



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

Issue 12 Spring 2020

Free

A CLYDESIDER MENTAL WELLBEING SPECIAL

**HOPE, LOVE
& LAUGHTER**

AFTER THE FROST

So cold it eats into my bones
My neck and shoulders freezing
Looking for sunlight to come through
To see this weather easing
From my kitchen window I gaze in hope
Not just for a change in weather
But for the bonds that find me here
Like a constant unseen tether
This prison of my own design
The mistakes I must see and own
Like imagined fields of furrowed earth
My choice of seeds were sown
But the bitter harvest has been gathered in
And prices paid for the sheaf
I can't look back at frozen ground
To see that frosting thief
There is hope now of brightness
I must grasp it while I can
For the new will lend to warmth of heart
And there create a different man
The frost will melt before us
With truth then light to free
Then once again in the mirror's gaze
At peace with the reflection to see.

By Chris Martin





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Cover photo by Caroline Finn



Welcome to CLYDESIDER

I'm writing this introduction to our first issue of 2020 two days after TV celebrity Caroline Flack took her own life. She was 40 years old.

As far as I'm aware Caroline had no connection with West Dunbartonshire. But it is her tragic death and the sensationalised reporting of her life that connects her to this issue of Clydesider, because we start our year of reporting on all aspects of health and well-being by focusing on mental and emotional wellness.

On Valentines Day, as I was pulling the magazine together I tweeted 'reading all the content for Issue 12 has felt like reading one beautiful love letter after another to and from our community.' It did – and still does.

I felt hopeful we could make a difference by offering our community a real alternative to sensationalised bad news.

That we could look at a really complex and difficult topic such as mental health, which takes its toll on at least 1 in 4 people in West Dunbartonshire, and the stories of positivity and recovery that local people willingly shared would help others facing their own struggles.

Then Caroline died by suicide and I was filled with doubt. Social media seemed so full of hate and anger, the tabloids went into overdrive to point the finger of blame elsewhere and the TV continued to pump out mind-numbing drivel. What could one tiny community magazine do against this opinion-shaping juggernaut that is 'the media'?

But sometimes it is only tragedy that can make us take a moment and question our personal role in a multi-billion pound industry, which thrives on weakness and division.

Because anyone who consumes media – newspapers, magazines, TV, social media – makes a choice about what they read, click on and watch.

And the more that sensational headlines sell papers or clickbait news, the more adverts are sold. This ends up in more vulnerable people being hounded by ruthless 'journalists' looking for the scoop of their career. We've been here before – too many times – but we do have the power to change it.

So I'm truly proud that Clydesider is trying to do news differently and we are trusted by our community to tell their stories without exploiting vulnerabilities.

And it is thanks to our wonderful volunteer contributors that Issue 12 is packed with so many brave stories, poems and photography full of hope and love.

Enjoy!



**Amanda
Eleftheriades-Sherry
Editor**



CLYDESIDER NEWS 2020

A Year of Wellbeing

Our focus for the magazine, our Creative Cafes and community events throughout 2020 will be on all aspects of health and wellness – kicking off with mental and emotional well-being.

Future issues will look at physical health and fitness, impact of place and environment on well-being and in the run up to Christmas we'll be looking at financial wellness.

If you have an idea for an article or photo story for these issues, or you're interested in becoming a volunteer contributor we'd love to hear from you. Email amanda@clydesider.org or call 01389 381110.

Digital 2020

Our new interactive website – www.clydesider.org - aims to be the go-to information space for community activity in WD.

As well as being able to read articles, download back copies and check out our events and training there are plenty of ways for local community groups to share their details, activities and services to our Local Directory - www.clydesider.org/local-directory.

Or browse what is happening in WD and add your events to our What's On calendar at www.clydesider.org/whats-on.

Got a story? Visit the Community News section to send us some details, we'll share your story with the world.

Clydesider Dates For Your Diary

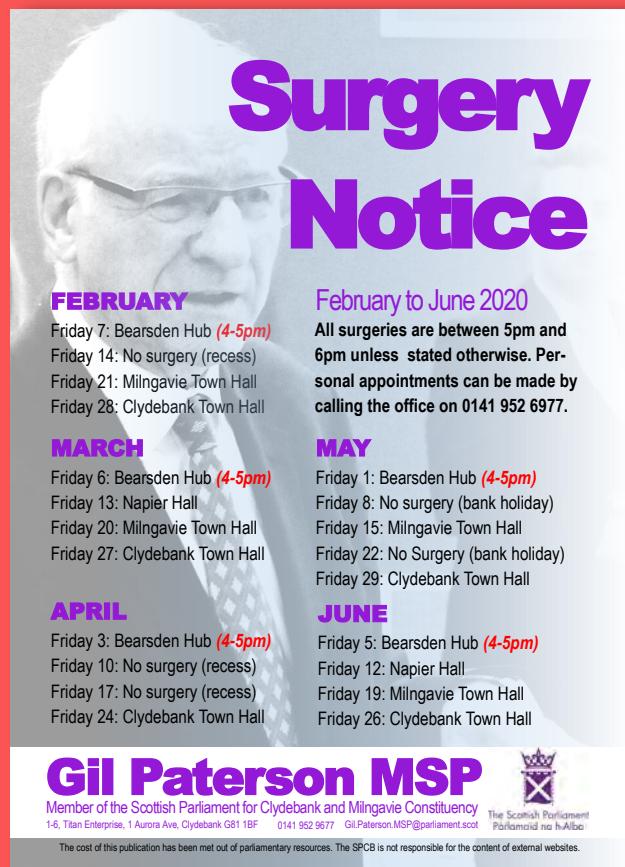
14 March – Mindful Photo Walk starting from Alexandria Library at 11am

28 March – 'Creating Well Being' community event in Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick 11am – 3.30pm

18 April – Mindful Photo Walk (venue tbc)

20 May – Power of the Positive Festival, Centre 81, 11am – 3pm

Sign up for our monthly digital newsletter at www.clydesider.org/newsletter or follow us on social media for Clydesider updates.



Surgery Notice

FEBRUARY

Friday 7: Bearsden Hub (4-5pm)
Friday 14: No surgery (recess)
Friday 21: Milngavie Town Hall
Friday 28: Clydebank Town Hall

MARCH

Friday 6: Bearsden Hub (4-5pm)
Friday 13: Napier Hall
Friday 20: Milngavie Town Hall
Friday 27: Clydebank Town Hall

APRIL

Friday 3: Bearsden Hub (4-5pm)
Friday 10: No surgery (recess)
Friday 17: No surgery (recess)
Friday 24: Clydebank Town Hall

MAY

Friday 1: Bearsden Hub (4-5pm)
Friday 8: No surgery (bank holiday)
Friday 15: Milngavie Town Hall
Friday 22: No Surgery (bank holiday)
Friday 29: Clydebank Town Hall

JUNE

Friday 5: Bearsden Hub (4-5pm)
Friday 12: Napier Hall
Friday 19: Milngavie Town Hall
Friday 26: Clydebank Town Hall

Gil Paterson MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency
1-6, Titan Enterprise, 1 Aurora Ave, Clydebank G81 1BF 0141 952 9677 Gil.Paterson.MSP@parliament.scot
The Scottish Parliament
Parlament na h-Alba

The cost of this publication has been met out of parliamentary resources. The SPCB is not responsible for the content of external websites.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

From life drawing to jam-making to mindful photo walks and den-building, there's no shortage of creative activities happening across West Dunbartonshire as part of this year's Scottish Mental Health and Arts Festival.

