

# RETURN TO THE HOST OF THE FIRST BRITISH UK

Cambridge, that prestigious university city which hosted the third *Internacia Kongreso de Esperanto* in 1907, will welcome us in 2023 for the 103<sup>rd</sup> *Brita Kongreso*. The event will take place from the Anglia Ruskin University campus from April 21 to 23, opening at 6pm.

## CONWY: TAKE 2!

This is the second *Brita Kongreso* since the lifting of the various national lockdowns owing to the coronavirus pandemic. The main guest speaker at last year's in Conwy, **Hans Becklin**, went down particularly well, and so we've invited him back to continue where he left off. We'll let you know in the next issue what he's got planned — you can be confident that it will be informative and entertaining, and last year's participants enjoyed his enlightening talks so much that they heartily endorsed the idea of running with the same main speaker in consecutive years. Fortunately for us, Hans is also very keen to return, and so we're all in for a treat!

He wasn't the only invited guest speaker from overseas last year: to that programme we added **Stela Besenyi-Merger**, who would have been the main guest at our cancelled 2020 conference in Leicester. She was supposed to be a one-off, a way of celebrating a return to meeting

in person, but her *legosalonoj* went down so well with Esperanto-speakers of all levels that we decided to extend a repeat invitation also to her, which she has been delighted to accept.

We haven't forgotten those people who are new to the language, and have our usual treat in store for them: **Elizabeth Stanley**, one of the nicest people you could ever wish to meet, will be putting on special sessions for our new friends so that they will find themselves in a supportive and friendly environment with other people who also are just starting out. Those with a little more experience but shy of the fluent stage will have classes just for them, too, led by **Jack Warren**, which we'll timetable as alternatives to some of the more challenging presentations on the main programme.

## MORE ADDITIONS

You could contribute to the programme too: Jack will be holding a class for those of you who are musically minded, and **Martin Rue** will be administering a session of lightning talks, presentations by you on topics of your choosing for 1 to 5 minutes. Excellent speaking practice! You can declare your interest in these when you sign up on the website, and Jack and Martin will then liaise with you afterwards.

Martin will be on double duty, hosting a session of the game *Homlupo*. Participants in this group activity have to work out who are werewolves among the villagers!

## BOOK IN ADVANCE

The venue is in the city centre, less than a mile from the main train station. If you're planning to travel by car, please note that it doesn't offer parking facilities, although there are some paid ones nearby. There are hotels in the vicinity: the Travelodge on Newmarket Road is about half a mile away, and was offering the Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights for £130 recently.

The attendance fee will be £70, for which you'll additionally get food on the Friday evening and refreshments over the weekend. For those of you who prefer to stay on site during the day, it will be possible to order various meals in advance. We've looked into options for a group meal in a local restaurant on the Sunday evening, once the conference has formally closed, since last year confirmed that nearly everybody is interested in this if it's available.

We'll be adding details, including sign-up links, on [britakongreso.org](http://britakongreso.org), which we'll update with new information over the coming months. Do pop by! ■



Howdy! Guest editor here. Since I need to write most of the content for this issue, I might as well pageset it too and save Rico the work, especially given how busy he is with *Interlingvistikaj Studoj* in Poznan, his editorial role for *uea.facila*, his local group, and preparing for the debuting C2 examinations in November. He'll be back for number 100 in January.

## CHILDREN'S BOOK OF THE YEAR

We've won the title again, following on from *La Krubalo's* victory two years ago: our full-colour hardcover *La domo ĉe Pu-Angulo* was named *Infanlibro de la jaro* for books published in 2021 in the *Belartaj Konkursoj* in Montreal. You can pick it up for £15 — a bargain for a book of this quality.



An unfortunate consequence is that, as holders, we're not eligible to submit for next year's competition a book published in 2022. Our spectacular *La aventuroj de Alico en Mirlando* won't be in contention in Turin next year, then.

We'll be slowing down on publishing children's books now, having well and truly filled the gap in the market. We get most of them printed in China, and there are often massive delays in getting them to Esperanto House, so we'll still be announcing new releases into the following year but otherwise not actively working on colourful hardcover projects such as the new *La fajrovulpo*, unless they're one-off special projects in the vein of *Alico*, or are more conventional reading books.



