

# UPPER BANN U3A

[www.upperbannu3a.com](http://www.upperbannu3a.com)

November 2017

## UPPER BANN NATURE REPORT

The weather might have been inclement to start with, but that didn't stop the Nature Group enjoying a trip to Strangford Lough to view the newly-arrived Brent Geese that overwinter in our mild climate. Observation points at Island Hill, Floodgates, near Newtownards and Castle Espie were all places we visited.

It is worth noting that some 25,000 Brents come to feed on the rich eel grass in Strangford Lough before dispersing around the Irish coast. The tide was out when we arrived exposing a vast expanse of mudflats, also rich in nutrients. Numerous wading birds were feasting here, including Little Egret, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Turnstone, Grey Heron and some others which, because of the sun in our eyes, were too difficult to identify.

A little bit of education, coffee, lunch and good company! Do think about joining us to experience the wealth of nature on our door step. Thank you Pat for another enjoyable trip.





## BRENT GEESE ON STRANGFORD LOUGH



### IN PRAISE OF NOVEMBER (Pat Flowerday)

*No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease  
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees  
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds,  
November*

These are the somewhat sombre words of the poet Thomas Hood written some 200 years ago. True, November is not everyone's favourite month. But it's not all bad. There are bonuses. Longer evenings is an excuse for sitting in front of a warm fire with a wee dram and, sometimes, special friends. The garden needs less of our time; lawns have had their final cut; fruit and veg have been harvested and stored for later. Trees haven't quite lost their autumn colours, while berries stand out brilliantly in eye-catching shades of red, orange and yellow ready for incoming redwings and fieldfares escaping the harsh conditions of Scandinavia or even Siberia. And there's more. The temperature is ideal for strolling, walking or cycling and, of course, nature rambles. Why not join us for one of these activities? November

### Could Be Halloween

Yowling, prowling, growling cat  
Why do you switch your tail like that?  
Why do your eyes flash gold and green?  
Could be--must be--Halloween!

Slinky, inky, blinky cat,  
Why do you arch your back like that?  
What scary creatures have you seen?  
Could be--must be- Halloween!





***SINGALONG  
WITH  
DIANE***

The Singalong Group has resumed its tuneful activities and is delighted to have several new members swelling its ranks. No experience necessary, just come along and enjoy the music, the coffee and the craic.....in equal measure!

We meet 2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month, in Portadown Golf Club at 10.15am until noon.







## WHAT A TALENTED LADY!!

Felicity Roland entertained members at the monthly Get-together in Lurgan Town Hall. Her very funny repertoire covered the themes of education, love and dare I say it 'old age'. Thank you Felicity, we loved it!!!!



## STRIDENT STROLLERS (Pat Flowerday)

Tuesday's Strollers gathered at Knock Bridge for a walk along the Newry canal. It was a lovely walk made more interesting by our leader for the day, Harry, whose knowledge of the history of the canal, its locks and bridges was fascinating. Thank you Harry.

## THANK YOU

I would like to thank all members who send articles of interest for the Newsletter. All materials are much appreciated. Please keep those articles coming!

## HOLA EL GRUPO ESPANOL

## PUEDE USSTED AYUDARNOS A APRENDER ESPANOL?

### SIX WEEK SPANISH COURSE

The first meeting of the newly formed Spanish Group took place in the Hub on Tuesday 24th. A very large group of interested students turned up for class. There remains a sizeable group of disappointed members. What we now need is another tutor who is prepared to take a second group of enthusiastic students. If you have the skill and if you are prepared to commit to a six week period on a day other than Tuesday, please contact Tom Young [thomasy04@me.com](mailto:thomasy04@me.com)

During our planning meeting it was agreed the group would meet every week starting from 7th November - 12th December inclusive from 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm. There will of course be the compulsory cup of tea/coffee. Twelve pounds will be collected from each member on 7th November and this will cover the room rental and the cost of the refreshments for the six week period.



Helen plans on using "BBC Talk Spanish Book 1". This is available from Amazon or Smith's Book Shop.



The U3A cycle trip to Scotland got off to a shaky start when Paul went to the wrong terminal and arrived at the Cairnryan one with only seconds to spare. Having been allowed onto the ship he then discovered he had left his phone, money and cards in the car and had to be accompanied back through security (something unheard of in the annals of the Stena Line).

So we set off into the hills behind Stranraer under the expert leadership of Mike Taggart and just when we had given up hope of ever finding a café or even a shop we found a tiny village store whose owner turned out to be the granddaughter of a famous Linfield footballer. She welcomed us into the 'bothy' at the back of the shop and made us tea and coffee. Brian found some dog biscuits for sustenance.

We travelled on through the mercifully rain free hills, pausing to provide first aid to Nora after an unfortunate and rather painful accident, and eventually arrived in the rather sad, rundown town of Stranraer where we settled into the warm and cosy Marine Hotel.

Our esteemed leader had not only done his homework on the travel bookings and route planning. He also managed to find us the best restaurant in Stranraer where we had a great evening of good food and songs along with a little taste of beer and wine and an awards ceremony organised by Heather and Betty.

Amazingly, at Heather's suggestion, we retired to bed relatively early (i.e. before midnight). After a good night's sleep we tucked into a hearty Scottish breakfast which included 'tatty scones', a close relative of our own potato bread, and set off on a windy morning to the beautiful little seaside town of Portpatrick, where we crammed into a small coffee shop to fortify ourselves for the return journey over the hills to Stranraer.

From there it was a relatively short cycle around the head of Loch Ryan to catch the boat back to Belfast. Mercifully, the rain managed to hold off and the wind dropped to give us the proverbial 'millpond' crossing.

Thanks are due to all concerned for a great trip in which we all supported each other and especially to Mike for all his hard work in organising and leading the excursion.



