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u3a Helensburgh & District

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



October 2026

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 U3NO page on our website

Our groups are a fantastic way of meeting people with similar interests and enjoying a wide range of activities together. Please look at our pictures on the notice boards at meetings and visit the group pages here.

We have 303 active members and growing.

Current active groups include:

Arts and Crafts

Bingo
Book Groups (2 & 3 planned)
Current Affairs 1,2 & 3
Dining Out
E-Mu-Ing
French Conversation
Gardening
Gentle Cycling
German Conversation
Golf - Putting
Local History
Mahjong
Monday Walking
Opera Appreciation
Philosophy
Photography
Poetry Appreciation
Quiz Group
Scrabble Group talks
Social Bridge
Spanish Conversation
Table Tennis
Theatre Group
Wednesday Golf - Select, Opera, Musicals & Cinema
Wine Appreciation

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

We are looking for volunteers to join the committee. If you feel that you could help, please contact Gordon Cox on gmdrying@gmail.com We also need volunteers to sign members in at meetings. Can you help?

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. If you can bring your own reusable cup or mug, it will reduce waste.



Next Monthly Meeting

Oct 5 - Margo Murray of Home Energy Scotland

The title of the talk will be **Home Energy Scotland in the Helensburgh & Lomond area.** Home Energy Scotland is delivered by the Energy Saving Trust. Home Energy Scotland provides free, impartial energy advice to homeowners, tenants and landlords across the Highlands and Islands.

Our remote and hybrid team operates throughout the region, ensuring that even those living across the extensive geographic area can access our support.

In my role as Outreach Team Lead for Argyll and Bute, I am responsible for:

The Outreach Team provides tailored guidance on renewable energy technologies and retrofit measures, undertakes regular visits to communities, and delivers locally targeted projects in collaboration with local organisations.

Future Monthly Meetings

Nov 2 – Crispian Best - Medicine and surgery in Nelson's navy "I was a Consultant in Paediatric anaesthesia at Hammersmith Care at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, until retiring in 2000. I am a Trustee of Hammersmith Care and Hon. Archivist to the Roll-Call for Nelson's Association and Others.

My interest in naval medicine in the 18th Century comes from both my background and my reading. I come from an English West Country family with many naval connections, some of whom served with Nelson and one who was the Surgeon in Nelson's H.C.S Foudroyan. Frederick Marshall and Valentia Patrick Symmons. Valentia was the Surgeon in Nelson's Ship HMS Endeavour, a recipe of the first ship that Captain James Cook commanded on his first voyage of discovery. Valentia was the medical officer for the Sail Training Association, now the Tall Ships Youth Trust, and crewed for many voyages on their two Brigantines and Barque. I have been sailing since I was 11 and first had a rollin had on the Clyde for 10 years.

Dec 7 – Christmas Lunch

Jan 4 2027 - Dougie Wylie - " The refurbishment of the Parish Church Tower and Clock."



Our monthly events continue to be extremely well attended and enjoyed by our members. If you have a subject you'd present at the general or science group events, please get in touch.

Science Group Talks



Next Monthly Talk

u3a Science talk Friday 16th October at 11.00am in Helensburgh Church Halls. (Small Hall). Please note that this is a change of venue. Coffee available from 10.45am. There is a charge of £3 towards room hire.

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

Summary - How we use holography, a digital projection, graphics cards, and a bit of physics to create a new type of endoscope the thickness of a human hair. A new endoscope can reach the places that other endoscopes cannot.

Speaker- Mike Padgett is a Royal Society Research Professor at the University of Glasgow. He has a BSc from the University of Liverpool. He has a PhD from Keele. Chair of Natural Philosophy since 2011 and served as Vice Principal and Head of College of Science and Engineering. He was educated at the University of Manchester, the University of York, the University of St Andrews, and Trinity College Cambridge. He is married to Sarah, and has 3 children.

