



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

Issue 11 Autumn 2019

Free

CREATING CHANGE
ONE WELD
AT A TIME



TUESDAY NIGHTS WITH THE GIRLS

I light the lamps, draw the blinds
and hurry to my bedroom to prepare for the night ahead.
Tonight I have to look my best,
all the girls will be here decked out in their finery.
I live for Tuesday nights.
As I take my seat before the mirror I take a deep breath
then lovingly spread moisturiser over my face and neck,
I begin to relax a little as I apply my foundation
letting my fingers work their magic.
I brush my eyelids with eye shadow and outline my eyes with liner,
I pencil my eyebrows a little and apply several coats of mascara to my
lashes,
everyone says my eyes are my best feature.
With soft brushes I apply powder and blusher and finish off with my
signature red lipstick.
I give a little pout and smile to myself,
I am feeling relaxed and happy now, anticipating the night ahead.
I sip from the glass of wine I poured myself earlier
and reach for the finishing touch.
Tonight my wig is long and blonde,
I love the feel of it brushing my bare shoulders.
I clip on my earrings and necklace
and select an emerald ring from my jewellery box.
I spritz myself with a little Chanel no. 5
and go to the wardrobe to take out my dress.
I revel in its silkiness as it slides over my body.
I slip on my high heeled sandals and instantly feel sexy and feminine,
finally I turn around to look at myself in the full length mirror
and as usual I want to cry.
Only on Tuesdays do I feel like this, happy and sad at the same time,
it's the only night I can be myself,
a man,
dressed as a woman.

By Dora Wright





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Cover photo by Caroline Finn



Welcome to CLYDESIDER

Autumn is probably my favourite season and one West Dunbartonshire seems to do so well, as the array of greenery that covers our hills, parks and fields crisps and colours into a multitude of burnt reds and oranges.

So it seems fitting that this autumn issue we are focusing on change in West Dunbartonshire. Like the leaves falling from the trees at the moment, that change comes in so many colours, shapes and sizes.

And the catalyst for much of the change we feature in Issue 11 is rooted in our community. Sadly, in the myriad of problems our community faces.

From poverty to loneliness, addiction to underachievement, the people of West Dunbartonshire don't have their troubles to seek.

Yet, in amongst that adversity and challenge the beautiful colours of our community keep shining through – whatever the season.

Unlike the falling leaves, much of the change we are celebrating in this issue is a result of growth as our community digs deep and builds its own solutions to these challenges.

From community cooking groups and cafes dishing up free food and company; to recycling hubs and creative artists finding new uses for unloved items or tapping into unfulfilled youthful potential; to a Men's Shed and Friendship Club where laughter is definitely the best medicine, there is so much for our community to take pride in.

Speaking of pride, this issue we also share stories of communities celebrating what they have in common – rather than building barriers to divide.

In Alexandria the community came together to organise and celebrate the first Vale Pride event. And people from all walks of life have been joining forces to recover a little Dunkirk veteran and in so doing have added exciting new chapters to both her rescue story and their own.

We also hosted our first Community Gathering and had the pleasure of watching a little bit of magic happen as local grassroots activists, politicians and policymakers spent some quality time together.

And, like our Community Gathering, I think this issue may be our most diverse yet. Not merely in the variety of individuals and organisations featured but also in the growing number of contributors and in how they are telling their stories as we're proud to publish two photo essays in this issue which each shine a very different focus on change. Enjoy!



**Amanda
Eleftheriades-Sherry**
Editor



RADIO KILPATRICK HITS THE AIRWAVES

By Angela Clark

Pupils at Kilpatrick School launched their very own podcast/radio station.

At the launch students put their interview skills to the test, turning the mic on star guest Clyde 2 radio presenter Euan Cameron who officially opened the station.

They quizzed him about his previous media jobs, how he became a radio presenter, the newspapers he worked for and his favourite TV programmes.

And they explained how working on the school radio had helped them.

Jon Phee said: "We love the radio station. It's changed my confidence quite a bit. When I was younger I was completely shy, now I have the confidence to get right into it. When I leave school I would like to be a DJ or a Youtuber, something like that."


The radio station broadcasts every Friday from Kilpatrick School. The students get the opportunity to express their creative side using the material they research and gather for broadcast from social media.

Music teacher Andy Rimar said:

"All the ideas the students bring are amazing, everyone involved is very enthusiastic. Each of the pupils takes a different role whether it's writer, editor, diction, or learning technology.


"We hope to go out and visit radio stations so what they learn here can be carried over to real experiences and the students can make those connections to help with job opportunities after school."

The school hopes to become a popular well-loved station in the local community. Tune into Kilpatrick Radio on Sound Cloud.com and follow them on Twitter.



Gil Paterson MSP

For Clydebank & Milngavie



Constituency Surgeries 2019/2020
 All surgeries are held between 5pm and 6pm unless stated otherwise

November 2019			February 2020		
1st	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm	7th	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm
8th	Napier Hall	Old Kilpatrick	14th	Recess	
15th	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Rd	21st	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Road
22nd	Goldenhill Primary School	23 Stewart Drive, Hardgate	28th	Clydebank Town Hall	5 Hall Street, Clydebank G81
29th	St Andrews Day Holiday				

March 2020			April 2020		
6th	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm	3rd	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Road 4pm to 5pm
13th	Napier Hall	Old Kilpatrick	10th	Recess	
20th	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Rd	17th	Recess	
27th	Clydebank Town Hall	5 Hall Street, Clydebank G81	24th	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd

There are no fixed surgeries during:
January - July - August - December

Personal appointments can be arranged by calling:
(0141) 952 9677

Constituency Office of Gil Paterson MSP, Suite 1-6, Titan Business Enterprise Centre, 1 Aurora Avenue, Clydebank G81

GOLDEN AWARD FOR GREEN CHURCH

A local congregation has achieved a gold standard for its environmental work – one of just four in Scotland.

Assessors commended Alexandria Parish Church for the breadth of their work, with many members taking positive action to reduce their individual carbon footprints as well as that of the church building.

Environmental issues are embedded in worship and extend beyond the grounds, with a reflective walk being prepared for RSPB Loch Lomond as part of a Faith Action for Nature project.

Mary Sweetland, the Church's Eco-Convenor said: "We started on this journey in 2011 and have worked through the levels of the award, raising awareness among the congregation and users of our buildings on the importance of reducing our carbon footprint to protect God's Creation."

"With the Climate Emergency now declared by governments we will continue to strive to help the transition to a low carbon economy, so that our children and their children can continue to enjoy the beauty of Loch Lomondside and the Leven Valley."

James Anthony, assessor for Eco-Congregation Scotland praised the parishioners' work saying: "The use of church grounds for community allotments should be encouraged in all churches with space to spare. It was very clear that each member of the eco-team has green threads running through them."

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A LITTLE BOAT WITH A BIG HEART

BY AMANDA ELEFThERIADES

A little boat which once rescued hundreds of stranded soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk during WWII, is again on a recovery mission.

This time Skylark IX is providing a lifeline to local people battling the dark and lonely world of substance misuse.

And the ripple effect of her rescue is already reaching out into the wider community with apprenticeships, training programmes and even plans to bring shipbuilding back to Dumbarton.

Mary Burch from the Skylark IX Trust explained how the unlikely partnership between the Dunkirk Veterans Association and Alternatives WD Community Drug Service began.

"On the anniversary of Dunkirk we used to sail on the Loch and lay a wreath or poppy petals on the water in memory of the Dunkirk Veterans.

"In 2010 the Skylark sank, it was very close to the anniversary of



Dunkirk. That was when the campaign started and we put an appeal out for help from the community."

