

May 2026

Charity Number SC021683

May News

u3a
Dumfries



Monthly Meeting

Clare Melinsky

At our May meeting, members were delighted to welcome illustrator and printmaker Clare Melinsky, who gave a fascinating insight into the traditional art of lino cutting. Clare explained how she transforms an initial sketch into a finished print, carefully carving intricate designs into lino before applying ink and producing the final image by hand.

Throughout the talk, she shared examples of her beautiful work, much of it inspired by local towns and buildings. Members were particularly interested to hear about the level of planning and patience involved in the process, especially when creating multi-coloured prints, where separate layers must be carved and printed in perfect alignment.

Clare's enthusiasm for her craft was evident throughout, and it was an engaging and inspiring afternoon.

Photograph by Ronnie Galloway

Upcoming Meetings

May Meeting – Jenny Batchelor on Jane Austen

We are looking forward to welcoming Jenny Batchelor, owner of Chapters, a lovely little bookshop in Thornhill, who will be joining us on Thursday, 28th May at 2.00 pm at the North West Resource Centre. Jenny gave up a very demanding career as a History teacher to fulfil her lifelong dream of running a bookshop.

Her talk *On the Page and Beyond*, will be about the ever-popular novelist Jane Austen. Whether you're a lifelong fan of Jane Austen or simply curious to learn more, this promises to be a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, so we recommend you arrive early to get a good seat.

June Meeting – Annual Quiz

A regular fixture on our calendar is the *Annual Quiz* which will be on Thursday, 25th June at 2.00 pm at the Dumfries Baptist Church Centre. This year Kathleen Simpson has handed over the baton of quiz mistress to Sue Price, who leads the Fun Quiz Group. Sue and her husband Eric are planning to take full advantage of the audiovisual facilities offered at the Baptist Church, so it should be a fun afternoon. There will be prizes for the winners and losers and a free raffle. Donations to the raffle would be very welcome.

September Meeting – Carolyn Hornblow

Many of us were disappointed that Carolyn had to cancel her talk on *Devorgilla of Galloway*, planned for last month. However, we are pleased to say that we have been able to reschedule her as our September speaker.

Can you suggest a speaker?

Do you know someone who would make an interesting speaker for our monthly meetings? Maybe that person is you! If so, don't be shy, email Maggie Holdsworth, secretary.u3adumfries@gmail.com, with your suggestions.

In Other News

New Venue ...

Our May meeting will be the last monthly meeting in The North West Resource Centre, although some groups will continue to meet there. From June onwards, we are pleased to be moving to the Baptist Church Centre, Gillbrae Road, Dumfries, DG1 4EJ.

The Baptist Church is easily accessible and offers plenty of free parking. It also has a rather good café for those who might want to meet up for lunch before the meetings or socialise after our speakers.

... New Time

There will also be a change of date, following the summer break. From September our monthly meetings will revert back to the first Thursday of the month. This change has been made as there was some confusion between meetings being on the fourth or the last Thursday of the month.

Apologies

I was so chuffed with myself for getting the Contents done last month and making all the pictures interactive but, as they say, pride comes before a fall. So here, with my apologies, are the corrections from last month.

The date of the June meeting is the 25th June not the 25th May

Margaret wasn't a past Chair of u3a Scotland – she was a past Treasurer.

Some of the email addresses for the new Office Bearers have changed – they have been corrected in the Contact Us section of this issue.

And, finally ...

Kathleen did not join the u3a in 1915 but in 2015. Lot's of you picked up on that one with various witty comments about how good she looks for her age, and that perhaps being Treasure made it feel like a hundred years!

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation

Our Art Appreciation Group meets monthly at Northwest Resource Centre to discuss the art topic we have researched in advance. However, on Tuesday 26th May at 2pm we will attend a talk at Gracefield Art Centre which has been arranged to fit in with the day we meet. Sandy Wood, Head of Collections at the Royal Scottish Academy will give a gallery talk on the origins

of the RSA and a tour of the William Littlejohn exhibition followed by tea/coffee and Q&A. Duration approx 1 hour and it is free to attend, but please book a place by emailing arts@dumgal.gov.uk, or online with [Ticketsource](#).

