

UPPER BANN U3A NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019



STARLING MUMERATION - BELFAST

Nature Group

Winter is generally a good time for outings for the Nature Group. Our first in January was to the Broadwater near Aghalee and accessed from Moira train station. It was one of those cold, crisp, bright mornings when you could easily have stayed at home, but were pleased you had made the effort to go out. Five of us did just that and were rewarded with an abundance of birdlife - 20 species in all - and a truly enjoyable walk. By contrast, in February we journeyed by train to Belfast to witness a single species, but in huge numbers - a wonderful Murmuration of Starlings. March saw us in Oxford Island, where, from the hide, we were treated to the spectacle of displaying Great Crested Grebes as well as a number of wildfowl, including, a now rare, Ruddy Duck. Our



second March outing was to the recently opened Montalto Estate - a beautiful place, where we were hoping to get a glimpse of a red squirrel. It wasn't to be but the scenery, the grounds and the cafeteria were outstanding.

Report and photographs supplied by Pat Flowerday



OXFORD ISLAND

MONTHLY GET-TOGETHER

This year all but one of the speakers at our Get-Togethers was a member of Upper Bann U3A. This reflects the wide range of experience and knowledge of our members. I am quite sure there are other 'hidden gems' amongst us who also could share some of their experiences.

Alex Barr opened the season with a talk about her visit to the Antarctic. This made many of us envious of her initiative for holidays with a difference.

Lorna Liggett followed Alex in October telling us about her days as a student nurse making her way to the Royal Hospital each day, running the gauntlet of both Loyalist and Republican blockades. This was quite an experience for the young girl 'up from the country'. The Nurses amongst us were able to identify with a lot of Lorna's talk.

In November we had the one speaker not a member. Primrose Wilson, a well known historian in our area, gave us a very interesting insight into the work of the Follies Trust in Ireland. Primrose, and her husband, Edward, have been heavily involved in the restoration of our historical buildings for many years and at present she is Chair of the Follies Trust.

December's Get-Together was our Christmas Lunch, organised as usual with great aplomb by Norma. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, dancing and chatting into the afternoon. A lovely start to Christmas.

The new year dawned and in January a relatively new member, Eileen O'Rourke, gave us a very interesting talk on St. Helena, a remote island in the South Atlantic. Illustrated by some wonderful photography we learnt about Eileen's work with the local hospital and her exploration of a beautiful island. When she went first it was a six week's journey by boat but now a small airport has been developed which will make this island much more accessible.

In February Dr. Tom Mason who, having studied Geology, has worked in many different fields. Tom's talk was centred around the mining of diamonds and having worked with De Beers gave us quite an insight into the value of our treasured rings!!! Tom is a very talented artist and very active in the Water colour painting Group.

March was the responsibility of some of our more dramatic members. Bob undertook to gather some members together to entertain you with some sketches and monologues. Des, Helen, Alix, Flo, Carol, Norma, Trevor, Stanley and Ruth were 'roped in'. We all enjoyed the craic and from your response so did you. A good bit of fun to finish with.

The Get-Togethers have been well attended with 45-50 members meeting up to enjoy a short talk and catchup with others on the 3rd Monday of each month in the Hub at Craigavon. It's a chance to greet members outside your particular group over a cup of tea/coffee and a biscuit.

A TASTE OF ONE MONTHLY GET-TOGETHER (Photos by Joy Sloan)



WHO DO YOUS'UNS THINK YIZ ARE?

The Genealogy Group continues to meet at regular intervals so that we can share relevant resources and help each other.



Over the past few years 40 people have dipped in and out of exploring their family history. Some have had a passing interest or just wanted to find out something specific. Others have developed a real passion for it and when they've discovered one part of it they're off exploring the next avenue.

A lot of resources are now online. New friendships have been made by contacting descendants of those who emigrated – mostly to the United States, Canada and Australia. They're not just names – they're people with stories to tell.

Thanks to Audrey Ward we had a talk on how to go about having your DNA analysed and what relevance it might have in putting you in touch with others with whom you match - and who have a similar interest in your family history.

Lorna Liggett gave us a very interesting and informative talk on her research – now there's a lady who knows her stuff. We look forward to hearing Alex Barr's journey so far on Wednesday 8 May at 2.00 pm in The Hub, Craigavon.

Some people may not be able to get to the meetings or may not be particularly interested in using online resources. Time permitting, I'm happy to help where I can.

