

CHIT-CHAT

u3a
East Renfrewshire

THE NEWSLETTER OF
[EAST RENFREWSHIRE U3A](#)
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A BIT TROPICAL



This exotic plant isn't all it seems.
Find out more in The Buzz.

PINNED DOWN

Find out where this
giant safety pin
was spotted, and
by whom, in
Groups.



CHAT LINE

Chit-Chat needs readers to keep sending in pictures, anecdotes, funny stuff etc. You can send it to me at chit-chat@eru3a.org, or post it on the [ERu3a](#) page in Facebook.

MAKE CONTACT

Use the link incorporated in the *Chit-Chat* heading to access our website, and the various message birds to contact group facilitators. By using the message bird in the [Contacts](#) section of the website you can access any of the post-holders listed there. Safe links to other websites may also appear in *Chit-Chat*.

The interest groups featured in *Groups* are just a few of those now available. They are all listed alphabetically in the [Groups](#) Section of the website. Facilitators can be contacted by clicking on the blue Message Bird incorporated in every group's heading.

If you don't have access to the Internet, phone 0743 712 3921 for information about groups etc.

Jim Hamilton

THE BIZ

MARCH MEETING

Our next monthly meeting will be in Broom Church, Newton Mearns. Allan Mauchline, the advertised speaker for March, has had to withdraw. He has been replaced by our own Graham Greenhalgh, who will be talking about the Spanish Flu.

The doors are open at 1.30pm and the meeting starts at 2.00pm. Refreshments are served after the talk and we ask for a small donation of £1 to cover the costs. If you can- please bring your own mug.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Councils across Scotland declared the climate an ecological emergency in 2019 and Scotland as a nation is aiming to become carbon neutral by 2045. But where is the climate action we need, such as warm and energy efficient homes, efficient recycling and active travel routes?

Climate Emergency UK, along with the help of over 200 volunteers, have created the Council Climate Action Scorecards to measure actual climate action from all UK councils, including the 32 Scottish local authorities, and hold them to account.

At the next Online Across Scotland monthly talk, on **Thursday March 7th at 4pm**, we are delighted to welcome Don von Rohland, Outreach Director at Climate Emergency UK, who will explain how they created the Scorecards, what the results show, and how to access the results for your Council.

Please refer to <https://u3asites.org.uk/onlineacrossscotland/events> for more information. The Zoom link is <https://zoom.us/j/99316672323?pwd=ajBWZnBzQkpRb1dmSjJzRlgvNEp2UT09>
Meeting ID: 993 [1667 2323](#)
Passcode: 154212

THE BUZZ

HATWALK SUCCESS

Fashion Group member Sylvia Levitus suggested a Hatwalk event to raise money for the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice at which students from the millinery department of Glasgow Clyde College could model their creations whilst a delicious afternoon tea was served. After several planning meetings partnerships were formed with Glasgow Clyde College and the Prince and Princess of Wales



Hospice, and the local business community responded generously.

At the event on 14th February 175 guests were entertained by the East Renfrewshire u3a Ukulele Group before marvelling at the stunning hats created and modelled by the students. Everyone enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and award-winning milliner Jill Busby delivered an informative presentation on the history of hat felt making.





The mighty sum of £4,547.48 raised for the hospice and Shona Crozer at Glasgow Clyde College and her students deserve special thanks for their unwavering support and modelling their sensational hats in such a professional way. The Planning Team wish to thank all those who supported this unique event.



MAKING FRIENDS

This month saw the launch of a new initiative called *u3a Friends*, which helps to connect members all over the country. The *u3a Friends* newsletter carries news, offers and services along with information about events and access to learning opportunities. You can sign up for this at [u3a – Newsletter](#).

MONTHLY MEETING

At the start of the meeting on 21st February Marbe McNeill announced that the membership had risen to 595.

Guest speaker Brian Young's topic was *Roman Campaigns in Scotland*. The first of these was in 55BC when Julius Caesar, suspecting that Britons were somehow managing to reinforce the Gauls, invaded Britannia. The one tribe that held out were the Caledonians. In an attempt to contain them the Romans constructed a line of forts along the Gask Ridge, north of Perth. In 83AD Calgacus defeated the Caledonians at Mons Graupius.