This meeting is open to the public so it is not an exclusively u3a meeting, but it would be good for us to support Dawn Henderby at Gracefield as she arranges talks to fit in with our meeting dates.

Contributed by Sue Bedford

The Art Appreciation Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month at various locations. Contact Sue Bedford, Group Leader, for further information.

Writing Together

Bill Walker chaired this last group meeting before the summer break. There were 5 attendees and apologies from non-attendees, 3 of whom sent in their contributions to be included in the readings by members of the group. The topic, One Day, produced a variety of responses. Hopes for the future, regrets of the past, triumph over adversity, personal memories with a bit of feline fiction and jovial jousting thrown in for good measure. All were read aloud in turn and much enjoyed by the group.

Juanita, who had chosen the topic, then had the unenviable task of choosing the piece for submission to the newsletter. After much deliberation she decided a bit of fun and laughter was a good way to start the summer break and so chose Bob Mundell's light-hearted legend *The Tournament* and hopes it will raise a smile or two as you read it.

Contributed by Juanita McNeish

The Writing Together Group meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at The North West Resource Centre. Contact Bill Walker, Group Leader, for further information.

Local History Group



Fourteen members of our group enjoyed a truly memorable outing to Stirling Castle recently, with the weather at its very best for a day of exploring one of Scotland's most iconic historic sites.

The journey itself got off to a smooth start thanks to our driver, Dave, who safely transported the group there and back without a hitch.

While everyone chose their own interests for the day, the royal apartments proved to be a real highlight, with their breathtaking detail and sense of history. The stunning gardens also offered a lovely place to take in the scenery and enjoy the surroundings.

It was one of those trips where everything came together—great weather, fascinating surroundings, and good company.

Contributed by and photographs by Monica Callander

The Local History Group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Lochvale House. Contact Pamela Baird, Group Leader, for further information.

Birding Group



Last month we had a fabulous outing to Levenhall Links at Musselburgh. It may have come with a bitterly cold wind, but the sunshine and spectacular birding more than made up for it!

An impressive 39 species were spotted over the course of the day, with highlights including the little ringed plover and the velvet scoter—not bad at all!

The group would like to say a big thank you to Tony for getting them there and back safely, and to Fiona Moir, a friend of Monica's, whose expert knowledge helped them find the best spots and make the most of the visit.

Days like this are what it's all about—good company, fresh air, and plenty to see along the way. We're already looking forward to the next outing!

Contributed by and photographs by Monica Callander

The Birding Group meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month in various locations. Contact Monica Callander, Group Leader, for further information.

Sewing Group

We are planning a summer outing on Wednesday, 24th June, to the Superior Sewing Centre, Carlisle, and would like to invite any interested members to join us.

We will be taking part in a three-hour workshop to make a toilet bag. All materials will be provided, and the workshop is suitable for beginners or those with more experience.

We will be travel down by minibus, leaving from Thornhill and picking up in Dumfries. Price for workshop and transport is £41. For those who do not fancy the workshop but would enjoy a day out in Carlisle, you are also welcome to join us at a fare of £8.

Places are limited – currently there is only one place left on the workshop and five seats on the minibus – so if you would like to join us, please contact Kathleen Simpson.

Contributed by Kathleen Simpson

*The Sewing Group meets on the 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at the Old School, Thornhill.
Contact Kathleen Simpson, Group Leader, for further information.*

Camera Group

Last month we had a very interesting visit to the Aviation Museum at Heathhall, Dumfries. It gave us lots of scope for creating some great images which we then entered into our final competition of the session.

