

Group news

Jan Bundy, Groups Co-ordinator, 01875 341022

New groups

Relaxation and meditation

A new group is being formed to be run by an experienced relaxation and meditation teacher. The group will practise simple meditation techniques to help cultivate a calm mind and reduce our experience of stress in everyday life. If you are interested, please contact Jan. (see above)

Bridge: moving on (post beginners/more advanced)

At last! a very experienced player and teacher of bridge has offered to run this group. Please contact Jan (see above) if you feel you would like to be part of this group and would like to attend, a planning meeting can be held this spring.

Other group news

Needlework/craft/creative craft

Can you share your skill?

The Needlework/Craftwork Group would be happy to hear from anyone in the East Lothian membership who has a soft craft skill, such as creative embroidery, patchwork or other fabric oriented craft, that they would be prepared to share with the group. Contact May Bowie 01620 895149.

Current Affairs Group

This group is currently "on hold" More members are needed who can attend fairly regularly to support the life of the group. The group can restart in the autumn so if you are interested please telephone the leader, Christine Meacock 01620 890504.

Wednesday Walking Group

This is a very successful group but with the numbers at fifty Ken Stirling who runs the group feels he needs to create a waiting list. Don't hesitate to give him your name if you are interested in this group. Perhaps a second group could be created by one of the experienced Wednesday walkers.

Group Leaders' meeting

The next Group Leaders' meeting will be held on **Friday 30 May 2008** at 2.15 in the Tynebank Resource Centre, 16 Kirk View, Haddington.

Musical assistance needed

The Recorder Group is progressing well after its first year of meeting. The members of the group would however welcome anyone in the East Lothian U3A who has the musical skills – an ex music teacher perhaps – who would be willing to help the members 'develop' their playing. Contact Jan (see above)

Are your interests represented in the list of groups of the East Lothian U3A?

If not, read the accompanying article by Liz Reid and ponder whether you would like to start a group, or enable an existing group to continue. If you would like to chat about it, ring Liz (01620 893036) or Jan (see above) for a chat, or speak with any of the group leaders.

Bring your ideas about possible future groups to the AGM in June.

Being a group leader in the U3A

From Liz Reid – Exploring Philosophy group leader

On joining the U3A nothing could have been further from my mind than becoming a group leader; U3A time was for leisure and expanding horizons. Now however, further down the road, I hope to encourage any member who cannot find a local group for their chosen subject, to consider starting a group - or leading a group if the present incumbent wishes to stand down.

Being a group leader sounds like a lot of work, but it need not be. In U3A everyone has similar commitments at home and, with family etc, U3A work has to be shared, and as far as possible not left to any one person. U3A is meant to be a pleasure, not a cumbersome responsibility. There are many advantages in being a group leader:

- Under the umbrella organisation of U3A you have an inbuilt publicity machine; members are soon informed of the possibility of a new group starting up; almost immediately you may be in contact with two or three people locally who share your interest.
- As the intended group leader, you have the opportunity to develop the group largely as you wish. Do you want a small group, meeting in each other's home? How frequently will you meet? What day of the week and at what time? etc. Though group members will naturally discuss these points, you will be prepared with your preferences.

I have found experienced group leaders most helpful; they have provided several useful tips to minimise work:

- 1 Ask each member for their e-mail address; if they do not have one, could they arrange an "email buddy" who will be willing to pass on information sent by email?
- 2 If postage will be necessary, ask members to supply the leader with a couple of stamped addressed envelopes.
- 3 If you are meeting in each other's home, each member should undertake to inform the host if they cannot attend.
- 4 Depending on your subject, members can take turns in leading/researching meetings.
- 5 Fellow group members are there to help develop the group as you all wish; the leader doesn't have to feel *responsible*; perhaps 'group Facilitator' is a better description; it sounds less demanding and should be enjoyable. Meeting occasionally with other leaders *is* enjoyable.

Being a group leader has been an eye-opener to me; I never dreamt there could be so many enthusiastic people with similar interests in one local area, and of all voluntary commitments, it has been the most enjoyable, and the least demanding! I can recommend any member to "have a go".

