

CHIT-CHAT



East Renfrewshire

THE NEWSLETTER OF

[EAST RENFREWSHIRE U3A](#)

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BEHIND THE WIRE



Find out where this grim-looking barrier was encountered in *Groups*.

HOG-BACK



Also in *Groups*, you can discover the purpose of this curious object.

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

OCTOBER MEETING

There is a change of speaker for the meeting in Broom Church on 21st October. Stuart Nisbet will be on holiday, so David Garbutt has agreed to bring forward his talk entitled *Escape from Stalag C*.

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

MONTHLY MEETING

Guest speaker Aiman Muhammed, a research assistant at Cambridge, delivered a thought-provoking talk on behalf of Alzheimer's Research UK.

Alzheimer's Disease is one of several manifestations of dementia. It occurs when toxic proteins disrupt communication between neurons, which then remove themselves along with the information they carry. Unlike all the other cells in our bodies, brain cells do not regenerate.

Dementia is not inevitable, and it takes decades to progress. Sufferers eventually lose the ability to move and forget how to eat. Symptoms overlap and early diagnosis is important. Almost half of cases could be prevented or delayed.

The 14 risk factors are quality of education, diabetes, hearing impairment, untreated visual impairment, high LDL cholesterol, high blood pressure, depression, social isolation, smoking, air pollution, physical inactivity, obesity, excessive alcohol use and traumatic brain injury.

To minimise the risk of being affected by Alzheimer's it is important to look after your heart, stay sharp, keep connected, engage in cognitive stimulation such as reading, sleep well, manage stress and maintain a healthy weight.

As of 2026 about 55 million people live with dementia globally (982,000 in the UK) with Alzheimer's accounting for 60–70% of these cases—roughly 33–40 million people worldwide. Prevalence is rising rapidly, with nearly 10 million new dementia cases each year and global costs exceeding \$1.3 trillion in 2023. Ongoing research is evaluating 158 medicines across 192 global trials.

One in two of us are affected by dementia, either as sufferers or as carers.





GROUPS

AROUND THE WORLD DINING

This month Group 2 visited Thailand, as manifested in the Thairiffic Restaurant at the Charing Cross end of Sauchiehall Street – lovely food and lots of very good company.



CHESS

The Chess Group needs more members. It meets from 1.00pm to 3.00pm on the first Thursday of every month at Clarkston Hall. If you think this might be for you, contact the Group's facilitator, Melanie Berry on [Chess \(Sociable\) - East Renfrewshire](#).

ENJOY THE ARTS

Our art aficionados spent a wonderful morning at the Paisley Big Art show in September. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the show, which included over 1,000 art works. The visitors were very impressed by the variety of submissions, which included paintings, drawings, prints, mixed media, photography, ceramics, sculptures and textiles.



LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Our appreciators of old stuff had a very interesting day at Govan Old on Wednesday 9th September, where they were treated to a talk by Professor Stephen Driscoll on the ongoing excavations, targeting structures in the south-east corner of the 1,500-year-old churchyard, examining potential early medieval entranceways and recording the burial plots within the graveyard. The excavations include digging and geophysical/probing surveys.

The recent digs have revealed a massive early medieval posthole complete with stone packing and a large piece of quartz, alongside ongoing documentation of a large stone structure along the east wall. Live excavations running into mid-September were part of the University of Glasgow Archaeology Field School and Clyde Archaeology partnership.

An ongoing Church Restoration, along with the graveyard dig by the [Govan Heritage Trust](#) is undertaking major restoration work to transform Govan Old Church into an enhanced museum and community hub, with construction expected to wrap up in Spring 2027.



The group then had a tour and talk by Elizabeth Bryson, one of the custodians. Early Medieval Origins of the church go back to the 9th/10th century, when power shifted to Govan after the Vikings attacked the main fortress at Dunbarton Rock in 870. Govan then became a political and religious centre for the Kingdom of Strathclyde.

Tradition says St. Constantine founded an early monastery here in the 6th century. Govan Old would have started life as a wooden building, following by later structures. The current Scottish Gothic Revival church, constructed in 1888, is an 'A' listed building and remains open as a visitor attraction to showcase the historic churchyard and stone collection. Regular Sunday services stopped in 2007.