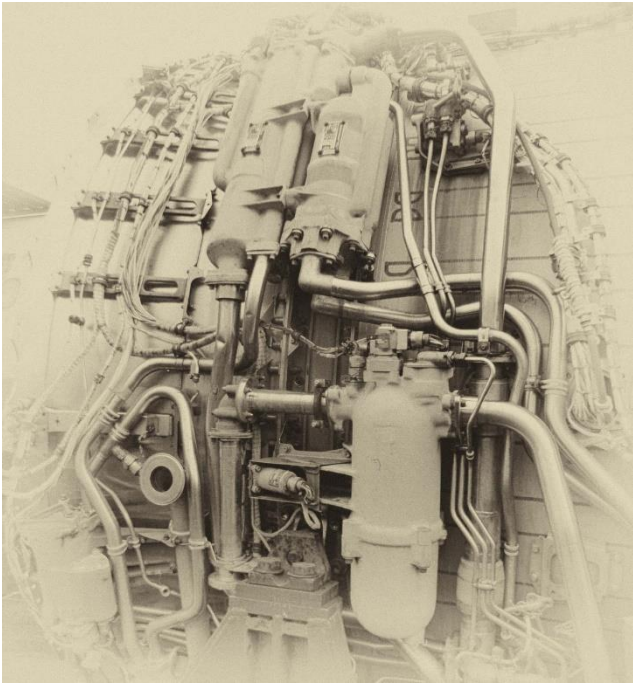
Here are our winners.



1st place – Fantasy Final Flight by Roger Shann



2nd place – Wall-e by Terry Howat



3rd place – Pipe Fitter's Nightmare

With this being our last competition before the summer, it was also time to discover who would be taking home the Trophy this year. Huge congratulations to our winner, Roger Shann. It couldn't have been closer as he and Terry were tied on points in the end. The trophy award was then based on the number of first places awarded during the year and Roger had one more than Terry! (Full results to follow in the next edition of the newsletter.)



Joyce Gemmell (last year's winner) handing over the trophy to Roger.

If you would like to come and join our group we have loads of space available in Kirkton Hall where we meet twice a month (second and fourth Fridays 10:30 – 12:30). Email Terry (u3a.camera@gmail.com) for further info.

Contributed by Terry Howat

The Camera Group meets on the 2nd & 4th Fridays of the month at Kirkton Village Hall. Contact Terry Howat, Group Leader, for further information.

Scrabble for Fun Group



New members are sure of a warm welcome at our group, and we always hope they'll enjoy it and come back for more, but we don't normally expect them to write a poem about the experience. However, that is exactly what member Mandy Stoner did after attending her first session.

*We challenged our brains
Over chatter and tea.
We took it in turns
To create word melody.*

*There was a hum in the room
And a silence as well
As over those letters
Our minds did deeply dwell.*

*We laughed and we shared
Each other's thoughts.
So, till next time
We'll practice, as we ought.*

We think it really captures the atmosphere at our Scrabble sessions, and if it sounds like your kind of thing, we'd love you to come along.

Contributed by and photograph by Shona Brown

*The Scrabble Group meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at the North West Resource Centre.
Contact Shona Brown, Group Leader, for further information.*

Craft and Chat Group



This month we were flexing our 'green thumbs' under the experience eye of Sue Price. Sue had recently attended a Kokedama workshop at Threave Gardens, and offered to take the lead on sharing it with our group.

Kokedama is a traditional Japanese plant craft, where a plant's roots are wrapped in soil, encased in live moss, and then bound with twine to create a round, hanging green sculpture. However, Sue also shared modern ways of using the craft on wreaths or in containers. We were all delighted with our efforts.

June will be our final meeting before a short summer break, and we will be making woven thread buttons (Dorset, Yorkshire and Zwirnknopf styles). Anyone who would like to come along and give it a go would be very welcome.

*The Craft and Chat Group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Lochvale House, Dumfries.
Contact Carol Moyes, Group Leader, for further information.*

Meet the Committee



This month we would like to introduce you to our new Treasurer, Pauline Slater.

Pauline tells us, 'I recently became Treasurer for u3a, which is my first experience of being a treasurer and to my surprise I am quite enjoying the challenge.

I am a member of the u3a art group and decided I needed to use more than one side of my brain. I am definitely doing that in this role, not only paying the bills but getting to grips with The Beacon admin.'

Not only is Pauline new to the committee, but she is also a relatively new member of our u3a, so an especially big thank you to her for taking on this important role.

Committee Catch-Up

A new article this month, which will become a regular feature, giving you the highlights from our latest committee meeting. This month ...