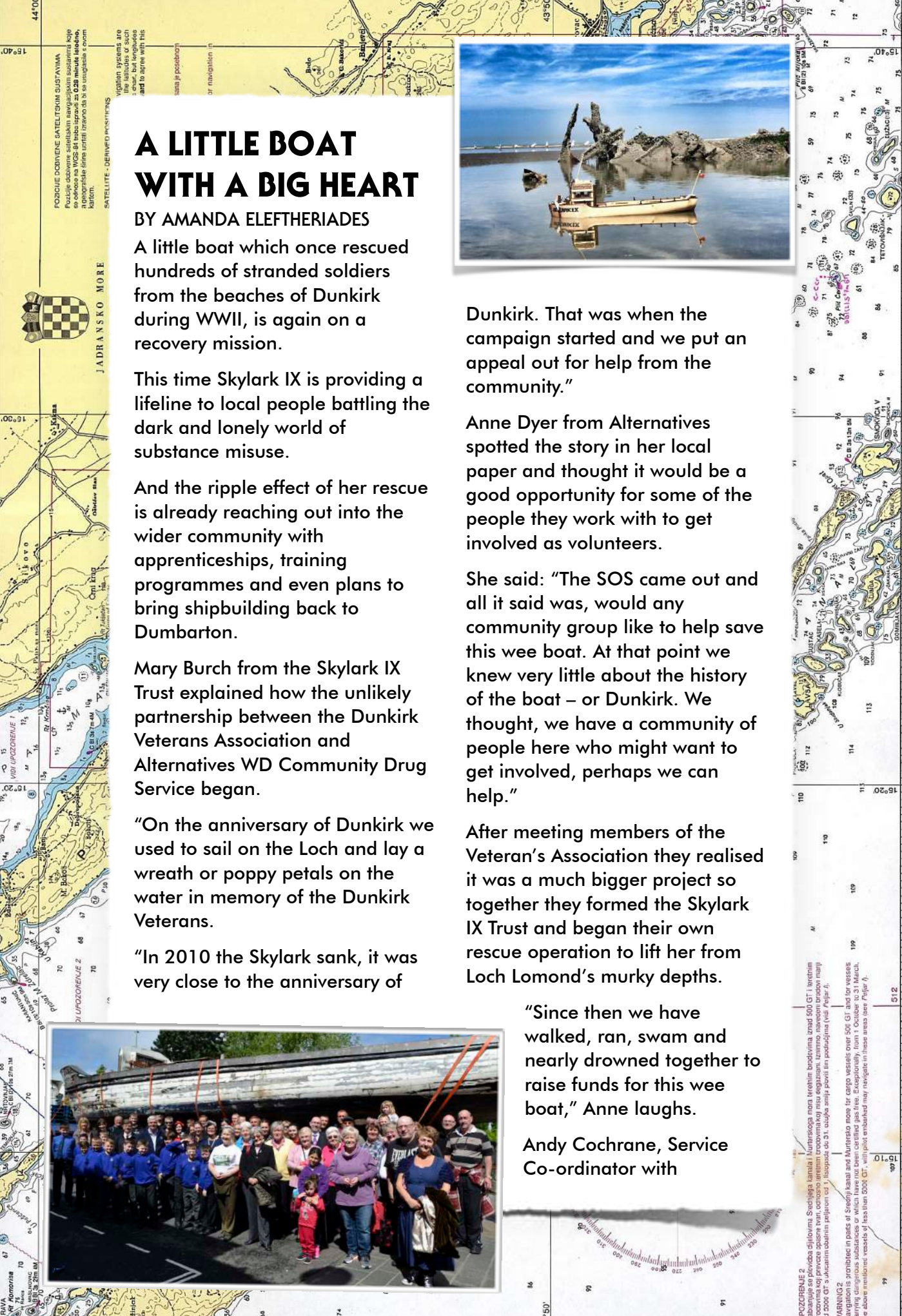
Anne Dyer from Alternatives spotted the story in her local paper and thought it would be a good opportunity for some of the people they work with to get involved as volunteers.

She said: "The SOS came out and all it said was, would any community group like to help save this wee boat. At that point we knew very little about the history of the boat – or Dunkirk. We thought, we have a community of people here who might want to get involved, perhaps we can help."

After meeting members of the Veteran's Association they realised it was a much bigger project so together they formed the Skylark IX Trust and began their own rescue operation to lift her from Loch Lomond's murky depths.

"Since then we have walked, ran, swam and nearly drowned together to raise funds for this wee boat," Anne laughs.

Andy Cochrane, Service Co-ordinator with



Alternatives, led the charity's fundraising efforts, setting up a 'Spirit of Dunkirk' team with residents staying in the charity's Recovery House.

Their annual endurance fundraiser not only goes the extra mile to raise money for the Skylark's rescue mission, it also helps participants in their own recovery.

"It started with a walk round Arran in 24 hours. It's 56 miles and we've done that three years now," Andy explained.

"We've also carried the Skylark propeller to the summit of Ben Lomond. Like walking to the top of the Ben isn't difficult enough, we thought we would carry a 50kg propeller with us.

"And we've done the Three Peaks Challenge in 24 hours.

"We purposely make the challenges incredibly difficult because we want the guys to dig deep. Some of the stories how they made it round Arran are legendary and they use that in their own recovery."

Andy says when the group start to struggle he reminds them what the guys at Dunkirk faced and still had to keep going.

"I tell them at least no-one is shooting at you or bombing you right



now, a wee heel blister is not the end of the world - so keep going.

"It had to be difficult to mean something to everyone who took part, because it was difficult for those young guys in Dunkirk and I want them to remember that."

Lee is one of the veteran members of the 'Spirit of Dunkirk' team and has completed the Arran Challenge three times.

He was first introduced to the Skylark as a member of the local Army Cadets, joining the Veterans Association for a Memorial Day service. Little did he know that years later Skylark would be helping his own recovery.

"My life spiralled out of control and I knew I was sinking. Alternatives has kind of pulled me out of the water and helped me rebuild my life again," he explained.

"When I heard what they wanted to do to get the Skylark back up and running I wanted to be part of it.

"I have used all of that in my own recovery, the team-building and pushing myself with the likes of the Arran Challenge; it showed me no matter how wrecked I was I could come out stronger.



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"Doing the Arran Challenge has totally changed my life. It takes you to a different level – knowing you can do something like that. I know now there are no limits if I put my mind to something.

"It is kind of like a war out there for some people. You come in here a wreck and they help rebuild you." Colin was also inspired by the Skylark to start looking after his own life again.

He said: "Before all this I didn't like fitness or physical exercises but the Arran Challenge changed all that.

"We got the ferry across at 5am and it was hammering down with rain. By mid-day all your clothes are wet through, at midnight a couple of boys drop out, another boy has to give in at 3am because his feet are all blistered and bleeding. I manage to soldier on until 6am and we found a wee toilet to stop and get some cover. I asked Andy to bandage my

legs because they look like pulled pork but everything is so wet the bandages just fall off.

"At that point I had to drop out. It gave me a flavour of what those guys had to endure but I was just dealing with the elements, I wasn't getting shot at and I knew I would get back."

Anne said there are a lot of parallels between the boat and the client group Alternatives works with.

"It started with the Skylark but then it became much more than just getting the boat out of the water. The people from Alternatives who got involved saw their recovery linked to the boat's, then more people got involved from all walks of life and everyone who has been part of this rescue has stayed with it."

