

CHIT-CHAT

u3a
East Renfrewshire

THE NEWSLETTER OF
[EAST RENFREWSHIRE U3A](#)
SCOTTISH CHARITY No. SC044004

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FEATURES

THE BIZ	2
THE BUZZ	3
GROUPS	6
DID YOU KNOW ...?	18
WHIMSY	19
PICTURE GALLERY	20
EVENTS	22
SUPPORTING u3a	22

TUNNEL VISION



What's at the end of this tunnel? Find out in *Groups*.

CRUISING



Find out where this lot were spotted in *Picture Gallery*.

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

MAY MEETING

At the meeting in the Broom Church on 20th May Brian Young will not be available to do his talk on The Secrets of Hadrian's Wall. Other activities are being planned for our amusement on the day.

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

BRIDGE LESSONS

[Learn Bridge with u3a](#) and discover the joy of playing the game in this introduction. Find out how to play online with u3a Bridge Adviser, Steve Carter, the u3a Bridge Adviser, and some volunteer mentors from the national Bridge programme.

Bridge is one of the most popular and stimulating activities across u3a — combining mental challenge, strategy, and social connection. In this lively session, Steve and the team will share their passion for the game and explore how you can learn Bridge.

You'll discover how other u3a members are learning and playing Bridge online with u3a and in local clubs and hear inspiring stories from members who've completed the **u3a Beginners' Programme** and now enjoy regular games.

Whether you're a complete beginner or simply Bridge-curious, this is your chance to find out more. There'll be plenty of time for questions and discussion — so bring your curiosity and join the conversation.

About the speaker

Steve has been the Bridge Subject Adviser for four years and has assembled a great team of keen Bridge Players, who have worked to design a set of Bridge beginner lessons ideally suited to the needs of u3a members. Many of these teachers will be available on the day to answer all your questions about Bridge.



Learn bridge with u3a

Discover the joy of playing Bridge in this introduction to the game, and find out how to play online, with u3a Bridge Adviser, Steve Carter.

Wednesday 10 June at 10am

Free – online via Zoom



DIG FOR GOVAN

Last year Willie and Myra Dyer volunteered to take part in the archaeological dig in the graveyard at Govan Old Parish Church, where they were shown the basics of surveying a designated area by probing, marking strikes and then removing the top surface. Myra struck an interesting worked stone and was allowed to investigate, albeit with supervision, using a wooden spatula to ensure the stone wasn't damaged.

The qualified archaeologists worked in another part of the graveyard on a possible processional walkway coming from the Mott and Bailey castle to the original church at the time of the Viking raiders.

If you'd like to volunteer to take part in the Govan Old Archaeology Programme, contact:

Frazer Capie

Project Development Officer

Govan Heritage Trust

info@thegovanstones.org.uk

07835980566

THE BUZZ

MONTHLY MEETING

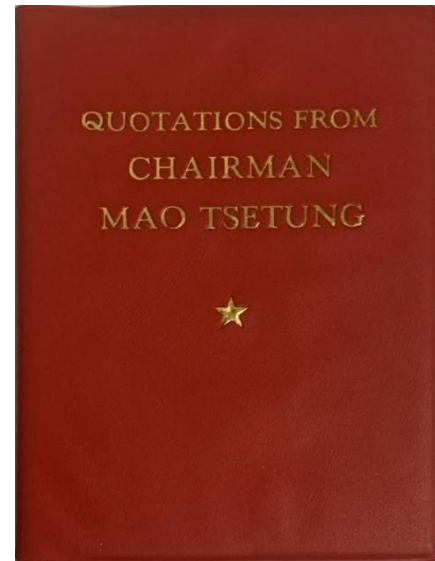
Our own Rosalind Holmes was the speaker at the April meeting. She talked about three generations of Chinese women – grandmother, mother and daughter – and the times they lived through.

The grandmother – Qhang Changying – was born into a wealthy family in 1920, a few years after the coming to power of the Nationalist Party, led first by Sun Yat Sen and later by Chiang Kai Shek. In 1941 she married Jin in an arranged ceremony and gave birth to four children between 1941 and 1949. After the Mao Zedong's Communist Revolution of 1949, all the family's lucrative government contracts disappeared and their houses were requisitioned. Changying died in 2007.

