



CLYDESIDER
OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS
Issue 1, Autumn Issue

CLYDESIDER'S CUPPA WITH IRVINE WELSH

**TRAINSPOTTING
AUTHOR DISCUSSES
SCOTLAND, WRITING
& FOOTBALL**



LEVENGROVE

During midge siestas, the park
is at its most engaging
when strolling beneath strawberry moons
flush with Leven grapes, lemon hollies.
Crouch low to watch trotting hedgehogs
race for slugs, barbed Usain Bolts
showing off
their six-pack stomachs
to scraps of golf flags on the putting green.

Even hedgehogs dare to dream.

The ruins of St Serfs remains
ever-shaded, fenced, memory's lane,
graves of glassworks and glory days
buried at the back of minds.
Then forward, towards ornamental fountains,
striped, grungy bees
buzz like feedback howling
from flower-headed microphones,
beds of pollen where ravers have fallen

asleep, in love, 'til morn.

Levengrove lip-syncs lullabies
of sea monsters, exhales seagulls
like slippers with wings
and gently moves the children swings
with the breath of piper's lungs
and in the firework's annual crackle,
the rusted cackle of the water pumps,
the sounds and sparkle
of ancestors' ambling through these grounds

echoes in the intimate reflections of my hometown.

By Stephen Watt, Dumbarton

<https://m.facebook.com/StephenWattSpit/@StephenWattSpit>
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=2GNXjFef54I>

Author of books Spit (£5) and Optograms (£7.95) copies available via social media or by e-mailing Wild Word Press at marcsherland@me.com



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Clydesider is designed by



Welcome to CLYDESIDER

Hello and thanks for picking up and reading this very first issue of *Clydesider* – a community magazine with a difference – this is a publication produced for our community, by our community.

We aim to promote the positive stories and activities that are happening in West Dunbartonshire and showcase the work of the many talented individuals that live and work here.

Our first issue is packed with a real mix of content that gives a flavour of the creative talents our community has to offer – we have poems by local writers Stephen Watt, Ann MacKinnon, Colin L. Scott and June Galloway, a short story by former school teacher Elspeth Crocket while Duntocher writer and photographer Charlie Sherry traded yarns over a cuppa with *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh when he visited Dumbarton Library recently.

Another author, Vale man Paul Murdoch, has very kindly contributed a piece about his writing inspirations – a stone circle high on the hills above Renton – while a great daughter of the Rock is remembered by Mary Irvine with her tribute to local writer and peace campaigner Margaret Harrison.

It's not all about the writing though – we have some stunning photos of the Clyde by local photographers, Vale artist Jenny Watson chats with Clydebank-based Italian artist Salvino Volpe about his work, while film-maker Tommy Crocket takes a look at the community gardens that are blooming across West Dunbartonshire and we find out about a whole host of creative activities taking place in Dumbarton's Artizan Centre. We also have some inspiring community news stories, a short piece about a troupe of talented young dancers who are on a mission to take to the stage in Vegas and Ian Miller has shared a column of his musings with us.

All of our contributors (including our photographers and designer) are volunteers from our local community and we know there are plenty more talented Clydesiders out there doing a wide range of exciting creative projects which we would love to hear about. Our magazine, website – www.clydesider.org – and Facebook page aim to provide an outlet for us all to enjoy these skills and show that the once world-renowned Clydeside is still a hub bursting with creative talent and activity.

Enjoy!

Amanda Eleftheriades
Editor



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CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY NEWS

WALK OUR WAY



Two local addiction services have been pulling on their walking boots to raise funds this summer.

Julie Murray, a project worker with Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol (DACA), found her boots were made for fundraising when she completed the 96-mile West Highland Way trek from Milngavie to Fort William in just six days and raised over £600 for the local alcohol support charity.

She was joined by her sister, Jennifer McCafferty, and two friends, Linda Roberts and Marie Rooney, who between them raised a further £1,000+ for SAMH, Help for Heroes and Mary's Meals.

Julie said: "I am glad I did it for a reason because there were times when it was painful but when it hurt I thought about the people back at DACA and I know that there are times when they are going through torture to make a change in their lives and that kept me going."

The hiking bug gripped another three walkers who had been accessing support from DACA and in July they climbed Ben Lomond raising over £200 for the charity.

In August 10 walkers from Alternatives' Safe as Houses Recovery House headed for the hills to do the Three Peaks Challenge in 24 hours.

The group of residents, peers and staff were helping raise funds for local charity, the Skylark IX Recovery Trust, which was set up to rescue and restore the Dunkirk Little Ship from a watery grave at the bottom of the Leven. Their sponsored challenge along with a series of other fundraisers helped the Trust reach its £5,000 target before the end of August.

Andy Cochrane, services co-ordinator with the Safe as Houses, said: "It was a bigger feat than we had anticipated because it was against the clock. We set off at 5pm on the Friday and summited Nevis in probably the worst conditions I have been up a mountain in. But we did it and covered three countries, three mountains and over 900 miles in 24 hours."



CLYDEBANK TALENT ON TV

Coming to a screen near you is a new multi-media platform to showcase the work of talented Bankies.

Clydebank TV is the brainchild of Bankie filmmaker David Cox and was set up by the G81 Trust with funding from the Big Lottery Awards for All, Titan Legacy Fund and Glasgow Airport Flightpath Fund.

David explained: "Four years ago I Googled 'Clydebank arts' and was so disappointed with the results, I know there are so many talented artists, photographers, musicians out there I wanted to create something to show what they do - that was where Clydebank TV came from.

"We are all volunteers, none of us get paid for it but we all want to promote the good things that are going on in our communities"

And Conrad Gross, who has set up the website added: "The general idea is to provide somewhere for local community groups to show what they are doing in the area and encourage people to get involved.

"In the future we plan to have a page which will include local campaigns and issues as we hope more people will get involved if they can see what is happening in their area."

The small team all from the Clydebank area are keen to recruit more volunteers to help.

The team's first few films can be viewed on their website www.clydebanktv.co.uk and anyone who is interested in getting involved or having a film made about their organisation should email video@clydebanktv.co.uk.



