

CHIT-CHAT

u3a
East Renfrewshire

THE NEWSLETTER OF
[EAST RENFREWSHIRE U3A](#)
SCOTTISH CHARITY No. SCO44004

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FEATURES

THE BIZ	2
THE BUZZ	2
GROUPS	3
DID YOU KNOW ...?	11
WHIMSY	13
PICTURE GALLERY	14
EVENTS	17
CONTACTS	17
SUPPORTING u3a	18

WHAT'S THE POINT?



What's this pointy thing, and where was it seen? Find out in *Picture Gallery*.

APPROACHING ENLIGHTENMENT



Also in *Picture Gallery* you can discover where this Buddha resides.

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

Our next monthly meeting will be in St Andrew's Church, Barrhead. The guest speaker will be David McDonald, Summerlea Museum Learning and Access Officer – Active and Creative Communities. His talk is entitled *Scotland's Sweet Spot – Confectionery Manufacturing in Lanarkshire*.

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.

THE BUZZ

BOUND FOR OZ



As many of us know, Heather & Bruce Cutler are moving over to Australia in a couple of months' time to live nearer their daughters and their families. They have very much enjoyed being part of ERu3a and will miss the many groups and the people they have met along the way, some of whom have become personal friends.

Before they head off for life Down Under, they would like to invite us all to join them for tea/coffee and cake at the end of the monthly meeting on 15th May.



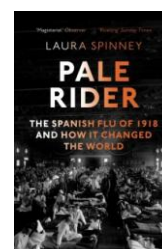
HATWALK RAFFLE

Our very talented Secretary Mary donated a voucher to make a celebration cake for the HatWalk raffle, which was won by Fiona who has a March birthday. After discussion it was decided to include Fiona's three dachshunds on the cake. She was absolutely thrilled with her beautiful birthday cake and said it tasted 'yum'.



MARCH MEETING

The talk this month was given by our own Graham Greenhalgh. His interest in his subject – the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918–20 – began when his daughter gave him a copy of Laura Spinney's book *Pale Rider*, published in 2018 just a couple of years before the outbreak of our most recent pandemic.





Estimates for deaths caused by Spanish Flu range from 50–100 million. This wide range is because the Flu coincided with the end of World War I and the Russian Revolution, which made it difficult to assign causes of death. The death toll from the Covid-19 pandemic has been estimated to be around 7 million.

It is generally known that Spanish Flu did not originate in Spain. Following outbreaks of the virus in 1917 in America and possibly also in China it was probably brought over when America entered the war or by the Chinese workers drafted in to dig trenches. It got labelled 'Spanish' because the press in Spain, a neutral country, was not subject to censorship. The Flu came in 3 waves, the second of which was the deadliest. People in the 20–40 age range were most affected, with pregnant women being at particular risk.

At the time little was known about viruses and how they spread but much research was undertaken in the wake of the outbreak, and by the 1930s work had begun on developing a vaccine. Soldiers in World War II were given an experimental flu vaccination but it wasn't until 1945 that the first flu vaccinations were approved for public use. The development of Penicillin, the first antibiotic, followed a similar timeline.



GROUPS

AROUND EAST RENFREWSHIRE DINING

Group 1 visited the Ca Va Brasserie in Giffnock for a lovely dinner at the beginning of March.



Group 3 met at The Cartvale in Busby for a lovely lunch.



AROUND THE WORLD DINING

On a return visit to a favourite Vietnamese restaurant – Non-Viet, in Sauchiehall Street – our adventurous diners found that the food and service were as good as before. Crispy Spring rolls were a popular starter, and for the mains many had the stir-fry with chicken, beef or tofu and, for the lovers of spicy dishes, the coconut curry did not disappoint. Some members couldn't resist trying deep fried ice-cream for dessert – maybe not to be repeated, but a good talking point.