- Kathleen Simpson has been bringing our new committee members up to speed on using the Beacon admin system.
- We have been discussing how to make the new Group Leaders' Handbook useful and comprehensive – but not off-putting.
- We continue to attract new members with 6 people joining last month.
- Following advice from the u3a Trust on Gift Aid, we have been redesigning the application form.

The full minutes of the meeting can be found on our website.

If there is anything that you would like to committee to consider, then please contact Kathleen Simpson, Chair.

Who Can Resist Those Puppy Dog Eyes?



If you can't, then you might be interested in offering a temporary home to a guide dog?

We have been approached by Emma Brown, Local Volunteering Attraction Coordinator (West of Scotland), to see if any of our members might be interested in providing either a part- or full-time home for a trainee guide dog. They are looking for homes for the following:

- **Weekend homes** (Training Dog Fosterer) Friday afternoon until Tuesday morning, for 10–12 weeks, to look after a trainee guide dog (they would be around one and a half years old). The staff member would look after the dog Tues–Fri to carry out its training. Available in Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright and Dalbeattie.
- **Full time emergency homes** (Fosterer – Respite) For example, if a guide dog owner is unwell and can't look after their dog. Available in Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright and Dalbeattie.
- **Raising a guide dog puppy** (Puppy Raiser) From 8 weeks old until they are just over a year old. We host monthly puppy classes in Dumfries. Across Dumfries and Galloway
- **Short term homes** (Puppy Fosterer) For example when puppy raisers go on holiday. Across Dumfries and Galloway.

Fostering a puppy comes with the following support: expenses covered, training provided, holiday cover when you are going away, a staff member to support you, as well as an out of hours phone line.

Emmas says, “All our volunteers have a big impact on people with sight loss, as guide dogs and our other services help people with a vision impairment get out and about independently. It is also a shorter-term commitment than taking on a responsibility of a dog for life, which many people find suits them.”

If you like the sound of these opportunities, then you can contact Emma directly, Emma.Brown@guidedogs.org.uk, or you can apply on their website www.guidedogs.org.uk/volunteer

From Our Ears to Yours

Each month we bring you a taste of the music members of the Enjoying Music group have been listening to. This month the theme was: **Flowers and Plants**

(CTRL+click to open links)

Traditional – Jasmine Flower – Wu Man on the Pipa

A centuries' old and popular song, with jasmine reflecting beauty and purity. There is conflict however for the flower picker, who, in enjoying that beauty, also destroys it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvRM6VGy3kE&list=RDZvRM6VGy3kE&start_radio=1

Debussy – Bruyères (Heather) – Alberto Lodoletti

A pleasant, light piece, but heather in France must be quite different to that found when “beating” towards the guns on the Yorkshire moors.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTrQk9FrTfs&list=RDyTrQk9FrTfs&start_radio=1

Delibes – Flower Duet from Lakme – Anna Netrebko and Elina Garanca

Lakme and her companion admire the flowers on an Indian riverbank, with an English

translation of the song appearing later. Jasmine is popular again in this duet, which displays well the difference between a soprano and a mezzo soprano.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD5ry23HggM&list=RDtD5ry23HggM&start_radio=1

Puccini – Crisantemi Ucelli Quartet Eugenio Ampudia (artist)

Barcelona's Opera house re-opened in 2020. This was celebrated by the playing of the quartet to 2,292 plants, a full house. Don't miss the applause at the end. No AI!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9BRbtlgipQ&list=RDi9BRbtlgipQ&start_radio=1

Schubert – Heidenroslein – Dietrich Fischer–Dieskau and Marlene Dietrich

A very short and well-known song. A lad sees a rose, picks it and it stabs him. Here we have contrasting versions: probably the most accomplished singer of lieder, Dietrich Fischer–Dieskau and the actress and chanteuse, Marlene Dietrich. You don't have to pick, just enjoy both!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paNlScKiihs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnm6cS_ObUU

Fun Quiz

Below are definitions of 10 words taken from the Oxford English Dictionary. But what are the words? The answers all have 2 things in common – working this out will help you with some of the trickier ones.

