

### Group news

From Jan Bundy, Groups Co-ordinator, 01875 341022

#### New Groups Starting Early 2007

**Wine Club** The initial meeting of the Wine Club will be held at the home of John & Tillie Baird, 42 Lady Jane Gardens, North Berwick, at 7.00pm on Friday 26 January. Please let John & Tillie know if you wish to join this group and if you can attend this meeting (Tel: 01620 895854).

**Recorder playing** Group Leader to be appointed but contact Jan for further details. This will be a self-led group for those with a delicate insufficiency of recorder playing experience. It is hoped to be able to graduate to part playing and accompanied playing.

**Current affairs** Numbers are sufficient to hold a planning meeting for this group which will define a format for successful meeting, frequency and venue, and work out a sharing of group leader "work". Contact Jan if you would like to come to this meeting and haven't yet given your name.

**Astronomy** We are very fortunate that a leader, with the necessary experience and knowledge, has offered to run this group. It is hoped there will be two types of group meeting: sessions involving observational study with telescope, and discussion sessions using visual aids. It is expected that some meetings will be in Athelstaneford and some in Haddington. If you are interested please contact Jan.

#### New members welcome

**Creative writing** This group meets fortnightly on Monday afternoons. Members are encouraged to write in their own style and to become confident in exploring different approaches to a topic. The group is going well but needs one or two more members. If you are interested in joining please telephone Jan. The group leader, Monica Rushforth is moving house over Christmas.

**Bookworms** New members are welcome to join this lively group. Contact Kath Rose on 01875 811578 or Janet Beaton on 01875852997.

#### Groups that members have shown an interest in

##### German conversation and Italian conversation

Some people have asked if there could be a group formed for practicing these languages. Please give Jan your name if you are interested. East Lothian will be well on the way to becoming multi lingual with more additions to add to our existing French and Spanish conversation groups.

**Basic bridge** The existing bridge group is full and there are a lot of names on the waiting list to join this group. We are now pleased to be able to announce that a leader has come forward to run a **second group**. If you are interested in joining those who have been waiting, please contact Jane De Busk on 01620 843944.

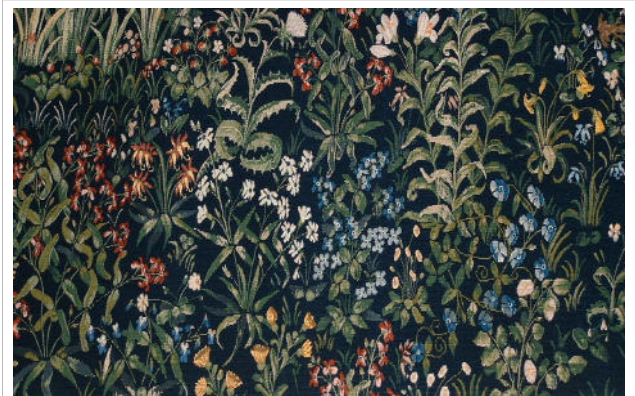
##### Biology - as if life matters

This group is starting up again at 3pm on Monday 15 January at the Bridge Centre in Haddington. Group leader, Ulrich Loening, can be contacted on 01875 340541.

### Open lecture

**Flowers and fierce animals in renaissance tapestries** was the title of the open lecture given by U3A member Professor John Dale in September in Longniddry Church. The unique tapestries referred to by Professor Dale were some of the finest pieces of art ever created and on a scale of thirty feet long and fourteen feet in height. The original tapestries are now in the ownership of the Duke of Devonshire and the Rockefeller family in New York. A copy of one of the tapestries *The Hunt of the Unicorn* can be seen at Stirling Castle.

A leading botanist at Edinburgh University, Professor Dale was particularly interested in the wide variety of plants incorporated in the tapestries in which over a hundred species can be clearly identified. This reflected outstanding craftsmanship that went in to creating the tapestries.



Over a hundred different plants can be identified in some of the tapestries

Of the animals depicted in the tapestries the most fascinating were the unicorns with their proud, fierce and mystical associations. Although the presence of various other animals also featured in Professor Dale's address it was the unicorn and the lion that became part of the Scottish coat of arms.

Professor Dale answered questions from the audience which had been enthralled by his learned address on such an intriguing subject.