CYCLING OFFROAD

The Offroad Cycling Group had its first outing of the year in a joint enterprise with its counterpart in Bearsden & Milngavie u3a. They were fortunate in having a glorious sunny day for the trip on National Cycle Route 7 along the disused railway line from



Kilbarchan to Kilbirnie and back, a distance of some 20 miles. Their compulsory stop for lunch and chat was at the fabulous Cucina Minucci Café in Lochwinnoch where they were greeted warmly and treated to an impressive array of delicacies. Over lunch they charted out routes for future outings, such as along the Forth and Clyde Canal from Auchinstarry Marina to the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies, a circuit (or two) around the Isle of Cumbrae, and Callander to Strathyre along the banks of Loch Lubnaig. As the group name suggests, they enjoy cycling away from road traffic, preferring the tranquility and safety of tracks and paths. If you too fancy meandering through our magnificent countryside on a regular bike or e-bike, get in touch using the Message Bird on the Group's webpage.

OUT AND ABOUT

Our outandabouters received a warm welcome on their visit to the Sikh Gurdwara in Albert Drive. After removing shoes and ensuring heads were covered, they were asked to wash their hands before being given an introductory talk before moving upstairs to the main worship area.



Sikhism was developed from Guru Nanak some 600 years ago. Over the next 200 years nine other gurus succeeded him. The tenth guru named the Granth Sahib (equivalent to our bible) as his successor, establishing this scripture as the spiritual life guide for all Sikhs. This 'living guru' is literally placed on a bed each night and brought into the temple every morning. Each day a page of the Granth Sahib is opened and read by practicing Sikhs. The centre of the Sikh religion is The Golden temple at Amritsar in the Punjab, a sacred place that all Sikhs will endeavour to visit in their lifetime.



Traditionally all Sikh men will show their adherence to the faith by wearing a turban and not cutting their hair. They will have a small comb and wear a special bangle on their dominant arm. They also wear an undergarment with a drawstring and carry a small dagger called a Kirpan.

The thing that impressed our group most was the Sikh commitment to relieving poverty and feeding the hungry. They collect and distribute food to many local foodbanks and anyone of any creed will be given food and a drink on turning up at a Gurdwara.



After the tour the group was taken to the hall where food is served and offered spicy lentil curry and a chapatti along with tea or water. Although no payment was asked for either the tour or the food, most gave a donation on leaving.



QUIZ

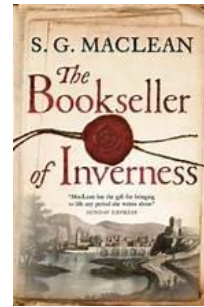
Congratulations to the winners of the March Quiz, Mary, Roy, Colin & Barry.



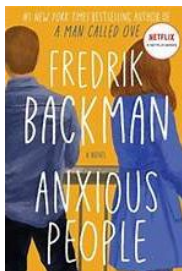
For the March Inter u3a Quiz, team East Renfrewshire were joined by Eva, a member of Edinburgh u3a, and Helen from Glasgow West End u3a to form a real 'Inter u3a' team, as our regular team members were either unwell or on holiday. After answering questions on topics such as Roman Britain, musical introductions, places mentioned in *Around the World In Eighty Days* and General Knowledge the team secured a respectable eighth place.

READING

The Audio Reading group read *The Bookseller of Inverness* by S G Maclean. The protagonist is Iain MacGillivray, a survivor of the Battle of Culloden who has opened a bookshop in Inverness. The day after he notices a stranger searching through an old collection of books he finds the man with his throat cut and the murder weapon laid out beside him with a white cockade – the Jacobite emblem – tied to the hilt. Iain then finds himself embroiled in a web of deceit as a series of old scores are settled.

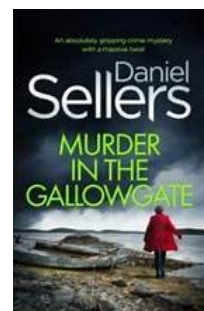


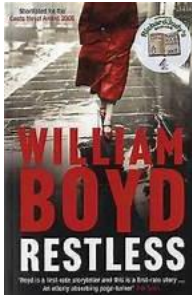
Generally the book was enjoyed by the group, although two members gave it up without finishing it. Historical facts surrounding the Jacobite cause and what the readers discovered about life in 18th century Scotland were discussed. This worthy winner of Waterstone's Scottish Book of the Year can be recommended to lovers of historic crime.



