

FREE



# CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POSITIVE PRESS

ISSUE 32 Summer 2025



**POWER THROUGH PEACE,  
POETRY & PROTEST**

INSIDE: SOME HEROES WEAR LAB COATS... WORDS OF CHANGE... WASPI WARRIORS...

POETRY COMPETITION WINNER:

# ME, MYSELF & I

By Maia Kelly

**I'm getting to know my own old bones  
As the girl in the looking glass changes.**

**Maiden. Mother. Crone.**

**I listen for every creak in my frame,  
Like the stairs in an old home.**

**And devour every mark on my body that  
shows I have grown.**

**Maiden. Mother. Crone.**

# WELCOME

Ever felt angry or upset at something that seems too big and difficult to change?

I guess that feeling of helplessness effects most of us at some point in our lives, whether in personal or professional relationships or a frustration at the state of the world around us.

Well, our wonderful volunteers and staff have packed this issue with stories of people who are creating positive change in so many different ways.

Some, like Sister Rita use their faith to (almost) move mountains, raising millions to create an oasis of peace for people on their final journey in life.

Others use more traditional routes to campaign for their rights – Laura Giannini shares her personal story of being part of the WASPI struggle to restore women's pensions, while John Donnelly highlights one local man's campaign to create a memorial in honour of lives lost at sea.

And then there are the creatives who use their inner talent to create change – this issue we have interviews with Vale schoolteacher Stephen Halkett and Clydebank accountant Emma Armstrong who are using comedy and poetry to share their passions and stories.

We also have two very powerful personal stories from volunteers Suhaila and Ben Pryde, which illustrate that sometimes change requires action and sometimes it needs patience.

And often it takes a combination of both – as Layla Blackwell explains as she shares why volunteering with Clydesider has changed her life (her words not mine).

We'll be featuring plenty more stories about community activists and changemakers over the coming year as part of our new 'In Peace & Revolution' heritage project – read all about it on page 26.

You can stay up to date with all our activities, training and volunteering opportunities by signing up for our newsletter just scan the QR code (we promise no spam).



## ABOUT CLYDESIDER

Clydesider Creative CIC is a not-for-profit community media social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire.

The Clydesider community magazine, website and social media promote the positives our area has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery, and history and showcase the creative talents, ideas, and experiences of local people.



Enjoy!

Amanda & the Clydesider Team

### Clydesider Creative Mission Statement

Inspiring change by sharing positive stories and solutions, creating opportunities for individuals and organisations to build connections so together we can challenge the negativity and stigma too often associated with our community.

### CLYDESIDER CREDITS

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteers who are all a true joy to work with. We would also like to thank our advertisers, members and funders. Your support helps us shine a light on the inspirational stories and creative talents in our communities.



Regulated by IMPRESS, The Independent Monitor For the Press CIC

IMPRESS, 16-18 New Bridge Street, London, EC4V 6AG

T 020 3325 4288  
E complaints@impressorg.com  
W www.impressorg.com

# CONTENTS

**02** Me, Myself & I  
*by Maia Kelly*

**08** A Call to Peace  
*by Layla Blackwell*

**12** Women Against State Pension (and Other) Injustice  
*by Laura Giannini*

**16** Some Heroes Wear Lab Coats  
*by Emily Fraser*

**18** My Autistic Brain  
*by Lisa Murray*

**20** A Dream Seven Years in the Making  
*by Suhaila*

**22** Pride of Place  
*by Amanda Eleftheriades*

**24** Clydesider Photo Competition

**26** In Peace & Revolution  
*by Kayleigh Hirst*

**28** #MoreThanYouThink  
*by Ben Pryde*

**30** Campaign Honours Lives Lost at Sea  
*by John Donnelly*

**32** Meet Our Volunteers: Layla

**34** Hidden Heritage Spotlight: Denny Social  
*by Annie Jordan*

**36** Community Garden Spotlight: Dillichip Gardens  
*by Harvey Smart*

**37** Reviews & Recommendations  
*by Mary Irvine*

**38** Creative Spotlight: Words of Change – The Wee Glesga Poet  
*by Jenny Watson*

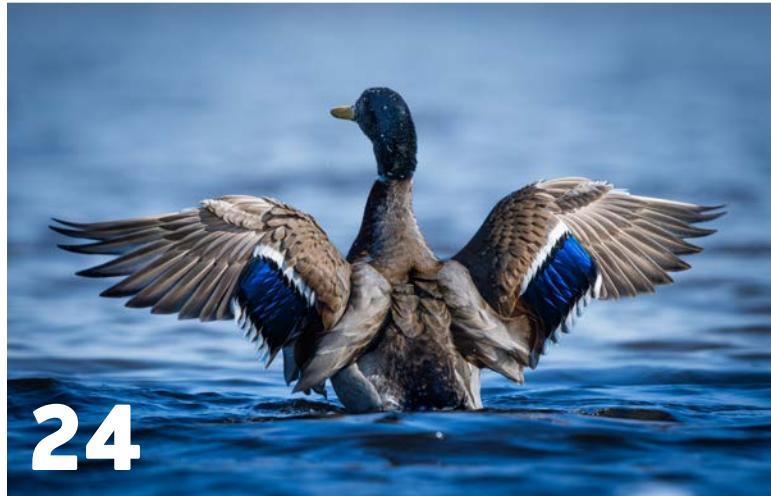
**40** Photo Tips  
*by Harvey Smart*

**42** Clydesider Community Directory

**44** Clydesider Community Diary

**46** Clyde & Baxter Cartoon  
*by Steven Hastings*

**46** Puzzle Page  
*by Steven Hastings*





# IMPROVING LIVES OUTDOORS

Improving Lives has created an accessible sensory garden and wellbeing allotment in Clydebank, providing a welcoming outdoor space for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. We aim to improve the wellbeing of individuals by offering a safe, inclusive environment for gardening, relaxation, learning and social interaction.

## The Sensory Garden

Our Sensory Garden has been carefully designed to accommodate people with various disabilities, ensuring that everyone can take part in gardening activities. Raised beds make planting easier for wheelchair users and people unable to bend low. Wide, even pathways ensure smooth navigation, and shaded seating areas provide a place to rest and enjoy the surroundings. Visitors will be able to enjoy the calming scent of lavender and rosemary, feel the texture of different plants, and listen to the soothing sounds of wind chimes.

Many of our peer support groups such as Art for Anxiety and our Autism Support Group use the tranquil outdoor space.

Our sensory garden is available for individuals or families of children with disabilities who may wish to spend a little quiet time in the outdoors. It may be especially useful for families without a garden of their own or who just need a little breathing space. This can be booked directly with ourselves and is completely free.

## Flourish Together

Flourish Together is our year-round gardening and sustainability project. This project focuses on connecting people with the outdoors, educating them on sustainability, nutrition and upcycling and building confidence and transferable skills.

The individuals involved in the project will benefit from an ongoing calendar of sessions, events and workshops. They will be given ownership and responsibility at the plots, have the opportunity to cultivate, plant and grow their own plants including being able to take these away. We will be teaching all aspects of gardening and horticulture to all age groups and abilities and encouraging them to share these skills with new members to the group. We have plans for several workshops and are currently planning more but some examples would be - Herbs and How To Use Them, Build Your Own Window Box, Mindful Gardening, specific repair workshops, Composting, Grow Your Own sessions, Allotment Management, Understanding Plants, Growing Food to Support Wellbeing and Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Reinvest.



This project would not have been possible if it were not for the generous funding and support of the Corra Foundation and the Henry Duncan Grant. This incredible funding has allowed us to make this a truly accessible project, creating an oasis of calm in a busy town which is available to everyone.

***For those interested in getting involved more information can be found on our website or by calling 0141 237 4560.***

# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Save Loch Lomond Update

In Issue 31 we featured local campaigner Sam Paton and highlighted the six-year campaign to stop the controversial £40million development planned for woodland beside Loch Lomond.

After 155,000 letters of objection, a marathon hearing of arguments for and against the development, the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park rejected the planning application, saying it did not comply with environmental and nature conservation policies.

But the developers appealed the decision to the Scottish Government's Inquiry Reporter who has now given it the go-ahead subject to certain legal grounds.

Local campaigners have vowed to keep up the fight and are urging anyone who objects to the development to sign the online letter on the Scottish Greens website - <https://greens.scot/LochLomond> - this will be sent directly to the Scottish Government minister responsible for planning; and to also contact your local MSP – Jackie Baillie for those living in Dumbarton and the Vale and Marie McNair for the Clydebank area – to ask them to put pressure in Parliament.



## Roman Fest

Join Hydra Arts for the first performance festival to explore the role of the Romans in the area.

Their Roman Fest community festival on June 28 in Old Kilpatrick offers a range of interactive arts opportunities to get involved in – and they're all FREE!

From music and rhythms, to dance, poetry and guided walks, to Roman re-enactment and even a community feast, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Find out more and sign up for an event at [www.hydraarts.org/roman-fest-programme](http://www.hydraarts.org/roman-fest-programme)

## Dumbarton Castle New Members Offer

If you love the area's history and heritage then this exciting new offer from Dumbarton Castle Society will be right up your street.

The local community group is passionate to get more people visiting Dumbarton's iconic castle and has teamed up with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to encourage more local visitors.

By becoming a Castle Society member (£20 for individual & £30 for family membership – two adults & two children) you can enjoy free access to the castle and all events organised by HES in Dumbarton Castle.

To find out more visit [www.dumbartoncastle.co.uk](http://www.dumbartoncastle.co.uk)

## Trace Your Ancestors

A range of historical records about West Dunbartonshire and its residents dating back to the 17th century have been made available to view online for the first time.

The information gives a fascinating insight into what life was like for residents from as early as 1615, with documents including school records over a 90-year period; a petty crimes log from Dumbarton Tolbooth – the local jail before Dumbarton Prison was built in 1824; along with a beautifully illustrated record of employees from the 1901 Denny Employee register.

Also available are details of births, deaths, marriages, and military records.

The Council's Arts and Heritage department teamed up with Ancestry to make the collection more accessible.

It means that people from all over the world can research via the Ancestry site while residents can access the digital records for free when using PCs in any West Dunbartonshire Council library.





# CLYDESiDER NEWS



## New Faces at Clydesider

There have been a lot of changes at Clydesider HQ already this year as we launch new projects and welcome new members to our team.

In April Kayleigh Hirst joined us as our Heritage Lead. She has hit the ground running meeting local groups and individuals who we hope will be involved with our 'In Peace & Revolution' heritage project and organising its launch event. Read more about the project on page 26.

We are also excited to have Kevin Monaghan and Rebecca Scolley join the team this month. In fact,

Kevin is re-joining us but in a different capacity as he was one of Clydesider's founding volunteers and designed the magazine pre-pandemic. He will be taking on the Community Media Lead role and helping develop Clydesider TV. Rebecca will also be working with Clydesider TV as our new Community Media support worker.

## Clydesider Summer School

Ever thought about volunteering for Clydesider but not sure you had the skills to get involved?

You may be surprised to learn most of our volunteers started that way and we provided basic media training and support – now they fill every issue with interesting stories.

With the start of Clydesider TV and our new multi-media heritage project, we're extending this training to cover film-making and podcasting.

We're now taking names for our Clydesider Summer School community media sessions which will run throughout July and August. All workshops are FREE and equipment and travel costs will be provided.

To find out more and reserve a space please email [jenny@clydesider.org](mailto:jenny@clydesider.org)



## Clydebank Co-operative Grocery Stores



### Sylvania Way Non Food / Express Grocery

2 Sylvania Way South  
Clydebank, G81 1EA  
0141 952 2000

### Kilbowie Road Grocery

393 Kilbowie Road  
Clydebank, G81 2TX  
0141 435 7700

### Faifley Road Grocery

258 Faifley Road  
Clydebank, G81 5EH  
0141 435 7711

### GWR Grocery

2141 - 2143 Gt Western Road  
Glasgow, G13 2XX  
0141 435 7708

### Dalmuir Grocery

8 Dunn Street  
Clydebank, G81 4BQ  
0141 435 7705

### Hardgate Grocery

580 Kilbowie Road  
Clydebank, G81 6QU  
0141 435 7727

### Parkhall Grocery

138 Duntocher Road  
Clydebank, G81 3NQ  
0141 435 7706



# A CALL TO PEACE

*Words by Layla Blackwell  
Photos by Charlie Sherry*



I shall pass this way but once;  
any good that I can do  
or any kindness I can show  
to any human being;  
let me do it now,  
for I shall not pass this way again.

I sat looking over the beauty of the gardens before me. Tulips of every colour stand watch from the borders of the flowerbeds. On such a sunny day it's difficult not to feel grateful.

The inscription on the Statue of St Margaret reads: "I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again."

Those words are both a solemn truth of the journey of the patients that come here for end of life care and the ethos of those who work here.

I had come to interview the Chief Executive Officer of St Margaret's Hospice Clydebank, Sister Rita Dawson MBE.

With a title like that I couldn't help but feel nervous. It was clear even before I met her that she was a force to be reckoned with. Loved and deeply respected by patients and staff alike. I didn't know what to expect.

The second Sister Rita entered the room, I felt her confident presence. She took her seat at the head of the table. A position I had no doubt she had earned.

I was instantly intimidated, and it took me a moment to compose myself enough to look at her face. The colour of her eyes matched the blue of her uniform. Her gaze held experience and compassion equally. I clicked the button of my recorder.

"When I came here first there were just two wards - that was it."

The original building of Saint Margaret's Hospice opened in 1950 and was the first Hospice in Scotland.

The current Hospice building was opened on September 29, 1971 and was purpose-built for the needs of patients at that time. Since then, it has gone through several renovations including the addition of the second floor in 1993, which Sister Rita oversaw.

"That's what I did, since I came, I put on the second floor. We had a lot of fundraising to do."