#### Record summer for Art Out of Doors group

*Liz Strachan writes:* Normally we're lucky if the weather is good enough to go out half the time, but this summer we were able to exercise our talents and enjoy our picnics in glorious sunshine week after week from May to September. Once or twice it was a bit chilly and windy and sometimes we even had to retire early because it was too hot! But there was not a single day that the group missed. Even the last one in September when it was wet and windy we took shelter in St Mary's Church and carried on sketching there before eventually retiring to Peter Potter's.

At the end of the season we met to display the results of our summer endeavours at a most enjoyable coffee morning.

## Wednesday Walkers Swiss Trip

At the end of September 12 members of the Wednesday Walkers spent a week in Switzerland. This arose out of a casual conversation on a walk one day in the East Lothian countryside between group leader Ken Stirling and EL U3A member Anita Muir who spends six months of the year in North Berwick and six months in Nyon, near Geneva. Little did we know then what a valuable member we had. Anita worked untiringly to book our accommodation, meet us at the airport, plan and lead us on very varied week of wonderful excursions, see us off from the airport at the crack of dawn, and devote every minute of every day to the project. All Ken had to do was act occasionally as interpreter and keep the group in order!



We had two walks along the shore of Lac Léman, one from Vevey to Montreux and the Chateau de Chillon, and the other from Lausanne to Morges during which the lake changed from a millpond to a stormy sea! Another day was spent in the foothills of the Jura, where, at lunchtime in a mountain chalet, we partook of fondue washed down with white wine. One of the most spectacular experiences was "La Descente des Vaches" in the mountain village of St Cergue. The main street was lined with stalls offering local produce, while donkeys, St Bernard dogs and hundreds of cows bedecked with bells and flowers were led down in a seemingly endless procession to winter in lower pastures. Folk singers, yodellers and alphorn players added their music to the pervading tinkling of cowbells. On our last day, between showers, we took in both the United Nations district and the picturesque old town of the city of Geneva.

Our small hotel was absolutely charming, the food and service, provided by our friendly host, Brahim, second to none. Evenings were always happy times, especially the last one when we entertained David and Anita and presented her with a small token of our appreciation.

## Parliament visit

Fourth time lucky? Thursday 8 March has been booked for our Museum visits group to attend a session of the Scottish Parliament.

Tickets are limited with group members having priority, but any others who are interested can be added to the waiting list. Please ring Margaret Gordon on 01620 842363 or email her at [agordon@tollymore.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:agordon@tollymore.fsnet.co.uk).

## IT evolution in East Lothian

This is the title of an article by East Lothian U3A member (and past chairman) Margaret Gordon which was published in the November issue of **Sources**. Margaret has been the inspiration behind many computer related initiatives in our U3A and, by sharing her experience through the pages of *Sources*, will be helping others within the wider U3A community to make better use computing and information technology (IT).

**Sources** is an educational bulletin published three times a year by the Third Age Trust and sent free to members. If you would like to subscribe you can sign up on-line at [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) or write to the Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QH

## East Lothian U3A to open its doors

*Liz Strachan writes:* Members will know that other U3A branches throughout Scotland have run a wide variety of study or open days to which all members are invited. Those of us who have attended them have found them most interesting and enjoyable.

Since we are the second largest U3A in Scotland we feel it is about time we laid on something ourselves. It would need the help and support many members since the committee is fully stretched already.

The idea was discussed with interest at a meeting of group leaders recently. They agree that the form it should take would depend on the number of members, group leaders and others, who were willing to volunteer, and on what they had to offer.

There is so much talent and ability amongst our 337 members, we should be able to put on something really good.

Anyone who would like to be involved and can offer ideas or help should ring Philip Taylor (01368 850235) who has kindly volunteered to chair a sub-committee to look into possibilities and get things going.

## Getting connected to the Internet

In the autumn Newsletter we published an item on **Joining the online community**. A scheme has now been set up to provide guidance to members who wish to have access to the Internet but don't have the necessary facilities. If you are interested in acquiring the equipment and skills to enable you to join the 'online community', please contact Richard Morton on 01620 825979, or Jan Bundy on 01875 341022.

## Our Website

Everything you want to know about East Lothian U3A is available on our website at: [www.eastlothianu3a.org.uk](http://www.eastlothianu3a.org.uk). Tell your friends that this is the place to download a membership application form. Full details of all the groups can be found on the website as well as copies of recent Newsletters (in colour).

## Fife U3A Open Day

**Saturday 17 March** - details from Sally Cummine on 01630 890756