Group 3 read *Anxious People* by Fredrick Backman. Set in Sweden, it is a quirky, poignant and sometimes funny novel about a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious strangers who find they have more in common than they ever imagined.

Group 4 read *Murder in the Gallowgate* by Daniel Sellars. They felt this gory multiple murder novel is set in Glasgow and the fictitious Isle of Erray in the Outer Hebrides was an 'okay' book. Although quite enjoyable and an easy read it lacked depth and was slightly contrived and unrealistic. The readers all liked the fact that it was set in Glasgow, but felt that there was not enough reference to the city other than a few street names and areas thrown in. Characters popping up randomly made it difficult to keep track of the story. Some characters who played no role of importance and the protagonist's affair with a married man didn't add to the story. But, on the plus side, everyone would have loved to have seen some of the paintings created by Edith, who has synesthesia and paints words.





Group 5 read *Restless* by William Boyd. This spy thriller is about Eva Delectorskaya, a 28 year old Russian emigre living in Paris. As war breaks out she is recruited into the British Secret Services by Lucas Romer, a mysterious Englishman under whose tutelage she learns to become the perfect spy. Three decades later secrets still haunt her and she decides to tell her story to Ruth, her daughter. She wants Ruth to help her find the man who recruited her for the secret service.

A good story, well written, it generated a lot of discussion.

STROLLERS

The Strollers have been lucky with the spring weather and have enjoyed recent walks along the Dams to Darnley route and also in Pollok Park.

Apparently some of the Highland cows had recently given birth but they didn't see any of the newly born calves.



UPHOLSTERY

Under Danny's expert guidance Barry transformed this old broken Ercol chair, giving it a new lease of life.



The transformation was incredible and Barry has done a very professional job of upholstery not only the chair but the matching stool as well.

He's now looking for another upholstery project.



WALKIE TALKIES

For their March outing members of the Walkie Talkies group repeated a favourite walk – a circuit of the Loch in Strathclyde Park. A stop at the Roman Baths was made more interesting when one of the group members, Susan Hunter, imparted some information she had researched about the history of the site. A very pleasant walk in good weather was followed by a welcome lunch at the cafe in the Watersports Centre.



WALKING

This month's walkers experienced all kinds of weather at Whitelee Windfarm, with the first week being the worst. The seven brave souls who went along that week experienced gales of over 40mph and driving rain. Thankfully everyone was dressed for the weather but visibility was very poor and, due to the extremely bad weather conditions, the Lochgoin Circuit walk was cut to just three miles.



The second week's 13 walkers had a much better day. It was dry and overcast at the start, with two heavy showers, and quite misty along the way, but cleared and brightened up at the end of their six miles.



The Café at the Visitor Centre provided both groups with very welcome hot refreshments and light bites/snacks at the end of their walks.





DID YOU KNOW ...?

STAYING SAFE

Following last month's piece on combating cybercrime, here is some more advice from Police Scotland on how to stop bad things from happening.

[Doorstep Crime and Bogus Callers.](#)

Bogus callers try to get into your home or get personal details by pretending to be council staff, charity collectors, meter readers and police officers etc. In reality, they are criminals trying to steal money and valuables.

Rogue traders usually cold-call, offering to make repairs or carry out work on your property. In reality they charge inflated prices for shoddy or work that isn't needed. They'll tell you the work needs to be done immediately and ask to be paid immediately. They may offer to go to the bank with you if you don't have the cash at hand.

To protect yourself from doorstep crime:

- Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly
- Keep front and back doors locked
- Use the door viewer or nearby window when answering the door
- Fit a door chain or bar and keep it on when talking to callers at the door

- If you're not sure, don't answer the door
- Only let callers in if they have an appointment – confirm they are genuine
- Always ask for identification badges, but don't rely on them as they can be faked – phone the company to verify the caller's identity
- Some companies offer a password system – ask if this can be used and make sure the caller uses it
- Never let people persuade you to let them into your home
- Never agree to pay for goods or give money to strangers who arrive at your door
- Don't keep large amounts of money in your home
- If you're not sure, don't answer the door.

