



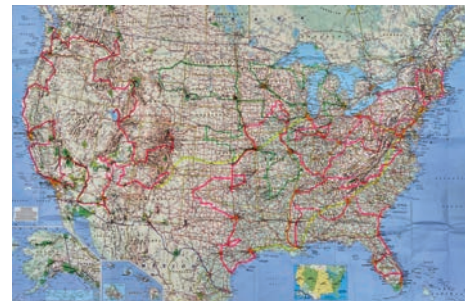
January 2024

**MONTHLY MEETING: 11AM, TUESDAY 16 JANUARY
UPPER HALL, ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, BEARSDEN CROSS
REDISCOVERING AMERICA – THE COUNTRY I LEFT BEHIND**

John Deffenbaugh will share reflections from his road trip to rediscover America. John is an expat American who has lived in Scotland for the past 50 years, but the America he knew from growing up in Peoria, Illinois in the 1960s has moved on. He set out to find out what has changed, what America is like now, and what the future holds. John will talk around these themes from the book he is writing, *The Country I Left Behind*.

Pre-meeting tea and coffee (in eco-friendly cups) are available from 10.30am (a bargain at 50p). Please return empty cups for composting.

Our **Welcome Desk** volunteers will be on hand to greet you and answer any questions. If you are able, please come earlier to help set out chairs, or help stack the chairs after the meeting and carry equipment to our storage area. Any help you can give is appreciated by the committee.



DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

We hope that all enjoyed the Christmas coffee morning and left in a festive mood, ready for all the celebrations to come.

Thank you to Jane and her team for coffees and teas, Linda for table decorations, Allan for the music, Jane for the quiz and to the many people who helped set up the hall and clear away afterwards. It wouldn't have happened without you!

We also celebrated the 10th Anniversary of BaM u3a, and Janet Holland, our first Chair, produced a display of photographs and a wonderful birthday cake.



Without Janet's vision BaM u3a might not exist. We owe her and the founding committee a huge vote of thanks. Janet is pictured above (left) with Maureen Smith, current Chair.

NEW OR EXTRA GROUPS FOR 2024

In response to the item in our December Newsletter, we have received some excellent suggestions for the following new groups:

- Art Appreciation (see item below)
- Ballroom Dancing
- Bird Watching
- Crafting
- Crime Fiction
- Gardening
- History Book Group
- Indoor Bowling
- Jazz Appreciation
- Maths
- Members on their Own
- Pie, Pint & Prattle (Sociable Seniors 2)
- Short Story Reading
- Study Group using Online University Resources
- Table Tennis
- Wine appreciation



If you might be interested in any of these topics, please let us know via the [Message Bird](#) on the Groups web page. We will then put you in contact with other members sharing your interest and together you can discuss the way forward and decide if there is a good basis for forming a new group.

GROUP NEWS

Backgammon

Following its launch at the November Monthly Meeting the Backgammon group now has nine enthusiastic members.

We have the basics in place thanks to guidance from Tom, our Convenor, who has proved to be an excellent teacher and motivator. Our three meetings in December have been thoroughly enjoyable and our first 'competitive' games, at the most recent meeting, were great fun!

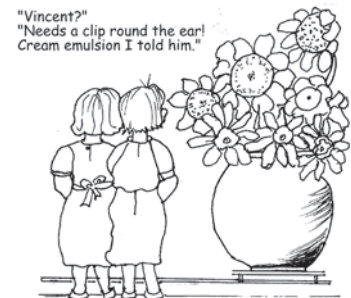
New Group Launch – Art Appreciation

Ever wondered why some art works are worth millions and some not worth the materials from which they are made? Have you looked at a painting and thought, 'my six year old could do better'?

Would you be interested in joining an **Art Appreciation** group to study works of art, discuss artists and share your favourite or most hated masterpieces?

Hilary Tottman has a diploma in Art Appreciation and ran a U3A group in Norfolk before moving to Milngavie. The group shared views, looked at famous works in detail and also trends and fashions in art.

For example, why are there so few famous women artists and did Van Gogh really cut off his own ear?



Hilary will be at the January meeting when you can find out more and perhaps express an interest. You can also get in touch via the [Message Bird](#) on the New Groups web page.



