

In this issue:

- 1 From Our Chairman
- 2 Monthly Meeting
- 4 Activity Reports
- 7 Useful Information

From the Chairman

The u3a monthly meeting took place on Tuesday 5th November in the Connect centre Ballymoney at 11.00. Before this month's speaker was introduced a few items of business on the agenda were dealt with.

The gathering was reminded that our 10th anniversary would occur in May 2025. They were informed that a sub-committee had been formed to plan for it. It will be led by founder member Ms Marie Hegarty and an appeal was made for additional volunteers to join it. It is hoped that all of our groups will contribute to the celebration of the anniversary by planning events/activities scheduled to take place then. A grant has been applied for to assist with funding the occasion and if successful will enable us to put on a very significant series of activities. So if you feel you would like to help in any way with the preparation for our 10th anniversary contact Marie and she will provide necessary details.

The other item concerned our constitution which had been updated by our vice-chair Mr John Pinkerton. This document had already been circulated to members for their perusal in advance. It is a requirement of TAT that all u3a's have in place a constitution approved by the membership and submitted to them. The membership was asked to approve this document and did so by a show of hands at the meeting.

Finally the speaker for this month was introduced our own Mr John Pinkerton who gave a very interesting and detailed talk on the Holland and German battlefields. Despite the power-cut just at the beginning of it he carried on using just his notes fortunately the power came on again allowing him to use the range of illustrative slides.

The meeting concluded with Pat Crossely giving the customary vote of thanks to the speaker. The Christmas lunch which is held in place at of a monthly meeting will take place on **Tuesday 3rd of December in the Royal Court Hotel.**

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

George McAuley
Chairman

Ballymoney U3A Meeting 5th November 2024

The November meeting of Ballymoney U3A took place on Tuesday 5th November at the Connect Centre and our speaker was U3A member and former Chairman John Pinkerton. John had prepared a talk with accompanying slides on the subject of his recent trip with a couple of friends to the battlefields of Holland and Germany and just as he was about to start there was a power cut! However, undeterred he continued on and despite the setback gave a fascinating talk. The trip began with a visit to Arnhem, the site of Operation Market Garden, the 80th anniversary of which was this year. This was a resounding defeat for the Allies and the military cemetery bears testament to the thousands of Allied soldiers who died during the battle. Each grave is tended by a child from the local school and has been since 1945 as a sincere act of gratitude for those who gave their lives.

John and friends then visited a town called Laboe near Kiel where there is a Museum with a U boat in its original condition which has been well maintained. It gives a sense of what life must have been like for those sailors serving aboard. This particular U Boat U-955 was responsible for the sinking of 7 ships – 6 Russian and 1 American. The trip then continued to Berlin to the airfield at Gatow where in 1948 during the Berlin Airlift John's Uncle Tom was in charge of fitting new runway lights. It is also the site of a Museum which houses dozens of planes from both NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. The next visit was to the Humboldthain Flakturm a relic of the defensive measures employed by the Germans against the Allied bombardment of Berlin.

Then on to the pretty medieval town of Celle famous not only for its timber framed houses but also because it happens to be the nearest large town to the infamous Bergen-Belsen concentration camp which was the next place visited. Despite the fact that this was not an extermination camp like Auschwitz 37,000 Jews and others died between May 1943 and April 1945 and a further 13,000 died after liberation being too far gone to respond to treatment. Apart from a Memorial Visitors Centre nothing remains of the camp except burial mounds each containing hundreds of unidentified bodies. A sobering and thought-provoking place.

The final place visited was Mohnesee Lake – the target of the Dambusters (617 Squadron) raid on the Mohne, Eder and Sorpe Dams. 19 Lancaster bombers took off from RAF Scampton but sadly only 11 made it back. However they managed to breach the Mohner and Eder dams and damage the Sorpe dam.

On the way back to Amsterdam they stopped at Venray British Military Cemetery to visit the grave of Lieutenant Daniel McGrath of the Royal Irish Fusiliers who was killed on 26th March 1945 at the Rhine crossing just before the War ended. Danny McGrath had been an old boyfriend of John's mother and also cousin to Kathleen Connolly and Audrey Shields both of Ballymoney. The travellers arrived home after an interesting, enjoyable and at times very moving trip which covered 1,700 miles.

Much to John's relief the power was restored in time for him to show the slides which illustrated his talk. He was roundly congratulated for his efforts and was thanked most fulsomely on behalf of the audience by Pat Crossley.

Sue Pinkerton



Our speaker was U3A member and former Chairman John Pinkerton



Our appreciative audience

Activity Reports

Family and Local History Group – November 2024

This month 16 members of our group travelled to Belfast on Tuesday 19th November to visit PRONI (Public Record Office of N Ireland). After travel by train and taxi transfer to PRONI, we were given an informative introductory lecture and tour of PRONI search, document viewing and document preservation rooms.

After lunch the group members carried out their own searches pertaining to family trees, family wills, and property searches.

