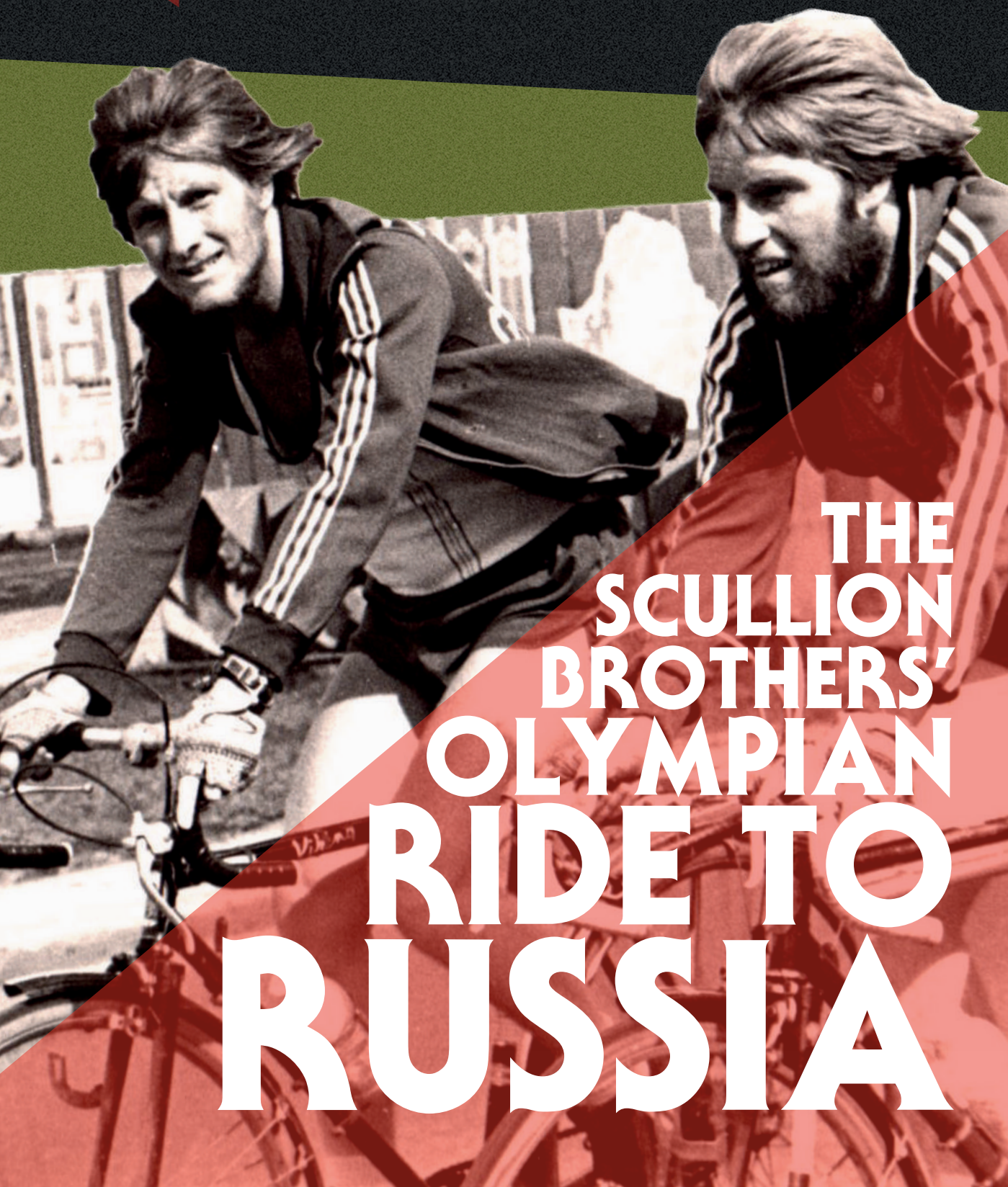




CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS
Issue 2, Winter 2017

Free



THE SCULLION BROTHERS' OLYMPIAN RIDE TO RUSSIA

POSTIES

Carrying voices, they move you with someone else's words,
delivering the unwanted invoices of sealed dreams.

Employed to scuffle with dogs, they are Hermes
in a uniform, fighting early morning thunderstorms
on feet that blister like pavement popcorn.

Hi-vis jackets around the post office hives
pigeonhole by postcode, answering tourists' questions
about the road well taken, the wisdom of drinking dens,
airgun assassins and pyromaniac veterans;

Councillors turn to them with local concerns.
By light, they are extinguished, wincing at school buses
and the morning rush to catch the train;
a laxative of elastic bands trails in their wake.

by Stephen Watt,
Dumbarton

<https://m.facebook.com/StephenWattSpit/@StephenWattSpit>

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

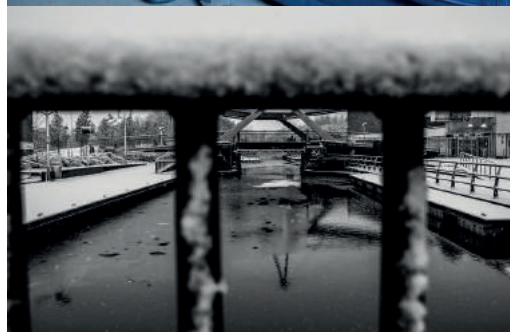
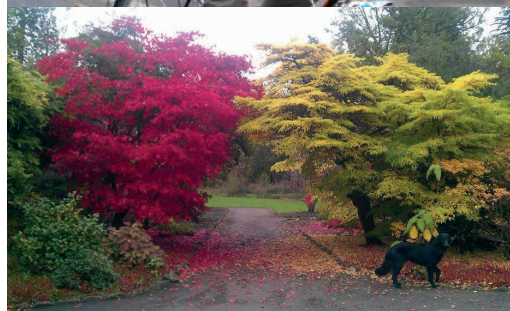
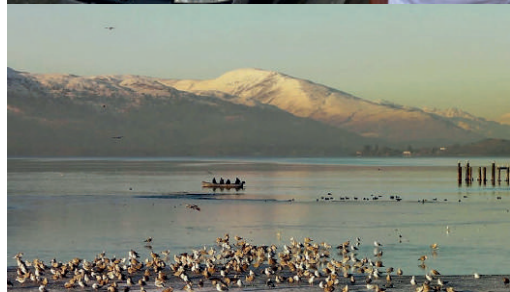
Author of books *Spit* (£5) and *Optograms* (£7.95) copies available via social media or by e-mailing Wild Word Press at marcsherland@me.com



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Clydesider is designed by



WELCOME TO CLYDESIDER

Dreams are exciting things because you never quite know where they will lead.

