u3a Helensburgh & District

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2026

Dear Member – please note that U3A Membership Renewal Fees were due on or before 1st July 2025

If you have already paid - Thank You

The subscription fee is £15 per member.

Payment should preferably be made by BACS as follows:

Sort Code 80-22-60
Account: 00772403
Name: Helensburgh & District U3A
Reference: Your Surname and Initial

NOTE - you can also make payment by cash at any General Meeting

The final cutoff date will be 1 September for membership renewal. Please be aware that anyone who has not renewed wishes to resign as payment will be 8 weeks overdue

WEBSITE ADDRESS : https://helensburgh.u3asite.uk/

Find us on Facebook - click the logo

The monthly newsletters and u3a Matters online magazines can be accessed via the CMAS page on our website

Our groups are a fantastic way of meeting people with similar interests and to share your skills and knowledge with others. Below is a list of groups that are active. Follow books or meetings and visit the group pages here.

We have 30 active members and growing

Current active groups include:

Arts and Crafts
Ballet & Musical theatre group
Board Games
Current Affairs 1 of 3 &
Current Affairs 2 of 3 &
Dining Out
Film Club
French Conversation
Genealogy
German Speaking
German Conversation
In The Time
Mahjongg
Mapping
Nordic Walking
Photo Manipulation
Philosophy
Photography
Spanish Conversation
Quiz Group
Scottish Dancing & ceilidh
Social Bridge
Spanish Conversation
Spinning
Theatre Group
Wine Appreciation

For more information and to contact the group leads, please use the website by clicking HERE.

Monthly General Meetings

Our Monthly General Meetings are held in Helensburgh Parish Halls at 2pm. (Main Hall)

Coffee & tea are available after the talk and entry is free to members. Non members bring your own cheque/cash on days it will reduce waste.

Next Monthly Meeting

Aug 2 - James Day - "Charles and Margaret McIntosh - A lifelong partnership of excellence".

James is a retired architect and chartered designer who received his certificate of architecture at Glasgow School of Art in 1968 and has spent a interior design from the Rhodes International School.
As well as being head of Interior Design at the Inchbald School of Design, he was a lecturer in Interior Design at the Glasgow School of Studies(the University) and the Glasgow School of Art.

He gave the Millennium Talk on Glasgow Tenements in the Glasgow Tenements Centre and was head of design for Glasgow Cathedral and has been researching the rare Scot of architects, Thomas Design.

Future Monthly Meetings

Sep 7 - The Glasgow School of Art Kerr, by Gordon Gibb

Oct 5 - Helen Ruffle on "Cuba"

Helen lectures on Cuba and Latin America at Glasgow University. She has written books entitled: 99 Ate Cuba' and 'Che Guevara: The Economics of Revolution'

Nov 2 - Dugald Cameron - Engineering

Dec 7 - Christmas Lunch

Jan 4 2027 - Dougal Marie - " The rafts/trainers of the Parish Church Tower at Luss"

Our monthly events continue to be extremely well attended and very popular. If you have a topic that you would like to present at the general or science group events, please get in touch.

Science Group Talks

Next Monthly Talk

U3a Science talk Friday 14th August at 11.00am in Helensburgh Church Halls. (Main Hall)
The meeting is open to all u3a members. Coffee available from 10.30am. There is a charge of £2 towards costs.

'Some diseases are share with animals and what they tell us' by Prof Kate Sidin

Summary: As One Health becomes an increasingly common part of our scientific language, it is worth pausing to look more closely at what it actually means. In its simplest form, it is the relationship is viewed primarily through the lens of threat, particularly in the form of zoonotic disease. Yet many interactions between humans and animals and the shared biology offers significant opportunity.

In this talk, I will explore examples of naturally occurring disease in dogs that serve as powerful models for comparative medicine, illustrating how studying disease in companion animals can directly support human health. These examples reveal a truly symbiotic relationship between veterinary and human medicine, one that remains surprisingly under-appreciated.

