



# U3A Ireland

Age Action

IRELAND

For All Older People

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Margaret Fitzpatrick,  
Development Officer U3A

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## CALLING ALL MEMBERS

We are looking at ways to add to the activities of the U3A groups so for that reason we are sending out a questionnaire to all U3A members to get your ideas as to how we can improve the network. I look forward to your responses!

U3A Ireland is funded by



## Welcome to U3A

My name is Margaret Fitzpatrick. In January I became Education Development Officer with Age Action. I am re-launching the U3A newsletter and hope that this will be an interesting read for you.

This newsletter will be issued every three months and I urge you to write to me with any news, opinions or stories that you would like to share with us. A bit on myself. I began working with Age Action in 2008 as the development officer for

the 'Getting Started' programme for Age Action Ireland. In this role, I set up courses for beginners on computers that were taught by trained volunteers. My new role as development officer for lifelong learning is in some ways more open and demanding. The challenges are to support U3A groups, establish new U3A's and to keep you informed on all that is going on. I hope that this newsletter will help me to do this. I look forward to serving you all.

*Margaret Fitzpatrick*

## Work experience with Age Action

I want to give you a brief introduction of myself, because I started to work at Age Action just a few weeks ago. I will work in the main with Margaret Fitzpatrick to support the educational programmes of Age Action.

My name is Verena Krekeler, I'm a graduated student from Germany. I took my degree in Gerontology in 2009 and came over to Ireland to gain more professional experience.

The purpose of my work experience is to gain more practical experience in the field of gerontology in Ireland such as psychology, sociology, geriatrics, medicine as well as social work and social policy. I am delighted to have been given this opportunity by Age Action and particularly to support the educational field for older people. I have already gained some work experience before and during my studies in Germany.



I have been specifically involved in projects that dealt with theories of care, as well as planning and managing leisure time activities.

It is very interesting to get to know about older people in Ireland and through my work placement at Age Action I have participated on a

## Information Sharing

### Sandford Cinema

Howard Linnane, former employee of Age Action is working on a project to commemorate the many years of Ranelagh's very own cinema Sandford cinema, as it was a major focal point of the local community from 1914 to 1978. If you have any personal memories of the Sandford that you would be willing to share, please contact him by email on: [sandfordproject@yahoo.ie](mailto:sandfordproject@yahoo.ie) or phone 085 1351822

number of projects and services however my main role is to support the U3A programme. I have facilitated on the Getting Started programme and have acted as tutor in assisting older people in basic computer skills, which I have found very rewarding.

I am looking forward to continuing my work with Age Action during the summer and maybe to have a chat with you at a U3A meeting!

Verena Krekeler

### A year at "An Cosan"

*Swap the image of old age from 'grey' to 'golden'! This course embraces the approach that older age can be positive and life-enhancing – and that learning is life-long."*

This is the motto of the U3A group 'An Cosan', who meets usually every fortnight in the 'Centre of Learning, Leaders and Enterprise' in Tallaght.

Many older people join the U3A group to take part in different activities, to meet other older people and make new friends.

There is a huge diversity of activities – the group visited different places around Dublin during the year and Imelda Hanratty, who runs the group, invited different speakers, who gave a talk on special topics. The group is very active in different ways. Besides listening to talks or taking

part at cultural events, the U3A members share skills or hobbies, celebrate birthdays and support each other as well by swapping information and sharing problems or experiences of their daily lives. Moreover there are meetings dealing with physical exercises to keep fit and active.

The U3A group 'An Cosan' is a place for life-long learning as well as for finding a community, making new friends and keeping up activity. To provide you with a more detailed insight into this U3A group, I want to give you a brief overview about some activities and events during the last year:

The year started off on 2 October 2008 with 11 people with a class held during the "Positive Ageing Week". Everyone who was talking about a special hobby, brought an item (like an instrument) and presented it to the other U3A members. Interesting chats were developed and the group had a special Toast to Life with sparkling wine. The October meeting ended with a visit of the Civic Theatre to see the Greenhills Variety Show, which was enjoyable for everyone.