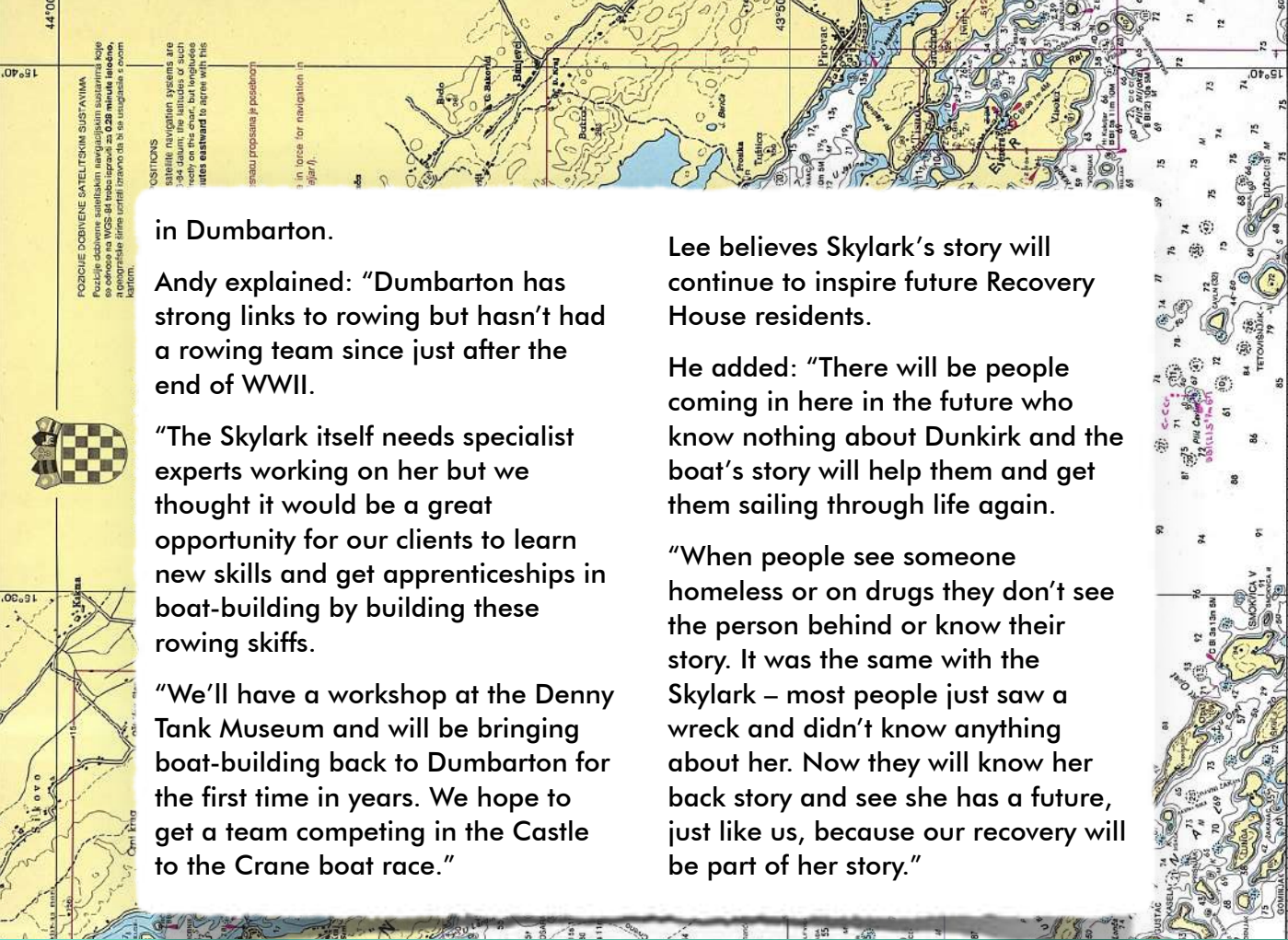
The boat is now at the Scottish Maritime Museum in Irvine and thanks to a successful Heritage Lottery fund boost of over £400,000 specialist work can begin on her restoration.

And the Skylark's story is starting to spiral out into the community. Local primary and secondary schools are including it in their curriculum, apprenticeship and training programmes will help with the restoration work and the Trust is building links with Glasgow University.

Perhaps the most exciting spin-off from the original rescue mission is how the little boat has inspired the return of shipbuilding at Denny's



Photo by Katie Kennedy



in Dumbarton.

Andy explained: "Dumbarton has strong links to rowing but hasn't had a rowing team since just after the end of WWII.

"The Skylark itself needs specialist experts working on her but we thought it would be a great opportunity for our clients to learn new skills and get apprenticeships in boat-building by building these rowing skiffs.

"We'll have a workshop at the Denny Tank Museum and will be bringing boat-building back to Dumbarton for the first time in years. We hope to get a team competing in the Castle to the Crane boat race."

Lee believes Skylark's story will continue to inspire future Recovery House residents.

He added: "There will be people coming in here in the future who know nothing about Dunkirk and the boat's story will help them and get them sailing through life again.

"When people see someone homeless or on drugs they don't see the person behind or know their story. It was the same with the Skylark – most people just saw a wreck and didn't know anything about her. Now they will know her back story and see she has a future, just like us, because our recovery will be part of her story."

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MP ADVICE SURGERIES



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Dumbarton Library

- 1st Friday of the month (11.30am-12.30pm)

- 4th Tuesday of the month (6pm-7pm)

Dalmuir Library

- 1st Saturday of the month (11am-12pm)

- 3rd Friday of the month (1pm-2pm)

Clydebank Central Library

- 2nd Wednesday of the month (5pm-6pm)

Faifley Library

- 3rd Friday of the month (2.15pm-3.15pm)

Balloch Library

- 4th Saturday of the month (11am-12pm)

Contact information

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No surgeries on bank holidays, school holidays or library closure days.
Surgeries may be run by staff due to Martin's parliamentary commitments.



CREATING CHANGE

BY CAROLINE FINN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRAW TALENT

"Creativity is not determined by where we live – yet the links between creative careers and postcodes are undeniable." It is this inequality which drives Braw Talent.

Former school teachers Darren Osborne, Lydia Everitt and Colm Keegan are on a creative mission to challenge this postcode lottery and encourage youngsters to develop their creative talents.

The trio are talented creatives in their own right. Young Bankie Darren is an actor and BAFTA nominee, specialising in filmmaking and graphic design. Lydia, a Fine Arts graduate from Glasgow School of Art has had work exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy and is part of the Scottish National Collective while Colm was lead singer with Irish sensation Celtic Thunder and was voted Best New Artist at the Irish Music Awards 2015.

The three colleagues were all teachers at St Peter's the Apostle in Clydebank and what started as a lunchtime conversation eventually gave birth to Braw Talent social enterprise at the start of 2019.

Each had the desire to offer pupils creative experiences beyond the existing school curriculum, experiences that linked directly to a career in the creative industries, which is the fastest growing industry in the UK.

And this summer they took their creative masterclasses back to school at Our Lady of Loretto in Dalmuir where they worked with P7 pupils to produce a music video programme as a farewell project about their time in the school.

Colm thinks that the programme is such a success as it combines their creative teaching skills in a range of different ways.

He said: "We had some kids who were keen on the filmmaking and production who worked with Darren, another group wanted to work with Lydia to create the scenery and props and I took the kids who were interested in music

and we recorded the Beatles song 'With a Little Help from my Friends.'

"So we were in three different classrooms working on three different disciplines and then the film brought it all together."

The children had fun making the music video but the impact for some went much deeper.

Lydia explained: "One of the teachers told us there was a girl working with us who had been too afraid to even go into the same room where a performance was being held earlier in the year yet she loved acting in the music video alongside her classmates, the teacher couldn't believe it.

"Another girl struggled with reading but she enjoyed art and she made these huge props and scenery backdrops, it's amazing to see the confidence of these young people being developed." The creative workshops develop other skillsets and qualities that are often quite unexpected.

Darren added: "Creativity is applicable to everything; an art classroom or a music classroom are not the only places you can find creativity. Lots of different skills are used in creative projects like

team work for example, everyone works on their own specialised area but at the end when it all comes together they've accomplished a film. They're learning social interactions, encouraging one another and increasing their confidence. The most rewarding aspect of it is knowing that we've inspired the kids."

