

Fife u3a

Newsletter December 2025

From the Chair

Thirty-Five Years Walking in Limekilns - Life, Community, and the Joy of Walking

For thirty-five years, I have made my home in the picturesque village of Limekilns, nestled along the northern shore of the Firth of Forth. Drawn by the village's tranquil charm and deep sense of community, I found a place where time seems to move at a gentler pace and nature is never far away. Over the decades, walking has become central to my experience, particularly during the Covid lockdown - more than a simple means of travel, it's been a way to connect with both the landscape and the people who inhabit it.

Limekilns offers a walker's paradise: from coastal paths and wooded trails to historic routes winding past the famed lime kilns and onward to neighbouring Charlestown. Each walk brings new discoveries, whether it's a springtime carpet of bluebells near the old quarry or the expansive vistas along the Fife Coastal Path. These walks, both solitary and shared, have shaped friendships and fostered a profound bond with the village and its ever-changing scenery.

Throughout the seasons, walking reveals the subtle transformations of Limekilns. The crisp salt air of winter, the lush renewal of spring, the blue sky and sea in summer and the golden hues of autumn all offer fresh perspectives and quiet moments of reflection. Encounters with neighbours, the exchange of greetings, and the shared appreciation for simple pleasures have all contributed to a vibrant sense of belonging.

Looking back, it's clear that Limekilns is more than just a place—it's a companion on life's journey. The habit of walking its lanes, trails, and shoreline has granted me contentment, connection, and countless memories. As I look forward to future walks, I do so with gratitude for this enduring relationship with my village and its natural beauty.

Fiona McOwan

Simple Cyber Tips for u3a Members

Cyber-crime affects people of all ages, and older adults are often targeted. Here are some easy ways to protect yourself and your devices:

- Use long, strong passwords (e.g. ThreeR@nd0mWord\$).
Don't reuse the same password across accounts.
Turn on extra security (called 2FA or two-step login) when available.
If you struggle to remember passwords, consider using a password manager.
- Always install updates when prompted.
Keep antivirus software switched on.
Only download apps from trusted sources like official app stores.
- Save important files to a USB stick or external hard drive.
Keep a copy somewhere safe, away from your computer.



- **Scams & Phishing**

Don't trust emails, texts, or calls just because they look familiar.
Never share personal details with incoming callers.
Report scam emails to report@phishing.gov.uk and texts to 7726.
Call 159 to reach your bank's fraud team.

- Lock your phone and computer with a PIN or password.
Try not to use public USB charging points, use your own charger or power bank.
- Use a credit card for extra protection when buying online.
- Be cautious when scanning QR codes. Don't act on messages asking to change payment details — always confirm using trusted contact details.

Final Advice

Take your time. If something feels odd, ask someone or double-check. You can check if your email has been hacked at Have I Been Pwned. (<https://haveibeenpwned.com/>)

Travel Group

On 6th May 2025, six members of the u3a Travel Group flew to Rhodes. We stayed at the Blue Sky Hotel where three of us had stayed previously. The hotel was within walking distance of old Rhodes Town, one of the reasons we were more than happy to return there. The other reason being it was in close proximity to a lovely friendly Greek taverna where we had enjoyed tasty evening meals on our earlier stay.



We booked our tours with a local company called Holiday Essential. As a group we picked two trips that we fancied, the Island Tour by coach and the boat trip to Symi Island.

The island tour was excellent, thoroughly enjoyable day with visits to Siana Village and a lunch stop in Embonas village where we had a very tasty and inexpensive lunch with wine. Other stops were at Monolithos Castle, Fountoukil & Eleousa, Ancient Kamiros as well as Butterfly Valley.



Our boat trip to Symi was exhilarating, seas were a bit choppy but the weather on Symi was pleasant. Time for a leisurely lunch, a stroll about the village and time for souvenir shopping. The boat trip included a visit to the Panorimitis Monastery on the south side of the island and short stop in a bay before returning to our hotel.

During the other days we occasionally split up and visited museums, strolled around the walled city, found the ancient ruins of the

Acropolis of Rhodes and enjoyed leisurely lunches.