The whole focus of the Hospice is to create a homely and tranquil atmosphere, despite the clinical needs. It's a very bright and welcoming space for relatives to enjoy quality time with their family without the pressure of providing care. The Hospice has an on-site restaurant where you can enjoy some time admiring the gardens.

"The environment itself is very conducive to tranquility, to peace, serenity. That's what we try to make sure people experience," Sister Rita added.

The Hospice supports people from diagnosis onwards - both patients and families.



Covid brought new challenges to this family-orientated environment, and to overcome the isolation for their residents they now use more technology to keep in contact with families.

Sister Rita continues to dedicate herself to ensuring residents enjoy the best quality of life possible and she is currently overseeing a new renovation to the building, projected to cost around £5 million.

"The demand [for services] is still growing. We have to redevelop the whole first floor again."

Despite the increased need for the services provided by the Hospice, government funding for charities has decreased while costs for things like National Insurance has increased, adding to the pressure on the Hospice funds.

The new build will largely be raised by donations and community support.

"We have always relied on donations and people's support to help us achieve what we've achieved so far," Sister Rita explained.

"We have created this type of environment so we can continue to support people in the most difficult and challenging time in their lives."

The focus here is very much on life and the highest quality of the care for the community here - and it does feel like a community.

You can tell Sister Rita herself demands the highest of standards, but she does so with a clear compassion and drive. She has so much wisdom that makes her invaluable to residents, families, and staff.

"Health is the greatest gift of all, we take it for granted," she continued. "Always be grateful for the day you've had and never presume that you'll have tomorrow."

"Life is for living, we should be living it."

"And we should also be praying because the world is in a bad way at the moment."

"We can't solve all the problems, but we can do something in our own little world. It's about helping people at a crucial time in their lives."



I asked what her advice would be to anyone wanting to make change and advocate for others.

Her answer was simple and clear.

“Come to the Hospice and volunteer. The Hospice changes peoples’ lives.”

In addition to her care for the residents and the families, Sister Rita has a great drive to help young people overcome adversity and become their best self.

“I went into nursing because I wanted to help people. That passion and drive has never left me.”

My morning with Sister Rita and Saint Margaret's Hospice was a joy and has completely changed my perspective on the care they provide.

They do so much more than I realised.

Services include a day centre, an education centre, a hydrotherapy pool, palliative care and care for elderly residents with complex needs.

They provide vital support for patients and families from diagnosis onwards.

They give hope at a time when it is needed the most.

*If you want to support the work of Sister Rita and Saint Margaret's Hospice email [fundraising@smh.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@smh.org.uk) or call 0141 435 7018. To find out more about the support available call 0141 9521141.*



## MARIE MCNAIR MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for  
Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## NEED HELP OR ADVICE?

Every day I help constituents with their problems. I will always do everything I can to support you.

As your local MSP you can contact me by email or phone. I also regularly hold Advice Surgeries across the Constituency where I am available to listen and help. You can book an appointment by emailing or calling me.

Email: [marie.mcnair.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:marie.mcnair.msp@parliament.scot)

Tel: 0141 737 8010



# THE WEE CHATTY CAFÉ

Out for a walk or a cycle and looking for a pit stop to rest weary legs and refuel – then check out the Wee Chatty Café in Old Kilpatrick.

The brightly painted shipping container beside the Saltings is hard to miss and there is always a friendly smile and banter available alongside the rolls and sausage, ice cream and coffee.

The story behind the Wee Chatty Café is an interesting one...

The name may ring a bell as it is part of OKFP Hub CIC social enterprise. It also supports Old Kilpatrick Food Parcel's charity.

The 40ft shipping container was purchased in 2021 and a planning application submitted, but due to Covid delays it took a further two years before approval was granted.

Finally on April 1 2023 the Wee Chatty Café team opened for business and remain open seven days a week 10am - 2pm.

Gordon Cummings runs the Wee Chatty Café with five regular volunteers and one employee – Sharon Marr.

Sharon started as a volunteer with the charity back in 2022.

She explained: "I lost my husband through cancer, and I wasn't going out much, then one day I discovered the Chatty Café when it was in Station Road, I loved the atmosphere and thought I could do this and get out again."

After the move to Napier Hall, Sharon started working in the Wee Chatty Café and loves her new role.

"You get to meet so many new people every day, and also get to know the regulars. I had just moved to the village and didn't know anyone.

"Here I have time to talk to folk and get to know people – many of them like myself – it's such a lovely atmosphere, we need somewhere like this in the village."



**"I REALLY ENJOY BEING AT THE WEE CHATTY CAFÉ, IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE PART OF THE COMMUNITY."**

If you pop along on a Saturday morning, you'll be greeted by an all-male volunteer team – Gordon, Christopher, and Lennon.

Gordon, co-founder of the charity, loves showing the young men how to make home-made soup and the pair are enjoying learning new skills.

Chris, 16, initially started volunteering for his Duke of Edinburgh while 17-year-old Lennon is keen to get some experience in the care sector before university.

Chris said: "I first started volunteering with the Chatty Café two years ago for my Duke of Edinburgh, going out with Gordon to collect supplies from the supermarkets.

"Then the Wee Chatty Café opened, and I've been there ever since.

"You meet so many nice people from different backgrounds, get a chat and a laugh. It is a great charity, the amount of work they do and the number of people they help – I love being part of it."

A visit to the Chatty Café also prompted Lennon to volunteer. "Maureen showed me round and I was really impressed with it so asked if I could get involved.

"I really enjoy being at the Wee Chatty Café, it feels like you're part of the community. We get used to our regulars and get chatting to them, people have a nice attitude towards it."

📞 07578769485

✉️ [theweetchattycafe@gmail.com](mailto:theweetchattycafe@gmail.com)



# Women Against State Pension (And Other) Injustice

*By Laura Giannini*

When the Clydesider asked if I'd be interested in writing an article about the WASPI women, the first thing I said was "it won't be positive." They said, "write what you know and how you feel."

What I and most WASPIs (Women Against State Pension Injustice) feel, is furious, frustrated and worthless.

## Why?

Because in 2010 one group of women, who did not have a chance to properly prepare, were made to bear the brunt of all the changes to the pension system, instead of, as originally proposed in 1995, the changes being spread across a longer period.

Unjust said WASPIs. They asked for compensation.

Here I want to bring in MSP Jackie Ballie as she has been a strong supporter of the women who lost years from their pensions.

She said: "When I became fully aware of the predicament of these women, I wanted to find out how

many locals were involved. What was the reality of the situation?"

Mrs Ballie and her staff organised an open meeting in the Concord Centre in Dumbarton.

The MSP said: "I was stunned by how many women turned up. The place just wasn't big enough, women were standing in the aisles, out in the foyer..."

"I began to perceive that full re-instatement would never be agreed. The sums were just too large.

"At the same time, it was more than obvious that these women had been unjustly treated. Some compensation had to be due."

Governments dragged their feet.

Keir Starmer, in opposition, told the Conservatives to get on with paying compensation. But in government told Parliament that 90% of people knew of the pension age change.

Mark, he said 'people', not women born in the 1950s; nor did he say when, how many and what demographic were polled.

Statistical vagueness can be so very useful.

There is such a difference between asking a whole range of ages about their awareness of potential pension reforms in 2020 say, or asking 50-year-old women in 2010 'are you aware you can't retire till you are 66?'

December 2024 the new government, with the first ever female Chancellor of the Exchequer - how's that for irony - dealt the women born in the 1950s, another heavy, if not wholly unexpected, blow.

Compensation for our claim of State  
Pension Inequality was found not to be "a fair or proportionate use of taxpayers' money." Presumably none of those women were taxpayers!

Yet again, women are the easy target.

Liz Daly, West Dunbartonshire WASPI co-ordinator, like me, discovered she would have to wait six years, when she asked about pension arrangements.

She explained: "My husband was very ill, terminally as it turned out, so I decided I would retire as soon as I turned sixty.

"You cannot imagine the shock at being told I would have to wait six years. I was devastated. How would we manage?"

Sometime later Liz, now a widow, went to a WASPI meeting and decided to get involved.

"The stories we heard...

I can't tell you. It seemed impossible that these supposedly clever people didn't understand how devastating the changes were."

Being less charitable, I say they knew, they just didn't care.

Mrs Daly was in court when the first WASPI case on which millions of us 60-year olds had pinned our hopes of a re-evaluation of the Government's brutal blow to our life plans was dismissed.

She told me: "The hurt was almost physical, all around, inside and out, women started sobbing and screaming."

Perhaps the only comment worth repeating was Jeremy Corbyn's "beyond disappointing."

Still there was a glimmer of fading hope - the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

In March 2024, after much delay, the PHSO found the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had 'failed to provide accurate, adequate and timely information' about the change to their pension arrangements for millions of women born in the 1950s.

The PHSO ruled this amounted to maladministration and recommended compensation of between £1,000 and £2,950 per woman.

A spit compared to the £40,000+ women had lost in the six years of withheld pension payments.

Yet, the same ministers who claim they must accept their pay rise to almost £94,000 per annum, because they 'must accept the decision of the independent body', had no hesitation in utterly dismissing the independent PHSO's view that women should receive a few crumbs for the injustice suffered.

Mrs Baillie said she would have liked to see the Scottish Government create a special welfare benefit, "at least for those most adversely affected."

For my part I say politicians – left, right and nationalist – and the feminist movement, have utterly failed women.

A quarter of the way through the 21st century and women's rights and support are being reduced or removed.

There is little or no care about the increase in danger to women. The official gender pay gap is rising - in 2024 it was at 9%. This means for every £1 a man earns, a woman earns 91p.

It seems the only equality we can achieve is to lose the extra pension years meant to compensate for child-bearing, caring roles, a disproportion of unpaid home management work and, perhaps, for the lower pay women receive for the work they do.

Now, honesty compels me, reluctantly, to admit a pension reform was necessary.

Women in Europe are living, on average five years longer than men, while the birth-rate is falling.

This, together with rising unemployment, means there are not, will not be enough people paying into pensions to pay for the longer payout period that comes with longevity.



To conclude this article, with my inner child screaming “it’s not fair,” I’d like to suggest women allow themselves to be shafted, metaphorically spat upon, because they do not react en masse, they do not stand all together against the injustices done to them.

I put it to the reader that women are a slightly larger group than men (50.5% to 49.5%) and, in general, cover more than one job; so if they went on strike, refused paid and unpaid work, the country would soon feel the bite.

It is my belief if only women would stand together, back other women, we could make a better world for ourselves and those who will follow.

Yet, as we see with our female Chancellor, solidarity is a microscopically rare commodity amongst women.

Almost 100 years after we obtained the vote, after 120 years of campaigning for equal rights, our wages are lower than men’s, job equality a myth, rapes are increasing.

Time to stand woman to woman for improvement for women.

Perhaps the WASPI women will continue the fight against the many injustices – after all they’ve had enough practice.



# Clydebank Co-operative

Funeral Directors

Always here for you in your time of need



11 Hume Street Clydebank G81 1XL

24 hour service

**0141 952 1573**

[www.clydebankfuneral.co.uk](http://www.clydebankfuneral.co.uk)

# COMMUNITY LINKS SCOTLAND

**Community Links Scotland**



**REGENERATION SERVICES**



As a local Clydebank based community regeneration charity, we have been supporting the West Dunbartonshire community for 23 years. We primarily work with community-led Housing Associations to develop and deliver projects that support their tenants who are most vulnerable to social isolation and financial hardship, and we support a number of projects that seek to engage wider communities within local activities. We also support non-profit community organisations, helping them to develop, to secure funding and to deliver projects.

We deliver a number of targeted projects that support the local West Dunbartonshire Community – such as the West Dunbartonshire Energy Advice Service

## ENERGY ADVICE SERVICE

This service is available to anyone who is experiencing hardship as a result of their fuel bill, and will help households to:

- Ensure they are accessing all relevant financial support.
- Ensure they are using their heating systems in the most cost-effective way.
- Provide information and advice on energy efficiencies within their home.
- Provide advocacy for those in dispute or debt with energy providers.

Our energy advocacy support helps households to access eligible energy supplier initiatives such

as Hardship Grant Funding Support, Warm Home Discount and the Priority Services Register. In addition, we work closely with the Fuel Bank Foundation to enable our service to allocate emergency fuel voucher support to households who are in danger of falling into self-disconnect and have no other avenue of assistance open to them.

We have access to a small support fund and can assist households to access small scale energy efficient items for their homes, such as air fryers or heated drying racks.

We also seek to maximise the household income and refer to our partners to arrange for a benefit health check to be carried out. This ensures that the household is receiving all the eligible benefits that they are entitled to.

Our support can be provided by in-home visit or, if preferred, we can offer assistance remotely by phone or video call. We also have drop-in energy surgeries in venues across West Dunbartonshire.

We seek to work with organisations across West Dunbartonshire in order that we can identify and engage with households who otherwise may fall through the cracks of support. If you would like to work in partnership with us or wish to arrange for energy support, please contact us:

**Office:** 0141 952 4382

**Email:** [energy@comlinks.org.uk](mailto:energy@comlinks.org.uk)

# Some Heroes Wear Lab Coats

By Emily Fraser

SAVE THE PLANET



**N**ot all environmental activists stand on a protest line - some of them stand in front of a school class.

Vale of Leven Academy hero Stephen Halkett mixes all his favourite elements for his latest experiment, a kids' comedy show on fighting climate change.

In 'Save The Planet', he demonstrates an important hypothesis: your audience will listen and learn, when you make 'em laugh.

I must declare my bias here. Mr. Halkett, originally from Clydebank, was a legend back when I was a VOLA pupil - everyone remembers him as "sound" and a great teacher, that's no mean feat.

I was lucky to attend two of his comedy shows at The Stand in Glasgow, one for kids and one for the grown-ups, afterwards we chatted about the method to his creative 'madness'.

Physics teaching was a logical choice for a young Stephen, between his teachers in fourth year picking up on his natural questioning of Newton's Laws and telling him, "you're a physicist" and the discovery, made as a member of the Boys Brigade, that he likes speaking in public.