During November and December different speakers gave talks at 'An Cosan'. Nyamwenda informed the U3A members about Global Citizenship and Fair Trade and Orla Walsh from the Breast Check Clinic gave a talk as well. Apart from dealing with these topics, the group was engaged in Christmas preparation by making

physical exercises and the U3A group got new experiences by trying chair dancing or line dancing. At the beginning of February the group attended the AONTAS Senior Learner Network meeting in the Burlington Hotel. AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation and the Senior Learner Network meeting was part of the AONTAS Adult Learners Festival which aims to promote and celebrate lifelong learning.

Further one group meeting took the form of a 'book exchange'. This means that the members bring in books to speak about and to swap with other members. In addition there were different outings to the Civic Theatre to see the play 'Little Gem' and also an Opera. The group went on 'Isabel's Day' to the 'Shanty Education and Training Centre' to share stories and spend time together. The year ended with a last formal meeting at the Airfield House in Dundrum. The gardens and coffee shop proved to be good locations for a chat about events of the last year and to make plans for future meetings.



This newsletter is for U3A members. It is about sharing ideas, stories and articles of interest. If you have attended an interesting talk, read an inspiring article or book, or enjoyed a trip away, perhaps you would like to write about it for our readers.

If you have tried anything recently that has been particularly successful I would be delighted to hear about it.

Please send articles or details of meetings to:

Margaret Fitzpatrick email [u3a@ageaction.ie](mailto:u3a@ageaction.ie)

## U3A Blessington

U3A Blessington, went to visit Mount Stewart, Strangford Lough, in May 2009. It is now owned by the National Trust, though Lady Maire Elizabeth Vane-Tempest-Stewart is still resident there. We left Blessington by coach at 8.30 am – a cold dreary day. We had a most efficient driver, Wayne, and we stopped for a break in the Carrickdale Hotel on the way. I recommend their scones! When we got to our destination, the sun came out and while it was wet underfoot, we had a guided tour of the gardens. The first stop was where Lady Maire lay in her pram as a baby and there is a

statue of her surrounded by bells and cockleshells. The Shamrock garden also has hedging depicting a harp for Ireland and a crown for England. Many plants and shrubs are growing in almost lush tropical conditions. After a light lunch in the café, it was so warm some of the members opted to take the lake walk. As a patchworker, I was lucky I opted for the house, as there was an extensive exhibition of wallhangings, dotted around the house – part of the previous weekend's Fayre. Some pieces echoed the motif in the ceiling or floor in the room where they were displayed. The chairs used in the Congress of Vienna are still there as are coronets and chairs used for coronations.

Wayne drove us homewards via

the Ferry and then the rain really came down again.

We have a local Millenium Choir and we had wonderful entertainment in the 'bus from the members present. In view of the weather, we pushed for home and completed the day with a meal in a local restaurant. Thanks to the U3A member who organised the whole day, obviously he arranged that the sun came out at the right time.

*Anne Cowie,  
Blessington U3A*

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## U3A Baldoyle—A great day out at Castletown House



The members of the U3A group 'Baldoyle' usually meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in Sutton. Because there are no regularly meetings during the summer, the group decided, with the support and efforts of Sheila Cullen to organise a series of outings to keep in touch and to get to know different places in and around Dublin.

I was delighted to attend one of the outings of this U3A group and would like to report about this great day:

The field trip brought us to the Castletown House, Celbridge in Kildare on 14<sup>th</sup> of July. Castletown House is an imposing building and the largest and most significant Palladian style country house in Ireland. It was built in 1722 for William Conolly, the speaker of the Irish House of Commons from 1715.

The guided tour took almost two hours and it was really interesting to get to know the story of the building and the people who lived there as well as the architecture and to listen to a few stories, which occurred there. The tour delivered a good insight into the life of the Conolly family and the different rooms, so that you could really imagine in which way they lived there. You felt like being displaced into another time.

The architecture is amazing, because the designs of a number of important architects were used, particularly of Alessandro Gailiei (1691-1737), but of Edward Lovett Pearce and later of

Sir William Chambers as well. The house was inherited by Tom Conolly in 1758 and the interior decoration was finished by his wife Lady Louisa during the 1760s and 1770s.

