



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

Issue 4, Nov/Dec 2017

Free



KARAOKE CLOWN WITH A HEART OF GOLD

TITANS

The Clyde laps gently on a landscaped shore.

I sip my coffee, think what went before
when my ancestors trod this self-same ground
and the Clyde's bank shuddered
to the hammers' sound.

Lent...OHR.

Workers' Mass at six a.m.

Back home for breakfast.

Walking, wind or rain
in black of winter morn or summer's early light,
pieces in pocket.

Then to scale the heights
or probe the deepest depths of cavernous dark
warmed and lit by only braziers' spark,
among those men who made
cold iron
float.

Chains would rattle,
cheers would rend the air -
cat-calls, whistles aimed at Crown and heir
as ships rolled down and out
to meet their time in space
and Queens sailed forth to claim their rightful place.

Or, greyed and serious, faced a world at war...

"When I nod my head, you hit it!"

Aye.

Riveters, welders, squaddies, hauders-on
- my people made their mark and then passed on.

And solitary, stark against the sky,
that crane -
the lonely witness of those men gone by.

I strain in vain to hear the hammers' song.

Still silently the river rolls along,
its music now a surging student throng.

By Marie-Therese Kielty (Poetry Competition Winner)



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KEVIN MONAGHAN
DIGITAL DESIGN



Welcome to **CLYDESIDER**

It's hard to believe, but *Clydesider* is marking its first birthday this month. It seems like just yesterday that Issue One arrived back from the printers and it has been so exciting to watch it grow, hear such positive feedback and see more people get involved.

A lot has happened since Issue 3. Most importantly for the magazine's future we secured an award from Firstport, who support social enterprises in Scotland.

This has allowed us to take on Lilly as our part-time marketing representative. She has worked wonders since joining both with our advertising and our social media presence. So you can now find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram plus the magazine is available on Issuu. And, just as we were going to print, we secured our own premises - can't wait to move in!

The funding also allowed me to start working full-time on the business, building the magazine and getting more people involved.

With this extra time, a dedicated advertising person and as we had so many great stories, photos and features from our *Clydesider* contributors I decided to make our anniversary issue a bumper 48-pager.

The theme emerging from many of the stories we received is one of ordinary folk doing extraordinary things for their communities.

In Clydebank there is former cabbie Jim McLaren - he set up the amazing Golden Friendship Club providing fun and entertainment for folk who would struggle to get out of the house. Bonhill man Maurice Donohue has more than gone the extra mile this past year running a daily 10K to raise awareness of dementia. While two community Facebook groups are using the power of social media to raise funds for charity and develop a local information forum for people with disabilities.

These are just a few of the inspiring stories featured in Issue 4.

Before I go there is one more wee development I would like to share with readers. In July I married a very special man - Charlie Sherry - who I met when doing the groundwork on *Clydesider* back in 2014. He has helped in so many ways from those early planning days to contributing articles and photos in each issue, to getting in our first adverts and distributing the magazines. So, I would like to say a big thank you to my new husband for helping make *Clydesider*'s first official year such a wonderful adventure.

Enjoy!



**Amanda
Eleftheriades-Sherry**
Editor



COMMUNITY NEWS

VALE BANTER CALENDAR

A local Facebook group is moving into the world of print to raise funds for Robin House Children's Hospice in Balloch.

Members of the Vale Memories and Banter page have been sharing their photos digitally for years in the group and wanted to do something more with them.

An admin member for VMB explained: "Last year people were saying there so many good photos on the page we should try and make a calendar with them but it was too near Christmas at the time so we decided to leave it until this year.

"We wanted the profits to go to CHAS and when we went to have a chat with JJR print they suggested we get sponsors for each page so that all the money from the sale of the calendars will go directly to them rather than on printing.

"So we did that and we got local businesses to sponsor each page so the cost of the calendar is just £5 as we want it to be affordable for local folk and we have already got over 200 orders and that's before we've even picked the photos!

"We would like to say a big thank you to all our sponsors - Dawn's Dance Academy, Bruce Rennie

Bakeries, Corries, TOA Taxis, Crafts U Make, Central Café, the Old Vale Bar, Croft Decorators, Sandra's Café, Super Clean and Dave Heslop who sponsored a page and gave us a donation in memory of his mother Jean Donnelly who was always on the Banter. We also received donations from other individuals and businesses so thanks to everyone who has helped make this happen."

The calendar will be on sale in Corries in Balloch, the Lagavulin and Crafts U Make in the Loch Lomond Factory Outlets, Central Café in Renton and Jimmy's Cards & Gifts, keep an eye on the VMB Facebook page for updates.

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DEMENTIA CHALLENGE RUN

By Gail Russell

Runner Maurice Donohue, from Bonhill, has crossed the finish line on his year-long 10k-a-day challenge to raise money for two dementia charities, Race Against Dementia and The Sporting Memories Foundation.

As well as a 10k run every day for a year in honour of Vale-born Commonwealth gold medalist Lachie Stewart, Maurice is also running 27 half marathons - many of them at race tracks, in a tribute to local Formula 1 World Champion Jackie Stewart's 27 Grand Prix victories.

"My father has dementia and I had heard Sir Jackie Stewart talk about his wife Helen's struggle with the illness," Maurice explained. "There isn't a cure for dementia or for those who are stricken by it.

"It doesn't go away. It's there 24/7, which is why I decided to set myself the challenge for a year. I also wanted to do something to encourage people to be a bit more active and celebrate how sport can help in the battle against dementia."

Maurice ran in various locations across the country, including the Great Scottish Run, Great North Run and both the Edinburgh and Silverstone half-marathons. He even ran an overseas circuit at Monza in Italy, replicating Jackie's winning run in 1973, and was met by the man himself

at the finish line.

His running raised both awareness about dementia and funds for two charities - 'Race Against Dementia' and 'Sporting Memories Foundation'.

Race Against Dementia, raises money for breakthrough and innovative dementia research. See www.raceagainstdementia.com

The Sporting Memories Foundation helps improve the wellbeing of people living with dementia and reduces the isolation and stigma surrounding the disease through a shared passion for sport. See www.sportingmemoriesnetwork.com

Donations can still be made by visiting <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/runwithmaurice>

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LODESTONE CO-WORKING SPACE

SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL



The Bowling-based project offers unique co-working space and desk rental for social enterprises and business start-ups. They also host regular social enterprise networking events and information sessions.

Lodestone, a project set up by The Bowling Harbour Project social enterprise, opened its first co-working space, Arch 7/39, in the recently renovated arches at Bowling Harbour by the Forth and Clyde Canal.

Project Manager Jain McIntyre is keen to encourage start ups, freelancers, creative thinkers and social entrepreneurs to join them to draw inspiration from the dramatic waterside settings the Harbour offers.