So, armed with a dual BSc in Physics & Mathematics from Strathclyde Uni and fresh from Jordanhill College he launched into the profession at the Vale Academy. Interestingly, beginning with the Maths department.

"Every teacher is a performer. You are up there, performing. And teachers can bring comedy into class, it gets pupils' attention."

He still teaches in the lab every week, but Mr. Halkett is now Principal Teacher of Pastoral Care in Fleming House, with 150 pupils under his wing.

It sounds like a relentlessly busy role with a lot of responsibilities

- offering one-to-one support for young people, being the contact for parents and other agencies, delivering Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE), to name just a few.

"I'm there to help every pupil feel happy, confident and comfortable at school, so they have the chance to do their best work. And we have a huge drive to make sure each individual leaving VOLA is heading towards a suitable positive destination."



Stephen was switched on to comedy as a hobby after getting loads of compliments for his humorous 'Best Man' speeches at his brother's and his best friend's weddings, so he studied 'Introduction to Stand-Up Comedy' with Charlie Ross, (finalist of the Scottish Comedian of the Year 2010) and performed in the 'end of course' show at Maggie May's in Glasgow.

A good reception there amplified his confidence.

Later, he joined an advanced training in stand-up comedy skills led by international comic Viv Gee

at his alma mater Strathclyde's Centre for Lifelong Learning, and has run with every opportunity to boost his talent since then.

"I asked Viv for a shot at hosting, and she let me compère the graduation gig of my comedy class [sharing the stage with a now-famous classmate, professional comedian Susie McCabe, among many others].

"My compèring went down really well, and I've got Viv Gee to thank for introducing me to the world of stand-up. We stayed friends and she's such a supportive mentor."

Stephen's grown-up set is very funny, reflecting on his day job with a Weegie school teacher's point of view and recounting hilarious (fictionalised) interactions in science class, before branching out to other topics. People around me seemed to love that.

Now we're adults - well aware that jobs and kids are stressful and ridiculous at times - it's comical hearing inside a teacher's mind, you see them in a new light.

From beginners' open mics and traveling to Edinburgh for a five-minute spot at the Beehive Inn, to earning longer time slots at The Stand and playing comedy festivals around the country, Stephen has been honing the grown-up material alongside becoming a successful MC.

"I love DJ'ing young people's events where I can add the fun factor - sports days, awards nights, proms, fundraisers. And when the Primary kids get to visit 'the big school' for the first time, I meet them as magical 'Professor Heisenhoff' and engage with a bit of science lab wizardry, spells and potions.

"It sparks curiosity and helps put them at ease (well, except for that one kid who cried thinking I was a real, scary wizard).

"Then one year I watched a Comedy Club for Kids show at

the Edinburgh Fringe and thought, I could maybe do something like that, so I started writing 'Save the Planet' which took off from there."

Watching the show, my partner and I had a great laugh and noticed parents enjoying 'class' just as much as their kids.

Games, prizes, dancing to music and jokes about 'bottom burps' go down well no matter how old you get, we're all big kids at heart and Stephen knows that better than most.

It's scary talking about climate change and what to do about it, especially for kids, but it's too important not to and he managed to get the message across with humour and crucially, with hope.

'The Professor' is now a household name on the kids' comedy circuit - hosting annual Christmas and Halloween shows at the Stand, being a regular booking with Comedy Club for Kids, and performing his own show at venues like Glasgow's Tall Ship.

But Mr. Halkett still has more aims and objectives. For example, to headline and host at the Stand's grown-up comedy shows, and who knows, perhaps - by popular demand - a Rikki Fulton tribute act? He's often had the compliment that they look alike.

"It's a bit of a phenomenon, teachers becoming stand-up comedians... There's a lot of us. Any colleagues with a funny bone should give it a go. Not only is it a release from the day job, you'll find yourself

taking valuable skills, like confidence and public speaking, back to help your pupils."

For Stephen, appropriately, life is like Newton's first law.

Here's someone who stays constantly in motion - literally and metaphorically - and I feel like no external force will stop him. Whether moving pupils to enjoy school and thrive, or moving comedy audiences of all ages to use their science brain, he's fuelled by fun and passion.

Stephen's energy has enabled him to combine his two worlds, in his unique method, producing impressive results and ultimately adding more power to what should be our shared mission: to Save the Planet.

#### ***Look out for Stephen in these places -***

***MC of Run Loch Lomond (10k & 5k) 2025, Moss o' Balloch, on 21st June from 9.30am (Facebook)***

***[www.thestand.co.uk/whats-on/glasgow](http://www.thestand.co.uk/whats-on/glasgow)***

***[www.comedyclub4kids.co.uk](http://www.comedyclub4kids.co.uk)***

***[www.thetallship.com/your-visit/what-s-on-events](http://www.thetallship.com/your-visit/what-s-on-events)***

***[www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com)***

***[www.glasgowcomedyfestival.com](http://www.glasgowcomedyfestival.com)***

## **Autism brain**

*By Lisa Murray*

My autism brain won't switch off  
I close my eyes but all I see is darkness  
I open them again, my eyes are tired  
My heart beats to the rhythm of the drum  
Pick an animal is what she says  
My autism brain won't shut off  
I can't get my mind to go there  
Why won't my mind go there?  
Do I have an animal guide?  
I don't really like animals  
So maybe not  
I can't get in touch with it all  
Why won't my mind switch off?  
I sit here with a drum on my lap  
I don't even want to drum  
My autism brain won't switch off  
So I'll sit here in silence  
My autism won't switch off  
My heart beats to the rhythm of the drum  
My autism won't switch off



**SEARCH  
AND APPLY**

**WEST COLLEGE  
SCOTLAND**  
Clydebank | Greenock | Paisley

**August  
Start  
Courses  
Now Open**

**we  
are  
West**



**“We’re now shipping internationally, thanks to Business Gateway’s support.”**

Jayne Lasley  
**Founder, Fairlie Curved**

Connect with Business Gateway and discover all the services and support that could help your business thrive.

We’re in your corner

Connect with us at [bgateway.com](http://bgateway.com)

 **business  
gateway**

# My Journey from Sri Lanka to Scotland: *A Dream Seven Years in the Making*

By Suhaila



**F**or seven years, I waited. Not just waited, but held my breath—hoping, wondering, fearing.

Every decision I made in Sri Lanka felt like a question mark. Should I buy these school textbooks? Should I enroll in this course? Should I just do what I want here? Or will I regret it if I leave tomorrow?

Because when you're a refugee, you're not just in limbo physically. You're in emotional, mental, and spiritual limbo, too. You're stuck in a place that doesn't let you fully stay or fully leave.

What I mean when I say we couldn't fully stay is that we weren't allowed to work, we couldn't open a bank account, and I struggled with their language, Sinhalese. It was hard to build a life under those conditions, so no matter how long I was there, it never truly felt like home.

And worst of all, I had no idea when things would ever change. It felt like living the same nightmare every single day, with no end in sight.

I was in Sri Lanka for almost seven years and I lived in the shadows of uncertainty. As refugees, we were often spoken of like we'd be leaving "soon," though that word quickly lost meaning.

From 2020 onward, every year became another mark on the calendar of waiting.

COVID-19 came. Wars broke out. Hope shrank. Friends, I had shared laughter and struggle with were suddenly resettled — off to their new lives, their new futures. And I remained behind.

2024 was the hardest year. I felt lost, stuck, and unmotivated. I didn't feel like anything anymore. There were moments I questioned whether my dreams had an expiry date.

But something kept me going. A quiet voice inside that said: 'Dreams come true. Maybe not now, but someday.'

And then, someday arrived.

In February 2025, I landed in Scotland — my resettlement, my fresh start, my long-awaited miracle.

But it wasn't just a new country. It was the first time I felt like I could finally breathe. I could finally plan. I could finally live.

Now, I live in Clydebank—a place that has already felt more like home than anywhere else. I received my first bank card—something so ordinary, yet something I once considered impossible. I'm also writing a book, something I always dreamed of but never believed I could achieve in Sri Lanka due to language barriers and publishing limitations. But here, I'm not just writing. I'm planning to publish.

And that's the beauty of all of this:

In Sri Lanka, I couldn't plan more than a day ahead. In Scotland, I'm planning the future.



I used to feel guilty for feeling hopeless, because I had a roof over my head and food to eat. But what I've learned is that it's okay to struggle, even when you're surviving. That doesn't make you ungrateful. It makes you human.

But the biggest lesson of all?

Things happen at the right time.

If I had come here earlier, I might not have been ready. But now, I'm at the right age, with the right mindset, and a heart full of dreams ready to take flight.

Scotland isn't just my new home. It's my second chance.

And I'm finally living the life I dreamed of for seven long years.



# PRIDE OF PLACE

**Words by Amanda Eleftheriades**  
**Photos by Caroline Finn**

What makes you proud of your hometown?

At the start of the year, we put this question to a group of Bankies and provided a variety of creative opportunities for them to share their thoughts.

Together they remembered the town's proud shipbuilding past, the ships horn sounding as Singer's clock chimed in a new year.

The group wanted to celebrate the town's famous folk – Kevin Bridges, Wet, Wet, Wet, football legend John McGinn to name a few.

But what gave them the greatest pride was the so-called 'ordinary' people - those who went the extra mile for their neighbours and community; those who helped survive the dark days of the Blitz and those who brightened up the day with a smile and a song.

Working with Clydesider's Creative Lead they tried their hand at creating collages, lino prints and hand lettering and trawled through history books, magazines and archive photos to capture these people and places in a range of art forms.

For some it was the first time they had used these creative techniques.

One participant explained why she got involved: "Now that I've retired after having such a serious job, I just want to do things like this that are fun."

And fellow participant Frances said: "I hadn't done anything like this before, it was great learning the different crafts and seeing it all come together."

All the group enjoyed sharing memories and learning about the town's past together.

"I remember standing outside the baths in your towel because you only got an hour then had to get back in the queue."

"I remember the horns on the Clyde on Hogmanay."

"We had a big street party the day of the last tram."

And as the weeks progressed their artwork was collated and used to create a final 'Pride in Clydebank' mural which is now available for all to enjoy in Dalmuir Barclay Church.

"It looks amazing, I'm really proud of it," said Tracie, one of the participants.

The project was funded by the Flightpath Fund and West Dunbartonshire's Community Chest Fund and the mural forms part of our new 'In Peace & Revolution' heritage project which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

And it provided the perfect backdrop to launch our new heritage project at the end of May (read all about this on page 26).

The room was packed with local activists, history enthusiasts and creatives, swapping stories and ideas for us to work on.

So, by the time we host West Dunbartonshire's first local authority-wide Heritage Festival next May we expect to have uncovered even more reasons for people to be proud of their hometowns and villages in Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale!



**SMA**  
SALVAGED METAL ART

### **FIREPITS • £45**

AVAILABLE IN TWO SIZES (16 & 17 INCHES)

### **HORSESHOE DOOR NUMBERS FROM £20**

### **CLUTCH CLOCKS • £50**

@Salvaged Metal Art

@Salvaged Metal Art

EMAIL: salvagedmetalart736@gmail.com



**Welcome to  
Dalmuir Pharmacy**

#### **Our services include:**

- Free prescription collection & ordering via our app
- Free NHS Scotland Pharmacy First services – ask in store for details
- Private services including travel vaccinations available in store

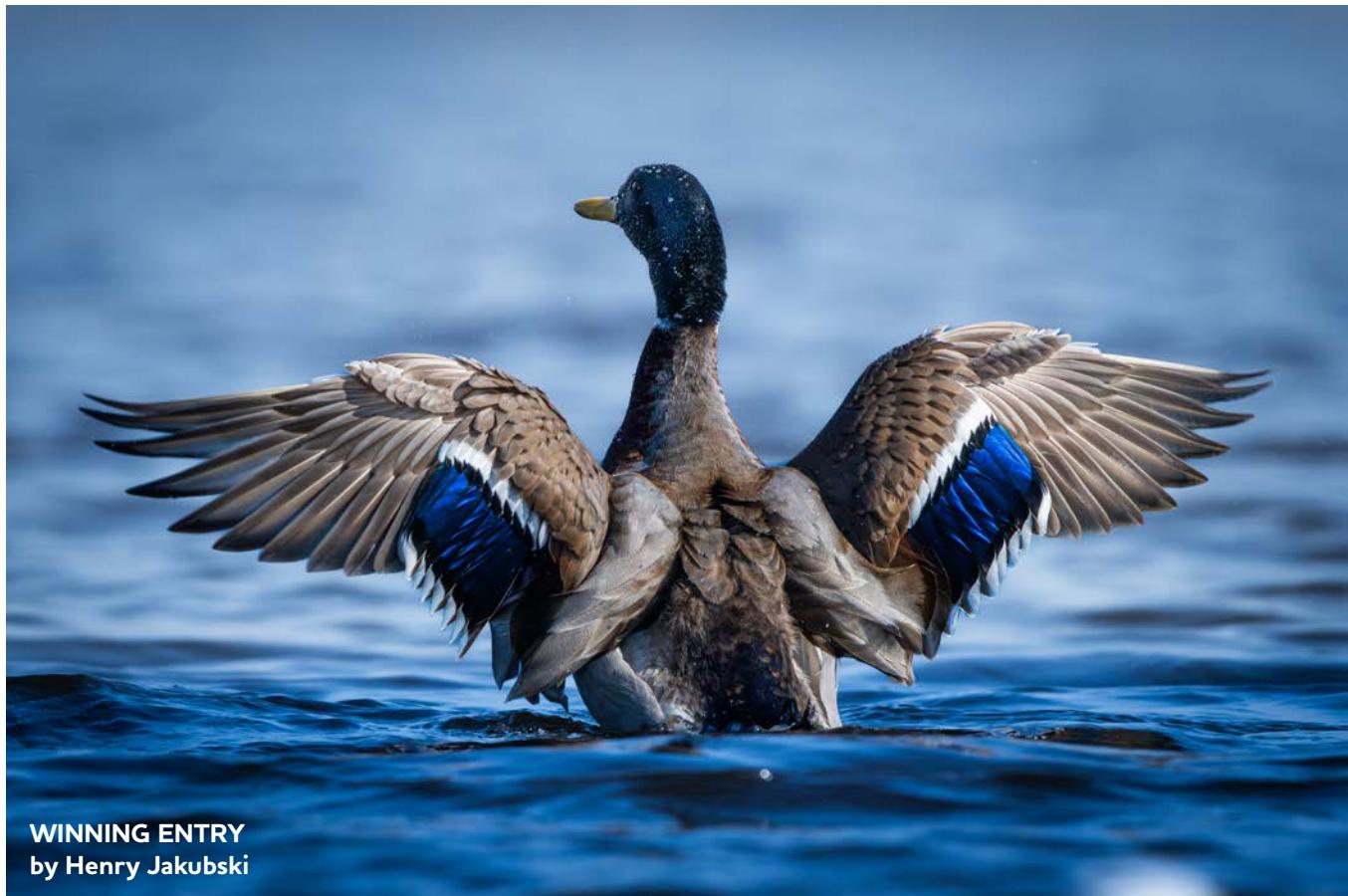
Scan our QR code to save our contact details and view all our links

