U3a Newsletter

October 2026



Welcome to the October edition of your Newsletter.

In April's edition I included a photo of the tree I can see from my living room, on which the pink blossom was in full bloom. As you can see from this recent photo, the autumn leaves are as colourful but in a different way. It won't be long before the tree is completely bare, and the countdown will begin until it bursts into life again.



The photo to the right is from our communal gardens – the Acer is the most vibrant red we have ever seen. With everything else going on in our own lives, and in the world generally, it is sometimes easy to forget how miraculous nature is. I hope these photos help to remind you.

This month's Spotlight article on Page 4 is from Jane Valentine who, as well as being an active and valued member of the Committee, organises the Walk in the Park groups on Tuesdays and Fridays. Putting one foot in front of the other can mean more than just benefiting from the exercise, so don't sit about at home. The members of this Group are loyal and dedicated, and everyone is welcome.

Speaking of walking, ***a new Group will be starting on Thursday 26h November – Nordic Walking.*** Lorraine McLeary is the Group Leader and more details are on Page 6.

Most people who catch a train from Shawlands are going no further than the city centre. In 2010, however, our Committee member, Jim Gillies, decided to extend the Cathcart Circle to Beijing. Jim's account of his journey is this month's Trip Down Memory Lane on Page 5.

Our guest speaker at the meeting on Thursday 19th November is Iain English. Iain's presentation will be on the Isle of May, which is located at the northern edge of the Firth of Forth. The Isle is a national nature reserve, and home to large colony of seal pups. **As usual, the meeting starts at 1:30pm in Newlands South Church.**

Please send your articles to **newsletter@glasgow-southside-u3a.org.uk.**

Kind regards,
Elainne Lawrie (Editor)

Future Monthly Meetings

We are pleased to have secured the following quality speakers for 2026/2027:-

November 19th: Iain English on "The Isle of May"

December: No meeting

January 21st: Afternoon Tea

February 18th: Hildegarde Berwick on "The 1901 Exhibition"

March 18th: Brendan Berry on "Photography and Art"

April 15th: Elizabeth Roddick on "Your Mind and Improving Your Memory"

May 20th: Harold Amos on "Russia Starts Here"

June 17th: Clem Clement on "Around Scotland in 15 places – an Incomer's View"



Brain Teaser

1. With which Scottish football side did Gordon Ramsey have trials?
2. From which musical does the song "Old Man River" come?
3. What profession would be followed by someone with the letters FRCVS after their name?
4. In which part of the country is the novel Lorna Doone set?
5. A deficiency of which vitamin can cause Rickets in humans?



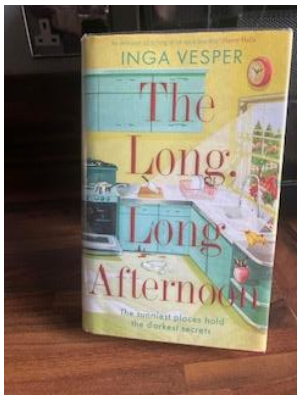
You Heard It Here First

Nea's is a superb wee café, located at the corner of Battlefield Road and Battlefield Avenue. Hot drinks are served ***hot***, the owners are friendly and remember you and what your "usual" is, and dogs (on a lead), babies (not on a lead) and working-from-homers-with-laptops are all regular customers. The avocado on sourdough toast is superb, and the sandwiches are a meal in themselves.

Highly recommended.

Recommended Reading

I made the decision recently to stop borrowing library books that were written by authors whom I know I already like and have been reading for years. It occurred to me that there must be hundreds of books in libraries - bookshops too - that are bypassed because the author is not well known, or their book has not featured on a TV or radio Book Club.



Each time I go to the library now, I borrow one book completely at random out of the three that I choose, and I have been surprised and pleased at the outcome. The most recent random choice was amongst the best books I have ever read. The Long Long Afternoon by Inga Vesper is an intriguing mix of LA Confidential and Peyton Place. Set in 1950's Los Angeles in a wealthy and exclusive area, the plot revolves around a murder (or is it??) a semi-disgraced New York detective who is sent to the West Coast to do penance for a misdemeanour that is never fully explained, and the women who, behind the impeccable homes, clothes and apparently perfect lifestyles, are trying to break free from the restrictions imposed on them. Well written, and extremely enjoyable.