In the evenings we met up and went for our meal to Tommy's House, the local name for the wonderful taverna called Orexi, with its rustic freshly cooked fish, meat and pasta dishes. Always receiving a welcoming hug from Tommy and his partner Anna.

They go above and beyond to welcome their customers and we were able to sit and enjoy beautiful sunsets. Another visit next year?

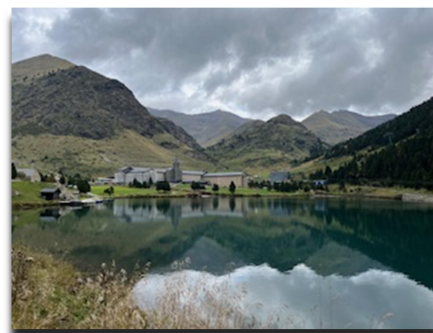
Elise Shaw

On 24 September nine of us from the Travel Group headed off for an unforgettable trip touring the Little Trains of the Pyrenees. As this was my first u3a holiday I wasn't sure what to expect but I wasn't disappointed. We flew from Edinburgh to Barcelona and were met by Margaret from Travel Department. After a two hour drive we arrived in Roses on the Costa Brava at the Hotel Monterrey, which had a wonderful position right on the promenade and overlooking a spotless sandy beach.



Over the week we had numerous train trips which were all different but equally enjoyable. The first was the local Roses Express tourist train up into the Cap de Creus nature park. Stunning views were all around us. On the other days we visited Villefranche, a UNESCO world heritage site with medieval streets. We also visited the interesting town of Figueras where

the artist Salvador Dali was born. We spent a morning at the Dali Theatre-Museum which had been restored by Dali and was now a museum housing some of his works. Nothing like any other museum I've ever seen but then again he was a most unusual man. On other days we travelled on the red and blue trains, visiting Riversalats and Axat and the stunning Nuria Valley, finished off by a cable car ride.



Our guide Margaret was absolutely outstanding and every day kept us informed of where we were and gave us all the local myths and legends. The weather was perfect and I had several swims in the sea. All in all a wonderful week's holiday, which was enhanced by the company of the Irish contingency who were on our tour.

Fiona Dick

Lunch Club

On 2nd October, the lunch club went to Booffi's restaurant in Dunfermline. It is a world buffet with many cuisines to choose from. This was a completely new experience for the lunch club. It was excellent, enjoyed by all who attended. Selection included- Sushi, pizza, Mexican - build your own tacos, Chinese, Indian, hot dogs, children's menu. There were assorted desserts including chocolate fondue, ice cream machine and fresh fruit salad. It was so well received, I am sure we will be returning in the future.

Anne Starkie

Out and About Group

On 28th October 2025, the Out and About group visited the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, this marked Gillian Dooley's final organised outing for the group.

The Salisbury Road synagogue, built in 1932 to seat 1,000 worshippers, remains the only purpose-built synagogue in Edinburgh. Its striking stained-glass windows, designed after the war by William Wilson, one of Scotland's most distinguished artists combine Jewish symbols with abstract



and floral motifs. These six windows are regarded as among Wilson's finest works adding both beauty and cultural significance to the building.

The site also houses a mikveh, a pool of natural water (often rainwater or spring-fed) constructed according to strict Jewish law. Used for ritual immersion, it symbolizes spiritual renewal and purification. Edinburgh's mikveh is one of only two in Scotland, highlighting the synagogue's distinctive importance in sustaining Jewish life.



We were fortunate to be guided by Rabbi David Rose, whose insights brought the building's history and traditions vividly to life. His explanations of the synagogue's role in Edinburgh's Jewish community added depth and meaning to our visit, making it a truly memorable occasion.

Over the years, Gillian has given us many enjoyable excursions and this last outing was no exception. It was an enlightening and thoroughly enjoyable day that everyone who attended found really interesting.



Anne Starkie's first outing as the new group leader for the Fife u3a Out and About group was a most enjoyable day at The Academy, Fife College, Kirkcaldy. We were served by the college's hospitality students who are currently working towards their qualifications in a practical setting.

