

CHIT-CHAT

u3a
East Renfrewshire

THE NEWSLETTER OF
[EAST RENFREWSHIRE U3A](#)
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WALK THIS WAY



Find out where this historic figure was spotted in *Groups*.

SEEING DOUBLE



Also in *Groups*, you can find Willie Dyer with his doppelganger.

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. By using the links 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 links incorporated in all the group headings.

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

Jim Hamilton

THE BIZ

APRIL MEETING

At the meeting in the Broom Church on 15th April our own Rosalind Holmes will be talking about a hundred years of Chinese history through the lives of the women of one Beijing family.

The doors are open at 1.30pm and the meeting starts at 2.00pm. Refreshments are served after the talk. If you can, bring your own mug please.

NEW SECRETARY

The Committee are delighted to announce that Hazel Dunnachie has been co-opted and from March she will take over the role of Business Secretary.

THE BUZZ

NEW MEMBERS FAIR

On Thursday 5th March a New Members Fair was held in the Broom Church. Facilitators set up stands to attract more members to join their groups, and Shirley and Jean ran a busy cafe with Mary's delicious home baking on offer.

Several new members joined too, so it was a successful afternoon.





MONTHLY MEETING

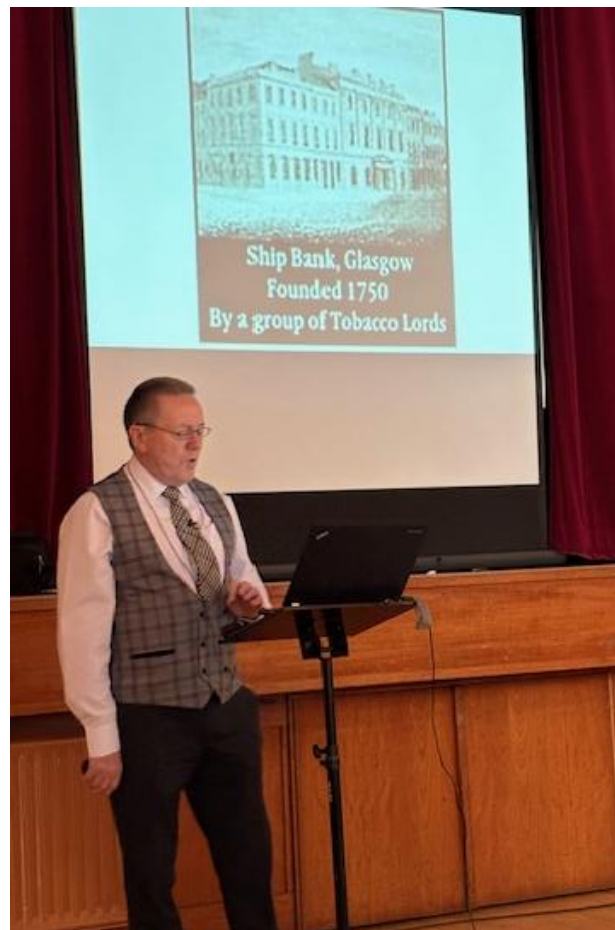
At the meeting on 18th March guest speaker David Vennard delivered a talk on *The Glasgow Tobacco Lords and Slavery*.

Tobacco was primarily grown in the English colonies of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. By the second half of the 1600s planters began replacing their indentured servants with enslaved Africans. Now dependent on slavery in order to be commercially viable, soaring American tobacco exports created a constant demand for more enslaved labour. Following the 1707 Treaty of Union Scottish merchants gained access to the English colonies, and in 1747 the French monarchy granted Glasgow a monopoly for the importation of tobacco into French territories. The deepening of the Clyde in 1768 provided a further advantage for Glasgow ships built specifically for the Atlantic crossing.

The tobacco trade was part of a trade triangle that involved merchants carrying manufactured goods from Europe to West Africa to sell or exchange for slaves, which they transported on to America and the Caribbean. On the third leg back to Europe, they carried tobacco, rum, cotton and sugar.