Speaker: Professor Kate Sidin trained in small animal clinical practice and specialist referral work before moving into academia.

She has spent over a decade at the University of Glasgow as a veterinary neurologist, combining clinical service, teaching, and research. Her work sits at the intersection of veterinary and comparative anatomy and how clinical veterinary medicine can inform comparative and One Health research.

Future Monthly Talks

Sep 18th Prof Mark Symes - 'Green Hydrogen for a Green Future'

Talk summary: In theory, we could replace fossil fuels with a "hydrogen economy". This concept involves using renewable energy to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen then being used as a fuel that would release only water when it is consumed. However, although this idea has been around for many years, it has never taken off, in part due to not getting any closer to realising it. In this talk, Prof Symes will discuss some of the challenges of producing hydrogen from renewable energy, and will give an overview of the work he is doing to developed electrolyte might solve some of these problems.

Speaker: Mark Symes is the Professor of Electrochemistry and Electrochemical Technology in the School of Chemistry at Glasgow University. His research group specializes in studying developing new electrochemical processes and electrochemical technology for the more sustainable production of fuels and key chemicals. He is also the co-founder of the University spin-out company, Ceres Hydrogen Systems, a spin-out from the research lab that is developing a new generation of electrolyser systems for converting renewable electricity into green hydrogen.

Oct 16th - An Endoscope the thickness of a single human hair' by Prof. Mike Padgett

Summary: How we see holographic, a digital projection, graphics cards, and a lot of physics to create a new type of endoscope the thickness of a human hair. Our endoscope can reach the places that other endoscopes cannot.

Speaker: Mike Padgett is a Royal Society Research Professor in the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Glasgow. He has held the Kelvin Chair of Natural Philosophy since 2011 and served as Vice Principal for Research from 2012 to 2016. He has also educated at the University of Manchester, the University of York, the University of St Andrews, and Trinity College Cambridge where he was awarded a PhD in 1990.

Working with Lab-Work, he conducted pioneering work on the optical properties of the Quantum Dot, for which he received 1999 the Royal Medal. The research group he leads is best known for its work on optical communication with light (classical and single photons), including optical tweezers and optical communication with light (classical and single photons) and the alphabet of optical communication (with both classical and quantum light).

Mike was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (FRSE) in 2001, in 2011 he was elected a Fellow of the Institute of Physics (FIoP), in 2013 he was elected a Fellow of the Photonics Instrumentation Engineers (FPIE), in 2014 he was elected a Fellow of the Optical Society (FOS) – the UK's National Academy of Sciences.

Nov 13th Title: "The heat beneath our feet" by Dr Iain Neill

Summary:
Beneath our ancient natural geothermal heat from severe volcanoes underground? Geothermal sources could reliably supply baseload energy for heating and hot water systems via heat pumps. Geothermal energy contributes to baseload supply and our limited energy storage capacity across the UK. Geothermal energy is underexplored and underutilised. The development of geothermal energy is surprisingly limited. The Geothermal Research Group (GRG) at the University of Glasgow is Scotland's* the and first discover how its colleagues and it are ramping up a new generation of geothermal exploration and research. Geothermal energy is underutilised. Ground source heat pump systems might be envisaged in different parts of Scotland and how they could tackle problems associated with fuel poverty, climate change, and decarbonising heating. We'll conclude on our own doorstep, what does the geology beneath Helensburgh consist of, and would it be worth exploring our own deep geothermal energy potential?

Biography:
Iain Neill is a geologist originally from Dingwall in Easter Ross and he currently lectures at the University of Glasgow. He has lived in Helensburgh since 2019. Despite also working on the Geology of Antarctica and the Arctic, he has spent many years in the Caucasus mountains, he is an expert on Scottish geology and particularly the rocks of the Highlands. He is keen to see Scotland's rich geology and its natural resources used to support common good. Alongside colleagues and students in Glasgow he promotes the deep geothermal energy potential of Scotland's subsurface with a range of community organisations.**

Dec 4th Title: Responsible Artificial Intelligence – does it exist? By Prof Simone Stumpf

Summary: In this talk Prof Stumpf will cover the benefits and harms of AI applications and current efforts to make them more "responsible". She will talk about how you can use them more responsibly and get involved in shaping a better future.