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DALMUIR'S READING CHAMPION

BY ANGELA ANDERSON

Clydesider writer Angela Anderson met up with poet and writer Donny O'Rourke to chat about his role as resident Reading Champion at Dalmuir Library.



As the author of nine poetry collections plus a career in print and broadcast journalism Donny has a love for words and the stories they can convey.

His latest venture, which brings him to Dalmuir, is a joint project with Scottish Book Trust and West Dunbartonshire Libraries.

He explained that his aim is to "encourage people to read more, explore their creativity and get more out of life."

He has already run two seasons of activities mainly at Dalmuir Library although also spending some time in other libraries and community groups across West Dunbartonshire. His autumn programme, due to start in

September, will include a Television and Film club followed by discussions on the screenings.

Donny has also been working with a long running community creative writing group but he is happy to work with anyone who is interested in putting pen to paper – or fingers to keyboards – and is keen to stress no experience of writing is required.

He wishes he had longer in the area and believes he could do so much more with a longer residency but his residency finishes in December. In the meantime he wants to seize this valuable opportunity and speak to as many local writers and readers as he can.

So if you wish to pop in for a chat with Donny about your creative writing, you can phone for an appointment or drop into Dalmuir library where he is resident 3 days per week.

Dalmuir Library contact number is 0141 562 2425.

CLYSIDER SHORT STORY COMPETITION

If you have a short story to share with *Clydesider* readers why not enter our first writing competition. We are looking for short pieces of fiction, no more than 600 words with the title 'Dreams'. Entrants must live or work in West Dunbartonshire and all entries should be submitted by email to theclydesider@gmail.com with 'Writing Competition' in the subject box by 5pm on Friday October 28th. Donny O'Rourke will judge the competition and the winning entry will be published in the next issue of the *Clydesider*. Good luck.

MILLER'S MUSINGS



With the Olympic trials and tribulations only just fading into memory....Are you a sprinter or a marathon runner? I guess I must be in the former category. Not literally of course. I would struggle to run for a bus.

A teacher friend of mine tells me that I have a short attention span and that I must have been a nightmare at school. Certainly I think she is right on the last bit. I have always found it is easy to get involved in things and develop a great passion for causes but sometimes I confess my enthusiasm for many of them begins to flag. On the other hand 38 years in the one parish, 20 years of hospital campaigning and 50 failed years of trying to ban bombs and 47 years of happy marriage (I am happy anyway... not so sure about Joan) does indicate that I can, on occasion, be a success in the marathon stakes.

More and more I believe that the wellbeing of our community and the success of its institutions depends on the "marathon runners." The folk who give a lifetime of service to their bowling club, golf club, community council, housing association, church or whatever and they do it without any thought of payment.

John Donne said: "No Man is an island," we cannot live in seclusion. We are happier when we live in community. Just get anyone of the older generation to talk of the delights of living up a tenement and you will know what I mean.

There is something within us that by necessity reaches out for warmth, understanding, and connection. Relationships matter. It is built into every fibre of our being. Nothing in life is satisfying if we have to experience it alone. I applaud the Clydesider as another worthwhile vehicle to bring us together in community. I wish it continued success.

Ian Miller

Signed copies of Ian's autobiography 'Habbie to Jeely-Eater' are available from www.neetahbooks.com or follow him on Facebook.



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CLYDESIDER'S CUPPA WITH IRVINE WELSH

TRANSPOTTING AUTHOR DISCUSSES SCOTLAND,
WRITING & FOOTBALL WITH CHARLIE SHERRY

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"It's shite being Scottish," well it was at one time for bestselling novelist Irvine Welsh in the words of one of his most famous creations - Renton.

Sitting across from the great man, author, playwright, film director and producer in the pleasant surroundings of Dumbarton public library, I get the impression that his opinion on his nationality, like the country itself, has changed unrecognisably from that of the 1980's - the period in which his most famous novel *'Trainspotting'* is set.

Looking at this giant of a man slouched in his chair dressed in black denims, leather jacket with a hoody underneath, a woolly hat and, the trademark of the non-conformist, the Doc Martin shoes, he looks more like a working class guy you would come across on the streets of his beloved Leith where he grew up, than that of an international bestselling author with all the fame and financial rewards that come with it.

That is what makes Irvine the man he is, the fact he has never lost sight of where he comes from, unlike many who escape the harsh world of the Scottish working class housing schemes and quickly take on a persona more akin to the rugby fields of Eton or Harrow, the sometimes controversial author is unmistakably Edinburgh proletariat through and through, both in appearance and talk.

Like most things in Irvine's life, he did not take the conventional root to becoming a writer. Indeed, it was only through a chance meeting with an old

school teacher, Miss Tait, while he was working as a TV engineer that led him on the path he travels today. As Irvine explained: "I always liked writing essays and stuff at school but I never saw writing as some sort of career choice." Miss Tait, who had always been encouraging to him at school, asked if he was still writing and on hearing he was too busy working, told him he should get back to his writing as he had talent.

That brief encounter with his old English teacher re-ignited Irvine's passion for writing and propelled him into a career that he openly admits is the only thing he was ever good at, that of a writer.

When asked if he believes enough is being done to encourage creativity and the arts across Scotland and in the working class areas in particular, the writer's views on this, like his views on most subjects, were forthright: "It is not a case of what is being done, it's more there has been so much done to destroy it." He went on to explain: "The dole was anything but a perfect instrument but at least you could take a bit of time off, get together a band, spend some time writing, it gave the space you needed to be creative, with the new regime, sanctions and so forth, that is no longer an option."

He added that forcing people into low paid, mundane jobs zaps the creative energy from them. The fact that public amenities such as libraries, community centres and hubs, where creative people used to meet, interact and discuss ideas, are being closed all over the country as a result of the

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**“When I was a kid
the mentality in
Scotland was,
it’s all the English’s
fault.”**

austerity cutbacks, is a major factor in the lack of creativity and new talent breaking through, he believes.

The key to encouraging the creative arts in our communities is to move away from the concept that the arts are an industry according to Irvine. "People are splitting up the idea of work and money, young people here, and in the States where I live now, are doing jobs like waiting tables or working in supermarkets to get money but they don't really see this as their work, they are making music, film-writing, painting, being creative in general. This is what they class as their work.