When I first thought about setting up a community magazine for West Dunbartonshire I didn't know how I would do it, where the money would come from or how we would get 10,000 copies distributed across Dumbarton, Clydebank and the Vale.

I did know I didn't want to do it by myself – what's the fun in that – but I didn't know many people with media expertise willing to lend a hand on a voluntary basis. So, I had to take a leap of faith and put my trust in people who crossed my path and wanted to get involved with *Clydesider* in one way or another.

And I could never have dreamt how very rewarding that would be and how many amazing people were willing to help *Clydesider* go from being an idea floating around in my head to becoming a reality.

So it seems quite fitting that Issue 2 focuses on dreams and our talented team of volunteer writers and photographers have captured the stories of what happens when you dare to do something with your dreams.

This issue includes a fascinating tale of two Clydebank brothers who decided to cycle over 2,000 miles to achieve their dream of getting to the Olympic Games. We also hear about a Bowling musician whose student daydream of setting up a band led to a place in the Scottish Folk Music Hall of Fame and a young artist from the Vale gives the *Clydesider* an exclusive preview of her artwork and tells us about her dreams for the future.

Our short story competition winner has given an interesting twist to her 'Dreams' and a Dalmuir novelist tells us how he achieved his goal and got his first novel published. We also find out about the inspiration behind a new art gallery in Clydebank which is quickly becoming a hub of creativity and we solve a decades-old mystery about the standing stones above Renton.

All this plus more poems, photos and prose from our creative contributors.

We would like to wish all our readers a happy and healthy 2017 and we hope it is a year when dreams come true for you.

Enjoy!

Amanda
Eleftheriades
Editor



COMMUNITY NEWS

YOUTH SUCCESS

Youngsters involved with local youth charity, Y sort It, had a remarkable year in 2016 achieving many personal triumphs and helping others along the way.

The charity runs a range of groups, activities and services across West Dunbartonshire to support young people to tackle life's challenges and achieve their goals.

During the summer a group of Y sort it Bravehearts tackled the 96 mile West Highland Way to raise funds for another local children's charity, the Children's Association Hospice (CHAS).

The challenge was organised by Y sort it's Youth Work Apprentice, Jay Smith, who commented: "I thought it would be good to involve young people in this sort of challenge, it is good to give something back to the community, to help others, whilst challenging yourself."

Y sort it also worked with the Syrian families who recently moved into the area, helping to make the transition to a new culture easier for the youngsters and their families.

Their work reached global audiences in September when their Fresh Creations Youth Arts worker, Daniel

McCormick, joined 40 young people from around the world to participate in discussions at the Edinburgh International Culture Summit.

And in December their achievements were recognised nationally when they were shortlisted for a Third Sector Partnership Award by Scottish Public Services for the joint partnership working with West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

For more information visit ysortit.apps-1and1.net/



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CREATING A COMMUNITY LINK

BY PAULINE BRADLEY



Clydesider volunteer Pauline Bradley tells of her personal involvement with Community Links Scotland and chats to their Training and Volunteer Co-ordinator Janette Devlin.

"I have been involved with Clydebank-based Community Links Scotland (CLS) for about a year. I went on the lively, 12 week Activate course which was fun and inspiring and completed their Wee Adjustments course and some community consultations which led to paid work. I met people from all walks of life including young men and women recovering from addictions, youth workers, a food bank manager, unemployed people and a professor. It's refreshing that CLS brings such a wide spectrum of people together, values them and treats them equally. Janette Devlin is the main driver in making all this happen. I met her in her office on Kilbowie Road where she told me more.

She explained: "Community Links Scotland was previously the volunteer arm of Street Links which did youth work, but after funding was cut we changed our focus to providing training and volunteer opportunities for anyone, including those who had been failed by schools or affected by poverty and alienation."

"Anyone can access the service, participants range from 16-65 year olds. There are no financial barriers because expenses are paid and courses happen at evening and weekends so as not to interfere with most people's work commitments.

Everyone is at a different place in their life's journey, we try to help them move forward; whatever that means to them. No one is judged and everyone is valued."

They do this by offering immediate access to training, support, supervision, and front line work experience. Volunteer learners are supported to develop their skills, experience, qualifications and in doing gain confidence.

Courses on offer include the Activate course, which is accredited by Glasgow University, for community activists, volunteers and interested people. Janette explains: "It uses creativity, games and activities aimed at understanding and challenging powerful interests which maybe damaging to our lives or communities."

They also offer SQA Level 5 in Leadership to builds people's confidence as leaders and Wee Adjustments for brain health, well-being and personal development.

Anyone who is at a loose end, wants to move forward in their lives, maybe unsure how or perhaps lacks confidence; should get in touch with Janette at Community Links Scotland. I can vouch that she'll make you feel welcome, valued and find the right course, people, networks and path for you.

For more information call 0141 952 4382 or email janette@comlinks.org.uk

Photo by Pauline Bradley



CREATIVE CLYDESIDERS

THE WRITE STUFF

A Dalmuir author caused a stir down his local when he chose it for the launch of his debut novel, *Lily Poole*.

Friends, family and fans joined writer, Jack O'Donnell, in The Cabin to celebrate the publication of his first book.

The novel set in 1970s Clydebanks is described by Jack as "a ghost story without a ghost" which is told from the perspectives of several characters.

Jack says the novel starts with something that happened to him back in the seventies when he spotted a child walking alone slip on ice. He helped the youngster up and took him to St Stephen's Chapel, which features throughout his book.

He said: "The kid said to me 'big people don't understand', that stuck with me and gave me the starting point for *Lily Poole*."

Jack is a prolific writer who has penned hundreds of short stories but *Lily Poole* is his first full-length novel that has been published and it was a marathon journey to get it into print.

He explained: "The writing isn't the hard part – the selling and marketing

is, we did it with crowd-funding and that took over a year to raise the £5,000 needed.