In each programme Braw Talent runs they have been warned about certain students who may struggle or find the group work difficult. Yet these youngsters were the ones who have jumped in with enthusiasm in the non-traditional teaching environment and stood out as being talented creatively or great team members who generously helped their peers.

Colm explained: "The model of a teacher talking and the student sits and listens taking in as much as they can, works for some people but doesn't work for everyone. Some people are just really hands on folk and learn by doing, not listening. It's really good to see them coming out of their shells."

During the music video project they also ran an Oscars type award ceremony with the young people voting for their peers. "It was great seeing some of the

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pupils who might struggle in class with traditional academic subjects win these awards after their peers nominated them for special recognition. It was really rewarding to see those kids who aren't always celebrated in the classroom get that credit," Colm added.

Braw Talent's mission is to show that creativity is open to anyone with the aspiration to try it.

Research shows that 78% of people who work in creative industries are from privileged backgrounds while students from low-income families who take part in an arts activity at school are three times more likely to get a degree.

Braw Talent is keen to end this imbalance by raising the awareness of creative careers in less affluent areas such as West Dunbartonshire and providing the kids the option to at least imagine a career in the creative industries as a possibility for their future.

Colm said creativity has never been more accessible than it is today. "When we were kids if you wanted to do filmmaking you would have to go somewhere that had expensive cameras and equipment. Now in 2019 everyone has the capabilities of doing it with what's in their pocket with instant access to an audience through places like Facebook and Youtube."

Over the summer the team also worked with youth charity Y Sort It running a six-week guerrilla filmmaking project. Another programme they offer to schools is a Ted Talk style creative festival bringing together local people who now work in a range of creative jobs to show youngsters the variety of options open to them in the creative industries.



As part of their social mission Braw Talent plan to offer free creative workshops to the local community. "We don't want creativity to become a classist thing that is only for those who can afford it," said Colm.

And Lydia added: "I think a lot of people can be overwhelmed by the cost of creative projects, it's important to us to show that you don't need to spend money to make films, that you're voice can still be heard."

To find out more about Braw Talent visit www.brawtalent.org

CLYDESIDER Competitions

We have more great giveaways for you in Issue 11.

1. Poetry Competition – the theme is 'Renewal' – prize is a £20 local gift voucher plus an annual Clydesider Club Card membership.

2. Photography Competition – the theme is 'Friendship' prize canvas and framed prints courtesy of Photo Ecosse (see pg 24) plus an annual Clydesider Club Card membership.

Usual rules for the Poetry and Photography Competitions apply:-

- One entry per person and you must live, work or be part of a West Dunbartonshire-based group to enter
- All entries must be your own work
- By entering you give Clydesider Creative Ltd permission to publish your work in our print, digital and social media outlets – this in no way infringes your copyright.

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RECYCLE, REUSE

WORDS & PHOTO BY ANGELA CLARK



When we think of items that are harmful to the environment we rarely consider our unwanted clothes.

But every time we throw an unwanted outfit into the bin it ends up decomposing on a landfill site somewhere and the material produces gases, known as carbon dioxide and methane - all contributing to global warming.

The manufacture of the clothes also causes water pollution, with toxic chemicals needed to give materials their prints and vibrant colours polluting water supplies and drinking water in developing nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Rose Sehakizinka is Project Co-ordinator for ISARO Social Integration Network. Based in Centre 81 the charity

runs workshops that encourage people to stop throwing away clothes and find other uses for them. She hopes by teaching people to sew they will save money and help reduce the impact of overbuying to protect the environment.

Rose said: "I'm from Africa, we don't throw things away. We did a lot of sewing in school so you learnt how to repair your clothes. When you have clothes you make sure you wear them as much as possible. I have that passion of not wasting things because in my mind when I think of people who need things and then I see people throwing them away, it's not good."

The sewing workshops ensure people get the most out of their unwanted items. They teach people the basic skills they need to repair broken zips, to make alterations, shorten items and how to reuse the material to make something new from it.

Rose said: "We do lots of up-cycling with clothes that no-one wants, we make toiletry bags, pencil cases. We also run a Kids Club, they have made bags out of t-shirts and we try to inspire a culture of respect where children grow up and use old things. We are trying to encourage people to buy things only when they need it and when you no longer need it make sure to pass it on to someone or to a charity shop or one of the local swap shops."

The group run regular swap shops where local people can take their unwanted clothes and exchange them

for a whole new wardrobe saving them money and protecting the environment. These run from Monday to Thursday in Whitecrook Business centre alongside the Recycle Room based in the Hub CE centre.

Nichola Mable, from the Recycle Room said: "We try to get people to understand not everything needs to be brand new. I always had stuff passed down to me. My first flat looked like a multi-coloured swap shop. I had stuff from my Granny, my Mum, aunts' stuff and things from charity shops."

Nichola started the Recycle Room four years ago to help the local community. The service is free and relies on donations of clothes and household

items that people no longer use. There are no restrictions about who can use the service whether you are working or on benefits, all items that people take reduces the amount of items sent to landfill and saves you money.

Nichola added: "Charity shops sell secondhand items that you could walk into Primark and buy new at the same price, so it makes it easier for people to throw things away, it's definitely become a generation thing."

Two generations ago during World War Two the government introduced the Make Do and Mend scheme to encourage people to repair clothes that were worn out. It encouraged people to be creative in their ideas and gave them invaluable skills that we have lost along the way because clothes are so cheap just to replace.

Thanks to people like Rose and Nichola who are following old traditions, more people are open to learning new skills and recycling their unwanted clothes. Hopefully they will encourage the next generation to do the same, leaving them a legacy we can all be proud of.



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FOOD FOR ALL



BY CATHIE HOWARD, PHOTOS BY BRIAN WATSON

Social cooking, community cafes and gardening groups are sprouting up across West Dunbartonshire to tackle the growing problems of poverty and loneliness.

Charities, housing associations, schools and faith-based organisations are developing local solutions to provide food and friendship with no strings or stigma attached.

The 'Plot to Pot' philosophy is growing in popularity and Kevin Mason, project manager of the Leamy Foundation, plays a key role in promoting it throughout the area.

Seasonal produce, grown in local community gardens, heads straight into the pot in the social cooking sessions. The benefits are enjoyed on a weekly basis in Alexandria's Veterans' Hall and Ladyton Community Centre in Bonhill.

Kevin explained: "The social cooking gives people a reason to get out of their

houses for awhile, to spend time together, meeting new people, sharing a cup of tea or coffee. Hopefully they enjoy learning about food - growing it, harvesting it, cooking it or trying new and old recipes and it builds confidence along the way.

"These sessions are open to everyone, with a particular focus on anyone who feels socially isolated for any reason.

"From the Leamy Foundation's perspective our interest would be to involve people who find themselves experiencing anxiety, depression or whatever causes this isolation and to establish a regular point of social contact."

The Leamy Foundation was established in 2015, initially to encourage well-being through social gardening. Like the gardens, it has blossomed into an ever-growing network of community initiatives.

Kevin enthused: "There is so much going on throughout West Dunbartonshire connected with food.

"Various projects are established in Haldane, Alexandria, Bonhill, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton, Old Kilpatrick, Dalmuir, Clydebank, Faifley and more."

They are also working in local schools encouraging little hands to dig deep in the soil to grow their own food.

As a result there is a plentiful harvest of ingredients awaiting the culinary touch and local cooks are coming forward to lend a hand with the community cooking groups.

"Older generations would have had 'hands on' experience of the food on their dinner table.

"The big supermarkets changed food production. Most fruit and vegetables were mass produced elsewhere and shipped back into our local areas which removed that hands on personal connection that ordinary folk had with what they ate."

In addition to the community growing initiative an increasing number of organisations are offering a menu of activities which put food at their core.

For those who need food or company there is a free community meal to be found in Dumbarton every week day.

