

Upper Bann U3A Newsletter

December 2015

www.upperbannu3a.com



CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2015

This year, our Christmas Lunch which is open to all Upper Bann members will be in Armagh City Hotel on Tuesday 15th December 2015. If you have not already booked and wish to attend, please contact Norma Galway before 30th November. The lunch which is subsidised, costs members £15 and must be paid for at time of booking. The menu was emailed on 4th November. To contact Norma please ring 38 8717 57 or send your menu choice with cheque (made payable to Upper Bann U3A) to Mrs Norma Galway, 11A Brompton Park Derryhale Portadown Co Armagh.

Allan Jardine has arranged music and it promises to be a most enjoyable occasion. We have full use of the room from 12.30 pm until 5 pm.

NOVEMBER LUNCHEON CLUB

The November Luncheon Club will meet on Thursday 26th November in Brownlow Castle, Windsor Avenue, Lurgan at 12.30 pm. If you wish to attend please contact Norma with menu choices (details above) or email norma.galway@gmail.com. The menu was emailed on 14th November.

SHOPPING TRIP

Ena has planned a Christmas shopping spree to Dublin. The trip is planned for Wednesday 9th December 2015. The train leaves Portadown station at 11.08 am. (If you would like to leave earlier, a train departs from Portadown at 8.33 am) Lunch for interested members will be booked in 'The Church' for 1.15 pm.

If you wish to go to Dublin, ring Ena 38 3396 06 or email enamarley@hotmail.co.uk

THEATRE TRIP TO DUBLIN

Ruth and Edith are currently planning a trip to the Abbey Theatre Dublin to see **"You Never Can Tell"** by Bernard Shaw on Saturday 30th January 2016 at 2.00 pm 65+ - £15. Under 65 - £25. Closing date for booking is Friday, 11th December 2015.

Please pay by cash. Put the cash in an envelope with your name and the number of tickets required and give it to either Ruth or Edith. Alternatively put the envelope through their letterbox, Ruth McKinley, 28 Killicomaine Drive Portadown BT63 5JJ or Edith Davies, 13 College Manor, Portadown BT63 5UB. If neither of these proposals suit please phone Ruth 07753 615993 or Edith 38 3622 67 to make alternative arrangements. For more information on up-coming theatre/cinema events please see email of 14th November.

DANCING

The U3A Social Dancing class will meet up to and including Thursday 10th December 2015 and then break for Christmas and New year. The class will resume on Thursday 7th January 2016 in Portadown Golf Club from 2.00pm to 3.30pm.



**A very happy 90th birthday Jean
from your many U3A friends**



CHESS

The next two meetings of the chess group will take place in Brownlow Library at 10.15 am on Monday 23rd November and Tuesday 1st December. Everyone is welcome.

THE STRIDENT STROLLERS

Tuesday next our route will follow the beautiful North Down Coastal Path between Cultra and Hollywood. We will meet at Portadown Railway Station to get the train at 09 15 am (09 21 am if you wish to join at Lurgan), getting off at Cultra Station at 10 27 am. to then follow the Coastal Path as far as the Esplanade in Hollywood.

The nearby Dirty Duck has been recommended as our refreshments venue, so we can choose to get the return train at 12 47 pm to be back in Portadown at 13 58 pm.....or we can linger and take any of the later trains which run on a half hourly basis.

Feel free to join us, even if you are not a regular stroller.

Helen Made A Difference

On 17th November, members of Upper Bann U3A were treated to an inspirational talk by a former teaching colleague of mine. The huge project undertaken by this very petite lady was awe inspiring.

In January 2006 Helen Moorehead, a former teacher in Lismore Comprehensive School, was sent by the Methodist Church in Ireland to work in a school for the deaf in Meru, Kenya. However she soon



realized that there were many deaf children receiving no education in a rather remote semi-arid area known as Tharaka. With £3000 raised by teachers in Lismore, Helen went to build a classroom for the deaf in Kamatungu, Tharaka.

Tharaka is recognized as a 'hardship' area because of the harsh climate, poor infrastructure and lack of clean water. It is a semi-arid area which suffers from drought, which in turn leads to poor harvests and lack of food. A number of children in this area had been assessed as severely or profoundly deaf. Society had a very negative attitude towards them, regarding them as cursed by evil spirits and consequently treating them as outcasts.

The high incidence of deafness in this area is actually due to cerebral malaria and meningitis, both of which are very prevalent in Tharaka. Also malaria is treated with quinine, which when given in large doses can leave a child deaf.

Helen started with 5 children and one classroom. Over the next seven and a half years the school grew and thanks to the generosity of people from Ireland, Helen was able to put up 7 classrooms, 3 dormitories, a kitchen and dining room and an administration block. Today there are about 80 deaf children at the school and the first five children have just completed their transfer exams in November and will move on to high school or vocational training in January 2016. Helen thanked all the people from the Craigavon area who have supported the project and who have given these children hope and a future.