From 1710, Glasgow became the centre of an economic boom lasting nearly fifty years that was personified by the Tobacco Lords. Arguably the most successful of these merchants was John Glassford, who was the most extensive ship owner of his generation in Scotland.

During the 1760s tensions grew between Britain and her American



colonies, amongst which were economic stresses arising out of the perceived unfairness of the Glasgow-dominated tobacco trade. Maryland and Virginia planters were offered easy credit by the Glasgow merchants, enabling them to buy European consumer goods and other luxuries, but the indebted growers found themselves forced by the traders to accept low prices for their harvest in order to stave off bankruptcy.

GROUPS

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

The undernoted groups would all welcome new members.

Amblers	Out and About
Around East Renfrew Dining 1	Poetry
Around the World Dining 1	Poetry Writing Group
Around The World Dining 2	Quiz
Audio Reading Group	Rummikub Scrabble
Backgammon	Russian
Boules	Saturdays
Bridge Friday	Saturdays Together
Bridge Online	Science & Technology
Bridge Tuesday	Scottish Country Dancing
Chess	Screen Time
Classical Music Appreciation	Sewing
Comealong and Singalong	Spanish Chat
Conversational French	Spanish Improvers
Cuppa@11	Stage Craft
Cycling Offroad	Strollers
Discussion	Swimming
Enjoy the Arts	Talking Music
Garden Visits	Theatre
Geology	Travel
German Intermediate	Urban Sketching
Knitting	Walkie Talkies
Local Archaeology History	Walking
Miniaturists	Wine Buddies
MOTO (Members on Their Own)	Yoga
My Life Stories	

AROUND EAST RENFREWSHIRE DINING

Eight diners from Group1 had a first time visit to Loks. The staff were very attentive and two courses cost £17.95. The good choice of starters included cullen skink, hummus and chicken tenders. The main course offerings of steak and haggis pie, pasta, and 'the best Caesar salad' were so generous that a few of the diners took home 'doggy bags'. They will definitely be back!



AROUND THE WORLD DINING

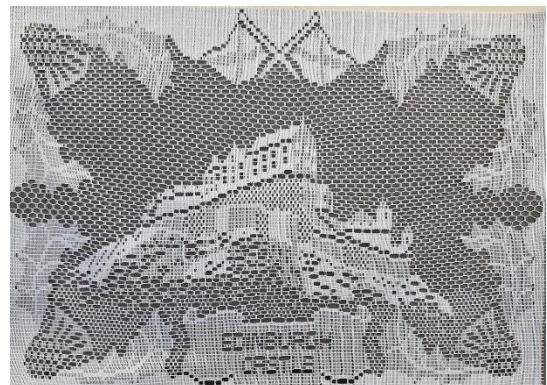
This month our peripatetic diners' destination was Nepal, with a visit to Himalayan Dine in Shawlands. At £12.95 for two courses, the menu offered excellent value. Popular starters were the Fish Pekor and the Chicken Sekuwa (skewers). For the Mains, Butter Chicken, Basil Coriander Lamb and Nepalese Chilli Chicken were popular. All the portions were very generous. The service was friendly and efficient and the company, as always, excellent!



OUT AND ABOUT

This month our outandabouters made a return visit to MYB Lace Factory in Newmilns, Ayrshire, which is now the last lace producer of its kind in the world. Since the last visit was substantially oversubscribed, this was an opportunity for those who missed out.

The 17-strong group had a very interesting talk by the two company



designers, one of whom has been working there for 40 years. The mill exclusively weaves Scottish lace and madras sheers for high-end companies around the world and the visitors were very impressed to see a large number of packages almost ready to be shipped to California. It was fascinating to hear that the lace has featured in well-known T.V. shows and Hollywood films. Approximately half the production is for theatre stage backdrops woven on a 12-metre-wide loom. The lace also features on the catwalks of upmarket fashion designers. After the talk the outandabouters were taken to see the looms at work and had the various stages explained to them.