She said: "One of the hardest things for a freelancer or start up working from home is switching from home mode to work mode. Arch 7/39 is a solution to the distractions of home life and a space for people to get on with

their work or engage with other businesses, share ideas and support each other – it's an office environment without the hassle of a long-term lease.

"As a social enterprise ourselves we know the challenges start-ups face, that's why Arch 7/39 came about. We wanted a space that was connected with other like-minded people and was flexible and affordable plus the incredible view really attracted us."

Lodestone has a positive environmental and ethical approach to their work. Jain added: "We try to make the space as sustainable and green as possible. We buy local wherever possible and use recycled goods – our coffee is roasted in Cardross, the arch walls are decorated by local artist social entrepreneur Alison Bell, while the furniture is handmade by members of the Skylark project from reclaimed wood.

"We want our spaces to feel different and inspire people working here. We also wanted to celebrate Bowling's amazing history - the name Arch 7/39 comes from Cycle Route 7 which runs past our door and Lock 39, a disused lock on the canal just opposite us."

The Bowling Harbour Project is now looking for a second co-working space which will be geared towards artists, makers and creatives.

To find out more about networking events, room and hot desk rental contact Jain at info@lodestonestoreworks.org or follow them on Facebook at [Lodestonestoreworks](#).

DISABILITY GROUP DELIVERING



By Gail Russell

Clydebank man Kevin Crawford is at the forefront of a new community group set up to help disabled people living in his area. The group was set up after Kevin found himself housebound and struggling to get the help he needed.

"I just woke up one morning and couldn't move and I was like that for months," Kevin explained.

"My wife took some time off work to help me get around but when eventually she had to go back to work someone told me to get in touch with social work at West Dunbartonshire Council.

"I found there are a lot of groups and support out there for people who are disabled but if you have never needed them before it is difficult to find them."

So Kevin collected all the information he could and set up the Clydebank

Disabled Group Facebook page, posting his findings about local groups and support services to it on a daily basis.

"Before I started doing this I had hardly used a computer, I didn't know anything about Facebook and I know it can be difficult for people who don't know their way around social media but most people know someone who can help them - my wife Dhyan has been giving me a crash course."

Kevin is now in the process of having the group registered as a charity and, looking to the future, he hopes to eventually have premises in the community where people with disabilities can get the support, advice and information they need.

He has also set up The Sunday Shindig, a monthly afternoon social event for people with disabilities. Held in the 543 Club in Dalmuir there is entertainment from the Karaoke Clowns plus a prize raffle. Tickets are just £3 and there is free entry for carers.

Kevin added: "You just never know what life is going to throw at you. I never expected to end up stuck in my own house at the age of 47 but that was my life for the best part of a year. I am on the mend now and just want to do something to help others who find themselves in a similar position and let them know that the support is out there."

The Clydebank Disability Group Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/ClydebankDisabilityGroup>



CLYDEBANK CABBIE'S GOLDEN FRIENDSHIP JOURNEY

BY
CHARLIE SHERRY

PHOTOS BY
MARTIN MCGECHIE
& CHARLIE SHERRY



It has been a long journey from behind the steering wheel of a black cab to entertaining packed community halls for charity and you could be forgiven for thinking Clydebank's very own song and dance man – throw in comedian - Jim McLaren, was a born entertainer. Yet he will tell you himself that until a few years ago he "would have rather have died than perform in front of folk."

Today the former cabbie is a familiar sight behind the microphone in Dalmuir's 543

Club or performing in the town's shopping centre. Along with his lifelong friend and fellow entertainer, John Brady, Jim is one half of the Karaoke Clowns cabaret act that has their audiences singing along to a medley of classic golden oldie songs or in tears of laughter with their hilarious humour and madcap stage antics as they don inflatable outfits such as sumo wrestlers and Scottish Elvis. And Jim has used his love of entertaining to raise funds for groups and individuals in Clydebank who are going through tough times.

The Dalmuir man would be the first to tell you that if you had asked him what career path would he take should he leave the taxi business, entertainer

would not have even been on the list. "I was always envious of those who could get up and sing or tell a few gags, but, as much as I maybe harboured a desire to perform, my crippling shyness always prevented me from doing so."

The discovery of Facebook and learning how to make and post videos with his phone from the relative safety of his own home was Jim's route to escaping from the obscurity imposed on himself by his own insecurities.

The budding entertainer began filming himself singing songs and posting them on the social media site. To Jim's surprise, the songs were well received, people he knew and total strangers started sending in requests. In no time at all, Jim had become something of a celebrity in Clydebank and further afield and

his videos were getting viewed by thousands each week.

It was then that Jim's Facebook appearances began to take a more benevolent nature as people started pledging cash for charity if he sang their favourite tune. From Johnny Cash to Boy George, even to Dolly Parton - gender was no barrier to the requests Jim would perform. Often dressing to suit Jim sang his heart out, throwing in his own particular brand of humour to his solo Star's in Their Eyes



Over a two year period Jim's "Monday Madness" request raised a staggering £8,000 for St Margaret's Hospice in Clydebank and, just as importantly, Jim the entertainer had arrived; no more the shy lad who hid in the corner, he had conquered his stage fright and there was no going back.



Inspired by the response his videos received Jim began putting on shows for elderly care homes and DJing here and there along with John Brady. Finally after 27 years behind the wheel he decided to take the plunge and gave up taxi driving, as he explained; "it took up all my time and I never had time to do anything else."

At this time he decided to start the Golden Friendship Club. Jim has always been community spirited and noticed that elderly folk and people who are generally excluded from clubs because they maybe too disabled or regarded as disruptive, could do with a wee day out.

"The club is for people who need assistance for their day to day living, any special needs, disability, it doesn't matter, come down and have a laugh," he explained.

The Club meets twice a month in the 543 Club in Dalmuir. Entry is free and along with Jim and John's fabulous cabaret act, there is bingo and a raffle. Initially to finance Golden Friendship Jim put out an appeal on Facebook for folk to donate £60. He explained: "I had all the equipment and we were getting the hall free so I asked folk on the "Call Yersel A Bankie" Facebook page if anyone would be interested in giving £60 to buy prizes for the raffle." Again Facebook proved to be a fantastic tool for Jim's fundraising. "Over 24 people in just under a day pledged £60 each, I was overwhelmed and determined not to let them down," he said.

From its humble origins Golden Friendships now attracts over 100 people along to its wee afternoons in Dalmuir and Jim has recruited many volunteers to help out, including family members. " My mum, aunt and sisters all come along to help out, they love it."

They have even hosted a 'Golden Friendship's Got Talent Night' in Clydebank Town Hall which was a roaring success.