Local food charity, Food for Thought dishes up something hot at their Community Soup session in St Augustine's Church Hall every Wednesday and Thursday.

Ghislaine, long-time volunteer and founder of Community Soup, said most days they have 30 – 40 people popping in for a bite to eat.

"It's sad we need this in 21st century Scotland, but we do. Some of the people who come in here won't see anyone else from one week to the next and this might be the only hot meal they get.



The growers at the Leamy Foundation love the experience of growing their food from scratch. One commented: "There is nothing more satisfying than the pride you get, both cooking and eating food that you had a hand in growing and tending.

"During the holidays we also supply the schools with soup and sandwiches which the children get when they come along to do their activities. The Council pays for this, it helps our Foodbank and makes sure the children still get something hot to eat when the schools are off."

Food for Thought also run a daily foodbank service from St Augustine's and offer a catering service to help cover their costs.

On Christmas day they have a Christmas dinner and party which last year was attended by over 70 people from the local community.

Ghislaine added: "We go and collect people and drop them back home, everyone gets a gift and we have a wee party. We don't want anyone to be spending Christmas alone.

"We're always in need of volunteers to help on the day and in the run up, we're run off our feet. If there are any drivers who can collect people or cooks to help get the meal ready on Christmas day, we would love to hear from you and we always need people who can collect the food for the foodbank."

Robert and Stewart are regulars at Food for Thought's Community Soup, enjoying the company as much as Ghislaine's delicious home-made soup.

Robert said: "I would go hungry without it here, they really help. If

you're hungry, you just feel run down all the time and end up ill, this takes a bit of the pressure off and you can always talk to the folk in here.

"It's a good way to meet people as well and start getting back into society if you have problems. I can't cook, so it's great getting a home-cooked meal in here."

Stewart agreed: "They feed you well in here but the company is important as well. If you're feeling down when you come in, you know you will have a laugh and feel better before you leave.

"You also find out what is going on in the community and if you need some help with anything there is usually someone to ask. You get a good blether and I enjoy listening to the younger ones, it helps you get well and move on with your life."

Kirsten Wiggins, another volunteer with Food For Thought is starting to collect money-saving tips, budget recipes and free food skills such as brambling and jam-making to share in their newsletter.

She has kindly shared a few with our readers and if you have any ideas, recipes or tips that you – or your granny – would recommend to save money please email to kirsten-wiggins@outlook.com

Cooking On A Budget – Top Tips

- Save Your Garlic - peel all the cloves and put those you don't need into a jar and cover with cooking oil. They will keep longer

and your oil will end up superbly garlicky. You can use it in dishes or spread on bread to make your own garlic bread!

- Tomato Puree Left-overs - can be covered in a little oil, stick in a bay leaf and bingo - you have the start of a simple tomato sauce.
- Home-made Toast Toppers - make your cheese for a sandwich/baked potato or cheese toast go further by mixing it with a little finely grated carrot, mayo and onion...or mushroom.
- Fuel Efficient Cooking – cut your veg up small before boiling and cook in the same pan. Not only does this save on the energy bills, it also saves on the washing up!

Community Food Spaces

- Mon – St Patrick's Church Hall
12.30pm – 1.30pm
- Tues – Lennox Evangelical Church
12 noon – 1.30pm
- Wed – Community Cooking, Bonhill
Community Garden, Ladyton
12.30-2.30pm
- Wed – Community Soup – St
Augustine's Hall 11.30am –
1.30pm
- Thurs – Community Soup – St
Augustine's Hal 11.30am –
1.30pm
- Fri – Community Cooking, Veterans
Hall, Alexandria 12.30-2.30pm
- Fri – The Phoenix Community
Centre, Castlehill (pay what you
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SHED TALK

BY ANGELA CLARK
PHOTO BY KATIE KENNEDY

There are not many places where men feel comfortable sharing their problems or talking about their health, but an old timber classroom in Dalmeir has been transformed into one such space.

The Dalmeir Men's Shed provides a breathing space and time away from the daily pressures of life, where men from all walks of life come along, share their problems, swap skills and have a bit of banter.

For Bob Simpson 'The Shed' has been a real lifeline. He said: "My wife died just over three years ago and I was just sitting in the house. I thought it's much better for me to get out and about. At the Shed there's a good crowd and you

can get on the tools, it keeps your mind busy.

"I like doing the woodwork as I'm good with my hands. It's also a hub here for getting information like if you need to contact social work, there is always somebody who has done it and they pass all the information on to you by just talking about it."

Many personal stories like Bob's are shared inside these timber walls, giving an insight to why the men come along.

Ronnie McLachlan a Shed regular said: "I've been coming here for about two years now, it keeps me busy and my skill levels up.

"The wee jobs here keep my brain active. I plan things out, I was a sheet

metal worker and that's what I did when I worked. I really enjoy the company as well.

"I met an old neighbour in here - Big Stewart - I hadn't seen him for 40 years. If the Shed wisnae here I might never have seen him again.

"You get a bit of banter with the men, a wee laugh at each other."

The Shed caters for all ages and abilities. Some of the guys have dementia and Parkinsons, they come for the chat and sit with a cup of tea, sometimes enjoying the laughter, other times sharing their problems.

Committee member Adam Mirren said: "Men don't do that easily – share their problems. We have good discussions, we just talk things through, people share their experiences and what they've done."

There are a large number of skilled workers amongst the members, many of whom served their time in John Browns in its glory days.

Their skills proved invaluable to get the shed up and running, converting two old classrooms into a fully

operational workshop, toilet, kitchen and social room. They also installed a ramp, to give access to wheelchair users.

Adam added: "We are building another hut out the back as we have a shortage of storage space. We're also keeping a bit of the grass area to create a wee garden with a bench so the guys can potter about outside."

As well as working on their own shed the men have extended their skills out to the local community making benches and garden furniture for local community gardens.

They also make bird and dolls houses and little ornamental wooden Christmas trees.

Chairman Mick Wilson said: "It's a great level of skill we have in the shed. We are trying to find a way of trickling those skills down to newer members and the younger generation and looking at ways to be sustainable in the long run."

To find out more about The Shed call 07484 641566 or pop in to their base at Dalmuir C.E Centre 1pm – 4pm Mondays and Wednesdays.



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Jackie Baillie MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumbarton Constituency

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THIRD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

2.45pm - Alexandria Library, Gilmour St, Alexandria
4.45pm - Helensburgh Parish Church, Colquhoun St, Helensburgh
6.30pm - Constituency Office, 6 Church Street, Dumbarton

*No surgeries in July. Surgeries may be subject to change.
Please phone 01389 734214 for more information.

The costs of this publication have been met from parliamentary resources.



Kieran Broadbelt



CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

BY CHARLIE SHERRY

What can I say folks, 'My Place' is Clydesider's 11th photo competition and again the good folk of West Dunbartonshire have not disappointed. The images entered just seem to be getting better and better with each issue, which is fantastic.

What's not so great is trying to choose a winner and two runners up from all the amazing shots entered, it just gets harder each time.

Thankfully I had the assistance of a fellow 'tog, Clydesider's very own Caroline Finn, to help me.

In Kieran Broadbelt's shot taken from the hills above Bowling, overlooking the River Clyde, the viewer can feel instantly that this is a place close to Kieran's heart, it just feels like

somewhere you would go to get away from it all, somewhere you could call 'My Place'. Lovely shot Kieran, great light and very well composed, congratulations.

Our first runner-up Ian Barr has captured the emotion of the Loch and the Ben in his wonderful shot, a place he obviously loves. His magnificent image is a reminder to us all that we should be proud of this place we call home. Well done Ian.

Slater Irvin took the theme a bit closer to home for our third runner up with a rather different interpretation to the theme 'My Place'.

Thank you for putting a smile on everyone's face in the office on a dreich Scottish day. They're lovely dogs and Slater deservedly picks up our joint

runner-up prize for this quirky image, good work.

