

CHIT-CHAT



East Renfrewshire

THE NEWSLETTER OF

[EAST RENFREWSHIRE U3A](#)

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OPEN-HANDED



Is this a greeting or a warning? You can find out where it was spotted at least, in *Groups*.

CHEERS!



This character doesn't look very cheery though. Find out where he was spotted in *Groups*.

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

EASTWOOD CHOIR

Last year, Eastwood Choir recruited a number of new members from the u3a, and they contributed to a very successful musical year. Choir Treasurer (and u3a member) Anne Brooks has suggested that it may be of interest to other u3a members.

Eastwood is a mixed voice choir, which meets weekly and performs a range of classical and contemporary choral pieces in four-part harmony at concerts in December and May. This friendly choir always seeks to encourage new members. There are no auditions, so you can just come along and see if it is for you. An ability to read music is not essential, but would be an advantage. All are welcome but, as is the case with most choirs, men are particularly encouraged to come along.



Starting in late August, there are rehearsals at Park Church, Ravenscliffe Drive, Giffnock from 7.00 to 9.00pm every Monday. Anyone interested is encouraged to come along to an open rehearsal on Monday 31st August, but if you can't make that evening but are still interested, you are welcome to come along to any rehearsal.

Singing is well known as being beneficial for well-being and for promoting positive mental health, as well as being good for your physical health. It's also great fun – and often quite a challenge!

For further details contact gillatecs@gmail.com or find Eastwood Choir on Facebook.

TRAVELLING AUCTIONEERS

Here is a message from Iona Shanks (iona.Shanks@stv.tv; phone: 07799611999), a researcher for *The Travelling Auctioneers* (broadcast on BBC One).

We are currently casting for our brand-new series. Our show focuses on assisting individuals experiencing significant life transitions. This includes people who wish to downsize, clear out a family home or sort through overwhelming collections. Our team of expert auctioneers and restorers visits each home to uncover hidden treasures, restore items, and ultimately help participants make some money at auction.

We want our show to truly reflect the rich diversity of the region. We are actively seeking applications from all walks of life. I'm happy to chat on the phone if you have any questions.

AGM

Our AGM will take place at the Broom Church on 19th August. There will also be a talk by David Vennard entitled *Dr Rae and the Northwest Passage*.

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.

THE BUZZ

COASTING

The NC500 tour organised by Leigh was a huge success.





MONTHLY MEETING

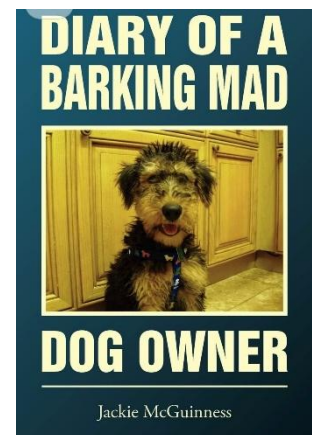
The subject of the July meeting was Dogs Trust, represented by Kayleigh Maclean and her canine chums Jools and Chico. Chico was the star of the talk and epitomises exactly what the charity is about. His owner died when he was a youngster. When he arrived at Dogs Trust, he was in a sorry state – badly needing a haircut and to have his claws clipped. He was also very withdrawn and had behavioural issues. Today he is a friendly outgoing dog, sporting a very fetching haircut. He wandered about the hall while owner Kayleigh gave her talk. The vision of Dogs Trust is to give every dog a good life, and to be there when a dog needs help. Established in 1891, it has 22 residential centres, two in Scotland (Glasgow and West Calder) one in Northern Ireland and the rest scattered throughout England and Wales.

When a dog arrives at a centre it is assessed physically and mentally before a programme is set up to ensure it has whatever it needs to be successfully rehomed. Some dogs are cared for at the centres, while others are fostered out – just as Chico was fostered out to Kayleigh. Once a dog is ready to be rehomed, its details are entered on the Dogs Trust Website. Once a prospective owner has completed a form online, his/her suitability is assessed. After a dog is rehomed, there are follow-up procedures to ensure the rehoming has been successful. A dog in the centres cost £64 per day, and those fostered £39 per day. The charity relies on various fund-raising activities as well legacies in wills. It gets no government funding.



Dogs Trust provides other services. For example, you can register your dog with the Trust to ensure it goes to a good home if anything should happen to you. It also provides an advice service to any dog owners, not just those who have rehomed a dog from the Trust. Their view is that giving owners support will reduce the number of dogs arriving at the centres. Volunteers and staff also help dogs overseas.

One of our members, Jackie McGuinness, kindly donated a signed copy of her book, *Diary of a Barking Mad Dog Owner* to Kayleigh who was delighted to receive the donation and will raffle the book to raise funds for Dogs Trust. Jackie's book is available from Amazon.