It's the first year West Dunbartonshire has been represented in the national programme and local community groups, charities, churches, NHS and WDC teams are working together to make sure there is something for everyone.

The national festival, running from May 4 - 24, taps into community

creativity to challenge preconceived ideas about mental health. A full programme of local activities will be published closer to the time.

Clydesider will host a 'Power of the Positive' Festival on May 20 in Whitecrook C.E Centre as our contribution to the local creative festivities.

It will be an opportunity for local groups to showcase their creative work and activities and share ideas on how positivity can help well-being.

Follow us on social media or sign up for our monthly newsletter at www.clydesider.org/newsletter for updates. If you would like to be part of the event please drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com



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KNIT & NATTER

WORDS & PHOTOS
BY CAROLINE FINN



Knitting is not an obvious therapy for anxiety or depression but mixed with a healthy dose of blethering it can prove the perfect tonic.

Two Dalmuir-based 'Knit n Natter' groups offer this combination of creativity and companionship on a weekly basis.

Both groups are labours of love, run by local artist Mags Reid. "I'd always wanted to run a Knit n Natter group, I never thought I'd be running two. They feed my creative passion and I get to socialise with other adults.

"I really miss this after giving up work when my youngest son was born in 1990. I found being a lone parent and carer too demanding and had no option but to give up my job.

"We started slowly with just a couple of members and it gradually increased."

Now 18 people attend the group in Dalmuir Library and 16 come to Golden Friendships Club, a handful of members go to both but each group is very different.

"It keeps me sane to have my own free time away from my caring role, it's creative respite," Mags explained.

The groups are creative, flexible and welcoming, anyone can go along and do their own thing, no-one is pressured to do anything or to talk if they don't want to.

Mags said: "We've all lived different lives with different struggles, no one judges anybody. We always say nattering is just as important as knitting, it's the company that means the most to a lot of our members.

"You can pop in for an hour once a month or stay for the full four hours every week, we don't put any demands on anyone, come as little or as often as you like and you will always receive a warm welcome."

Maureen Spratt, a regular for nearly a year, finds the groups help her mental health. "I really struggled with anxiety, I couldn't use public transport on my own, I didn't like leaving the house – and I couldn't knit.

"I feel quite proud I'm part of this wee group. I used to sit in the house all day, for years I never went further than the local shop, so this has got me out of the house."

"My family moved away, my daughter lives in Australia and sometimes I felt I was no use any more, so this really helped me."

Mags added: "Maureen's family is really proud of her having all these interests, they're settled in their mind and not having to worry about her being on her own."

When Liz joined the Golden Friendships group she hadn't knitted for 40 years as rheumatoid arthritis made it too painful.

Mags let her try some bamboo needles which Liz found easier to grip. Now she just takes her time knitting and has breaks in between for a good natter.

Like Maureen, Liz suffered from anxiety and agoraphobia and sometimes stills struggles with panic attacks when she leaves the house to visit new places.

She enjoys how supportive the group is and is open about her anxiety: "I think it makes it a lot easier if the

people in the club know you're struggling so they can support you.

"If I'm around people who don't know it makes me feel worse and I worry more that I'll have a panic attack but if they know, I feel a lot more comfortable."

Fighting isolation is one of the main reasons Mags started the groups. She said: "I thought there must be people sitting at home alone knitting, they could come here and have company instead."

The biggest hurdle for many in the group is coming in the door that first time, worried they won't be accepted.

"It doesn't matter if you can't knit just come along, sit and listen, have a cup of tea, it's better than sitting in the house on your own," Mags reassures.

It's always difficult to go into an established group especially when suffering with issues such as anxiety or depression but everyone in the group speaks of the benefits of having a supportive social circle.

Ann said: "I still get depressed, I still get anxious but knitting is definitely good for me I know that, it gives me a sense of purpose."



Each of the members joined for different reasons.

Christine Brennan joined when she was new to the area. "I moved home and I'm so glad I came along to the group, it was an easy way to meet new people, make new friendships and socialise.

"We have a shared interest in knitting and I love being inspired by getting involved in charity knitting projects, learning new things has given me a new purpose."

The groups have worked on different projects for a variety of charities ranging from fidget mitts for dementia sufferers to yarn bombing for an event at Bowling Harbour, to hats for premature babies and trauma teddies for Police Scotland. They also donated hats to 'Hats for the Homeless', raised over £460 for Erskine Hospital selling knitted poppies and £500 for Golden Friendships Charity.

Maureen said: "My family were so proud of me when they heard about the money we raised for Erskine, we had such a nice day out taking the cheque to them and getting shown around. We all worked hard knitting the poppies and it gives you a sense of purpose that you've made something that helps someone else."

Many of the members enjoy the charity projects as no matter what's going on in their own lives they feel

a real sense of achievement when creating something to help others.

Mags said: "The charity projects give us something to work towards, it's such a feel-good factor knowing you're helping people, it puts things into perspective, especially if you're having a hard day yourself."

The Knit n Natter groups meet up for special events, go on days out together and encourage each other to be creative and brave in a gentle and supportive way.

Christine summed them up: "We all inspire each other creatively, everyone is so friendly, it feels like a nice safe place to be. It helps me feel part of something, we all help one another, like a little family."



If you fancy a knit and natter pop into Dalmuir Library on a Wednesday from 10am-2pm or Golden Friendships Club on Monday from 11am-3pm.

SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE EPILEPSY SUPPORT GROUP

BY AIDAN MACDONALD



Epilepsy affects one in every 100 people in the UK and every day eight Scots are diagnosed with the condition.

Despite the impact it has on the lives of over 55,000 people in Scotland there is still a certain stigma surrounding it.

The West Dunbartonshire Epilepsy Support Group wants to break these unfair stereotypes.

They regularly raise awareness of the condition while also providing a vital support network for those in the area who are suffering from the condition.

Raymond Hussain, secretary of the group, said: "When I was first diagnosed it was an extremely

isolating experience and I was desperate to find others to speak to who had the same problems that I did, and the group allowed me to do that."

Some of the local group explained that when they were younger it was something to be embarrassed about and they were scared to tell their peers for fear of judgement leaving them feeling isolated and very alone.

They also felt that it had potentially led to discrimination when applying for or being interviewed for jobs.

This is why the group is not just a safe space for epilepsy sufferers to discuss their lives and the challenges it brings; it also exists to promote awareness about the reality of living with the illness.

Brian Rocks, chairman of the group, said: "In the past we have held awareness sessions at local football games, and have provided information to emergency services on how to recognize a seizure."

And he is keen to expand the size of the group as the more members they have the more chance they have of ending the stigma around epilepsy.

The group meet on the first Monday of every month, at Clyde House, Kilbowie Road, Clydebank, from 10am to noon.