"I think the book is a good book but it is great to hear other people saying they loved your book and having people come up and say they recognise people like your characters – then you feel you've got it right.

"Every one of my characters in here are from the pub – but getting them from there down on to the page is always a challenge so it's good when they feel real to other people."

With the support of online writing platform abctales.com and crowdfunder publishing website, Unbound.com, Jack turned his novel idea into print and the book is selling well both online and down his local.



Photo by Charlie Sherry

Copies of *Lily Poole* are available from Amazon or from www.unbound.com

SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL



Q. *What is Inclusive Images?*

A. We are a social enterprise established by accredited Photo Voice trainer, Charlie Sherry from Clydebank. We offer Community Action and Community Voices workshops that help groups tell and share their stories using the power of photography.

Q. *Do you take the photos?*

A. No – we provide people with basic photography skills and give participants cameras so they record what is happening in their own communities and organisations. We then work with the groups to turn their photos into campaign and promotional materials or exhibitions.

Q. *Who is Inclusive Images for?*

A. Any community group or organisation that has a story to tell. If you are looking for a creative and imaginative way of capturing what you are doing or highlighting a campaign issue our Community Action or Community Voice photo workshops offer something a bit different to a

lengthy written report. They are a powerful way of getting the people who are involved in your organisation to tell their stories directly to funders, partners and politicians.

Q. *Why did you set up Inclusive Images?*

A. I think ordinary people with a story to tell often find it difficult to reach those in authority. Photography is a very powerful medium which helps break through those barriers and you don't need lots of expensive equipment or training to capture a single image which speaks volumes.

I have been a community activist all my life and I am also a trained photographer. I want to use both my photographic skills and life experiences to inspire and empower others to use photography as a means to picture and influence change.

Q. *Are your workshops free?*

A. The workshops are free to the individual participants but there is a cost to the organisation. We try to tailor our courses to meet an organisation's budget and also provide advice on where to access funding to help cover costs.

For more information visit www.inclusiveimages.org or call Charlie on 07502460273



TO RUSSIA WITH REG



'Cycle tae where?
MOSCOW?
Are ye aff yer heid?'

'Cycle to where? Moscow! Are ye aff yer heid?'

This was the beginning of a conversation Clydebank lad Alex Scullion had with his brother Reg sometime early in 1980 which ultimately led to the two working class brothers defying the odds to cycle across the continent of Europe, right to the very heart of the old Soviet Union, to watch fellow Scot Alan Wells collect the Olympic gold in the 100 metres, the showpiece event of the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics.

Like most Scots, fiery redhead Alex was heavily into his sports, he had always wanted to attend the Olympics but being an unemployed working class lad there had always been one great hurdle in place - that being he was always skint, in fact poverty and unemployment were at endemic levels

across Scotland's industrial heartlands at the time.

It was only when Alex was watching another news report about some other country pulling out of the Moscow Olympics due to the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan, that he came up with his Herculean idea of cycling to the Games.

Alex explained: "At the time I was attempting to recover from a close personal tragedy, this was the catalyst that inspired me, I felt I had to do something to try to shake myself out of it.

"We were free to do what we wanted, both of us were unemployed with no prospect of a job anytime soon. Add to this, I was pissed off with how the West was once again ganging up on what I



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*This is sample rents only

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looked up to as the nation attempting to build a classless socialist society.

"I was and still am a socialist. My mind was made up, I had no idea how I was going to achieve it, but I was cycling to Moscow."

Initially more than 50 people agreed to join Alex and Reg on their madcap adventure, but when push came to shove it was only the Scullion brothers that showed the determination and fortitude to face whatever lay ahead on the road to Moscow.

Alex and Reg now had their mission but being the big-hearted Bankies they still are today, they decided to use the opportunity to raise money for Yorkhill Children's Hospital - a cause close to Alex's heart given the personal tragedy he had recently lived through. Their generous decision raised the equivalent in today's money of over £20,000 for the hospital.

Amidst the fanfares and bustle of the press the brothers cycled out of the grounds of Yorkhill Hospital on May Day, International Workers Day, 1st May 1980, heading east, bound for Moscow.

The pair were now on their way to the Olympics with only the small obstacles of England, the Channel, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and a large chunk of the Soviet Union in their way, nae bother tae the Linnvale lads.

Through England and Western Europe, the trade union movement in Scotland had arranged for union activists in the various countries to provide accommodation for them, it was only

when they crossed the border into the old East Germany, which back then was still a communist state, that, somewhat bizarrely to the lads, their adventure became headline news across communist Eastern Europe.

Obviously cycling across Western Europe was no mean feat, and as Alex said: "It was testing, not only physically, but emotionally as well." Brothers being brothers, it was inevitable that sibling rivalry, no matter how mild, reared its ugly head. With the Scullion brothers arguments never lasted too long before being replaced by laughter.

Alex recalls an incident in the middle of Belgium or Germany, "the argument got a bit heated, I was sure I knew where I was going and Reg was as equally sure it was the opposite way - next thing I know he threw a toothbrush, of all things, that whacked me on the nose. After that, we both fell about the floor laughing, I can't remember who was right or wrong about the route after that, it didn't matter. That was Reg and me for you."

Across Poland and into Russia Alex and his brother were constantly being interviewed by the local press and TV, they were getting old hands at their new found celebrity status.

And on Saturday 5th July 1980, to the cheers of crowds and under the glare of TV cameras, Alex Scullion and Reginald Scullion, were met in the heart of Moscow with an official state welcoming party, handshakes and hugs were in full flow. Despite all the odds stacked against them, they had cycled

to Moscow and arrived 13 days before the Olympic opening ceremony.

On arrival in Moscow the lads were given a guide who also acted as an interpreter; Alex was constantly asking her to repeat the Russian name for something or a Russian phrase and the more the interpreter repeated, the more Alex began to understand Russian. This process continued over the course of the weeks of their visit until one morning a local spoke to Alex in Russian and he understood exactly what he was saying, not only that he was able to reply.



Photo by Charlie Sherry

You would be forgiven if you thought cycling from Clydebank to Moscow was enough of an achievement in itself but not for Alex, through the same determination and single mindedness demonstrated in his colossal journey, he had disciplined himself to learn Russian and he still speaks it to this day.

The brothers spent over five weeks in Moscow, heading for home a week after the Olympics finished. With the

help of their guide, they visited most of the usual attractions in Russia's capital - Lenin's Tomb, the Kremlin, Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral and Gorky Park.