1. Intense loyalty to one's own community or group
2. To advise or order the use of a specific medicine, remedy, or treatment,
3. A person (esp. a man) who belongs to a tribe
4. To stretch out like a ribbon
5. Flowing out in a dropping stream, trickling
6. To contribute or pay a sum of money at intervals to receive a service, publication (like a newspaper or journal), or support a charity.
7. Boards, committees, or assemblies appointed (often by a government) to adjudicate or investigate specific matters or disputes
8. Hastily written, often illegible handwriting or notes
9. Written, printed, carved, or engraved on or in a surface (especially for a formal or permanent record, like names on a trophy or words on a monument)
10. One who gives a verbal or written account, or representation of something

Coffee Break Read

Thank you to Bob Mundell, of the Writing Together Group, this month's interesting take on the theme of *One Day*.

The Tournament

King Ulrich was bored. It had been two years since the Puny War had ended, when he had defeated the barbarian hordes who had tried to invade his land and since then his realm had basked in peace and prosperity; the meadows around his castle were filled with contentedly grazing cattle and sheep, the hens laid in abundance and the towns and villages sparkled with the joyful sounds of his adoring subjects going about their everyday lives. God was in his Heaven and all was well; except, he had to admit, life had become dull. Nothing exciting happened anymore, no grey-clad assassins tried to ambush him in dark corridors and seize his throne. No foreign princes challenged him to duels. He was such a mighty general that all feared him. As he gazed on the full length portrait of himself dressed in his magnificent armour astride his faithful warhorse Tiberius that the Court artist Van Holstein had painted he understood why. He looked omnipotent and, with due modesty, also extremely splendid.

'Do you think that Holstein has flattered me?' The King asked his loyal liegeman Sir Clapalott. 'Am I really that handsome?'

'Absolutely, Sire,' Clapalott responded. 'It is so true to life. I have witnessed maidens in the Palace faint in your presence, overcome by your fine features and your perfect gallantry.'

'That is true,' the King confirmed and sighed. 'And of course if they didn't I would have to put them to the torture. It is so difficult being King and maintaining discipline, being charming to everyone and smiling a lot. Sometimes my face aches with the effort of it all.'

'But Majesty, you do it so well.' Clapalott assured him, breaking into spontaneous applause as was his wont.

'I do. It is the curse of Kings. But I need some action, a new goal! I want to fight, to show my colours in battle once again.' He snapped his fingers. 'I know, I shall instigate a jousting tournament, a one day event when I will challenge the bravest men of this realm and beyond to test their skills against me on the field. It will be on May Day. Make the proclamation, Clapalott, to the wider world. My will shall be done.'

'An excellent idea, Majesty.' Clapalott cried excitedly, his hands again bursting into applause so vigorously that his palms were sore for the rest of the day. 'No one but you could have thought of such a plan!'

Ulrich studied the man carefully. Sometimes he wondered if Clapalott rather overdid the enthusiastic responses to his commands, but of course when one was so charismatic it was only to be expected that lesser mortals would be permanently in awe. It was another burden of kingship.

Alice was sitting on a branch of an ancient oak tree, eating an apple and casting a critical eye over her brother's schooling of his horse. Ever since they'd heard of the King's challenge and the prizepurse of 200 gilders, Rupert had been putting Star through his paces; he was now riding using only his left hand to control the steed so that he could hold the jousting lance in his right, and using his legs to cue the mount for direction and speed. Unfortunately, neither horse nor rider had quite got the hang of it yet; suddenly Star stopped abruptly and Rupert cart-wheeled over the equine's head and landed heavily on the hard ground. Alice stifled a laugh, tossed away the apple core and went to dust her brother down.

'That was much better,' she said encouragingly. 'You are really starting to synchronise so well. What we need to do now is to get Star used to noises and crowds and flags. You remount and I'll get the drum and we'll have a few sessions with that.'

Rupert looked at her doubtfully. 'Are you sure? You're a much better rider than me. Maybe you should mount him and I'll bang the drum.'

'Don't be silly. I can't fight the King; it's for men only,' she grimaced.

'And no one will trounce the King,' Rupert replied mournfully. 'Maybe this is all a waste of time. He is invincible.'

