

Banchory and Deeside U3A

<https://banchorydeeside.u3asite.uk>

Newsletter October 2026

Report from Chair

I am honoured to have been elected to chair our thriving U3A and will do my best to maintain the high standards of all our activities. For a start, I have decided to have a u3a dedicated email address which should be used with immediate effect for anything to do with the u3a. I would be grateful if you could add this new address under your contacts - feel free to get in touch with any queries or suggestions that are u3a related!

The new address is maggiechairu3a@talktalk.net

Maggie

Talks

- To start the season in September, we had a literally stimulating and enjoyable talk from Emelie Fyvie, an NHS Occupational Therapist based in Aboyne. Emelie is promoting physical MOTs for older people; her talk was so well appreciated that she is full booked until at least February. Details of how to book an appointment are on slide 18 of her presentation, which has been circulated.
- This month Kairen Griffiths, a retired Cystic Fibrosis Nurse Specialist, gave us a moving glimpse of activities at the front line of Covid in Aberdeen. They were based on her interviews with a range of staff, published as Memories from the Frontline, which is available online. In these times of public enquiries and a tendency to criticism and blame, it was a timely reminder of the dedication, willing overwork and amazing contribution of NHS staff and others at the frontline.
- The Committee is enormously grateful to everyone who has suggested a speaker. The input has been so good that we are now booked until November 2027, which is wonderful.

So may we suggest that if you have a good idea it would be safer to let us know before you commit someone to speaking? Just email. Then we don't have to explain that they are not being rejected. It also means that we can plan the topics to provide a good variety of talks. Thank you.

News from the Committee

- u3a Quiz Wednesday November 11th

There are still places available to join us at Scott Skinners on November 11th for a u3a Quiz Night. Why not get your Thinking Caps out and come along! Tables are in teams of four, but we may be able to place you in a team if you have not got a four of your own. Please get in touch with the Quiz Master Peter Davis on davis5banchory@aol.com

- The issue of the Magazine was raised at the AGM. If you would like to opt out of receiving a hard copy, as a number of us have done, please would you let Maggie, our chair, or June, current Membership Secretary, know and they will arrange it. This will help us save money and contribute to saving the planet. You can still read the magazine (TAM) online: go to u3a.org.uk then click on "What We Do" then click on "u3a Matters Magazine" and then access the online edition.
- We are very grateful for any items that you would like to submit to the newsletter; the photographs and poems have been widely appreciated. You can submit them anytime, but the deadlines for the following newsletters are the ends of September, January and May.
- We are looking for a new Membership Secretary. June has done a fantastic job in looking after you all and your interests, but it is time for a change. You don't need any previous committee experience! This role is perfect for anyone who has basic computer skills and would enjoy being a welcoming point of contact for our community. We are looking for someone who would be willing to respond to emails from people interested in joining our u3a as well as serving as the main point of contact in sending out information to our u3a members.

If you would like to have an informal, no-pressure chat about what the role involves, please contact June at u3amembershipsec@gmail.com

u3a Scottish Committee

I have recently become a member of the u3a Scottish Committee. I'm just beginning to understand what this is all about but will hope in future to let you know of what may be of interest to you. At the moment I'm working on trying to set up a local u3a network of the u3as in this area: Aberdeen, Inverurie and ourselves. This will be a fairly informal arrangement but the idea is that we can help and support each other. Things like sharing the names of speakers, arranging joint outings and events spring to mind but I'm sure that there are many other ways to work together and learn from each other. There is also the possibility of another new u3a being set up in Westhill. I have met some of those involved and they are working towards holding a public meeting to gauge interest in the near future.

Mary

Oh no not the website!

Yes, the website... Just a couple of things. As you can see from the Newsletter heading, the website address is <https://banchorydeeside.u3asite.uk> It is increasingly noted on BandD u3a communications, so it should be easy to find. It is not there for Russian spies, but it is there for members of Banchory & Deeside u3a, nobody else really. It mostly contains information; Monthly Meetings, Groups, the Newsletter, Constitution & Policy Documents and Minutes. And we strive to keep it current.