The talk took place in the factory shop, which has a good stock of items for sale, such as napkins, tablecloths, table runners, baby blankets and even lace window blinds. Some are designed at the Glasgow-based 'Timorous Beasties' company. The factory also has an online shop.

After the visit most went for a soup and sandwich lunch in the nearby *Humble Table* café.



PHOTOGRAPHY

The Photography group met on a cold morning last month at St Enoch Subway Station and split into pairs to undertake a subway challenge. Each pair was allocated two subway stations to visit. They were to take photographs in the area around the station that included at least one of the following themes:

something orange

triangle/s

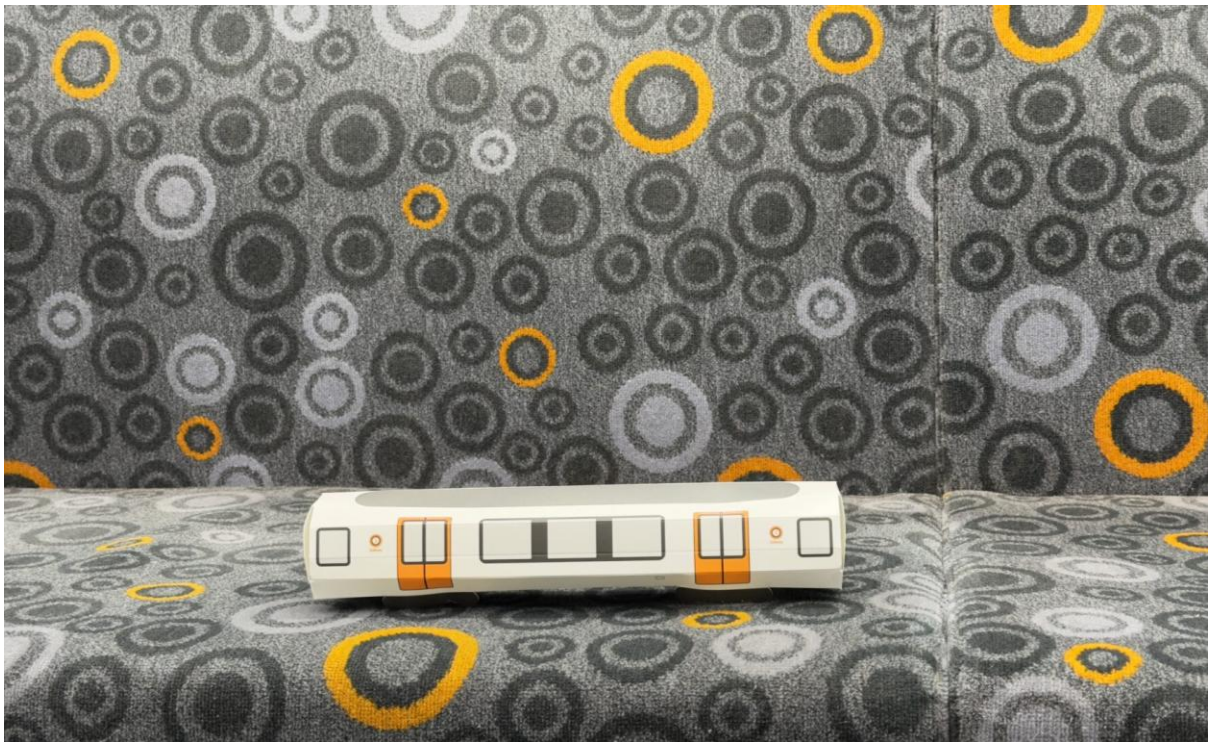
something unusual

something that captures the
essence of where you
are/your destination

something representing the subway

something funny

To make the task even more challenging members had one hour to complete the task and were not allowed to edit the photographs.



