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Hello Everyone

Hello everyone and welcome back to Ballymoneyu3a. Our activities have all started up so please check our activity and events programme listed at the end of this Newsletter or look on our Ballymoneyu3a website to see what is going on. You are very welcome to come along and check out one or more of these without committing yourself.

Our next **Members' Monthly Meeting** will be held on Tuesday 7th November at 11:00 am in the Connect Centre. This will be an Information Day with exhibits from various organisations who will have information and advice which we hope you will find beneficial. Tea/coffee will be served from 10:15 am to 10:45 am.

Our website at ballymoneyu3a.org.uk contains up to date Activities and Events and copies of all our Newsletters; as well as photos of our activities and events as well as Membership information and Contact details for our principal officers.

Our next **Coffee Catch-up** is Friday 24 November and this is an excellent opportunity to get out and about and meet over a cup of coffee or tea. More details are available below.

Breaking News - OfCom (the UK's communications regulator) in conjunction with AdviceNI are offering a free 5 week course to Ballymoneyu3a members on "Making Sense of Media Online". The course covers: Being a Savvy Internet User; How to Stay Safe Online; Using Price Comparison Websites; Shopping Online; and Banking Online.

The course is designed for members who comfortable using IPAD/Tablet devices, mobile phones and laptops and who wish to know more about being safe online. While the course and materials are free of charge there may be a small charge for room rental. To get maximum use of the course it is recommended that you provide your own computer device, although these are not essential. If you wish to join this course please contact our Activities Coordinator- **Kathleen Owens at: activitiesbbu3a@gmail.com** as soon as possible.

Report of Members Meeting - 23 October 2023

John Pinkerton chair welcomed a full house saying that it great to see so many returning and new members.

John introduced Pam Peterson on behalf of Home Start Causeway who spoke about the work of that organisation. Pam said that with the help of volunteers, assistance could be provided to families with a child under 5 who were facing difficulties in their day to day lives. Many families with a young child struggled with stress, depression and other emotional issues and to have someone to spend time, to listen, offer support and advice was beneficial. She encouraged Bu3a members to consider if they could give a few hours to this worthwhile project. Training is provided with the next session taking

place in October. Anyone wanting to offer their time or get more information should contact Victoria on 07483 141376 or email info@homestartcauseway.co.uk

John then introduced the guest speaker Adrian Morrow general manager of Glenarm Castle estate.

Adrian gave the audience a fascinating insight covering the history of the Castle, its inhabitants its place within the community and its role as a present day tourist attraction. It was obvious that this is more than a job for Adrian having made up his mind at the age of 6 that he wanted to be part of this historic property.

Home to the McDonnell family the Earls of Antrim since they fled to safety from Dunluce Castle in the 17th century and still occupied by the 15th Earl, Randal and his family, the estate presently covers an area of 2000 acres. It was much larger but the 6th Earl had a passion for racehorses, without any success in racing them, so to recoup his losses he gambled away much of the estate.

Adrian showed some of the antiques which furnish the Castle including two sea chests recovered from the Girona. Again many of the valuable pieces were stolen around 1918 and only a few have been recovered.

A set of fine upholstered chairs were a gift from Winston Churchill. Pride of place in the main entrance hall is taken by a large chandelier and in a tale worthy of Del Boy in Only Fools and Horses Adrian recounted the fateful day when at the prompting of a new housekeeper he was charged with lowering it for cleaning. The housekeeper did an excellent job and sent for Adrian to raise the chandelier. Finding it more difficult than the lowering had been he enlisted the help of young gardener, a somewhat clumsy individual, who enjoyed a beer and perhaps some herbal tobacco to supplement his lunch. Whatever the reason he lost control of the hoisting rope and the precious cargo fell to the floor with devastating result. Crystal shards covered a wide area and after the clear up filled 27 biscuit tins. It fell to Adrian to break the news to the Earl who on recovering from the shock asked if repair was possible. After much investigation Adrian was told of an Austrian who was an expert in the field and who had carried out a similar repair at Hillsborough Castle following an incident involving Mo Mowlam but that is another story.