Clydesider would like to thank Iain Wilson from Photo Ecosse in Dumbarton High Street for providing the prizes for our three winners.

The photo competition theme for Issue 12 is 'Friendship' entries to be emailed to clydesidercomp@gmail.com by January 27 2020.

Happy snapping folks!



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FOCUS ON CHANGE WD

BY JENNY WATSON, CLYDESIDER

PHOTOS BY ROBERT WILSON

Tackling poverty is a community effort in West Dunbartonshire.

Community groups, charities, social enterprises, faith-based organisations and (extra)ordinary folk are busy working away to challenge the problem. Yet much of this work gets little publicity.

Last year we ran a series of Community Media workshops and asked participants to look at how we could cover the topic of poverty from a solution-focused perspective. One idea they came up with was an event to raise awareness about these groups.

So we decided to bring as many of them together as possible and host our first Community Gathering - Focus on Change WD: Learning from the Grassroots.

Over 50 participants from 20 local organisations joined the day-long event in Dalmuir C.E Centre.

We developed our own Discuss It, Create It and Build It model of

engagement. We hoped this would be both informal and solution-focused, encouraging people to get to know each other and share ideas with as few barriers as possible.

We chose three topics where West Dunbartonshire has a wealth of potential to challenge poverty and split the day into three themes: Creativity, Heritage and Sustainability.

Each theme had three catalyst speakers for the Discuss It sessions and local creative facilitators hosting the Create It sessions.

Speakers for Creativity included Jim McLaren of Golden Friendships, Georgina Reilly from WD Work Connect and the Braw Talent team who discussed how creativity helps challenge loneliness and isolation faced by older people and vulnerable groups, while also opening a wide range of opportunities for young people.

In the Heritage room archaeologist and academic Kenny Brophy, local historian Elspeth Crocket and Andy

Cochrane from Alternatives WD and the Skylark IX Trust, shared their experiences of tapping into the area's wealth of local history and how the past had an important role to play in the area's future. The group also discussed the need for the community to be involved in defining and developing that purpose.



Sustainability speakers, Dumbarton Academy pupil Cameron Russell and Rose Sehakizinka, project co-ordinator for Isaro Social Integration Network shared how activities such as recycling, gardening and community cooking are helping to bring people together who are struggling with poverty or social isolation. Robin Tennant from the Poverty Alliance also gave an overview of what measures the Scottish Government is taking to try and address some of the issues associated with poverty.

After hearing from the catalyst speakers each group explored the topic in more detail, talking about the work their organisations and projects

are doing, the challenges they face and the barriers which can stop people from getting involved.

By the end of the Discuss It sessions new connections were made and ideas for various partnership projects were flowing.

We then moved into our Create It sessions. In the Sustainability room there was a Ready Steady Cook-style cook-off with local chefs from community food charities Food for Thought and Made With Love. Using a bag of goods from a local foodbank and fresh produce from Jackie and the Beanstalk's local market garden they whipped up quick and easy, low cost meals. As they cooked they shared tips on fuel efficient cookery, tackling food waste and shopping on a budget.



Meanwhile in Creativity the Braw Talent team had participants scripting, making props, performing and filming for a tongue-in-cheek promotional video of Clydebank as the new up-and-coming holiday destination. Watch it at www.clydesider.org

And in Heritage local poet and historian Ann MacKinnon, got the group working together to compose a Scots ballad about Clydebank's shipyards. (See page 29)

The three groups came back together for our final Build It session to identify gaps, suggest ideas and offer resources. These included financial contributions, digital and physical spaces, volunteers knowledge, skills and time.

While there were many problems identified which required significant system change to fix, three actionable proposals at community level came from the event.

or organisation free of charge. Check it out at www.clydesider.org

Several community events were suggested to bring local people and groups together.

There was also a desire to keep the connections made on the day and Tracey Groom from the Chest, Heart and Stroke Club offered to set up a regular Breakfast & Blether group for local community groups to meet, share information and explore potential partnership working.

Smaller, but equally important connections and actions were planned on the day. One charity offered

another their leftover clothing to be recycled into new goods; a housing support charity took the leftover fresh vegetables to introduce their residents to Jackie & the Beanstalk's fresh veg boxes at their next community cooking session and our creativity speakers were planning opportunities to work together.

Following the event we have been informed

several of the ideas shared around community transport and 'out of home' hunger will be incorporated in local and national strategies.

To get involved, please contact our Community Engagement worker Jenny Watson on 01389 381110 or email

jenny@clydesider.org



One of the biggest gaps identified across all themes was a lack of a community information-sharing space for West Dunbartonshire. The Clydesider website has been revamped to try and resolve this with an Events Calendar, Community Directory and Community News section which can be added to by any local charity, group

'CLYDESIDER'

Warming hands on the brazier's heat,
chasing away the damp, the cold.
the cling, the clang, the hammer's beat.
the music of the Clyde unfolds.

The riveter, the caulker, the gaffer,
the hauder oan, the tea maker,
the crack, the banter, the laughter,
the welder, the stager, the boiler-maker.

Tired and weary, hard shift done,
horns howling, the length of the Clyde,
gates open and workers start to run,
fleet-footed, fuelled with pride.

Majestic at the end,
hearts swelling with pride.
Look what we have done my friend
as she is launched on the Clyde.

Towering high above the town,
lying silent on the stocks.
Tomorrow will bring another dawn
with workers once more on the docks.

Locals silent, days of Lizzie have passed.
Old men remember with tears in their
eyes,
the yards now quiet, a thing of the past,
a long slow passing, without their
goodbyes.

by Focus on Change
Heritage Group



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PHOTOGRAPHING CHANGE BY BRIAN WATSON

Urban decay. What does that mean? What does it mean to you? Is it physical? Mental? Is it a way of life? A mindset perhaps?

My goal is to challenge your way of thinking, to spark a conversation about what it means and perhaps inspire solutions or a new attitude to things or people in your life.

I know for me, it's an opportunity to look forward, to take care of myself and those around me.

From decay can come restoration.











A VALE FULL OF PRIDE

BY CATHIE HOWARD
PHOTOS COURTESY OF VALE PRIDE

The success of the first Vale Pride was sketched on the smiling faces of the 400 strong crowd who gathered together to celebrate with the local LGBTQ+ community in Alexandria.

"There were no odd looks when we were holding hands." Christine described what the day had meant for herself, her partner and their daughter.

Sitting in Sandra's bustling café in Alexandria's Main Street, waiting to interview a few of the organisers who helped initiate the Vale Pride, I could understand why this energetic hub of activity was at the forefront of bringing the whole community together in celebration.

Weeks after the event it is still plain to see and feel the glow of pride and contentment on the faces of Sandra Reilly & Dylan Kennedy, two of the organisers, as they speak about how

they felt about Vale Pride and the positivity it brought to the LGBTQ+ and wider community.

These ordinary people with their genuine blend of positivity were the perfect mix to make such an extraordinary day happen. Something that would have been difficult to imagine less than a decade ago.

And the day's success has prompted plans to make Vale Pride an annual event.

Sandra explained the spark that got the ball rolling. "I saw Dylan was being subjected to a torrent of homophobic abuse on Facebook, it brought back memories of what my own son, Paul, endured when he was growing up and I just thought enough is enough.

"Dylan's mum, Annemarie Kennedy, is my co-worker, and I knew things had to change.

"So with the help of Dylan and friends Kirsten Gibson and Natalie Dougan we set the wheels in motion." Vale Pride was on its way...

Dylan said: "The aim of Vale Pride is to support the LGBTQ+ community, to show there is a safe place to celebrate, a place where no fear exists.

"It is a place where we can all feel accepted in the wider community, it raises awareness and it is somewhere for the whole community to gather together and we can really begin to understand one another."

