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Activities, Events and Meetings

After a long winter the days are getting longer and warmer and we hope you are all taking advantage of the improving weather to get out and about and hopefully join in the meetings, activities and events Ballymoney u3a have arranged. We have taken the opportunity to update our Activities and Events and our Contact details and have provided these at the end of this Newsletter.

We have been asked by a number of members about new activities such as line dancing, yoga, cookery and there may be other activities that you would like us to arrange. If you could lead any of these activities we would be delighted to hear from you and support you in running them. Please contact our activities coordinator Kathleen Owens who would be happy to hear from you.

Our thanks go to Marie Hegarty for additional photos in this edition.

Report of Members Meeting – 6 February 2024

The guest speaker at February's Ballymoney u3a Meeting was Eddie Lynch the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland.

Eddie outlined the main priorities of his role and explained that the post of Commissioner for Older People NI was established in 2011.

His main role is to protect and promote the rights of older people which means he is involved with the various statutory and voluntary agencies who provide services to this age groups as well as advising on government policy.

His duties are wide ranging from health and social care to housing, fuel costs and treatment of residents in care homes to transport, IT scams and tackling ageism in society. One notable case was a major investigation in allegations of elder abuse at Dunmurry Care Home which led to Adult Safeguarding legislation being introduced.

His office was heavily involved during the Covid pandemic dealing with issues raised by individuals and organisations. He is a Core Participant in the current Covid-19 enquiry and hopes that his contribution will help to avoid mistakes made during the pandemic happening should a future situation of this nature arise.

He then spent some time informing members on the various IT and banking scams which are increasingly prevalent. In conjunction with the PSNI, his office has formed Scamwise to monitor and raise awareness among older people of the dangers involved.

All in all it was a very educational meeting and members appreciated all the information they had been given.

Sue Pinkerton

Note- Ballymoney u3a provides, on request, IT courses which cover

subjects including scam awareness, online banking, online shopping, as well as IPAD and mobile phone courses.

Eddie Lynch the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland



Activity Reports

Coffee Catch-up – 23 February 2024



A great turnout at Coffee this morning. In addition to our "regulars," we welcomed three new members who thought they would "give us a try". While having coffee, a big fry, scone, or whatever - members discuss and share interests and experiences, leading to lively banter and lots of laughter.

As a Bu3a member, you are most welcome to join our joyful group, and meet new people, make new friends, and have Bu3a-related queries addressed. Above all the focus is on friendship and fun!

March Coffee Catch-Up will be on Friday 29 March. Julie will send out a reminder before that date and it is simply a matter of texting her to book your seat.

Marie Hegarty

Sarah, Irene, Ted, Alison, Naresh



Jim, Elizabeth, Drew, Sally



Bu3a Family and Local History Group – 20th February 2024

This month we met at Connect Centre as our planned PRONI visit had to be postponed until later in the year. A video entitled “Old Ballycastle Lit by Love and Sunshine”, available on YouTube, was shared with our group members. Narrated by renowned Ballycastle actor Conleth Hill, the video outlines much of the past history of Ballycastle, old film of local life in the 1960’s and ’70’s, footage of interviews by the late Charlie McAfee and some camera work by the late William Campbell.

Our Group discussed our programme for the rest of our year to June and also set up some project groups to do research and present local topics of interest to a future group meeting.

Our next meeting is planned for 10-30am on Tuesday 19th March 2024 at The Connect Centre. Our planned speaker will be Maurice McHenry with an illustrated talk entitled “Slavery and North Antrim”. This talk will also be advertised to all other BU3A members inviting them to attend as guests as it promises to be of much local interest.

John Flynn

U3A Writers' Group – February



The Writers' group is continuing to flourish with three new members this year. The members are gently encouraged to share their stories – be they fiction, memoir or autobiography - in a supportive and friendly environment. There's a lot of chat and laughter over coffee and biscuits. Occasionally some writing exercises get done and a task is set for the following month.

The most important aspects of the group are the enjoyment of writing, the exploration of themes and topics and the moral support for its members.

Meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month from 12.30pm – 2pm in the Connect Centre.

Anne McCusker

Mary in full flow



Creative writing: a study of concentration



Reading Group

Our Reading Group met on the Tuesday 13th February and the book for discussion was "*Snap*" by Belinda Bauer.

"There are two kinds of people in the world. Those who think it could never happen to them. And those who know it will ..."

This is a crime thriller set in the West Country about how three children survive after their mother is murdered. The story is fast-paced and involves a varied collection of characters and is in turn humorous, emotional and dark at times. Most of our group really enjoyed this book and would happily recommend it.

Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, 12th March at 10:30am in Connect** and we will be reading "*I will find you*" by Harlan Coben.

"An innocent father serving life for the murder of his own son receives evidence that his child may still be alive, and must break out of prison to find out the truth. New York Times bestselling author Harlan Coben's latest breathtaking thriller."

If you are interested in reading, we would love to see you, please come along. You will be made very welcome.

Karen Keenan



— Story Telling Group

The storytelling group in February, heard a variety of stories told by participants. They included

- English visitors to the farm
- Poaching Salmon in Ballycastle
- Funny stories from Magistrates Courts
- Visiting the gentleman goat
- Funerals with unusual features

In addition to the above stories, other stories from childhood experiences were told and it was a very enjoyable occasion.

The next meeting is in The Hub Ballymoney on **Monday 11th March** at 11.00 and as always new members are welcome to come along and enjoy the session. There is no pressure on anyone coming to the group to tell stories, they can simply listen to those told by others and be entertained by them.

See you there.