For more information and regular updates follow them on Facebook or email westdunbartonshireepilepsygroup@outlook.com

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SINGING FOR YOUR LIFE

BY ANGELA CLARK
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARIANNA
PHOTOGRAPHY UK

Suffering a lifetime of anxiety, low self esteem and depression eventually brought aspiring Alexandria singer Emily Fraser to her knees, to the point she wanted to take her own life.

Instead she took the courageous step of contacting her doctor.

Emily said: "I knew I had to do something. I didn't realise I was suffering from depression, I was always a worrier I just thought it was my personality.

"It started getting a lot worse when I went to University in Aberdeen. I was studying law and German and struggled throughout my time there.

"I finished my studies and unfortunately there was nobody taking on new lawyers, so I decided to come back home."

Back living at her mother's house things just got worse for Emily. She struggled to find a meaningful job and

eventually found herself going full days without getting out of bed.

Her mum even tried physically dragging her out of the house and into the car.

"If my Mum managed to get me into the car she would take me to the shops and when we arrived I would stay in the car as I was always too self conscious to go in," Emily remembers.

"At night I would go upstairs into my room and sit on the end of my bed for hours with my thoughts going around and around.

"When I think back, I can't even remember what I was thinking about, I was just worrying uncontrollably about stuff that wasn't even anything to do with me. And then the next day I was physically exhausted."

She began to experience suicidal thoughts which frightened her into seeking professional help.

Her doctor diagnosed her with depression and stress and put her in touch with a local organisation,

Stepping Stones, who provide counselling and support to people suffering from mental health related issues.

Emily said: "I'm so grateful to Stepping Stones, they made a huge difference to my life and the way I think about myself. This is down to a weekly social support group I attend and my cognitive behavioral therapy.

"This helped me to identify negative thought patterns and I learned how to separate myself from these negative thoughts and understand it's not me, it's just a thought I'm having.

"I then challenge those negative thoughts and replace them with positive thoughts and the way I think about myself."

Emily's new positive thinking has changed her outlook on life and helped improve her confidence and self esteem.

The support encouraged her to follow her dreams and she is now pursuing a career in the music industry, something she never believed was possible.

She explained: "Music has always been in my life. I sang with a youth choir for many years.

"It was always a form of therapy for me, whether it's playing, listening or writing it, but I never allowed myself to believe I could have a music career.

"Now I have done and continue to do a lot of work on my mental health, my sense of self worth and confidence in my abilities has massively increased."

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Tapping into her creative talents took Emily thousands of miles from her Alexandria home.

Through a friend in Singapore she got involved with the 'Anxiety Bullshit Busters' social media group. This resulted in an invite to sing at a VIP coaching event in Bali last October.

Emily said: "It was so exciting and such a huge adventure for me going there on my own."

She has also sung at several mental health related events, busked at Braehead shopping centre to raise money for cancer support and successfully auditioned to join the Glasgow Eurythmics tribute band as a backing vocalist.

In January one of her first original songs 'The Voice of Your Soul', which she wrote and performed at the event in Bali, reached number 26 in the Scottish New Music Global Chart Top 40.

She is now helping to organise an event for the Scottish Mental Health and Arts Festival to help others experiencing the dark place she was once in.

Her songs are available on Bandcamp and Soundcloud
emfraser.bandcamp.com/releases

If you need someone to talk to you can contact Stepping Stones on 0141 941 2929 or self refer online or speak to your GP.

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MP ADVICE SURGERIES



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- 1st Friday of the month (10am-11am)

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)

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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.

LEARNING TO LOVE

BY AMANDA ELEFTHERIADES

"If you plant a lettuce and it doesn't grow, well you wouldn't blame the lettuce, would you?"

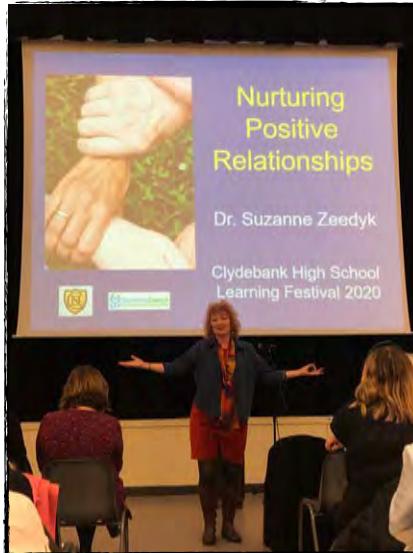
Speaking to a packed hall of teachers and health care professionals in Clydebank High School, James Docherty's analogy doesn't miss the mark.

The representative for Scottish Violence Reduction Unit has his audience's attention.

And in the hour that follows James holds that focus as he gently shares his personal knowledge of what happens to 'lettuces' such as himself, who are blamed, stigmatised and punished from early childhood by those who should be their protectors and caregivers.

A child victim and witness of domestic violence, James found no safe haven or support in the education system, instead he met Derek, Mark and Brian in his primary class 'bad corner'.

The group provided each other with the protection and support that was missing in their homes and school. Today James is the only one able to tell their tale – the other three casualties of a multitude of systems which failed them from birth.



"Adverse childhood events (ACEs) don't happen in a vacuum, if you are looking at a kid experiencing adversity it's likely their parents were once that kid," James explains.

"You don't pick your environment, you are born into it. Kids witnessing domestic violence are not just witnesses – they are experiencing it. But you need to get it right for the parents in order to get it right for the children."

Hopefully the 'Nurturing People and Building Resilient Communities' Learning Festival will herald a new approach to tackling the inequalities of birth which have left a long-lasting mark on too many children and adults in West Dunbartonshire.

Because it is hope – collective hope – that James came here to talk about. "It's never about blame, it's just about a search for understanding.

"It takes a community to heal. Our job isn't to change people, it's to love ... them."

The landmark initiative, pioneered by Clydebank High and West Dunbartonshire Resilience Hub, brought together 600+ teachers, health workers and community representatives for a series of talks and workshops.

Attendees also had time to browse 40+ information stalls covering every stage of child, adult and community

development and engagement in West Dunbartonshire and beyond.

But this was no conventional event as Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, the first speaker of the afternoon alluded to.

The research scientist and founder of 'Connected Baby', specialises in childhood attachment. She congratulated the school on providing a 'community of leadership for the country.'

And introduced 'sabre tooth tigers' and 'teddy bears' to the conversation – her interpretation of how a child's brain and body react to positive and negative stresses – reactions which can stay with them for life.

Like James she covered big themes – love, resilience, nurture and trauma – and both speakers brought tears to the

eyes of some in the audience who doubtless recognised children and young people who had passed through their care.

But their joint message was one of moving on, not looking backwards or sideways to point fingers of blame at those who had meted out these punishments or failed to care in the past.

Instead they both advocated reaching forward to current and future generations, offering them something better than their parents and grandparents had been given by an education system designed to grind out individuality and inquisitive thought.

A system, which instead prepared young minds and bodies for decades of obedient back-breaking labour in coal mines, shipyards and factories.

She added: "We don't just need system change, we need culture change. We have put a lot of money into facilitating childhood suffering. Now we must not go into denial but start talking about what we need to do to change this."

She concluded with five actions – or non-actions – for her audience to muse on: "It's not about doing; it's about wondering. You can't fix it, you can't control it, you CAN help."

And she urged everyone to take a stand, have an opinion and join the conversation.