They now receive support via regular donations from local businesses and individuals and any cash raised is put to good use. Golden Friendship's official photographer Martin Mcgechie is one of the people who came along to the Club looking for a bit of support, he told Jim he was interested in

photographing all of their social events and activities. They have also donated to various care homes and clubs in Clydebank and regularly take Club members on outings to pantomimes and, recently a tour of Scotland's national stadium at Hampden Park. The charity is now forging strong links with other organisations in Clydebank, Clyde Shopmobility being one who have offered to help Jim in any way they can to help secure more long-term funding which will make sure Golden Friendship Club can continue to offer its wonderful activities to those who most need it.

Like many who commit a large part of their time and energy in the pursuit of helping those less fortunate than

themselves, Jim McLaren shares a common modesty as he is the first to let you know that he believes he gets more out of helping others than those he is helping.

The final words should really come from Jim himself. "A friend said to me I bring the best out of those who come to the club, he was wrong though, they bring the best out in me."

Golden Friendship Club is on from 2pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month in Dalmuir's 543 Club. Any raffle prizes or donations please contact Jim on 07957568330.

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YOUR PLACE YOUR PLAN



SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

West Dunbartonshire Council and Community Planning West Dunbartonshire are committed to working with you to improve how we deliver services in West Dunbartonshire. There are lots of different ways to get involved and the level of involvement we've seen so far has been encouraging. However the more people we hear from and work with, the more responsive we will be - so please get involved.

Over September we started gathering your views on the Main Issues Report for West Dunbartonshire, which is the first stage in the creation of our Local Development Plan. This specifies how we will use space across West Dunbartonshire, both in terms of areas for development but also areas which will be protected.

To make this consultation relevant to more of our residents we undertook a

series of 'Your Place Your Plan' events in September, asking residents to come along and talk to us about their local neighbourhood. This is useful information for all services, not just for development planning.

Many of you came along to these events and gave your views. If you didn't make it along you can still take part. We're using a Scottish Government tool called the Place Standard to gather views online, or using their app. If you'd like to complete some questions about your neighbourhood please visit <http://www.placestandard.scot> and enter the group ID 3079-94.

As well as these exciting developments about place the Communities Team have been busy supporting another round of Community Budgeting, with 9 voting events held in May & June. Over these events 62 projects secured funding in excess of £300,000. What a great investment in local community groups and activities.

If you are interested in learning more about Your Community in general or any of the specific activities within your area please contact the Communities team yourcommunity@west-dunbarton.gov.uk





OVERTOUN HOUSE & LANG CRAIGS

ADVENTURES OF SNOOP & SKULK BY DOUGLAS YOUNG

We were lucky with the weather for our walk to the Lang Craigs. Warm sunshine and good visibility held as we completed the nine-mile saunter and exploration (snoop and skulk) of this stunning landmark above Dumbarton.

My partner, Lilly and I had never been to this area before, although it is only 10 minutes away. Often we tend to ignore what is on our own doorsteps – and what bonny doorsteps – when seeking somewhere new and exciting to explore.

There are many paths and routes to choose from, relaxed and easy or difficult and strenuous, and like all good walkers we did absolutely no pre-planning except to find access and set off.

Garshake Road, one starting point shown on a wee phone map, leads with a fine, wide pathway and descends well-made steps into

beautiful, light woodlands. The contrast from urban to countryside is immediate, the sounds of traffic gone, replaced with silence.

Silent apart from birds in their hundred-shades-of-green, sunlit canopy and the gentle babbling of the Garshake Burn, which is wide and shallow enough to walk across. So we do and chicken out at the last part, which is slightly deeper with slippy stones. You wouldn't drown in the foot of water but wet socks and boots at the start of the walk means chickens we shall remain. Dried foot chickens.

Shafts of sunlight illuminate the rich brown stones on the river bed through crystal clear waters and we loiter – skulk – for ten minutes before setting off into the woods along a good path with the burn far below. A diversion up a flight of steps is in place due to a

landslip, it's short and the original route is regained quickly.

Speaking of diversions, walking is good for my mental health. Literally. Diagnosed a few years ago with depression when I was living in Shetland, I realised something more than drugs and counselling would be needed to conquer my illness. Conquer is perhaps too strong a word, live with would be more accurate, because I can't be sure it will not return, many with mental health problems are re-visited by them. Once you recognise the symptoms it is relatively easy to take the steps needed to control the illness.

Walking with depression works for me and using one of those wee wrist gadgets – pacemaker – helps me aim for a daily target too. After 10,000 steps it vibrates but you can set your own step count and this walk smashed that target.

But enough of this and back to the beautiful, sunny woodlands (you remember them?) and we cross a bridge over the burn and climb out into the lovely garden and house at Overtoun. This approach is sudden and unexpected, the contrast from being in woods to gazing at this towering, grand mansion is delicious.

There's plenty of information available https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overtoun_House but for now the most interesting is, there's a tea room inside! Such grand surroundings and also welcoming and informal in which to "take tea". Walking boots and t-shirts getting stuck into homebakes, china

teapots and white linen, and we've hardly started the walk. Prices are on the low to reasonable scale too.

Since planning had been at a minimum we set off for the Crags around 4pm not knowing how long it would take, with a short stroll through large metal gates and into open countryside with recently planted saplings. The ground rises steeply here and we stopped often to look back over Dumbarton, Loch Lomond and the distant mountains.



The Woodlands Trust have a ten-year plan for the area, covering around 600 acres, and it's well advanced with trees native to Scotland, paths and thoughtfully – benches, although some are only single seats. Rowan trees glowed bright red in the afternoon sun.

The Crags rise out of lush green vegetation, sheer rock faces, with a few trees clinging to their lower slopes which we circumnavigated round the western flank and up the steepest part of our route to the summit. Steep enough for someone to have cut toe-holds into the turf. Would not have liked to come down this way!

The views are expansive and on such a clear day Ben Lomond and the

Arrochar Alps are visible. Dumbarton Castle is an insignificant rock from this viewpoint. Overtoun House pops out of the trees as lowering sunshine gleams off streets and roads in Dumbarton.

It's best to stop and look because the path goes very near the edge at times without fences of any kind for much of the walk and, walking through the heather, there is no warning of the sudden nothingness ahead. A few strands of ineffective iron railing remain in places.

We stop to refill our water bottles in a burn and start the slow descent, which takes about an hour, and checking our time we realise the light will be going soon and we've quite a way to go. The final path is a bit uneven and rough, passing a fenced-in quarry/landfill site and a superb drystane dyke carpeted in moss. You must stop to stroke its

squashy greenness. The circular walk ends with a mile or so through built-up areas but Google maps shows a quicker way which takes us straight past Overtoun House again.