Alice scoffed, 'He's a conceited windbag so he'll make sure that no one beats him by any fair means, but chin up, you don't have to win, you just have to last for three jousts and then you can claim the reward. We really do need the money, Rupert. Since daddy was executed for spreading sedition we've been on our uppers. This is our chance to get some cash, so back in the saddle my boy.'

Rupert obeyed his sister's command and patted Star's neck affectionately. 'Be a brave lad,' he murmured into the nag's ear.

Alice produced a kettle drum from behind a bush and began to beat a steady rhythm, pianissimo to start with and then increasingly louder. The horse reared up startled and unseating Rupert once more bolted to the far end of the field where it whinnied fretfully.

'How long until May Day?' Rupert asked, painfully getting back on his feet.

'Two weeks. We can do it!'

The morning of the tournament dawned bright and clear. Alice and Rupert had been up before sunrise. Rupert had spent the previous day polishing his father's old armour until it burnished brilliantly while Alice meticulously groomed Star. Then Rupert had reluctantly acceded to Alice's request that he cut her hair short.

'It'll grow back,' she said. 'But in the meantime if I am to be your squire I must look the part. We're about the same size so I can wear your tunic and your second best breeches and no one will suspect that I'm a girl.'

Rupert looked her up and down. 'I'm not so sure. You're a bit top heavy.'

'Nobody is going to look at me when they see you on Star. You look extremely dashing.'

The siblings had spent the last couple of weeks desensitising Star to the atmosphere that he would encounter, and Rupert had been exercising hard to increase his upper body strength for the combat to come. He'd practiced at the Quintain, a swivelling target, to improve his timing and learned to couch the lance under his armpit to achieve a steady aim while on his moving horse.

They were as ready as they would ever be.

The lists had been constructed on a swathe of lea that ran from the castle to the river and when Alice and Rupert arrived they were greeted by throngs of people. There were jugglers, fire eaters, jesters and the occasional pick-pockets mingling with the crowds; many stands loaded with food stuffs and drinks, especially the local sweet delicacies made from fermented and candied pig's trotters that filled the mouths of the children who danced around the intricately decorated Maypole, while their mothers and fathers laughed in approbation and imbibed some more of the potent liquor that the local publican, Merlin, who was said to be in league with the Devil, sold. In several months time there would be a glut of babies wanting to be fed; and a lot of haggard mothers and fathers wondering why they had ever decided that 'Hello porter' was such a pleasant drink.

Young maidens, dressed all in their finery with flowers in their hair were vying to get the best seats in the stands so as to have at least a glimpse of their handsome King when the action began, and practising swooning in adoration, in the process knocking down several rows of seats and having to apologise to old crones who put the evil eye on them, especially Mother Shipman who took her clay pipe out of her mouth just long enough to spit tobacco in their direction.

Rupert and Star were scheduled for the final encounter with Ulrich, which gave Alice plenty of time to study the King and assess his form. She had to admit that he looked good but she paid special attention to the angle of his head and whether he favoured aiming for his opponent's helmet or shield with his lance. She also took careful note of where the sun was in the heavens and how it was reflected on the combatant's armour.

Much to her relief none of the challengers had lasted more than two jousts with Ulrich, and most had been unseated at the first pass, so she had high hopes for her brother when finally his name was called and he took his position to the left of the dividing wooden tilt barrier. The Marshall waved a flag and the horses began to gallop, carrying their riders towards each other at speed. It was the King who made the first strike, his lance shattered on Rupert's shield to wild cheers from the crowds, and for a moment Alice thought her brother was doomed, he wobbled but managed to retain his balance on his high-backed saddle.

The two men had now changed ends and the King had his back to Alice when he reared which was not what she had hoped for.

'Please, Rupert, stay aloft,' she prayed, crossing her fingers as the two men charged towards each other again. She closed her eyes and heard the splinter of wood and a cry of 'Oooh' from the crowd. When she dared to look again she saw that Rupert had made a hit on the royal helmet! Oh well done, blessed boy!

This was the third joust, and the King was facing her. If only Rupert could survive it! Alice sent another prayer up to the sky and checked the position of the sun again, then drew from her pocket a small piece of mirrored glass and gripped it tightly.