They played David Bowie's Space Oddity to Yuri Gagarin's mum.

But the visit that stands out most for Alex does not fall into the usual 'sightseers' category, he explains: "One day we were taken to the house where Yuri Gagarin - the first man in space - was born and brought up, sadly he died in a test flight in 1968 but his mother Anna still lived there."

After the lads were introduced to Anna, Alex spotted a guitar, Reg and Alex being keen musicians, Alex asked if they could play a tune.

"We played 'Auld Lang Syne' as I knew Rabbie Burns was very popular in Russia, after we finished playing, Anna asked for another song. Given where I was and whose house it was, I thought we would play David Bowie's 'Space Oddity', a wee bit cheeky I know, to be honest I don't think Anna understood the lyrics anyway."

From daring to dream that he could cycle all the way to Moscow for the Olympics, Alex and his brother Reg found themselves honoured guests of the Soviet Union at the opening ceremony and had front row passes for all the major events at the games, in particular the 100m, in which they

witnessed fellow Scot Allan Wells become the first Scottish athlete to win gold in the event.

This was a great moment of pride for Alex as he is passionate about his homeland: "My heart was bursting with pride when Allan Wells crossed that line first, here was a Scot winning the most prestigious event of the Olympics and my brother and me were guests of honour to witness it, it doesn't get much better than that."

Now in his 60th year Alex incredibly still rides the bike that took him to Moscow. He reflects back on his amazing journey, not just in distance, but psychologically of how it helped him grow as a human being, in

understanding others and gave him a tremendous insight into a world he only ever dreamed of beforehand.

Thus was his advice to all who dare to dream, no matter what that dream maybe: "Go for it, don't let anyone tell you it can't be done or you are not quite good enough, you have to believe in yourself, if you do, you will find a way to achieve your dream "

When Clydesider heard the Scullion brothers' story we knew there was much more to tell than we could share in this magazine so we introduced Alex to local writer and Clydesider contributor Paul Murdoch and the pair are now collaborating on a book about his adventures.



HOME HERBAL REMEDIES

BY JOANNE DICK

Local herbalist Joanne Dick shares some of her top tips for fighting common winter colds and infections.

The ability to make a simple remedy from our kitchen cupboards, gardens and hedgerows is empowering and valuable a skill that, until relatively recently, was commonplace. With some practice we can all use these simple remedies, feel more in control of our health and reduce our use of strong medicines.

The following is a small selection of remedies for colds and winter infections, but there are many more. Go exploring, go experimenting but remember plant remedies need to be used repeatedly and will not work as quickly as orthodox drugs.

Some plants are antiviral, improving the body's ability to manage a virus, potentially before it takes hold or at least reducing severity and duration. Examples of these are garlic, onion, lemon oil (from the rind) and elderflower. Onion and garlic have similar actions, but onion is gentler for children.

For any respiratory infections. Chop 4-5 cloves of garlic into thin slices, cover over with honey, leave for several hours. Strain the garlic from the honey. Take a spoonful every 2-3 hours.

Others plants are antibacterial e.g. thyme, honey, ginger and clove. These are useful for managing bacterial complications such as coughs/sinus infections and improve cough effectiveness, clearing the lungs.

Thyme and Clove Tea - add a teaspoon of dried thyme (or a sprig of fresh thyme) and 2 cloves to a cup of boiled water, cover and leave to stand for 10 minutes. Strain and drink. Repeat 2-3 times daily.

Heating remedies are also important to include, these help to warm the body, improve circulation and increase the actions of the other remedies. Ginger and cayenne are two excellent examples.

Add a pinch of cayenne to any of the previous remedies to intensify its effectiveness.

To help reduce mucus sniff eucalyptus oil from a tissue or burn in an oil burner. Use the oil throughout the day for it to be effective. One sniff will not work!

If symptoms persist seek medical advice.

COMMUNITY FEATURE

WOMEN & WAR

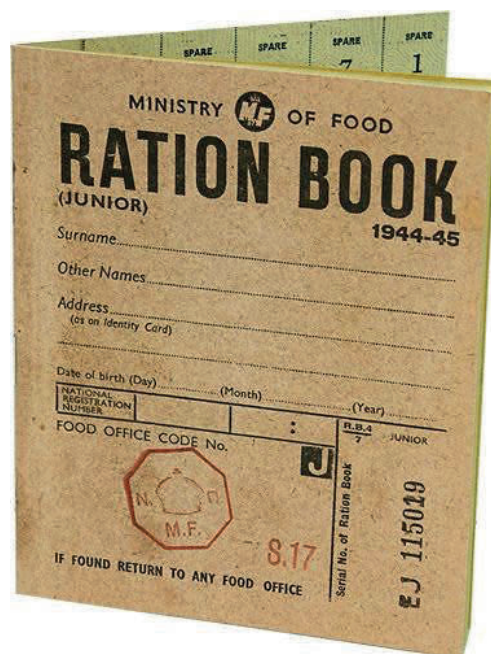
A local heritage group is calling on women from the area who lived through the Second World War to share their memories, stories, recipes and any photos or artefacts from the era.

The West Dunbartonshire Women's History Group is working on a Heritage Lottery-funded project to capture the changing role of women during the war.

Any women who have memories of the time themselves or anyone who has a female relative who lived through the war can share their stories by contacting chairwoman May Semple by emailing may.semple@talktalk.net.

Lorna Stevenson, project tutor and support worker, said: "We can now ensure that the wider life-changing experiences of local women during the Second World War will be recognised, documented, championed, preserved and shared with the local community before they are lost.

"We are appealing to the local community to support this project through providing their or their female family members' wartime life experiences in the form of oral/written histories and the loaning or donating of artefacts of the period, recipes, wartime women's clothing or quality WW2 women's uniforms."



The stories, anecdotes and photos will be used in a book about the changing role of women and the recipes will be included in a 'Then and Now' Family Recipe Book which is filled with ration recipes popular during the war and modern non-ration recipes.

One of the women involved in the project commented: "I joined this year because my husband had died and I was looking for an interest. As a result I have gained new friendships and much new knowledge from the various sessions – from the visiting speakers, the outings for research purposes, the informal training opportunities and from the sharing from my fellow group members, now friends."