Dylan remembers his time at school, "there was no support whatsoever when I was younger."

A regular support group for the LGBTQ+ community now meets in Sandra's Café. It is private for now, although plans to engage with the wider public, to share information and have chats will be moulded into its structure.

Dylan explained: "Some of the local LGBTQ+ community just do not venture out locally for fear of prejudice and hate crimes aimed at them, they choose to travel to Glasgow instead."

The atmosphere at the Vale Pride was a welcome contrast to this. Sandra said: "It was such a brilliant day, everyone had so much fun from the youngsters upwards. The entertainment was fantastic and carried on the whole day at The Pawn Lounge in Alexandria and afterwards

the celebrations carried on in Desire Nightclub.

Dylan added: "This was particularly meaningful to some of the local LGBTQ+ community as it was their first time ever being out sociably in their home town."



One young Alexandria woman who joined the celebrations said: "We felt as if we were in a different place, everyone was buzzing and looked so happy. There was lots of laughter, the area just felt really safe.

"It would be great to have more inclusive events like this one, bringing all the communities together, learning about one another."

Christine celebrated the day with her partner and their

daughter. She said: "It was a happy day, like a celebration. It felt like we were a normal family, like the way life should be, everyone treating each other with respect.

"I feel really proud to have been part of Vale Pride. Sandra and the organisers did an amazing job, setting an example for other children and people - respecting everybody's differences."

Dylan's dad summed it up: "It was all about smiling, happy faces."



SALVAGING METAL INTO ART



BY JENNY WATSON
PHOTOS BY CAROLINE FINN

What happens when you combine a passion for car mechanics with a love for art? A Young Achiever of the Year is created.

Local entrepreneur and artist Jack Smyth, 23, has faced many adversities in his young life. As a premature baby, he required shunts in his brain to stop it from bleeding. This left Jack with cerebral palsy down his right-hand side. "We were told Jack would not walk or talk and that his prognosis was very poor," explained Karen, Jack's mum.

Jack was regularly in and out of hospital during his childhood. On many occasions he was on life support, each time defying the odds and continuing to grow in strength.

As a young boy he was interested in mechanics, spending hours watching his dad fix cars and absorbing as much information as he could. One of his favourite things to do is visit scrappies with his dad in search of spare parts.

"Scrap yards – I look at them like a massive toy shop. It's effectively where I come alive. I love them," Jack said laughing.

After high school he started studying vehicle mechanics at college. However, various barriers prevented Jack completing the course, greatly affecting his confidence.

He learned to adapt his welding technique using extra clamps and equipment and sticking to his uncle's welding advice "ABC. Always be Comfortable."

Jack had the idea to combine his love of cars with the craft of welding and began to create pieces of art. He started by turning car parts into candle holders and fire pits. His dream is to eventually turn this into a fully-fledged business.

He also joined the West Dunbartonshire Street League who put him in touch with the Princes Trust and since then he has not looked back.

Through the Princes Trust Jack completed confidence building courses, participated in seminars and even gave speeches at events. In October he was presented with the Princes Trust Young Achiever of the Year Award at a glittering ceremony in Edinburgh. For a young man who used to be nervous about attending events alone this was something he never dreamt would be possible.

Now he is passionate about encouraging others to "keep smiling, dreaming and creating."

It is a passion which led to a meeting with one of his idols – blacksmith and metal sculpture artist Kevin Paxton.

Kevin's bespoke artwork is internationally known so when he invited Jack to visit his Edinburgh workspace, it was a very quick and excited acceptance reply.

The meeting turned out to be inspirational for both artists. Jack described it as the "highlight of his year so far."

And Kevin said: "It was a pleasure to meet Jack and see his determination to overcome the obstacles that have been in his way.



"His choice of career demonstrates his grit, as blacksmithing is both a physically and mentally demanding job.

"His enthusiasm for his art and designs is contagious and he is an inspiration and example to any young person who wants to follow their passion. We have commissioned a piece of his work ourselves and look forward to seeing Jack go from strength to strength."

Jack's inspirational and motivated personality and work ethic has created contacts and networks keen to help him along his path.

From local garages and the Bikes 4 Good project donating materials and spare parts, to meeting Arnold Clark CEO at a party - which resulted in a box of car parts arriving at Jack's house two weeks later - young Jack has a

natural flair for welding relationships as well as car parts.

He is also environmentally conscious and keen to give back to the communities who help him, living by his motto of "changing the world, one weld at a time."

Follow Salvaged Metal Art on Facebook and Instagram.



GOLDEN MOMENTS

WORDS & PHOTOS
BY CHARLIE SHERRY

"I hadn't been out my room for 17 years."

For 28-year-old Stephen Coombe, life before Golden Friendships Club was a lonely and difficult place.

Walking through the doors of the Dalmeir-based charity with, what he described as "not much expectation and even less personal confidence," was a life changing moment for the Clydebank lad.

When Stephen was just seven years old, he was diagnosed with a massive brain tumour and given less than 1% chance of survival. Despite the overwhelming odds and after major surgery, Stephen pulled through.

However the illness left him with on-going health issues, needing to take a cocktail of pills each day.

Despite his own personal problems Stephen now not only takes part in most of the activities on offer in Golden Friendships Club, he also runs his own class in disability dance fitness and helps whenever he can with all the other activities.

"I love being a member of Golden Friendships, I have made so many pals and being able to give something back through helping out is brilliant," he explained.

"Before coming to Golden Friendships, I didn't have a life. Now I wake up every morning with a smile on my face knowing I will be spending my day down at the Club with all my friends having a good laugh."

Stephen is just one of hundreds of folk Golden Friendships has helped since that day two years ago when Clydebank cabbie Jim McLaren used a room in Dalmeir's Masonic Hall to put on a wee afternoon of entertainment for lonely senior citizens.

Jim explained: "I was picking these folk up in my taxi, taking them to the post

office to collect their pensions and dropping them back home. They kept telling me 'that's me for the week son.'

"I found it heart-breaking. For a lot of them, I was the only human being they met all week. I decided to do something – that's how it all started."

The first afternoon's entertainment in January 2017 was attended by 24 senior citizens.

From there Jim set up Golden Friendships Club. With the support of members of his family, an ever-growing team of dedicated volunteers plus financial support from many local businesses and folk from the community, the group started to grow.

Now they host over 15 separate clubs per week, ranging from disabled fitness, to bingo and dances. Over 200 members and another 150 non-members regularly attend their various clubs and entertainment events.

Each year the charity go en masse to Blackpool for an annual holiday, this is now so popular they have hired a whole hotel in the Lancashire seaside resort for their trip next year.

From Jim's initial request to use the 543 Club for one afternoon a month, it wasn't long before the group were using both halls every day of the week, which the Masonic Hall management generously allowed them to do for free.

But when the 543 Lodge decided to merge with another Lodge this year, Golden Friendships faced the prospect of being homeless.

The group felt there was nothing else for it - they had to buy the building.

Jim said: "We were really sad for everyone at the 543. Since the very first event we held here they had been nothing but supportive, both in letting us use the building for free and actually helping out in the various clubs.

"We put in an offer of £80,000 for the building, which was accepted and then had six months to raise the money for our new home.

"We had every kind of fundraiser you could imagine and some you couldn't, from sponsored walks to dinner dances. We even had a woman with no legs do



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a sponsored swim, the effort was just amazing."

In July they reached their target and the keys were handed over to Jim. The charity is now in the process of refurbishing the place, starting with new toilets and kitchen. They are also organising Christmas party nights and taking bookings for the hall to help cover their running costs.

Jim added: "This journey has been nothing short of a miracle. To be able to bring a smile to the faces of so many people who were not in a good place is so rewarding. It's all down to the generosity of those kind folk who donate their money and time to help those less fortunate in our communities, I would like to thank each and every one of them."

The numbers attending each club increases daily as word spreads.

