

# University of the Third Age (U3A) In East Kilbride



## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019

Members agreed that this Annual Report should be distributed digitally rather than in the previous magazine format so this one is meant to be read on-line. Of course, you can also print it but it will use a lot of ink.

### Chair's Foreword

It has been an interesting and fact finding first year as Chair of our U3A, thank you to all committee for hard work and advice.

We have had a good year with new members constantly arriving, current membership approx. 300. With this number we hope to get some more organisers for groups to help clear any waiting lists on Groups. If you feel you would be able and willing to help out please speak to any of the committee. All help and guidance will be given.

Our outing to the V & A museum was enjoyed by all who attended, Thanks to Irene and Babs for organising. Looking forward to



**Norma Churchill**

this year's outing to Oban in June.

The Christmas lunch at the Holiday Inn was a great success and enjoyed by all. Thanks to Joan for organising. All groups seem to be working well, with many subjects covered, there have been some new groups started recently. A huge thank you to all group organisers.

Our speakers have been very varied over the year, thanks to Lesley for an interesting programme. We continue to grow in East Kilbride and look forward to a Happy, Bright and Lively Future. Look forward to coming year as Chair for East Kilbride

### Impending Threat

This Report covers events in 2019. Towards the end of the year we heard reports of a serious virus spreading from Asia into Europe. As we are all now too well aware, it was the beginning of the Covid-19 epidemic which is not only extremely contagious but also particularly deadly to older people. Inevitably it closed down our activities in 2020.

**Hopefully this report will recall happier times in 2019.**

Editor: Tom Berney

## ACTIVITY GROUPS

Art	Horticulture	Theatre Visits
Bridge	Italian	Table Tennis
Bowling	Mahjong	Theatre Visits
Canasta	Meditation	Town & Country Visits
Crafts	Photography/Film	Travelogue
Drama for Fun	Pub Lunch & Discussion	Walking
Family History	Reading for Pleasure	Whist
Forum for Hard of Hearing	Sign Language	Yoga
French German	Scrabble	
Golf	Sign Language	
History	Spanish	
	Table Tennis	

Our range of activity groups continues to grow. New groups on different subjects are created when sufficient members are interested and a member volunteers to lead it. This report contains information on most of them but, if not, you can find it on our prospectus or website.

[www.u3a-in-ek.net](http://www.u3a-in-ek.net)



### MEMBERS MEETINGS

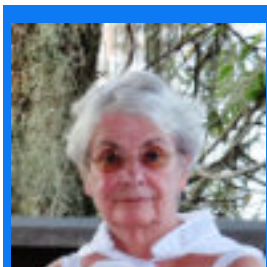
Held at 2.00pm on the first Monday of the month with an interesting guest speaker.

There we display details of activity groups and forthcoming activities. We also have an **annual outing** and a members' **Christmas Lunch**. In 2019 our outing was to Dundee

### 2019-2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman	Norma Churchill	<b>Committee</b>	
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Joan Hodge	Tom Berney	Lesley McIlhagger
<b>Secretary</b>	Elaine de Vries	Helen Biggins	Susan Moody
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jan de Vries	Alan Dickie	Jim Stewart
		Babs Paterson	Val Yaneske

# Secretary's Report



Elaine de Vries

Val Yaneske and Sandra Robb stood down at the AGM 2019 from their respective positions of Chairman and Secretary. Unfortunately, no nominations for the positions were forthcoming leaving the organisation in a very difficult position without its full complement of office bearers. Norma Churchill was persuaded to take on the role of Chairman, Joan Hodge that of Vice Chairman and I agreed to join the committee in the role of Secretary. I had some reservations but the advice and assistance of my predecessor, Sandra Robb, proved invaluable – thank you! Thank you also to my fellow office bearers and committee members who give generously of their time and many talents to ensure that U3A in East Kilbride continues to prosper.

## Council Support

We continue to meet monthly at the Ballerup Hall which has ample accommodation for our increasing numbers and we are grateful to South Lanarkshire Council Leisure Services who continue to offer us this and accommodation across its East Kilbride estate at very reasonable cost. As our range of activities widens our demand for accommodation continues to expand and to date SLC Hall Lets team have been able to assist. SLC have also generously provided grant aid to take the financial edge off the cost to members of the Summer Outing for which all who participate should be grateful!