The group is also holding a VE Day Celebration event in Clydebanks Town hall in March 2017 where they will bring together wartime food, music and film footage with an exhibition showcasing the donated artefacts and publications plus 1940's hair and make-up workshops and food tasting sessions.

The exhibition will then tour community venues across West Dunbartonshire.

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Photography: Digital Imaging	✓
Introduction to Creative Industries	✓
Songwriting	✓
Script Writing	✓

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Access to Social Services	✓

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NC Professional Cookery (Level 5)	✓
NC Professional Cookery (Level 6)	✓
Cake Decoration: An Introduction	✓✓
SVQ Level 2 Professional Cookery Fast Track	✓
Award in Airport Services & Ground Operations	✓
NC Travel and Tourism	✓

Learner Development

Aim for College Entry (ACE) 1	✓✓
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Social Sciences

NC Introduction to Criminal Justice	✓
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Introduction to Social Sciences	✓

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WINTER WALK

Wintry dawns rise

Crispy is the walk I take

Unless it's raining.

Haiku by Steven Kerr, Renton

TALES TO TELL



Photo by Sandra George

Dumbarton is steeped in a fascinating history with links to many interesting characters who have left their mark over the centuries.

Local writer and researcher Mary Irvine has teamed up with Dumbarton illustrator Anne Marshall to capture some of these tales and preserve them in print for future generations.

Anne and Mary's Local Tales is the pair's first collaboration and they are so pleased with the result they have already started work on a second volume.

Mary said: "This is our first joint project, Anne and I are really excited about the book and enjoying the co-operation. It works well.

"Probably because it's not about making money, as long as we break even we're happy with the project. We are working on book two at the moment and will be including more areas of the Vale this time to offer a wider interest."

Mary's favourite local character uncovered during her research was Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, better known as Don Roberto, who was co-founder of both the Labour Party and the SNP.

She said: "My favourite 'discovery' was Don Roberto. I've fallen in love with him. What an eccentric. Anne and I had a great day out at Gartmore wandering round the house and village."

Copies of *Anne and Mary's Local Tales* are available from The Artizan Hub in Dumbarton.

**NO NEED TO GO TO
THE CITY OR WEST END**

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WINTER PHOTO COMPETITION

Photo by Claire Love



BY BRIAN MCGOUGAN

I must admit I was delighted to be asked to judge this competition. I have looked carefully at all the images and was impressed by the captures portrayed by the photographers. Not all were taken by powerful cameras, some were taken by mobile phone. In essence I judged this competition on strength, heart, some photographic knowledge and sheer imagination.

I thought that this was going to be easy, because as a professional photographer you can see composition, colour, contrast and power within the image you want to capture. I was wrong.

The more I looked at these images the

more I came to realise that Interpretation is King.

I chose Claire Love's photograph as a deserved winner, it was bleak yet so powerful - a woman and her dog walking head bent through Goldenhill Park into the mouth of winter's icy grip.



Photo by Michael McLaren

I chose Steven Kerr's and David Crawford's images as fantastic runners up. Steven's macro shot of a spider's

web taken with a mobile phone was excellent, whilst David's silhouette of a tree against a burning sun is raw and powerful.

Finally, Jill McDonald's autumnal shot was vibrant and had strong leading lines giving good depth to the shot taken in Balloch Park. And I looked for black and white images and came across Janice Reid's shot of a frozen canal which was superbly shot, full of contrast and a pleasure to behold.

We all have talent, reach out there and grab it, who knows you just might be the winner of the next Clydesider photo competition.

Clydesider would like to thank Brian McGougan Photography for judging our competition and Iain Wilson (pictured opposite) from Photo Ecosse for putting up some great prizes for our winners - a 20x30" canvas print of Claire Love's winning entry and two framed prints for runners up Steven Kerr and David Crawford.

Spring Photo Competition 'From a Different Angle' - We are looking for photos that capture well known places in West Dunbartonshire from a unique perspective so get snapping and either email your photos to 'theclydesider@gmail.com' putting Spring Photo Competition in the subject box or add them to the competition post on our Facebook page. Competition closes March 10 2017, one entry per person and you must live or work in West Dunbartonshire to qualify.

Good luck!



Photo by David Crawford



Photo by Steven Kerr



Photo by Tommy Crockett



Photo by Jill McDonald



CREATIVE CLYDESIDERS

ART OF IMAGINATION



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY GAIL RUSSELL, ARTWORK
BY SHANNON LOGAN

Shannon Logan is an 18-year old artist living in Balloch who creates her pieces using both digital and traditional drawing methods. It was about four years ago she began focusing on improving her art and started to pursue it as a career.

In those four years Shannon has concentrated her time and energy on creating various art pieces which certainly grab the eye of her audience.



Q. How would you describe your art style?

A. My drawings are influenced by a variety of different art styles, my main influence being stylised cartoon artworks as well as Japanese pop culture. I find myself influenced a lot by artists like Patrick McHale and Noizi Ito among others.

Q. What mediums do you use to create your artwork?

A. I use watercolours in my art as well as inks and traditional pencil drawing, but the majority of my work is drawn digitally on a Cintiq companion



graphics tab using programmes like Photoshop and PaintTool SAI.

Q. Has your art style changed over time and, if so, what has influenced these changes?

A. Yes, my art style has been influenced by other artists working in careers I'd like to pursue. Also, the knowledge I gained and am still gaining from understanding human anatomy has helped me immensely in understanding how to stylise artwork effectively.



Q. Where would you like to see your art taking you in the future?

A. I'd definitely like to work in character design and work as a colourist in the future, specifically for animation.

Q. What would be 'the dream' for you?

A. Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, or Disney TV Animation. I'd ideally like to work on TV series.

Q. Do you take commissions?

A. Commissions are almost always open, I usually correspond with clients through email to discuss pricing and the work being done.

You can view Shannon's artwork or hire her for a commission at: www.artstation.com/artist/shannonlogan. You can also contact her by email at: Shannonlogan001@gmail.com or to request a print please contact her on Twitter @ShannonRolo

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CREATIVE CLYDESIDERS

A WESTRUCK ART

Photo by Charlie Sherry

BY AMANDA ELEFThERIADES

With just hours to go before his launch night Clydebank photographer Allan Rutherford provides me with a guided tour of his new venture – Awestruck Art Gallery.