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CREATIVITY & PURPOSE

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY BRIAN WRIGHT

"In 2018, I was diagnosed with an aggressive and invasive blood cancer.

The growth had already penetrated into the bone marrow of my spine and had become a serious threat to my central nervous system.

The blood treatment was decided to be an intense chemotherapy regime over six months at the Vale Hospital. My brain and spinal fluid would also be flooded with specialist chemotherapy during two in-patient spells at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

As if that wasn't bad enough, this happened at a time I was already receiving mental health treatment through the Stepping Stones organisation for other issues that had left me in a sense of despair.

To survive this new challenge I

understood that a light of purpose was needed to fight the darkness.

Over the 24 weeks of out-patient treatment at the Vale, I was also hospitalised eight times. Four times as an emergency with sepsis. Twice each for assessment and specialist nervous system treatment.

That didn't leave much time for anything other than a desire for survival. After it my spine was damaged. I couldn't bend. I walked with a stick.

Treatment over, but a few long months ahead before I'd know if it had been successful, a clear sense of purpose became all the more essential.

It began with 15 minutes a day tidying my front garden. I could only do it on my hands and knees. The tidy was overdue. I had moved house a few months before falling unwell.

However, there was also my plot in the back garden. It was a mess. Overgrown with horsetail weed, it contained a few shrubs and a crumbling crazy paving path. Interestingly, I did not look at it in despair.

I began to find myself formulating a plan. I wanted somewhere to be a haven of peace and tranquility. My own wee Zen Garden. I had found the purpose I needed.

I drew up a plan, ordered materials online, and gradually increased my 15 minutes a day. Still working on my hands and knees I began tackling the weed problem.

Online orders arrived. Plants and compost. Concrete and cement. Decorative effects.

Every day I got out of bed.

Every day I had my purpose. My challenge.

Every day it took a step further towards completion.

That sense of purpose led me through spring, summer and autumn last year.

My scan results were positive. The chemotherapy had been successful. No more treatment needed. The garden project was almost complete.

I'll finish the work this year. A river path to lay flowing under the wee bridge I bought, I still have to work on my hands and knees but I have my Zen Garden.

Purpose and creativity were my pathway through darkness."

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CLYDESIDER Community Wall of Fame

Last autumn we launched our first crowdfunder to help set up a Clydesider membership scheme. Thanks to your support we raised over £2,000 plus an additional £200 for a local Community Action Fund.

We would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who helped us reach this target - your name is now on our Clydesider Community Wall of Fame below.

The next step is to launch our membership scheme so we can keep Clydesider free for all to enjoy. We want this to be a 'pay what you can' scheme - the cost of a coffee or a pint once a month from enough readers would ensure our survival.

Please help shape what Clydesider membership looks like by completing the survey on the opposite page.



Help Shape Clydesider's Future

After three years of publishing Clydesider magazine and printing 10,000 free copies of each issue we need to ask our readers to help our long-term survival. We want to keep the magazine free for all to enjoy so we're developing a Clydesider membership.

We want the membership to suit our readers, you can help us by completing this short survey. Please return to 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG by April 17 to be entered in a prize draw to win £30.

1. Are you a regular Clydesider reader?

Every issue	Most issues
Occasionally	First Timer

2. Do you follow us on social media?

(Please circle all that apply)

Facebook Twitter Instagram

3. How likely would you be to make a small regular payment to help us continue publishing a print version of Clydesider?

Definitely	Very Likely
Likely	Possibly
Not Likely	Definitely Not

4. Would any of the following encourage you to become a paying Clydesider member?

- Receive a copy of the magazine posted direct to your door.
More likely Less likely Unchanged
- Receive a loyalty discount card for local shops & businesses.
More likely Less likely Unchanged
- Voting rights on Clydesider content & themes.
More likely Less likely Unchanged
- A percentage of your membership going to a community fund & you vote on how it is spent.
More likely Less likely Unchanged
- Clydesider Goodies – eg Clydesider car sticker, t-shirt etc
More likely Less likely Unchanged
- Exclusive online Members-only content.
More likely Less likely Unchanged

5. How regularly would you be willing to make a payment?

Monthly	Annually
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6. Which payment options would you be happy to use?

(Please circle all that apply)

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Contact details for the prize draw:

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Would you like to receive our online newsletter? YES NO

Thank you

POETIC JUSTICE

BY AMANDA ELEFTHERIADES
PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEPHEN WATT



Good writers find inspiration in the unlikeliest of places, but there can be few who have discovered their muse from a knife attack.

Yet this is what happened to Dumbarton poet Stephen Watt, who used this traumatic experience to uncover his inner creativity.

Stephen was just 19 when he was mugged twice within a few months, in the second attack his assailant held a knife to his throat.

Shortly before the first assault Stephen had started writing about every day sounds and smells he encountered at home and work.

"I was lying in my bed, hearing a bin lorry going down the street – I wrote something about it.

"A week afterwards I got mugged on the train by a drug addict, then the same thing happened four or five

months later – this time he held a blade at my neck.

"My counsellor encouraged me to keep writing, said that it would be therapeutic – so I did."

It was then Stephen discovered poetry ran in his family.

"My mum told me my grandfather was a poet and she found a book he had written in 1934 when he was 19 – it was a really nice link to my past and I never looked back from there."

Stephen dedicated years to learning his craft, submitting poems to magazines, books, competitions and self-publishing some of his work before getting his big break 11 years later.

"When I turned 30 I wanted to give myself a new challenge and thought about reading my poetry live. I found this spoken word night up in Partick.

"I wanted to watch but they said just come and have a go – it was October 2010 – and that was me off, the journey began."

He quickly discovered that reading his poems aloud to an audience gave them a whole new life.

Within months of that first Glasgow gig Stephen beat 8,000 poets to be crowned the champion of the Poetry Rivals Slam in Peterborough. The prize was the publication of 'Spit' - his first collection of spoken word poetry.

There followed a series of awards and firsts as he looked for novel approaches and outlets for his creative talents.

It was while living in Old Kilpatrick, almost directly under the Erskine Bridge, that Stephen became aware of the impact poor mental health has on the lives of so many people.

"I got speaking to people like Pat and Jim Byrne and Ann Morgan and found out about the Butterfly Action project, it was a real awakening for me."

Attending mental health first aid training the stories he heard inspired him to explore the complexities and pressures faced by many young people.

And in 2016 his second poetry collection 'Optograms' was published.

This booklet is filled with marginalised voices, each accompanied by a helpline number for any reader his words may connect with.

Reaching new audiences, particularly those who are maybe unlikely to come into contact with poetry, became a passion for Stephen leading him into some unconventional places for a poet – including the grounds of his beloved Dumbarton F.C.

After his poem 'Boghead' came third in a national football poetry competition, the Sons fan hit on the novel idea of being a poet-in-residence for his local club.

He began petitioning the Club to let him share his poetry with the fans and in 2016 they finally agreed.

"By using football as a way to reach people I wanted to break down some of the barriers people have to poetry and

try to change mind sets about it," he explained.

Another first for Stephen was his poetic crime novel 'Fairy Rock,' launched at last year's Bloody Scotland crime writing festival and described as the 'world's first crime novel written entirely in verse'.