Brian Young



Gask Ridge

Brian talked about the importance of the shield in the warfare of the time. The Roman tactic of using shield walls continues for 1,000 years after they left Britain. Roman troops also unnerved their enemies by remaining completely silent.

The Emperor Hadrian was a pacifist and, rather than confront the Caledonians, he had a wall built to keep them out. In 122AD construction began on Hadrian's Wall running the 73 miles from Wallsend on Tyne to Bowness-on-Solway.



Easternmost Distance Marker on Antonine's Wall



Hadrian's Wall

In 139AD Emperor Antoninus Pius ordered the construction of a new 39 mile-long wall linking the Firth of Clyde and Firth of Forth. Constructed of stone, turf and wood, it featured a 30 feet wide and 40 feet deep ditch to block horses and chariots. After Antonine's death the Romans retreated back to Hadrian's Wall.

In 208AD Septimus Severus arrived in Britain intent on conquering Caledonia. His 60,000-strong army was then the biggest in the world. In 213 in the course of a genocidal invasion he laid waste to Central Scotland before withdrawing to Eboracum (York) where he died in 211.



GROUPS

AROUND EAST RENFREWSHIRE DINING

Group 1 squeezed in an extra outing in February to the New Turban Tandoori Restaurant at Eastwood Toll to celebrate George's birthday and say Goodbye to Chris. They enjoyed a superb meal and everyone agreed that it was one of their best dinners so far.



Group 3 had our February outing at The Malletsheugh on Friday. We had a good turnout and a very enjoyable evening. The restaurant is lovely and the menu choice – either Indian or Scottish dishes – is great and suits everyone.



AROUND THE WORLD DINING



The first lunch of 2024 was to the new Turkish restaurant, Turkiye EFES, in Candleriggs. Food and service were both excellent and a generous complimentary serving of 'Balloon Bread' and salad accompanied the meal. Falafels and Turkish Borek were popular starters, followed by Lamb or Chicken Kebabs or Vegetable Moussaka. For the indulgent, the Baklava was the perfect ending to a most enjoyable meal.



FASHION THROUGH THE AGES

At their February meeting the Fashion Through the Ages Group enjoyed an interesting and informative talk entitled *The Sewing Machine – the final side of the triangle* presented by Mary Fyfe, one of the members. Mary covered the history of the invention and patenting of the machines as we know them today and also highlighted the huge impact their use had (both in industrial and domestic settings) on the demand for and manufacture of fabrics and finished goods. She also brought along several machines for the group to look at, including a Singer hand-operated machine which dates from 1899 and was purchased for her grandmother when she was a newlywed. The machine is still in perfect working order – one wonders if the same will be the case for modern machines in 100+ years!



GARDEN VISITS

The Garden Visits group dodged the showers to visit a private garden at Kittochside this morning. Wonderful swathes of snowdrops and crocuses.



OUT AND ABOUT

The group's first outing of the year was to Paisley Town Hall, which has undergone a £22 million transformation turning it into a landmark entertainment and conference venue for Renfrewshire and the west of Scotland.

In 1873 George A Clark of the famous thread family, who owned the Anchor Mill, left £20,000 in his will to build a Town Hall in Paisley.

The foundation stone was laid by his mother on 22nd October 1879 and the building – designed by William Henry Lynn and William Young in the Classical style and built by Messrs Morrison and Mason of Glasgow a cost of £50,000 – was officially opened as the 'George A. Clark Town Hall' on 30 January 1882.



Duncan Macintosh of Paisley u3a gave the group an introductory talk, pointing out the various changes to the interior to bring it up to date as a multi-purpose venue. Our outandabouters then split into two groups for the tour, starting in the impressive main hall. They visited the new Digital Lounge and bar downstairs before going upstairs to the large ballroom, a smaller function hall and the Logia with its balcony out to the front of the building. They were impressed by the architecture and how well Glasgow architects, Holmes Miller had blended the modern designs with the 19th century building. After the tour most of the group crossed the road to enjoy an excellent lunch at The Pendulum restaurant.



QUIZ

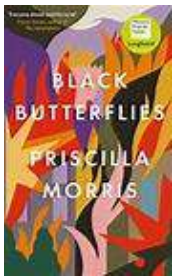
Many Congratulations to the winners of the February Quiz team *Four Men and a Lady*. Allen. Alan, Colin, Jim and Yvonne had an amazing score of 89.5.