And the space does leave me awestruck, not just by the interesting artwork that is already hanging on the walls but by the enthusiasm and energy of Allan himself who has transformed a former fashion boutique into an art gallery in under a month and has some really exciting plans to open his doors wide to the local creative community in the future.

A mystery artist has her work on the walls upstairs.

The gallery and creative arts space at 75 Kilbowie Road extends over two floors, a downstairs room which fills with natural light during the day will provide a home for resident Dalmuir artist Jim O'Donnell and upstairs a large open space where, for a modest fee, local artists can showcase their work next to a small office for Allan's own *Boy in the Corner* photography business.

A mystery artist has her work on two of the walls upstairs for the Gallery's opening night. Allan explains that each painting will be accompanied by a poem about her inspiration and the story behind the artwork – that's one of the many jobs still on his 'to do' list before he opens the doors to the public.

But considering that Allan has only had the keys to the Gallery for just over three weeks and during that time he has also been doing his own photography work his achievements are already remarkable.

"I was in here painting the walls with a roller until 3am the other night – and for a wee guy it's not easy reaching those corners," he laughs. The paintwork is not the only thing Allan has done on his tod – or with the help of his extremely supportive wife.

Before moving into the arts world the former youth worker from Whitecrook taught himself photography and set up his own Boy in the Corner photography business which he funded by working as a waiter. Now he has used his modest savings to open the Awestruck Art Gallery because he wants to encourage other creative types to take that first step to make a living out of something they love.

He said: "I have been working as a photographer since 2013 and have always wanted my own space. I was working from home at first but the photographic equipment plus my guitars – I teach guitar as well – was taking over our bedroom so I finally got a space up in Finnieston.

"That was when I first got exposed to the art world, I was making prints for various artists and they were telling me they were getting ripped off by galleries that were charging 50+% commission. I understand they need to make a living but I didn't want to do that with my gallery, I hope that I can offer something more supportive for local artists.

Photo by Charlie Sherry



"It was the missus who pushed me to get the space, she knew I had always wanted to do it and said "just try it", as long as the kids are fed and the bills are paid she wanted me to give it a go."

To realise his dream the father-of-four teamed up with Jim who will be the resident artist downstairs while he plans to hold regular arts and crafts events in the upstairs space and offer the walls to local artists who are starting out.

He explained: "We will have tables up here for the crafters and artists who perhaps don't have loads of work to display can show a few pieces. We'll also have art classes in the evenings.

"I am happy to show whatever artwork people want to give me"

"I am happy to show whatever artwork people want to give me, who am I to say what art is good and what isn't – everyone has different tastes. That's one thing that annoys me about

art is the snobbery that goes with it sometimes."

His journey into the art world started on a placement as a youth worker with West Dunbartonshire Council. He was fortunate as his talent for music was recognised and as he didn't have a qualification his employer put him through a music course at Ayr College. It was here that he first fell in love with photography when he started taking pictures of his classmates.

Allan has seen many talented young people who are creative but have not had the chance to follow their dreams and this is what has driven his ambition to open an art gallery in his home town.



He is delighted to be sharing the space with local artist Jim O'Donnell who exhibits as Jody Art.

Jim is a well known face in Clydebank as a former greeter at Asda where he worked for 18-years before retiring in June to concentrate on his art. Jim has exhibited in galleries in Helensburgh before and also exhibits and sells his paintings from his Dalmuir home but he is excited to be showing his work in a gallery in Clydebank for the first time.

He said: "I love painting, I've been doing it for 20 years, some of it is from places I've been, some are imagination and some are just completely bizarre - I like to try something new.

"I started by doing landscapes and that took off and people would give me pictures to copy and I enjoy doing that. I just sent six paintings to Singapore and another one of Ailsa Craig, Paddy's milestone, to a film producer in the States - it is great to see people enjoy my work.

"Now I have this space both to show my art and I will be working from here as well because there is a great light in here in the mornings. It's a fantastic venture and I'm really delighted to be part of it."

To find out more about Awestruck Art Gallery visit www.awestruck-arts.co.uk or pop into the Gallery at 75 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank. Road, Clydebank.



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Clydesider Short Story Competition
presents...

DREAMS

A Short Story by Zee McCartney, Clydebank

“Is this seat taken?” The voice broke through Mick’s musings, and he looked up to see two smiling brown eyes gazing down at him.

“Oh, right, no,” he blustered, half-standing to welcome the newcomer as she sat. He couldn’t believe his luck – she was the One who had occupied his thoughts for weeks, and here she was sitting with him. He had dreamed of this moment, and here it was actually happening.

“It’s Michael, isn’t it?” her voice floated through to him again.

“Yeah, ‘Mick’ to most folks. You’re Sheila, right?”

“Shona to most folks,” she laughed. Her voice had a throaty, musical quality. He admired her dark brown hair gently waving in the soft breeze. These tables by the river were crowded with students and staff out enjoying the brief sun. It felt positively Mediterranean, especially seeing sail boats and ferries in the distance, along with a seemingly ever-present frigate in the bay.

“You could imagine you were on the Med rather than Helensburgh this weather,” Shona remarked. Mick started. It was as if she were reading his thoughts. He hoped she couldn’t see what was currently on his mind!

“So, tell me about yourself,” he said abruptly.

“Like what?” she smiled back at him.

“Let’s see... What do you teach? And, where were you before?” he asked, adding to himself “...before you walked into my dreams.”

The next minutes were spent sharing information. Shona had just moved back from Aberdeen, where she’d done massage for five years; this was her first teaching job. Mick himself had been lecturing in communications for years. They hadn’t quite got to personal details before Shona headed off to class. Mick followed slowly; his second years were always late.

The next day found Mick at the same table; the weather was holding, and Shona appeared almost on cue.

"The seat's free," Mick intoned, as she approached. She smiled. It was as if there wasn't an intervening evening or morning, the conversation picked up right where they left off. Details of failed marriage and half-baked relationships, on Mick's part, were discussed and set aside.

He finally asked at one of their lunches (always in sunshine), "How about dinner Saturday night?"

"Funny, I was going to ask you!" she said. Mick figured so.