The beautiful Constantine Sarcophagus carved from a single block of limestone has Pictish images and Celtic knot work design. It could be related to this saint but, as Elizabeth pointed out, there are two other contenders. Internally the sarcophagus is extremely narrow.



The Govan Stones are a very important collection of 31 early medieval carved upright stone crosses. The collection also has the largest single collection of Viking Age hogback tombstones dated to the 9th/10th century. These crosses and hogbacks were originally found in the graveyard. The best preservation, especially in the hogbacks, is seen where the lower section of stone was found within the ground. The above-ground section shows weathering.



For centuries Govan was a quiet agricultural and fishing village, centred on the church and a strategic ford across the Clyde. The 18th/19th centuries saw an industrial boom, with textile mills, coal mining and world-famous shipbuilding. Govan became a burgh in 1864, before being absorbed into the City of Glasgow in 1912.

The Group's next meeting, back in Broom Church, will commence at 10.00am on 14th October in the room at the top of the stairs to the right. The Topic will be the archaeological sites on Orkney Mainland. This will be followed in November by a look at the archaeology on the surrounding islands of Orkney.

OUT AND ABOUT

On 2nd September our outandabouters visited the Sma' Shot Cottages in Paisley, which were saved from demolition in the 1980s by the Old Paisley Society. The cottages were built between 1735 and 1750 for Kerr and Pollock, cloth manufacturers from Cork. Generations of the Lawson family lived in the Weaver's Cottage for over 120 years, and it contains authentic furniture as well as a full-size hand loom.



The name 'sma shot' comes from a vital but invisible thread used in weaving and it became the symbol of the weavers' fight for fair pay. The cottages and nearby row of mill workers' houses offer a fascinating glimpse into the lives of those who shaped Paisley's world renowned weaving industry. After the tour members were welcomed at the tearoom, where they enjoyed lunch including delicious home made soup and home baking.