The horses were both frothing at the mouth now and the pace was intensifying as the two men hurtled towards each other for the final time. Rupert looked almost spent, he was slightly off balance as the King changed tactics and aimed his lance at Rupert's head. Alice waited until she was sure that Ulrich was ready to go in for the kill and then she opened her fingers and let the glass absorb the sunshine and reflect it onto the King's visor, momentarily dazzling him. His lance drooped and at that instant Rupert's lance broke on the royal shield. He had won! Alice jumped up and down in excitement as the King dismounted from his horse and shook his victor's hand.

'Well done, young man,' Ulrich smiled. 'You have been a worthy foe and the prize is yours.'

'Thank you, Sire,' Rupert mumbled. 'But the praise should all go to my squire, my sister.'

'Your sister? Squire? May I meet her? Come forward, Rupert Trevelyan's squire,' the King commanded and Alice obeyed, curtsying low.

'Exquisite! My goodness, what a beautiful squire. You have a very handsome and courageous brother and I would like to know you both intimately,' Ulrich said. 'You will sit beside me at the banquet tonight.'

And so they did.

Two months later Cecil the Small sat at the grand organ in the Cathedral of Santa Maria, flexed his fingers over the keys and waited for his servant Cecil the Even Smaller to get to his knees and operate the peddles that allowed the larger Cecil to play the beautiful notes of the hackneyed Mendelssohn Wedding Anthem. He would have preferred a bit of Wagner, but the King had refused his request and demanded that his wife to be would be accompanied down the long aisle by that piece of fluff. The man had no taste.

Yes, it was Alice that Ulrich married, and that was one glorious day that would remain in the memory of the Kingdom for many years thereafter.

Recipe of the Month

Buckwheat Chocolate Cake

Our recipe this month comes to us through roundabout (and international) channels. It was shared with me by a friend who first tried it when she lived in Germany – was written by American chef, David Lebovitz – who adapted it from a recipe of Spanish baker, Aran Goyoage, who specialises in gluten free recipes. When a recipe gets passed around that much, it must be good!

Despite its name, buckwheat has nothing to do with wheat and is instead a pseudo-grain belonging to the rhubarb family. It is naturally gluten-free and, interestingly, is a complete protein containing all the amino acids. I think that means it qualifies as a health food – if we ignore the fact that the main ingredient is chocolate!

Ingredients

6 ounces (170g) bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped

1/2 cup (115g) unsalted butter, cubed (Aran's version used coconut oil for a dairy free version)

4 large eggs, separated

1/2 cup (100g) unrefined or granulated sugar

1/3 cup (80ml) plain whole-milk yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup (75g) almond or hazelnut flour (see Note below)

1/4 cup (35g) buckwheat flour



Method

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C.) Butter an 8-inch (20cm) cake pan and line the bottom with a round of parchment paper.

In a large, heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, melt the chocolate and butter until smooth, then remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, half of the sugar, yogurt, vanilla, and salt, then whisk them into the melted chocolate. Stir in the almond or hazelnut flour, and the buckwheat flour.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, or by hand, whip the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Gradually whip in the other half of the sugar until the whites are in firm peaks. Fold one-third of the whipped egg whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten it, then fold in the remaining chocolate mixture just until it's completely combined.

Scrape the batter into the pan, level the top, then bake for 25 to 30 minutes; the cake will feel relatively set, but the centre of the cake should still be soft. Let cool for 10 minutes, then remove from the cake pan.

Notes

If you don't have almond or hazelnut flour (also called "meal" or nut "powder") you can use ground almonds and hazelnuts. You can also grind your own using 75g of sliced almonds or whole hazelnuts and pulverizing them with the buckwheat flour in a food processor.

Storage: This is one of those cakes that is better the second day (if you can wait that long!). Wrapped in foil it will keep for up to three days.

What's On in June

Each month we share local events which might be of interest to our members. If you know of an event that aligns with one of our interest groups, please contact Carol Moyes to have it shared in our newsletter.

Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival

A varied programme of performances around the region, running until 14th June. You can find the full programme [here](#)

The Arts Society Dumfries and Galloway

Edwin Lutyens: Architect to dolls, dukes and dynasties a talk by Nicholas Merchant.