With twilight falling we take 15 minutes to reach our original starting point. How did we manage to spend an hour covering the same distance when we commenced?

That'll be all the skulking and snooping I guess.

A total of nine miles were covered in about four hours. There are so many walks and routes here, you can choose your own. Half an hour or the whole day, it's up to you. If we were doing it again we'd probably start out sooner, take some food and not just water and of course "take tea" in the Big Hoose.

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VALE OF LEVEN CREDIT UNION

SPONSORED EDITORIAL



With Christmas just round the corner many people are already starting to feel the pinch and dreading the headache of paying back credit and store cards or high street lenders.

But there are other borrowing options which do not cost as much and which help both you and your community.

With its 40th anniversary not far away the Vale of Leven Credit Union has stood the test of time and proved a real lifeline to many of its 5,000+ adult members.

Manager, Cathy Greig, said: "We want people to choose us first if they are looking for a loan over Christmas or paying off bills in the new year because we offer a fair and affordable service.

"We're cheaper than most alternative lenders – a new member borrowing

£500 from us pays just £49.80 interest - or less if paid back early."

The Vale Credit Union also has over 1,000 junior members and is active in the Junior Savers project in local primary schools with most young savers going on to become adult members.

The Credit Union has over £4 million in savings and in the last 7 years has lent £15million to local people which has helped improve homes, buy holidays and cars and generally enhance lives. It also goes a long way to help local traders and shops be sustainable as most members spend locally.

October 19 is International Credit Union Day, the theme for 2017 - 'Dreams Thrive Here' - captures what credit unions are all about Cathy believes: "The most heard phrase in credit unions is 'I should have joined this years ago.'

"By saving or borrowing with a credit union you don't just help yourself – you invest in your community.

"All our loans are on a needs-based basis, you don't need a set amount of savings first and we offer lower interest rates for larger loans. We also have a funeral plan product which provides affordable life insurance."

Joining couldn't be easier - all you need is something with your address and something with your signature. To find out more call 01389 721803, email info@valecu.co.uk or pop into 6 – 8 Bank Street, Alexandria.

Simply Sambalicious

A little corner of Old Kilpatrick is fast becoming a favourite for foodies looking for somewhere special to dine with friends and loved ones.

Sambalatte combines café, wine bar and restaurant all under one roof alongside outdoor space perfect for al fresco dining or a glass of wine.

The cosy ambience and décor are important ingredients to the little restaurant's success as are their high quality food and wide selection of wines, spirits and cocktails, which keep customers coming back for more.

Their homemade cheesecakes and fruit loafs are firm favourites with regulars, so are the pizzas - fresh handmade dough fired directly on to stone giving that authentic Italian flavour.

For those with less time to linger over a sit-down meal their neighbouring eatery, Figaros Fish & Chips takeaway, serves the popular classic with a healthy twist.

All food is fried in sunflower oil, fish is delivered fresh every morning from Aberdeen, even the chicken nuggets are made from fresh meat and for those counting calories small meals are available.

At both Sambalatte and Figaros quality is king. But don't take our word for it - why not try for yourself?

Advertising Feature



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THE SECRETS OF THE STONE

WORDS & PHOTOS BY ANDY BOYLE

In 1887 the Cochno stone was found in what is now Auchnacraig Wood near Faifley by the Rev. James Harvey and from then till now debate is still raging to try and figure out what its purpose was. Perhaps it was for religious ceremonies or maybe some sort of calendar - I guess even 5,000 years ago it would be nice to know what day it was.



The stone, which dates back to 3000BC and is some 8m x 13m in size, is the biggest rock art panel in Europe and consists of many cup and ring marks - these are deep cuts made in the stone with some encircled with one or

more rings.

Other cup and ring marks were found in a half-mile radius of the site, 17 in fact and there may well be more undiscovered. In October 1937 renowned archeologist Ludovic McClellan Mann painted the stone with what was thought to be white paint but with the excavation of the stone in 2016 it was noticed that there were at least five different colours used by Mann to mark shapes and lines which were used by him to demonstrate his theory that there may have been a connection to the Druid temple at the Knappers site near Kilbowie Road.

The 2016 excavation was carried out by Glasgow University's archeology department with Professor Kenny Brophy at the helm. I was fortunate to be at the site for most of the dig and it was fascinating to see - I didn't even know the stone existed until six years ago. When it was uncovered and open to the public there were up to 100 people a day visiting it - I was very fortunate to be there at the time and took photos of the dig and the stone, I don't think it will be uncovered again it really was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

A Spanish based company, Factum Arte, were in charge of documenting the stone and used laser technology they had pioneered on Tutankham's

tomb to scan it from all angles, they even used a drone so that all the cup and ring markings and of course the well talked about four toed feet were perfectly photographed.

This is being done so that in the future a replica of the stone can be made, size for size and perhaps put on display in Clydebank Town Hall. The stone has got a lot of graffiti on it with most of it being people carving their names or dates they were there, with some going back to the 1920s and span up to the 1950s before it was buried by Mann and his team for its own protection.

There are lots of stories from locals fondly remembering the stone in many

ways. One of them being playing marbles, the game was to try to get your marble into the cup marks, and also just sitting there gabbing the day away.

Lets hope the funding will be found to allow the replica stone to be shown for future Bankies to enjoy and for the whole world to come to our little town to see our very own Wonder of the World.

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DAWG GONE GOOD CAFÉ

by Hugo Hound (and Holly Munn)



Whilst on my walkies I came across a great place for me and my canine chums. Sheltering from the rain I found myself in The Dug Café at Bowling Basin.

Despite my wet coat and mucky paws I was welcomed in and took a seat at a table overlooking the canal. The café is perfect for us waggly-tailed types (and our companions). Quirky and intimate, it makes the most of its space with a number of little booths and tables. Nestled under one of the arches, it has an open plan, modern feel to it.

After a run around on the sand we were hungry hounds and needed to fill our bellies! Whether it's breakfast or lunch you're after there's plenty to suit every pooch and pal. From a simple porridge and toast to their selection of breakfast rolls, there are lots for those out for an early morning walk. If you feel like something more substantial they also have a number of doggy-themed hot food options, from the spicy Chihuahua Mexican filled wrap to the Chinese inspired Chow Chow pulled pork wrap. Meaty heaven! If

you're looking for something closer to home try the Scottie Dog, a haggis and cheese hot toasted sandwich or the British Bulldog - the café's own take on an old favourite - the all-day breakfast roll. All washed down perfectly with one of their many choices of hot coffee and delicious homemade cakes. And if you've been a good boy you can take home some special dog biscuits they have on offer too!