"Expressing their creativity, though not necessarily expecting financial rewards from it, the reward is in the creative process itself and the appreciation of others."

Although Irvine now lives in Chicago, he visits his homeland on a regular basis, more often than not to watch a certain Edinburgh football club based in Leith and to visit the friends he grew up with and whom he is still very much in contact.

He holds very strong views on his homeland, indeed, during the recent campaign for Scottish independence came out very strongly and publicly in favour of a Yes vote and believes this is the third change in the Scottish psyche that he has witnessed in his lifetime.

He describes them as a first phase when all Scotland's problems were the fault of the English: "When I was a kid the mentality in Scotland was, it's all the English's fault, everything that was wrong with Scotland the English were blamed for it." He felt it was a very bitter and antagonistic attitude and for his part, did not buy into it.

As he got older, around the mid-1980s, Irvine noticed a change in focus on who was to blame for his nation's predicament, gone was "blame our Southern neighbours" for all Scotland's woes, to; it's our own fault for letting ourselves get into this situation in the first place, as he explained: "The second phase is like the Renton period, it was like a self-hate thing. It's nothing to do with the English; we are where we are through our own stupidity, a self-flagellations thing."

Irvine believes the phase Scotland is in now has created "a massive growth in confidence and self-awareness," no longer does he feel the Scots are a nation of perennial moaners, malcontents, forever blaming England for everything that goes wrong. "It doesn't really matter whose fault it is, it's up to us to sort it out. Scots now have a positive can-do attitude which bodes well for the future."

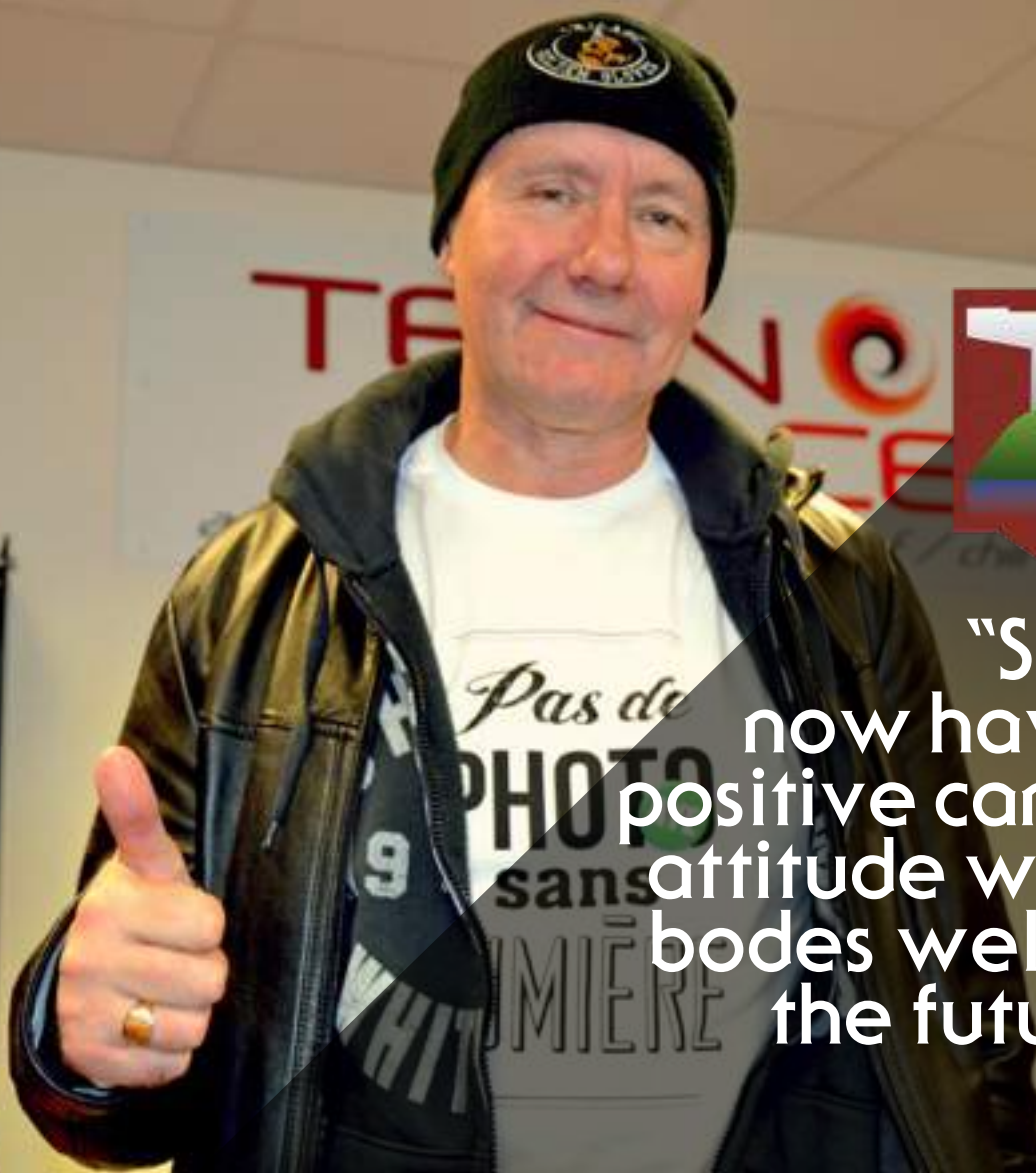
For all his confidence in the future, the reader would do well to remember that Irvine is a product of the Leith streets he was brought up on and

therefore has Hibernian Football club and their fortunes in his DNA.

Given that his beloved Hibs are struggling to get back into the top tier of Scottish football, one has the feeling that if they fail to do so, there will be no sunshine on Leith and Mr Welsh may agree with Renton once again and think: "It really is shite being Scottish," So for Irvine's sake and Scotland's future: C'mon the Hibeels!

- *Clydesider would like to thank Annemarie Quinn and Paul Deeley for contributing questions to the Irvine Welsh interview via our Facebook page.*

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"Scots now have a positive can-do attitude which bodes well for the future."