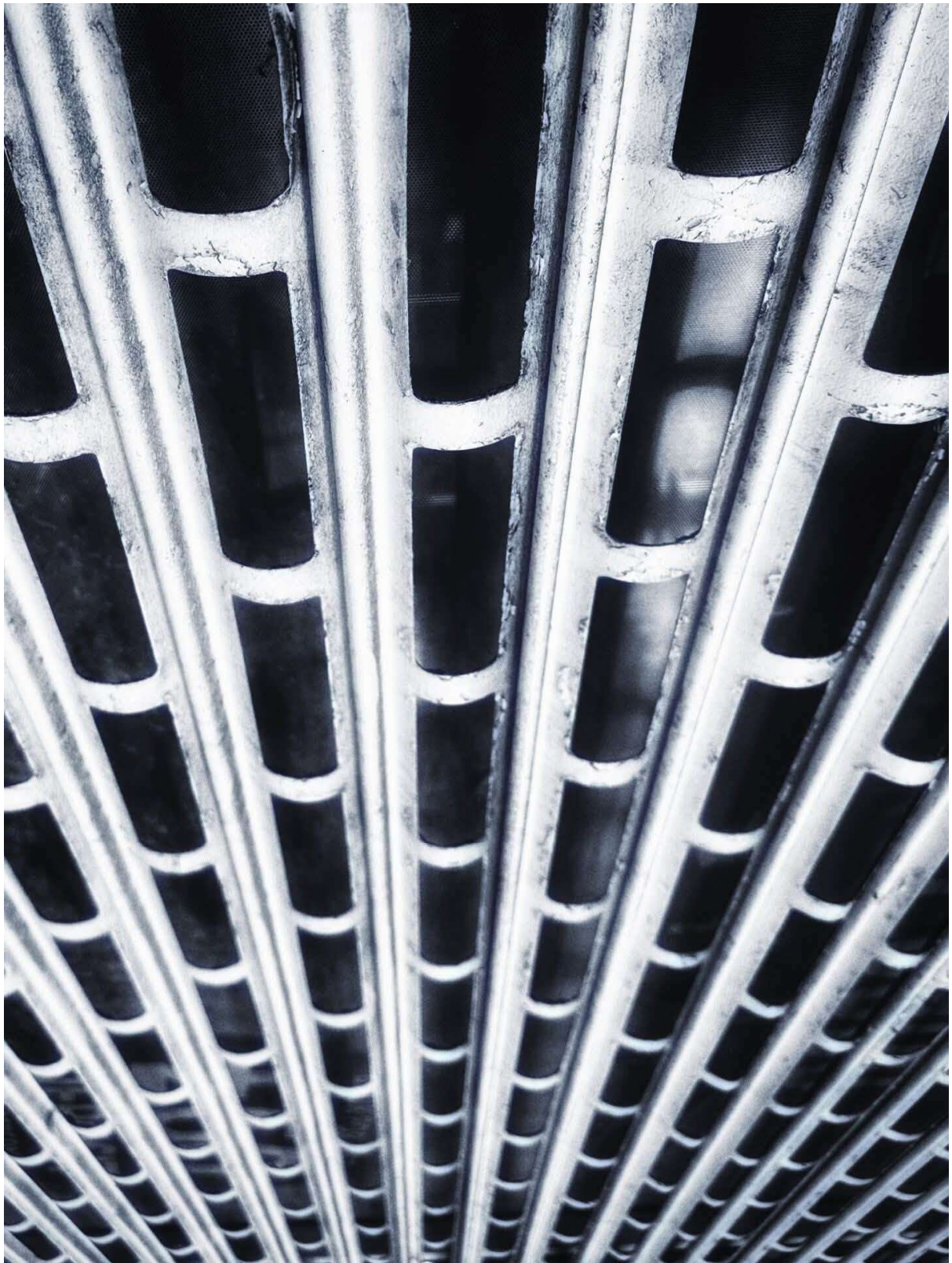




PHOTOGRAPHY

Our photographers had a very different challenge last month – to visit an uninspiring location and use their creative skills to find something interesting and/or beautiful to photograph. So, a group of them ventured to Barrhead Asda Car Park and surrounding area on a dull and wet morning, in search of some appropriate things to photograph. To make the challenge even more interesting they only had 30 minutes to take their photos. As can be seen from these examples, people certainly used their imagination.





This is a roller shutter on a shop window, turned through 90 degrees. It's in black & white to avoid any reflected colours distracting from the vanishing perspective.



Green filter applied to photo to reflect the green of Asda



POETRY WRITING

Once a month in Mearns Library each member brings a poem on the chosen theme. This month the stimulus was to respond to, describe, praise or comment upon a work of art. Our budding poets discussed and gently analysed poems on music, paintings, sculptures and a Cambodian temple. And here is a couple of examples of their work.

Claude Monet's *Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge*, by Claire Milligan

Master of Impressionism, Monet saw that light
Changed his subjects hour by hour, rendered colours bright.
The garden he designed in Giverny supplied the scenes
Of ponds enrobed in water lilies: purples, whites and greens.

For twenty years he painted in his garden endlessly,
Repeating lilies, pond and bridge in his own Giverny.
The strong brush strokes, the vivid hues with contrasts sharp and clean
Created tableaux rich in tone, yet peaceful and serene.

I visited his garden to see what Monet saw.
I sat immersed in lush surrounds that Monet used to draw.
I'm glad that Monet captured his own idyll in his art
So everyone who buys an image shares a little part.

Memorial to the Heroes of the Cheapside Street Fire, Glasgow March 1960, by
Catriona Docherty

A simple plume of smoke heralded the fire,
This night in 1960 would be etched in Glasgow history.
Soon forty foot flames roared round the warehouse,
As four hundred and fifty firemen stormed the scene.
Every city engine and St Mungo's fire boat deployed –
The inferno replied with heat fuelled explosions.
Alcohol filled casks in the whisky bond became its arsenal.
Walls blew at the front,
Walls blew at the back.
That long night as if in the jaws of hell,
Visible across the entire city,
The battle lit up the sky,
Until dawn became the only light –
Its price the loss of nineteen firemen.
The city mourned and the city honoured.
The Merchant's House donated vaults in the in the city Necropolis,
Where the nineteen were laid to rest.
And a memorial in stately stone immortalised the heroes.
But let not your eye miss,
As you run down that list.