Tuesday 9th June – 11.00 am – Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries –£10 (pay at the door or book [here](#))

Museum of Lead Mining, Wanlockhead

Books Open Days! is a celebration of the 270th anniversary of the Wanlockhead Miners' Subscription Library. The Library books are historic and special, and need to be handled with care. However, you can join these special sessions and, under expert guidance, read the books so valued by the miners. Find out more and book tickets [here](#)

Crawick Multiverse, Sanquhar

Summer Solstice Celebrations – either watch the sun go down at a Sunset Session in the Sun Amphitheater on Saturday evening, or enjoy a Sunrise Celebration and wellbeing activities on Sunday.

Saturday 20th – 4.00 pm to sunset – and Sunday 21st June – 4.00 am to 6.00 pm – Crawick Multiverse, Sanquhar – book [here](#)

A final nugget of wisdom

Picture Perfect

One of the joys of being part of our u3a is seeing the wonderful variety of activities and outings taking place across our groups — and over the summer there are usually plenty of opportunities for photographs that can help showcase everything we do.

Local newspapers are always keen to feature community stories, and a good photograph can make all the difference in getting an article noticed. However, editors do sometimes have to turn down photos that are too dark, blurry, distant, or small to reproduce clearly in print.

The good news is that you don't need an expensive camera to take a great publicity photo. Most modern mobile phones are more than capable of producing excellent images — with just a few simple things in mind:

Get close enough! A group of tiny faces standing half a field away may capture the scenery beautifully, but newspapers want to see people.

Pose your group Make sure everyone is in the picture with a little 'breathing room' around the edges of the frame. Avoid long rows of people, so consider arranging your group in rows. Use elevated surfaces or stairs so that every face is visible. Also ask your subjects to face the camera but turn their bodies slightly to the centre (about 45-degree angle should do it) so they don't look stiff.

Good light matters Outdoor daylight can cause unflattering shadows with bright windows behind the group.

Keep it steady Pictures must be pressed. Pressing the button helps avoid coffee and cake!

Take several shots Someone always has to hold the camera. Taking a few photos with different people.

Think about the background A background is important for an otherwise lovely photo.

Empty the hands As well as keeping the background uncluttered, ask people to ditch large bags and backbags. Pop them in a pile just out of frame where you can keep an eye on them while you take the photo. Once their hands are empty, make sure they still look relaxed — hands in pockets or folded arms will look natural.

Landscape usually works best Holding the phone sideways generally gives newspapers more flexibility when laying out pages.



Send the original image if possible Photos copied into documents or screenshots often lose quality, which is the main reason editors can't use them. The original image straight from the phone is usually best for print.



And finally – although the newspapers generally prefer a posed group photo – the best photos for our newsletter and Facebook and posters are the ones that *capture people enjoying themselves*. Smiles, conversation, demonstrations, activities in progress – these are the pictures that help tell the story of what makes our u3a such a vibrant and welcoming community.

Happy snapping!

Got a tip to share?

Have you got a 'nugget of wisdom' that you think other members would find useful? Please share it by emailing Carol Moyes at u3adumfries.newsletter@gmail.com

Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. tribalism | 5. dribbling | 9. inscribed |
| 2. prescribe | 6. subscribe | 10. describer |
| 3. tribesman | 7. tribunals | |
| 4. ribboning | 8. scribbles | |

Did you spot what they all have in common? Each one contains 9 letters, and includes the letters RIB consecutively.

Keep in touch

Questions? Suggestions? Comments? Please contact ...

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Treasurer – Pauline Slater – treasurer.u3adumfries@gmail.com

Secretary – Maggie Holdsworth – secretary.u3adumfries@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor – Carol Moyes – u3adumfries.newsletter@gmail.com

Group Leaders – visit our website and go to the Group's page. Click on the Group Leader's name and use the Contact Form to message them.

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes that create a sense of depth and movement, tapering to the right.

Visit our Website

Find out everything you need to know about what's going on in u3a Dumfries, and nationally, at dumfries.u3asite.uk

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u3a learn,
laugh,
live

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of overlapping blue and yellow shapes.