## Membership

Membership renewal last year was complicated by the need to comply with Data Protection legislation and a huge thank you is due to Susan Moody who coped and survived. Unfortunately Susan is standing down this year but, ever practical, has identified her potential successor who will benefit from a simplified renewal system as well as Susan's support. While not a legal necessity, the use of non-personal email addresses for committee functions is strongly recommended by U3A at UK and Scottish Regional level and you will find us hiding behind our EK job titles with effect from this year's AGM. As well as giving each of us a greater degree of online privacy, the move is intended to help when incumbents change. Once successfully implemented we might need to consider how to provide a similar level of privacy for group leaders. As ever, members are denied access to some activities because a number of groups are full – please, would you consider becoming a group leader? We can provide a lot of support.

Finally, advance notice of a national initiative - U3A Day UK will take place on Wednesday 3 June 2020. The nature of our participation has yet to be agreed but it is likely that we will be looking for volunteers to help spread the word of what a wonderful organisation we are.

*Elaine de Vries*

**Contact details for all of our group organisers are available from our website or the printed prospectus available at our monthly general meetings.**

[www.u3a-in-ek.net](http://www.u3a-in-ek.net)

## Art

A water colour by Elizabeth



Other group work work can be viewed on the internet at

[u3a-in-ek/art/gallery](http://u3a-in-ek/art/gallery)

Come and join us,  
Don't be shy

One arm, a brush and just one eye  
And you could be an artist bye and  
bye.

**Peter Sheppard**

## Bridge

The Bridge Group is now into its second year and has grown from 6 to 10 members. We continue to meet fortnightly in a member's house due to unavailability of other accommodation.

Unfortunately this means the numbers have had to be limited to ten due to space restrictions.

We acquired two baize-covered folding card tables which give us the illusion – or perhaps delusion – of expertise. We are steadily improving over time and those members who started out never having played Bridge before have made excellent progress. Bridge is a game that challenges memory like few other card games and is definitely good for the old grey matter. However, as a group we value the social and team interaction of the game as highly as the mental stimulation and each meeting is something we look forward to with great pleasure.

**Susan Moody**



## Bowling

Despite the poor summer weather the U3A bowling group had a very enjoyable outdoor season at Brancumhall. Thanks go to the Brancumhall Seniors Group for their continued assistance. We were saddened this year when Harry Frew a much valued member of our group passed away. He has been greatly missed as he was such a constant source of experience and support to us all. The membership fluctuated this year with some members moving away but happily being replaced by others.

Our enthusiasm is still strong and throughout the winter season we are keeping our skill levels up by playing weekly at the East Kilbride Indoor Bowling Centre (EKIBC) on Thursday afternoons at 1.15pm. We are very grateful to the staff at EKIBC for their continued support. Hopefully the weather will be kinder to us this year when we return to the greens at Brancumhall for the summer.

New members are always welcome

**Ruth Offin**

## CURLING

This is a small group, 6 at most, but usually only 4 but they are enthusiastic, keen to learn, and they seem to enjoy themselves.

The East Kilbride Curling Club head coach has been supervising things and he has also opened up the session on a Tuesday afternoon to the general public to come and try, this has resulted in about another 4 to 6 people coming along.

This means that participants get plenty of practice with the EKCC coach, myself and another coach overseeing things.

Anyone wanting to try curling will be welcome, just bring another pair of shoes for use on the ice. Trainers are quite good. Soles should be cleaned so that dirt and grit don't get dropped onto the ice. Other equipment is provided.

For anyone who has difficulty bending down to the usual curling position can use a cue to push the curling stones so that they don't need to go into a crouch position. If you are interested but not sure about managing to walk on ice come along and watch, speak to us, and you can see how we are coping.

**Alan Chappell**

## French

As ever, we covered a wide range of current events, enriching our vocabulary in sometimes unexpected ways. Environmental issues loomed large, including the top ten smells in the streets of Paris, killer seaweed in Brittany, French forests still poisoned by WW1 munitions, and contamination in the world's biggest Nutella factory in northern France. A French recipe for a home-made Nutella substitute was sourced, in case of a shortage. Other subjects included the Notre Dame fire and its aftermath, and how the D Day (Le jour J) anniversary was commemorated in France. We discovered the names in French of all the Mister Men, and learned a nursery rhyme about Reinette apples. We also followed the gripping saga of whether a child would be legally allowed to use a tilde in his Breton name, Fañch (he was, eventually). Underworld slang was lovingly harvested from Spiral, although we don't expect to be in a situation where we will be able to use it. Of the various quizzes we attempted, we scored best on the intelligence test for Miss France contestants. And the most enjoyable, but least successful class, was the one where we attempted to lip read in French. The experiment was of course based on sound pedagogical principles.