GROUP NEWS continued

Mahjong Group

Mahjong is a game of Chinese origin for four people (although it can be played with three). It has grown to have worldwide appeal, so that now every Monday evening between 7pm and 9pm you'll find an enthusiastic group of eight or nine u3a members in the upstairs room at the Station Bar, Bearsden Station playing this sociable game.

Mahjong combines skill and strategy with fair bit of luck. As well as keeping the mind sharp, the time spent 'washing the tiles' (no cleaning products are involved!) between games is ideal for chat, making for a very enjoyable evening. Our Mahjong Group is well established, meeting regularly for seven years. We would be delighted to welcome new players – both those who have played before and beginners.

CAROLYN FLAVELLE



Enjoy Live Opera

The group enjoyed another memorable year in 2023 with members attending 15 different performances. These ranged from lavish, full-scale staged operas to the piano accompaniment and sparse sets of Conservatoire students performing extracts from operas old and new.

There were well-known classics including *Carmen*, *Aida*, *Butterfly* and the *Barber of Seville* as well as a Scottish premiere for Strauss' bucolic opera *Daphne*, a staging of the rarely heard Chabrier opera *L'Étoile* and a magnificent concert performance of Wagner's *Tannhauser* under the baton of Scottish superstar conductor Donald Runnicles. In sum we were spoiled.

It already looks as if 2024 will provide similar enjoyment. We currently have plans to attend five operas between February and May, with many more later in the year once



Scottish Opera, the Conservatoire, Clyde Opera, Opera Bohemia and the Edinburgh Festival all unveil their programmes.

So, if you are not already a member of the group but would like to come along to an opera, please get in touch via the [Message Bird](#) on our Group web page. No prior knowledge of opera is required.

NICK SOPER

GROUP NEWS continued

Around the World Diners



Members of the group enjoyed their annual Christmas lunch at the Marriott Hotel.

JOAN CAMERON

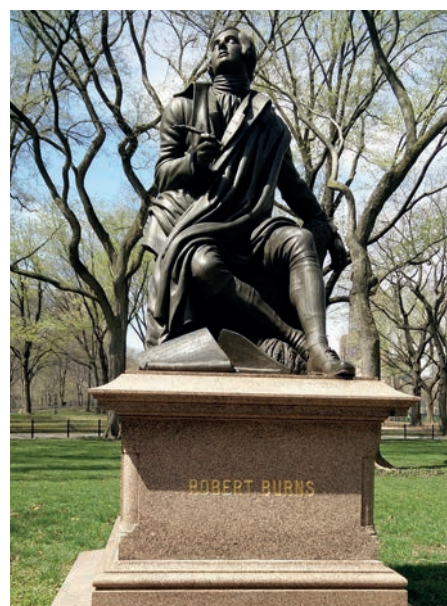
Carry on Singing

In the last three months we have enjoyed singing along to playlists with the themes of 'Space' (which followed the previous playlist on 'Time'); 'The First Record You Ever Bought' (with much input from members); and 'Food, Glorious Food (a mouth-watering selection). You can find playlist details on the website on our [group page](#). We also had two entertaining karaoke sessions thanks to our DJ (Allan), including 'Christmas Karaoke' on 22 December. A very good time was had by all.

RAY WALKER

RABBIE BURNS FACTS

- The first Burns Supper was held in July 1801 when nine of Burns' close friends got together to mark the fifth anniversary of their friend's death. It took place at Burns' Cottage in Alloway and included a meal of haggis, performances of Burns' work and a speech in honour of the Bard, which is now known as the *Immortal Memory*.
- With well over 60 statues dedicated to the Scots poet, Robert Burns is third in line after Christopher Columbus and Queen Victoria in the number of statues dedicated to a non-religious figure.
- In 2009, Burns became the first person to appear on a commemorative Coca-Cola bottle.



CRYPTO-PUZZLES 61 A&B

Below are well-known sayings, which has been encrypted by substituting a number in the range 1–26 for each letter. In each case, one of the letter substitutions is shown in the grid. Use the grid to record the other letter substitutions as you discover them. Do please let us know if you manage to solve the puzzles.

61A

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
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61B

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
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17	25	22	12		16	25	22	11	25	3	.															

Solution to Crypto-Puzzle 60A

Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right.

Jane Goodall

Solution to Crypto-Puzzle 60B

You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.

Shirley Chisholm