**DalmuirPharmacy.co.uk  
0141 952 1285**



770/772 Dumbarton Road Dalmuir G81 4BY

# PHOTO COMPETITION - ANiMAL MAGIC



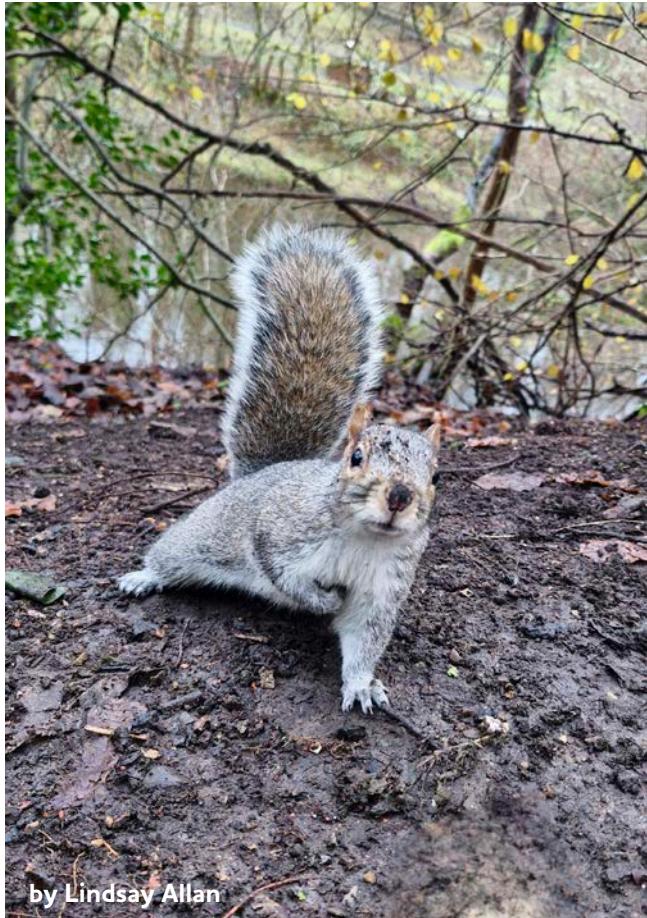
Thanks to everyone who entered, our volunteers and staff all enjoyed looking at those great animal photos - it was tough picking a winner!

Keep an eye on our social media for a slideshow of all entries.

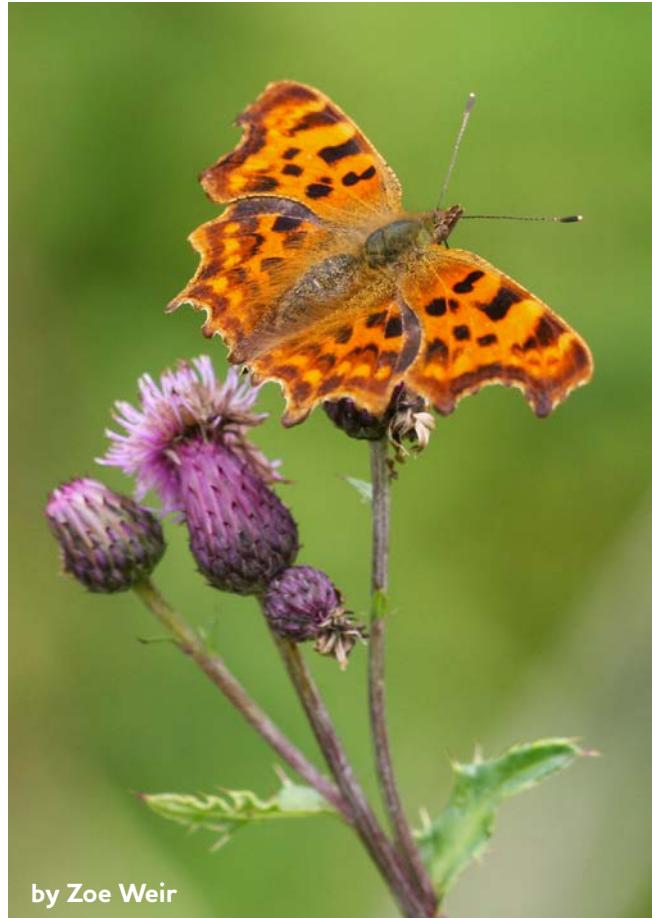
The next competition theme is Night Time - see pages 40/41 for some tips plus details on how to enter.

**FOLLOW**  
**CLYDESIDER**





by Lindsay Allam



by Zoe Weir

## *Sponsored Editorial*

# BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES

Knowes Housing Association Ltd (KHA) is a community based social landlord committed to its mission of providing good quality affordable housing and services which meet the needs and aspirations of the community we serve. The Association owns and manages 1056 properties and provides factoring services to 562 customers situated mainly in the Faifley area of Clydebank. We have 22 members of staff and an annual turnover of £5m.

We currently have vacancies on our Board of Management, and we are looking for people who share our purpose, vision and values and who are passionate about the provision of good quality affordable housing to our customers.

This is not a paid position, but all expenses associated with attending meetings will be



reimbursed. Experience in the housing sector is not a requirement as training and support will be provided. The commitment we require from you is one evening meeting per month which can be attended in person at our office or from your home via Zoom.

If you are interested in joining our team, please email [asweeney@knowes.org](mailto:asweeney@knowes.org) attaching your Curriculum Vitae. To arrange an informal discussion regarding what is involved in being a board member at Knowes Housing Association, then please telephone 01389 877752 and ask to speak to Amy.

KHA is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

# In Peace & Revolution

*Words by Kayleigh Hirst*

*Photos courtesy of West Dunbartonshire Council Arts & Heritage Services and Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore*

**I**t seems that however far back you go in history, the people of West Dunbartonshire have embodied the spirit of community activism - banding together to look after each other, and to make a positive difference in the world.

From the strong-willed people who stood up against the injustices of high rents and low wages in the 1920s, to the communities who decades later established local housing associations to address issues with poor housing and lack of facilities.

There were the workers like those at Singers who fought for better wages and conditions when industry was booming (and often paid a high price for raising their heads above the parapet).

And later, those like the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and Plessey factory workers who fought to protect local jobs as industry declined and they were under threat of closure.

Then as industry and jobs did gradually leave the area, there were the community groups who set themselves up to make sure people had access to benefits, training and social opportunities during those challenging times.

It's a need that still exists today, with dedicated members of the community and volunteers running foodbanks and support groups right across West Dunbartonshire.

There have also been those who have campaigned to protect the natural environment, from communities who stood up for the right to access common land when landowners tried to prevent them in the early 20th century, to the establishment of community gardens right across West Dunbartonshire, which as well as protecting vital green space also play an important part in raising awareness of climate change.

There are so many examples it's hard to list them all... And the spirit of community activism is very much alive and well today.



This year, Clydesider's theme is all about activism and we've been hearing lots of examples of people making a difference in their communities, by noticing a problem and doing something about it.

These stories are an important part of the heritage of West Dunbartonshire's diverse communities, but they are ones that aren't often told.

That's where the idea for our new heritage project came from.

*'In Peace and Revolution: Learning from our People's Past'* is all about capturing and celebrating stories of community activism across West Dunbartonshire, past and present.

It's about making sure we keep these stories alive so that future generations have the chance to learn how ordinary people in West Dunbartonshire have had an extraordinary impact on their communities and the wider world.

We hope to create opportunities for people to connect with the inspiring stories of activism from this area's proud past, and the things people are doing today to make a difference. And who knows, it might even inspire folk to take up their own cause!

So, what will the project involve?

Well, if you've enjoyed watching our Take a Minute films online, then good news - there'll be more to look forward to soon, with new films telling the often-



overlooked stories of local people including political pioneers and charismatic campaigners.

If you fancy getting involved in film-making, photography or podcasting yourself, you'll have the chance to take part in skills workshops focused on capturing stories for the project.

Perhaps you have a family member who was involved in campaigning or an industrial strike? Why not get involved and share their story!

We'll also be offering the opportunity to learn heritage skills, so if you'd like to find out about the fascinating things you can uncover in local archives or discover how you can improve information about West Dunbartonshire's history on Wikipedia, there'll be something for you.

On top of that, we'll be facilitating storytelling sessions which explore aspects of community activism in creative ways, organising heritage walks across West Dunbartonshire, and creating an original photo exhibition celebrating activists and activism.

So there really will be something for everyone!

Alongside the project, over the coming months we'll be working to boost the profile of West Dunbartonshire's fascinating wider heritage. We know local people are passionate about the area's past, but for a place with so much history, it can often be overlooked.

So, we look forward to the chance to shine a light on lots of different heritage-related activities taking place across the area and inspiring people to get involved as part of WD's first ever heritage festival in May 2026.

In the meantime, we'd love to hear from you if you'd like to get involved in the In Peace and Revolution project. If you know of an example of community activism we should include, you'd like to get involved in the project or just want to find out more, please contact Kayleigh: [kayleigh@clydesider.org](mailto:kayleigh@clydesider.org)

# #MORETHANYOUTHINK

## MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE MARK SCOTT LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE AWARD

*Words & Photos by Ben Pryde*



In April I humbly accepted my certificate of completion of the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award at the Radisson Blu on Argyle Street.

When sitting back down in my seat after receiving this certificate, I fondly reminisced on the six-month journey - from canoeing across Loch Eil, to countless community project meetings, to the project delivery in Drumchapel and to the lifelong friendships I made with total strangers.

Even now, it's hard to believe this fun, challenging and rewarding experience is all wrapped up in a single sheet of A4 paper.

The Award was built up from the tragic killing of 16-year-old Mark Scott in 1996, who was stabbed in a sectarian attack in Glasgow.

Following this atrocity, in 1998 Mark's parents founded the Award to help young people discover their talents and boost their self-confidence and self-esteem.

And 27 years on, it is still changing young people - like myself - and their lives for the better, showing us we can do anything we pour our heart into.

Myself and my two friends applied for the Award back in May last year, after Steven Elliott, one of the project leaders, came into our school to promote the Award to our year group.

Being for S6-only, we felt it would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. A way to have a good time outside school, gain an honour most Scots don't have and participate in new experiences which were way outside our comfort zones.

The Award is split into two parts - a five-day residential away in Loch Eil Outward Bound Centre near Fort William and a community project delivered in our local area.

We had never met the rest of the people in our group - eight more strangers from Clydebank High and Drumchapel High as well as our own from St Peter the Apostle but as soon as we got on the coach to Loch Eil it was as if we had known each other for years.

We got talking, swapping life stories while playing card games, setting a solid foundation of trust and friendship even before we entered the centre.

Five days of adventure and daunting experiences soon followed; an overnight expedition to the small town of Arisaig where we had to pitch our own tents while camping in a rural area, canoeing across the stretch of Loch Eil and climbing a 12-foot wall just by boosting each other up were a few among many difficult yet fun tasks we were set.

This was coupled with completing a SCQF Level 6 (equivalent to Higher) or Level 7 (equivalent to Advanced Higher) award in Community Leadership just by answering questions in a learning booklet.

The questions helped me understand why the skills learned through the physical tasks could be used to help bolster myself and transfer these skills into later life after high school.

The residential was one of the most enjoyable weeks of my life.

I was out of school but still learning new concepts, building new and existing skills and making friendships with people whom I'd never met before in my life.

To also receive an Advanced Higher-level award for just an extra few hours work was incredible.

And even after the Award was completed we are still a tight-knit group - we will never forget just how much fun we had during those five days.

Moving on after the residential, we were split into two groups of six to plan out and deliver our community projects.

The spec was simple: decide what area we want to focus on, find a community partner to help sponsor and fundraise our efforts, and find ways to actually fundraise our project.

My team decided to clean up a skate park on Southdean Avenue in Drumchapel for our project, selling football cards and having bake sales in order to fundraise.



Through months of meetings in which we planned every tiny detail to meet and succeed in our aims, our hard graft was rewarded with spectacular results at the start of March.