The night arrived. He'd chosen the very posh Grande restaurant in the City, quite on purpose - they'd have to share a long cab ride home to Helensburgh. He was at the restaurant ten minutes before their meeting time and settled into a comfortable daydream at the bar. He imagined they'd be a bit worse for wear after a good few drinks, they'd stagger out into the Glasgow drizzle and giggle their way into a cab, and kiss and tussle in the back like teenagers. Nearing home, his, he would casually suggest she come for some 'refreshment' before continuing home. One kiss would lead to another....

After twenty minutes he got restless, checked his phone - no messages. After forty minutes, four unanswered calls, and five shots of whisky, he left the bar despondently and headed out in the dark. He wasn't sure if it was the drizzle making his eyes wet; either way, he didn't see the cab as he stepped off the kerb....

"How's our patient today?" The voice broke through Mick's musings, and he looked up to see two smiling brown eyes gazing down at him. He liked Nurse Shona, her visits always cheered him. She paused before taking her accustomed chair by his bed and jokingly said, "Is this seat taken?"

The End.

Clydesider's short story competition was judged by Donny O'Rourke, Dalmuir Library's writer in residence. Thank you to all entrants, Zee receives a handcrafted wood fountain pen.

The short story competition title for the next issue is 'The Alternative'. Entries should be no more than 600 words and should be emailed to theclydesider@gmail.com by March 10 2017 with 'short story competition' in the subject box. All entrants should live or work in West Dunbartonshire.



Photos by Charlie Sherry

CREATIVE CLYDESIDERS

BOWLING MUSICIAN'S BATTLEFIELD FAME

BY TOMMY CROCKETT

Nearly half a century ago a young folk enthusiast joined three fellow students from Strathclyde University and set up a band.

Nothing unusual there, but fast forward 47 years and the Battlefield Band - named after the Glasgow south side district of Battlefield where it was formed in 1969 - has become one of the country's most popular and successful folk groups, responsible for 30 albums and numerous tours around the world.

And in November founder member and Bowling community activist, Jim Thomson, along with all 23 musicians who have been in the band over the past five decades, were inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame alongside such luminaries as

Barbara Dickson and the recently deceased Michael Marra.

Multi-instrumentalist musician Jim was studying English and philosophy at Strathclyde by day while backing legendary folk singer Matt McGinn at night when he met up with Brian McNeil, Alan Reid and Eddie Morgan and together they set up the Battlefield Band.

During term time gigs were never far from Glasgow but as their reputation grew demand came from further afield. Jim said: "Our first regular slot was at the Moorings in Arrochar, that was every Friday night.

"As we became better known on the folk scene we played gigs with the Humblebums topping the bill, which at that time included Billy Connolly and Gerry Rafferty.

"We would go on first as the support

act and then on would come Billy, who was the best banjo player in the country at the time as well as being extremely funny, then we would go on again after the break and he was a really tough act to follow."

After Strathclyde Jim trained as a teacher continuing with the band for as long as it worked in with his course, but by 1974 it became clear that teaching in a Glasgow secondary school didn't combine well with gigging with an increasingly popular folk band.

For Jim teaching won and he left the band, shortly afterwards heading south for a teaching job and the London folk scene.

He recalls: "I used to go along to Young's pub in Camden where there was a jam session every Friday night and the likes of Sandy Denny and Ralph McTell would come along and we'd all play together. This was before either of them had become household names.



"I went to Germany to work for six months and when I came back every juke box was playing 'Streets of London', I don't think I ever saw Ralph in the pub after that."

After Germany Jim's passion for local history took centre stage bringing him back to Scotland where he was involved in a variety of projects including the Rothesay Winter Garden and Glasgow Garden Festival.

He moved to Bowling in 1994 and almost instantly had a different battle on his hands – to preserve the village's identity from developers' bulldozers as

plans were afoot to build 120+ houses and a 60-bedroom hotel in the quiet Clydeside community.

It's a fight that Jim has successfully waged on and off for the past 20+ years forcing planners and developers time and again to return to the drawing board.

During this time his musical interests merged with a developing interest in computer technology leading to work with Project Ability where he combined music and IT to encourage people with a variety of special needs to express themselves creatively.

This led back to the educational arena this time working with young people with emotional and behavioural issues. He set up and ran music departments in Glasgow's two EBD schools before heading to Reid Kerr College in Paisley to develop assistive technology for people with a range of learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

Having recently retired from "the world of work" Jim is busy as ever volunteering with his local community and composing his own music.

He was stunned when he heard about the award. "It's a great honour," he said. "Music means a lot to me, so to have my music recognised in that way is a real honour and a privilege."

Once a musician - always a musician. Let's hope Jim continues to share his amazing skills with the wider community, he has certainly earned his place in the 'Hall of Fame'.

THE MESSAGE IN THE STONES

BY PAUL MURDOCH

My last article in the *Clydesider* introduced people to my fantasy series for children - *The Peck Chronicles*, where I talked about the local area and how it inspired me.

I mentioned a set of standing stones, known to my family as 'The Jesus Rocks'. Perched on Carman Hill, just above Renton Reservoir, this enigmatic jumble of rocks found their way into the original manuscript of *Talisman*. The rocks became a gateway to another world and the words that adorned them were reversed and used as a spell by the goldfish-wizard, Mendel.

As a child of perhaps 4 or 5, high up above the Vale of Leven, I read the words that had been painted on the largest of the rocks and wondered who had written them. Why had they gone to the trouble? When did they do it? Over the years, they seemed to be refreshed, but I wasn't sure. I mean, this stone was a good 750 foot hike up a steep hill. Was it just graffiti or a heart-felt evangelistic declaration? The two words written on that stone were - 'Jesus Saves'.

Then, to my complete surprise, I received an unexpected email from Amanda - the editor of *Clydesider*. She explained that the man who'd actually painted 'Jesus Saves' on the rocks all those years ago had read my article and contacted her. There was a chance to meet him and unravel some of the

mystery... The man's name was Harry Gibson.

At age 7 Harry attended an Evangelical Mission held in the old Renton Free Church hall, which existed on what is now the site of the John Connolly Centre. Both his grandparents ran this mission and it was through attending this that he felt God leading him to 'trust Christ as his Saviour'. Harry spent the first eight years of his life in Renton but continued to play in and around the Carman hill even when his family moved to Haldane in the 50's. He eventually joined the Covenanters Youth Organisation which encouraged him in his faith, which he still holds passionately today, but amazingly he was only 15 when he decided to paint the words - 'Jesus Saves' on the large rock above Burnbrae and Renton.