An example of the latter is the Moomins: we've signed a contract for all seven of the books in the internationally well-known series. (People occasionally try to helpfully correct me on this point, informing me that Tove Jansson wrote *nine* Moomins books. Our resident expert — the translator, Sten Johansson — explains that one was a prequel and another a collection of short stories.)

The first book, *Kometo en Muminvalo*, came out, priced at £10, in September, and seems to have been a big hit with people of a certain age from other European countries. It's shifted 78 copies in the eight weeks since we launched it, which is a massive deal for an Esperanto book. The second, *Ĉapelo de sorĉisto*, will follow in early 2023, with the others popping along every now and again afterwards.



Even more popular has been the first book we've commissioned in our new focus to produce highly readable, popular paperbacks, the sort of titles which people will expect to find in modern bookshops. We launched the wonderful *La kurioza incidento de la hundo en la nokto* — translated by Simon Davies and previewed in *LBE 992* — on September 30: that's sold 68 copies already in the four weeks since.



There's a reason for the success of these books: unlike our other books, they're found on Amazon and other sites, with sellers such as Wordery and Book Depository offering free international delivery. This is a consequence of a production decision we've made, and is how we'll be producing, as much as possible, future books which don't require the bells and whistles that a *Pu-Angulo* or an *Alico* do.

Since we can't personally compete with services which offer free delivery on top of low prices, we probably won't be carrying these particular books in our own bookstore. You can find the books easy enough yourself next time you're online.

We'll certainly remain worth a visit because of all the non-standard books we sell, though. On top of the afore-mentioned *Pu-Angulo* and *Alico*, you can find our other children's books there, including the brand-new *La fajrovulpo* and *La plej eta elefanto* for £5; their English versions are £12.99, by the way!

## THE LANDLORD SAGA

I detailed in *Update 96* how EAB hadn't succeeded in getting any invoices for rent or utilities from its landlord. It's taken them 21 months but they finally despatched a packet of 15 invoices to us, adding up to a repayment of £14,507.32, far more than we'd ever incurred before under the previous landlord.

Included in there were 12 separate charges for late payment which they had incurred with suppliers and have forwarded to us to repay as though their failure to pay their invoices is somehow our responsibility. They did the same with a fee for a debt recovery agency, too. And they issued an invoice for business insurance which we'd already paid last November.

Those are the obviously contestable parts but there are others, too. The gas bill — which does look plausible — uses meter readings from the main property on the site rather than Esperanto House. And the electricity bill is out of this world: if you know how a closed office can somehow consume £9.33 of electricity over a January weekend, you're smarter than I am. Unfortunately, Esperanto House doesn't have a separate meter, so we can't demonstrate anything. My theory: the people squatting in the large property (see next page) were probably not put off by the fact that they had no right to the power when feeling cold in January and ever since.

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Response to my request in *Update 98* for members' ideas regarding reducing the quorum for the AGM has been rather muted, shall we say. Here's a reminder that we'll be discussing the topic in Cambridge if you wish to share an opinion with me. ■

**Tim Owen**

Answers to Jack Warren's anagrams related to *la mezepoko* from *Update 98*:

1. KATEDRALO 2. MONAĤEJO
3. GLAVINGO 4. KASTELO 5. BARONO
6. SERVETULO 7. BLAZONO\*
8. ASTROLOGIO 9. KAVALIRO
10. KRUCMILITO 11. TURNIRO
12. PILGRIMADO

\* In *Update 98* the words shouldn't have been *Bona Sol* but *Bona Zol*.

# BREAK-INS IN BARLASTON

**Esperanto House has been burgled. Twice. One week apart.**

Wedgwood Memorial College closed precisely one decade ago. Esperanto House stands on one of its two sites, named Estoril, after the enormous house which occupies pride of place in the plot. I was, as a representative of a “stakeholder”, involved in the discussions about the fate of the College, including being part of a small team which submitted several business plans to take over the running of the loss-making facility under a Community Asset Transfer. (All very “Big Society”, as David Cameron was advocating at the time.)

We were doomed to failure from the get-go: the Government had cut off Stoke-on-Trent City Council’s funding by £36m, and then another £24m in the following year. The council’s officers were not going to turn away the £7m which the two sites were supposedly worth, and Wedgwood Memorial College closed. (Those of us trying to keep the College open at the time pointed out that the council was never going to receive £7m.)