Nine Minute Microwave Dumpling

Thanks to our regular contributor, Margaret Hendry, for this recipe. I can confirm that it is really tasty because, strictly in the line of research, I have already sampled some.

Ingredients:

Half a pint of water
Half a cup (60g) of white sugar
2 eggs, beaten
Half pound (225g) of plain flour
1 rounded tablespoon of mixed spice
1 rounded tablespoon of cinnamon
1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda
Half pound (225g) of margarine
Half pound (225g) of raisins
Half pound (225g) of sultanas

Method:

Put the water, sugar, mixed spice, cinnamon, fruit and margarine into a saucepan on top of your cooker.

Bring the contents to the boil, and simmer for one minute.

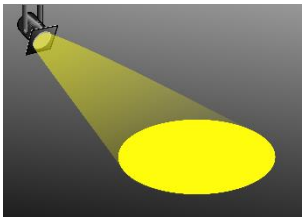
Remove from the heat and mix in the sieved flour and bicarb.

Add the beaten eggs.

Pour the mixture into a medium sized microwave-suitable bowl which has been lined with enough microwave & freezer wrap to go well over the sides, but do not cover the mixture with the wrap.

Cook in the microwave at 900w for nine minutes.

Allow to stand until cool.



SPOTLIGHT

Walk In The Park – With Coffee

Sitting watching the storm picking up again, trees shaking vigorously, wind whistling through my windows, for the first time ever I decided to cancel the Walk in the Park on safety grounds.

The "Walk In The Park – With Coffee" group was one of those created when Glasgow Southside u3a first began. When the original members sat around a table at the Bungo for the first Committee meeting, it was decided that each of us as founding members would offer to host two groups to get the ball rolling. By the time the discussion reached me, sitting at the far end of the table, offerings had already been made for such esteemed groups as Science & Technology, Photography, Local History, Mahjong and Theatre.

I had been quietly racking my brains about what I could come up with when I had my "Eureka" moment. I live overlooking Queens Park, so I offered a Walk In the Park ***and***, as I had just read that Strathbungo was rated 22nd ***in the world*** of best places to live for shops, the park and eateries, I threw in the "...'And Coffee". The idea was that we would sample various coffee houses. Soon, however, the group members made their preferences known, so we now have a regular coffee stop based on very friendly staff and good coffee.

Walk in the Park - And Coffee takes place on the first and the third Friday, and the second and the fourth Tuesday of each month. Communication is by Whatsapp the day before each scheduled walk, when I ask "***anyone up for a walk tomorrow***?" Group Members then reply if they are free to walk. Conversations flow as we break into small groups and surprise is often expressed at the distance covered. The perimeter of Queens Park is just over 2 miles, 2.5 by the time we reach our coffee stop to continue our blether.

We also visit other parks in Southside which luckily have good coffee houses, such as Pollok Park and Govies; Rouken Glen and the "Sit-ootery" at the Garden centre; and Newlands Park with the Dandelion cafe, although at Newlands two/three laps are required to get the steps under our belts.

We have in the past celebrated Christmas (and the enduring winter weather) with a well-attended Christmas lunch, and on one or two occasions have swapped coffee for a toddy when chilled to the bone.

The benefits of walking are well recorded, and when good company and decent coffee are added you will feel so much better at the end of the walk than you did at the beginning. Please come along, you will be made so welcome.

Jane Valentine



A Trip Down Memory Lane

On the morning of Tuesday 4th May 2010 I set out from Pollokshaws East station to travel to Beijing by train. Although this was the start of the journey, it was the end of many months of detailed planning.

I was joined by two friends at Glasgow Central and we travelled together to Moscow where the fourth member of the party joined us. Travelling across Siberia by train had long been a dream of mine but I had never been able to arrange it, so when a friend emailed me to ask if I was interested in making the journey with him and a couple of other friends of his I jumped at the chance.

Working out an itinerary was complicated. We knew we wanted to stop in Irkutsk and to visit Lake Baikal. We also wanted to spend some time in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, before reaching Beijing. Not all the trains ran every day, so we had to plan around the rail timetables for out stops.