Trading Standards advice is to not feel pressurised into agreeing to immediate work, buying a product or service from the first person who calls or paying cash up-front. You should shop around if you decide you need work done and ask what your cancellation rights are.

If you suspect someone is a doorstep criminal, ask the caller to leave and call the police immediately on 101. If the person refuses to leave your door, or you feel threatened or scared, call 999 and ask for police.

Note down their description and the description of any vehicle they're using, including make, model, colour and registration number.

[Identity Theft](#)

Criminals who get access to someone's personal information can steal their identity and then pretend to open bank accounts, get credit cards, loans and mortgages or to claim benefits. They could even take over someone's accounts and change the address.

Ways in which these criminals work include searching through rubbish or unattended bags to find bills or bank statements, targeting flats where shared mail boxes make theft easier, bribing or robbing postal workers or purchasing the information from other criminals. Warning signs to look out for are bills or invoices for goods you have not ordered, collection letters for debt that isn't yours or transactions on your bank or credit card statements that you do not recognise.

There are a number of steps you can take to avoid falling victim to identity theft:

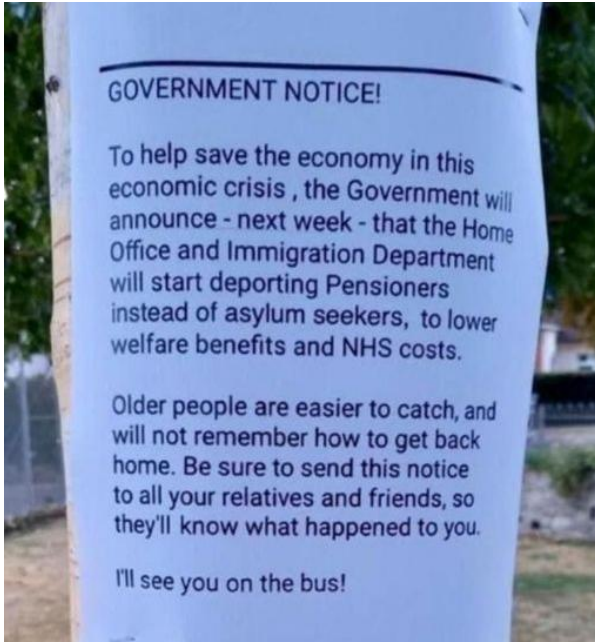
- Keep all your important documents safe and secure
- When using a credit or debit card, make sure it's never out of your sight
- Cash machines may have been tampered with. Your cards could be skimmed and cloned

- Never give out your personal details when you're contacted by phone, fax, post or email
- Always offer to ring back any suspicious callers but check the phone number you are given
- When throwing out documents which contain personal information try to shred them so that nobody could read your personal details
- Always check your bank and credit card statements. Report any transactions you don't recognise, even small amounts
- Close all accounts you no longer need
- Move your mail when moving home by arranging with the post office to forward your mail to your new address
- Get organisations to send to your new address.

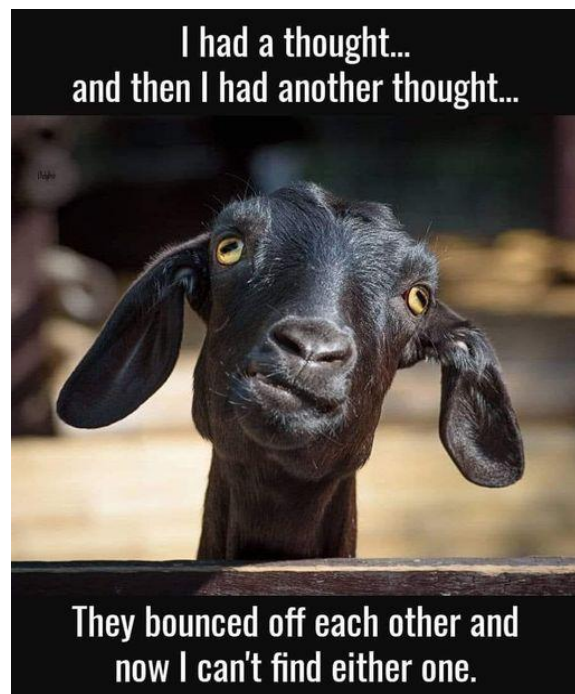
If you think you might be a victim of identity theft contact your bank or building society and report the matter to the police.