The council initially invested in security services, costing the taxpayer over £9,000 a month, according to the local newspaper, *The Sentinel*. They gradually reduced the security presence over the years, and the sites remained unsold until 29 January 2021, nearly nine years later. Although the information hasn’t been publicly disclosed, our understanding is that the final fee was £1m.

The abandoned Estoril site has been trashed. People routinely evade the security fences by the simple mechanism of walking around the sides of them. They’ve smashed windows and broken the external fixtures and fittings, and some have even posted videos on YouTube of them breaking into the big house. We’ve since learned that it’s been a home to squatters.

It was only a matter of time before somebody turned their attention to the other building on the site, only a few

metres away. Viv turned up to work on Monday, 25 July to find that the plate-glass library door had been smashed by somebody throwing a brick through it.

His haul was particularly unimpressive: he located some petty cash, and took the first-aid box. (The fool had cut himself on the glass shards when entering, and then left some DNA for the police forensics team to find. They know who he is.) Unfortunately, he helped himself to a few items which are of no financial value to anybody but which we can’t replace: a framed photograph of Joseph Rhodes — co-founder of the first Esperanto club in the UK — and a painting of Montagu Christie Butler — after whom the library is named. I immediately removed the large portrait of Ludoviko Zamenhof and several other valuable items to a secure location.



That decision might have paid off within days because on Tuesday 2 August, having enjoyed a long weekend, Viv was greeted by the sight of every glass-panelled door having been smashed, this time by a different thief. This one had been more thorough than his friend, having entered the three upstairs bedrooms too. His haul was about as derisory as it’s possible to be: an

old, unused digital camera from 2005, and an ancient, low-spec laptop which barely runs, and which can only be accessed via an admin password anyway.

## ENDURING REPERCUSSIONS

Sadly, the outcome of these two individuals’ pointless criminal activity goes beyond the immediate inconvenience. They’ve left us with financial losses, some of which will persist into the future.

We incurred £2012 of losses with regards to damage caused. Some of that should come back from our insurers. They’ve already increased our premium by 70% this year, an increase of £700, *before* taking into account the claims. Goodness knows what the sting will be once the payouts are factored into their pricing.

We haven’t been able to claim for the damage done to the glass doors, which is covered under the buildings insurance: there would have to be two claims because of the separate incidents, and the excess on each is £500. Although one of the two claims slightly exceeds that, it’s not worth the punishment of higher premiums, so we haven’t proceeded.

We’ve spent £480 having security cameras fitted: they ping Viv on her mobile if they’re triggered. Worryingly, it didn’t take long to do that, and the recording showed three young people entering the site and, ignoring the larger Estoril, heading straight to the office door. One of them was eventually capable of reading Viv’s message of “Smile! You’re on camera!”, which she’s affixed to the door, and they looked up, confirmed that there was a camera there, and left.

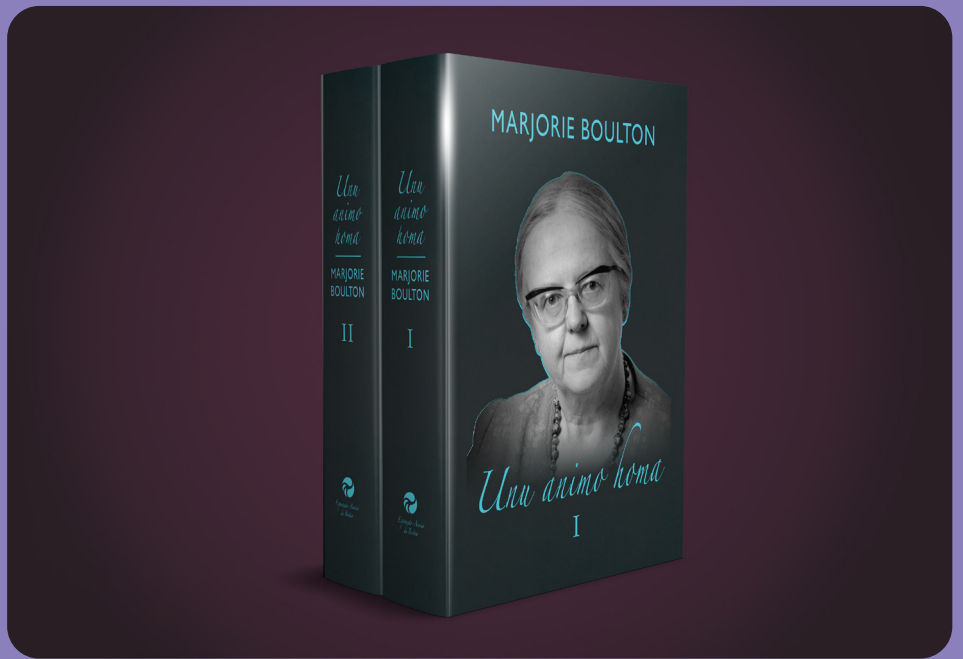
It’s a sad state of affairs. So much disruption and inconvenience. So much financial loss. So many more losses to come because of the increases to our insurance premiums. Irreplaceable heirlooms — of sentimental value to us but nearly as worthless as these perpetrators to anybody else — gone. And for what? ■



