



U3A in Scotland
Scottish Charity SC 030370



Summer School Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 August 2020

Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling, Airthrey Rd, Stirling FK9 4LA

Courses and Tutors

Subject to demand we plan to offer the following courses:

Ancient Civilisations of Mesoamerica: Olmec, Maya and Aztecs: Prof. Maria Chester, East Berwickshire U3A

Creative Writing: on Writing Short Stories: Gilly Beckett, East Berwickshire U3A

Exploring Poetry: Peter Holmes, Forth Valley U3A

Immunology - Our Immune System: Friend or Foe?: Prof. David I Stott, Bearsden and Milngavie U3A

The 1820 Radical Rising in Scotland: Irene Scullion, Glasgow West End U3A and Helen Glassford, Paisley U3A.

Outlines of the courses are given below:

Ancient Civilisations of Mesoamerica: Olmec, Maya and Aztecs

Do you know that tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, beans, peanuts, chocolate, sunflower and almost 60% of all the vegetables we eat came from the Americas? We will find out more about this subject together after travelling with our imagination thousands of years back to the remote New World where the most fabulous civilisations developed and vanished.

We shall study the fabulous and mysterious cultures of Mesoamerica, with an accent on advanced civilisations such as the Olmec, the Maya, the Toltec and finishing with the Aztec or Mexica which civilisation was interrupted by Hernan Cortes and his Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century with the siege and complete destruction of their beautiful capital city: Tenochtitlan, a city built in 1325 in the middle of the lake Texcoco. After the city was burnt and its temples destroyed, the Spaniards built what today is Mexico D.F....

Prof. Maria Chester, East Berwickshire U3A

Creative Writing: on Writing Short Stories

Are you writing? Would you like to write? Have you already embarked on a story? Have you finished your story? Or is your story still the germ of an idea? Wherever you are on your literary journey – summer time-out in an imaginative atmosphere with like-minded folk can go a long way towards solving dilemmas about where your story is going and boosting your confidence along the exciting route towards creating your literary work.

As in all art forms, whether a musician, a dancer, an actor, a sculptor, a painter, there are essential skills which are necessary to your art. During our creative writing summer school course we shall look at defining character and place, and using the writers' basic craft skills that bring your work to life and give it professionalism - and have some fun along the way.

In an address to students in Oxford Ian Fleming encapsulated his approach to writing: say whatever you want, research it properly, and write fast. Never look back...if you persevere, a writer's life has its advantages: 'You carry your office around in your head. And you are far more aware of the world around you. Writing makes you more alive to your surroundings and, since the main ingredient of living is to be alive, this is quite a worthwhile by-product of writing...' *extract from 'The Man with the Golden Typewriter' by Fergus Fleming.*

Gilly Beckett, East Berwickshire U3A.

Exploring Poetry

The seminars will provide an opportunity to explore and examine in some detail the work of a range of poets, most of whom, but not all, will be from the British Isles. We shall focus on poets who, over a period of some eight centuries, have made a particularly important contribution to literature; but alongside this we shall consider how a number of different subjects or themes have been central to poets and poetry, and how in their individual ways poets have approached them. Obvious topics will include love, death, grief, humour, approaches to religious belief, relationships, love of the natural world and commentaries on the state of the world, depending on the interests of the group. In the course of this exploration there will also be an opportunity to discuss the variety of forms in which poetry is written, and how language can be structured and presented in ways that evoke a response from the reader or listener.

As well as exploring the written word, there will be opportunities to hear readings of poetry, and to listen to poets talking about their approach to creativity. No particular background knowledge is required, but those attending should be prepared to contribute to discussion, and to be open to the views of others.

Peter Holmes, Forth Valley U3A.

Immunology - Our Immune System: Friend or Foe?

How do people recover from infections such as the common cold, influenza and childhood diseases without medical intervention? This course will explain how the immune system works starting with the historical background that led to modern discoveries in the nature of the immune system and how it protects us from disease. I shall describe the "footsoldiers" of the immune system, i.e. the different types of cells and antibody molecules that protect us against infections and even attack and destroy cancer. How do these cells talk to each other and learn to recognise an infection? What are antibodies and how are they able to attack and destroy bacteria and viruses. How do vaccines work? What are monoclonal antibodies and how are they being used to treat diseases including cancers, rheumatoid arthritis and many others. Learn what can go wrong when the immune system over-reacts to harmless substances causing allergies, including asthma, or attacks our own tissues resulting in diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes and many others. No prior knowledge of the biomedical sciences is required, just an interest!

Prof. David I Stott, Bearsden and Milngavie U3A

The 1820 Radical Rising in Scotland

Calls for the right to vote, citizens slain in the streets of Greenock, public executions, transportations to Australia, 60,000 on strike, and rigged show-trials – yet the events of the 1820 Rising in Scotland are comparatively unknown or celebrated. This course gives you the opportunity to find out more about the rising which celebrates its bi-centenary in 2020, to learn why many historians regard it as a watershed moment in Scottish history, and to examine how different groups have arrived at different interpretations of the events.

Sessions to be presented include –

The background to the rising, and its causes; the forces opposed to the reformers – including the established Church, Press, and Government; the events of the Rising and its aftermath; stories of some of the individuals involved; the role played by women; music associated with the Rising; and a session exploring both the challenges to U3As in carrying out research and lessons learned.

The course is being presented by members of multiple U3As, who have collaborated for the last two years on research into the rising, including contacting similar groups in England (and descendants of some of those involved at the time). We hope that by the end of the summer school you will have a much better understanding of what happened, why it happened, and how we can learn both from the events themselves and from our experience of researching them. But most of all – we hope that the experience of learning will have been enjoyable, supportive, informative and interesting!

Irene Scullion, Glasgow West End U3A and Helen Glassford, Paisley U3A.