Everyone at the café is delightfully dog daft and couldn't be more attentive to the needs of me, and my four-legged friends. The café can get busy at times with lots of other doggies and humans but that just adds to the fun, as there are plenty of new snouts to sniff. It doesn't matter how wet or muddy we are, we're always welcome here and there's definitely something to suit our humans as well.



We all left with our tails wagging and paws twitching to continue our walkies around Bowling Basin. You'd be barking mad not to try here with your furry friends.

Vibe	★★★★
Service	★★★★★
Price	★★★★

NETTLES (URTICA DIOICA)

by herbalist Joanne Dick
 Green Tree Remedies
www.greentreeremedies.co.uk

Well known for its sting the nettle has long been appreciated for its nutritive and medicinal properties. It is also a great source of vitamins, minerals and amino acids and can be picked and cooked as a vegetable, like spinach.

Tea/Infusion

Use 1-2 teaspoons of dried nettle leaf in a tea-ball or infuser, cover with boiled water, allow to stew for 10 minutes and drink. If using fresh nettle, wash leaves and put a handful into a teapot or pot with lid, cover with boiled water and allow to stew for 10 minutes before drinking.

Nettle Soup

Half carrier bag nettle leaf

50g butter/or some oil

1 large onion or 12 wild garlic bulbs

1 litre veg or chicken stock

1 large potato

1 Large carrot

Sea salt and ground pepper

2 tbsls creme fraiche (optional)

Few drops extra virgin oil

Few drops tabasco sauce

Wash nettles and drain. Melt butter (oil) in large saucepan, add onion and gently cook for 5-7min

Add stock, nettle, potato, carrot and cook gently for aprox 15min. Puree soup. Season

Pour into bowl, add few drops Olive oil, tabasco and some creme fraiche. Enjoy.



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Ian McDougall

CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

We had some more beautiful photos from across West Dunbartonshire for the Clydesider photography competition.

This issue we asked Awestruck Art Gallery owner Allan Rutherford to judge the competition. Allan, a photographer himself, picked Ian McDougall's misty shot of Dumbarton Rock as the well-deserving winner.

He chose it for the "great framing and composition - the trees and then the mysterious mist covered rock in the water."

Ian, a member of Hub Singer Photography Club for over 10 years,

told Clydesider that he took the photo on his phone while out cycling.

He added: "I like to do the cycle routes and I was down in Bowling but couldn't see the Clyde because the mist was so thick so I thought I'd carry on and see what Dumbarton Rock was like. When I got there it was covered as well but within 10 minutes it lifted and I got that shot which I am really pleased with."

Allan also picked two beautiful images of Loch Lomond for the runners-up prizes. These went to Steven Mahoney for his dramatic sunset shot of the Maid of the Loch and Karen McKay who captured a snow-capped Ben Lomond in the distance.

Allan added: "They both have stunning colours with a warm feeling and a good composition. I really like the way [Karen's image] has almost grey ice foreground blending into the colour of the middle ground around the boat then stunning hillside and sky. The icy feel then creeps onto the side of the photograph with the soft focus."

Clydesider Issue 4

A highly commended mention also went to Claire Love's picture of children playing on Goldenhill Park.

Allan has kindly offered to display Ian's winning image in Awestruck Art Gallery for a week. Pop into the gallery at 75 Kilbowie Rd, Clydebank G81 1BL for a look and while you are there why not enter one of our exciting competitions. See page 45 for more details – including the new photo competition.

Good Luck!

Clydesider would like to thank Allan Rutherford from Boy in the Corner Photography for judging our competition and Iain Wilson from Photo Ecosse for providing the great prizes for our winners - a 20x30" canvas print of Ian McDougall's winning entry and two framed prints for runners up Steven Mahoney and Karen McKay.

Linda Morrison



Karen McKay



Steve Mahoney



Derek Dex McEwan



Claire Love
© Claire Love Photography



Tina Mullen

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There are some great local businesses in Dumbarton, the Vale and Clydebank who go that extra mile for their customers and communities.

So when you start writing your Christmas shopping list or planning home improvements check what our local high streets and trades folk have to offer because spending local protects local jobs and services.

And many of them offer something a little bit special for their customers, providing a personalised service which you don't get shopping online or in a big department store or supermarket.

Take Jackie & The Beanstalk for example, she recently transformed the old Carman Stables into a thriving organic market garden where she sells a range of organic veg, jams, chutneys and fresh duck eggs.

Or Shirley at En Pointe Dancewear, she opened her Alexandria dance shop nearly a year ago selling the highest quality dance wear, accessories and make up for children and adults. A former dancer herself she loves to pass on her vast experience to customers and there is always a comfy chair for them.

And when the shopping is all done why not pop into the Lagavulin Bistro in Lomond Gallery and recharge the batteries with a tasty meal or coffee and cake. If you time it right you might even be treated to some musical entertainment from local musicians.

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END OF AN ERA

BY CHARLIE SHERRY



A local charity which supports people with alcohol problems is marking the end of an era as, after 25 years of tears, laughter, challenges and many triumphs, director Cathie Dennett is calling time on her role steering Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol (DACA) to the successful organisation that it is today.

Within a few minutes of chatting to Cathie you would be forgiven for thinking that she had always wanted to run an organisation like DACA, she exudes a commitment and enthusiasm to help those whose lives have become unmanageable due to alcohol. She has an almost contagious energy; this is a woman who, alongside the many committed workers and volunteers who have contributed to DACA over the years, has helped thousands of folk get their lives back on track.

However this was never Cathie's original career choice. The Bankie started her working life close to home in the offices of the old Singers factory in Clydebank, as she explained: "When I left school, I took the first job I was offered which was in Singers working as a general dogsbody in an office. I worked there up until I got married and we moved to Balloch and we quite quickly had our first child."

But Cathie always had a drive in her to help people, this motivated her on the next phase of her journey as she decided to train and work as a nurse, the ultimate caring profession.

The demands of nursing with its strict regimes and erratic shift patterns proved too much of a balancing act whilst bringing up her young family and something had to give, and, understandably, the nursing had to go.

For the next 15 years Cathie devoted herself to her family, bringing up her son and two daughters. Once the children were all going to school she found herself with a wee bit more time on her hands and the drive to help her fellow human beings began to come to the fore again.

At this time she saw an advert in the local paper for volunteers in a shop front addiction service which had just opened in Renton. Cathie thought, "maybe not a lot of people will want to do that, it's not your kind of huggable charity," so she called them up to volunteer. Initially this was for half a day a week, answering phones, typing letters, filing and general admin.

She loved helping so much that before long she found herself volunteering there on an almost full time basis. Her face lights up when she says: "That was my introduction to the addiction field, I absolutely loved everything about the place, the work, the staff and, most importantly, the clients - they all kept telling me I made such a difference to them."