In 1951 the mother – Chen Mingmei – started school. In 1958 Mao's Great Leap Forward began. Collective farms were introduced and unrealistic rice and grain quotas led to widespread starvation.



Up to 40 million people starved to death. Mingmei graduated in 1966, just as the Cultural Revolution began. The Red Guard was established with a mission to destroy the four 'olds' – customs, culture, habits and ideas. In 1968 she was forced to choose between 'going down to the countryside' or marrying a promoted soldier in the Peoples Liberation Army. She chose the second option and married Duan Lei. Following the birth of the daughter – Duan Ume – in 1976, Lei used his clout to persuade the authorities that she was too fragile to survive. A second child was then permitted despite the one-child policy, and so Ume had a brother.



After Mao died ~~death~~ in 1976, the country was run by the 'Gang of Four' until Deng Xiaoping took over in ~~1968~~1988 and ended the Cultural Revolution. In 1989 thousands were killed and everything shut down following the Tiananmen Square protests. China was isolated again until 2003, when Hu Jintao began promoting development and growth. Workers migrated to the cities and a middle class developed.



In 1992 Duan Ume passed the entry exam for Peking University and got a job in graphic design. She hired an Aiyee (housekeeper), adopted a western way of life and anglicised her name to Amy. In 2003 she did Europe and in 2004 met Richard from Glasgow. In 2006 they set up a biotechnology business and in 2009 they married. They now have a daughter called Annabel. After organising the Beijing Olympics in 2008 Xi Jinping became Chairman in 2012. He brought in more censorship and control, established the Xi Cult and

abolished the five-year term. At that time the number of millionaires in the city reached 100,000 and there were 110 billionaires.

In 2020 Duan Ume, Richard and Annabel moved to Scotland. At the end of the talk Rosalind revealed that Richard is her son.

REMEMBERING MARBE

(Margaret Beatrice)

Marbe was a member of our u3a for well over a decade and played a huge role in making it what it is today. She had remarkable enthusiasm for and belief in what the u3a stands for and actively helped it to grow over her nine years on the committee and five years as chairperson. She brought a huge desire to improve the management and organisation, not only for our u3a but also in a wider sense and actively sought involvement with other local u3as both to support them and learn from them.

One of her most significant achievements was the setting up of a considerable number of new groups, not only the ones she facilitated, but all the many others she helped to get started, giving members more opportunities to learn, connect and share their interests. She was always very supportive of all our facilitators and played a central role in expanding the variety of our activities. Marbe always endeavoured to make every member feel welcome and valued and reminded us that there should be no barriers in our u3a. She certainly did not let her own limited sight be a barrier to her involvement and success as our immediate past chairperson.

Marbe was very good at identifying how things could be improved and always had ideas about how to take those improvements forward. She was particularly enthusiastic about embracing new technologies such as improving our web site and using Zoom during COVID so that members could still meet and enjoy their activities albeit in the virtual world. She carried out her duties as chairperson with careful preparation, a friendly manner and often a sense of humour, which helped to make everyone feel welcome.

She will be sadly missed by so many members, but we are very grateful for everything she did for our u3a and her legacy is an important part of East Renfrewshire u3a's story.



GROUPS

AROUND EAST RENFREWSHIRE DINING

This month twelve of our diners met at Monteiths, where the good food was enjoyed by all. The menu included massive fish and chips and a good plateful of Balmoral Chicken. The Tablet Sundae just completed a very satisfying meal. Some had to take 'doggy bags' home. The Group will definitely be back.



GARDEN VISITS

This month our horticultural enthusiasts visited Perth. Their first stop was Bonhard House, a traditional 19th-century garden of five acres approached through an avenue of magnificent oaks. On arrival the group was shown into the big house and offered tea or coffee, the most delicious home-baked coffee and walnut cake and chocolate brownies.

There are many mature trees, six classified by the National Tree Register as 'remarkable', including a monkey puzzle, sequoias, Douglas Fir and a variety of hollies. The rhododendron and azalea beds weren't in full bloom, but the group enjoyed strolling through the recently planted spring and summer flowering meadow areas with a variety of fruit and nut trees, beehives and a productive vegetable garden. Grass paths meander through a pond area with wildlife habitat and there are red squirrels, lots of birds and six Shetland cows.