In association with the Alliance Française, we enjoyed a free screening of the French film 'Le Poulain' in the Arts Centre. We hope that this will become a regular event. And just in time for Christmas, we found out that egg nog in French is lait de poule - chicken's milk.

**Val Yaneske**

## Improve Your French

Group numbers have remained steady and attendance has been high for the past twelve months. There are nine regular members who all participate wholeheartedly and enjoy the bond of friendship that has formed over the months. Conversation remains the focus of the group although some language structures are thrown in where required to enable the group to express themselves in more accurate French. The most difficult thing most of the group find is listening and understanding native French speakers but they are becoming more and more adept at getting the general gist and making appropriate responses. Good use has been made of YouTube recordings and other Internet resources as well as authentic texts as a basis to stimulate conversation.

As of January 2020 Maureen Ramsay, the Group Leader, has had to step down temporarily owing to family issues but the members appear keen to keep things going and have stepped up to the mark to run the group meantime! Bon courage a tous!

## German Learners



2019 has been a good year for our German Learners' Group. The membership of the group has held steady with 17 who attend regularly and 3 others who remain on the contact list and drop in from time to time. We meet every Friday morning between 10 a.m. and noon. Regular sessions involve listening to and working through exercises in the series "Deutsch Warum Nicht" which is available as a free, downloadable course. Our other resource is the series of books "Dino lernt Deutsch". The books follow the fortunes of Dino, a young Sicilian, as he spends time in a number of German speaking cities and, in one book, in his home country. Members of the group read aloud from the books and this helps with pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

We have been very fortunate this year to have received voluntary assistance from Silke, a native German speaker and her friend, Moira, a retired principal teacher of modern languages. Their involvement with the group has given us a great boost as they are able to keep us right with pronunciation and grammar and to provide clarification on issues relating to the use of German in everyday situations.

In keeping with what has become a group tradition the group planned their Christmas lunch at Arigo in East Kilbride Village on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020. We intend to visit West Bar which is a German Themed bar, brewery and restaurant in Glasgow later in the year. Thanks go to our social convenors, Margaret and Anneliese, for organising these activities.

As the group co-ordinator it pleases me greatly to say that when I am not available there is always someone who can take over to make sure that the two hours we have on a Friday morning are well used. About 6 months ago we decided that to make use of our German we should organise a trip to Berlin and Görlitz for March 2020. Plans are well in hand and a full report of our visit, with photos, will feature in our 2020/2021 report.

**Alasdair K. Offin**

## U3A GOLF

The Golf Group is still going from strength to strength with 34 members taking part in 4 Classes on a weekly or fortnightly basis at Playsport.

### Class 1

This is the original group who started in May 2014. The Class currently meets on alternate Fridays from 10.30am to 11.15am. Most of the members have been Senior Members at Playsport Golf since the summer of 2015, all have a recognised CONGU handicap and regularly play in competitions.

### Classes 2 and 3

These Classes came into being as members of the Beginners Class became more proficient. Most of the members in these Classes are members of Playsport and, like Class 1, have a recognised CONGU handicap and regularly play in Gents or Ladies Competitions at Playsport and elsewhere. These Classes meet on alternate Tuesdays from 11.00 am to 11.45 am.

### Class 4

This Class started out as a Beginners' Class several years ago and currently meets every Tuesday from 10.15 am to 11.00 am. Most of the members in this group are now Senior Members at Playsport Golf Club.

### Social

We continue to have social events through the year, last year we had a Group Lunch at Zucos in January, 20 of us went on a 3 day golfing break to Crieff and 16 of us went on a 7 day golfing holiday to Portugal. We had several golf days over the year at Troon, Girvan, Rouken Glen, Ayr and Lanark.



This year we are having our Group Lunch at Torrance House Hotel in February. There are 16 of us going on a golfing holiday to Balaia Golf Village in the Algarve in May, 22 of us are going on our 3 day golfing break this year to Portpatrick in August and we are planning on having several away days to other golf clubs.