Below the last name, William Oliver,
There sits a simple urn,
A fit as perfect as a glove,
Inscribed 'Marion, Beloved Wife of William Oliver 13-9-22 27-7-06.
They also serve who only lose and love.

Lovers of all poetry genres are welcome to join this light-hearted and positive leaning hour or so, in which the idea is to inspire and widen poetry appreciation and writing.

QUIZ

Many Congratulations go to the winners of the September Quiz, The Hip Hops Team – Jim, Catriona, Yvonne, Jim and Neil.



SUNDAY AFTERNOON COFFEE

The first meeting of the new Sunday Afternoon Coffee Group 3 was held on Sunday 13th September. Thirteen members came along for a very friendly afternoon of chat, coffee and cake at Parklands.



TASTE THE WORLD

Our travelling diners visited Elia Greek Restaurant in George Square where they enjoyed excellent reasonably priced food. Holiday arrangements meant that a smaller number than usual were able to attend.



DID YOU KNOW ...?

D.C.

How did the capital of the USA get its name and come to be where it is? We all know why it's called Washington, but are we so sure about the DC tag?

Professor Wikipedia tells us that in 1788, [James Madison](#) argued that the new [federal government](#) would need authority over a national capital to provide for its own maintenance and safety, and in 1789 the [U.S. Constitution](#) called for the creation of a federal district under [exclusive jurisdiction](#) of the [U.S. Congress](#), which would become a constituent part of the Union but not be part of any [state](#) or [territory](#). In the [Compromise of 1790](#), Madison, [Alexander Hamilton](#), and [Thomas Jefferson](#) agreed that the federal government would pay each state's remaining [Revolutionary War](#) debts in exchange for establishing the new national capital in the [Southern United States](#).

On 9th July 1790, Congress passed the [Residence Act](#), which approved the creation of a national capital on the [Potomac River](#), with the exact location to be selected by President [George Washington](#). Formed from land donated by Maryland and Virginia (including the pre-existing settlements of Georgetown and Alexandria), the initial shape of the federal district was a square totalling 100 square miles. The [District of Columbia Organic Act of 1801](#) officially placed the entire territory under the [exclusive control](#) of the federal government.

On 9th September 1791, three commissioners overseeing the capital's construction named the city in honour of President Washington. At the same time, the federal district was named Columbia, [a poetic name for the United States](#) commonly used at the time, being the feminine form of the name

Colombus. Congress held its first session there on November 17, 1800. In the [Organic Act of 1871](#), Congress created a new territorial government for the whole district, making 'the city of Washington...legally indistinguishable from the District of Columbia.' In 1874, Congress replaced the territorial government with an appointed three-member board of commissioners.

In 1789 Both Maryland and Virginia were [slave states](#) and the city became an important [slave market](#). In the 1830s, fearing that [abolitionists](#) in Congress would end [slavery in the district](#), Alexandria's citizens petitioned Virginia to retake the land it had donated to form the district, a process known as [retrocession](#). The [Virginia General Assembly](#) voted in February 1846, to accept the return of Alexandria, and in July that year Congress agreed to return all territory that Virginia had ceded to the district during its formation, leaving only of the portion originally donated by Maryland. The [Compromise of 1850](#) outlawed the slave trade in the district.

Washington, D.C., residents do not have voting representation in Congress, but elect a single [non-voting congressional delegate](#) to the U.S. House of Representatives. The city's voters choose three [presidential electors](#) in accordance with the [Twenty-third Amendment](#), passed in 1961.

WHIMSY

OOPS!