Webmaster

A webmaster is required to maintain and develop our website (www.eastlothianu3a.org.uk). Any member with an interest in web design is invited to contact the present webmaster, Richard Morton (ramorton@f2s.com), with a view to taking over responsibility for the website.

Members' coffee morning

The first coffee morning for members, old and new, took place on Saturday 26 January in Trinity Centre, Haddington and attracted between 30 to 40 people. It was not only a good social occasion, but also an opportunity for people to find out more about what our U3A has to offer.

The merry buzz of chatter suggested it was a success, so there will be more in the future, possibly to be held in different parts of the county.

If anyone has suggestions about the form future occasion should take, please speak to a member of the committee.

Cinema Sands



Twelve members of the new Opera Group gathered at Estelle Morton's house in The Sands, Haddington, to watch a DVD of Tchaikovsky's opera Eugene Onegin prior to attending a RCMD performance at the Festival Theatre. Estelle's sitting room was rearranged for the purpose and, with the use of the U3A data projector, the opera was viewed on the big screen, with full stereo sound.

New committee

The time is coming round when we should be thinking of the new committee for next year. Three of the current members will be resigning, so we are looking for nominations to take their places. Although previous experience is welcome, it is by no means essential. Enthusiasm and a willingness to help our U3A keep going and developing are the main qualities necessary. There's plenty of help and advice available for new recruits.

Our constitution requires that nominees are proposed and seconded by members. Nominations should be notified in writing to the secretary, Liz Lockwood, by 28 May.

Please contact Liz on 01875 826320, (or any other member of the committee) for more information.

Deaf awareness

Edinburgh U3A in collaboration with Edinburgh RNID is hosting a meeting to help those with hearing loss, and to suggest ways in which U3A activities may be run so that deaf people can participate as fully as possible. The meeting will be of particular interest to group leaders but all members are welcome. **Tuesday 29 April**, at 2 pm in St Peter's Church, Lutton Place, Edinburgh EH8 9PE.

Drug Affliction

Our November **Open Lecture** was presented by Dr Ian Oliver, a recognised international authority on the policing of drug controls, and who had just returned from a five week tour of Afghanistan, the source of most of today's drug production.

In an impassioned address Dr Oliver stated that with a world-wide market of some £320 billion it is not surprising that illegal drugs are the scourge of so many countries, destroying the lives of countless people, especially the younger generations.

Regrettably the UK has one of the worst records in Europe for controlling the spread of drugs which impacts directly on our society whether it be through huge public health and support costs to cope with the spread of HIV or the ever growing number of drug related crimes, carried out to finance addiction. Indeed it is estimated that much of international terrorism today is supported through the proceeds of drugs trafficking.

The UK Government seems to have lost the will to confront directly the war against drugs with no properly thought out policy in sight. A failure to educate the public on just how pernicious and insidious drug addiction can become is self-evident when drug reduction rather than zero tolerance is being taken as the easy option. This sends out the wrong message that 'recreational' and soft drugs are more acceptable, disregarding the real risk of gravitating towards ever-stronger options which are far more powerful than the same type of drugs available ten years ago. Methadone treatment and needle exchange are not the long-term answer for our society which currently supports a vague form of informed choice rather than the total rejection of addictive drugs in any form.

The recent expansion of membership of the European Union, with greater freedom of movement across borders has led to a considerable influx of addicts and HIV carriers who arrive in this country without proper health checks and tests being carried out.

Dr Ian Oliver's strongly held view is that only through the total rejection of addictive drugs, supported by a more urgent approach to public education, will present and future generations have any hope of avoiding the social devastation that drug addiction brings.

More information is available on this subject in Dr Oliver's recently published book 'Drug Affliction'.

Members thanked Dr Oliver for his 'wakeup call' on the huge threat that social acceptance of addictive drugs presented to our children and grandchildren.

DATES FOR YOU DIARY

Open Lecture

2.30 pm Wednesday 30 April 2008.

The Town House Haddington.

'**Something Oriental**' by Jan Chapman, former Far East Curator, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

U3A Annual General Meeting

2 pm Wednesday 18 June 2008.

The Town House Haddington.

The AGM will be followed by a Lecture:

'**The Stone of Destiny**' by Graeme Munro, former Director and Chief Executive of Historic Scotland.