Mike's research was there he developed pioneering work on optical angular momentum, for which they were awarded the Royal Medal. The research group he leads at the University of Glasgow is developing new types of light for angular momentum, including optical tweezers and optical spanners, which are used to trap and rotate microscopic objects in 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 (FInstP), in 2012 a Fellow of the Photonics Instrumentation Engineers (SPIE). In 2013 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) – the UK's National Academy of Sciences.

Future Monthly Talks

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

Summary -
"Should we extract natural geothermal heat from several kilometres underground to provide a reliable source of relatively supply baseload energy for heating and hot water systems via district heating networks? Geothermal energy can help to reduce our supply and our limited energy storage capacity across the UK. Scotland has the best potential for geothermal energy and the development of geothermal energy is surprisingly limited. The nearest functioning deep geothermal system to Helensburgh is in Southampton. Deep geothermal energy is a renewable energy and we are having a new generation of geothermal exploration across Scotland's diverse geological settings. Then we'll look at the challenges of developing deep geothermal energy in the north of Scotland and how they could tackle problems associated with our gradual transition away from hydrocarbon-based heating. Finally, we'll look at the research work that the British Geological Survey (BGS) and other academic groups undertake in partnership 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 risks of AI and what it means to develop AI systems that are "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 University of Glasgow. She joined the University of Glasgow in 2019 after working in industry on user interactions with AI systems. Her work has contributed to Explainable AI (XAI) and Responsible AI (RAI). The prime aim of her research is to put people at the centre of AI systems effective. She previously gave an excellent talk on AI two years ago and a lot has changed since then!

2027 Dates

Jan 15th Title: Biodegradable electronics by Prof Jeff Kettle

Feb 12th Title: Control of human obesity by Prof Naveed Sattar

Mar 12th Title: Ageing in birds by Prof Pat Monaghan

Apr 16th Title: Shortrock Holmes and tropical diseases by Prof Mike Barrett

May 14th Title: Chronic Pain Experience and Impact by Prof Barbara Nicholl

Jun 18th Title: Out Biome by Prof Simon Milling

Jul 16th Title: Mosquitoes in Scotland by Dr Georgia Kirby

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

New u3a Talks Programme on Social Science and Public Policy Topics

SOCIAL POLICY

Following the success of our u3a Science talks programme (75 talks delivered to date with strong attendance numbers) we have decided to launch a new programme. The aim of the programme we would introduce a new programme of talks on Social Science and Public Policy topics.

The Social Science and Public Policy talks programme began in October 2025 and will continue through to December 2027 subject interest from our members. The talks will be held at 11am in the **Small Hall** on the following dates. There will be a charge of £2 to cover expenses.

NEXT MEETING

23rd October



Title: 'Holding power to account? Looking forward to the U.S. Midterm elections and back to the Scottish Parliament elections in 2026'

Summary – It's often said that elections are how we hold those in power to account – but to do voters really believe that way? In this talk Professor Christopher Carman will look at what we can consider whether (and how) American voters will use their vote to judge the record of those in office, then looks back to the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021 and what we might learn from the Scottish Election Study, it asks whether Scottish voters did the same.

Speaker: Prof Christopher Carman holds the Stevenson Chair of Citizenship at the University of Glasgow and has been part of the Scottish Election Study team since 2007. He is the co-author of several books and articles examining Scottish and US politics, most recently Disintegrate (OUP, 2020), which explores public support for political compromise in the United States.

27th November
Title: Adam Smith's economic legacy at 250 by Prof Alex Trew



Summary – Two hundred and fifty years ago, Adam Smith published An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. The book founded the discipline of economics, but it also changed the world. Smith's ideas inspired the imagination as a new champion of markets and self-interest. The real Smith is more interesting, and more important. This talk will explore Smith's life and work, his relationship with Glasgow, student at fourteen, Professor of Logic and then of Moral Philosophy, and later Rector. In years he called the happiest and most respected of his life. He wrote not only a history of astronomy, where he argues that scientific theories are inventions of the imagination, but to make a disordered world intelligible. He was not the first to see the role of self-love, he thought he was doing in his own two great books. Then The Theory of Moral Sentiments, on how our moral judgements are shaped by our relationships with others, and then the Wealth of Nations. The Wealth of Nations itself, including the parts usually left out, is a subtle and sophisticated account of the role of workers, and the clear role he saw for government. Finally, Smith's legacy. Why did he become so influential? Why do we have institutions one another, the overlook common "greed is good" caricature, and a recent recovery of the broader, richer Smith? And what can we learn from economists have learned about the wealth of nations since.