GROUPS

AROUND EAST RENFREWSHIRE DINING

For their July dinner Group 1 visited the Orchid restaurant in the Dalmeny Hotel, Barrhead. The meal and the company were both excellent and our diners will certainly be back before too long.



ENJOY THE ARTS

In May our aesthetes had a very interesting tour of the Mansfield Traquair Centre, originally a Catholic Apostolic Church. It is also known as Edinburgh's Sistine Chapel. Its outstanding feature is the scheme of mural decorations painted by the renowned Phoebe Anna Traquair in the 1890s, which have been beautifully preserved.



In June they went to Glasgow Art Club and were given a fascinating guided tour by its president Robert Ferguson. The Club was founded in 1867 by a group of amateur artists, including several of the Glasgow Boys, and is housed in a historic building on Bath Street. Some of the decoration was done by a young Charles Rennie Macintosh.



GARDEN VISITS

This month our horticultural enthusiasts had a tour of the garden at Sonas in Kilmacolm. Sonas, which is the Gaelic for happiness, was built in 2017 within the garden of Netherknockbuckle, one of the six James Salmon's houses in Kilmacolm.

The visitors saw many mature trees and the original pond, refurbished to prevent leakage, which is now linked by a stream to a new smaller pond at the top of the garden. There were also beautiful water lilies and a planted floating island in the large pond.



The beds are planted with a loose Japanese theme, and in the back garden there is a large greenhouse with a very prolific grape vine, together with raised vegetable beds and some fruit trees.

The visitors were taken with a bench made out of an old railway sleeper, inscribed 'Sit Long, Talk Much, Laugh Often'.



Afterwards the group lunched at Carriages, the old Kilmacolm railway station.

LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Our historians/archaeologists spent the cold and damp months of Winter 25/26 in Broom Church researching Ordnance Survey maps, photos and all sorts of historical reports. With the onset of summer weather, they've been able to go out to see it all in reality. This month was particularly 'map-to-actual', as they toured Rouken Glen.

Susan Hunter and her colleague Andrew Eadie led the day, which started with an arranged opening of the doors at the pavilion. The group's itinerary for two hours included:

- The Capelrig Cross, near the park – a relic of missionaries and monks from over a thousand years ago. It was still standing locally in 1926, but more useful as a cow scratcher!
- The original bandstand site opposite the pavilion. Photos show it was similar to the one currently in Kelvingrove Park.
- Site of the quarry (famous for Giffnock stone) just past the waterfall and outside the iron fence perimeter of the park.
- The working mill site down from the raised waterfall.
- The location of Thornliebank House near the walled garden.
- Geological Strata formed over 230 million years.

And much more.





OUT AND ABOUT

This month 31 of our outandabouters went by coach to visit Rozelle House Museum and Art Gallery in Rozelle Park, Ayr, which has a total of five galleries. They had a very informative guided tour of the permanent collection of Alexander Goudie's 'Tam O'Shanter' series of large paintings, which certainly brought Burns' poem to life.

They were then introduced to an exhibition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Royal Scottish Academy, featuring works by prominent R.S.A. artists Frances Walker and Ade Adesina. Both artists work in several mediums: Ade in printmaking, painting and sculpture and Frances mainly in lithography and screen printing. Through their work both artists show their concern about ecology, environment and the ever-changing world. The visitors were very impressed by the artists' fascinating work.

There was then time to visit the tearoom, walk around the grounds or make a quick visit to the other three galleries, before moving on to the very busy café in the nearby Robert Burns Birthplace Museum to enjoy a tasty lunch, despite the crowds.

Some went on to visit the nearby Alloway Railway Tunnel Art Project, established to change the old, unused tunnel into a safe, inspiring place, in which Chris Rutterford creating one of Scotland's largest hand-painted interactive murals to celebrate Ayrshire heritage.





QUIZ

Although it was a very hot sunny day there was a good turnout for the July Quiz. Both Frances and Margaret prepared some of the questions. Many teams found these harder this month, but the Summer Scorchers (Susan, Myra, Margaret and William) had the answers and were the clear winners.

At the national Inter u3a July Quiz East

Renfrewshire u3a Quiz Team (Susan, Allison, Ian and Eva) came a very respectable fourth out of sixteen teams. The winning team from Causeway only dropped three points in six rounds in what was a fairly difficult quiz covering 20th Century Literature, Science, Ancient World, a picture round and general knowledge to finish.

The next Quiz is on 11th August, 2.00pm in the Westbourne Room, St Andrews Church, Barrhead. Guest quizmistress Catriona has compiled all the questions. If you would like to take part, contact Allison groups@eru3a.org.