The visitors then travelled a few miles down the road to the gorgeous NTS Branklyn garden, where in contrast the



rhododendrons and azaleas were a riot of colour. After another cuppa, many of the group went home laden with plants bought from the shop.



MINIATURISTS

The Miniaturist Group had their first ever meeting and had lots of fun!





MY TUNES

The My Tunes Group held their first meeting in the Westbourne Room, St Andrews Church, Barrhead.

The aim is to make the group a safe place to talk and share memories and music and they certainly did that. The session started off with Edith Piaf's *Hymne a l'amour*, before whizzing forward in time to Danny Wilson's *Mary's Prayer*. Stuart said that he never guessed for a moment that we'd all be enchanted by a lovely memory of The Murrison Male Voice Choir serenading the inhabitants of their community in Wales every time (and at ANY time...night or day) when they returned home from a performance. Their version of *All I Ask of You* from *The Phantom of the Opera* made us all jealous that we were never roused from our sleep at 3.00am when the choir came home - a really magnificent sound and memory. Having visited France, Scotland and Wales, we hopped across to Canada and then back to Ireland with Joni Mitchell's chillout *Hejira* and a stripped down but rousing *Hometown* from Rory Gallagher, before staying in Ireland for The Pogues' *Rainy Night in Soho* and then Wales again for Rhydian's amazing *Coming Home Again* and another laid back gem from American (I think) Steeley Dan's *Deacon's Blues*, which of course influenced the band name choice of a well-known Scottish band.

The Group ended up in France - back where it started - with Christine and the Queen's beautiful song *Tilted*.

Not a bad way to spend a convivial couple of hours on a Tuesday afternoon!

Stuart is looking forward to the next meeting which will be on Tuesday May 5th – thankfully avoiding all the Star Wars' *May the Fourth be With You*' jokes from the day before!

If anyone would like to join the My Tunes Group, and enjoy the fun, please contact [Stuart McColl](#) via the group webpage.

OUT AND ABOUT

After two previous attempts to visit Perth Museum had to be cancelled due to the incident with the Stone of Destiny, our outandabouters succeeded at the third attempt on 1st April. They were given a warm welcome by the friendly staff and after highlight tours of some of the extensive displays in the main museum, including a 3,000-year-old Carpow Longboat excavated from the Firth of Tay and a very rare Māori cloak made from unique green kahapo feathers dating from 1810–1820.

The groups were divided further into smaller groups for security reasons to view the much-travelled Stone of Destiny, which now has a permanent place in the museum. It is an ancient symbol of Scottish monarchy and kingdom, and an object of importance to both Scotland and the United Kingdom. It was used in the inauguration of Scottish monarchs at Scone, three miles upriver of Perth



on the River Tay. Its first documented use was in 1249 for the inauguration of the boy king Alexander III. Fifty years after Alexander became king it was taken as war loot to Westminster Abbey by King Edward I. Now after 700 years – and a brief foray to Arbroath Abbey in Christmas Eve by Ian Hamilton and three fellow students – returned permanently to its home in Perthshire, where it is available to view for free. It was used most recently at the coronation of King Charles III.

After a light lunch in the bright café, which has an extensive menu, members visited the exhibition of Mary Queen of Scots' last letter, written in French on the eve of her execution in 1587 at Fotheringhay Castle. Addressed to her brother-in-law Henry II of France, it proclaimed her innocence and requested care provision for her servants. It is a poignant letter to read, written as it was in isolation after 19 years of imprisonment. Considered a relic, the letter is usually held in secure storage at the National Library of Scotland, due to its sensitivity to light, and is rarely displayed in public. So, our group was privileged to have had

the opportunity to view it. It is cited as going on display once in a generation, although it was last displayed in public the National Library for just six hours on 8th February 2017 to mark the 430th anniversary of her execution.

Of course, by a twist of fate, Mary's son James VI of Scotland inherited the thrones of Scotland and England after the death of Elizabeth I.