To get to Beijing we had to travel through France, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Russia, Mongolia and, finally, China. The last four of these countries required us to have visas. The first leg of our journey was from Glasgow to Cologne. At Cologne we joined the direct train to Moscow travelling across Germany, Poland and Belarus. We spent a couple of days in Moscow visiting the Kremlin, Red Square, the Novodevichy Convent, the famous Metro stations (where we were stopped from taking photos) and other sights around the city.

From Moscow we set off on the longest of our train journeys, four nights on the train to Irkutsk passing through Yekaterinburg, Omsk and Novosibirsk before arriving in Irkutsk. From Irkutsk we travelled to Lake Baikal where we saw the lake just beginning to thaw after being completely icebound throughout the winter. We took a trip on a small hovercraft which skimmed across both water and ice at speed. Then back to Irkutsk to catch the train to Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. Another couple of nights on a train traversing the Gobi desert after a long wait at the Russian - Mongolian border. Ulaanbaatar is a rapidly growing city with many people moving from the countryside. Modern skyscrapers sit beside ancient temples and the traffic is chaotic. Crossing the street was a terrifying experience.





The final leg of the journey took us from Ulaanbaatar to Beijing, where we spent a couple of nights before flying home. A perfect ending to a dream at last come true.

Jim Gillies

GROUP NEWS

Nordic Walking
Group Leader – Lorraine McLeary

I am starting a new Nordic walking group in Overtoun Park, Rutherglen commencing on Thursday 26th November at 10:00 am. I will provide the Nordic walking poles at a hire rate of £3 each session. This will go towards the purchase of "paws" when required for the poles. The poles are made by Leki so are of very good quality.

Nordic Walking has both mental and physical benefits in abundance, and is so beneficial for all-round good health. Your balance will improve enormously and, as it is a weight bearing exercise, it is great for bone strength too. Most importantly, it is fun being out in the fresh air with good company during the winter months.

We will meet three times a month on weeks 1, 2 and 4 from 10:00 to 11:15, and afterwards have a cuppa and homemade baking at The Meeting Place in the park. I popped in to see them, and they will welcome us as well as providing complimentary refills of hot drinks after the initial purchase.

The maximum for each session will be eight people, with a minimum of four required for the group to go ahead on each session. I'll be travelling without a car and, as I will be walking with the group, the equipment I will be carrying will be a little heavier than usual. I will therefore need firm commitments from new members to make the arrangements for the first, and subsequent, sessions.

There is parking off Johnstone Drive by the gates to the park and also at Rutherglen Primary Health Care Centre, with toilets in the centre as well as in the Church cafe.

A WhatsApp Group will be set up pending interest.

If you are interested in joining this exciting new group, please email:-
groups@glasgow-southside-u3a.org.uk

Art Appreciation Group
Group Leader – Hildegarde Berwick

At the beginning of October, we visited Greenock and The Wyllieum, the museum dedicated to Glasgow born artist George Wyllie, who made Gourock his home. Most of our group were not familiar with his work, so it was very informative to see the sculptures, prints and images of his outdoor installations. This included the Straw Locomotive, suspended from the Finnieston Crane in 1987. Maybe you remember this?

November will see us visiting The King's Gallery at Holyroodhouse, in Edinburgh. The theme of their current exhibition is "The Edwardians: Age of Elegance" and we are expecting that opulence to abound in paintings, costume and accessories, all drawn from the Royal Collection.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Hildegarde via the website.

Social Photography
Group Leader – Anne McLean and Jim Gillies

2 become 1.

This will be the last update from the Social Photography group as we know it. We have joined forces with the Photography group as there was already a crossover of members. The Photography Group had taken a break over the summer, so Jim Gillies (Leader of the Photography Group) and I took the opportunity to review the future of both groups. We therefore had a meeting in September with members of the Photography Group to canvas opinion, and this resulted in an agreement to join forces



The new, combined group will continue to meet on the 2nd Monday of each month, usually at 2pm. Meetings will alternate monthly between outdoor locations and indoor meetings, the latter of which will focus more on technical aspects. There is a great breadth of knowledge and experience that we will be able to share, and we are all looking forward to this new approach.