One page on the website is special, the Members page. It can only be accessed with a password, which is: st-ternan This is evidently not heavy security, but hopefully just enough to keep random visitors away. It contains the Committee members names and the minutes of their meetings.

Lastly and to re-iterate, the site is for the members of Banchory & Deeside u3a. If you have ideas how it might be improved or made more helpful, please let us know via the contact form on the website.

John Perry

News from the Groups

- From Sheilagh Clark, Groups Coordinator: Please send your requests or suggestions to me through our website. Please list the activities that you are interested in participating in. I will forward them to the appropriate person who will respond as soon as they are able.

The Discussion Group are changing their name and will be known as Current Affairs, to better reflect their activities.

Also at the moment we have a few names for a Third Art Appreciation group. Please send a message through the website if that is of interest to you. We would need to find a day that works for the majority and take it from there.

What about Drawing/sketching group? I've had one enquiry so far. Anyone else interested?

- Poetry Group 1 In this group we read poetry purely for pleasure. We don't really focus on the way a poet constructs a poem, but on its meaning and its impact on us. For each of our meetings, we choose either a poet or a theme and everyone brings along two or three poems to share. This month, October, we read some of the poems of Nan Shepherd, one of the earliest women graduates of Aberdeen University and most famous for her prose work "The Living Mountain." In this she writes about the Cairngorms and what it means to her in a way which was way ahead of her time in the connections she made between the relationship between the natural world and human behaviour. Written in the 1940s, it was only published in 1977 and we discovered that her poetry collection "In the Cairngorms" published in 1934 predated it and dealt with much the same subject matter. We were initially a bit doubtful of the wisdom of our choice of poet, but the more we read the more interested we became and

as individuals we may try her novels next or tackle or revisit “The Living Mountain” with perhaps a greater understanding of its message.

Next month our theme will be Remembrance taken in its widest sense. Of course in November thoughts inevitably turn to poetry about warfare, but we will no doubt also look at happier memories as well. Indeed our group usually finds opportunities for laughter in our discussions and I certainly always leave feeling happy and cheerful.

- From Kathleen Day in the Bird Group, this photo of a dramatic sunset over the Montrose Basin. Thank you, Kathleen



Sheilagh

Outings

[Lost Loch Spirits](#) is a craft spirits distillery located in the Deeside Activity park at Dess whose name plays on the nearby "lost" (drained) Loch Auchlossan. It has just been bought over, but were doing tours and tastings at £25 pp, with 12 people per tour. If you are interested in a visit, please contact us at banddu3aenquiries@proton.me.

Research

The Committee has had a request from a research group for volunteers to take part in a study spelt out below, with the contact details.

Do you want to challenge how society views aging—and how we view ourselves?

The HALFLIFE project is an exciting new five-year research study funded by the European Research Council. We are looking at how ageism (stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination towards people based on age) is experienced and, crucially, how people aged 60 and over can help challenge it.

We want to find practical ways to reduce both the ageism we face from others and the negative thoughts about aging we might accidentally direct at ourselves.

How you can help: We are looking for volunteers to join four 1-hour co-design sessions [online- times and dates tbd].

In these sessions, you will try out and give feedback on a new "reframing age" activity: a set of structured workshops designed to help reframe negative thoughts about getting older. Your feedback will directly shape the final research.

Interested in taking part? If you are aged 60+ and want to help us design this vital project, please contact Dr Rachel Crossdale (rachel.crossdale@biu.ac.il) for more details.

Finally, an anonymous Ode to the BandDU3A (from the poetry group)

In Banchory and Deeside U3a's all the rage
Among those who have reached their pension age
It matters no longer how much we earn
There's the friends we can make and what we can learn
There's a wide range of subjects we can study in groups
Or gather in West Church along with the troops
To hear expert speakers who'll share what they know
There's so much on offer our numbers just grow
We're grateful to members who give up their time
To tell us the places they've been able to find
For meetings with biscuits and coffee and tea
And all that it costs is a small yearly fee.