COMMUNITY FEATURE

A BLOOMING BUSINESS BY
TOMMY CROCKET
PHOTOS BY GAIL RUSSELL

A new growth industry is blooming in neighbourhoods across West Dunbartonshire as the community gardening bug takes root. From Bellsmyre to Alexandria, from Bonhill to Whitecrock, patches of overgrown wasteland are being transformed by local residents into brightly-coloured, leafy oasis.



At West Dunbartonshire's Growing Spring Event, Kevin Mason of the Leamy Foundation – a local therapeutic gardening charity – said there are 23 active gardening groups throughout the area, which, like the plants therein, are at various stages of development.

What brings people together to form a community gardening group? According to Kevin, it's as basic as a desire "to make where I live a little bit better," but there are factors other than community pride at work.

There's the social aspect, he explained: "It's great to see how a new group of people can bond and make friends when there is a common interest – diverse ethnic and faith communities come together over a shared goal."

There's also an economic factor in these community gardens as they are also a source of vegetables for the local community and for foodbanks where fresh food can be in short supply, or where flowers and decorative plants can be produced for sale with profits ploughed back into the garden.

Community gardens can be designed to cater for all levels of fitness and ability and there is no doubt that fresh air and company have great benefits for health and well-being.

Allotments provided by West Dunbartonshire Council, such as Castlegreen Street and Round Riding Road in Dumbarton offer areas for people to grow plants and socialise while Alzheimer Scotland West Dunbartonshire has an allotment which is a valuable resource for its client group.

In Dumbarton's Westbridgend Community Garden a group of volunteers tend to its needs on a monthly basis with grass cutting provided by West Dunbartonshire Greenspace. The gardeners have weathered two seasons now and their efforts are appreciated by people walking from the town centre to Brucehill, Castlehill and Westcliff as they stop for a rest and a quick blether on their way.

Bellsmyre Community Garden is one of the more established local growing spaces which has been running for over four years and is a wonderful example



“Getting young
people involved
can help set
them up for life.”

of what can be achieved by a determined group of volunteers. An award winner in the "Keep Scotland Beautiful - It's Your Neighbourhood" initiative, it was not alone in horticultural success. Dalmuir Park Community Garden, Faifley Community Garden and Allotments and Whitecrook Community Garden were all assessed as 'thriving' and Lomond Community Garden and Allotments assessed as 'developing'.

A new venture which sowed its first seeds this year was Blue Triangle's garden in central Alexandria and volunteers at Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol transformed their garden with a multitude of colourful plants which burst into bloom for their 40th anniversary garden party.

Jimmy Comrie is an avid volunteer gardener and has worked with DACA's gardening project in Dumbarton as well as Braehead and Haldane primary schools. He believes that getting young people involved can help set them up for life.

The next West Dunbartonshire Growing Event is planned for Saturday October 8th in the Clyde Shopping Centre, Clydebank. For further information and advice about starting a garden in your own community please contact Kevin Mason at the Leamy Foundation 07583 285016,

www.theleamyfoundation.com

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THE PROOF READERS

Scrutinise the printed page.

Scan each line to check for
spelling errors, punctuation –
delete, omit or change.

Note down any little problems.

Is everything just right?

No comment made to say “Well done” –
a page without mistakes.

And some do see what others miss,
although all read the same.

So as we go through life, it seems,
reviewing situations,

how often do we make remark
“Well done, congratulations”?

And do we see what others miss
in someone that we meet?

Perhaps not quite the sweetest face,
but she has lovely feet.

Making judgements all the time,
can we all be just right?

By June Galloway, Clydebank

A PERFECT DAY

It 's a saft day, dreich drizzle
geying us the richt feel o' the laund.

The ben lowers ower us .

A gowden eagle soars
and a peregrine falcon swoops doon
tae gaither up a wee bit rabbit.
Its chicks'll no gang hungry the nicht.

We trauchle through the mire,
backpack heavy , looking forrit
tae a log fire and hot broth
and telling tales though the night
while ootside the windae, deer snicker,
gulls caw and the barn owl screeches.

A perfect day!

By Ann MacKinnon, Balloch

Author of *Nae Flooers*,
a pamphlet of Scots poetry published by Tapsalteerie Press.

CLYDE PHOTO COMPETITION



The River Clyde, which runs through West Dunbartonshire and which this magazine takes its name from, has so many changing faces and facets.

In July we ran a competition on our Facebook page asking our Facebook followers to share with us some of their images of Scotland's second longest river.

We were really impressed with all the entries which captured the water way in all its beauty from glowing sunsets to memories of its industrial heyday.

Unfortunately we could only have one winner – though there were so many great pictures that we felt we had to share a few more of them here.



Autumn Edition

Our winning entry was taken by Keriann Pearson back in 2012. The haunting image, taken near Old Kilpatrick, is of her partner Stephen silhouetted against a misty green sky with the Clyde's still waters behind.

Keriann said: "It was a foggy evening, one of those perfect winter nights when it isn't raining and the water was so still. We used to go for walks down by the Saltings quite often, it's one of my favourite spots but I don't think it gets used enough.

"The photo was taken on my mobile phone, I've never done photography – or even thought about it – before, although I enjoy taking pictures. It's just handy having the phone and I can just pull it out when I see a scene I like and the light was perfect that night."

A few of the other images we have picked from the entries we received include two more beautiful sunset shots, one taken at Bowling Basin by Conrad Gross, the other of the Erskine Bridge by Bill Barclay; a lovely picture of the Titan Crane with the sun shining brightly behind taken by Dhyani Quinn Crawford and a black and white looking down the Clyde captured by Steven Kerr also another of the bridge by Michael McLaren.

Thank you to all our entrants – there will be more creative competitions coming from Clydesider.



Clydesider, Issue 1

Autumn Edition

STONES THAT TELL STORIES

BY PAUL MURDOCH, ALEXANDRIA

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When I was a boy I used to make a weekly pilgrimage with my godfather, up the steep farm track that led out of Burnbrae onto Carman Moor. The journey was always punctuated by a drink from the well. A scoop of cold, fresh water using a coconut shell on a chain. Dragonflies whirled across our path like faeries as we braved a thorny wall of yellow gorse. We built bridges of bracken to avoid sinking below the fetid marsh and then scaled the crumbling dry stone dyke. Always warm. Always a summer-blue sky. We sifted through the tall ferns before finally reaching our goal – ‘The Jesus Rocks.’