We limit the maximum number of members in each Class to 10. Currently the status of each Class is as follows:

Class 1 has 6 members.

Class 2 has 10 members, therefore there is a waiting list for this Class.

Class 3 has 8 members.

Beginners Class has 10 members

. **Alan Murdoch**

## Horticulture

Problems with your garden? We may be able to help - as long as you don't ask us to dig it.

We usually have a visit to a well known garden during the summer months: Our last visit was to Dumfries House, which everyone enjoyed. We also have access to East Kilbride Development Trust's garden where you can get your hands dirty and enjoy the fresh air - and good company.

**Peter Sheppard**

## History



Last year we finished our look at Russian History, very bloody and interesting. This year we are looking into the History of Germany from the beginning. Attached photo of Charlemagne the Holy Roman Emperor who became King of the Franks in 771. They were a Germanic tribe in Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, France and West Germany.

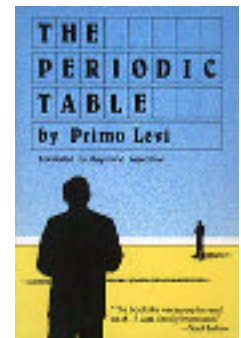
He embarked on a plan to bring all the Germanic Tribes together, to convert them to Christianity and create one kingdom.

**Joan Hodge**

## Intermediate Italian

Low in number, high in enthusiasm, we continue our self-imposed task of producing the perfect translation of modern Italian texts, currently Primo Levi's 'The Periodic Table'. It is a real pleasure to pit our version against a professional translation, and we engage in spirited debates about the meaning behind the words. We would welcome more members with the same aim.

**Jean McKechnie**



## Meditation

We experienced different meditation/mindfulness/relaxation techniques and practised some of the brain balancing exercises from the yoga class. Our favourite one is the Buddhist "pointing finger" one. All classes finish with a short relaxation and an optional cuppa. New members welcome.

## Guided Meditation

This is a new class which started in October 2019 and has been well received. Meditation is proved to reduce heart rate, blood pressure, slow breathing and stabilise brainwave patterns. There are many different approaches to Meditation. In this class we use easy breathing techniques to become calm and to remain calm, which can be used in any time and situation.

In Guided Meditation, a scene is set for the class to follow, then there is a period of silence. After some time the class returns to the present, hopefully refreshed and renewed. We meet at the Calderwood Hall, variable Wednesday afternoons, please check timetable for dates. New members are always welcome.

## Yoga

We continued to enjoy gentle, flowing sequences, postures and breathwork. We concentrated on building up our "inner fire" for the winter and appreciated our warm, cosy hall for lots of relaxation afterwards. Optional cuppa after class. New members welcome, no experience required

## Horticulture

We meet to discuss (and hope to solve) any gardening problems that the members have. We share plants and seeds. We also have facilities for a bit of hands-on gardening for those that are interested and don't mind getting their hands dirty.

This group meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 10.30. Winter meetings are held in Westwood Community Hall, Riverton Drive and summer meetings are used to visit gardens. **Peter Sheppard**

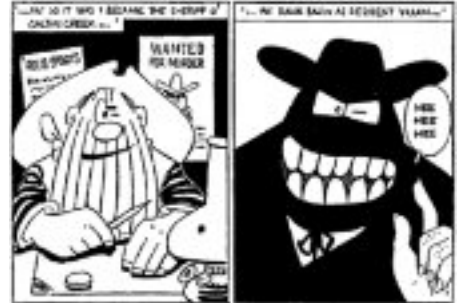


## Monthly Meetings

Our monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 2.00 in the Ballerup Hall. One of the best subjects was on Bud Neill the legendary Glasgow cartoonist.

Speakers are arranged by

**Lesley McIlhagger**



## Mahjong

The group has continued to meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays in the month under the joint leadership of Irene Hudson and Alan Dickie.

It resumed activities on 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019 after the summer holiday break and meets in the small committee room at Calderwood Community Centre Blackbraes Rd Calderwood.

There is normally anything from 4 to 9 players who regularly turn up to play Mahjong. We are gradually improving our Mahjong skills, but the main aim is playing the game for fun. As we improve, we are now managing to play about 5 or 6 games in our 2 hour slot

compared to last year's 3 to 4 games.

We are a sociable group and as well as enjoying our Mahjong games, we still manage a few laughs each meet.