And Stephen Coombe had this message for anyone hesitant about popping in: "Always try something once, you'll be welcome here with a big smile, you'll love it."



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TRAVEL TO CHANGE

WORDS & PHOTOS BY
ROBERT WILSON

In August I was lucky to visit Berlin. My other half hails from Germany so I have been fortunate to travel there a few times. I decided each time I go I would see something new. I work as a freelance photographer so I have a particular love for a visual location and even before I arrived I knew I was in for something special. What I got wasn't just a pretty city but also a revaluation of the value of travel.

We spend a lot of time in our usual routine. From work to where we go to relax, it is easy and comfortable to keep to this standard process. It's tough to change but by doing so we can improve in ways perhaps we





don't even imagine. Even with my partner, going to Germany was still daunting. I don't speak the language and not knowing where you are from street to street made me feel like I was back in school for the first time. To go somewhere new does require a level of courage, but it's worth it.

You are giving yourself a chance to learn more. Perhaps it's about the culture of somewhere else, reliving the history or maybe it's just being able to ask for a beer in a different country. It gives you stories to come back with to tell friends and family. You can even use this new found knowledge and experience to help repurpose something new or old in your everyday life. It also has the ability to spark positive emotions and improve your health.

When I travelled to Germany I was not exactly in the highest of spirits. I was feeling creatively unmotivated and physically a little unhealthily. At work my clients have been the same for the last few years and I haven't been pushing to get more and even though I am a born Scotsman I haven't visited nearly enough of my own country.

When you're stuck in your own little bubble it's hard to notice but the moment I was out of it, exploring Berlin, learning about their past - the good and bad - I started to develop plans for my return. I challenged myself to do things when



I was away I would never have done back home, including swimming in the city's beautiful lakes. My ambitions were pushed back to focus on my future, I was never more excited and all I did was leave my usual home of West Dunbartonshire for a week or two.

In the few weeks I've been back I've already worked with new clients and delivered some work, I consider my best in a long time. I have started a little exploring, climbing up a few castles including Dumbarton's very own Rock. I wasn't so surprised but happy with myself by how much happier I felt from challenging myself since my little escape from my normal life.

I know this seems a very personal way of saying I had a good holiday, but it's meant more as a call to some of my fellow Clydesiders to get out there and see more. No need to book a flight to Europe, just visit a new place nearby or try a small hike up some of Scotland's beautiful hills and mountains.

Head out and explore, you never know you may end up coming back with more than you took with you.



'OLD BLOKE GOES RUNNING'

BY PAUL MURDOCH, REVIEW BY MARY IRVINE

"This is neither a diet book nor an exercise regime." So says Paul.

It may at first be thought an irreverent look at 'getting fit'. But on closer inspection it proves to be a valuable step-by-step approach to how anyone can achieve fitness without the rigours of the usual routines.

Paul takes us through his own journey in very readable fashion. I loved the throwaway/tongue in cheek humour. Even the pictures are amusing, especially liked the woolly hat with built-in light. Humour pervades throughout, including amusing anecdotes such as the study of sports watches available.

This is the lighter (no pun intended) side of losing weight and getting fit.

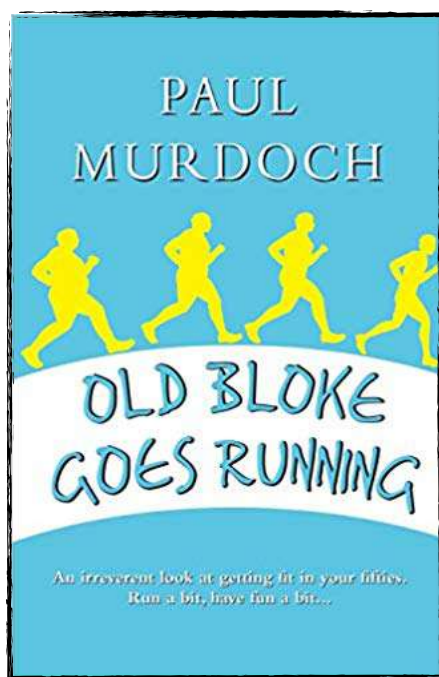
But there is a serious side. Paul stresses the importance of 'seeing', being aware of traffic, conscious of hidden dangers. Preparation of clothes, basic equipment, checking

with your doctor on personal medical conditions – all before a foot is pressed into your personal plan of action. Sound advice and inspirational despite the light-hearted approach.

Paul makes it sound like fun as a whole new world opens up with a change of lifestyle but not on any drastic scale.

Paul also addresses diet but is not precious about it. He still enjoys wine and beer and has a weekly treat - an Indian or Chinese take-away.

Not the strict undoable some books suggest, this just might inspire people to give it a go. And even if you are not inspired you will enjoy the read. Trust me!



Paul, you're not an 'old bloke' at all. You're someone who's having fun and living life. As your mum said: 'You're a long time deid.'

'Old Bloke Goes Running' by Paul Murdoch available on Amazon.co.uk and from the Craft Shop, Mitchell Way, Alexandria.

Check out paulmurdoch.co.uk for information about Paul's other books/musical activities.

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WHAT'S ON

Design Your Own Lantern Sat Nov 30 + Sun Dec 1

Design your own lantern, then take a wander along twinkling candlelight trails and listen out for some of the creatures that only come out after dark. RSPB Loch Lomond, High Wards Farm Gartocharn. £5/£4 for RSPB members. To book email loch.lomond@rspb.org.uk or call 013899830670.

Ben View Santa Dash Sun Dec 1

Run, jog or walk to raise funds. Sunday 1st December at 11am at Levensgrove park. Registration fee applies and includes Santa suit. Adults £13 Under 16's £10 under 5's £5 Contact Morgan on 01389 733030.

Clydesider Creative Café Sat Dec 7

Crafty Christmas on a Budget. Come along and make a gift for family, friends or yourself. All workshops and activities are free. Also enjoy our Christmas Community Kitchen. Alexandria C.E Centre 11am - 3pm

Drop-in Knit & Natter

Golden Friendship Club every Monday 11am – 3pm and Dalmuir Library every Wednesday from 10am – 2pm. Anyone welcome to bring their own project or work with other group members to create various charity projects. New members welcome. £2 pw to cover tea/coffee & biscuits.

Family Support Drop-ins

Wednesdays at Alexandria C.E Centre 12.30 – 1.30pm; Thursdays 3pm – 6.30pm Y-Sort It, Kilbowie Road, Clydebank; Fridays 2pm – 5pm Chest, Heart & Stroke Community Room, Dumbarton

Support for any teenager and young adult (12-26) affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use. One-to-one or group support available, along with fun activities and outings. Call or text Claire on 07387 852186 or see Facebook – ScottishFamiliesYoungPersonsProject

Clydebank Life Story Group

Meet every month on the first Friday of each month, 10 am – 12 noon at Waterfront Church Hall, Clydebank. New members always welcome.

Literary Open Mic Night

First Monday of the month, Balloch House Hotel from 6.30pm – five-minute slots are available on a first come first served basis. All welcome.

Clydebank History Group

Meet at 7.30pm in Morison Memorial Church Hall, Clydebank on the first and third Monday of the month from October – March. Enjoy a series of illustrated talks aimed at creating greater awareness of the history, culture and heritage of Clydebank.

CLYDESIDER Credits

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteer contributors including published and novice poets, authors, journalists, photographers plus local artists, designers, cartoonists and web designers – you are a real joy to work with.

We would also like to thank all our advertisers, our supporting subscribers and funders. You are all helping to shine a light on the good news stories and creative talents in our communities.

About CLYDESIDER

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire. The Clydesider community magazine promotes the positives our area has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery and history and showcases the creative talents, ideas and experiences of local people.

If you would like to get involved and be part of West Dunbartonshire's good news story just drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com

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