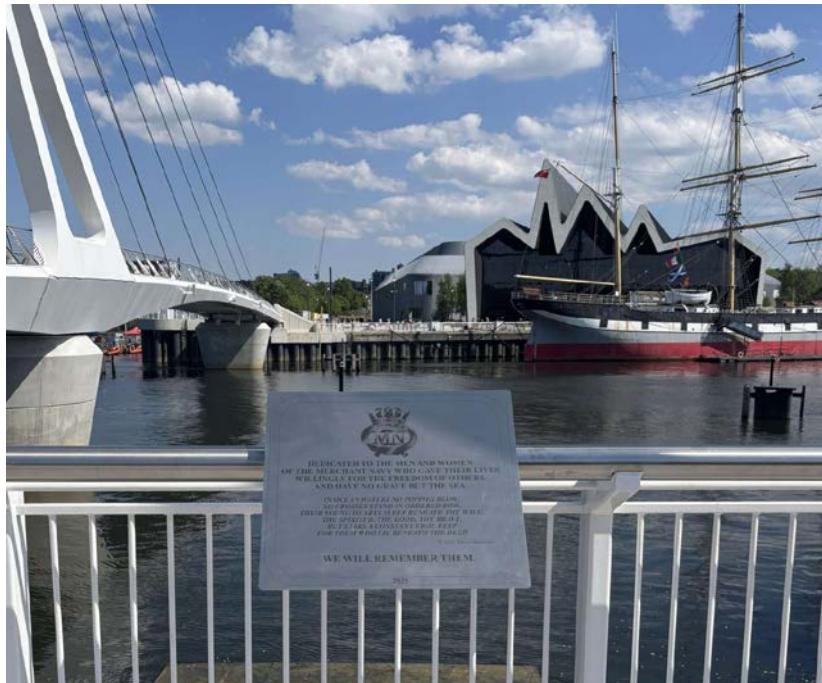
In just four days, the skate park transformed from a barren, mossy area to a bright space spray-painted with kindness, cleared of all the litter and mess we first encountered.

I was stunned at our collective efforts on this transformation and the locals seem to love it. I walked through the park area at the start of May and found no vandalism and no litter - evidence that our clean-up is a respected and acknowledged part of Drumchapel.

I would urge any future S6 to undertake this Award.

It is so, so beneficial to shaping yourself for your future after high school and you learn so many valuable life lessons, so many new skills and you make so many new, lifelong friendships.

The slogan of the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award is so true - it really does help you believe you are #MoreThanYouThink.



# Campaign Honours Lives Lost at Sea

*Words by John Donnelly  
Photos by Mitchell Lindsay*

**O**n an unusually sunny and warm Saturday in early May, I went along to the unveiling of a new memorial plaque at the Govan/Partick Bridge on the banks of the Clyde in Glasgow.

The plaque is to commemorate the approximate 60,000 merchant seamen whose lives were lost in both World Wars and other sad incidents.

Former merchant seaman Iain Lindsay who lives in West Dunbartonshire, led the campaign to commemorate the lives lost at sea.

He explained how it all began: "At a Merchant Navy Association meeting in Glasgow about maybe nine, 10 months ago I was approached to see if I could help with an idea. We sat down, had a wee chat and decided we could make that idea a memorial."

Iain is now the Welfare Officer for Nautilus, a worldwide maritime union. He spends his days supporting maritime workers and their families and is passionate about honouring their work.

"The minute they brought it to me, I did what I always do and said let's get this done," laughed Iain.

Through many requests of where the plaque could be placed and after hearing a few "no's," Iain became more determined this was going to happen, as he felt they were not initially understanding the significance of this plaque.

"This is to celebrate 60,000 lives lost. It's not for my granny who used to sit here in the summer.

"You know, it was as if they were kind of treating us as if we just wanted to put this wee, you know, wee family thing up."

Many meetings later with Glasgow City Council and various other parties, a wonderful spot was agreed upon on the Govan side of the Clyde. Which Iain felt was appropriate due to Govan's history with shipbuilding and as most of the ships and the seamen embarked on their final voyage from the city.

The memorial service and plaque reveal took place on Saturday May 10 at the Govan - Partick Bridge to encompass the VE Day 80th celebrations.

The memorial plaque is displayed as a reminder of the debt we owe to all Merchant Navy casualties who have no grave, nowhere for families and relatives to grieve.

Inscribed on the plaque is an excerpt from Eileen Mahoney's moving prayer 'In Waters Deep'...

"In ocean waters no poppies blow no crosses stand in ordered rows"

The event was well attended by merchant navy personnel with representatives from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA), Marine Coastguard, and CalMac to name a few.

Also in the audience were many relatives and people with a connection to the Merchant Navy.

Many ships built in Clydebank were sunk in WWI and WWII: the RMS Lusitania, HMS Hood, HMS Barham, SS Avila Star, there was also remembrance for the Flying Phantom tug which went down at Clydebank College on the River Clyde several years ago, to name but a few.

RFA Captain John Hood gave a poignant speech on the loss of life at sea and the bravery of merchant

seamen and Rev Joseph O'Donnell gave the blessing.

The Merchant Navy association marched up to the bridge as part of the ceremony behind a party of pipers.

"We tried to get a piper for the day, so we put an appeal out through Sunny G radio and we ended up with eight! The people of the west of Scotland are great, they will rush out to help you," Iain laughed.

The ceremony was a great and enjoyable experience, and the plaque is a lasting tribute for all to see.

Iain's dedication to the cause was celebrated with the presentation of a certificate of appreciation and medal by Jalal Shaheen, chairman of El-Wafa International.

He also received a quaich as a gift of thanks from the ladies at the Scottish Nautical Welfare Society.

Christine Hollywood explained: "Iain has done amazing work helping seafarers and their families receive housing and benefits – as a widow of an M.N engineer I am one such person.

"The help he gives changes lives, and this is why it is good that he is recognised for the work, especially being a local man in this community."



## We are Dalmuir Park Housing Association

What's missing? Its U!

Are U passionate about your local community?

Would U like to make a difference?

Are U someone who shares these principles:



If so, then what are you waiting for? Become a Board Member today by contacting us on **0141 952 2447 (option 2)** or send an email to [admin@dpha.org.uk](mailto:admin@dpha.org.uk) and put the **U** in Dalmuir Park Housing Association!

# MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS



For this issue some of our regular volunteers put colleague Layla Blackwell in the hot seat to find out more about why she volunteers with Clydesider.

**John: Layla, you have been involved with volunteering at a few other groups. What do you find is different for you here at Clydesider that makes you want to be here?**

**Layla:** When I got introduced to the Clydesider, I remember having a look at what they do and thinking that seems a bit more fitting for my existing skill set. I'd come away from writing, and thought I'd love to go back to writing, so I thought what a great opportunity to do that. They are very enthusiastic about their volunteers and very grateful for anything that we could offer them. It's the sort of organisation I want to give my time to. I genuinely feel like there was an opportunity to both use my point of view and my life experience in a way that would be beneficial for both me and anybody else who reads the articles. I think the fortunate thing is it has given me an outlet that has

changed my life, but it's also given me a focus that will continue to change my life.

**Patricia: How would you say that the Clydesider has changed your life?**

**Layla:** I have lived here since I was 21. On and off in different parts of Clydebank, and I've been struggling to find my own niche and where I wanted to fit in. I wanted to find my own space and way of making a difference, in a way that wasn't going to drain me, because I do have some restrictions in terms of what I'm capable of doing. And when I got to Clydesiders, I didn't feel like I was having to adjust myself for situations. I've continually been offered opportunities to do new things, but in a way that is safe to do them. I suppose you can kind of call it safe adventuring. I can do something that's slightly outside

I CAN DO SOMETHiNG  
THAT'S SLiGHTLY  
OUTSiDE WHAT i  
THiNK I'M CAPABLE  
OF, BUT... YOU KNOW  
YOU'RE GOiNG TO BE  
ABLE TO DO iT. AND  
PSYCHOLOGiCALLY, FOR  
ME, THAT MAKES SUCH  
A DIFFERENCE AND  
KNOWiNG THAT, I HAVE  
GROWN AS A PERSON  
THROUGH HAVING THESE  
EXPERiENCES. I CAN'T  
TELL YOU HOW MUCH  
THAT MEANS, AND I  
CAN'T PUT A PRiCE  
ON THAT.

what I think I'm capable of, but you can do it in a way that you know you're going to be able to do it. And psychologically, for me, that makes such a difference and knowing that, I have grown as a person through having these experiences. I can't tell you how much that means, and I can't put a price on that. It just gives me a safe place to know that I'm making a difference, and it lets me adventure in other ways that I didn't think were possible. So, it changed my entire future and I'm becoming a person I don't recognise, but in a good way.

**Steven: Do you have a favourite article?**

**Layla:** That's like Sophie's choice. To be honest, I love all of them just for the sheer experience of it. In this issue is an interview, which is the second interview I've ever done so I would say this one is probably my favourite. For just now. The experience of doing all my articles for different reasons has been its own reward. There's a beauty to writing for me, it takes away old barriers, so I get to say I'm good at something. I will always say yes to any opportunity I'm given here because I can, so yeah, this one's probably my favourite, but I'm looking forward to anything else I am assigned.

**John: Do you feel part of a team?**

**Layla:** Yes. I don't think it's even that. I mean, you can get included in teams all the time just by being on a list. Speaking as somebody who played sports, I can be on a team and never get played, and I'm still on the team, technically speaking. But I am part of this. I am literally a page in an issue, and without my page, that issue is shorter. I can see where I am and I can see what I've done.

**Patricia: I think the value, as well as you seeing yourself on the page, is that so can other people. Other people can then go, 'oh, maybe that is possible.'**

**Layla:** Yes! I feel like the process of being honest about disability and about my life, people are getting answers to questions they didn't have to ask me. People are learning about aspects of disability and they're getting a realistic and honest view that it's neither positive nor negative. And it gives me the benefit of knowing that I've used my voice in a positive way, but it also gives me the benefit of knowing I've had an effect, even if somebody just reads one line and goes, I didn't think about that.

**Patricia: You mentioned loving writing, do you feel like you are getting more creative?**

**Layla:** I just have a confidence now that I didn't have before. I like knowing I've finished something, and it gives me an outlet, and it lets me see I've achieved something.

**Steven: Do you find that the more personal articles are easier to write?**

**Layla:** One of the first bits of advice you're ever kind of given when you start to write is write what you know about. Now, mistakenly, when I heard that, I thought it was going to be boring then because I thought, what do I know about? But what they basically mean is, and how it's worked for me, is see your life experience pop that down. That's what they meant, not if you've got a hobby. It's about taking my life experience and adapting it in a way that makes it more accessible for everybody.

**Jenny: What advice would you give to someone who was thinking about volunteering?**

**Layla:** Volunteer for someone who appreciates what you do. I think at the end of the day, if you're not being paid for your work, then you want somebody who's going to at least say thank you. But also, if you can manage, then volunteer somewhere you know that you're making a difference, do that.

**Jenny: What is your favourite biscuit?**

**Layla:** I'm a bit of a wagon wheel fan. Oh, and a wee Jaffa cake.

# HIDDEN HERITAGE SPOTLIGHT



## DENNY SOCIAL

**Words by Annie Jordan**  
**Photos by Jordan Stevens & courtesy**  
**of Scottish Maritime Museum**

If you have never visited the Denny Tank in Dumbarton, it is high time you did! There is something for everyone and the price could not be better at the moment: a paying adult (£5 full price or £4 concession) can bring up to three children free so that's a great deal - too good to miss.

Laura McFetridge, the most welcoming face on the front desk suggested: "It's a wee idea for the school holidays. Or anytime. For parents and grandparents. There's loads to do...."

Their 'Denny Social' exhibition is running until August 9.

It features the rich and varied social life and fun of the Denny Tank employees with information boards, photos and a fascinating, beautifully illustrated scrapbook of their stories, events, programmes, menus, sporting activities and football.

The centrepiece is a piece of stained glass, a collaborative artwork by local volunteers working with artist, Eilidh Mackenzie.

I fell in love with the Denny Tank last time I covered it for Clydesider.

I have returned twice since, which defies any critics who say it is too scientific, too focused on engineering.... I am neither, but I DO enjoy social history, storytelling and a real sense of community, and the museum has that in spades.

Jennifer Pless, Community Engagement and Development Officer at the Scottish Maritime Museum explained: "My new role is all about people, relationships, a sense of community and saving their stories for future generations. Meeting and working with locals has been so refreshing.

"They are very proud of Dumbarton and its place in shipbuilding history. It seems incredible to think the world-famous Cutty Sark, moored at Greenwich, was built at Denny's here in Dumbarton..."

The Scottish Maritime Museum organised "Brew and Blether" sessions in Dumbarton Library to bring the community together and share their stories.

The stained glass piece was born out of these sessions with locals working alongside Eilidh Mackenzie and taking inspiration from images and stories in the 'Denny Arkivz', a 'scrapbook' of social events kept by Denny staff as well as the group's own personal experiences.

Their stained glass journey was recorded on video and has pride of place in the exhibition.

Children visiting the exhibition can make mini 'stained glass' mobiles in the discovery area upstairs.

When asked what was the most challenging thing about 'Denny Social', Jennifer responded with a warm smile: "Nothing... it has been so interesting.

"Learning about the Denny family, Denny Tank and about its workforce. They were so skilled but also funny..."

"Have you read the football letters?"

I made a beeline for these. Sarcasm and banter rolled into one. Hilarious!

Jennifer continued: "We also captured their humour on the postcards on the Memory Wall. One employee

tells of Princess Alexandra launching a ship and the champagne bottle didn't break..."

Jennifer loved learning these real stories: "For the Dennys, an employee was more than an employee: they sent care packages to WWI soldiers and rewarded employees for innovative ideas..."

The Dennys fascinated me last time - the Leonardo da Vincis of Dumbarton: forward-thinking, innovative; inventing hovercrafts, helicopters etc. way ahead of their time.

The museum, however, is a step back in time: it is as though the workers have just gone home for the night.

So why visit 'The Denny Social'?

Jennifer concluded: "If you are interested in the community as it was in Dumbarton, what made them tick or how they socialised back then or their music. Or stained glass itself, then you should definitely come along.

"Also we have Tommy the Pigeon and a "pigeon trail" for the children..."

One fascinating wee nugget was that homing pigeons were used by Denny for speed trials... Who knew?

