

Massereene U3A

Report for year September 2024/2025.

From a total membership of 84, the average attendance at our Friday monthly meetings was 46 which was considered excellent. As in previous years, a variety of topics were covered in the monthly meetings.

In September, Brian McAuley, a local vet gave a very informative talk on 'The Life of a Vet.' Who can forget the constipated sow or the horse passing a blanket!

In October, Peter Harper from the Lough Neagh Partnership highlighted the bird life around Lough Neagh and the environmental problems the Lough faces, particularly the blooms of blue-green algae. While in November David Dowd from Greenmount College outlined the various aspects of Horticulture courses and the very promising career prospects for Horticultural students.

In December, a well attended Christmas lunch was held in the Dunsilly Arms. As usual, the food and service were excellent. Many thanks to our treasurer, Peter Dawson, for organising this event and for the Committee for providing gifts for the raffle.

January's meeting was cancelled due to storm Darragh when all of Northern Ireland came to a standstill. We missed hearing about the life of Mary Ann McCracken but we are delighted that this talk will be held in September this year.

In February who can forget Stephanie Lavery giving a humorous talk on the use of Medieval Medicine with audience participation. A really enjoyable meeting.

We were delighted that Aiden McMichael joined us in March from the Belfast Titanic Society. His talk on 'Belfast Fireman Lost on Titanic' gave us a new insight to life aboard this stricken ship.

In April, local man Ronnie Barnes gave a talk on the mills of the Six Mile Valley. Many of us did not appreciate the number and variety of mills which existed and their decline over the years.

Finally in May, Sue Benham, with her amazing dog, gave a really interesting insight into 'The Work of Guide Dogs for the Deaf.'

This year's outing in June was to Glenarm Castle, followed by afternoon tea in Laragh Lodge. Everyone found the tour of the Castle so interesting that we plan to invite the estate manager to speak to us later this year.

The six main groups, Bridge, Book Club, Learn Irish, Dine Out, Let's Go and Environment, continued their activities during the year. Many thanks to all the facilitators who organise and look after these groups. A special word of thanks to Bob Armitage who has successfully looked after the Dine Out group for several years but has now decided to hand this over to someone else. We are delighted that Yvonne Kirkpatrick is taking over this role.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of Committee for their help and co-operation during the year. A special word of thanks to Alan Walbridge and Linda Houston who after years of service have decided to step down.