Not a true stone circle. Not like Callanish on Lewis or the Ring of Brodgar on Orkney... Not even one of the 500 less-known stone circles that pepper the Scottish countryside. Just a jumble of rocks on the edge of Carman Hill that look down on the reservoir above the town of Renton. This mishmash of lichen-crusting stones which may or may not have been part of some ancient Roman fort, are much more important to me than any megalithic wonder. They were the starting point. The catalyst. The first place mentioned on the first page of my first-ever book.

We called them the ‘Jesus Rocks,’ because the biggest stone had been daubed with the words – ‘Jesus Saves.’ Year after year, some overzealous vandal would renew the graffiti in fresh white paint, no doubt caught up in their own pilgrimage to proclaim ‘the word.’ I used every aspect of this place in my first book for children – Talisman. The



©2016 Charlie Sherry

words, ‘Jesus Saves,’ were reversed to form ‘Sevessusej.’ A spell that would transform the stones into a gateway. A portal to a dying world. James Peck, the hero in my stories, has to fight his way through my imaginary ring of stones. His amazing adventure hinges on finding his missing father, reuniting his flawed family and saving a dying world. All this, seven books worth, because those stones on Carman Moor sparked my imagination, kick-started my real-life adventure: travelling all over the world as a children’s author.

This year, I got the chance to give some of that magic back. I visited five of the most famous stone circles in Scotland, meeting over 1,000 children in libraries and schools along the way.

Working with GLOW, an Education Scotland information platform for Schools, my task was to find out about the stone circles from the children who lived close by. Children would share information about the history and re-tell some of the local legends that surround these mystical sites. I filmed my journey from Alexandria to Tomnaverie (near Aboyne), to The Ring of Brodgar (in Orkney), to Callanish (on the Isle of Lewis), to Temple Woods (near Kilmartin) and eventually to The 12 Apostles (near Dumfries). But 12 days and 750 miles later, I had achieved much more than a series of video diaries...

Yes, Scotland has more stone circles than anywhere else in the world. Yes, we learned that the sites were most probably constructed around 5,000 years ago (at the same time as the pyramids in Egypt and the newly discovered ziggurats in Brazil). Yes, we learned about the people of the Stone Age, about the tools they used and the barley they grew in a much milder Scotland. But then something magical began to happen. As I travelled round, children offered up their own ideas about the stones. They began forming their own creatures and characters: monsters that may have inhabited the stone rings, people that may have started their own adventures there. They began to create their own stories, use their imagination and most of all - have fun!

People often ask me what I like most about being a children's author. It's not seeing your book on a shelf in Waterstones or on Amazon.

It's seeing kids getting excited about reading and writing. In a world of distraction it's nice to see a wee boy or girl show you a creature they have drawn and tell you all about it. Saying, excitedly, that they too want to write books and stories.

I was lucky enough to visit Indonesia last year, work with six schools deep in the Balinese jungle, but this year it was really nice to explore my own country. Look at my own starting point. Share some of that magic and hopefully spread joy of reading and writing.

Paul Murdoch's 2016 stone circle video diary can be found at: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/stonecircleproject/tag/stone-circles/>

His 2015 cross-cultural adventure to Indonesia can be found at: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/eslb/2016/04/04/paul-murdoch-author-assignment-to-bali/>

The first three books in Paul Murdoch's PECK CHRONICLES: Talisman, Citadel and Tyrant are published by Strident Publishing <http://www.stridentpublishing.co.uk/book-author/paul-murdoch/> and can be found in all good bookshops or online.

Signed copies of Paul's books and much more about his talks and school visits can be found at: www.paulmurdoch.co.uk

REVIEW BY AVA WATSON, AGE 10

Paul loves to write books. He got the inspiration to write them because of his children.

His books I think are amazing, he puts so much experience into them as well as so much detail. I have got all his books and I love to read them over and over again.

He must put a lot of time and effort into his books because they are so good. They are very funny, they make me laugh a lot. Some of the characters include a talking goldfish and big bad monsters because you always need them.

I have also been to some of Pauls classes where he teaches you how to create your own monsters for your own stories. I am looking forward to reading his new books.

PECK CHRONICLES COMPETITION

We have a full set of the Peck Chronicles to give away, kindly signed by author Paul Murdoch. To win this fantastic prize just answer this simple question:

Where is the Jesus Rock which inspired Paul's writing?

Either email your answer to theclydesider@gmail.com and put Paul Murdoch competition in subject box or put your answer on a postcard and send to:
Clydesider c/o Ben View,
Strathleven Place,
Dumbarton
G82 1BA.

All entries should reach us by Oct 25th, 2016.



A HUB OF CREATIVITY

BY AMANDA ELEFThERIADES



A children's story is being hatched in one corner of the Artizan Community Hub, across the room a patchwork quilt is taking shape and nearby photographs, just back from the framers, are being admired.

Meanwhile in the back of the room local musician Pauline Bradley of Sound Inspirations is running a music and movement workshop and Reverend Ian Miller is due in later for a book signing.

This creative buzz of activity in Dumbarton's town centre comes from a room filled with crafters, writers and artists who showcase their work and share their enthusiasm for their crafts with local shoppers and passers-by.

Rhona Thomson makes delicate jewellery and intricate patchwork quilts and bags and there is more to her craftwork than initially meets the eye. She explained: "The jewellery is

for fund-raising - and because I enjoy doing it - but the quilts are my real passion.

"I tend to be sewing most of the time, I am part of a group called Comfort Quilters and we make quilts for children and adults in hospitals and hospices who have life-limiting diseases or are going through really bad depression."

Next to Rhona sits Marion Henderson who is busy knitting a new baby's shawl. With six children and 11 grandchildren Marion has always knitted since learning at school, she remembers making her first boyfriend a cycling jumper when she was just 16 and after retiring and the death of her husband she found her knitting needles therapeutic and helped her relax.

