
NEWSLETTER

UPPER BANN U3A - February 2015



MONTHLY GET-TOGETHER

Last Tuesday's January Get-together was attended by approx. 40 Upper Bann U3A members. We invited Geraldine Foley, Public Relation Officer for the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) Newry & Portadown branch. Her wonderful presentation was called: - "Newry-Portadown Canal - Past, Present and Future".

Geraldine ably took us through the historical construction of the canal, used for transporting coal, materials for the linen industry, etc and its demise in the 1900s as rail and road took over the movement of goods.

The Newry-Portadown Canal, completed in 1742, was Britain's first truly summit-level canal. The towpath was used by the horses, which pulled the canal boats, known as lighters, along the canal. There were issues with the lock construction, the width of the summit level and the water supply. Below Newry, a ship canal was opened in 1769, and both Newry and the canal flourished.

By 1800, the canal was in a poor condition, and another £57,000 of public money was spent refurbishing it over the following ten years. Closures during the refurbishment resulted in a loss of traffic, which did not fully recover. In 1829, both canals were transferred to a private company, who spent £80,000 on improvements over the next twenty years. The ship canal was enlarged in 1884, to allow ships of 5,000 tons to reach Newry. It reverted to public ownership in 1901, when the Newry Port and Harbour Authority was created. The canal closed in 1936 and most of it was officially abandoned in 1949, with some in 1956. The ship canal closed in 1966 and the Authority was wound up in 1974.

The canal runs for 18 miles from the Point of Whitecoat, just south of Portadown, to Victoria Locks at the sea south of Newry. It meanders through the Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne Council areas on its journey from Lough Neagh to the sea at Carlingford Lough.



The ship canal, below Newry, has been reopened for use by pleasure craft, and there have been attempts to re-open the Newry to Portadown Canal, which have not yet been successful. The towpath has become part of a long distance footpath and also part of the National Cycle Network. Some restoration has taken place, and the canal has become a haven for wildlife. Parts of it are also used for coarse fishing.

“Newry-Portadown Canal - Past Present and Future”

The Newry and Portadown Branch of the IWAI (formed in 2005) is a wonderful group of volunteers who have been carrying out restoration work on the locks, planting trees and other plants along the canal, etc. The group is always encouraging and work with the different councils and other organisations to dredge the canal, develop woodlands for wildlife and people to enjoy. Their over-riding ambition is in the re-opening of the Newry to Portadown canal.

It was wonderful to have an insight into the past, present and future of the Portadown-Newry Canal that we all so value as a resource for our walks, cycles and nature appreciation. (Reported by Tom Young)



SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

Thirty two members of Upper Bann U3A will travel on Wednesday 28th January, by train to Dublin's Abbey Theatre for a matinee performance of 'She Stoops to Conquer', a comedy by Irish author Oliver Goldsmith.

A wealthy countryman, Mr Hardcastle arranges for his daughter Kate to meet Charles Marlow, the son of a wealthy Londoner, hoping the pair will marry. Unfortunately Marlow is nervous around upper-class women, yet the complete opposite around lower-class females. On his first acquaintance with Kate, the latter realises she will have to pretend to be common, or Marlow will not woo her. Thus Kate stoops to conquer, by posing as a maid, hoping to put Marlow at his ease so he falls for her.

Enjoy the trip everyone!

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON CLUB

Lurgan Golf Club is the luncheon venue.

Anna Lynas is the convenor of the January lunch which will take place on Thursday 29th, 12.30 for 1.00 pm sitting.

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REGIONAL QUIZ REMINDER

An inter U3A quiz is being held on Tuesday 10th February in Robinson's Bar, Belfast. For full details of the quiz see the regional webpage <http://u3ani.info>

To guarantee a place you are asked to immediately send your bookings by post or email. Bookings will be dependant on availability of space.

For other regional information visit our home page on www.upperbannu3a.com

PHOTOGRAPHS

Paul Singh kindly forwarded photographs taken on 16th December at the Christmas Lunch. To view visit the home page on our webpage and view "Seniors Have Fun January 2015".

Please forward photographs from our many events.