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u3as from Scotland gather for inaugural Jamboree!

u3as from across Scotland came together on 29th August for their first-ever Jamboree, held at **Edinburgh Napier University's Craiglockhart Campus**. The day was filled with conversation, creativity, and contemplation, bringing together over 280 members from Dundee, Glasgow, Fife, and beyond.

Council Rep. **Liz Ervine** was inspired by the u3a York Festival in 2024 and wanted something similar for Scotland. She brought together a team – fellow Council Rep. **George Cleland**, **Linda Matheson** (Ayr), **Bob Low** (Dundee), and **Gail Donaldson** (Glasgow West End). Along the way they gathered a group of volunteers. After hundreds of hours of planning, members enjoyed an inspiring programme of talks, crafts, and activities on the day.

Special guest **Iain Cassidy**, CEO of the Third Age Trust, joined sessions and shared in the celebrations.

At the Jamboree, Chair of u3a Scotland, **Gail Donaldson**, said: - “We wanted to provide an opportunity for all u3as in Scotland to come together and celebrate the fantastic people of the u3a community.

“We’ll learn from this event and hope to repeat it again in a couple of years.”



Valued guests join to offer members additional benefits.

A wide range of external organisations attended the Jamboree, meeting members and sharing valuable advice. Event sponsor **Age Scotland** not only funded tote bags for everyone but also delivered an insightful talk on *Ageing Well*. **Alzheimer Scotland** (Alison McNair) was on hand to discuss brain health and volunteering opportunities, while **Fairtrade** (Anne Walsh) highlighted the impact of buying ethically.

Legal specialists **Katie and Lyndsey** from **Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie** gave an engaging session on the importance of setting up a *Power of Attorney*. Creative flair was also present, with **Sew Confident**, displaying their kits and encouraging members to try something new.

Together, these valued guests added practical guidance, inspiration, and fresh opportunities for u3a members.

Edinburgh Napier University, Craiglockhart Campus hosts the Jamboree.

The stunning Craiglockhart Campus of Edinburgh Napier University provided a perfect venue for the inaugural u3a Scotland Jamboree. With its sweeping views of Edinburgh and flexible spaces, members enjoyed conference rooms, classrooms with hearing loops, outside areas, and a welcoming reception hub for coffee and conversation.

An impressive timetable offered hourly talks, including *Ageing Well* (**Doug Anthony** for Age Scotland), *Power of Attorney Guidance* (Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie), and well-attended sessions from **Dr. Sandesh Gulhane, MSP**, and **Bob Pullen**, who talked about the *Secrets of the Human Brain*.



Workshops invited creativity, from memoir writing and singing to crafts, sign language, and games. Outdoors, croquet, tai chi, geology walks, and birdwatching kept members active, while the chapel hosted music, dance, and laughter throughout the day.



Briefly



Other brilliant sessions:

IgNobel Prizes with **Bob Batty**, looking at this satirical prize category.

Grahamston, Glasgow's Forgotten Village with **Kevin Scott**.

Creative Writing with **Maureen Farrell**.

Edinburgh Volunteers – promotion with **Professor J. Goldblatt**.

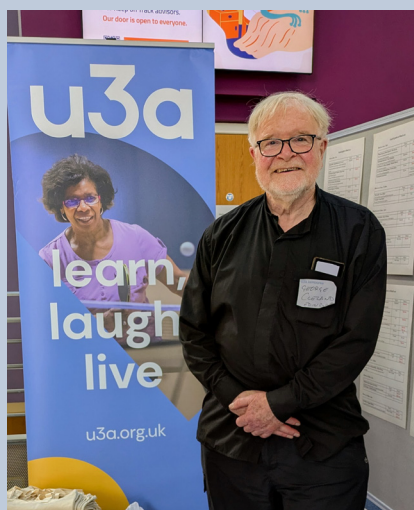
Tapestry Weaving Demo in the Alcove.

The Garden Gang with **V. Reilly**.

Friday Fun Quizzes with **Alex Dymock**.

Voltaire's Candide – the story, with **David Cunningham**.

Strolling to Appreciate Nature, with **Hugh Munro**.



Guest and member speakers add fascinating talks in a packed schedule.

Craiglockhart Campus provided excellent spaces for an inspiring programme of talks led by both guest speakers and u3a Group Leaders. Highlights included **Bob Pullen's** engaging session *Secrets of the Human Brain* and **MSP Dr. Sandesh Gulhane** sharing his journey from the *NHS to Parliament*.



Jackie Sangster of **Historic Scotland** explored the nation through old postcards, while **Norman Robb** presented *Scots at War* – a poignant theme for a venue once serving as a hospital for shell-shocked soldiers, including Wilfred Owen.



Members also enjoyed sessions on *Children's Fiction* (**Maureen Farrell**), *Enhancing Photography* (**Neil Shaw**), and *How's Your Hearing?* (**Richard Peoples**), with optional hearing checks available. A lively introduction to *sign language* with **Stephen Balmer** rounded off a schedule that balanced insight, learning and fun.

Out and about – exploring the beautiful places around Craiglockhart.

Blessed with fine weather, the historic grounds of Craiglockhart Campus, first built in 1877, provided a stunning backdrop for outdoor activities. Members enjoyed *Tai Chi* and *Qi Gong* in the Courtyard, led by **Debbie Hamilton** and **George Cleland**, while **Jean Wood** introduced *Croquet* on the lawn.



Inside the beautiful Chapel, dancing took centre stage with **Elaine Hutchison** leading *Scottish Country / Ceilidh Dance*, and **Kate Daly** guiding an inclusive *Circle Dancing* session.



For those looking to venture further afield, **Maggie Gilvray** led *birdwatching* walks, and **Gillian Pickup** explored local hills through *Geology* walks. Meanwhile, a group of *Pickleball* enthusiasts made their way to Craiglockhart Sports Centre for a lively mix of learning and friendly competition.



Music, games, and crafting sessions bring joyful creativity throughout the day.

Creativity was at the heart of the Jamboree, with sessions in music, crafts and games proving hugely popular.



Val Davis inspired members in her hands-on *Croquet for Beginners* workshops, while **Mary Fyfe's** *Mock Stained Glass* and **Janet Barnes' Art Taster** sessions filled quickly.

Games enthusiasts enjoyed *exploring board games* with **Rod Ferrier**, while **Harvey Harris** introduced many to the joys of *Backgammon*.

Music added energy throughout the day: **Paisley u3a's** *Singing for the Fun of It* reminded everyone that singing is good for the soul, while **Michelle Rudd** invited attendees to *Come and Sing a Pop Group* in the Chapel. Members also enjoyed a *Concert* featuring u3a musical groups, and **Iain Carver's Ukulele taster sessions** brought smiles and strumming to eager beginners.

Forums for debate: – u3a members engage passionately in Current Affairs.

Debate and discussion were also important in this Jamboree, with members enthusiastically sharing ideas on science, society, and the environment.

Ian McCoull opened thought-provoking conversations in his *Quintessential* session, exploring the essence of key topics. **Georgia March**, who also led a popular *Memoir Writing* workshop, hosted *Current Affairs in Science*, sharing insights into advances like MRI and the Vera Rubin Observatory.

Climate change inspired some of the liveliest debate. **Brenda Ainsley's** session *The Climate Crisis* offered practical steps for positive action, while **John Davies** shared his experience of calculating his *household carbon footprint*. The *Climate Matters* group further deepened discussion with an engaging debate and stand.