A carriage within a carriage (Subway, Orange & Unusual)



[Mary Barbour](#) Statue (Essence of Where We Were)



Essence of Where We Were & Triangles



Another mode of transport (Orange & Triangles)



Team player on the task (Subway & Orange)



Something Unusual



And another team member on the case (Something Funny)



Ostrich with lip piercing mural (Something Funny)



Something strange happening in Govan! (Essence of Where We Are, Something Unusual & Funny)



Seen on the wall above the Laurieston Bar, Bridge Street (Subway & Orange)

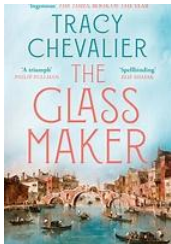
Whilst everyone enjoyed the task, they did find it very challenging not being able to edit their photographs. All of the photos can be found on the [ERu3a Photography](#) page.

QUIZ

Congratulations go to Team 5 Go to a Quiz (Linda, Jean, Susan, Jim and Stuart) who were the winners of the March Quiz with a superb score of 91.



READING



Group 5 read *The Glass Maker* by Tracy Chevalier. This well-researched work of Historical Fiction/Magical Realism contains good descriptions of Murano, Venice, and the craft of glassmaking.

Manipulating time, the book follows the lives of the Rosso family through five and a half centuries, from the Renaissance era, wars, changing economic trends, and plagues from Bubonic to COVID 19 in the 2020's. The story about a family of glassmakers begins in Murano in 1486 with an outline of the life of Ossola Rosso, the eldest daughter. Lacking encouragement at home, she was taught to make glass beads by a female mentor from a rival family.

There were mixed reviews from the group.

TALKING MUSIC

Our talkers had an interesting meet-up on the theme 'instrumentals, no vocals, however whistling and yodelling are permitted'. Sadly, no whistling or yodelling was evident, but they did get enthusiastic yelping.

They had Jeff Beck doing a bolero, Violinska sounding like they had strayed from ELO and a more jazzy straight-ahead track by Zappa. They also took five with Brubeck and had the pomp of ELP. Charles Mingus provided the yelping on 'Hog Callin Blues', there was the rolling piano of Bix Beiderbecke and the wildness of Red Bareet's bhangra.

ET and Mr Lawrence (Merry Christmas) made an appearance via their soundtracks which led to Yellow Magic Orchestra being played.

The theme of the next meeting is 'Vocalist you like or admire'. The focus is on the singer regardless of genre, band or song.



Straight-Ahead Pop from a Glaswegian Band

TASTE THE WORLD

Our globe-trotting chompers enjoyed a delicious lunch at Kochchi in Ruthven Lane this month. They had previously visited this venue when it was the Hanoi Bicycle Shop, so it was interesting to see the transformation in restaurant style both in terms of decor and menu.



WALKIE TALKIES

For their March outing our chatty walkers enjoyed a two-park walk, taking in Kay Park and a section of Dean Castle Country Park, both in Kilmarnock.

They began the three-mile circular walk in Dean Castle car park, before crossing the road to enter



Kay Park and following the footpath up to the impressive Burns Monument. At the Burns Monument Centre, the walkers were given a short presentation by Heather, one of the staff, who explained that the resource was used extensively by people tracing their family history.

After walking through the rest of the very pleasant park, the group returned to Dean Castle and had lunch at the excellent cafe.



The weather, although cold and a bit blustery, stayed dry. Another very enjoyable morning spent with a lovely group of friends.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

LOSING IT

The 14th March 2026 issue of *New Scientist* carried an article by science writer David Cox about frailty, which can start developing much earlier than you might think. He reveals that a significant number of people in their 30s or 40s are unknowingly in a 'pre-frail' state. Frailty affects around 10% of people in their 50s, rising to around half of all those in their 80s.

Signs of physical frailty include loss of muscle mass (sarcopenia) and osteoporosis. People can also be cognitively frail, which makes them markedly more vulnerable to dementia. Frail people have fewer biological reserves, leaving them much less resilient to any kind of trauma.