It was especially nice to see a good mix of members from various places in Fife, sharing conversation and laughter in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The afternoon tea was served on elegant cake stands, which added a charming touch to the table. The baking was good, fresh and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. For us, it wasn't just about the food, it was a chance to connect, catch up and enjoy a shared outing together.

Sadie Seath

Hame of Park Gowf

At 10:30 on Friday 15th September, eight intrepid members met up at Dunnikier Golf Clubhouse to step into a new adventure - Park Golf. We were met by volunteer Martin, handed chunky putters and plastic balls both bigger and lighter than traditional golf balls, and taken to the six-hole course and the first tee. I can't help thinking that those who design such courses must harbour a tiny nugget of sadism deep in their wicked souls, because the lie of the land, the siting of rough and smooth grass and bunkers are all designed to catch out the unwary innocents, ie us green-as-grass beginners.



“Aim left and UP the hill!!!” oft came the cry, however, alas, to no avail as balls rolled down and away from the hole and even over the wee hill and far away. I blame the half-a-gale that was blowing. We play in pairs with different coloured balls for each pair: the ball that lands nearer to the hole is joined by the farthest away so, if you are lucky enough to have a partner who is a canny hitter, you take your wayward ball to join hers for the next shot.

There is nothing better than being out in the (very) fresh air getting much more (gentle) exercise than you realise you are getting: all the walking to retrieve recalcitrant balls; the bending down (if you can, otherwise someone will help) to pick up the ball; club-swinging, ball-hitting (mostly) moving between holes; general hilarity and encouragement (good for the lungs) it is all good for health and well-being.

Coffee tea and biscuits laid on at the clubhouse were very welcome, and we all made a donation to the charity which runs this enjoyable activity. Go on, give it a go, you know you want to!

Patsy Bain

(New Group) Park Golf meets on the fourth Friday of the month, 10.30 for 11.00 at Durnikier Golf Club, Kirkcaldy)

Scottish Heritage Group visit to Newbattle Abbey College - Tuesday 16th September

Before the tour the group gathered at the Paper Mill restaurant in Lasswade for a relaxing lunch. Overlooking the River Esk the setting was peaceful and inviting and the food was excellent. Conversation flowed easily and the warm atmosphere set the tone for the afternoon ahead.



Our visit to Newbattle Abbey College was guided by Margaret - some may remember her from our Rosslyn Chapel tour. Once again she impressed us with her depth of knowledge and engaging storytelling. Her insights brought the abbey's history vividly to life, making for a memorable and enriching experience.

Founded in 1140 as a Cistercian monastery, Newbattle Abbey has witnessed centuries of Scottish history - from early coal mining to the drafting of the Declaration of Arbroath. Following the Reformation it became a stately home for the Kerr family, later the Marquesses of Lothian. In 1937 the estate was gifted to the nation and transformed into a residential college, offering adult education in a setting steeped in heritage.

After the tour some members took time to explore the gardens. Extensive and thoughtfully laid out, they offered a peaceful stroll - even if a little bare in places with nature quietly preparing for winter.

Wartime Huts at Newbattle Abbey

During World War II Newbattle Abbey became a military training centre for ATS and RAMC recruits. To house up to 2,000 trainees dozens of timber huts were built across the grounds, serving as dormitories, classrooms and mess halls. Around two dozen still stand today - weathered reminders of the resilience and duty of those who trained there.



Scottish Jamboree

We went to Craiglockhart campus at Napier University on 29th August. There was an extensive programme of talks and activities to choose from. I picked 3 lectures to attend. One of these was Secrets of the Human Brain by Bob Pullen a Neuroscientist from Newcastle University. He showed how our brain works using practical demonstrations and how humans are so different from other mammals making us the dominant species in the world.

Teresa Brown

Quintessential – Ian McCoull - by u3a in Scotland

A discussion of a topic looking to find the core (Quintessence) of what it means to us.

On Friday 29th August, I attended the u3a Jamboree organised by u3a in Scotland at the Craiglockhart Campus in Edinburgh. The Jamboree was very well organised. There was ample communication in advance about booking sessions, transport and car parking options, making getting there very simple.