On a more serious note Adrian spoke of the estate and the many activities which are now available from the working farm with its herd of shorthorn cattle providing meat which is sold in the shop at the Castle and is also on sale in Fortnum and Mason London, the tours of the gardens, the glamping pods and events for Halloween and Christmas.

Adrian used humour and wit to keep his audience enthralled audience and giving the vote of thanks Pat Crossley said that seldom had we enjoyed such a varied and entertaining morning.

Marion McDowell



Above: Smiling Faces – Arriving for the Meeting

Below: Adrian Morrow, John and George



Events

Coffee Catch-up



Bu3a coffee mornings are a popular way of getting to know other members and finding out more about your u3a.

Today, we had members "dropping in" and enjoying a cuppa and the chat. A special welcome to our new members and of course it was good to see those more familiar faces, and hear the chatter - the rowdies are back!

Both the food and service were good. Some, who were feeling peckish, added a scone, or even a full hearty breakfast to their coffee order. As if the coffee wasn't tempting enough, we had to walk past the dessert cabinet. Some folks resisted the temptation, however several could not and some freshly-baked blueberry scones, and delicious desserts were consumed.

Great to meet up again, chat with old friends, and welcome new member Brian.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2023
BETWEEN 10.30 AM AND 12 NOON

NB: Julie has to book tables in advance, and if you wish to join us, simply reply to Julie's email via a text to: Mob 07977297090. If circumstances change and you cannot attend, please let Julie know.

Marie Hegarty

Enjoying our Coffee Catch Up



Activity Reports

Story Telling Group – 9th October

The storytelling group met in The Hub on 9th of October and a range of tales were told by those present. Some of them involved dances held in Cloughmills Orange hall in the early sixties with high jinks by some of those present. Others were about children becoming convinced they had found the Devils footprints and following them. The big snow of sixty three was remembered in another and its impact on people. So as you can see the stories cover a wide range of topics and can sometimes be sad, funny or just fascinating to listen to.

If you want to join us, our next meeting is **in The Hub on Monday 13 November at 11.00**. Everyone is welcome whether you want tell a story or just listen to those told by others in the group.

George McAuley

Family and Local History Group – Meeting - 17 October 2023

Our speaker this month was Keith Beattie, local historian, who conducted a Ballymoney Heritage Walking Tour after an initial introduction to Ballymoney in the Connect Centre. He covered topics of history of education in Ballymoney, The Model School and Model Farm, and The Workhouse opened in 1843 later to become the Route Hospital.

His walkabout guided tour included the history of the Town Hall, War Memorial, The Diamond Bar, the Clock Tower, the Cemetery and finished up in Charles Street outside the Council Buildings.

Keith outlined the origins of several street names and provided researched anecdotes at each location. A total of 12 members enjoyed Keith's walkabout talk combined with some healthy exercise. Keith has offered to conduct a further similar guided walkabout in the future to cover the lower end of the town and Castle Street areas.

Our meeting next month in the Connect Centre on Tues 21st November 2023 at 10-30am, will have a speaker, Linda Houston, who will give a talk entitled "Macartney of Lissanoure and China" which promises to be very interesting. Our group would welcome any other BU3A members who wish to attend this meeting.

John Flynn



**Family and Local History Group – On the Walking Tour
(above and below)**



Hello China Workshops

"Hello China" was the mantra for October as Ballymoney u3a completed four Chinese Culture Awareness workshops hosted by Bonny Cooper, Managing Director of China Connections Consultant Ltd. The course was partially grant funded and the thirteen members who participated were rewarded with a greater understanding of Chinese life and culture.

In the first session Chinese culture and language was introduced and participants learnt to say a few Chinese phrases and to write some Chinese characters.

The following week interesting facts and customs surrounding Chinese New Year and the Moon festival were shared. We also were informed of the traits that come with each zodiac animal and each participant was taught how to make a paper cut window decoration. The third workshop gave an overview of Chinese medicine and philosophy. We learnt about acupuncture points, some dance moves and a set of light stretches for posture correction to help neck, shoulder, and back problems.

The final workshop was all about food and we were invited to sample delicious dumplings and a noodle dish having watched them being made and cooked by Bonny herself.