George McAuley

Ways to contact us

We offer two main ways to contact us – shown below. Of course if you know an existing member or committee member please talk to them about joining us. Or, come to one of our activities or events – we will be pleased to meet you.

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
Chairperson:	John Pinkerton		jwdp@sky.com
Meet and Greet:	Marie Hegarty	+447515068303	mariejhegarty7@gmail.com

Committee Officers 2023-2024

Chairperson	John Pinkerton
Deputy Chairperson	George McAuley
Secretary	Sue Pinkerton
Treasurer	Elaine Wilson
Membership Secretary	Elizabeth Stevenson
Activities Coordinator	Kathleen Owens
Minutes Secretary/events	Eileen Richmond
IT Support	Michael Diver

Events and Meetings

Date	Event/Meeting	Venue	Information
Tuesday, 5 September 2023	SEPTEMBER MEETING SPEAKER Bonnie Cooper	Connect	ALL THINGS CHINESE. Bonnie came to N Ireland as a University student, met her future husband, and has been here for 20+ years. She has a well-established business and offers courses to Chinese citizens, and others interested in learning about Chinese Culture, The Language, The Food, and The Festivals. To put the icing on the cake Bonnie brings pre-prepared "eats".
Tuesday, 3 October 2023	OCTOBER MEETING SPEAKER Adrian Morrow	Connect	"TALES FROM THE CASTLE" Adrian is the Managing Director of Antrim Estates Company/Glenarm Castle and is renowned for his informative and humorous talks. He has over 30 years of experience in Estate and Land Management, Tourism and Events, Hospitality, and Agriculture. This enables Adrian to drive the introduction of new projects and keep the business going, forward.
Tuesday, 7 November 2023	EVENT INFORMATION DAY - EXHIBITORS	Connect	INFORMATION DAY WITH LOCAL EXHIBITORS (20+ exhibits) Bu3a INFORMATION DESK North Community Transport Make-The-Call Service Good Morning Causeway Kennedy's Pharmacy Kilrea Home Heating Advice, CC&Glens B Council WAVE, Caring for Victims and Survivors Bu3a BOOK SHARE
Tuesday, 5 December 2023	EVENT CHRISTMAS LUNCH	To be decided/ confirmed	CHRISTMAS LUNCH - FIRST TUESDAY IN DECEMBER Meeting for lunch provides members with an opportunity to socialise, meet other members, and have some good food, fun, and company. The Lodge Hotel, Coleraine, is one of our most popular venues at Christmas. NB: Eileen Richmond will provide members with details well in advance of the event. Guests welcome!
Tuesday, 2 January 2024	JANUARY MEETING SPEAKER Sir Paul Girvan	Connect	HIGH COURT JUDGE, Rt Hon Sir Paul Girvan was educated at Larne Grammar School, Belfast Royal Academy, Clare College, Cambridge, and Queen's University, Belfast. Called to the bar of Northern Ireland, in the early 70's he went on to have a distinguished career, receiving a knighthood on his appointment as a Justice of the High Court of Northern Ireland. He has served as Chairman of the Law Reform Advisory Committee, and the Land Registration Committee.
Tuesday, 6 February 2024	FEBRUARY MEETING SPEAKER Eddie Lynch	Connect	COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND The Commissioner's primary role is "to safeguard and promote the rights of older people and to provide advice to government on policy, practice and legislative issues that affect older people". Making recommendations for improving the care home sector, providing regular advice to the government during the pandemic, and continuing to advocate for older people are part and parcel of his role. Q&A SESSION TO FOLLOW.
Tuesday, 5 March 2024	MARCH MEETING SPEAKER Tori Calderwood	Connect	COAST (CAUSEWAY OLDER ACTIVE STRATEGIC TEAM) COAST is an inter-agency partnership that aims to improve the health and well-being of those aged 60 and over in the CC&G Borough Council area. Holding bi-annual forums and large networking events, ensures the voices of older people are heard. Tori's Bu3a visit will provide an insight into the various services available to us. Q&A SESSION
Tuesday, 2 April 2024	APRIL MEETING SPEAKER David McKeown	Connect	"FROM VET TO LIFE COACH - AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY " David doesn't believe in 'retirement' and is currently in his 4th career. Many will know him as a vet in North Antrim. After 25 years, in his late 40's, he moved to the challenging role as Executive Director of a Cheshire-based Insurance Company. Nowadays he is the Director of the Samaritans charity and is a qualified Coach. His talk to u3a will focus on anxiety/stress management and how the power of various techniques can help impr
Tuesday, 7 May 2024	MAY MEETING AGM and ENTERTAINMENT	Connect	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE AGM IS VERY IMPORTANT, as a quorum of 20% of the membership must be present. AGENDA 1 Apologies for Absence 2 Minutes from previous AGM 3 Presentation of Reports 4 Election of Officers 5 Election of Committee members. AFTER THE AGM BUSINESS HAS CONCLUDED, ENTERTAINMENT will be provided by "SCAD THE BEGGARS".
Tuesday, 4 June 2024	EVENT ANNUAL DAY TRIP	To be decided	ANNUAL DAY TRIP The Day Trip offers members an opportunity to socialise and get out and about. Guests are very welcome! Have you been to a "place of interest" that may be suitable as a Bu3a Day Trip? Recommendations from members are most welcome! If you have suggestions, get in touch with Eileen at: helpeventsbu3a@gmail.com or speak with a Committee member.

Activities

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	Ballymoney Community Resource Centre, Acom Business Centre, 2 Riada Ave, Ballymoney BT53 7LH	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. Participants should have their own devices.
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.