Overall, we all had a very useful day acquainting ourselves with the PRONI security and search procedures; hopefully we will all be able to return individually on our own at a future date for further research.

There will be no December meeting for the group. Our next meeting is planned for Tuesday 21st January 2025. Details of the meeting will be circulated with our members in due course.

John Flynn

John, Elaine and Kathleen at PRONI



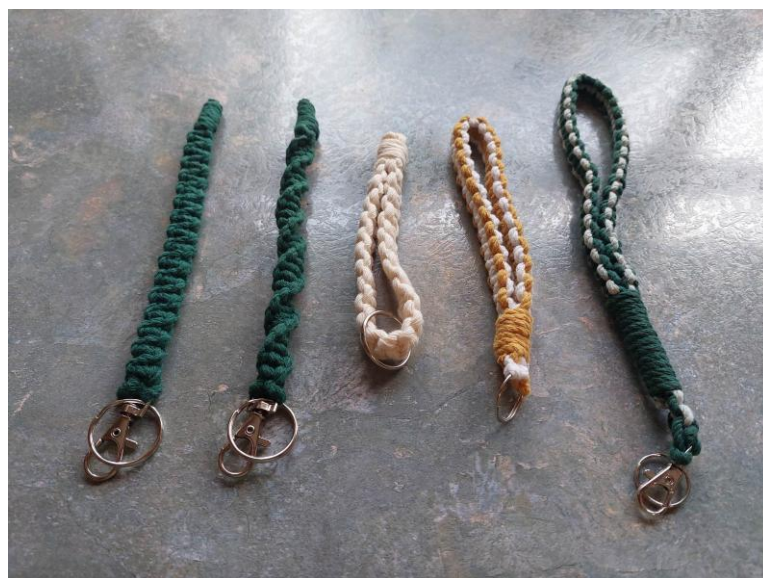
Craft Group

We started in September with some decoupage using napkins and tiles to make a teapot stand and a coaster.

In October we did some macramé which is knotting macramé cord to make items like a wrist key chain or a wall hanging. We used a square knot to complete our wrist key chain.

This month using a softer cord, we again used the square knot to make a Christmas tree decoration.

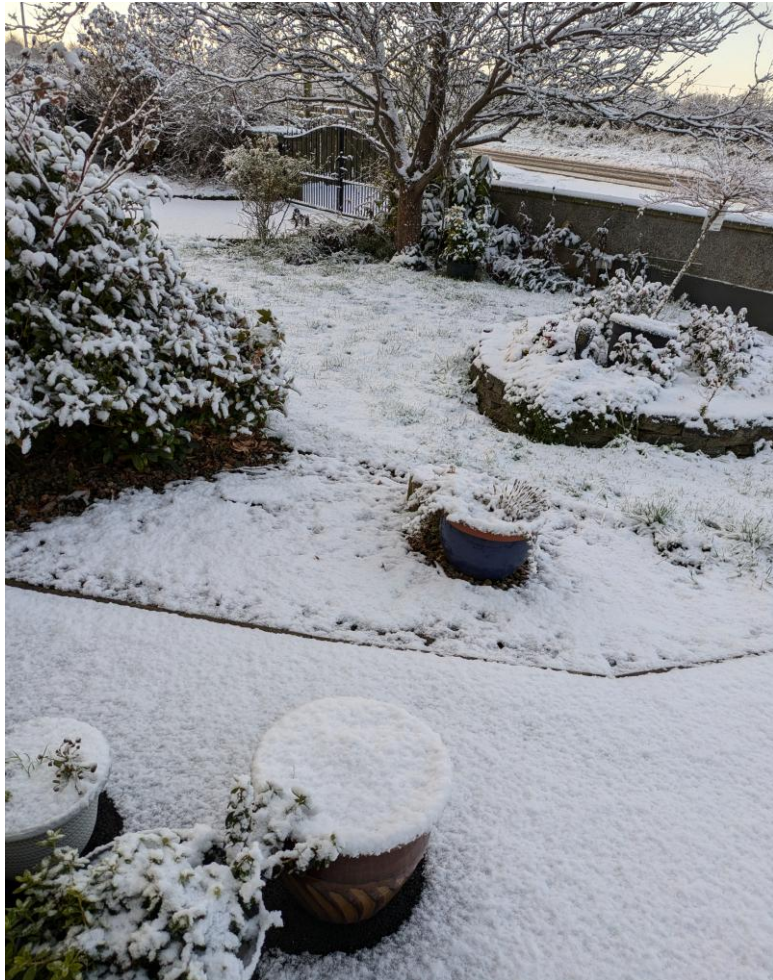
Sally Balmer



Gardening

Not much happening this month due to adverse weather conditions. However we have a very full programme next year with a speaker on sowing seeds, taking cuttings, visiting different gardens. So looking forward to Spring. The picture below was taken on our scheduled activity which had to be cancelled.