The Conolly-Carew family continued to live there until the entire estate was sold by them in 1965 to a property developer.

After the guided tour we had to come back to the year 2009, which was not too easy after all the amazing impressions of the last two hours.

We finished the outing with light lunch at the restaurant and had the occasion to talk about the tour and the different impressions we received. It was a great day out and enjoyable for everyone.

I want to say thanks for welcoming me on the outing and wish you more enjoyable field trips with other U3A members in the next months!!

*Verena Krekeler*

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The luck of the gods was with us for this trip. Wet weather was forecast for this outing and we all had our rain gear with us and it was not until we got on the special St Kevins bus back that it arrived. On arrival in Glendalough we divided into two groups one who wanted to walk around the small lake (they took a pack lunch with them) and then those who would prefer to visit the old church ruins and

graveyard dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century which was near where the bus let us down and would collect us again.

This outing is a full days' trip because there are so many things to see and do, there is a shop with lots of information on walks and history of the place, also a restaurant serving hot meals and snacks, which we enjoyed after the fresh Wicklow air. We were glad to sit for a while and enjoy the view on the return journey to the stop in Dawson Street, opposite the Mansion house.

Mary Ryan (Baldoyle U3A)

## U3A Meetings

### Dublin City U3A

Meet at the Chester Beatty Library at 11am on the last Tuesday of every month. Contact John Roche: (01) 2017490

### Blessington U3A

Meet the third Tuesday of each month. Contact Anne Cowie: (01) 45 865159

### Ballyroan U3A

Meet every second Monday at 11am in Ballyroan Library. Contact Al Connor: (01) 4903212

### Sutton and Baldoyle U3A

Meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm, Baldoyle library. Contact Sheila Cullen: (01) 8393868

### Ballymun Library U3A

Meet every second Monday at 2pm, except Bank Holidays. Contact Ruth Meehan: (01) 8571673.

### Blackrock U3A

Meet every Friday at 10.45am in Blackrock Education Centre. Contact Eileen Larkin: (01) 4557653

### Lucan U3A

Contact Dympna Fennell: 6282243

### An Cosan (Tallaght)

Contact Imelda Hanratty: (01) 4628488

### Maynooth U3A

Meetings are every second Friday: 11-1.00pm in the Town Library Maynooth. Contact Age Action: (01) 4756989.

### Roscara U3A

Contact Helen Waldren: 949621233

### Active Virginians U3A

Contact Gean Cullen, Lake View, Rautavan, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan

### Waterford U3A

Contact Terry (Theresa) Moloney - Tel. 051 876542 or email tmloney@wit.ie

### Ailesbury / Old Bawn U3A

Contact Sean Hennessy: 452 8418

### Boyle U3A

Contact Martin Spillane: 071-964-7843

## News and upcoming events

### PAW Event

Positive Ageing Week is taking place from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009. It is a week of celebrating ageing in Ireland with events, seminars and discussion groups. In 2008, Anne Neville the development officer for Lifelong Learning hosted a successful event at the Mansion House. This year, I am hoping to replicate some of those successes by running an event in the Mansion house. The Lifelong Learning Event will be run from 11am to 2pm on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September. I would like to invite you all. Details have not been finalised as yet however I would be grateful for any suggestions you might have. I am hoping to talk about the U3A programme and how we could raise awareness of it in Ireland. However, I would really like to invite some interesting guest speakers also. Please do let me

know if you have any ideas or thoughts. *Margaret Fitzpatrick*

### Upcoming events

Just to keep you posted on two speakers that would be interested in coming to speak with you:

- *Irish Aid Speaker*

Barbara Wilson from the Department of Foreign Affairs would like to offer talks on the work of Irish Aid.

- *Health speakers*

Caroline Peppard from the HSE would like to offer talks on the health in later life.

- *Over 50's matinee club in the Abbey Theatre.*

As a members you meet and enjoy a catch up over a cup of coffee/tea and attend post show question and answer sessions with members of the cast.

Contact details: Lisa Farrelly the Engage and Learning Coordinator on 887 2216. (The closing date for this is October 16<sup>th</sup> 2009.)

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