This was a very enjoyable and interactive experience for all concerned. Feedback was very positive and we look forward to the possibility of introducing more diverse and engaging activities in the future.

Elaine Wilson



Bonnie Cooper making dumplings and David enjoying them



Gloria and George – disussing the finer points of Chinese cuisine
and

Sarah, Sue and Marion – sorry no time to talk – the foods delicious!



--- Creative Writers Group

The group has 10 members, male and female, and meets on the **third Tuesday of each month from 12.30pm – 2pm in Connect**. The meeting consists of members reading their work and getting feedback and short writing exercises which can be shared with the group or not, as desired. There is no compulsion to read or share. The aim is to provide a safe, supportive environment where ideas can be sparked and discussed. Discussions can get very animated and the world is a better place afterwards!

Normally a task is set for the following month and members send their work to the facilitator who shares it so that everyone's work has the benefit of being read in full by each member before the meeting as time only allows a short extract from longer pieces to be heard.

An anthology of work entitled '**Frae the Toon**' was published in 2001 and plans are afoot to put together a second collection soon. The main aims of the group are to ENJOY writing, to listen to each other, to discuss ideas and to give encouragement and support.

Anne McCusker

Creative Writers Samples

SEPTEMBER ACROSTIC

Summer tucks up her skirts letting
Evening darkness spill out.
Purple twilight, mists at dawn.
The leaves fall: their final
Explosion of colour crisp as
Moonlit frost. Tides wash the shore,
Birds gather, Change is
Everywhere, Light the fires,
Retreat. Prepare to start again.

AN UNWANTED CONVERSATION

Abridged

Tom was sitting on a granite bench at the sea front deep in thought when he became aware of someone approaching the seat. Out of the corner of his eye he had been conscious of movement to his left-hand side, an elderly unkempt man shuffling along. The "tramp" stopped in front of him and at first he thought this is the "pound" man looking for money to get the bus home to Bangor as he claimed when he worked the sea front each afternoon. His hand had already gone instinctively to his pocket to fish out a coin. Instead, the "Tramp" gestured toward the empty space on the bench.

Tom shrugged his shoulders to show that there was no one occupying it but secretly annoyed that his rumination had been disturbed. His partner of over ten years had informed him that their relationship was over and whilst she would be happy to remain a

friend, she no longer wished to be a "special friend" and would be moving out. This had not come as a bolt out of the blue as he had been aware for some time that they had slowly been drifting apart.

Looking back, he believed it had started not long after her first husband, from whom she had been divorced a long time ago, had died after several years of heavy drinking which, in the end, had taken its toll of his health and had led directly to his premature death. She had become increasingly dissatisfied with life in general and him. This manifested itself in several ways. There was increasing criticism of his lifestyle ie he watched too much TV, was not interested enough in the several new hobbies she had begun to pursue and did not do his fair share of domestic chores. He, on the other hand, just wanted a quiet life, having stepped back from the day-to-day responsibilities of running his own business and having had several health issues of his own to contend with. In some ways it had come as something of a relief that she had taken the initiative to end it, but nevertheless it was still a considerable wrench and he needed to think it over and hopefully come to terms with it.

So it was not surprising that he should resent the interruption in his train of thought when the "Tramp" had shown up and sat on the bench beside him. His annoyance increased when he heard him say, "Is this all there is to it?" Tom did not respond, then he heard him say, "You know, I used to have it all but not anymore."

General Enquires

Please contact the following for any general enquires.