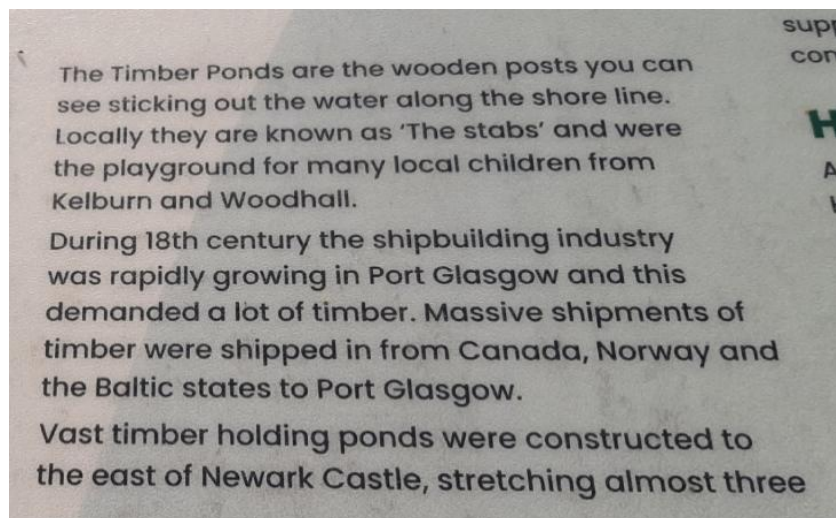


WALKIE TALKIES

For their July outing, our chatty walkers had a lovely walk in the glorious sunshine alongside the Firth of Clyde at Port Glasgow, starting at the Parklea Branching Out Garden Centre.

The route took in part of the Heritage Trails and the walkers viewed the remains of the old timber ponds where, in its heyday during the 1800's, wood imported into Port Glasgow from Canada, Norway and the Baltic states was seasoned prior to its use.

At the end of the walk, lunch was enjoyed at the very pleasant cafe in the Garden Centre, after which several people succumbed to temptation and treated themselves to a few plants.



As they were walking along the shore at Langbank and marvelling at how low the Clyde was, someone said, 'it's a very tight channel for the Waverley to navigate', which is true. When the tide is out it shows how narrow the channel is for sailing large ships down the Clyde to the sea. Particularly the ships built at BAE Systems.



WALKING

This month's five-mile walk followed the Vikings' route from Tarbet to Arrochar and back. This route also forms part of the Three Lochs Way and Heritage Trail. The Way is a 34.5-mile long distance route from Balloch to Inveruglas, linking Loch Lomond, Gare Loch and Loch Long.



Just before the famous Battle of Largs in 1263, King Haakon of Norway sent forty ships up Loch Long to meet with Magnus, King of Man. The Vikings pulled their ships out of the water and dragged them across to Loch Lomond through the Glen that links Arrochar and Tarbet, but fortunately our walkers didn't have to carry any ships! From the 13th Century until they were sold in 1784 these lands belonged to Clan MacFarlane. They are now the property of Luss Estates.



The outward section from Tarbet to Arrochar, on the north side of the A83, was through a narrow woodland path, involving some steep ascents and descents, where walking poles were helpful. The trees gave some welcome shade from the warm sun.

After enjoying a picnic and refreshments in Arrochar, the group headed for the return route along the hillside on the other side of the road. This was more open and mainly along a forestry road. Sunhats were the order of the day.

Back in Tarbet more refreshments, including ice cream, were enjoyed before heading home.





DID YOU KNOW ...?

LEFT OR RIGHT

In a 2017 blog on the [International Driving Authority](#) Website, [Anton Belikov](#) reviewed the history of Left-Hand Traffic (LHT) on approximately 25% of all roads, and Right-Hand Traffic (RHT) on approximately 75%. The reasons why this division occurred and why the world hasn't standardized to a single system lie in human psychology, ancient history, and modern politics.

Early travel behaviours were influenced by the fact that approximately 90% of people are right-handed. Travellers carrying goods with their dominant right hand naturally kept to the right side of paths. Armed individuals however favoured a left-side passage to keep their weapon hand (typically right) closer to potential threats.

These contrasting tendencies created an early divide in traffic patterns, with Left-hand traffic flourishing in regions with strong military traditions (like the Roman Empire) while Right-hand traffic developing in areas where peaceful travel was more common.

During the Middle Ages, Europe began establishing more formal traffic rules. Most regions adopted right-hand traffic, a trend reinforced by Napoleon throughout his conquered territories in the early 19th century. Continental

European powers (France, Spain, Portugal, etc.) generally spread right-hand traffic to their colonies.

Bucking this trend, the UK formalizing left-hand traffic with the Road Act of 1776 and the British Empire exported left-hand traffic to its colonies, including India, Australia, Hong Kong, many African nations and parts of the Caribbean. Japan adopted left-hand traffic when British engineers built its first railway, showing how infrastructure development influenced traffic patterns beyond direct colonial control.

