

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

We will soon be turning the corner into a new year and, judging by the weather, it is hard to imagine that it is almost winter. The grass is still growing, some trees remain in leaf, squirrels are still around and daffodils are now on sale. I read recently that this is the 'balmiest' autumn on record. However we are enjoying this unexpected pattern of mild weather, particularly after the experience of a disappointing summer.

We have a great deal to look forward to next year as the programme continues with more interesting talks and speakers at our planned open meetings. These meetings, not surprisingly, are attracting many more members than in the past. In addition to being occasions when members can enjoy interesting talks, there are also opportunities to come together socially and to meet other members. It is evident that many people like the socialising as it is often hard to persuade some members to make their way to the hall for the talk. Perhaps we should start earlier!

I hope that everyone enjoys the rest of this session and if you can think of any ideas for improvement, please feel free to pop them in the 'ideas' box.



On that note it remains for me to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Good New Year in 2012.

Wilma Coleman

TRAVEL GROUP

A small party from this newly established group headed for Italy at the end of October. We packed a lot of typical tourist activity into experiencing the wealth of treasures of the city of Florence and tasting other delights as well.

A climb to the roof of the Cathedral dome was a memorable experience.

The final day was spent in admiring the wonders of Pisa, where some of us giddily ascended the famous tilting tower.

John Andrews



BIRDERS OUT AND ABOUT

Members of the Bird Study Group enjoyed a day's birdwatching on Tuesday 18th October. The usual meeting room at Letham St Mark's wasn't available for the October meeting, so members travelled to the RSPB Nature Reserve at Loch of Kinordy for some practical bird study. The group were met by the reserve's Assistant Warden, Kim Ross and two local volunteers, who gave the group an introduction to the reserve and then helped them in identifying some of the species of wild-fowl present on the loch.

Several species of Ducks, Geese and Swans were identified, many of which were new to most of the members. Binoculars and telescopes were used to get close up views from the hides at the water's edge and the group made use of the helpful species cards provided by the RSPB.

After the hard work, members had a break for coffee and cake, along with the reserve staff. Then the group set off for a second study session, this time at Forfar Loch, where several additional species were recorded, such as Grebes, Cormorant, Coot and Moorhen. In total the members recorded more than 25 separate species, which was very satisfactory for a fairly chilly and blustery October afternoon.

Brian Gall

One to figure out

This is freaky: this year we have experienced four unusual dates:
1/1/11; 1/11/11; 11/1/11; and 11/11/11

Now figure this out: take the last two digits of the year that you were born plus the age that you are this year, and it will equal 111.

PS this only works if you were born in the 20th century !

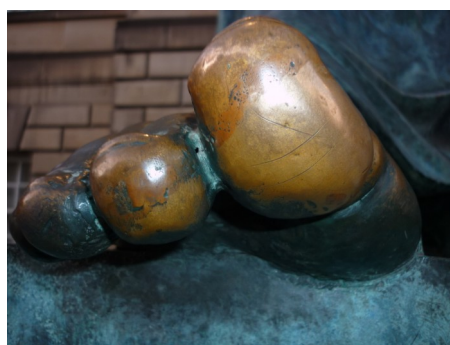


Photo Quiz
Can you identify the Subject of this 'somewhere in Scotland' scene ?
Answer on p 2

Website

www.perthu3a.org.uk

SEEN ON A WEBSITE - but edited for length !

Whilst enjoying a Mediterranean cruise I noticed an elderly lady sitting alone in the dining room. I also noticed that all the staff seemed very familiar with this lady. Our waiter said she had been on board for the last four cruises. As we left the dining room I stopped to say hello. I said, "I understand you've been on the last four cruises, I can't help wondering why".

She replied without a pause, "It's cheaper than a nursing home.

The average cost for a nursing home is \$200 per day. I have checked on cruise reservations and I can get a long term discount and senior discount price of \$135 per day. That leaves \$65 a day for gratuities which will only be \$10 per day. I will have as many as 10 meals a day if I can waddle to the restaurant, or I can have room service (which means I can have breakfast in bed every day of the week).

The cruise ship has three swimming pools, a workout room, free washers and dryers, and shows every night. They have free toothpaste, soap and shampoo.

I will get to meet new people every 7 or 14 days. TV broken? Light bulb needs changing? Need to have the mattress replaced? No Problem! Clean sheets and towels every day, and you don't even have to ask.

Do you want to see South America, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, or name where you want to go? There will be a ship ready and waiting.

P.S. And don't forget, when you die, they just dump you over the side at no charge."

WALKERS ABROAD

Four members of the Perth U3A Hill-walking Group have spent a most enjoyable week in SW Bulgaria, near the ski resort of Bansko, walking in and near the Pirin National Park. They were very fortunate to be the only guests in the hotel, it being the last week of the summer" season. The opportunity had arisen because the very hospitable English couple running the hotel had already entertained another U3A group and had realised that U3A folk were a good target market. Bulgaria, its mountains and culture lived up to all expectations and gave a fascinating view of one of the less well-known parts of Europe. Many thanks to Cris Bonomy who did all the organising. Ian Tait



On a Bulgarian mountain top

NOTICE Book Club 1 will not be meeting on December 14, but will meet on January 11 at 2.30pm in Quayside Court as usual.



POEM BY A FRIEND

When cancer came
The moment of truth
After much pain, much anger,
Hitting out in as many ways
As might bring relief
Was strangely expected.

Not knowing what was to come,
What to do, to say,
To feel, to be;
Not knowing how to tell it,
To those around and near me.

Time itself was all early
morning,
Burning out tunelessly,
wastefully.
In solitary tears and grief,
Making nothing of the
defence
Of self-esteem and control.

But then came for and to me,
In ones and twos,
And threes and fours,
Those who cared, gave time
and heed,
To overcome my foolish-ness.

Sometimes in brusque
words,
Sometimes in actions louder
still,
Sometimes in kind deeds
And kinder still affection,
Sometimes just listening.

These off-beat angels came
and scattered
Star-dust in my hair and eyes,
Sheer altruism - so special;
They knew how to be,
To make an opportunity of ill,

To show humanity staying
In every corner of life,
Giving what is best balm
Of all the gifts to receive -
Love and respect.

NEW GROUP CONTACTS

Approaching Art
Ed. Link 01337 827637

Geology
Bob Duguid 01577 862997

Thematic Stamp Collecting
Stanley Brown 01738 628818

SPECIAL EVENT

Burns Lunch
Thursday 19th January at the Grampian Hotel.
12.30 for 1.00 Price £12.50

Booking inquiries to Margaret Garvie on
01738 620392

Photography in the Raw

The Resource Centre of the Third Age Trust has supported the Photography Group by purchasing a new DVD "Photography in the Raw" by David Noton. This DVD has been loaned to Perth U3A for 3 weeks at a cost of the return postage. The DVD will be available for other U3As to use on loan. Many thanks to the Resource Centre for their support. Jeffrey Screeton, Group Leader - Photography 1 & 2

Photo quiz
Statue of David Hume
in Edinburgh