A 2018 study of nearly half a million people in the UK found that 38% of women and 35% of men aged 37 to 45 had indicators of pre-frailty. 'Physiologically, pre-frailty reflects a body under strain, but still highly adaptable,' says Tom Brennan, an ageing researcher at Flinders University in Australia. 'People may feel more tired than they used to, move a little more slowly, be less active or notice subtle losses in strength.'

Since 2016 UK health services have been using a digital tool integrated into health record systems that enables doctors to predict older people's risks of living with frailty. It is based on research carried out in the early 2000s by geriatrician Kenneth Rockwood at Dalhousie University in Canada, who developed a way of assessing frailty as the combined accumulation of different physiological deficits.

In a 2001 study, Lida Fried and colleagues at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Maryland defined five predictors of frailty as unintentional weight loss, self-reported exhaustion, low physical activity, slow walking speed and weak grip strength. Anyone with three or more of these is classed as frail.

Claire Steves, who studies ageing and health at King's College London, highlights walking speed as perhaps the most revealing of the five traits. This is because walking utilises multiple bodily systems and can be affected by underlying health conditions. 'In order to walk quickly,' she says, 'you need to have basic muscle function, really good balance, good spatial awareness and cognition to put all of that together.'

As we age, we develop growing numbers of senescent cells that no longer divide and replicate. 'When you get to the age of 70 or 75 you could have anything between 300 and 500 grams of senescent cells in your body,' says Nicholas Rattray at the University of Strathclyde. Studies have shown that growing numbers of senescent immune cells in the gut trigger intestinal inflammation, while harmful populations of gut bacteria can make senescent cell formation more likely. As white blood cells called T-cells become senescent, the immune system is less capable of fighting off infections. Inflammatory molecules generated in the gut can affect distant organ systems and drive a phenomenon

known as anabolic resistance, which restricts the generation of new muscle tissue.

A study conducted last year by Tom Brennan found that, while someone might appear healthy, their psyche can act as an early red flag, with pre-frail individuals being more likely to feel lonely and hold more negative attitudes to ageing.

Dietary changes, such as consuming more fibre and fermented foods, can improve gut microbiome diversity and cognitive function in the pre-frail. Research has also found that people deficient in key minerals – particularly calcium, magnesium, selenium and zinc – are more at risk of frailty. Some studies have suggested that alcohol consumption, particularly binge-drinking can contribute to the formation of senescent cells, while vaccinations can have wider benefits for the immune system. Daisy Wilson, a dietician at the University of Birmingham, recommends resistance training, such as push-ups or lifting weights, to maintain muscle and bone health. Steves talks of the apparent benefits of leucine, an amino acid that has been shown to counteract age-related muscle loss, particularly when combined with vitamin D3.

Evidence is building about the benefits of other anti-ageing therapeutics, known as geoprotectors, which can clear excess senescent cells from the body and help cells generate new mitochondria. If geoprotectors are found to be effective, the question will be whether they should be given to people in middle-age or people who are extremely frail, says Wilson.

WHIMSY

OVERDONE

Libby McCree posted this.



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aunty acid

PICTURE GALLERY

TUNISIAN ADVENTURE

Willie and Myra Dyer recently visited Tunisia, where they encountered various Roman sites and associated museums. They saw the Coliseum at El Jem, which is the third largest in the world. For an amphitheatre to be called a Coliseum its capacity must exceed 32,000. El Jem could accommodate 34,000, although it was never used for the purposes



for which it was built, as the Roman Empire was under threat and retreated to defend Rome. It was later used by the citizens as refuge during times of war, and in recent times was used as a venue for summer concerts.





The Acropolium, known as St Louis Cathedral, Carthage

EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT
Wednesday	15 th April	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Rosalind Holmes – China: a hundred years of history through the lives of the women of one Beijing family.
Wednesday	20 th May	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Brian Young – The Secrets of Hadrian’s Wall
Wednesday	17 th June	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Scottish Air Ambulance Service
Wednesday	15 th July	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Kayleigh MacLean - The Dogs Trust

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.