We had our inaugural meeting in October, which was an opportunity for everyone to meet. We then discussed what equipment people were using, what experience everyone had in both taking and editing photographs, and agreeing on how we saw the group progressing.

Our November meeting will be an indoor meeting, when we are going to review photographs taken on the theme of Autumn Colours and look at some editing processes/software. Watch this space.

Ben Lomond



Local Dining
Group Leaders – Jeannie Gilgannon and Barbara Sharp

October was a busy month for the group, with the leadership passing from Maureen Douglass to Jeannie and Barbara. The Group still has the same name, but our meeting day has been changed to the second Thursday of the month.

October's lunch was at All Bar One in Glasgow, which offers various menus at lunch time, and the ten group members present enjoyed good food and equally good company. The waiting staff did an excellent job at managing the group, which added to our experience.

The next lunch will be held at the Battlefield Rest in November

Membership of this group has been closed for some time. Going forward, it is planned to ask all members to confirm that the new day is still suitable for them, and whether they want to remain in the group. Should any vacancies arise, the membership list will be reopened.

Gardening Gnomes
Group Leader – Ken Liddell

The Gnomes enjoyed their continuing adventures during September and October.

In September we visited the SONAS Garden in Kilmacolm, a newish garden constructed within the grounds of an old estate, around a burn/pond feature and designed in the "Japanese" style.



October found us in Ayrshire in the grounds of Blair Castle, near Dalry, an old (approx. 1100AD) estate. The Carriage House, with its much more recent arboretum was the main feature.



Tomorrow, Tuesday 3rd November, our final outing of the year will be our third visit to Dawyck Garden, near Peebles. Hopefully, the recent storms will have spared some golden autumn vistas for us to enjoy.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Ken via the website

Pickleball Group
Group Leader – Heather McEwen

Pickleball continues to be popular and we have a few more people on the waiting list. Thanks to John L for organising the session when I was on holiday. If you would like to join the waiting list please email **groups@glasgow-southside-u3a.org.uk**

Walking Group
Group Leader – Rosie Schild

Our last walk was on Friday 9th October when we travelled by the X11 from the bus station to Strathclyde Loch. The walk was just under 5 miles. We took the left side path and did a full circuit, returning to the start to have lunch at a very convenient coffee stall . The weather proved to be much better than forecast so it was a very pleasant outing. **This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Rosie via the website.**

Women in History
Group Leader – Moira Shearer

In September we discussed The Edinburgh Seven, a group of women who applied to the University to study medicine at a time when women were not expected to go to University.

In October we discussed The Janes, a group of women in Chicago who set up and operated an illegal abortion service in the late 1960's.

In November we are going to discuss Alice Guy-Blaché, a pioneer French woman film director.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Moira via the website.

Mahjong
Group Leader – Heather McEwen

Mahjong started back at the Stag and Thistle on Wednesday 28th October. Our first meeting was very enjoyable with two new members having their first games along with another new member who had played in the past, before joining the more experienced players. We will be playing twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10.30-12.30.

The next meeting is 11th November.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Heather via the website.

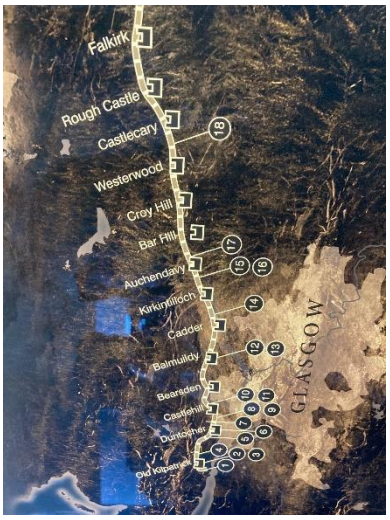
Indoor Bowling
Group Leader – Martin Sewell

The bowls group started up again in September. We meet on the first and third Monday of the winter months at the Glasgow Indoor Bowling Club in Mount Florida. It's a very welcoming club and its regular members often help out with a bit of advice or even some coaching. We currently have ten members, which is probably pretty much capacity so if you want to join us, be quick.