POETRY

This month the Poetry Group continued to explore the dark, but unpredictable, world of Alfred Lord Tennyson. Although Tennyson is still seen as the quintessential Victorian, he often took inspiration from rebellious Regency poets like Keats and Coleridge, a debt he did not always acknowledge. They also investigated how such an artistically insensitive poet as the Isle of Wight recluse could live to become, reluctantly, a huge influence on painting and the graphic arts. It was an interesting morning with some unexpected surprises.

The Group meets in the Conservatory Room, in the Redhurst Hotel. If you would like to join, please contact [Peter Faulkner](#) via the Poetry Group webpage.

POETRY WRITING

At their meeting in Newton Mearns Library, the new Poetry Writing Group heard some wonderful and interesting poems written by its own very talented members, using a range of forms from free verse to rhyming in stanzas, and a prose poem.

The theme for May is 'Psychic Poet', which the Facilitator Bob takes to be an invitation to look into the future and make some predictions!

QUIZ

Congratulations go to The Optimists Team (Yvonne, Catriona, Jim, Neil and Colin) were the winners of the April Quiz, but commiserations go to A Thorn Among the Roses (William, Myra, Margaret, Linda and Alan) who were beaten by just half a point! All the scores were very close indeed.

If you would like to join us for the next quiz on Tuesday 12th May, 2pm at St Andrews Church, Barrhead, just contact Allison via the group webpage.



SATURDAYS

The Saturdays walkers followed the nature trail in Busby Glen, without their leader due to illness. Get well soon Vikki.