Although not set locally – the title refers to Ailsa Craig – Stephen continues to find inspiration in the sights, sounds and smells he encounters every day in his home town.

Copies of 'Fairy Rock' are available by contacting 'Stephen Watt Poet' on Facebook or from Red Squirrel Press at <https://www.redsquirrelpress.com/product-page/fairy-rock-stephen-watt>



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CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

BY CHARLIE SHERRY

The theme for this issue's photo competition was 'Friends' and it seems the good folk of WD are a friendly lot, going by the number of entries received.

This is now our 12th photo competition and with each issue the bar is set a little higher with the quality of entries submitted.

This time first prize goes to Roslynn Snape for her quirky shadow shot. I love the thought that has gone into the composition, how the wee dog seems almost puzzled by its shadow, side by side with its master.

And of course there can be no more loyal a friend than your dog, which fits exactly with our competition theme. Great work Roslynn.

The first of our joint runners-up is Stephen Mahoney's photograph of two friends, shall we say in their more advanced years, out fishing for the day.

When I first saw this shot it brought a smile to my face. I have the feeling Stephen captured an image of two lifelong friends enjoying something they have done together for years; getting away from it all, enjoying each other's company and sharing a yarn or two. Well done Stephen.

William Stewart's photograph of his two grandsons enjoying a paddle in Loch Lomond on their first visit to Scotland, brought back great memories of my own childhood friendships when it seemed we didn't have a care in the world.

The wee intimate moment William captured seems to encapsulate everything about friendship and he

Clydesider Issue 12

deservedly picks up joint runner-up prize, congratulations, William.

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

The theme for Issue 13's photo competition is 'Wellness' entries to be emailed to clydesidercomp@gmail.com by May 1 2020. See page 39 for competition rules.

Happy snapping folks.



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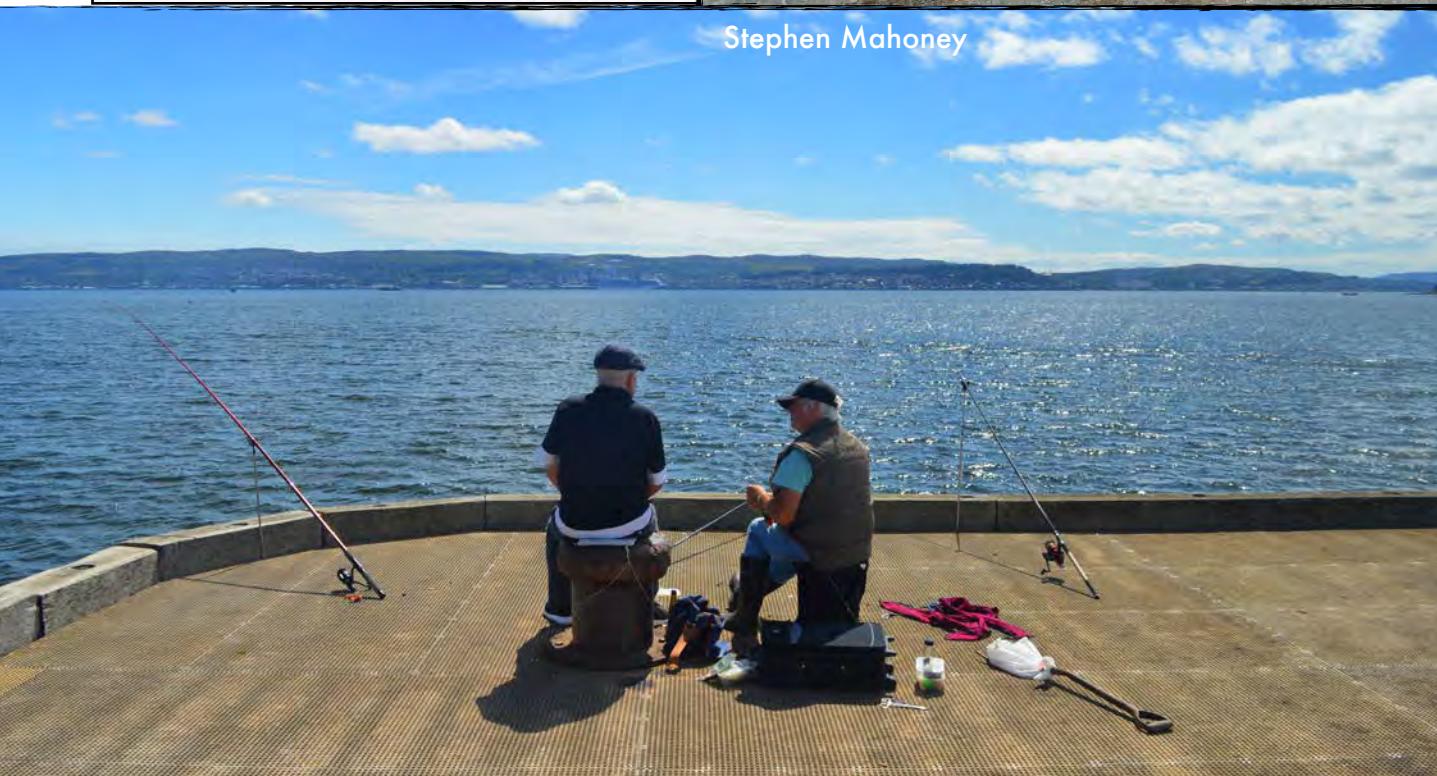
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Stephen Mahoney





LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

BY CHARLIE SHERRY

"Ten years ago I realised my relationship with alcohol had changed from maybe having one too many on a night out, to sneaking up to the local Spar for my carryout at times when I was least likely to meet someone I knew.

I had become totally withdrawn, a nervous wreck. I would then sit in my flat alone, drinking and feeling sorry for myself.

This pattern continued for the last 18 months of what I now call my 'drinking to escape myself' period.

Most folk who know me now would see a sociable, out-going person who sometimes talks too much. However, back then I had lost all confidence in myself and life, I saw myself as one of life's losers.

At the time I thought I was just another alky, I didn't know I was drinking copious amounts to escape from myself and my ever increasing negative outlook.

One morning after another stealth mission to the Spar, instead of getting tore into the eight cans of Stella as soon as I got back to my flat, something clicked in my mind.

For hours I sat and stared at the cans, with a mantra just repeating itself over and over in my head, 'this has to stop, one way or another, you can't go on existing like this.' I'm not afraid to say, I cried my eyes out.

I now believe my body was telling me it had had enough, both physically and emotionally, what I have now come to know as hitting my own personal rock-bottom.

Instead of drinking those cans of Stella, I emptied each one down the sink. As each drained away it reaffirmed my decision to reclaim my life back.

Initially I attended AA meetings to help with my alcohol cessation and, to be honest, to get me out the flat. Sitting alone without drink to 'help' me escape was a whole new set of horrors.

However, it did not take me too long to realise I was not an alcoholic, I'm not saying drink was not a problem, obviously it was.

I began to realise that turning to alcohol was a symptom of what was really happening with me; depression, which in turn had led to a complete lack of self-esteem, leaving me with no sense of self-worth and no confidence whatsoever.