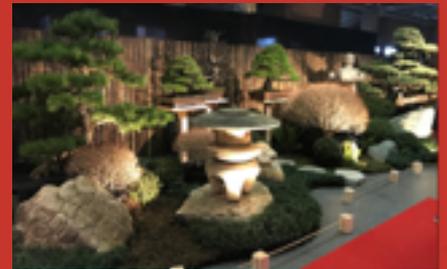
You never know – Yiz might just find out who yiz are. Geraldine McIvor

BONSAI GROUP (JOHN LAMBE)

The Bonsai Group continues to run from my home on the last Tuesday of the month from 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm.

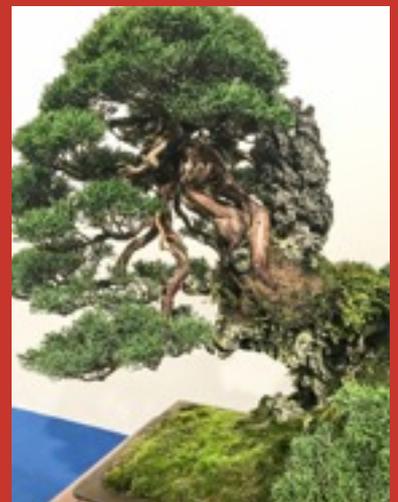
Personally I have had an exciting year attending the Noelanders Trophy in Belgium which included some of the top bonsai and bonsai experts from all over the world. Next week Bud Garden Centre in Bundoran hosts a Japanese garden and Boinsai display over the Saturday and Sunday.

We have a calendar of topics we are covering in the coming months which was circulated recently and is still available on request.



The calendar includes dates and locations of none bonsai events which may be of interest to those with a general interest in gardening.

Events such as the Rose show, Belfast spring show, Ulster alpine society show and our recent event which was combined with Portadown Gardening Society to welcome back Ian Young to speak on Kusamono and Moss balls.



As always new members are more than welcome.



New Photography Group for Upper Bann U3A

Upper Bann U3A has always strove to accommodate members who have expressed an interest in a new activity. A sufficiently large number of members expressed an interest in photography to justify the formation of such a group and so in March 2019 our new photography group was born.



Since its formation we have had two outings, the first of which was to Lough Neagh. We met at the Marina and then went to one of the hides.

Our second outing was to Clare Glen and we were very lucky with the weather.

As a group we have decided to meet at 10.00 am on the 3rd Thursday of each month and hope this will suit those members who have expressed an interest in the photography outings.

In mid May bluebells will be in full bloom and will form the background for great photo opportunities. For this reason the next outing will once again be in Clare Glen on 16th May at 10.00 am. New members welcome!!

Report and photographs by Eileen O'Rourke



STRIDENT STROLLERS BRAVE THE ELEMENTS



The Strident Strollers continued their weekly strolls throughout the winter months and into Spring. Our most popular places, in winter, are the Scarva Towpath, Lurgan Park and The Argory, when there may be twenty or more participants. Other popular venues this year have included Armagh Demesne, Hillsborough Forest Park, Dungannon Park and Oxford Island. As soon as Spring arrived, we headed off to another firm favourite, the North Down Coastal path. Unfortunately it decided to rain that morning, thus deterring a few regulars. We know too that not everyone can make it every week. The rain turned out to be no more than a fine misty drizzle and the stroll was thoroughly enjoyed by the ten who ventured out. Along the shore line we were intrigued to see a number of Turnstones doing exactly what their name suggests. The train journey there and back is a pleasurable opportunity to talk and get to know each other. We love new members joining us and hope to

ANYONE FOR BRIDGE? - TOM'S ADVICE

I'm giving you tips that work in lessons, but not necessarily in real life.

Tom How should I have played that hand? With a different partner. (Photographs and pictures - Pat Flowerday)

LUNCHEON CLUB (Norma Galway)

The Luncheon Club continues to meet on the last Thursday of the month. Various venues are used, the Seagoe Hotel, Lurgan Golf Club, Banville House Hotel and Sintons. Numbers vary from 8 - 18. There is no money held by this group as each member pays for a meal at the lunch. Members need to phone me and book. Everyone is welcome, the more the merrier. Members are informed a week in advance of the lunch via email

Granma says



Think Positive - it keeps you young. For example, I fell down the stairs today and I thought WOW - that's the fastest I've moved in years.

THEATRE OUTINGS

October '18 saw the group have a very successful visit to the Grand Opera House to see the comedy musical Spamalot.

Again in November the theme was comedy and we went to see the ballet La Fille Ma Gardee. This was a new one for lots of the group and most enjoyable.

In March saw our popular annual visit to Dublin, this time to the Abbey theatre to see Edna O'Brien's Country Girls which in its time had been banned as risqué.