Speaker: Alex Trew is Professor of Economics at the Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, a member of the Council of the Scottish Economic Society, a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and a co-editor of the Review of Economic Studies. He is the author of The Wealth of Nations at 250: A volume of contributions from some of the world's leading economists and Adam Smith scholars

(https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/wealth-of-nations-at-250/C2A2A3B4A9E67BAC1D94B13B8F3B8F2D)

2027 Dates

Jan 22nd - Prof. Jim Conroy - Scottish Education "Why does Scottish education struggle so much"

Feb 19th - Dr. Louise Lennon – Pensions and pensioners "Ageing Well? Inequality and the New Realities of Later Life"

Mar 19th - Prof. Des McNulty - "Scottish Universities: the case for change?"

Apr 23rd - Dr. Paul Reilly - "Impact of Social media of parades, protests and civil unrest"

May 21st - Dr. Alan Brown – "The legal and ethical issues surrounding surrogacy, assisted reproduction, and non-traditional families"

June 25th - Dr Ewan Gibbs - How Britain's energy policy has evolved through responding to crises since 1945"

July & August - no meetings

Coffee and a Chat



Next U3A Coffee and a Chat

Coffee and a Chat meets each week on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the 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 café staff will usually be able to tell you where the U3A group is.

Go to the counter and order your tea or coffee (which will be served in a china cup). Now go and join the U3A group, which usually numbers between 6 and 12 (it's not always the same members who attend the event and no booking is required, so members and attendees vary).

New members are particularly welcome.

The café is a relatively quiet environment, which makes it easier to converse and hear everyone at the table.

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

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Discover Top Stage & Screen Outings with 'Going Out!'



Have you been wanting to catch a brilliant opera performance, a live ballet, the latest musical, or a great film, but haven't got around to booking? Or perhaps you'd just prefer to go along with good company?

Our 'Going Out!' group has now been running for a full year, enjoying fantastic trips to top-quality shows across both Glasgow and Helensburgh.

We keep things completely informal and easygoing. Here is how it works:

No pressure - We run a simple WhatsApp group where we regularly post upcoming events.
You choose - Pick and choose only the outings that appeal to you - there is never any obligation to sign up for something you'd rather pass on.
Meet up - Before heading on the showtime, we often combine our outings with a casual bite to eat, a light supper, or a quick drink beforehand or after.

With the exciting reopening of The Tower Cinema, we are looking forward to planning even more convenient local cinema trips right here on our doorstep, alongside our regular outings/events in Glasgow. Our area has an extraordinarily rich cultural scene - joining us is a stress-free way to make the absolute most of it.

Get Involved

Whether you're a lifelong arts lover or just fancy trying something new with a friendly group, we'd love to welcome you.

See **the PDF** to get a flavour of the events on offer – something for all tastes.

For The Tower listings - click HERE

The Going Out! Ballet, Opera, Musical & Cinema group is having an 'open' coffee meet-up - we'd like to invite any u3a members interested in finding out about our group along. The idea is to let potential members know what we do and how we operate. Any u3a member is welcome to join us for a quick coffee.

The meet-up is on October 20 @10.30 am in Helensburgh - we'll decide the venue later but it will be La Barca or Civic Centre. Please contact Liz Wilson for the venue nearer the time.