Now, as well as the traditional babywear, she also makes dog coats. She explained: "My daughter sent me the pattern and they have been really popular, I've made coats for every size and breed of dog from collies to bull mastiffs.

"There are other ladies who knit in here as well and it is good that we can offer different things. There are so many original arts and crafts being made in here, if you are looking for something unusual the Artizan Centre is definitely the place to come."

Mary Robertson's table nearby is covered with brightly coloured handmade bows and ribbons. What started off as something to do when her partner was working nightshift has become an enjoyable hobby.



Preparing for the back to school rush she is busy making her designs in local school colours as she knows they are always popular. She said: "The 'Frozen' ones used to be my most popular, at the moment it's the school colours but there are always new things coming up so there are always new designs, I also make them to order."

Next to Mary is Mags Reid's Recyclables. Her passion for recycling is legendary in the Hub - and beyond. "Everything on my table is made from something from my home that I didn't want to just throw away," she said. Now I have people donating things to



me because they know I like to find a new purpose for them."

She has been in the Artizan Centre for a year now and says "I feel as though I have come home here – I have a base for my upcycling and try and inspire others to do their own as well."

Morven Keady is a volunteer in the Hub helping with any organisation that is needed and taking payments for crafters when they can't be in. She also makes a selection of handmade cards, a hobby that started after being unwell for awhile.

She is delighted at how much the Hub has changed from the early days: "When this place first opened there

were just a couple of photographers in here so we have built it up and get all different kinds of arts and crafts in here now.

"There has been some confusion with people thinking this is another charity shop but we have been on Facebook explaining what we do and people can come in here and see us at work because most of the things on sale are made here as well."

For photographer Kevin Murney the other artists and crafters who use the Hub gave him the confidence to believe in his own skills. He explained: "I've been taking photos since I was 16 but it's only been the last two years that I have had the courage to display

any of it – and they seem to have gone down a storm. My inspiration since I started coming here 18 months ago has been Anne Marshall – she encourages me to go out and take photos and push my boundaries, I just love the support you get in here from others.”

Kevin’s inspiration is sitting nearby minding her grandchild who is playing on one of Rhona’s patchwork rugs. The artist and children’s author who has been in the Hub from the start says the support is mutual and feels the place is very inspirational for all creative types.

“We all bounce ideas off each other. I’ve been painting all my life and now

I am really enjoying writing the book and letting children know they can go and see the place they are reading about.”

As I take my leave Anne and Kevin are choosing names for the characters of Hedgehog Hamlet and developing plans for a real life setting on Dumbarton’s foreshore for the prickly stars of her book.

The Artizan Hub in Dumbarton Shopping Centre is open Monday, Thursday and Saturday from 10 – 4pm and on a Friday from 12noon – 4pm.



Clydesider Short Stories
presents...

THE PROFESSOR'S BOOK

A Short Story by Elspeth Crocket, Bonhill

1.

Professor McAusland sat hunched over his desk, academic gown draped loosely over his shoulder, surveying his tutorial group. A dark, jowly monolith of a man with a disconcerting habit of picking his nails, his gloomy authority filled the small study in University Gardens. Joie de vivre was not his forte. A language, rather than literature scholar, he had the ability to kill stone dead any insidious hint of enthusiasm or enjoyment among his students. Outside, the rain fell steadily from a bleak November sky.

Rhona sat in cowed silence. A bright, lively girl rendered mute by the professor's baleful presence, she knew it was her turn to receive THE BOOK. An obscure history of the early nineteenth century German novella, it came from the professor's personal collection and was entrusted each week to the unfortunate student who was to prepare the following week's tutorial paper. A laboured sermon, stressing the book's rarity and value, was always delivered before the shabby-looking, frayed volume was handed over. Rhona wondered if the professor was a wee free. He was certainly miserable enough.

Leaving the Modern Languages building, Rhona stepped out into the rain. Unable to put the book in her bag, where a wet umbrella had dripped over the entire contents, she wedged it into the waistband of her jeans and set off for Partick station. Picking her way gingerly through the dark back streets, she zigzagged down to Dumbarton Road, the book safe and dry under her duffel coat.

Once settled in the 12.20 to Balloch, Rhona retrieved the book, placed it carefully in the rack and pondered on the miserable week to come. The tutorial paper would dominate her thoughts and every time she turned a page in the bloody book she would worry that it would fall to pieces. There was, certainly, the Modern Languages student party on Saturday night, normally something to look forward to, but McAusland had decreed that beer was the drink of the working classes and would not be served; Rhona feared that many of the more fanciable males would stay away.

Thoroughly fed up by the time she reached Dumbarton East, Rhona stepped out of the front carriage and unfurled her umbrella. The "blue train", as Rhona's granny insisted on calling it, was just drawing out of the station when the awful truth dawned. THE BOOK! The professor's book, still in the rack, was slowly heading round the bend, up the Leven valley to Balloch, unaccompanied by any German-speaking caretaker.

Rhona stood on the platform, rigid with horror. A few minutes later she ran, panic-stricken, to the ticket office.

“What’s up, hen?” – Stevie Donnachie, the kindly station clerk, liked Rhona. A friend of her father, he always refused payment when she forgot her ticket, advising her to buy chips with the money instead. After listening to Rhona’s gulped story, Stevie sprang into action, phoning big Davie at Balloch station to advise him of the book’s imminent arrival.

A tense ten minutes followed until the news came through. The book had arrived safely in Balloch and Rhona should wait for the train’s return journey to retrieve the errant volume.

Too wound up to accept Stevie’s offer of a cup of tea, Rhona, cursing her own absent-mindedness, paced up and down the rain-lashed platform, waiting for the train’s return. At long last it arrived and she jumped expectantly into the front carriage. NO BOOK! Horrified, she sank into a seat as the train moved off, heading back to Glasgow. What had happened? Where was the damn book? As the train sped along the flooded plains of the Clyde estuary, enlightenment suddenly dawned. The train hadn’t turned round in Balloch. The book was in the LAST carriage.

As the train pulled into Bowling harbour Rhona jumped out and raced, panting, along the platform, heading for the rear of the train. Too late, only two carriages along, she had to jump back on, terrified of being left behind. A similar sprint against the driving rain in Old Kilpatrick brought her two-thirds of the way along the train. Would this never end?