March also included a numbers of members attending the various plays at the Drama Festival.

Finally we will end this year's programme with a trip to the Lyric theatre to see A Street Car Named Desire one of Tennessee Williams most performed plays.

All our outings have been really well supported by U3A members and Ruth and Edith would like to thank everyone who has come along to the various events.

Hopefully we can all look forward to another successful year next year. `



Climate Change and you!!!

Yesterday after shopping in our local supermarket, I was in the queue at the check out, and heard when the young cashier suggested to a much older lady that she should bring her own grocery bags, because plastic bags are not good for the environment.

The woman apologised to the young girl and then sighed,

"We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young clerk responded, "That's our problem today. You folk didn't do enough to save the environment for future generations."

The older lady said "Ahh yes you're right - our generation didn't have the "green thing" in its day." She continued:

Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles & beer bottles to the shops. The shops then sent them back to the plant to be washed, sterilized & refilled, so those same bottles were used over and over, thus REALLY were recycled. But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Grocery stores put our groceries into brown paper bags that we reused for numerous things. Most memorable was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our school books. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school) were not defaced by our scribbles. Then we were able to personalise our books on their brown paper bag-covers. These books were reused year after year. But, too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then.

I remember how we walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store or office building; we walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go 200 yards. But she was right - we didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind & solar power really did dry our clothes back in our days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. . . . But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then we had one radio, in the house - not a TV in every room. And if anyone did own a TV the screen was not the size of a football pitch, it had a small screen the size of a handkerchief. Do you remember them?

When cooking we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us.

When we packaged a fragile item to send by post, we used layers of old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn fuel just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then. (Anon)

THURSDAY'S BOARDGAMES (Report and photos - Jean Millar)



Celebrating Betty's birthday at our regular fun morning of games.



Coffee break time with a few extra visitors. We had such fun!!



U3A Cycle Group at one of their favourite watering holes - Oxford Island Discovery



Mary knows how to keep out the wind and rain!

CYCLISTS - The wheels on the bikes go round and round - most of the time!



Great cycle with Dean Woods today. Mike Taggart checked the weather forecast and asked Dean to lead. High winds, heavy rain +

UPPER BANN U3A CYCLISTS

BREATHING TO LESSEN THE SENSATION OF PAIN

(Report and photographs Wendy Alexander) T

This time we are going to focus on using the breath to lessen the sensation of pain. You



may suffer from acute or chronic pain, and yoga breathing can help manage this pain. It will not remove pain, but it can help to lessen the feeling of

pain. Yoga breathing is taught in pain management clinics and is used by women in labour.

This breathing technique lengthens the breath out to lessen sensations of pain.

WHERE In a comfortable, quiet space where you can focus on your breath.

Either lying on a bed, knees bent, feet resting on the bed (or a yoga mat if you want) or sitting in a chair, but with your back supported so you can breathe easily.

Wearing comfortable clothes with a flexible waistband – we all love those!

WHEN In the morning before you get up is good, or any time during the day that you feel in pain.

HOW - STAGE 1 Start by bringing your attention to your breathing without trying to alter it - how does your breath feel? Become aware of your breath in and of your breath out. If your mind wanders bring it back to your breathing. Don't skip this stage as it is calming.

STAGE 2 The secret to this breathing technique is to lengthen your breath out. The longer you can make your outbreath, the more the sensation of pain will become less. Of course to breathe out for longer we need to take a long, deep breath in!

Try to breathe in and out through your nose. Begin to deepen your breath by breathing in and out for longer, trying to fill your lungs with air. Make the in and out breaths the same length. You can add a silent count to check this and to practise making your breath longer. Remember to keep your shoulders relaxed.

STAGE 3 Try to breathe in through your nose, and out between gently pursed lips, as if you were breathing out through a straw. By pursing your lips you slow down your outbreath. It is the act of lengthening the breath out that lessens the sensations of pain felt by the body. Do you remember blowing bubbles as a child? Try to blow gently and slowly as if blowing the largest bubble possible.

Now imagine that you are breathing out a thin, silken thread or ribbon that floats away from your lips as you breathe out. Or imagine

breathing out a thin stream of mist that floats gently away from you with each breath



out. Use whichever image is most pleasing to you. See the curl of mist or the silken thread spooling away from your lips, taking with it your pain and discomfort. See the breeze catching it and blowing it gently away from you, making beautiful patterns in the air. How long can you make the thread or curl of mist? The longer and more slowly you breathe out, the more your pain sensations will dull.

Don't be in a rush to jump up when you have finished, as breathing deeply can make you feel light headed. Allow your breath to return to normal first.