We still need a few more members to come along and give the game a go. If any members are willing to give the game a try, you will be made most welcome. Anyone interested in trying Mahjong, can either put their contact details on the sheet at the normal U3A monthly meeting or contact Alan Dickie on 01355 222405.

We are all working from the same rules and where new members come along they will be able to purchase the playing rules for a small charge.

We hope to see a few new faces in 2020 to our small band of players, so please come along to our meetings.

**Irene Hudson & Alan Dickie**



## Annual Outing

On the first Monday of June we organise an annual outing to an interesting place followed by dinner on the way home. In 2019 we visited the new Victoria and Albert in Dundee. We were disappointed that some of it was closed on our day there but it was an enjoyable day out.

**Irene Hudson & Babs Paterson**





## Pub Lunch and Discussion



We meet on the second Wednesday of every month in the Crooked Lum, where after a drink and a lunch we would sort all the political, moral, and frivolous problems of the world like Independence, Brexit, all our yesterdays, kids today ... usually with lively free flowing discussions that end up a long way from where we started. Quite heated at times but always better behaved than Westminster.

Sadly this year two of our stalwarts in the photograph Anna and Tom Ross passed away. They are greatly missed.

**Tom Berney**

## Introductory Spanish

I am glad to say this group consists of men and women which makes for an interesting dynamic ,particularly when we are doing paired practice. We are using "Suenos" as our main text but this is supplemented by a variety of other texts and listening material to broaden our scope. As well as learning basic language skills we learn something of the history and culture of Spain and South America. There are twelve students on the roll at the moment. There is a waiting list as we cannot physically accommodate more people at this stage. We meet every second Friday in Greenhills Community Centre(10 am until noon

**Anne Mendes**

## Intermediate Spanish

This is a well established group consisting of twelve ladies. We have nearly completed "Suenos"(which is a two year course) and ready to move on to more advanced material, revising "Suenos" as the need arises .The course includes the language ,history and culture of Spain and the Spanish speaking countries of Central and South America. Some members of the class have visited Ecuador and Chile and shared their interesting experiences with us. We have welcomed a newcomer to our class and would be delighted to have more if space would allow. We are full at the moment. The class meets fortnightly at Calderwood Community Centre.

**Anne Mendes**

## Conversational Spanish Intermediate

The group currently has twelve members, all of whom have taken Spanish lessons in the past and have a sound working knowledge of the language. The members take it in turn to provide an exercise for the first part of the class and the contributions are varied and interesting. These exercises usually include reading, speaking and interpreting, and often generate general discussion around the rich variety of culture and practices in Spain (and sometimes in other countries that the members have visited!)

The second half of the class is devoted to working through the textbook selected by the group in the past-Enjoy Spanish (Intermediate to Advanced) from the Teach Yourself range.

This friendly group uses the final meeting at Christmas and Summer to go to Tinto Tapas in East Kilbride for a typical Spanish lunch, which is always very convivial and entertaining.

**Julia Hunter**

## Photography

That camera you carry everywhere, yes, the one on your smart phone, do you know how to use it? You can come to the photography group and we'll show you how to get the best out of it. We like a challenge.

**Peter Sheppard**

## Table Tennis

The Table Tennis Group enjoyed another successful year in 2019 with between 12 and 15 members attending regularly. We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month from 1-3pm in the John Wright Sports Centre. An energetic 2 hours is spent by all along with much laughter and fun.

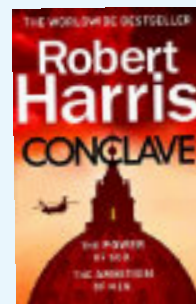
New members are welcome to join.

**Wendy Kelly**

## Reading

This year we read about relationships good and bad in the heat and dust of Australia in books by Jane Harper, namely, *The Dry* and *Force of Nature* and in the dark and cold of Scandinavia with *Dark Pines* by Will Dean and *The Scandal* by Frederik Backman. Regardless of the setting they gave us an insight into human capacity for good or evil. We even had a behind the scenes view of choosing a new Pope in *Conclave* by Robert Harris. You can see our reading was varied and gave us plenty of scope for discussion. We look forward to the 2020 selection.