Through the Renton organisation,

Cathie did her counselling training which led her to DACA, where she was accepted, somewhat unexpectedly by her, as a volunteer councillor and eventually becoming a practice supervisor coaching fresh volunteers.

After seven years volunteering as a councillor with DACA, Cathie had decided that working in the addiction sector was what she wanted to do.

Over the next few years she held several roles in various organisations which dealt with addiction from Glasgow Council on Alcohol, to the Talbot night shelter in Glasgow, to a church hall in Clydebank which dealt with all addictions.

Little did Cathie know at the time but the career journey she was on would eventually lead her back to DACA. After the sudden death of John Cuthbert, the then manager of DACA, who had been a close friend and mentor to Cathie, she was encouraged to apply for the post managing the organisation and, much to her surprise, was offered the job. Cathie was back home, where she belonged – even though she didn't realise it herself.





"I was shocked when they offered me the job but Douglas Allsop, the chief executive of Scottish Council on Alcohol, told me the panel had been unanimous but they had one reservation - that was that I wouldn't stay too long as my previous record in a job was three years," she explained.

But their concerns were ill-founded for 25 years later it is only now, at the age of 68, that Cathie Dennett is making final plans to retire from DACA.

The organisation that she has managed over that period has seen many changes, both in those who need their help and the services they offer. In

particular, more women and younger people are coming through the door.

Cathie explained: "When I first started here the ratio of male to female was 12:1, now it's 2:1 and in the Clydebank office it was 1:1 for a period."

Cathie puts this down in large part to DACA leading the way in creating a more holistic approach to alcohol problems which removed some of the stigma women used to feel if they admitted they had a problem with drink.

"We tried to make DACA more female friendly by introducing things that women are interested in, such as complementary therapies. This is commonplace now in addiction services but at the time – back in the 1990s - it was unheard of. When I first started working at Westbridgend Lodge in Dumbarton it was more like a dry pub with a darts board on the wall, a pool table in the corner and full of older men."

Cathie has accomplished many great things through DACA over the years but perhaps her greatest and certainly her proudest moment was their first Big Lottery grant, this enabled them to open the Clydebank office and funded services that no other addiction organisation would have even dreamt to offer, a whole range of complementary services and activities from chiropody to photography and many more.

It would be as impossible within the confines of one magazine article to tell the full story of the innumerable achievements of DACA over the years, the story of the thousands of ordinary folk and their families that it has reached out and helped and, no doubt, the thousands it will continue to help, as it would be to measure Cathie's role in all of DACA's great work. Now into

its fifth decade serving the community the longevity of the organisation, with its committed staff and volunteers who Cathie has recruited and mentored over the years, is without a doubt the best testament to this amazing woman's contribution.

In retirement Cathie intends to spend more time with her children and grandchildren, understandably though DACA will never be far from her thoughts as she so eloquently expresses: "After my kids and grandkids, DACA is my second love, it has been such a large part of my life, I will miss it badly."



It is fair to say that DACA will miss Cathie as well, however, with the foundations she has played no small part in laying, the organisation Cathie has guided for 25 years undoubtedly has a bright future ahead of it.



A VALE MAN OF MANY TALENTS

WORDS BY TOMMY CROCKET
PHOTOS BY BRUCE BIDDULPH



The creative gene runs deep through the DNA of Vale actor, writer and local historian, Bruce Biddulph. But when he left the Vale of Leven Academy around 1980 his sole ambition was to be a farmer.

"I wasn't academic and loved the land around me," he said. "I loved the job on a farm in Gartacharn but I didn't even have the proper clothes for the job - ah didnae even have willies." But within a couple of years illness drove Bruce from such a physically demanding career.

Indoor employment provided shelter from the inclement weather and for a three year period Bruce was a hall and night porter at Drymen's Buchanan Arms Hotel before a spell of unemployment allowed him to get involved in voluntary community

activity in the Haldane. Here he met such creative luminaries as Agnes Owens the writer who lived in Haldane and sadly passed away in 2014, Peter Arnott the playwright from Glasgow and his sidekick Peter Mullan who went on to be an international film actor and director.

The creation of the Haldane People's Theatre sparked in Bruce an interest and indeed a passion for the stage as the group went to see productions in Glasgow. These visits inspired Bruce to move to Glasgow where he stayed in touch with Peter Mullan, even lodging with him for a spell, and got to know the writer A.L. Kennedy - Alison - who worked with Project Ability, the charity supporting disabled people to encourage their creative abilities. Bruce worked on producing a magazine for Project Ability. At this

time, he also worked in The County Bingo Hall in the South side and in various bars throughout the city.

Whilst working with Project Ability, Bruce was encouraged to learn the computer language Basic. This in turn led to web design and, as is the case with anything that really takes his interest, he threw himself into it in a big way. "When I start something, I can't rest 'till it's finished," he said.

He had to put this newly learned skill into practical use and as he's always been interested in the Clyde and its shipping, he set up CLYDESITE which he ran until it became too time consuming for one person, even one who rarely finds time to rest. This led to his being sought out as something of an authority by BBC radio and TV for interviews about Dumbarton shipyards, even leading to a chat with the former Conservative minister Michael Portillo as he stopped off in the town for his 'Great British Railway Journeys' series.

A spell of serious ill health involving a period of hospitalisation for Bruce, and the death of his mother led him to the realisation that life is short and time should not be wasted. His interest in the stage had never left him and he threw himself into a drama course at Glasgow's Stow College for three years followed by founding Angry Puffin Theatre

Company with a couple of fellow students.

Webster's Theatre in Glasgow was the venue for three of their productions including Pinter's 'The Dumb Waiter' and two from Bruce's own imagination, *Flying With Crows* and *No Quarter*. "I'm considering a run of *No Quarter* in the near future if I can find the time and if other projects fall into place."



The "other projects" of which he speaks follow on from his publication of a book *Ancient and Royal Balloch and Haldane* two ago years, and a DVD, *Walks of Old Lennox Vol 1 – Earls to Haldane* in June this year.

This features well researched history of the Earls of Lennox, with links to Balloch and Inchmurrin together with a series of walks in areas such as The Fairy Glen,

Boturich, Inchmurrin as well as others starting from the Haldane. The whole project was filmed and edited by Bruce and features beautiful musical backgrounds to the walks and his commentary.

These accomplishments cover the first two years of Bruce's next five year plan. Currently he is working on another DVD but this is more of a relaxed venture and is on the theme of Postcards of Loch Lomond and the Vale and having seen some of the clips I can testify to its beauty in sight and sound.

Further projects are on the theme of the historic estates of the Vale of Leven and will be in the form of a book or perhaps another DVD and, still within the five year plan, a book or play on the life of Isabella Stewart, Countess of Lennox, who features on the current DVD. If the decision is in favour of a play, Bruce will produce it for the stage.