However, the winner of the best St Valentines hat was Frances, who looked stunning.

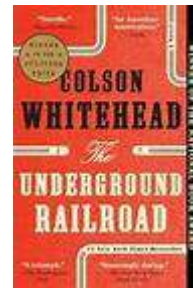


READING



This month Group 3 read *Black Butterflies* by Priscilla Morris. The book explores the Siege of Sarajevo in 1992 through one woman's experiences. She is a painter and teacher who refuses to leave war-torn Sarajevo although she sees much of her city and precious art work destroyed. The traumatic realities of war are intertwined with hope, resilience and friendship in a city under siege. The group enjoyed the book and considered it really well written, evocative and giving an insight into the war. The novel was shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2023.

Group 4 read *The Underground Railroad* by Colston Whitehead. They found it both harrowing and traumatic, but in the darkness of the way that slaves were treated in the 19th century American South, flashes of compassion were shown to the protagonist Cora and the others, both directly and indirectly. It was a painful read in some parts, hard to concentrate on for long spells of time, but overall it was a well written informative book on something that most of us knew so little about. The analogy of the railroad, including station-masters, conductors etc, as a way out of slavery was very cleverly used.



There were great descriptions throughout, although some thought it may have been better written in the first person, to get more personal feel of what she went through. There were certainly a lot of intertwining and background stories which added to the overall situation. The horrors of this traumatic episode were upsetting for all the readers, and in discussing it they also talked about the slavery that is still sadly going on today.

SATURDAYS

The Saturday Group met up at Crookfur Park for a walk before having lunch at Parklands. It was lovely to see the snowdrops in bloom.



SATURDAYS TOGETHER

This month our Saturdays Together Group enjoyed a lovely stroll in Bellahouston Park, while managing to avoid the steep sections of path. Despite a light drizzle at first, on the whole the day was nice and fresh, with no wind. Afterwards they met up with a couple of other group members who were joining them for lunch in Bargacree Café at the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice. The ten strollers were lucky to have lunch in the private room where they could have a good chat. The food and service were excellent as usual.



Next month they will be strolling from Mearns Golf Academy and lunching in Castello Cafe.

STROLLERS

This month our strollers enjoyed a lovely day in Linn Park. They were lucky with the weather, although it remained very muddy underfoot.





UPHOLSTERY

Danny McGregor is kindly facilitating a second upholstery group. The group are having lots of fun renovating various pieces of furniture. Loretta has just finished expertly recovering this beautiful chair and stool and she is now looking for another project.



WALKIE TALKIES

For their February outing 16 members of the Walkie Talkies Group enjoyed another city walk led by Kevin Scott. The walk was entitled "The Drumlins" which, as Kevin explained, are features of glacial deposition shaped a bit like half an egg. Glasgow was built on a 'swarm' of these rounded hills – which explains some of the steeply-sloped streets in the city. As always, Kevin gave out lots of interesting information about aspects of the city and some of the people who made it what it is today. Despite rain being forecast, the weather remained dry, if a little windy at times.



WALKING

Starting from Neilston railway station, Walking Group members headed for the hills surrounding the village for their two outings this month. This was a six-mile circular walk, mainly along attractive countryside paths and woodland tracks.



The route initially descends steeply towards the former Crofthead textile mill before starting a gradual climb through the Cowden Hall Estate and on to the wooded confines of Midge Glen. After stopping for a snack break beside the picturesque Craighall Dam, the walk continues along the well-used track around the base of the Neilston Pad which the Group has walked up previously. The final stretch, which is extensively on pavements, offers impressive views of Glasgow and the Lochliboside Hills before arriving back at Neilston station for the return home in time for lunch.

Once again, the weather conditions on the 2 walks could not have been more different, with the first week being very wet for the whole walk. Despite rain being forecast again on the second week, it turned out to be very bright and sunny all morning, with definite signs of spring in the air. The route was very muddy and slippery and walking poles came in very handy on the uphill stretches in particular.



Next month the Group will return to the Whitelee Windfarm for a circuit around the Lochgoin Reservoir.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

BEATING CYBERCRIME

Police Scotland offers advice on [Protecting yourself against cybercrime](#). Forms of cybercrime include ransomware, account compromise and denial of service attack.

