

Group news

from Jan Bundy, Groups Co-ordinator, 01875 341022

Spanish Conversation New members are welcome who can already speak some Spanish. Contact Gill Wallace: 01620 861020

Parliamo Italiano Although most members in this newly formed group have a little knowledge of Italian the group is starting from "scratch" and has space for new members. Contact: Ken Stirling 01620 829642

Scottish History This year the topic will be "The Borders". Three vacancies have arisen in this sought after group. Contact: Mona Lewis McLeod 01875 340462

Sight Singing Marjorie Hannah is ceasing to lead this group for the present and will notify us in the future when she is able to take up her valuable work again.

Gentle Exercise This group has recently started and is going very well meeting monthly on the first Monday of the month in Haddington. Contact Jean Buchanan 01368 830355

Notice to group leaders

The next **group leaders meeting** will be on Friday 7 December 2007 at 2.15 pm – venue to be announced.

New Leisure & Learning Groups booklet

The booklet enclosed with this newsletter contains full details of all the East Lothian U3A Leisure and Learning Groups.

Study Day

Forth Valley U3A is organising a Study Day

Sustainability in Practice on Friday 29 June 2007 in Stirling, looking at Global Warming, Home Composting Systems, and Creating Biodiversity. Booking and information from Margaret Risk 01786 472440

Funding for accommodation

Until recently the Bridge Centre in Haddington kindly allowed us the use of its premises for group meetings free of charge. However this arrangement has come to an end and we now have to pay a realistic fee, for which a figure, to cover costs for a whole year, of £1,100 has been negotiated. As expenditure of this kind would make quite a hole in our finances, we applied to the Lloyds TSB Foundation and the East Lothian Educational Trust for financial support. Your committee is pleased to announce that these applications have been successful and the cost of our use of the Bridge Centre is now covered for the next 12 months and beyond.

AGM and Open Lecture

The East Lothian U3A AGM will take place at 2 pm on Wednesday 20 June at the Town House, Haddington. AGM papers are enclosed with this newsletter.

The AGM will be followed with an **Open Lecture** by **Professor David Simpson**, advisor to the Water Industry Commissioner, on the subject of **Water in Scotland**.

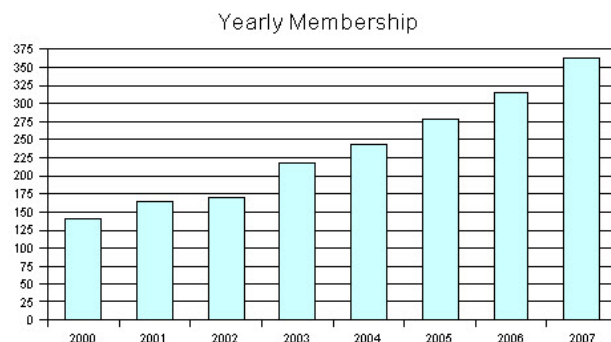
A continuing success story

Since its launch in 1999 The University of the Third Age in East Lothian has shown an impressive year-on-year increase in membership.

The original initiative for the creation of a U3A in the area came from Francis MacLennan who was then in charge of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Alderston House, Haddington.

A public meeting was called in April 1999 to try to gauge the support for the launch of a branch of the U3A in the area. A healthy attendance of around 80 people indicated that there was indeed an interest and following the appointment of a steering committee, a constitution was drawn up and the U3A in East Lothian was born.

The following graph shows the annual increase in membership since then.



Of course numbers only tell one part of the story but they do indicate that the U3A satisfies a need in the area. We must be doing something right.

Open day to celebrate tenth anniversary

After much discussion it was decided to make the proposed open or study day to which we invite other U3As as a way of celebrating our tenth anniversary in 2009. At the moment we have not decided exactly what form it should take, but that gives us plenty of time to plan and prepare for it.

At a recent meeting of group leaders many expressed a willingness to become involved and various ideas were put forward. At the moment the most important thing is to find out, from our large membership, who is willing to offer their talents, then the event can be shaped according to their initiatives.

If you are interested and would like to help in any way, please get in touch with the Liz Strachan 01875 340457 or any member of the committee.

A date for your diary

The **next Open Lecture** will be held at the Town House, Haddington at 2.30 pm on 26 September. The speaker will be Matthew Wellard, art historian and manager of the Peter Potter Gallery in Haddington. The title of Matthew's lecture will be **Scottish Art in Public Galleries**.