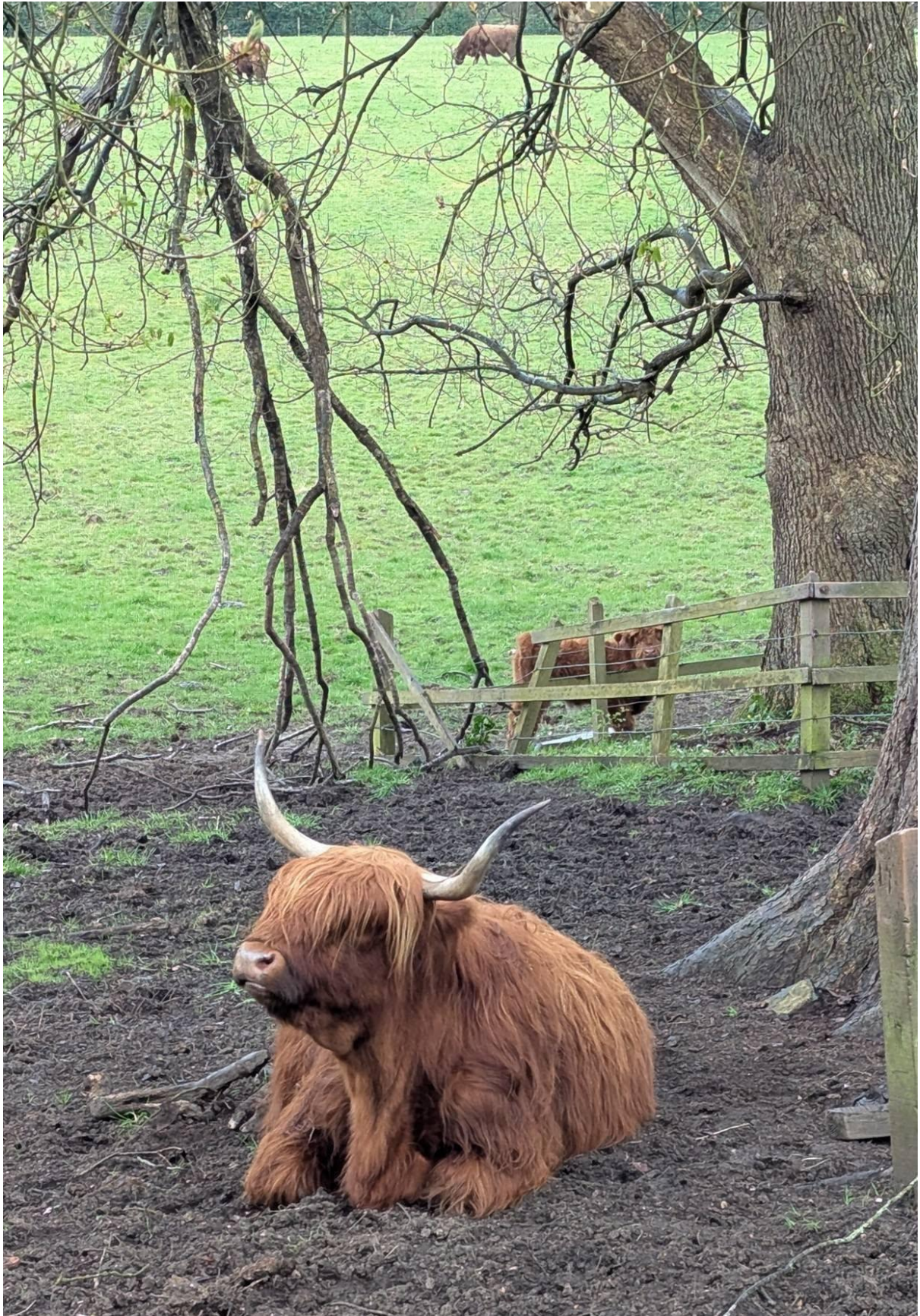




STROLLERS

Our afternoon strollers saw some gorgeous tulip beds and a few of the new baby highland cows on their Pollok Park walk.







TASTE THE WORLD

Fourteen of our travelling diners enjoyed delicious Spanish food at Malaga Tapas in Clarkston. The menu is extensive and they were left wondering how they manage to produce such a variety from such a small kitchen.



WALKIE TALKIES

For their April outing our chatty walkers enjoyed a very pleasant walk along the Forth and Clyde canal. From Maryhill they walked along to the Stockingfield Bridge then along the canal towpath to the Lambhill Stables. After a look around the allotments, they had lunch in the lovely community cafe before retracing their steps back to the starting point. The weather stayed dry and mostly sunny, so it was another very enjoyable outing with a great group of people.



WALKING

Falkirk Wheel

The better spring weather made this month's walk very enjoyable. The 6.5-mile level walk started at Falkirk High Railway Station. Leaving the station, our walkers were soon on the towpath of the Union Canal. Running from Falkirk to Edinburgh, the canal was constructed to bring minerals, especially coal, to the capital. It opened in 1822 and, although initially it was a success, the construction of railways reduced its value as a form of transport. It eventually closed to commercial traffic in 1933 and officially closed in 1965. Since then, much has been done to restore the canal to how it is today, including the Millenium Link at the Falkirk Wheel. Today the canal is used recreationally.

On a very pleasant walk along the canal, our walkers enjoyed the natural sights around and on the water. Shortly before arriving at the Falkirk Wheel, the group reached Roughcastle Tunnel, which cuts beneath the Antonine Wall. The tunnel opened in 2002 as part of the Millenium Link Project to restore a link between the Union and Forth and Clyde Canals at Falkirk, where the rotating boat lift at the Falkirk Wheel allows the two canals to reconnect for the first time since the 1930s. The Wheel was opened on 24th May 2002.



After refreshments in the café at the visitors' centre, the return route was along part of the Forth and Clyde Canal and through a local residential area to get the train back to Glasgow from Falkirk Grahamston Station. A large stretch of this Canal is undergoing significant improvement works along the Falkirk Flight (between locks 3 and 16).





DID YOU KNOW ...?

GOING UNDER

The same issue of *New Scientist* that told us all we'd ever want to know about frailty also carried a report on rising sea levels. Katharina Seeger and Philip Minderhoud at Wageningen University in the Netherlands have found that 90% of studies on coastal vulnerability failed to consider the effects of ocean currents, tides, temperature, salinity and winds, thereby underestimating coastal water level by an average of 24 to 27 centimetres.

Correcting the forecast increases by up to 68% the number of people whose homes will be underwater by 2100. This amounts to as many as 132 million more

people, mainly in Southeast Asia and Oceania, where sea levels are a metre higher on average than previously thought.

The earth bulges at the equator due to its rotation, and denser parts of the mantle exert a greater gravitational pull on water above them. Sea levels can be several metres higher in places where winds or currents pile up on water, or where warmer temperatures cause water to expand. And coastlines can move up or down as rivers build up sediment or cities suck groundwater out from underneath them.