Without even knowing the term, alcohol had been my way of 'self-medication' but instead of giving me any relief, it just dragged me down even further.

I knew I had to get my head sorted and over time, thankfully I have achieved that to a point where I have begun to like myself again. To me that was a major achievement as I hated who I had become back then.

For seven years I did not consume one drop of alcohol, I'm convinced I would not still be on this planet if I had. Now though, I have a 'normal' relationship with drink and enjoy the odd beer or two, never to excess

though.

My life has completely turned round from those dark days. Now the future seems to be full of endless possibilities as opposed to the vision of a dark tunnel I was staring down back then.

Some folk reading this may be going through their own dark period or know a friend or family member who is. As someone who has been on a similar journey my advice is quite simple - you are not alone. If you do not have immediate family or friends to turn to there is a list of support organisations on page 44 who will be more than happy to help.

I completely understand how daunting it feels to reach out for help, initially it scared me to death. However, trust me, it will be the best move you can make.

Probably the best way I can describe how I felt once I began to get my head together again is that rather than living a lifestyle I'm positive would have led to my death, I started one that allowed me to begin living again.

You can too."

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FREEDOM

LEAVING BEHIND ORDINARY

A PHOTO ESSAY BY KATIE KENNEDY

FB @K.K.PHOTOGRAPHY9 INSTA K.K.PHOTOGRAPHY09

Katie has been volunteering with Clydesider for nearly a year and become a valuable member of our team, helping with everything from photography to distribution to transport, even collecting pine cones!

We first crossed paths when she entered – and won – the photography competition in Issue 7 with a stunning photo of Loch Lomond taken on her phone.

Last year she signed up for our photojournalism workshops and, I think, surprised herself by attending each week and helping to take photos of our Walkin' Talkin' events.

Katie, like many of our volunteers, has been dealt more than her fair share of life's blows. We're privileged she feels Clydesider offers a safe outlet for her creative skills because she is a talented photographer and it is behind her camera lens that Katie comes to life. These 10 photos and 10 words capture her journey so far.

HEALING





NATURE

JOY





OPPORTUNITIES

TALENT

ATMOSPHERE





FAITH

HOPE

OVERFLOW





WHO AM I?

BY GRAHAM MORGAN

"Well the chapter 'Doorstep Sales Man' in my book START, describes that fairly well and, slightly to my regret, concludes that I am pretty ordinary. I am however, a great fan of the ordinary and the extraordinary in the ordinary.

We have so many stories to tell in all our lives and I am privileged in my day job to meet so many people and hear so many different stories.

I work for the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and am

always touring the country meeting people; mainly people with experience of mental illness, but also people with learning disabilities and autism and other conditions and what I hear and witness could fill many books.

I am also part of the team reviewing our mental health legislation. Meeting people who, like me, have experienced compulsory treatment is humbling and makes me wish so much that we can come to helpful conclusions with the review.

I would love one day to be able to just write for a living but that might be just a bit too inward looking. Lacking a wide imagination, I tend to write about myself and what I think and feel and see around me.

Mainly I talk of my experience of schizophrenia, but I also talk of my friends and family and the natural world. At the moment I am slightly obsessed by the call of the oyster catchers and curlews on my daily walk by the Clyde with Dash the Dog.

START took me five years to complete, a story not heard often; that of being treated against your will for many, many, years and yet at the same time, thinking that treatment might keep you alive.

But also a story of love, and the wonder of a new relationship when I had abandoned any hope that might happen again.

I am currently working on another book or maybe two books; the sequel to START. Life with Wendy and her

young children, the beginning of a new life with the myriad different beginnings that involves but also endings.

The end of her Dad's life and also my Dad's life. I am trying to work out the book's shape and what I am trying to tell people, nothing new; that death is a very ordinary event as it comes to all of us and yet at the same time is extraordinary, that even when life feels filled with tragedy you still put the wash on, cook the meals, put the bins out.

And that is who I am really, another of those extraordinary ordinary people.

Neither writer, nor worker, but Wendy's boyfriend, the one who says very little but grins all the time when he is in the company of her friends. The one who gets told off for constantly trying to plan the next meal and the next food shop.

The one wee Charlotte loves to cuddle up to and admire because she too wants to be a writer when she grows up and the one her twin James likes to tease with that wicked sense of humour he has.

The one who has lived through some terrible times and now, in late middle age, has a new life that fills him with wonder which he wants to tell people about.

The one who posts all the time on Twitter and Facebook about those

curlews and the crows, the rain showers and the smell of the shore when the tide goes out.

The one, who whenever he is alone, says into the silence of the house that he wants to die and yet nowadays dares to hope that one day he will forget to say or think that and instead will really believe that life is all about this wonderful living stuff we do."

Graham Morgan will be in conversation with Robin Lloyd-Jones in Dumbarton Library on March 24 from 7pm. This is a free event.

Graham Morgan has an MBE for services to mental health and is the Author of *START* (by Fledgling Press) a memoir of compulsory treatment, love and the natural world. (Available from Amazon and Waterstones on line.) He can be found at @GrahamM23694298 on twitter and at Graham Morgan – author; on facebook or at the Scottish Booktrust Live Literature database at <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/authors/graham-morgan>



Remember to Follow Clydesider



CLYDESIDERS' TIPS FOR WELLBEING

We put a call out across our social media for well-being tips and you shared some great ideas and solutions. Thank you.

For Alison McInally, 'Lisboa 1967', Sharon Reid and 'Loch Lomond Wild Art' a good walk and connecting with nature was the best way to look after their wellbeing.

Alison said: "Walking groups are good. Nothing beats a good walk for stress and the people are lovely. You're nobody's mum, wife, gran, sister, you are yourself."

And 'Loch Lomond Wild Art' commented: "Nature definitely helps me cope with trauma of losing my dad...being out in nature, seeing the sights, hearing the sounds and smelling everything around me makes me feel alive, amongst the chaos we all face there is so much to be thankful for."

Nikki Rose agreed: "I always head for the sea when I need a boost. The waves, the air, the massive expanse of sky. In all kinds of weather, any time of day."

Outdoor activity is also a must for local author Paul Murdoch who enjoys running and bird watching along the Leven.

Volunteering provides Liz Daly with the feel-good factor: "I've found volunteering to be very helpful in promoting mental health wellbeing, you have something completely different to do and think about. So not only does the community you are volunteering for benefit, you do too. Win-win!"

For Emma Saanen, Susan Laws and Sharon Reid creativity helps their well-being. Emma said: "Everybody needs an outlet, a way of cutting loose, of expressing themselves. In a world that forces you to mask your identity, find a place to be you. For me, it is through my shamanic and artistic work."

Local artist Jenna Ferguson agrees, sharing on her Insta account "a few hours of painting comes as such a relief and helps me recharge my batteries ready to return to family life and taking care of two little ones."

Morag Kerr and Claire MacDonald believe finding people to relate to is important. Claire said: "Sometimes talking about problems, sometimes not. It doesn't matter as long as you care about each other and are able to pick each other up when needed."

Margaret Finnie found a keep fit choir helped her when she needed it most. She said: "After my husband passed away suddenly, I joined #danceSing. Singing, dancing and making new friends has been a godsend. A choir that keeps us fit."