This group is still open to new members but is filling fast. Anyone interested should contact Martin via the website

Local History
Group Leader – Shona Liddell

After a get-together at the Tramway in September, the plan for October was to follow The Requiem Walk in the city, which is curated by Approxima in collaboration with Glasgow Heritage Trust.



After a great deal of planning, however, the weather decided we should save this for another day so we had a very interesting visit to The Hunterian Museum in Glasgow University instead. This is a real hidden gem, and worth a visit if anyone hasn't been.



We had an interesting guide to the permanent exhibition of The Antonine Wall, Scotland's answer to Hadrian's Wall but sadly not as much remaining.



Our next meeting will hopefully be to the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre at Nitshill.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Shona via the website.

Quiz Group
Group Leader – Brenda Mason



This month's winning Quiz team were the Autumn Sunshines answering questions on subjects ranging from Science and Nature, Music and Witches (well Halloween is just around the corner) - with several other subjects in between. Well done to Des, Janet, Jean and Elainne.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Brenda via the website.

Brain Teaser Answers:- 1. Glasgow Rangers 2. Showboat 3. Veterinary Surgeon 4. Exmoor (Devon) 5. Vitamin D

Science and Technology
Group Leader – Moira Shearer

In September we discussed the Mapping of the Drosophila fly brain. In October we were looking at North Sea oil and gas - exploration and production.

In November our subject will probably be Optogenetics.

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Moira via the website.

Music Appreciation Group ("MAG")
Group Leader – Ken Liddell

Our MAG in the Stag & Thistle continues with our wide ranging discussions on many aspects of music. We're never short of material - it is fitting it all in that is quite an exercise!

Our recent discussions covered upcoming gigs (including Celtic Connections in January), whether we should go to see "old" bands, some of which are like us by being in their dotage and, increasingly, with little or no original members. Songs featuring mentions of Glasgow streets were also discussed, and much more.

On Monday 16th November there will be a quiz, and we'll be covering more streets, maybe protest singers and songs and whether a "word" sparks a memory of a song. We may eventually discuss Manchester music and Bruce Springsteen and.....did you actually ***like*** the Beatles??

This group is open to new members, and anyone interested should contact Ken via the website.

MONTHLY TIMETABLE OF EVENTS

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Gardening Gnomes, am/pm visits (occasionally on other days) _____ Bowling 14:30 – 16:00	Women in History 10:30 – 12:00	Local History 10:15 – 1200	Book Group 11:00 – 12:15 Art Appreciation 14:00 – 15:00 (chat). Longer for visits Nordic Walking (to be confirmed) 10:00-11:15	Walk in the Park 10:00 – 12:00
2	Social Photography 14:00 – 15:40	Walk in the Park 10:-00 – 12:00 Quiz 14:00 – 16:00 Pickleball 15:00 – 16:00	Mah Jong 10:30 – 12:30	Cribbage/Scrabble 10:30 – 12:30 Conversational French 10:00 – 12:00 "Bookish" Book Group 10:30 – 12:00 Local Dining Nordic Walking (to be confirmed) 10:00 – 11:15	Walking AM/PM
3	*Group Leaders Meeting 10:15 – 12:00 Music Appreciation Society 10:15 – 12:00 (occasionally other slots will be used) _____ Bowling 14:30 – 16:00	Pub Lunch and Discussion 12:30 – 14:00 Tennis 10:00 – 12:00 Langside Sports Club	Science & Technology 10:30 – 13:00	Monthly Meeting 13:30 – 15:30	Walk in the Park 10:00 – 12:00
4		Walk in the Park 10:00 – 12:00 Pickleball 15:00 – 16:00	Mah-Jong 10:30 – 12:30	Cribbage/Scrabble 10:30 – 12:30 Conversational French 10:00 – 12:00 Nordic Walking (to be confirmed) 10:00 – 11:15	Executive Committee Meeting 10:30 – 12:00

The Theatre & Cinema Group meets as and when events are identified in advance
Local Dining, Pickleball, Theatre & Cinema and both Book Groups are currently at capacity with waiting lists
Group Leaders - meet March, June and November *