So, if like me, you didn't know that, get along to see the 'Denny Social'... and those football letters too!!! You will definitely learn something.

*The 'Denny Social' is open Mon – Sat from 10 am - 4pm until August 9.*



# ADVERTISE WITH CLYDESIDER



**Only publication covering all of West Dunbartonshire**



**5,500 copies distributed to 200 outlets**

**16,000+ readers in Dumbarton, the Vale & Clydebank**

**Discount rates for charities & social enterprises**

**Call: Charlie on 07502460273**

**Email: Charlie@clydesider.org**

**Visit: [www.clydesider.org/advertise](http://www.clydesider.org/advertise)**

**FOR OUR COMMUNITY... BY OUR COMMUNITY...**



## NEW KID IN THE GARDENING BLOCK

*Words & Photos by Harvey Smart*

**D**illiechip Community Garden is one of the latest growing spaces to pop up in West Dunbartonshire, opening last spring with support from the council and West Dunbartonshire Greenspace.

Iain McPhie, who sits on the local community council was approached to head up the project. He explained how it all began.

“We had to form a community committee to apply for grant funding. We applied for the first lot of funding, which was from Strathleven Trust.

“That’s how we’ve managed to pay for all the trees for the orchard.” Iain gestures to the young fruit trees which line the borders round the garden.

“Historically there was an orchard here before the houses were built, so we’ve done all the heritage variety types of fruit.”

But in more recent history, the land the gardens occupy was an old blaes football pitch.

To make it suitable for gardening and growing food, the council had to build the entire area up with several feet of topsoil. No small undertaking.

“The Council provided us with two sheds, the polytunnel, and we need to now start running it,” Iain says.

“But the place isn’t full, as you can see, they’ve got to work their way through the waiting list. Historically, there’s been a waiting list in West Dunbartonshire for allotments for years, because there’s been no new ones built.”

But Iain is keen for the gardens to be used for more than just individual allotments.

They have plans for it to be a place for the community to gather and unwind in a relaxing space and also provide food for locals.

“The goal is to produce as much food for the local community and garden users as we can.

“We could have open days here and we would maybe have people paying a nominal sum for a load of fruit and veg. Especially just now when times have been hard.

“Obviously the individual allotments are for the allotment holders but for the community garden side of things we’re going to try and get as much produce as we can.”

Nearby Bonhill Primary is also involved, with the kids tending a couple of beds, and several local community groups have already taken advantage of the gardens to get folk active.

Iain stresses the benefits gardening can have on mental health.

“It can be helpful for loneliness, for people with disabilities - we’ve had a couple of ladies that are of an age where they might have lost their husbands and they’ve come here and made new friends.”

Like most of these recent community garden projects in West Dunbartonshire, they likely wouldn’t be so successful without the support of Andy Devine of WD Greenspace, which supplies the network of local gardens with the invaluable materials and knowledge to get them up and running.

“Andy’s given us a lot of support. He provides us with a skip, he brings compost for us to use, they made the planters over there for us. He’s been really good.”



As they don't have access to mains power, future plans include aims to follow the model of Bellsmyre Community Garden and get funding for solar panels and a battery bank for charging tools and equipment.

As the garden continues to grow, both in size and ambition, it's clear that Dillichip is more than just a place to grow fresh produce. It's a space where community, hard work and wellbeing go hand in hand.

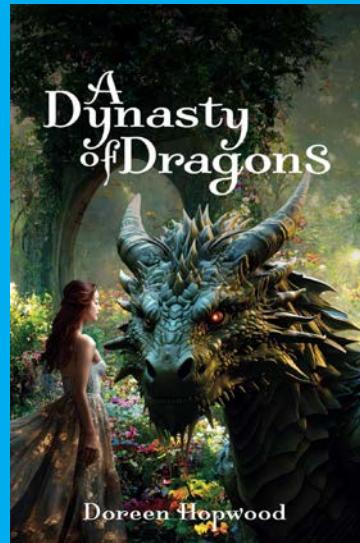
With a strong foundation, a clear vision, and community spirit at its roots, Dillichip Community Garden is well on its way to becoming a fine addition to the growing collection of similar projects across West Dunbartonshire.

# REVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## A Dynasty of Dragons

by Doreen Hopwood

*Review by Mary Irvine*



Local author, Doreen Hopwood, launched her debut novel 'A Dynasty of Dragons' at Alexandria Library, attracting an audience of over 40.

In conversation with fellow author, Mary Irvine, Doreen spoke of how her love of writing developed from the less than helpful primary school teacher to writing short stories, eventually concentrating on poetry.

Doreen joined a writers' group where she became friends with Agnes Owen who introduced her to the 'Third Eye' meetings in Glasgow. Here she met such poets as Tom Leonard, Alasdair Gray and Edwin Morgan, long before they became famous.

She co-wrote scripts, with Margaret Higgs, for the 'Day Oot Drama Company' and was asked, by Agnes Owen's son if she would mind giving an interview to a student writing a thesis on Agnes Owen.

The seed of what was to become 'A Dynasty of Dragons' was sown when the 'Pen and Ink' group of writers was given the word 'garden' as a stimulus.

Doreen wrote a short story and the character Molly arrived.

The novel eventually came into being, taking six years to complete.

The result is a well-crafted story, written in perfect English – unfortunately not always the case these days - and beautifully produced with a stunning front cover.

The book is a magical journey reflecting Doreen's love of Celtic myth and legend and plots Molly's journey between two contrasting worlds. A must for anyone who enjoys fantasy and adventure.

# CREATIVE SPOTLIGHT



## Words of Change - The Wee Glesga Poet

*Words by Jenny Watson & Photos courtesy of Emma Armstrong*

There is a curious little phenomenon we often experience in this life called the Baader-Meinhof Phenomenon, also known as Frequency Illusion. It's when you see or experience something new, then suddenly you start to notice it everywhere.

Maybe you buy a yellow car, and then you start seeing more on the roads. Or your friend happens to mention a new chocolate bar they tried, and boom! Adverts for it everywhere.

This is exactly what happened to me with The Wee Glesga Poet.

First, I saw her on TikTok, after that, someone I know shared one of her videos with me, then her work was recommended to us by a member of our Board. I read the signs and knew I had to meet her.

I went on to her website, sent off a message explaining who I was and asked if she would be interested in being interviewed. A short while later I received a reply from Emma Armstrong, the woman behind the colloquial handle.

Having lived in Clydebank most of her life, Emma grew up experiencing and witnessing the issues many here live with.

She explained: "I've had quite a turbulent life. I was homeless at 15, in and out of homeless accommodations, up until I ended up in a Women's Aid at 21 after a very violent relationship.

"I had issues with drugs and alcohol earlier in my life, too. My life was very chaotic throughout that period.

"This was when I started building my business. It was my driving force and focus, and that is what kept me on the straight and narrow."

Emma worked inspiring hard to build her business, B-Able, based in Clydebank, into the solid company it is today.

Her hard work was recognised in 2018 when she won Best Professional in Business at the Scottish Women's Awards.

However, 2020 was another pivotal point in her life.

The pandemic put restrictions on where her team could work from, it increased their workload, it brought personal issues regarding family health care, and it changed Emma's way of thinking about everything.

"The whole scenario with Covid opened my eyes to a whole lot of things I had never been aware of before.

"As somebody who has always been very trusting of the establishment, systems, and healthcare, I started looking at things very differently and started not being as trusting. I began researching things," Emma shared.

This is when she came across the work of Mattias Desmet, a Belgian psychologist and professor in clinical psychology, and the correlations he made between his work, the state of hypnosis and human behaviours.

Realising that she was identifying some of these human behaviours during the pandemic, Emma wanted to learn more about the mind and the impacts it endured due to people's day-to-day lives.

"As someone who has been surrounded by addiction, anti-social behaviour and violence, all the things that come from living in a scheme in the west of Scotland, I wanted to know how this [hypnosis] was getting used, and I wanted to be able to use it to help individual people."

Once again, Emma channelled her self-declared workaholic attitude and retrained as a clinical hypnotherapist. She opened a therapy centre in Helensburgh, providing mainly addiction-based therapy.

Now I know you are probably thinking at this point, where does poetry come into this?

On listening to Emma talk, poetry has been woven through our entire conversation, the poetry that is Emma's life.

And it was from her experience, both professionally and personally, her first poem, '*The Demon Drink*', was created.

"The struggles people were coming to me with were alcohol, cocaine and cannabis, because that seems to be the poison of choice in this neck of the woods.

"I wrote the first poem as an addition to add on to treatment plans to send to clients after their appointments.

"It was a way to change perspective, to take them away from everything they have ever learned and the core beliefs their addictions are stacked upon, and the need to get them thinking differently."

From that first poem, Emma wrote and shared more with her clients.

They then began expressing how much they were helping and encouraged her to put them online to provide solace for those struggling further afield.

This was not an easy decision for Emma as she had previously experienced a side of social media that made her wary of expressing her thoughts and opinions.

However, she tentatively took that first step on to TikTok by sharing a couple of videos of her reading her poems.

The response was overwhelming.

"*The Demon Drink* went viral, within a couple of days it got over a million views.



## **"The Demon Drink went viral, within a couple of days it got over a million views."**

"It was a crazy amount of attention that one post got.

"In the few months that preceded it, I felt something was unleashed when I started writing, and I just kept going.

"I started writing stuff that more people could relate to, like growing up in Scotland, Scottish patter, things that were a bit more comedic as opposed to serious and dark."

From those initial posts, Emma has garnered an online following of over 100k people, written seven books, attended various locations for speaking events and offers commissions and consultancy work.

To find out more, visit Emma's website [www.theweeglesgapoet.co.uk](http://www.theweeglesgapoet.co.uk) and TikTok [www.tiktok.com/@theweeglesgapoet](https://www.tiktok.com/@theweeglesgapoet)

# Photography Tips & Techniques – Night Time

*Words & Photos by Harvey Smart*

The theme for our photography competition in Issue 32 is 'Night Time.' Taking photos outside of daylight hours can be challenging, but also rewarding when you know how to use it to your advantage, so we've got some tips to help you get the most out of the darkness!

## 1. Long exposures

Use manual mode if possible on your camera or phone to slow down your shutter speed. The longer the camera shutter is open, the more light it will catch. However, this will also come with the caveat that fast-moving subjects will be blurred, which can create some interesting effects. For example, when photographing a street scene, car headlights will appear as long streaks of light instead of points. You may also need a tripod to achieve this effect properly.



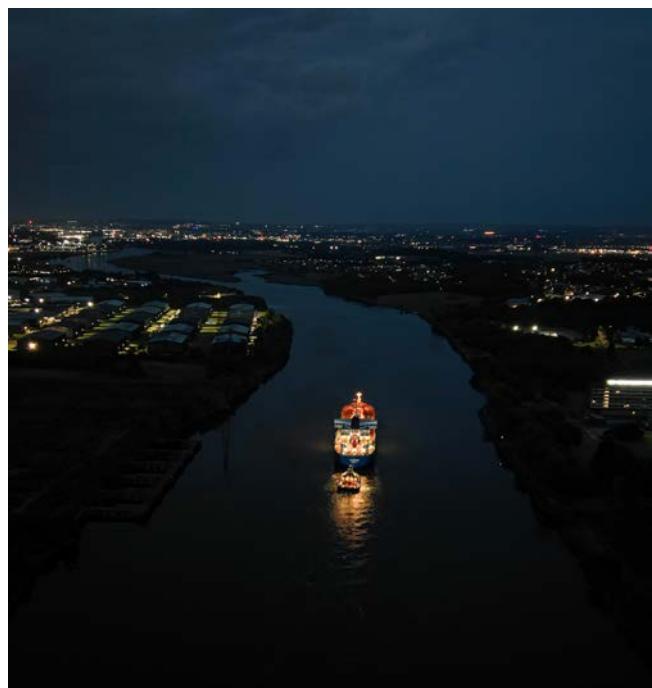
## 2. Light sources

Look for available light such as street lights, shop signs or car headlights to illuminate your shot. Use these light sources to make your subject stand out and create a moody atmosphere.



## 3. Use night mode

If you're using a phone or a camera with which you are unable to manually adjust settings, try using night mode or something similar. Most devices have something like this, which uses longer shutter speeds and stacks images to increase brightness without too much noise.



## 4. Avoid zoom

If using a phone, avoid using the digital zoom in the camera app, as it reduces quality and resolution. If you need to crop, do it afterwards.

## 5. Editing

Use an app like Snapseed or Lightroom Mobile after shooting to adjust exposure and contrast, and reduce noise.

## 6. Safety

It's easy to get distracted by the camera while shooting, especially in the dark. Watch your step and if near traffic, wear high visibility clothing to make sure drivers can see you.

Whether it's the bustle of city streets or the quiet of a moonlit landscape, we can't wait to see you try your hand at this theme!

Happy shooting - and don't forget to look up every now and then! The night sky has its own stories to tell.



# CLYDESIDER MEMBERSHIP



[ko-fi.com/clydesider/](https://ko-fi.com/clydesider/)

## Supporting Membership

- » Every issue of Clydesider posted direct to your door (additional overseas postage costs apply)
- » Clydesider goodies
- » Invite to all our events
- » A Clydesider Vote

**£3**  
per month  
or £30 a year

## Friendship Membership

**£5**  
per month  
or £50 a year

- » All of the perks above plus a Clydesider tote bag

## Community Membership

- » All the perks of Friendship Membership plus the gift of Clydesider Supporter Membership. You can choose to nominate someone or we will share your gift.

**£9**  
per month  
or £90 a year

**Thank you, your community spirit helps keep Clydesider free for all to enjoy.**

Name: .....

Address: .....

Email address: .....