To join or find out more: Email Liz Wilson
at liz.wilson31@icloud.com

For more info, visit our Group page on the website HERE

Keep an eye out: We are planning an informal autumnal get-together soon to kick off the new season - details will be announced shortly!

Look forward to seeing you. Liz, Francine & Chris





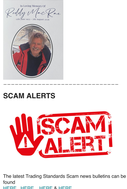
Book Group 3



For potential new book group members .

We currently have two well subscribed book groups but have have had waiting list for a possible third group for quite sometime.
We are looking for someone who could get people together to plan where and when regular group meetings could take place. If you are interested in perhaps leading this or just want to be in a new group , please email
Glenda.Caldwell@ymail.com
Thank you

Current Affairs Group 2



We have vacancies for up to 4 members interested in joining our Group.Next meeting at Civic Centre Cafe on October 6th at 10 am . Friendly welcome to newcomers.
Thank you
Moira MURNING

u3a Matters Magazine Paper Copy Opt Out

We are aware that some people do not wish to receive the monthly u3a magazine by post and, in the interest of saving 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 borrow or keep and a link to the online magazine will be put on the website LINKS page every month. The February, Spring , Summer , Autumn, Winter 2024 and Feb, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter 2025 and February, Spring and summer 2026 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 once 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 growing membership currently 88 members and growing. The group can be a useful source for the subjects, dates and times of u3a activities and events. Please remember this is information about U3A. It can be used to quickly contact group members and group leaders about current events and meetings. It is also updated regularly with news and interesting information. Please join the group, it is private and restricted to 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 this link

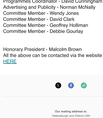
Please note that our website has a MEMBERS page. If you have anything that you would like to share with the members, send me it by email and I can add it to the website and also to the Facebook page.
The page can be found HERE.

Members

Sadly - Arlene Munro and Roddy MacRae have passed away. Our thoughts are with their families.



SCAM ALERTS



The latest Trading Standards Scam news bulletins can be found
HERE , HERE , HERE & HERE

Beware of ChatGPT shopping scam - see HERE

Beware of addresses using cyrillic characters to fool you - see the article HERE

Be vigilant - Stay Safe

u3a Mailing

National u3a News

Watch the u3a news video HERE

The latest (September 2026) u3a friends newsletter can be found HERE

To subscribe to the latest U3A friends newsletters - Click HERE

The u3a Scotland newsletters can be found on our website LINKS page. The Autumn 2025 edition is already there.

The online u3a magazine can be found on our website LINKS page.

u3a Scotland

find out more about u3a Scotland online groups HERE

Local Events

Helensburgh Bowling Club

Helensburgh Bowling Club have been holding coffee mornings (£3 for tea, coffee and scones) with craft stalls, game and toy stalls, plants, home baking stalls and much, much more to raise funds for the maintenance of the clubhouse. These are well attended, great fun and open to all. The next coffee morning are held 10.00-12.00 at the bowling club on the corner of East Abercromby St & Sinclair St on the **last Friday of the month.**



The Tower Cinema

Please support the Tower Cinema, a fantastic resource saved by volunteers and now in community ownership

Keep an eye on their films and events on their website https://tickets.thetowncyw.scot/home

The Board and co-opted committee members agreed at the 2026 AGM are as follows :-

Chair - Gordon Mackie
Vice Chair - **Post Vacant - would you like to join?**
Treasurer - Anne Bernard
Secretary - Ed McGrachan
Minute Secretary - Peter Holmes
Membership Secretary - Archie Westwood
IT Coordinator - Gordon Mackie
Speakers Coordinator - Graham Caldwell
Programmes Coordinator - David Cunningham
Advertising and Publicity - Norman McNally
Committee Member - Wendy Jones
Committee Member - David Clark
Committee Member - Geoffrey Hollman
Committee Member - Debbie Gourlay

Honorary President - Malcolm Brown
All the above can be contacted via the website contacts page HERE

Our mailing address is:
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c/o Hermitage Hall
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Helensburgh, G84 9JE
United Kingdom

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