Just before Dalmuir, the train ground to a halt. Signals. Trying to distract herself, Rhona looked around the carriage. The only other passengers were two teenage boys, clearly enjoying an away-day from school. An announcement played on a loop.

“We will shortly be arriving at Dalmuir. Passengers should take care when alighting from the train”.

“What’s fucking “alighting”?”

“Fuck knows”.

Incomprehension established, the boys sprawled laconically over the seats, discussing where they might spend the rest of the day. Rhona watched them, wishing she possessed just one iota of their carefree contempt for authority.

Finally the train juddered into life and creaked its way into Dalmuir station. Alighting like a bullet, Rhona made a final dash along the slippery platform and stumbled into the last carriage. IT WAS THERE. The professor’s book lay safely in the rack. Drenched, now, with relief, she sat in a happy trance till the train reached Clydebank where, clutching the book, Rhona set off westwards again.

Professor McAusland directed a lugubrious stare at Rhona as she read out her tutorial paper the following week. In the normal run of things she would have awaited his verdict with trepidation. As she handed over the fraying book, however, Rhona realised that things had changed. The previous week’s misadventure had constituted the most memorable experience of her year with Professor McAusland. The book, she thought, probably felt the same.

As the professor launched into the usual palaver of the book-sermon, Rhona gazed with something approaching affection at the faded volume. She felt proprietorial – it had become HER book. She wished it well.

AN ITALIAN ART JOB

BY JENNY WATSON,
BALLOCH



A wonderful array of colour greets me as I am welcomed into Salvino Volpe's Clydebank home. He is an artist with a fine flair of expression and is truly passionate when talking about his work.

Originally from Italy Salvino started out his professional life as a civil engineer - a structured profession filled with rules, formulas and symmetry. However, he always had a love of creativity and the freedom to be so.

"I always loved drawing," he said. "It has always been a passion although until maybe 20 - 25 years ago it was more of a hobby."

It was upon moving to London to study English several years ago which allowed this love to be released. By joining an art course at his University, his world opened before him. "I met a few Italian guys and other nationalities and they said to me why don't I do an art and design course. It was a way of improving my English. I got in and basically that was the best year of my life," he remembers.

Learning new techniques inspired his talent, which in turn inspired his need to learn and try more. It was at this point in his life Salvino started hosting small exhibitions in the city and getting involved in art more seriously. After a while, he moved back to Italy for a few years with his wife - "being in London was very exciting but it was also very hard," he said. In Italy he returned to his career as a civil engineer and graphic designer but also continued painting more semi-professionally, hosting small exhibitions when he could.

When family brought Salvino to Scotland and West Dunbartonshire almost 10 years ago, he noticed that for a part of the world so enriched with beauty and brimming with talent and skill, there was a very deep hesitation to display and present that creative richness.

An area that was predominantly working class, an industrial background entrenched in hardship, he felt there was a sentiment that fulfilling lives with artistic enthusiasm and hobbies detracted from the work that needed to be done in order to sustain day to day living. And when Salvino's own home life changed, he decided to pursue art as a full time, long term vocation.

Whilst continuing to develop his own skills, he began to nurture an idea. An idea to help his local community to get creative. He is now trying to raise funds to provide an art centre which will offer not only art classes, but workshops to learn many different skills that will aim to improve the lives of those within his local and wider communities. He hopes that one day art will not be just a flickering dream or passing hobby

within West Dunbartonshire but a natural part of life which we all enjoy creating and sharing with one another.

Salvino also offers tailor made holidays to his home town in Italy. Whether it be a painting, walking or sightseeing holiday in the Italian countryside you desire, Salvino can take care of all the details.

To find out more about Salvino's art work visit his website at <https://www.saatchiart.com/salvino>

For more details about his tailor made holidays or to become involved in his community group, contact him via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Salvino-Art-274348679441076/>.



REMEMBERING MARGARET... 1918-2015

BY MARY IRVINE,
ALEXANDRIA



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It's a Friday afternoon in Glasgow Women's Library in Bridgeton and a small group has assembled in their new premises, with its light, airy and very welcoming surrounds to dedicate a shelf in memory of a Dumbarton woman who played so many different and important roles throughout her life.

Margaret Harrison, peace campaigner, Freewoman of Dumbarton and so much more – holds a special place in the

hearts of the people of Dumbarton and the Vale.

The Leven Litts Writers' Group of Alexandria, to which Margaret belonged for many years, had arranged this event so their friend's life and work would not be forgotten. The wooden block, now placed on a shelf and proclaiming her a poet, ensures her memory will live on.

The group was welcomed by Morag Smith who spoke of her meeting with Margaret in Castle Douglas, when some of Margaret's memories were recorded.

Four members of the writers' group then followed with their own special tribute. Using Margaret's own words in both prose and poetry they told of her first meeting with her husband Bobby on a hiking holiday with her pal Frances. This was especially touching as Frances' son, Iain, had travelled up from Walsall to be present at the dedication event.

Margaret wrote of her marriage to Bobby in 1934 and of their first home together when they married – a single room in a youth hostel - and how they made do. This led to *'The Auld Tin Bath'* poem which raised much laughter.

Another poem told us how she was 'no much o' a hoosewife'. And, after hearing what she could and could not do, the lines: *'Ma best freens tell me no tae change, want me to stay the same,'* reflected the feelings of all present.

The peace pilgrimage from Iona to Canterbury in 1981 played an important part in Margaret and Bobby's life. Her poem 'Iona' reflected the close, spiritual feeling she had for the island. This was followed by 'A Window on the World from a High Rise Flat', which won a national competition, and the lines: *'...the Ben, the Leven, the Rock and the Clyde, Have been there in my life, always, Something solid, unchanging, In a changing world.'*

This led us to her poem, 'Changed Days' and she had indeed seen many changes in her 97 years and a hint of nostalgia may be detected in the final lines: *Ther's an awfu' lot o' changes here, An' they're no' fur the best I doot.*

The tribute ended with a poem Margaret wrote at the age of 95 when she was leaving to live with her daughter Anne and family in Castle Douglas. A poignant poem full of emotion as she recounts everything she loves about Dumbarton, and which is summed up in the final stanza,

*A true daughter o' the Rock
I've been proud tae be
An a pairt o' this auld toon
Which means sae much tae me*

Sally Gorton, retired priest at St Mungo's in Alexandria, where Margaret worshipped gave a

comprehensive résumé of Margaret's life and led the group in a prayer while a charcoal drawing of Margaret by her younger daughter Ruth was displayed.