Supporting: £3pm or £30pa

Friendship: £5pm or £50pa

Community: £9pm or £90pa

Please send form and payment to  
Clydesider Creative, 48a Erskine  
View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG



# CLYDESIDER PHOTO COMPETITION

Theme: *Night*

Prize: £25

Closing date: August 11

Email entries to:  
clydesidercomp@gmail.com

# CLYDESIDER POETRY COMPETITION



**THEME: HEROES**

**PRIZE: £25**

**CLOSING DATE: AUGUST 11**

**EMAIL ENTRIES TO:**

**CLYDESIDERCOMP@GMAIL.COM**

**Rules:** One entry per person for each competition, entrants must live, work or be part of a group in West Dunbartonshire; all entries must be your own, by entering you give Clydesider permission to publish your work in print or online - this in no way infringes your copyright.

# CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

## LOCAL SUPPORT SERVICES

### DUMBARTON DISTRICT WOMEN'S AID -

Confidential Domestic Abuse Helpline Office hours -  
01389 751036, 24hr Helpline 0800 027 1234

### CLYDEBANK WOMEN'S AID -

Confidential Domestic Abuse Helpline -  
0141 952 8118, 24hr Helpline 0800 027 1234

### GLASGOW & CLYDE RAPE CRISIS -

Support line 08088 000014

### DUMBARTON AREA COUNCIL ON

### ALCOHOL (DACA) - Community-based

alcohol support service 01389 731456 or  
0141 952 0881

### STEPPING STONES - Community mental

health support services, 0141 9412929 or email  
referral@stepstones.org.uk

### ALTERNATIVES - Community-based recovery

support for individuals and families affected by  
substance use, 01389 734500 or 0141 951 2420 or  
info@alternativeswd.org

### COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION

SERVICES - Mon - Fri 8.45am 4.45pm 0141 562 2311  
or 01389 812018

**OVERDOSE RESPONSE TEAM** Greater Glasgow &  
Clyde - 7 days a week – 10am to 10pm, anyone can  
make a referral Freephone 08088 00811

### WDC EMERGENCY HOMELESS TEAM -

01389 776400, Out of Hours - 0800 197 1004

**MENTOR SCOTLAND** - Peer to Peer mental health and  
wellbeing support group.

Contact admin@mentorscotland.org or 07470 461685  
www.mentorscotland.org

**WD CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU** - Information and  
advice service Freephone - 0800 4840136 Mon - Thur  
8.30am - 4.30pm, Fri 8.30am - 3pm.  
www.wdcab.co.uk

**IMPROVING LIVES** - Support and information for  
people living with a disability or long-term condition,  
627 Dumbarton Rd, Dalmuir, G81 4ET,  
0141 237 4560 or contact@improvinglives.co.uk

### CARERS WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE -

Community-based support service for unpaid carers.  
41 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank, G81 1BL. 0141 941 1550  
clydebankcc@carerswd.org

**Y-SORT IT** - information, support, advice and activities  
for 8 - 18 year olds 0141 9413308 info@ysortit.com

**WD ENERGY ADVICE SERVICE** - Community Links  
contact 0141 952 4382 or energy@comlinks.org.uk for  
more information

**WD KINSHIP CARE SUPPORT** - information, advice  
and activities for kinship carers and their families;  
Level 2 1 North Ave, Erskine House, Clydebank  
G81 2DR, 0141 2373303

## CONTACT CLYDESIDER

**PHONE:** 01389 381110 (please try our  
mobiles or email if you can't get us on  
this number)

**EDITORIAL:** Call Amanda on 07913029234  
or email amanda@clydesider.org

**ADVERTISING:** Call Charlie on 07502460273  
or email charlie@clydesider.org

**COMPETITIONS:**  
Email clydesidercomp@gmail.com

**ADDRESS:** 48a Erskine View,  
Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.clydesider.org](http://www.clydesider.org)

## MONEY ADVICE

**HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND** - help, advice and  
financial support to reduce heating bills.  
Call 0808 8082282 [www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org)

**CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP** -  
information about benefits in Scotland:  
[www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/welfare-rights/scottish-benefits](http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/welfare-rights/scottish-benefits)

**ENTITLED TO** - free online benefits calculator blog:  
[www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)

**ADVICE DIRECT SCOTLAND** - provide free,  
independent advice via phone, SMS, web chat, email,  
online and through social media [www.advisedirect.scot](http://www.advisedirect.scot)

**NATIONAL DEBT LINE** - charity giving free and  
independent debt advice over the phone and online.  
Call free on 0808 808 4000, Monday to Friday  
9am - 8pm and Saturday 9.30am - 1pm or to Webchat  
with an advisor visit [www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org)

**STEPCHANGE** - a debt charity providing free,  
confidential and expert debt advice and money  
guidance. They also campaign to reduce the risk  
of problem debt. To find out more visit  
[www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)

# YOURS FOR FREE (OR NEARLY FREE) IN WD

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT -

Emergency food aid, referral now required from any local authority organisation. For same day emergency food aid please call before 1pm. If you call after 1pm then collection of food aid will be available the next working day. Open Mon 10am - 3pm, Tues 10am - 3.30pm, Weds 10am - 2pm, Thurs 10am - 3.30pm, Fri 10am - 3pm. Unit 14A Artizan Shopping Centre, Dumbarton, G82 1LL. 01389 743908 admin@foodforthoughtwestdun.co.uk

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### ALEXANDRIA OUTREACH -

Tues 11am - 12noon, CATRA base, Alexander Street, Alexandria

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT DALMUIR OUTREACH -

Mon 11am - 12noon, St Stephen's Church, 12 Park Road, Clydebank G81 3LD

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY FOODSHARE -

Emergency food aid delivery & Xmas Toy Bank Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm, 01389 764135 or freephone 0800 34570500

## OLD KILPATRICK FOOD PARCELS COMMUNITY PANTRY -

Mon - Fri 12noon - 2pm & OKFP Chatty Cafe Mon - Fri 12noon - 4pm, Napier Hall, 12 Dumbarton Rd, Old Kilpatrick, G60 5LW 07368 496836

## DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH COMMUNITY PANTRY & CAFE

Thurs 6.30pm - 8pm & Fri 11am - 1pm, 1 Durban Ave, Dalmuir, G81 4JH

## DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH DROP-IN TOTS TO TEENS -

Clothing for kids. Fri 11am - 1pm

## LOMOND COMMUNITY PANTRY -

Thurs 1pm - 7pm & Fri 10am - 4pm. £4 for 10 items. Available to anyone in the community in need of support with provisions. 101 Main Street, Jamestown, G83 8AZ.

## FAIFLEY FOODSHARE FOOD PANTRY & FAIFLEY UPCYCLING

- Tues, Pantry 10am - 11am & Upcycling 10am - 12noon, Faifley Parish Church, 164 Faifley Rd, Clydebank

## THE RENTON COMMUNITY FOOD HUB -

Tea/coffee, food pantry, Wifi & chat Thurs 11.30am - 1.30pm, Trinity Church Hall, Alexander Street, Renton, G82 4LT

## THE SALVATION ARMY

COMMUNITY CAFE - (donation only) & Employment Plus, free use of Chromebooks to Job Search, update CV & improve IT skills. Weds & Thurs 11am - 1.30pm, Sylvania Way South, Clydebank 0141 941 1353

**IMPROVING LIVES HUB** - Warm space offering free tea, biscuits plus advisors available. Mon to Thurs 9am - 5pm & Fri 9am - 3pm

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### COMMUNITY SOUP &

**SANDWICH** - Wed 11.30am - 2pm, St Augustine's Church Hall, Dumbarton

## SOUP SPOT - Community Lunch.

Fri 11.30am - 2pm St Augustine's Church Hall, Dumbarton

## SOUP CLUB - Community Lunch.

Mon 12noon - 1.30pm St Patrick's Church Hall, Dumbarton

## PHOENIX CENTRE COMMUNITY

**CAFE** - Lunches & breakfasts (donation-based) Tues, Weds & Thurs 12 - 1.30pm & Weds 8am - 10.30am, Phoenix Centre, Castlehill, Dumbarton

## SOUP SPOT -

Tues 12noon - 1.30pm, Lennox Evangelical Church, Risk Street, Dumbarton

## WESTBRIDGEND CLOTHING

**BANK** - Free recycled clothes, open Mon & Tues 11am - 3pm in Community Flat, 1 Lomond Court, Dumbarton elaine\_41@hotmail.com

## Y-SORT IT - Friday Night Youth

Café for 12yrs+ offering a safe place to meet friends, have a FREE MEAL, charge phones and access WIFI. Every Friday 6pm - 8pm at Y-Sort It Hubs in Clydebank & Bonhill. Call 0141 941 3308 or email info@ysortit.com to find out more

## THE RECYCLE ROOM -

Free recycled unwanted clothes, toys, household items & community laundry, 137 Onslow Rd, Clydebank G81 2PW or email therecycleroom1@gmail.com Open 7 days a week, check Facebook for daily opening times.

## BEN VIEW - Breakfast Club

Tues 9.15am - 10.45am. Family Community Meal Sun 5pm - 6.30pm. Both FREE Ben View Resource Centre Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA

## GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS -

Weds Lunch Club, Bingo & Entertainment 1pm £5. 18 Nairn Place, Clydebank

**TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR ISSUE 33 CLYDESiDER COMMUNITY DIRECTORY EMAIL [JENNY@CLYDESiDER.ORG](mailto:JENNY@CLYDESiDER.ORG) BY AUG 15 2025**



# CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY DIARY

## CREATIVE, HERITAGE & LEISURE

### DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH

**Indoor Bowls** every Thurs 10am - 2pm; **Arts & Crafts** Drop-in every Thurs 6.30pm - 8pm. All welcome.

**AFOLS** - Adult Fans of Lego, enjoy a morning of lego fun in Alexandria Library first Saturday of the month, drop-in 10am - 12noon, bring your own set or use the library Lego

### CLYDEBANK LADIES CHOIR

Mon 7.30pm - 9.30pm, Dalmuir Barclay Church, 1 Durban Ave, Dalmuir, G81 4JH

**FREE ADULT MUSIC CLUB** - learn drums, piano, guitar, ukelele. Wed 1pm - 3pm Awestruck Academy, 36 Sylvania Way South, Clydebank 0141 4357116

**MAGGIE'S YARN BUDDIES** knitting group meet Wed 10.30am - 2.30pm in the Improving Lives Hub, Dalmuir

### CRAFT GROUP

Bi-weekly  
Mon 2pm - 4pm, Tower Centre, Kilbowie St Andrews Parish Church, Clydebank

**LOMOND FOLK CLUB** - free, friendly folk club every Mon 8.30pm, Mavi Kitchen & Bar, Balloch Road, Balloch. Join in or just sit and listen. Raffle and free snacks at the break.

### LENNOX EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Dumbarton - Arts & Crafts workshop - Monday  
1.30pm - 3.30pm

### KILMARNOCK OLD KIRK

**TRUST** - Heritage Tours available at Kilmarnock Kirk, Gartocharn. To book contact Janet Beveridge kilmarnockgt@gmail.com

### FRIENDS OF LEVEN RIVER

**VALLEY** - Meet second Saturday and last Tuesday of every month (weather permitting), litterpicking and occasionally other activities e.g. clearing Himalayan balsam. Check Facebook page or email levenlitterpickers@outlook.com for details

### CLYDEBANK DISTRICT CHOIR

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 9.20pm, The Hub, 405 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank G812TX. No auditions or need to read music. The choir will be taking a summer break, starting back Aug 19. Contact wilmamacnicol@btinternet.com

### GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS CLUBS

**Mon:** Knit & Natter 10am - 1pm; Chair Yoga 10.30am - 11.30am; Disability Fitness 12 - 1pm; **Tues:** Arts & Crafts 10am - 12; Bingo 1pm; **Wed:** Drama 10am - 12; Bingo Night 8pm; **Thurs:** Arts & Crafts 10am - 12; Line Dancing 10.30am - 11.30am; **Fri:** Boccia 10am - 12 18 Nairn Place, Clydebank

## SUPPORT & WELL-BEING

### SIGHT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Run by Improving Lives. Last Thurs of the month 2pm - 4pm. Concord Centre Dumbarton.