A regular fitness routine is also important to Clydebank judo coach Paul McGuinness, he recommended: "Start one thing at a time, do it once a week until it becomes a habit, then start adding to it. If you're exercising you start to eat better and feel a difference mentally."

Phil Dawson recommends the local Walking Football clubs and Levengrove Parkrun give the thumbs up to a run in the park (see page 46 for details).

Local alcohol support charity DACA said: "Doing activities in the outdoors connects people to natural and urban environments which gets the heart and lungs pumping and the brain firing on all cylinders."

And Skylark IX Trust recommended getting out on the water.

One of Clydesider's top tips is to choose a healthy news diet. Watching and reading too much negative news can make you feel stressed and helpless. Our recommended reads - 'You Are What Your Read' by Jodie Jackson and Positive News magazine.

We hope you found some inspiration in these tips to give yourself time to do whatever works for you.

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THE SHANGHAI EXPRESS

BY ALLY CRAIG

"Just recently, I have been going to a wee gathering every Wednesday night, with like-minded individuals who share a sort of common purpose.

We are all people who have experienced difficulties, to a varying degree, with alcohol and the causes and effects associated with the various problems we have experienced in our own individual ways.

The group is an extremely diverse one, ranging in age from teenage to borderline pensioner and from an equally diverse social background.

We all go there knowing we will find good food, good company and a good time, cor blimey, and ne'er a drop passing the proverbial lips.

This is something of a re-educative process for many of us, who came to associate the consumption of alcohol with all human social exchanges. Speaking personally, it's been quite a revelation to me to find that this is NOT NECESSARILY THE CASE!!!!???? |||** Well, you live and learn.

So it's Wednesday night at the drop-in. The women who run the organisation set up an evening's entertainment for

the clients, who filter in one by one from their respective corners of the universe, getting coffees, teas, asking what's for dinner.

Every week an 'International Cuisine of the Week' is chosen and we have food approximating varying famous dishes from this country.

This week it's China. Various little statues of Buddha, pictures of dragons, candles, incense and a pack of "Tao" divinatory cards – like tarot, but more philosophical – brighten up the normally very functional room.

Mags, the 'boss', if that's the right word, arrives with the food...one of the bonuses of this whole set-up. Sometimes it's a take-away – although the staff's efforts are every bit as good as their 'professional' rivals.

Let's say a little about the clientele, as it were.

Tonight we have 'The Quiet Man,' obvious how he got that name really, doesn't say much at all; 'Captain Hatstand,' who is very voluble, maybe a bit too voluble, who has a surrealistic sense of humour which never fails to cause hilarity.

Then there is 'The Travelling Man', who has been all around the world and back, and would have more stories to tell if only he could remember them and 'Sunny Jim' a teenager just come



Remember to Follow Clydesider



back from a fishing trip – quite reticent, but bright enough.

Plus your intrepid reporter, a notorious bletherskite and show-off of global proportions. Various other bodies are presently being counselled in other parts of the building.

With the food eaten, fags smoked, coffees replenished we are into the main event – the quiz, with major prizes to be won...the subject of the quiz is the same as the country whose food we have just put away.

Well, to cut a long story short, the quiz is quizzed, I win AGAIN, tempers flare, names are called, fights break out, blood is spilled. No, seriously, I win a box of incense sticks and everybody enjoys themselves.

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As the evening winds down, some of the clients draw one of the 'Tao' cards, getting their meanings from the accompanying booklet.

One, drawn by Captain Hatstand, says: "Remember to bend in the wind
Like Rushes –

For that which is too hard will break
And that which is too soft will fold."

Captain Hatstand yields a sigh: "Well that just about sums me up."

I, and a number of others, fall apart – it is the way he tells them, when he tries it doesn't work, he's a natural comedian.

Just as I'm about to leave, Mags invites the group for a day trip to Inveraray. "Hud me back," was what I sort of replied. Total Bonus!

As I reflect on all that goes on at these wee gatherings, I feel really good that I can get along and take part with a bunch of relative strangers and feel good about it.

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CHAMBER CHOIR

PHOTO BY CHARLIE SHERRY

Political debate and discussion are the sounds a passerby normally expects to hear from the Council Chamber.

But after 5pm on a Tuesday evening the room is filled with music as the Chamber Choir start warming up their voices.'

The choir, now in its fifth year, was originally set up by a group of friends who all work at WDC.

"We'd been away for a girlie weekend and just had a good laugh singing together so we decided to set up a feel-good choir," explained Lynsey Dickie.



With the support of voice coach Sandra McFeeley the choir started learning a mix of songs from modern pop to local folk tunes.

Over the years they've performed at Christmas concerts, care homes, charity fundraisers and were part of the opening ceremony for the new Council offices in Dumbarton.

Mary Rose McElroy said: "It's relaxing, after a hard day you come in here, do your breathing exercises and have a good sing – there's a real sense of satisfaction. It just gives you an hour or two to forget about everything else."

The choir is open to any WDC employee contact Eileen.Dorrian@west-dunbarton.gov.uk for details.

CLYDESIDER

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CLYDESIDER COMPETITIONS

We have more great giveaways for you in Issue 13.

1. Poetry Competition – the theme is 'Habits' – prize is a £20 gift voucher for a local independent shop or business.

2. Photography Competition – the theme is 'Wellness' win a prize canvas and framed prints courtesy of Photo Ecosse (see pg 24).

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.

Email entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com or send to Clydesider, 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG by May 1 2020

Good Luck!



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Get to know me
I'm more than you see
Someone holding a can
I do have a name
Yours may be the same
Ever wondered
What this feels like to be
A cracked branch
In the family tree
Broken and detached
The perfect mismatch
Snapped, a handicap
To those that I love
Handled with gloves
Ask what I'm like today
And I'm likely to say
Let's get rid of those
Horrible names
Badges of disgrace
Wash away all of the dirt
That causes the hurt
Come clean
Starting from now
For those worse off than you
In health or in mind find love
Have a heart for a start
Then take life from there
Who knows where this lead
So, in your world today
Treat all the people the same
That's all I have to say
Have yourself a nice day

By James Reid



I'M GETTING THERE

You'll get there when your ready someone said to me

I need your help just now I thought

I'm desperate, can't you see?

Of course, I never said that. Instead I just agreed.

I felt like this for awhile

That I could not feel just right

Whatever feeling right may be

And this I struggled to see

One day I started doing more

Like joining a few clubs

I got support from Stepping Stones

And gave myself a hug.

By Steven Hastings



9 WAYS TO UPCYCLE YOUR CLYDESIDER

BY SARAH SMITH (ECLECTICA BY SARAH)



How's this for 'romancing the ordinary' and a two-for-one upcycle? If possible, I pass my Clydesider magazine on to someone else, otherwise I root around in my recycling bin and choose interestingly shaped items to upcycle, then use the 'decopatch method' to decorate them with my magazine. This is also a great technique for lovers of mindfulness projects.

What you need: Clydesider

magazines, Plastic/glass bottles/jars tins/boxes, Scissors, Small household paintbrush, PVA glue. Ideas for new use:

Holiday piggy bank
Pet treat holder
Pen holder
Vase

Bird feeder (with a macramé hanger)
Tea/coffee jar
Desk tidy
Plant pot holder
Store for bird seed

Step 1 Choose an item and think of a new use for it (see above for some ideas).