**Margaretta Thomson**



## Theatre Goers

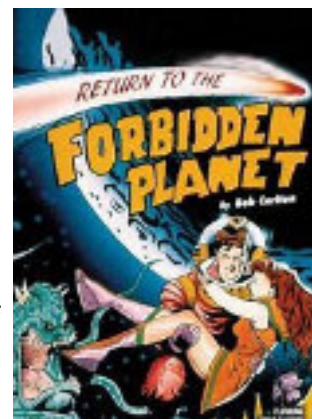
First of all may I say a huge thank you to Maureen and Mary for all the hard work they have put into planning and organising our outings for this year but what's that old saying? Doesn't time fly when you are enjoying yourself.



As usual, we planned a varied programme in the hope that we might encourage new people to join us and take delight in theatrical events. I am sure that once again we have had more successful outings than failures. The beam-ups of national operas to our local cinema continues to be very successful. Who would have thought that you could see performances of this calibre sitting in your local cinema, and at a fraction of the price it would cost to attend in person. When the cost of theatre tickets is on the rise its gratifying to find a bargain like this.

One of the shows that stood out this year was Theatre Guild's performance of **Return to the Forbidden Planet**. It was most unusual. It was based on the **Tempest**, set in a space ship and had 18 fabulous 60's rock tunes to which the cast danced their socks off. It was a blast. One lady said to me I have no idea what it was all about, but I absolutely loved it. Rock On!!!!!!!

**Sandra Robb**



## Town and Country Visits

Once again the group enjoyed a busy year visiting places of interest, some near to hand and others further afield. There are always new exhibits to see and try your hand at in the Glasgow Science Museum and the group made its first visit to Dumbarton Castle. By popular request we revisited Dumfries House and were rewarded by fantastic weather. Dawyck Gardens near Peebles was well worth a visit, with plenty of walking opportunities and I can thoroughly recommend its cafe. Although Paisley was unsuccessful in its bid to obtain City status, some buildings in the High Street are undergoing transformation. The Museum and Observatory are closed but some of their exhibits are on show at 'Secrets of Paisley'. The guides were very amusing and knowledgeable and, if you have an hour to spare, I thoroughly recommend it.

Thanks all those who came along and supported the group in 2019. **Elizabeth Kelly**

## Long Walks

During the year the group relied on some well tried and tested favourite walks which have been amassed over the years. Despite the forecast, we managed to stay ahead of the weather for most of it apart from 2 occasions which stand out. On the 19th March on returning to Strathclyde Park from Chatelherault, the group had to paddle through very deep water and the boots were thoroughly soaked. Coffee and cake in the cafe helped to take minds off wet feet for a wee while. On 14th August we did a walk that hadn't been on the programme for a few years, Helensburgh Circular. Starting at Hill House we made our way on the forest track to Highlandman's Wood, then turned down to Rhu for lunch. Just as we got there, the heavens opened but that didn't spoil our picnic, eaten in a bus shelter in true hiker fashion. Despite the rain, which didn't finish until we were heading home, we thoroughly enjoyed the day.

On behalf of all the members, both past and present, I would like to thank Jim Stewart our long term leader who stood down this year due to persistent knee problems. We thank Jim for all his hard work in ensuring that the walks were suitable, that we had good weather most of the time, that there was an excellent coffee stop at the end of each walk, for organising the transport, for his patience and good humour but most importantly for the fun that we have had over the last 10 years. Thanks, Jim.

**Elizabeth Kelly**

# Other Groups



**Walking Group**

## **Short Flat Walks**

The group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month to walk 1 - 3 miles

**Margaret Lachlan**

## **Family History**

The group meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month to share information and sources or to attend relevant courses.

**Ena Stewart**

## **Whist/Canasta**

Beginners welcome  
Traditional card game. Fortnightly on Tuesdays. **Ina Hunter.**

## **Drama for Fun**

**Anne Spencer**

## **Craft**

Offers a variety of crafts and meets on alternate Tuesdays

**Beatrice Beattie & Anne Robertson**

## **Sign Language**

Alternate Fridays in Calderwood Community Hall.

**Val Yaneske**

## **Hard of Hearing**

Meets occasionally to discuss relevant hearing matters

**Bill Barr**

## **Tell Your Friends**

More information about U3A, a calendar of our activities and contact details for all of our group leaders are available on our website. We are a great resource for older people in East Kilbride. So please pass on the website address etc to your friends and neighbours.

**[www.u3a-in-ek.net](http://www.u3a-in-ek.net)**