WHIMSY

Irene Cowan posted this.



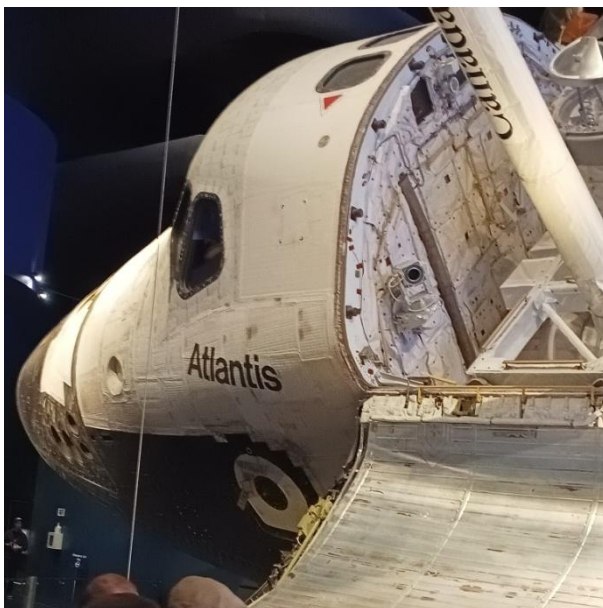
And this is from Libby McCree



PICTURE GALLERY

BACK IN THE USA

On their latest transatlantic venture Carol and Jim Hamilton visited the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral.

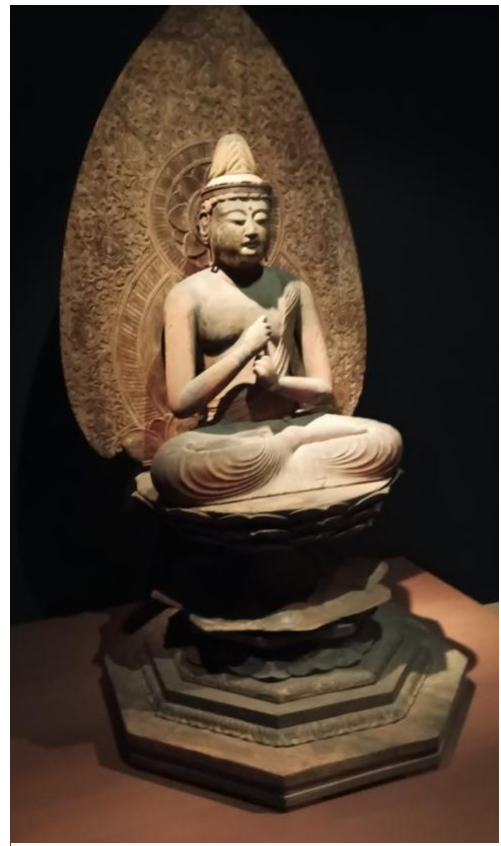


They also spent a few days in New York.





Central Park



Buddha at the Metropolitan Museum of Art



Afternoon Tea at the Plaza



EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT
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
Wednesday	17th July	Monthly Meeting in St Andrew's Church, Barrhead Barbara Craigie - Andrew Carnegie

CONTACTS

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

Chair: Marbe McNeill chair@eru3a.org

Vice Chair: Liliias Dunlop speakers@eru3a.org

Secretary: Mary Fyfe secretary@eru3a.org

Treasurer: Ann Scott treasurer@eru3a.org

Membership Secretary: Roy Bryce membership@eru3a.org

Groups Co-ordinator: Allison Kershaw groups@eru3a.org

Webmaster: Roy Bryce website@eru3a.org

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.