Speaker: Simone Stumpf is Professor of Responsible and Interactive AI at the School of Computing Science, University of Glasgow in 2021 and her research focuses on user interactions with AI systems. Her work has contributed to the emerging field of Human-Centred Explainable AI. Much of her work is to empower everyone to use AI systems effectively. She previously gave an excellent talk on AI two years ago and a lot has changed since then.

As always, dates and reminders will be sent out nearer the dates.

New u3a Talks Programme on Social Science and Public Policy Topics

SOCIAL POLICY

Following the success of our u3a Science talks programme (70 talks delivered to date with strong attendance numbers) we decided that in addition to maintaining the Science Talks programme we would also start a new programme of talks on Social Science and Public Policy topics.

The Social Science and Public Policy talks programme began last October and has been well received by our membership and large interest from our members. The talks will be held at 11am in the **Smart Hall** on the following dates. There will be a charge of £2 to cover expenses.

NEXT MEETING

25th September

Title: Immigration: A Scottish Perspective and How Scotland Supports Refugees by Dr Sam Fisher

Summary: Immigration is one of the decade's most hotly debated topics. But what do global migration trends and recent Scottish data actually show? This talk will explore how and why how migration and asylum policies are changing, and what impact this has on Scotland's communities. Why is Scotland's living in Scotland. We will be joined by a representative from the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum, who will discuss local work to support refugee integration.

Speaker: Dr Sam Fisher is a political geographer working at the Centre for Public Policy University of Glasgow. The researcher has states manage their borders and govern migration, including the ethics of immigration detention. The Scottish Government's New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and informed the Scottish Parliament's review of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Coffee and a Chat

Next U3A Coffee and a Chat

Coffee and a Chat events are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month in Helensburgh Civic Centre cafe, 38 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh G84 7PG at 10.30am.

Sometimes a U3A sign will be displayed on a table. But if not, the cafe staff will usually be able to tell you which is the U3A group.

Go to the counter and order your tea or coffee (which will be charged to your own tab). Then find the U3A group (there are usually numbers between 6 and 12 (if it's not always the same members who attend the event and no booking is required, so new members are always welcome).

Now relax and enjoy your refreshments.

The cafe is a relaxed quasi-environment, which makes it easier to converse and meet everyone at the table.

The Coffee and a Chat group details can be found on the website Groups page

u3a Matters Magazine Paper Copy Opt Out

We are aware that some people do not wish to receive the magazine in paper copy form. We feel that this is a wasteful waste and postage, would like to opt out. A large number of members have already opted out, following our email requesting preference.

Magazines will be made available at the monthly meetings to collect if required. The u3a Matters Magazine can also be on the website CMAS page every month. The February, Spring , Summer , Autumn, Winter 2026 and Feb, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter 2027 issues, Spring and summer 2028 editions are already there.

I will add a link to the next edition when it is available online.

You can always opt back in again should you so wish.

If you would like to stop receiving the magazine by post, please let us know by clicking HERE.

Note - they do take quite a while to stop sending the paper copies since I have unsubscribed you but we have asked them to look into this.

Kind regards

The Helensburgh and District u3a committee

Social Media

The Helensburgh and District U3A Facebook group has a number of members who have joined recently. This group can be a useful source for the subjects, dates and times of monthly meetings, Science Group meetings and other interesting events. It is also a place for Science and Group members and group leaders about current events and meetings. It is also updated regularly with news and interesting articles and photos of events and activities of members of Helensburgh & District U3A members. The more people that join and contribute, the more information we can share.

The Helensburgh and District U3A Members Facebook page can be found using Click Link

Please ensure that our website has a MEMBERS page. If you are a group leader and would like to share with the members, send me it by email and I can add it to the website and also to the Facebook page.

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