Mindful that the Smolletts still shot grouse on the moor, Harry was careful not to be seen. He first carried up the paint and hid it before returning with his brush to finish the deed. He painted the words in red and made them as big and cryptic as he could, determined the local population would 'get the message'. Years later, he repainted his sign in white when the words began to fade.

Harry's grandfather referred to the Jesus Rocks as Mount Malowe. Derived from the old Scot's word 'lowe', meaning a 'the warm light from a fire', it's not inconceivable that the site may have been used as a beacon point. The Jesus Rocks may have been used to signal danger to the Vale folk in the past. They certainly seem to have been a site of great importance and were, in fact, the place where Harry proposed to his wife.

I find it strange yet wonderful that, in the very summer I was born (1961), Harry climbed that hill to paint those words. Then, after years of visiting 'The Jesus Rocks' as a child and eventually with my own kids, I sat down to write my first book using that site and those words as an integral part of the story. Harry's message, albeit dressed up in magic and monsters from other worlds, still reverberates today. The Peck Chronicles are read all over the world by thousands of kids who know all about 'The Jesus Rocks'.

The fictional character who paints the words in my book, Talisman, is called Archie McNulty. He's the church warden at St Donan's. An old grump with badly fitting false teeth and a love of ferrets. Archie is a bit of a poacher who continually tries to outwit the

police on his escapades. However, he is also the guardian of a secret. He has a task to perform that has been passed down to him through the generations. He is the guardian of the stones... The real story, however, has remained untold until now.

Harry still takes a walk up the hill now and again, and when I asked him if, given the chance, he would paint the same message again, he said - 'Of course!'

Harry's website
is www.harrygibson.com

Paul Murdoch's website
is www.paulmurdoch.co.uk

More interesting reading on the site
including articles by local historian Billy
Scobie: [http://
www.valeofleven.org.uk/contributions/](http://www.valeofleven.org.uk/contributions/)



Photo by Charlie Sherry

A LOCAL INSTITUTION

BY ANGELA ANDERSON

Janette Barnes, a long time member of the Dumbarton People's Theatre, tells Clydesider volunteer Angela Anderson about the popular Dumbarton theatre.

The DPT celebrates its 72nd season this year and Janette has been a member since joining in the 1960s. Initially helping out backstage with costume and stage management she got her first part in 1971 as "the lass with the muckle moo", or 'girl with a big mouth'.

Shows used to be performed in the

"old Tin Hall" on Glasgow Road, where the group rehearse at present.

The idea of panto first came up in 1974 and Janette played the Good Fairy in Jock and the Beanstalk. Other pantos included Aladdin, Cinderella, Mother Goose, and they scripted their own Pirates of the River Leven.

When the Denny Civic Theatre opened in 1969 they were able to do more ambitious productions and reach a wider audience.

Janette says: "It's the cheapest hobby in the world." Membership is currently £10 a year for adults and £5 for juniors and any age can join.

They open three evenings per week and also hold regular acting workshops run by the Citizens Theatre which are



open to anyone.

Their large costume collection includes many outfits that wouldn't be found in the shops as people have been donating to the DPT wardrobe since 1945. They are maintained by two volunteers who also design and make new outfits if required.

Over the years the DPT has launched many successful actors including Robert Trotter, who played Mr Murdoch in *Take the High Road*. He had his first taste of acting with the DPT and recently left a generous legacy which will pay for studio lighting and billboards.

To find out more about the DPT visit www.dumbartontheatre.co.uk or email Dumbartonpeoplestheatre@outlook.com



CLYDESIDER MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

Support and Contribute to Clydesider

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

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

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

Clydesider Credits

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

We would also like to thank the businesses and organisations that have advertised in our first two issues - we know that investing in a product in its early days is a risk, we hope that it is one you are starting to benefit from as we become more established.

And finally we would like to thank West Dunbartonshire Libraries, West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust, West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, the Independent Resource Centre and Ben View Resource Centre as well as all the *Clydesider* volunteers who have helped with the magazine's storage and distribution - we definitely couldn't have done it without you.

THE WEE LORRY

There was once
A wee lorry
Sent out in a bag
A' the way tae Malawi,
Tae a lovely wee lad

First sight o' the lorry
It made his heart leap,
Something sae wondrous
Was his fur tae keep.

He looked an' he marveled
He played – oh whit joy!
This was his treasure,
His fantastic toy.

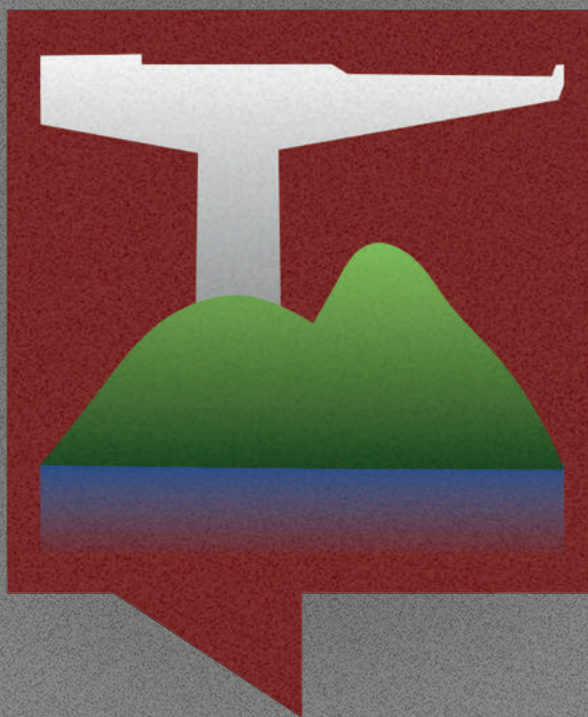
'twas later that week
That a teacher did find,
That the toy it was broken
And enquired as to why?

This boy was no vandal
Nae evil intent
Had caused him dismantle
His precious present.

He'd shared it wae love
Wae his friends who had nane
Wan got an axle,
Another a chain.

He'd let them a' share
In his treasure wae joy.
What we could all learn
Frae that lovely wee boy.

by Josie Torrance, Duntocher
from 'Little Acts of Love' Poems for Mary's Meals



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