Ransomware is a type of malicious software (malware) that prevents a user from accessing a computer or data. The computer itself may become locked and the data on it might be stolen, deleted or encrypted. Malware disguised as a legitimate file tricks the user into downloading or opening it when it arrives as an

email attachment. A popup message on the computer then asks for a payment to get access to the data. However, even if a payment is made, there is no guarantee that you'll be able to regain access.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) advises individuals and businesses reduce malware and ransomware attacks by making regular backups of important information on an external hard drive or USB stick and ensuring the device with your backup is not permanently connected to your computer. You could also consider backing up to the cloud.

To reduce the likelihood of being infected with Ransomware keep your operating system and software (apps) up to date and make sure your antivirus product is turned on and up to date. Windows has a built in malware protection tool (Microsoft Defender) which can be used. Avoid downloading unofficial apps by using only official app stores (like Google Play or the Apple App Store), which protect against viruses.

If your computer or device has been infected by any type of malware you should open your antivirus (AV) software and run a full scan and follow any instructions given. If your AV can't clean your device, you'll have to wipe it entirely, factory-reset and re-install everything, starting with the operating system. Restore the backed-up data you have kept on a separate device but do not copy any data from the infected computer or device. If you receive a phone call offering help to clean up your computer, hang up immediately. This is a common tactic used by cyber criminals.

Sometimes devices can be 'unlocked' by using the FREE Police and Industry backed Europol initiative, [No More Ransom](#). If you think your PC, tablet or phone has been infected with a virus or some other form of malware, follow the [advice](#) from NCSC. It will remove the infection and restore your device.

Police Scotland and partners, including NCSC do not encourage, endorse, nor condone the payment of ransom demands as there is no guarantee that you will get access to your data or device, your device will still be infected, you'll be paying a criminal group and you're more likely to be targeted in the future.

Many things can alert you to the fact that your account has been compromised by someone else accessing it. Things to look out for include logins or attempted logins from strange locations or at strange times, changes to your security settings and messages sent from your account that you don't recognise. Once you know your account has been hacked, NCSC have a [step by step guide](#) to help you regain control. They can help you stay protected against future attacks.

Denial of service (DoS) attacks leave users unable to access their systems. NCSC have [guidance](#) to help organisations understand and reduce DoS attacks.

If you believe that you have been the victim of a Cybercrime, you should contact Police Scotland on 101 (Non-emergency).

WHIMSY

Annie Wills posted these.



Coming soon to a street near you!



Graham Greenhalgh sent in these musings.

If you dropped something when you were younger, you just picked it up. When you're older and you drop something, you stare at it for just a bit contemplating if you actually need it anymore.

I told my physical therapist that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places.

When I was a kid, I used to watch the 'Wizard of Oz' & wonder how someone could talk if they didn't have a brain. Then I got Facebook.

My neighbour knocked on my front door at 3 am. 3AM!!! Luckily, I was already up playing the bagpipes.

PICTURE GALLERY

TRAVELS IN SPAIN

Willie Dyer sent in these fascinating pictures from Spain. In Cordoba he visited the mosque with its distinctive horseshoe arches and the old synagogue where the Hebrew script is incorporated with Muslim plasterwork.





About an hour's drive from Malaga is the Caminito del Rey walking path, which was built over 100 years ago, but abandoned in the 1970s as the Hydroelectric company no longer needed it. It was renovated and reopened in 2015. A guide is provided to escort walkers on the three-hour walk.



EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT
Wednesday	20th March	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Graham Greenhaigh - The Spanish Flu
Wednesday	17th April	Monthly Meeting in St Andrew's Church, Barrhead David McDonald - Scotland's Sweet Spot
Wednesday	15th May	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Peter Macfarlane - Incredible India
Wednesday	19th June	Monthly Meeting in St Andrew's Church, Barrhead Margaret Anderson

CONTACTS

Mobile enquires call/text 0743 712 3921 www.u3asites.org.uk/eastrenfrewshire

Chair: Marbe McNeill

Secretary: Mary Fyfe

Treasurer: Ann Scott

Membership Secretary: Roy Bryce

Groups Co-ordinator: Allison Kershaw

Webmaster: Roy Bryce

SUPPORTING u3a

The [Riviera Travel Affinity](#) scheme donates 10% of the cost of holidays booked by members.



East Renfrewshire u3a doesn't endorse any commercial organisations.