©2016 Robert Kyle

Perhaps enjoyable is a strange word to use but the ambience was one of happy rather than sad. For a short while disparate people enjoyed each other's company all happy that we had known Margaret. Her family, daughter Anne and son-in-law Eric, friends of longstanding from all aspects of her life, to those of us who had only known her for a short time - all had been touched by her. Thank you Margaret.

As it says on the dedication: 'An ordinary, extraordinary woman.'

Read more from Mary Irvine, writer and philhellene, at www.glasgowwestend.co.uk/category

THE VEGAS PROJECT

BY JENNY & AVA WATSON
AGE 10



What happens when 16 young dancers are invited to perform in Las Vegas - the world's biggest stage?

A unique international advertising opportunity arises for a local business – oh, and there was also a lot of screaming, shouting, high fives and jumping around, and that was just the parents!

Well that's how it went down when Linzi Donald, Principal Teacher at Dancebase Academy and Performing Arts in West Dunbartonshire sent in footage of her troupe as an audition piece for Smile Las Vegas 2017.

Just a few hours later the magic offer email landed in her inbox much to her surprise. Linzi said: "I know my dancers are skilled and move wonderfully but as always I respect the strong competition of other dance schools and I never expect things to just happen without hard work and determination.

"I was a little shocked when I received the reply so quickly, it just goes to show the hours and practice are paying off for my kids. I couldn't be more proud."

Sharon Collins, director of Smiles Productions, praised the young dancers "strong pattern and direction, well-rehearsed, great presentation and good spacing."

She added: "The dancers at your school are obviously well trained and I am happy to say we welcome you on-board for our "Smile Las Vegas" 2017."

So then the hard work really began as a lot of fundraising is required to fly 16 children and a parent or guardian per child to the bright lights of Vegas.

Aimee Reid, one of the lucky dancers, said: "I am so excited to go. I can't wait. It's a lot of work we are doing to raise money but everyone helping us has been great."

The dancers and their parents have been fundraising A LOT - they have been doing car washes, bag packing... a lot of bag packing,...dancing at Lomond Shores, bingo nights, ladies nights and lots more. Their dance teacher is so proud of them for all their hard work so far.

And this is where that unique advertising opportunity comes in. To help the young dancers perform in the "Smile Las Vegas" show at the Tommy Wind Theatre on the same intimate stage that Prince, Stevie Wonder, Little Wayne, P Diddy, and many more have performed - the dance school is offering local businesses the chance to sponsor their adventure.

Zandra Baird, from the group's fundraising team, said: "Obviously sponsorship from a local business would help us financially but it would be a great asset to the business itself.

Their company logo would be displayed on our marketing materials and tracksuits/ t-shirts that we'll be wearing during our fundraising, they will get a mention in all of our press releases and the business name will travel the miles with us to Las Vegas. How cool to have your business advertised on Las Vegas Boulevard."

For more information on the fundraising events or if you would like to help please contact Dancebase via their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/Dancebase-Academy or keep an eye out for updates on www.clydesider.org



CLYDESIDER MISSION STATEMENT

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire. Our community magazine, *Clydesider*, will promote the positives that the area has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery and history and will showcase the creative skills, ideas and experiences of local people.

There are some amazingly talented folk in our communities however few have the opportunity to make a living from their creativity so *Clydesider* aims to provide a home for professional and amateur alike - it will be a community magazine that truly is for our community and by our community.

The print publication will be a creative community space linked to our digital media space - www.clydesider.org - which will include music and film.

Support and Contribute to Clydesider

As a social enterprise we need to make the publication sustainable so we need the support of our community. If you are interested in advertising in *Clydesider* please contact us by emailing clydesideradvertising@gmail.com.

While the magazine is free we plan to build a base of supporting subscribers to ensure we keep a good balance between creative content and advertising. We have a Paypal link on our website where you can choose to make a monthly, quarterly or annual supporting subscription or if you wish to make a contribution by cheque please make it payable to Clydesider Creative Ltd and send to Ben View Resource Centre, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA.

We are keen to hear from creative contributors in West Dunbartonshire so if you would like to get involved please email theclydesider@gmail.com. We also have regular meetings in different venues across the area which are advertised on our Clydesiders Facebook page.

Clydesider Credits

First big thank you goes out to our fantastic team of *Clydesider* contributors - these include published and novice poets, authors, journalists, photographers plus local artists, designers, cartoonists, web designers and advertising executives - you have all been wonderful and a real joy to work with.

Another huge thank you has to go to the team at Firstport, particularly Brian McMillan, who helped this social enterprise take its first baby steps and secure two social enterprise start-up awards from Firstport and West Dunbartonshire Council plus a small grant from Business Gateway.

And a final thanks to the many wonderful people who listened to and believed in my ideas from the start, helping shape them into Clydesider Creative Ltd - particularly Jenny, Michael, Kevin and Charlie - you guys are amazing, couldn't have done it without you!

CLYDESIDE

Mist rises over
the dark quiet water.
A century of dreams;
A shipbuilder's heaven!
I see them again,
rows of marching men
overalls and bunnets as uniform
warding off the drizzling rain.
They climb the stairs
to a skeletal ship.
Talk is muted now;
condensation rises up
against the black steel,
shimmering in the wet.
Below decks now, we
find a dry howf, and
the first flask of tea
or coffee is opened.
The ship is now alive!
Her daily ration complete.
Sounds fill the air;
Hammers and caulking tools
assault the senses.
No earmuffs in those days!
Another day begins in
John Brown's Shipyard.
Now the mist clears
as a heron flaps
over the still water
to the Renfrew shore.
Time to leave now;
my memories still secure!

By Colin L Scott, Parkhall



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