As well as using his creativity to bring local history to life or capture the beautiful surroundings around Balloch

and Loch Lomond, Bruce also puts his passion for film-making into making sure that individual's special moments live on for future generations to enjoy.

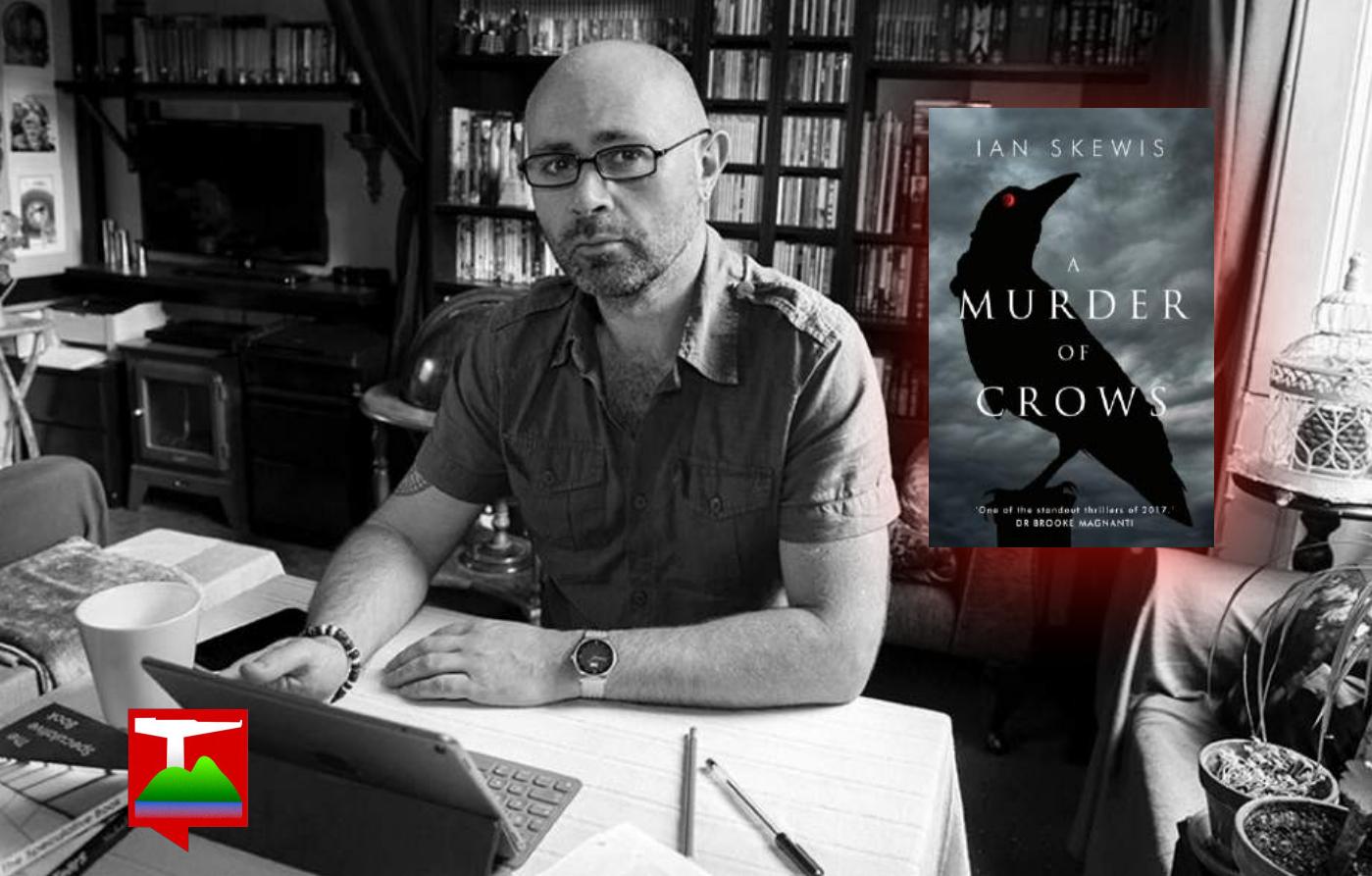
With his film company, Vale Budget Video Productions, he offers bespoke films for small occasions, specially designed for people on a tight budget.

He explained: "I started Vale Budget Video Productions because I love making films, but more than that I realised not everyone can afford the more expensive packages.

"I toolled up inexpensively and then applied myself to post-production techniques. This means I can offer great loveable films to families and organisations at truly affordable rates."

Further information on the projects and where to get the book and DVD is available on Bruce's Facebook page www.facebook.com/victor.bruce.581?fref=nf and information on his commercial film work can be found at <https://scottishformal.wixsite.com/valevideos>





GRUESOME CHILDHOOD FIND INSPIRES DEBUT NOVEL

BY AMANDA ELEFTHERIADES

Exploring the hills near his home in Bellomyre was part and parcel of Ian Skewis' childhood, his parents loved walking and there were no shortage of routes for the family to investigate.

It was on one of these outings as they were close to home that nine-year-old Ian and his parents made the tragic discovery of a man's body hanging from a tree near the primary school.

"My Mum kept me away from the place while my Dad called the police," he recalls.

Although unaware at the time, it was then the first seeds of what would become his debut novel were planted.

"Within weeks the kids at school were making up ghost stories and it triggered my imagination to kind of fill in the gaps of what happened on that day.

"Ever since then the countryside has taken on an eerie quality in my mind and much of this book is set outdoors in the country. I tried to capture that feeling in the book and the inspiration for it stems from that walk."

In 1989 Ian started putting the ideas for his detective novel down on paper and *Murder of Crows* began to take shape but it took another 26 years before he returned to his writing and decided to do something with it.

In the meantime he turned his hand to other creative activities first going to art school in Aberdeen, then moving to Glasgow and training as an actor with the RSMD going on to work in theatre, film and radio.

After 10 years of acting he felt it no longer provided enough opportunities for creative input and opted for a complete career change taking a catering job in House of Fraser which gave him time to return to his writing.

"In 2013 I started taking my writing more seriously and in 2016 got a short story published and was offered a publishing deal for *Murder of Crows*."

Crowdfunding publisher, Unbound, requires authors to raise funds to help support publication costs. Ian was set a target of £3,500 in three months.

He took to social media to promote his novel and was delighted with the support he received. "I was amazed at the number of people who I didn't know who contributed and was stunned when Broke Magnanti – the blogger who wrote *The Secret Diary of a London Call Girl* under the pseudonym Belle de Jour – helped fund and promote the book.