The invention of the automobile created new considerations for traffic systems. The first cars used floor-mounted control levers, with drivers typically sitting on the left. The transition to steering wheels required determining optimal driver positioning, and drivers initially sat on the side closest to the kerb for easier exit. Henry Ford's 1908 Model T pioneered left-hand steering with right-hand traffic and mass-market European manufacturers eventually followed Ford's lead.

Safety considerations emerged about driver exit location (pavement vs. road). By the 1920s, most vehicles were designed with the driver seated on the side facing oncoming traffic, which became the standard approach.

The 20th century saw a significant shift toward right-hand traffic in previously left-hand countries: Belgium (1899); Portugal (1928); Spain (1930); Austria and Czechoslovakia (1938).

Despite 83% of Swedes voting to maintain left-hand traffic in a 1955 referendum, the Swedish parliament approved the switch to occur at 5:00 AM on September 3, 1967 (known as 'Dagen H' or 'Day H'), when all vehicles simply moved to the opposite side of the road. Accident rates initially plummeted as drivers exercised extreme caution, but within months the figures returned to previous norms. Iceland followed Sweden's example with its own 'Day H' switch in 1968.

In modern Europe, the only countries maintaining left-hand traffic are the United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta and Cyprus. Globally, approximately 76 countries and territories continue using left-hand traffic, including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa and many Caribbean, African, and Southeast Asian nations.

Odesa in Ukraine has select streets with left-hand traffic to manage congestion, St. Petersburg in Russia features some left-hand traffic streets in its historic centre and Paris has one left-hand traffic avenue (Avenue General Lemonnier).

Australia prohibits left-hand drive vehicles unless converted, New Zealand requires special permits for 'wrong-side' vehicles, Slovakia and Lithuania ban registration of right-hand drive vehicles entirely and Russia has a unique situation where right-hand drive Japanese imports are common in eastern regions despite it being a right-hand traffic country.

SENSIBILITY

Sandra Rigg
posted this
bit of fun.

The Older I Get... The More These *Make Sense*

1. I talk to myself now...
Turns out, I give pretty good advice.
2. "Dressing up" means wearing
something that still fits comfortably.
3. I don't need anger management...
I just need fewer annoying people in my day.
4. My people skills are fine –
my patience just isn't what it used to be.
5. The biggest lie I tell myself:
"I'll remember that later." (I never do.
6. "On time" is simply getting there at all.
7. You can't fix foolishness...
but you can walk away from it.
8. Honestly, I wish we could hop in the dryer
for ten minutes... and come out
wrinkle-free and a little smaller 😊
9. Funny thing is... people my age
somehow look older than me.
10. Growing old? That happened
way *faster* than I expected.
11. I may move a little slower these days...
but I've got a lot *more to say*.
12. I still don't act my age –
and at this point... I *don't plan to*.

And one last thing:

"Before we go" now means...
a quick stop at the bathroom first.



PICTURE GALLERY

STONED

Myra and Willie Dyer volunteered to assist the Glasgow University investigation of the medieval site within the grounds of the Govan Parish Church. Having been baptised there, Willie has an affinity with the now deconsecrated church.

They were fortunate enough to be accepted, and have now been there on three occasions to do a bit of everything – probing, using a Tee bar and flagging possible hits below the turf, removing the sod, carefully and scraping the earth to explore what they've hit. They entered the main trench to assist in mopping water from the flooded site following a



heavy downpour, removing and sieving earth from a test pit and washing, bagging and cataloguing finds. It is a thoroughly enjoyable experience, the archaeologists are very knowledgeable and explain each process and also the theories of what they are discovering.

Govan was an important site and there's lot of historical evidence with the 'Hogback' stones and sarcophagus of King Constantine of Strathclyde, who it is said was converted to Christianity by St Kentigern.

Asked if they found the work arduous, they said it was like genteel gardening, not like our usual work in Barshaw Park, where they volunteer in the walled garden and Community Space.







GONE WEST

Carol and Jim Hamilton have recently returned from a visit to Carol's daughter and son-in-law in Massachusetts. Here are some of the photos they brought back, showing some Independence Day fireworks and exhibits at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.









EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT
Wednesday	19 th August	AGM in Broom Church, Newton Mearns David Vennard - Dr Rae and the Northwest Passage
Wednesday	16 th September	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Catherine Crawford – Alzheimers Research
Wednesday	21 st October	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns Stuart Nisbet - Giffnock Sandstone- The Forgotten Story
Wednesday	18 th November	Monthly Meeting in Broom Church, Newton Mearns David Garbutt - Escape from Stalag C

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.