Climate scientists and oceanographers should work more closely with geographers, environmental scientists and others who study coastal impacts, according to Matt Palmer at the Met Office.

WHIMSY

BUD NEIL'S FINEST

Bruce Lockhart posted this.

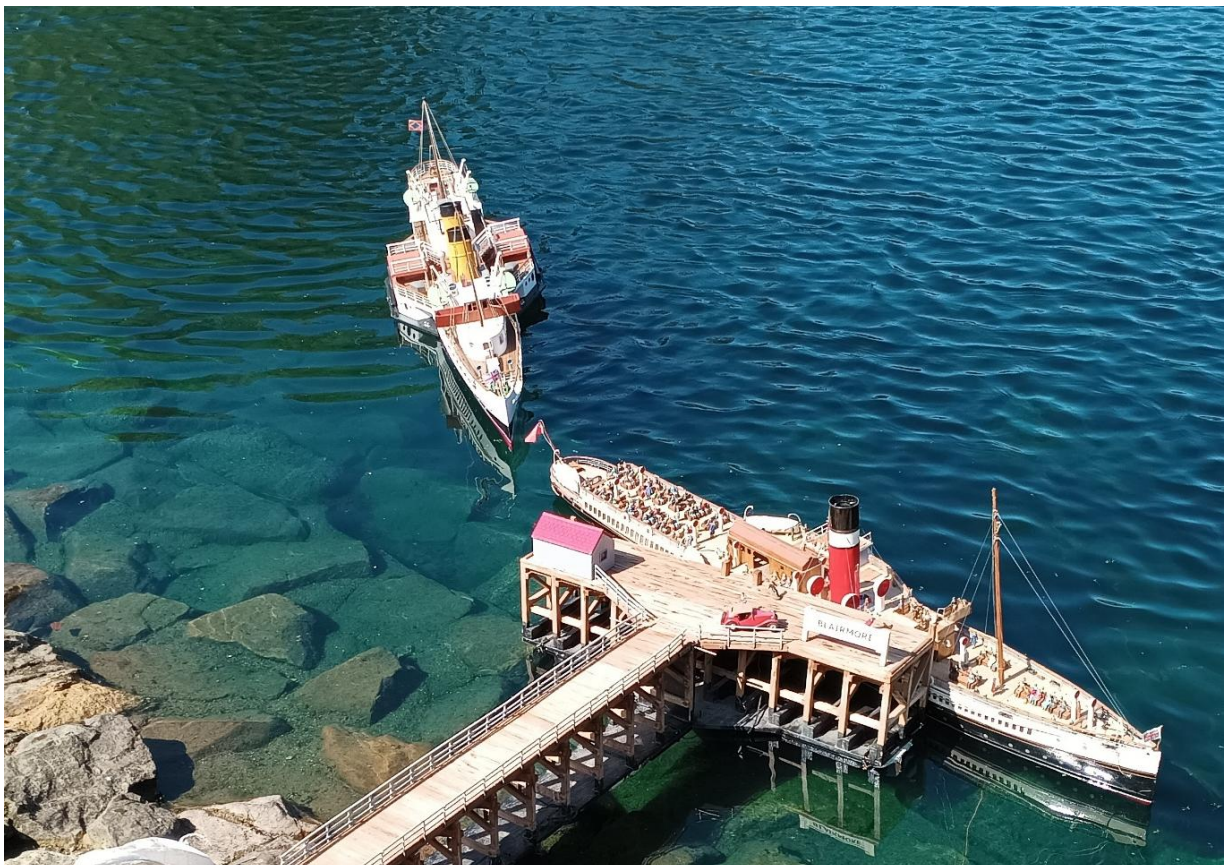


Portrait of Mrs Thomson officially opening the Toonheid windae-hingin' season.

PICTURE GALLERY

DOON THE POND

On a recent stroll around the pond at Rouken Glen your *Chit-Chat* editor spotted these models of historic Clyde steamers.







EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT
Wednesday	20 th May	Social event in Broom Church, Newton Mearns
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
Wednesday	19 th August	AGM and The Glasgow Great International Exhibition 1901 in Broom Church, Newton Mearns

SUPPORTING u3a



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

East Renfrewshire u3a does not endorse any commercial organisations.