Role	Name	Phone	E-mail
Membership Secretary:	Elizabeth Stevenson		`membershipbu3a@gmail.com
Activities Coordinator:	Kathleen Owens		activitiesbbu3a@gmail.com

Ballymoney u3a: 2023-2024

Events and Meetings

Date	Event/Meeting	Venue	Information
5 September 2023	Monthly Meeting	Connect Centre	Speaker: Bonnie Cooper, Topic: Hello China
3 October 2023	Monthly Meeting	Connect	Speaker: Adrian Morrow, Topic: Glenarm Castle Estate
7 November 2023	Monthly Meeting	Connect	Information Day. Various Exhibitors
5 December 2023	Monthly Meeting	Lodge Hotel	Christmas Lunch
2 January 2024	Monthly Meeting	Connect	Speaker: Sir Paul Girvan, Retired High Court Judge
6 February 2024	Monthly Meeting	Connect	Speaker: Eddie Lynch, Commissioner For Older People
5 March 2024	Monthly Meeting	Connect	Speaker: Tori Calderwood, Topic: COAST
2 April 2024	Monthly Meeting	Connect	Speaker: David McKeown, Topic: Samaritans
7 May 2024	Monthly Meeting	Connect	AGM, Followed by Scad the Beggars
4 June 2024	Annual Outing	TBC	TBC

Activity	Day/Time	Venue	Leader	Information
ARCHERY	TBC TBC	As advised by Activity Leader	Frances	To be arranged once a month. All equipment provided
BRIDGE	Monday 2.30 pm - 4.30 pm	Castle Community Centre, Castle Street, Ballymoney	Damian	Engaging with others and learning how to play the fascinating game of Bridge
COFFEE CATCHUP	Last Friday each month 10.00 am - 12.00 pm	As advised by Activity Leader	Julie	The group meets new venue at Nico's, at Ballybrakes for socialising over a cup of coffee.
COMPUTERS, IPADS AND MOBILE PHONES	Wednesday 10.30 am - 12:00 pm	As advised by Activity Leader	Michael	Tuition is available for IPAD's, Apple and Android based mobile phones and Microsoft Windows based computers. Subjects covered include: basic how to use; apps such as e-mail; security and for Windows users Microsoft Office products such as Word processing. Each course will run with a minimum of 6 participants. Participants should have their own devices. Courses may be repeated on demand.
CRAFTS	Thursday TBC	As advised by Activity Leader	TBC	Designing and decorating different items using artistic techniques
CREATIVE WRITING	3rd Tuesday each month 12.30 pm - 2.00 pm	Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH	Sharon	Get together and write stories on given topics.
ENVIRONMENT	Monday weekly TBC	As advised by Activity Leader	Jean	Group getting together to clear rubbish and debris from a local area to make the environment more pleasant. Reflective safety jackets and tools are provided
FAMILY / LOCAL HISTORY	3rd Tuesday each month 10.30 am - 12.00 pm	Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH	John Flynn	Researching family history for part of the term. Visiting and studying places of historical interest.
GARDENING	3rd Thursday each month 2.00 pm onwards	Ballymoney Community Hub, Robinson Hospital Site	Geoff/Davy	Having some workshops - seed sowing, plant swaps or videos. Mostly going on visits to open gardens.
GOLF	Thursday weekly Starting 10.00 am	As advised by Activity Leader	Donal / Paul	The group meets each week at different golf courses. mainly Benone. They also organise a two day golf holiday twice a year.
NEW ACTIVITY: FOOD FOR THOUGHT	2nd Thursday each month 2.30 pm	As advised by Activity Leader	Irene Barkley	The group will meet once a month to discuss 'Food' and how we use food for energy, nutrition, entertainment and healing.
OUT TO LUNCH	3rd Friday each month 12.30 pm for 1.00 pm.	As advised by Activity Leader	Eileen	Meeting at various restaurants for good food, good company and good chat.
PHOTOGRAPHY	2nd and 3rd Tuesdays of the month 10.30 am - 12.00 pm.	Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH	Davy	Learning techniques of taking good photos on various locations. The next week studying those photos followed by discussions.
READING GROUP	2nd Tuesday of the month 10.30 am - 12.00 pm	Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH	Mary	Getting together to read a suggested book and then sharing opinions.
STORY TELLING	2nd Monday of each month 11.00 am - 1.00 pm	Ballymoney Community Hub, Robinson Hospital Site	Mary / George	Some very intriguing stories are told in this group, with each member imparting their knowledge or relating their childhood memories perhaps.
UKELELE	TBC 11.00 am - 12.00 pm	As advised by Activity Leader	Damian / Mary	Providing harmonious melodies using a Ukelele. The Ukelele is provided at first until you become competent.