**QUIT YOUR WAY** - Free smoking cessation clinics at Clydebank Health Centre, Mon 9am - 12.30pm, Vale Health Centre, Wed 11am - 3pm & Dumbarton Health Centre, Thurs 9am - 12noon. Book an appt on 0800 9168858 or find out more [www.nhsoggc.scot/your-health/quit-your-way](http://www.nhsoggc.scot/your-health/quit-your-way), telephone consultations outside these times also available

### DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH GROUPS

**WD Boccia Group** Tues 1pm - 3pm; **Chair Yoga** Tues 10.30am - 11.30am; **Savage Martial Arts with Jack Leckie** Tues 5pm - 7pm; **Bowls** Thurs 10am - 2pm (some groups will take a break over the school holidays)

**PHOENIX CENTRE** - Cocaine Anon Fridays 7.30pm - 9pm

**FREE REIKI AND MEDITATION CLASSES** - every Thurs 1.15pm - 3pm, Hub C.E Centre, Kilbowie Rd, Clydebank 07515 962066

### BALLOCH WALK IN THE PARK

Wed 10.20am - 11.20am. Contact Fiona on 07843 842323 or email [fiona@trustinthepark.org](mailto:fiona@trustinthepark.org). or visit

[www.trustinthepark.org/walk-in-the-park/](http://www.trustinthepark.org/walk-in-the-park/). Meet at 'The Square', opposite The Waterhouse Inn, Balloch

### IMPROVING LIVES GROUPS

**Art for Anxiety** meets Tues, 12.30pm - 2.30pm

**Men's fishing group** Thurs & Sun 9am.

**Autism Support & Discussion group** meet every 2nd Mon, 3pm-5pm.

**We Share We Care Support group** meet 1st Thurs of every month, 11am - 1pm

**Wellbeing Walking group**

Mon 1pm

**Jewellery Group** Fri 1pm - 3pm

### CENTRE 81 FITNESS CLASSES

varied classes for age 16+ including Yoga, Pilates, Circuits, Chair Yoga, Kettlebells & Tai Chi only £3 per class - check Facebook page or call 0141 5337070 for details

### WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

**EPILEPSY SUPPORT GROUP** - meet 1st Mon of the month 10am - 12noon, Clyde Shopping Centre, Clyde House 170 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank & 3rd Thurs 6.30pm - 7.30pm at Improving Lives, 627 Dumbarton Road, Dalmuir

### MENTOR SCOTLAND GROUPS

**Cold Water Therapy** - Mon 8pm, Duck Bay. **Walk & Talk** - Tues 6pm, Ben View, Dumbarton.

**Men's Talking Group** - Wed 6.30pm - 9pm Alexandria C.E Centre

**Peer Support Drop-in** - Fri 5.30pm - 10pm Ben View, Dumbarton

**Women's Talking Group** - Fri 7pm - 9pm Ben View, Dumbarton

**Men's Talking Group** - Fri 7pm - 9pm Ben View, Dumbarton

### RECOVERY CAFE & SUPPORT GROUP

Street Connect in partnership with OKFP are hosting a weekly Recovery Cafe in Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick on Wednesdays 12 - 1.30pm

**FOR ALL BANKIES** - Crafts, activities, light lunch and recovery meeting in Clydebank Methodist Church, Second Avenue on Mondays 11am - 2pm

SEND DETAILS OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES HAPPENING FROM MID SEPTEMBER TO [JENNY@CLYDESIDER.ORG](mailto:JENNY@CLYDESIDER.ORG) BY AUG 15 2025 TO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

# EMPLOYABILITY & ADVICE

## CARERS OF WD RISE PROJECT

advice, information and support to unpaid carers living in specific areas. **Phoenix Centre, Castlehill** - 2nd Tues of the month, 11.30am – 1.30pm; **Mill Cabin, Haldane** - first Thurs of the month, 10am – 12am; **The Recycle Room, Drumry** - 2nd Wed of each month, 10.30am – 1.30pm Contact Clare Sweeney on 0141 941 1550 or email clare@carerswd.org

## WDC THRIVE

- supports 16 - 24 year olds take next steps after school. Contact Eilish.ODonohue@west-dunbarton.gov.uk and Amy.cowie@westdunbarton.gov.uk for more information.

## SALVATION ARMY EMPLOYMENT PLUS SERVICE

- help writing CVs & getting back to work; Thurs by appointment. Contact Joanne 07552 492136

## ADULT LITERACY

- Tues 1pm - 3pm in Dalmuir C.E Centre; Thurs 10am - 12noon in WDC office Church street, Dumbarton & **Adult Literacy and Computing** Wed 10am - 12noon in Alexandria Library. Contact Sharon Campbell on cld@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or 07900052290

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND

**LANGUAGE** - Thurs Dumbarton Library 10am - 12noon. Fri 10am - 12 noon in the Phoenix Centre, contact Eric Makeham on cld@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or 07900052290

## WDC COMMUNITY SURGERIES

Speak to WDC Communities Team about any matter concerning your community. They will be in WDC Libraries: **Alexandria**, Tues 10am - 12noon and Thurs 1pm - 3pm; **Dumbarton**, Thurs 1pm - 3pm; **Clydebank**, Wed 10 - 12 noon and **Dalmuir**, Thurs 10 - 12noon Plus community venues:- **Concord Centre**, 10am - 1pm on the 2 & 4 Fri of the month; **Centre 81**, 11am - 1.30pm first Wed of the month; **Dalmuir Barclay Church**, 11am - 2pm last Fri of the month; **Faifley White Church**, 10am - 12noon last Tues of the month

**SAMH STEP UP** - aims to help local residents get back into employment, education, training, or volunteering through the use of group work and 1-to-1 meetings, providing both employability and mental health support. Please contact amie. malik@samh.org.uk for more information.

# FAMILY & YOUNG PEOPLE

**PHOENIX CENTRE** - **Baking Buddies** Mon 10.30am - 12noon; **Mini Youth Group (P1-3)** Tues 3.30pm - 4.30pm **Youth Club (P4-7)** every Thurs 6pm - 7.30pm 50p per child & **Baby Massage** on Wed 11am - 12noon. **Phoenix Fun Toddler Group** Thurs 10.30am - 12noon. **Empower Youth group** for S1+ Thurs 8pm - 9.30pm. £1. **Zumba Class** 50+ Thurs 12.15pm £3

**BEN VIEW BUDDIES** - **Ben View VIPs P5 activity group**, Wed 6pm - 7.30pm **Ben View All Stars P6/7 activity group**, Wed 7.30pm - 9pm **Ben View Bravehearts S1+ activity group**, Sun 7pm - 8.30pm at Ben View Resource Centre, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA, to reserve a space email youth@benviewcentre.org.uk or call 01389 733030

**GUILD** bi-weekly Tues 1.30pm - 3.30pm, Tower Centre, Kilbowie St Andrews Parish Church, Clydebank

**TULLOCHAN YOUTH ACTIVITIES**  
**Mon** Employability Programme (16+) 1.30pm - 4.30pm **Tues** Timber Transitions (16+) 9am - 12 noon; Furniture Fix Project (14-25s) 1pm - 4pm **Wed** LGBTQ+ Action Group (16-25s) 5pm - 7pm; **Thurs** Green Skills 12.30pm - 4pm. Free meal or packed lunch are provided at Tullochan's groups & activities. To find out more contact info@tullochan.org or 07931228462

## AWESTRUCK MUSIC SCHOOL

Weds 4pm - 6pm for P3-P7, 7pm - 9pm for S1-S6. £3.

# WHAT'S ON

**APR 26 - AUG 9** 'Denny Social' An Immersive Community Exhibition. Opens up the world of Dumbarton's world famous William Denny & Brothers Shipyard. Scottish Maritime Museum (Denny Tank), Castle Street, Dumbarton.

**JUN 17** Grand Prix Walk in support of Race Against Dementia. 10.45am. Levengrove Park, Dumbarton

**JUN 21** Run Loch Lomond: the Loch Lomond 10K, 5K and Fun Run. 10am. Moss o' Balloch Park.

**JUN 21** Sketch & Stroll with Sarah Jayne McGlashan. 10am. Free but ticketed [www.tinyurl.com/3mj9vp5v](http://www.tinyurl.com/3mj9vp5v) Pier Park, Castle Road, Dumbarton

**JUN 25** Showing of 'Xanadu' starring Olivia Newton John, Gene Kelly & Michael Beck. Dumbarton Cine Club. Starts 1.30pm. Tickets £3. Concord Centre, Dumbarton.

**JUL 18** Friday night line dancing with the Vale of Leven Trust. 6.30pm – 8.30pm. £2/£3. Alexandria Masonic Hall

**JUL 19 - 20** Comic Con. 10am - 4pm. Loch Lomond Shores, Balloch

**AUG 14 - 18** Balloch Big Music Weekend. Five days of live music in Balloch.

**AUG 23** Honky Tonk Hoedown. A fantastic afternoon of live entertainment and line dancing with Vale of Leven Trust. 2pm - 6pm. Tickets £15/£13, advance payment required. Reserve a ticket by calling 01389 752629, emailing [info@valeofleventrust.com](mailto:info@valeofleventrust.com) or from hub at 9 Mitchell Way, Alexandria. Vale Masonic

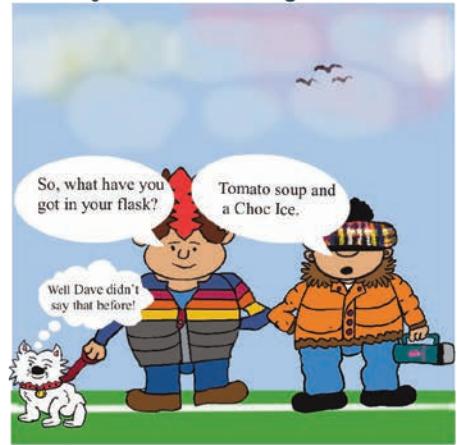
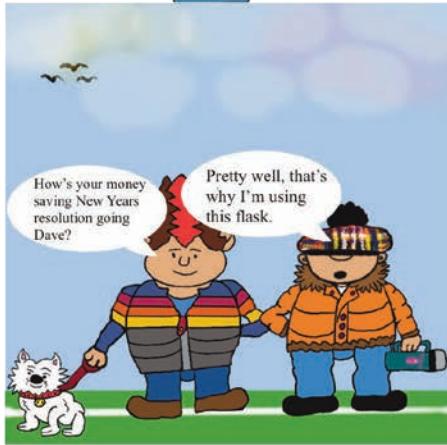
**AUG 24** Sunday Special: With Nicholas McDonald. He certainly has the X-Factor, and for this Sunday special, he is heading to wow Golden Friendships with his vocals. Doors open at 1.30pm. Tickets £5. This one is sure to sell out fast. Message Golden Friendships for details, or buy at the club hall. Golden Friendships Community Hall, 18 Nairn Place, Clydebank.

**SEPT 6** Country Night: Deep River. An evening of Country classics. 7pm. Tickets £10. Message Golden Friendships for details or buy at the club hall. Golden Friendships Community Hall, 18 Nairn Place, Clydebank.



# CLYDE & BAXTER

By Steven Hastings



## WORDSEARCH

### All Creatures Great and Small

by Steven Hastings

This wordsearch is about animals and their breeds. The words from the list can be found in the grid, going Left, Right, Up, Down & Diagonally. Words that are split with a / can be found in the grid separately.

- **Anteater**
- **Border Terrier**
- **Camel**
- **Corn Snake**
- **Crocodile**
- **Guinea/Pig**
- **Hamster**
- **Horse**
- **Puffin**
- **Queen Bee**
- **Rabbit**
- **Shetland/Pony**
- **West /Highland Terrier**
- **Zebra Spider**

W	Z	T	U	Z	E	F	H	C	R	M	R	O	C	H	F	E	Z	U	T	Z	C
V	E	W	X	G	U	C	O	R	N	S	N	A	K	E	C	U	G	X	W	A	V
A	M	S	N	O	P	W	T	O	X	Y	U	H	J	A	T	E	C	N	M	B	Z
Q	U	T	T	Z	E	B	O	C	I	G	E	S	R	O	H	B	N	E	E	M	E
Y	E	R	K	O	L	Z	E	O	S	P	X	C	A	V	S	A	L	R	N	H	Q
D	S	G	V	B	T	B	N	D	M	O	R	E	R	R	E	Z	E	S	C	O	U
F	A	C	X	D	E	R	T	I	C	I	L	Y	A	B	R	P	U	W	P	F	W
O	P	R	O	S	D	R	C	L	O	D	E	B	X	S	H	E	T	L	A	N	D
P	U	F	F	I	N	H	I	E	S	T	B	L	A	N	R	R	F	X	N	Y	E
Q	U	I	W	E	R	T	Y	U	O	I	P	C	O	F	F	I	W	R	T	I	D
A	S	N	C	R	O	I	G	H	T	L	A	N	E	H	A	M	S	T	E	R	I
D	Z	X	V	T	R	E	B	O	R	X	Z	E	W	N	G	U	D	E	A	N	L
Q	I	E	D	B	O	R	D	E	R	T	E	R	R	I	E	R	I	S	T	P	P
F	U	P	Q	I	E	C	A	I	X	C	B	O	E	B	H	A	R	E	E	D	U
I	H	E	U	R	S	E	C	R	E	O	R	P	F	B	O	L	S	T	R	F	W
T	M	S	E	T	T	N	F	B	B	R	A	S	P	N	R	H	O	K	P	E	S
D	E	R	B	N	G	U	R	I	P	K	S	H	O	W	A	E	N	I	U	G	B
W	E	A	I	G	B	A	C	R	A	U	P	K	N	U	K	A	G	Y	E	P	E
N	G	N	R	A	H	E	N	M	B	C	I	E	Y	E	D	M	X	N	A	T	Z
I	H	I	R	N	G	L	E	I	A	K	D	R	G	T	N	S	E	O	S	P	E
F	E	S	P	T	A	S	N	S	P	E	E	K	U	F	E	T	E	Z	E	T	E
A	B	N	M	Q	W	X	R	E	I	R	R	E	T	D	N	A	L	H	G	I	H



"That's a mad lookin' swan."

by Derek Scott

# MPC ENERGY LTD



INSULATION, HEATING AND SOLAR PV

**Since 2017, MPC ENERGY LTD have been providing heating and insulation solutions to customers to help keep homes warm.**

MPC Energy have access to Funding streams for energy efficiency measures and you may be eligible for government funding under the flagship ECO4 scheme.

We install the energy efficiency measures below so get in touch to see how we may be able to help.

**Internal Wall Insulation ● Cavity Wall Insulation ● Room in Roof Insulation ● Loft Insulation ● Underfloor Insulation**

**High Heat Retention Storage Heaters ● Non-Condensing Gas Boilers ● Back Boilers ● First Time Central Heating**

**Air Source Heat Pump ● Solar PV**

There are many ways you can save energy, money and the environment by upgrading your home and the ECO4 Scheme is your key to getting the funding you need.

**We are waiting your call - or alternatively email, or visit our website:**  
**E: [enquiries@mpcenergy.org](mailto:enquiries@mpcenergy.org)**  
**W: [www.mpcenergy.co.uk](http://www.mpcenergy.co.uk)**  
**T: 0141 951 7887**



# Find Your Perfect Bed At



**CLYDE BED CENTRE**

**STORAGE**



**MATTRESS**



**HEADBOARD**



**FABRIC**



**High Quality Beds,  
Mattresses &  
Bedroom Furniture At  
Very Low Prices**

Over 175



Reviews

Google Yell



**OPEN 7 DAYS**

Clydebank Business Park,  
Clydebank, G81 2DR

Tel: 0141 952 2200

[www.clydebedcentre.co.uk](http://www.clydebedcentre.co.uk)



YouTube