Kathleen Owens



IT Courses

The IPAD training course has now finished and due to the closeness of Christmas and the busy time this generates for all of us the next IT course "Making Sense Of Online Media / Being Safe Online" will commence in January. Dates and times will be advised by e-mail.

Michael Diver

Ballymoney u3a 2024-2025

Events and Meetings

| Date | Event/ Meeting | Venue | Information |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---|
| Tuesday, 3 September 2024 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | Speaker. Brian Rankin Comical poetry and story telling |
| Tuesday, 1 October 2024 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | Information day with lots of exhibitors |
| Tuesday, 5 November 2024 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | John Pinkerton: Talk on Holland and Germany Battlefields |
| Tuesday, 3 December 2024 | Monthly meeting | Local Hotel. TBC | Christmas Lunch |
| Tuesday, 7 January 2025 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | PSNI - Judith Lavery: crime prevention |
| Tuesday, 4 February 2025 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | Osborne Family: Air Ambulance |
| Tuesday, 4 March 2025 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | Diana Mc Clelland: Family history |
| Tuesday, 1 April 2025 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | Zara Hutchinson: Ballymoney Community Fridge |
| Tuesday, 6 May 2025 | Monthly meeting | Connect building | Annual General Meeting: Afterwards 'Scad the Beggars' will entertain us with an ensemble of musical items. |
| Tuesday, 3 June 2025 | Annual Outing | TBC | The annual outing will visit places of interest using a coach, complete with a meal. |

Activities

| Activity | Day/Time | Venue | Leader | Information |
|------------------|--|--|--------------------|---|
| Art | 2 nd Tuesday 2.0 pm - 3.30 pm. | Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH | Margaret | Learn new skills under a qualified tutor to produce pleasing pictures. |
| Bridge | Monday 2.30 pm - 4.30 pm | Ballymoney Community Resource Centre, Acom Business Centre, 2 Riada Ave, Ballymoney BT53 7LH | Kathleen | Bridge is a mindsport and a great game, a social pastime enjoyed by millions of people around the world. It is a fascinating game with 4 people at each table. North and South are partners as is East and West. The purpose is for each couple to outdo the others by gaining more points. |
| Coffee Catchup | Last Friday each month 10.0 am - 12.0 pm | Ballybrakes Industrial Park, Ballybrakes Road BALLYMONEY | Julie | A great opportunity to meet for coffee and enjoy socialising and a chat. An opportunity to get to know other members. |
| Crafts | 3rd Tuesday 2.30 pm - 4.0 pm | Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH | Sally | Meet together to use your artistic skills to produce many things such as decorating flower pots, lampshades, Christmas paraphernalia. A good opportunity to enjoy meeting other like minded people. |
| Creative writing | 3 rd Tuesday 12.30 pm - 2.0 pm | Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH | Anne | Members meet to share stories be they fiction, memoirs or autobiography in a supportive and friendly environment. The most important aspects of the group are the enjoyment of writing different themes and topics. |
| Family History | 3 rd Tuesday 10.30 am - 12.0 pm | Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH | John Flynn | Researching family records of relationships among family members, visiting PRONI etc. Also studying the local geographical history in the Ballymoney area. It incorporates cultural and social aspects of history. |
| Gardening | 3 rd Thursday Starting 2.0 pm | Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH | Geoff and Kathleen | Going on visits to various gardens, as well as having demonstrations of seed sowing, taking cuttings and discussions on edible weeds. |
| Golf | Thursday weekly 10.0 am tee off | As advised by Activity Leader | Donal and Paul | Golf is a game played on a large open-air course in which a small ball is struck with a club into a series of small holes. A very popular sport, meeting at different venues. The group go on a break to Donegal twice a year to practice their skills. |
| IT | Wednesdays 10.30 am - 12.0 pm | Ballymoney Community Resource Centre, Acom Business Centre, 2 Riada Ave, Ballymoney BT53 7LH | Michael | Learning how to use computer, iPad or tablet to best use covering aspects as requested |
| Line Dancing | Every Wednesday 1.30 pm - 3.0 pm | As advised by Activity Leader | Margaret | Line dancing is a choreographed dance where a group of people perform a series of steps in time with music. |
| Out to Lunch | 3 rd Friday each month 12.30 pm for 1.0 pm | As advised by Activity Leader | Eileen | A very popular event when members are invited to go for lunch to different venues each month. A great opportunity to spend a lunch time socialising, chatting and experiencing the cuisine at different hotels. |
| Reading group | 2 nd Tuesday 10.30 am - 12.0 pm | Connect Centre, 2-6 Model School Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BH | Margaret | Meet together to read prescribed books followed by discussions the following meeting. There are two kinds of people in the world. Those who think it could never happen to them and those who know it will A quotation from one of the books members read. |
| Story Telling | 2 nd Monday 11.0 am - 1.0 pm | Ballymoney Community Hub, Robinson Hospital Site | Mary | Members meet together to share quite a variety of tales such as "English visitors to the farm", "Poaching salmon", Stories from magistrates court to mention just a few. |