Helen has returned to her home in Portadown but plans to return periodically to ensure the good work she started will continue. Thank you Helen for sharing your experiences with us.

THE CEDAR FOUNDATION

Marion Bryson and Sinead Drummond from the Cedar Foundation attended our November Get-Together to explain the work of their charity. They deliver a range of services that enable people with disabilities to get the most out of life and to be fully included in their communities. Their services are centred around the individual needs of each person. If you would like to become a volunteer please contact Marion M.Bryson@cedar-foundation.org or Sinead Drummond s.drummond@cedar-foundation.org Volunteer Registration Forms are available from fmckeown@ionology.com

Anyone for a shower? (Report and photographs supplied by John Trimble)



Proving the old saying “there’s no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing”, John led the Tuesday group of U3A cyclists from Cascades in Portadown to Lough Neagh Discovery Centre on 17 November. The rain was incessant all morning and the temperature hovered around 5 degrees C but this hardy lot weren’t to be deterred. Donning gloves, hats and waterproofs they set off from Cascades, along the towpath, over the Bann Bridge and on past Kernan Playing fields to Rushmere Shopping Centre.



Exercising self control to the uttermost we turned away from the shops and the smell of freshly brewed coffee and raced past the lakes over the motorway and down to Lough Neagh Discover Centre where our efforts were rewarded by the staff who produced their delicious biker’s specials including all the tea and coffee we could drink and, for the leader, a tasty sausage and potato bread! Perfect grub for the weather.



Distance travelled was 17 miles. Well done all eight who took part (pictured above enjoying their bikers’ specials at Oxford Island).

Sing-Along

A number of members has expressed an interest in taking part in a sing-along. Tom Young (our groups co-ordinator) will convene a meeting early in the new year to agree, days, dates and venues.



SUCCESS AT PORTRUSH

(Report and photograph supplied by Tom Young)



Fifteen wonderful ladies and the brave, James from U3A Upper Bann bridge group went to the recent U3A NI Bridge Congress held in the Royal Court Hotel, Portrush. Where were our other men?

Approximately 120 U3A bridge enthusiasts turned up from many U3A groups within N. Ireland.

“Our ladies” presented as a little anxious, on seeing the “opposition” (little did they know that the so called opposition were feeling the same way about them). After tea/coffee, etc our intrepid ladies and James went to their allocated seats and the “battle” commenced

As I wandered round the tables I observed fantastic bids (as well as some, shall we say, interesting bids) such as Stayman, transfers, etc (I found myself as king - Have they been listening to my lessons after all?). In no time at all, half time was on us and our battle-hardened ladies and James tramped out for a well deserved lunch and maybe a glass of wine or two.

The call came for the second half to commence and our ladies and poor James surged as one (well maybe a couple went to spend a penny) back to the fray.

The wild and interesting bids resumed, while the play was exciting almost to fever pitch. However, the most important thing was that everyone was having fun and the “crack” was wonderful. All 15 ladies and James were “stars” but I would like to particularly mention Maura and Fiona who were 1st E/W, Teresa and Valerie who were 2nd N/S in section B, and Ganga and Ruth who were 3rd N/S in section C.

We all had a wonderful day and I expect all members in our bridge group to attend next year’s U3A bridge congress, due to be held in Newry.

On behalf our bridge group I would like to offer our sincere thanks to The Glens and Dalriada U3A for a wonderfully run congress and the hotel and staff for the warm welcome and good food.

Nature Walk Wednesday 18 November 2015

(Report and photograph supplied by Pat Flowerday)

The rain was torrential when four doughty diehards, clad in warm weatherproof gear, met up at Loughview for the Nature walk scheduled for Mount Stewart. The stiff upper lips relaxed when someone suggested Oxford Island might be a more appropriate venue on such a day.



The rain stopped while we took a lovely walk trailing our feet on a leaf-strewn path through the woods where we paused to admire the remaining autumn colours, not least on some spindle trees (see photo). This path led us to the Kinnego hide overlooking the bay. A flotilla of sleeping Great Crested Grebes drifted past, while swans punctuated the large expanse of calm water before us. Coots and moorhens and a pair of Little Grebes ventured out from the safety of the surrounding reeds, while a long line of various ducks kept just far enough way for us to be unable to identify. A flypast by a buzzard enthralled us - the sun, which had come out briefly, highlighted its lovely plumage and distinctive markings. However, with a blackening sky and the appearance of a wonderful rainbow, we headed with haste to the cafeteria for a welcome coffee and freshly baked scone. Refreshed, we were then invited to the Education room where a couple of the Education team talked to us about what they did and we were able to see their comprehensive collection of taxidermy. All in all it was a delightful day. And what's more, we still have Mount Stewart to look forward to!