# AVAILABLE: MARJORIE'S LIFETIME OF POETRY

We've stated in the last couple of annual reports that we're working on a collection of the complete poetry works of Marjorie Boulton. It's been a tall order because she was so incredibly prolific: take this from the man who had to index all 1200 pages, condensed from 1400! Despite our best efforts, it just wasn't possible to publish all this in one single volume, so *Unu animo homa* is a two-volume set of hardcovers, and is now on sale after years of tireless work by Edmund Grimley Evans, its editor.

We've done what we can to keep the price as low as possible, helped by printing the book outside the UK. A two-volume set still involves printing two individual books, so the cost is twice what it could've been, but it's still a bargain for something of this size and prestige: we've launched it UK-only for £20, a huge discount off the recommended price of £30. If you're in the UK, track it down on [esperanto.org.uk](http://esperanto.org.uk) or get in touch with Viv; people outside of the UK can buy it from our colleagues at [espero.sk](http://espero.sk). ■



## TRANSLATION COMPETITION

**Given our mission to increase our publishing of popular books, EAB is on the lookout for translators, and we've launched an international competition to initiate those relationships. The winners will not only see their name on the title page of two well-known books; we'll also pay them £500 as a thank-you.**

Getting a translated book into print is difficult and expensive if you're the translator. You have to procure the rights, including for any artwork. You'll need to have the cover designed and the text pageset, purchase an ISBN, handle the printing, distribution and promotion. Alternatively, you can specialise in the area you're good at, and leave the technical side and expense to us. That's what we're offering to the winners of our competition. That's *winners plural* because we're running two strands.

**"LAST NIGHT I DREAMT I WENT TO MANDERLEY AGAIN ..."**

That legendary line of English literature should give away immediately what the book to be translated in the main competition is: it's Daphne du Maurier's classic *Rebecca*. Competitors will have to translate an excerpt, returning it to us by the end of January, when a three-person panel of judges will check for accuracy and readability.

There's a second strand too for what we might call "emerging talent": people who haven't necessarily translated a full

book before, and who will start off with something easier and less lengthy: we've opted for Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. The winner will receive six mentoring sessions with experienced Esperanto translators while working on the rest of the book. As with the main competition, once the full text is handed over in good time and to publishable standard, the winner will get the joy of seeing their name in print, have a few copies of their own sent to them, and receive £500 in their account.

Something you could be interested in? You'll find more details and be able to apply at [esperanto.org.uk/konkurso](http://esperanto.org.uk/konkurso). ■



**3-A VIRTUALA  
KONGRESO  
DE ESPERANTO**

24.-27.11.2022

UEA has announced its third *Virtuala Kongreso*, following on from the two held in place of the normal *Universala Kongreso* during the pandemic. Joining as part of it is TEJO's second *Retoso*.

The event is free for members of UEA, 50€ otherwise. If you're not a member of UEA but wish to participate, there's an option to become a member as well as register at [vk.esperanto.net/2022](http://vk.esperanto.net/2022), which will save you some money. ■



 **Esperanto**  
Association of Britain

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