Step 2 Scour your Clydesider and cut out any images and large words/letters that describe its new use (eg for my vase I cut out images of flowers, plants etc). TIP - the photo competition is always worth a look or the poems if you prefer the written word.

Look at the overall colour pallet for the pictures you've chosen then cut out lots of squares of a contrasting colour, so your main pictures show up (eg if the colour pallet is mostly orange, cut out squares of blue) TIP – if the surface you are pasting on to is curved cut small slits in the top and bottom of the paper, so they fit flatter to the surface. Also cut the squares slightly smaller.

Step 3 Now comes the fun bit! Start with the background squares. Liberally paste glue on to a small area and stick on one of your background squares, then apply more glue on top. Now add another piece, slightly overlapping the first. Continue adding until you have covered the whole item. TIP – glue dries clear so be generous, as the paper is quite thick. Leave the background to dry, then add your main images on top, using the same method. Once finished, give the whole thing a top coat of glue to ensure it is all held down. Leave to dry - then it's ready to enjoy its new life!

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FINDING SUPPORT

COMPILED BY TOM BROGAN

If you're feeling down it may seem there's nowhere to turn, but in West Dunbartonshire there are a number of places where you'll find a listening ear, and hopefully the help you need. **Your GP** is the best place to start, especially if you feel your need is urgent. You can self-refer to many places but your GP can make a referral to services requiring this. Your GP also has a good sense of what service may suit your needs.

Stepping Stones is a mental health charity covering West Dunbartonshire. They offer CBT and person-centred counselling, individual support, Tai Chi and relaxation classes. You can self-refer to their services by calling 0141 941 2929 or completing a form on their website <https://www.stepstones.org.uk/> Not sure what to expect? Pop into Stepping Stones Peer2Peer Drop In sessions in the Stepping Stones office at Unit A10, Whitecrook Business Centre on Thursdays 10am - 1pm or Concord C.E Centre Dumbarton on Fridays 1pm - 4pm

New members can come in to refer and existing members in need of immediate support can pop in to speak with someone.

Breathing Space is a confidential telephone help line offering assistance at an early stage to stop problems escalating. Opening times Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am and Friday 6pm-

Monday 6am. You can call free from a landline on 0800 83 85 87.

The Primary Care Mental Health

Team based at the Vale Centre for Health and Care in Alexandria. They work closely with GPs and other referrers to support people who have common mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. You can call them on 01389 828203 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Goldenhill Mental Health

Resource Centre located at 199 Dumbarton Road Clydebank. They provide specialist care for people suffering from a persistent or acute mental illness. They're open Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm, and weekends and Public Holidays 9am to 5pm. You can call on 0141 941 4400.

If you're looking for help for a child experiencing mental health difficulty you can contact **Y-Sort It**, who are based at West Thomson Street, Clydebank. They work with young people aged 12 to 25. You can call them on 0141 941 3308 or visit their website <https://www.ysortit.com>

Riverview Resource Centre is based at Dumbarton Joint Hospital. They are the base for the adult community mental health team for Dumbarton and Alexandria. Their telephone number is 01389 812070.

West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Forum works with statutory and voluntary agencies, to allow residents of West Dunbartonshire, Helensburgh and Lochside access to mental health services, by signposting

them to the relevant agencies. You can find them online at <http://www.wdmhforum.org.uk> or call on 01389 742294.

Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol (DACA) is a community-based alcohol service providing advice, information and counselling for anyone in West Dunbartonshire affected by their own or someone else's alcohol-related problems. Enjoy a cuppa and a chat and find out more about DACA at their open Drop-ins on a Monday 9 - 12 noon and 6 – 9pm Monday and Wednesday evenings in Dumbarton and from their Clydebank office on a Wednesday morning 9 – 12 noon. Contact them on 01389 731456 or 0141 9520881 or visit their website at www.daca.org.uk

Alternatives WD delivers a West Dunbartonshire wide service with bases in Dumbarton and Clydebank. They offer a range of services to individuals and families currently or previously affected by drugs. Visit www.alternatives.org or call 01389 734 500 or 0141 951 2420.

The Leamy Foundation is a peer support focused charity covering West Dunbartonshire. They encourage and support people wishing to create activities and services important to them and their wider community. Call on 0758 328 5016 or visit their website www.theleamyfoundation.com

For those looking for support from people with personal experience of alcohol or drug problems there are

regular AA and NA meetings across West Dunbartonshire and nearby. You can find the nearest meeting on the **Alcoholics Anonymous** and **Narcotics Anonymous** website. You can call AA on their 24 hour helpline - 0845 769 7555 or for general enquiries call 0141 226 2214 and the NA helpline number is 0300 999 1212.

FAST is another local peer led service - they run a Recovery Cafe every Tuesday 12 - 4pm in St Augustine's Church Hall in Dumbarton and a FAST family cafe on the first Saturday of the month from 4pm - 7pm

You can call the **Samaritans** on 116 123 any time, day or night, from any phone for free. They offer a safe place, without judgement, for you to talk about any issues you may be experiencing.

Another resource available around the clock is **NHS24**. Offering urgent health advice out of hours. They can be contacted on 111.

All these services will be happy to speak with you and won't treat you as an inconvenience or trivialise any issues you may be going through.

Good mental health can be a journey, and for some it's longer than others, but there is help out there, and when you feel ready to ask for it you'll find empathy and understanding from people intent on doing their best to help you.



Remember to Follow Clydesider



WHAT'S ON?

Clydesider Creative Café Sat Mar 28

Come along and join our 'Creating Well-Being' Creative Café, there will be a mix of free workshops, drop-ins, walks and taster sessions plus a Community Marketplace and Community Kitchen. Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick 11am – 3.30pm. All welcome.

Power of the Positive Festival Wed May 20

An opportunity for local groups and individuals to showcase their creative work and activities and share ideas on how positivity can help improve well-being. Centre 81, Braes Ave, Whitecrook, Clydebank 11am – 3pm.

Old Kilpatrick Summer Fair Sat June 6

There will be a mix of craft stalls, raffles, tombola and tearoom from 1pm – 3pm in the Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick. All welcome.

Levengrove Parkrun

A free timed 5k walk/jog/run starts at 9:30am every Saturday. Open to all ages and abilities. Please register for free before your first visit at <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/>

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.

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.

Walking Football

Mondays 7.45pm – 9pm Our Lady and St Patrick's High School, Dumbarton and Thursdays 7.45pm – 9pm Argyle Park, Alexandria.

Walk in the Park

Enjoy a free, fun and easy walk in Balloch Park every Wednesday morning. Meet outside Balloch Tourist Information Centre at 10.20am, walks are 45 – 60 minutes on good surfaces.

CLYDESIDER Credits

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteer contributors including published and novice poets, 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 all help to shine a light on the local solutions, positive 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 positive news story just drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com

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Competitions: Email clydesidercomp@gmail.com

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Clydesiders



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- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Tax Credits (Child Tax Credits & Working Tax Credits)
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Child Benefit (Depending on Income)
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit
- Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance (ISA)
- War Pensions Mobility Support

Second Measure Needed

- Underfloor insulation
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