I attended three informative and enjoyable sessions:

- Grahamston – Glasgow’s Forgotten Village by Kevin Scott
- Scots at War – Three Scottish Battles
- And my favourite by far: Quintessential – Ian McCoull



Ian runs the u3a Quintessential Group in Callander on a fortnightly basis, in a two-hour session including a lunch break with an enticing bacon roll option! In our one-hour session, he ran a taster version. The Callander group have discussed topics such as woke, wellbeing and retirement. He gave an overview of the simplicity of how the group was set up and run.

Our session was led by Ian on the topic of retirement, with prompts that kept the conversation and debate going, such as how it has worked for us, whether we had a lead-in into retirement or if it was sudden and how we are spending our time during retirement. As a very recent retiree it was insightful to see how other people prepared for and were spending their retirement, their achievements since retiring, and their plans. My only complaint is that the session went so quickly I, for one, could have discussed and explored the topic all day long.

Nanette McCulloch

"Nae problem is worth yer life."

That's the message from Tartan Talkers, a Fife-based charity working to prevent male suicide by encouraging open conversation and community support. We know that life can feel overwhelming sometimes — and that it's not always easy to speak up. By including Tartan Talkers in our



newsletter, we hope to gently remind readers that support is out there, and that no one has to face things alone.

Founded after a family tragedy, the group offers drop-in hubs, peer support, and a listening ear for men who feel overwhelmed or alone. Their work is helping to break the silence and remind us all that talking saves lives.

Dear Fife u3a

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS to take part in a history project on youth councils in Britain from the 1950s to the 1970s. We would like to hear from individuals who were members of Cowdenbeath Junior Town Council between 1961 and 1979.

If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Dr Helen Sunderland at the University of Oxford Faculty of History at helen.sunderland@history.ox.ac.uk

If you are selected and agree to take part, you will be invited to participate in a recorded interview either online, at your home or at another agreed location. The interview is expected to take between 1 and 2 hours.

The interviewer will ask questions about your experiences of being on the youth council and what your role was. They will ask questions about your school, family life, work, politics and what impact, if any, being on the youth council has had on your adult life.

Thank you!

Relevant project information:

University of Oxford Ethics Approval Reference: 1934055

Project Title: Practising Democracy: Youth Councils and Parliaments in Modern Britain

Reclaim the Night in Dunfermline

The Fife Violence Against Women Partnership, will be hosting a 2025 Reclaim the Night march through Dunfermline as part of the annual world-wide 16 Days of Action working towards women's equality and demonstrating that women and men want to see an end to violence against women in all its forms.

When: Wednesday 3rd December 2025

Time: Meet from 5pm, march at 5.30pm. Speaker event from 6pm.

March meet point: St Margaret's Church car park, East Port

March route: Down East Port onto the High Street, into Pittencrieff Park and to the Glen Pavilion.

Let's Talk event location: Glen Pavilion, Dunfermline KY12 8QH

All welcome at either or both events.

This indoor event after the march in the Glen Pavilion starts at 6pm. It is a chance to mingle in the warmth, visit a range of stalls and hear speakers give a real picture of what is

happening. Among the speakers will students from Beath High School to speak about their experience of misogyny in schools and the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme. Some of our u3a members will be on the march and helping out on the Dunfermline Soroptimist stall so please say hello! If you plan to attend this event please can book your place at the indoor event here - Reclaim the Night: Let's Talk Event at The Glen Pavilion event tickets from Ticket Source.

New Year Lunch 2026

We are delighted to announce that our Annual New Year Lunch will be held at **The Abbotshall Hotel, Kirkcaldy** on **Thursday 15th January 2026**. Members are invited to arrive at **12.30pm for a 1.00pm start**.

The menu offers both two and three courses, priced at £21 and £28 respectively.

Please note that this event is open to **paid-up members only**, and **payment must be made at the time of booking**. The closing date for bookings is **Friday 12th December 2025**. To secure your place, please visit our website where you'll find full details and instructions on how to book and pay.

We look forward to sharing this special occasion with you!