So you think you can't run a U3A Group

If you have met someone who is unsure but would, you think, enjoy running a group you might like to show them the extracts below from a U3A group member in Worthing U3A:

1. "I don't know enough". Most U3A leaders are not instructors so much as "facilitators". They encourage their members to discover things for themselves and to share their findings with the group. To be a facilitator you don't need to be an "expert" but someone who can infect others with their enthusiasm.
2. "I couldn't face a group". It's easier to hold others' attention when you're the leader of a group, than when you're just a member. However much you may doubt your ability, you will find that, once you have your "badge of office", people will listen to you.
3. "It's too much of a commitment". There are at least three ways of making the job more congenial: (a) Co-leadership: you could offer to share the running of a new or existing (perhaps overgrown) group. (b) Delegation: you could agree with your members that you all take turns at preparing the subject matter for each meeting. (c) Phasing: you could offer to run a group for a limited period (say 5 meetings) in the first instance.
4. "I don't have a big enough room". There is no necessity for a new group to meet in the leader's home. You may well find that one or more of your members are willing to play "host". If not there may be accommodation for you at the Bridge Centre, Haddington or help can be given to find accommodation.
5. "I'm not very mobile". This is an ideal reason to *be* a leader. Assuming you have adequate space, it means that people come to you rather than you to them.

So, if you are considering running a group, why not talk it over with Jan Bundy or one of our committee members, or another group leader?

Dogs and children

from Lin Jonas U3A National Administrator

With immediate effect, any incident involving **dogs** belonging to U3A members on a U3A walk *will* be covered by our insurance.

One of the reasons why the question of insurance has become such an issue lately, is because there have been some problems caused by badly behaved dogs and therefore it seemed prudent to remind U3As that prior to 23 April 2007, our insurance would not cover an incident involving dogs. There was never any question of the insurance cover being invalidated for the whole group and/or for the group leader, if dogs were allowed.

I am aware that some U3As do not allow members to bring dogs but if you do, then I would suggest that a few ground rules may be useful. It can be very awkward for a group leader to deal with a situation where a dog has become a problem or where a request to bring a dog has split the group.

At the same time I have managed to ease the restriction on **children** occasionally attending U3A Groups, so there will be no problem with our insurance cover if you decide to allow members to bring grandchildren along during the holidays. Again it might be advisable to agree a procedure so that group leaders know how to deal with requests.

U3A - saving state money?

In a recent Sunday Herald article under the heading of *Grey learning would save state money* it was reported that a leading education expert has called for massive investment in education for older people, which he claims would save the health service millions of pounds a year.

Professor Tom Schuller, head of education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, and formerly the head of the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Edinburgh told the paper that pensioners should enrol in college or even university courses, in order to help them stay active. He believes this would save the health service a substantial amount, as a possible decline into poor health or frailty would come much later in life. "If you think about the cost of caring for an older person as a dependent in a nursing home for even a week, and multiply it by the number of people needing care, education which keeps people active and engaged is very attractive," he said. "No-one is suggesting that education is a magic bullet, but if older people can delay needing that level of care the savings to the public budget would be substantial". He added that the government should be investing for the long term in improving access to learning for older people. .

The Concorde Experience

Edinburgh U3A Science group is hosting a unique double event under the title of **Flight** to which East Lothian U3A members are invited. The first part will be a **presentation** on Thursday, 21 June 2007 at 7.30pm in St. Peter's church hall, Lutton Place, Newington, Edinburgh, which will be addressed by three speakers who have been closely involved with **Concorde**.

Tony Yule, ex-Concorde pilot will be the first speaker. Tony has been a pilot for 46 years and has worked for the RAF, British Airways, Air Europe (Italy and Netherlands) and was Training Captain on Boeing 767.

The second speaker, Dave MacDonald, was Flight Engineering Superintendent of the Concorde fleet. Dave will cover the history and development of the Concorde.

The third speaker, Dave Leaney, was Flight Technical Manager and effective Head of the Concorde fleet. He will talk about milestone events during Concorde's 30-year history and relate anecdotes about passengers who travelled on Concorde.

The cost will be £2 and will include refreshments.

The second part of the event will be a **conducted tour of Concorde** the following morning i.e. Friday 22 June - meeting at 11.00am at the **Museum of Flight**, East Fortune. Those attending should make their own way to East Fortune. Cost £6 approx.

For further information telephone David Richardson 0131 653 2008 or Pat Catannach 0131 667 2550

March Open Lecture – from Roy Hannah

It was very disappointing for everyone who turned up at The Town House, Haddington on 21 March, to find that our invited speaker, Professor Anthony Busuttill, the eminent forensic pathologist, was not present to deliver his lecture "Death Under Suspicious Circumstances". As organiser of the event I was only contacted the following day by Professor Busuttill who apologised for his non-appearance which had been brought about by his being in court earlier that day and unable to leave (or contact me), as he had previously planned.