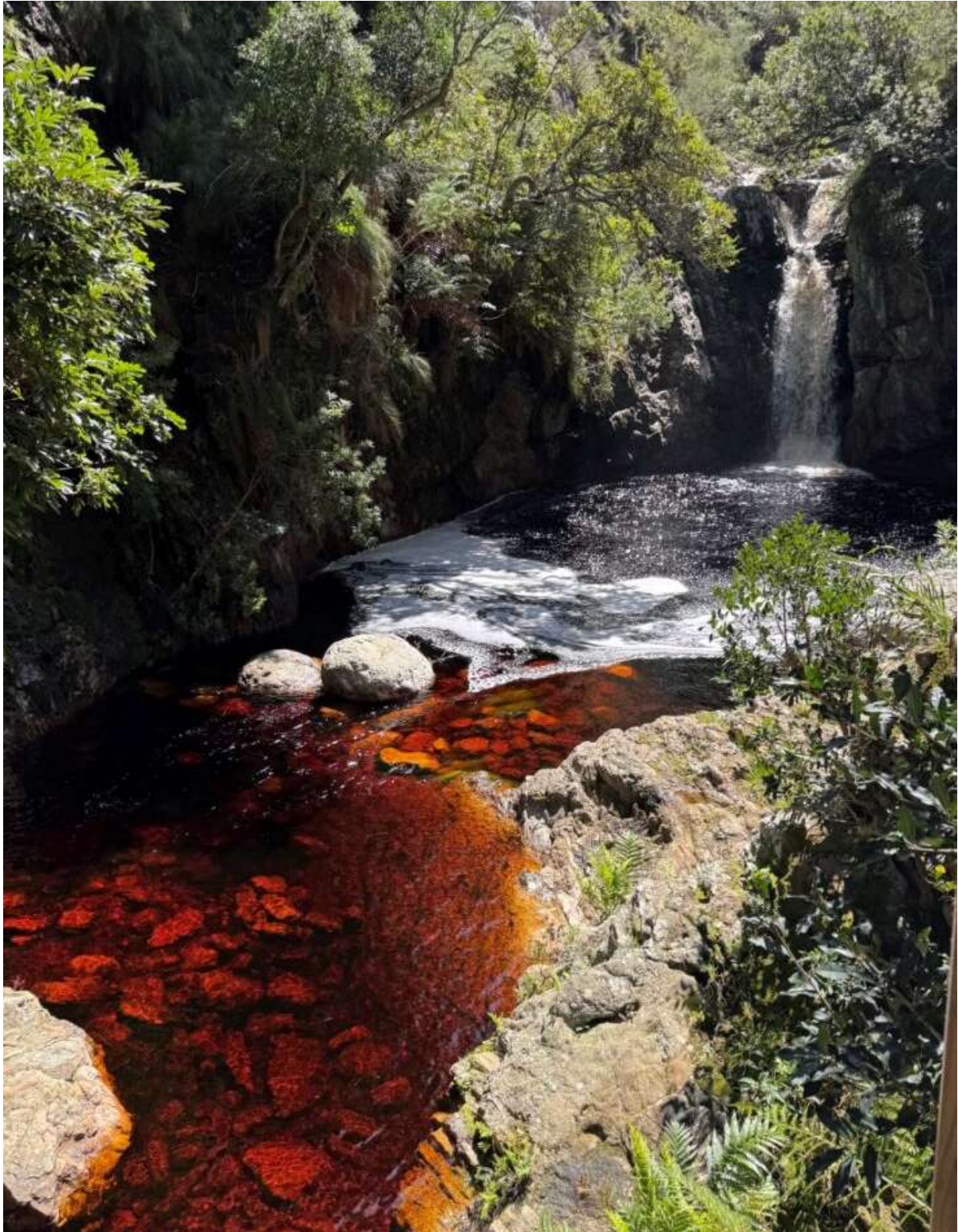
Elaine Greaves posted this bit of fun inspired by a recent news story.



PICTURE GALLERY

SOME OF THE BEST OF 2025

Here are some more Photography Group photos, selected from [Best of 2025- My favourites from the year. - East Renfrewshire](#).



Janice MacKenzie took this at Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens in South Africa.



This sleepy wee cat curled up in a plantpot in Ghizzano Italy was photographed by Fiona Campbell.



Janice MacKenzie took this one of sunset at Porthgain Harbour, Pembrokeshire.



Derek Hamilton snapped this grey heron on the River Creed in Stornaway.



Derek also took this at Menton in France

EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT
Wednesday	21 st October	Monthly Meeting David Garbutt - Escape from Stalag IX C
Wednesday	18 th November	Monthly Meeting Stuart Nisbet - Giffnock Sandstone
Wednesday	16 th December	Christmas Party - Clarkston Community Choir
Wednesday	20 th January	No Meeting
Wednesday	17 th February	Monthly Meeting Iain Gordon – Burns Celebration

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.