"We managed to get the target with two days to spare. At the time it was just going to be a digital version but

eight months later they decided to do a paperback and that was a dream come true."

A Murder of Crows is now available in Waterstones and Amazon. Earlier this year it became the No.1 Bestseller in the Scottish Crime Charts and also went to the top of the Murder charts in the USA.

Now Ian is working on a sequel - or prequel - and believes it has potential to be turned into screenplay.

He added: "There are lots of loose ends left as I always imagined this being part one of a two-part story. I am aiming to finish the first draft of the next book by December and hope it will be published next year. It has been a very, very long labour of love."



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'A MURDER OF CROWS' REVIEW

BY MARY IRVINE

I have to admit I am not a great reader of the detective novel. However, in order to write a review one does not have to be a fan and can review any book on its literary merit. I did, as a teenager - some years ago, own and read Agatha Christie's work. My confession is I always read the denouement and then watched out for the clues as opposed to the red herrings!

Having met Ian on one occasion when the book was embryonic, on publication I purchased the Kindle version and read it in two sittings. It was the way the characters were introduced which drew me in to his story as it's always interesting, in any genre, to discover how they are all connected. It also clarifies each character. To introduce several too soon often leads to confusion. The short chapters with the gradual revelations worked well. The setting was perfect and evoked mind pictures even if not familiar with the locale. In a clever way Ian managed to link nature with events in the plot.

I was pleased the characters were not stereotyped, all coming across as

human beings with lives apart from their work. They come alive and are well differentiated from each other. It was more credible to see the two 'partners' not having such a good relationship as the 'inspector and the sergeant' often do in TV series. In fact, talking of TV series maybe this could lend itself to an easy small screen adaptation.

One character treated with respect and understanding was Alice, a sympathetic lady who plays an important role in the plot. Particularly pleasing was that the many layered plot, over which Ian kept tight control, did not overshadow the characters.

If I have any misgivings it was the first person narratives were a tad too long but the unpredictable cliff hanger ending worked well and leaves the door open for a second book - or does it? Maybe we are going to be taken back to 'how it all started' so we can follow the career of DCI Jack Russell. I do believe I'm tempted to read the follow-up.

Win a signed copy of Murder of Crows' see Clydesider Competitions on pg 45.

A Murder of Crows by Ian Skewis Kindle Edition £2.99 Paperback £9.99 (amazon)

FINDING HAPPINESS

WORDS & PHOTO BY LINDA MORRISON

Have you experienced burn out? Do you feel that you have lost control of your life? Take a moment and ask yourself...am I happy? If you answered yes, well done. Keep doing what you are doing. If you answered no, then maybe you need to take a step back and examine your life and implement steps to increase your happiness. Put joy back into your life. Find your mojo!

So, what exactly is happiness? There are a myriad of ongoing scientific studies trying to answer that very question. My definition of happiness is to live in the present, to feel compassion toward others and to be grateful for what I have. Maybe now would be a good time for you to start thinking about what happiness means to you.

The wonderful Dalai Lama said: "Happiness is not ready made, it comes from your own actions." One of the reasons many of us are not as happy as we should be is because happiness is something we really need to work at.

We all work hard enough these days, right? Life can be a rollercoaster ride, juggling work, kids, bills, friends and family. How can we possibly take time out to look after ourselves!

Well, we should. Happiness scientists have proven that increasing our happiness benefits not only our mental health but also our physical health and our relationships. Happiness is something we should all work at.

Take a moment and close your eyes, imagine living in a world where people are happier and, as a result of that happiness, more compassionate, respectful and kind. I think that is something worth working for. Don't you?

You may be thinking that you are happy because you got a payrise, or because you got that dream house you always wanted. Well, just so you know, scientific research shows that material gains only increase happiness in the short term. Scientists use the term 'hedonic adaptation' to describe the journey from getting that thing we always wanted to returning to our baseline happiness level. This type of happiness isn't long term.

So, I hear you ask, "what will make me happier?" My answer to you is that there are many proven ways to increase our happiness levels.

Mindfulness meditation is one way. Mindfulness allows us to be in the moment and notice all the little things that usually escape our notice because we are too busy thinking about why the boss screamed at us this morning or about the party we are going to on Saturday night. Right now, this moment is the only moment we have. The past has gone and the future has not

Learning mindfulness will allow you to appreciate the little things and create new neural pathways in our brains that will not only help increase our happiness but also reduce stress and anxiety. Mindfulness meditation, with practice, can be done anywhere. You can meditate on a cushion, on the train, even in the loo at work. The more you do the better the results. Go on, try it. Buy a book or find a local class.

Another happiness increasing exercise is gratitude journaling. Get a notebook and every day write down three or four things you are grateful for. These could be anything from that smile you got from the waiter or waitress in the coffee shop, to the lights being green all the way to work. Write them down. Focus your brain on the good things.

A few other ideas to try - why not rediscover the long lost hobbies you once had, or go for regular walks in nature and pay attention mindfully to the sounds and sights that surround you. Every week make a point of doing two good deeds, write them down and notice how they make you feel. Exercise more. It has been proven that exercise, particularly aerobic activity, can have fantastic effects on the brain, increasing our feel good chemicals and making us feel great.

There are lots of classes in West Dunbartonshire to try. The secret is to get out there and join in. There are tai chi and qigong classes run by Bob McCafferty to help improve fitness and promote relaxation; contact Bob on 07816 842211. There are also lots of



gyms and leisure centres running classes that are sure to send those feel-good chemicals racing through your body. Call the new Clydebank Leisure Centre on 0141 9524321, the Meadow Centre on 01389 734093 or Vale of Leven Swimming Pool on 01389 756931. There are Meditation for Beginners classes at Strathleven house - call 01389 750005 and Dan Yoga runs classes at Ben View in Dumbarton and Bowling B-Hive visit his Facebook page for more details.

I will be starting a Happiness Class myself in Clydebank in the next month or two. If you would like to find out more about this please contact me - lindavance67@gmail.com

Increasing happiness can take a bit of work. The benefits to you are many. Go on, be the happiest version of you.

COMMUNITY CRAFTING



BY AMANDA ELEFTHERIADES
PHOTOS BY CHARLIE SHERRY

Growing up in a family who for generations had been tailors, dressmakers and crafters, the creative thread runs deep in Gillian McFarlane's veins and from her teens she dreamt of opening her own craft shop.

At the age of 19 the Vale woman wrote herself a business plan for a shop where crafters could buy their supplies and learn or develop their skills with other enthusiasts. But at the end of the Eighties as households continued to struggle with rocketing inflation, price hikes and rising unemployment she knew the time wasn't right to put her dreams into action.

Instead, like so many others, she put on her practical head and "got a real job" as an admin worker in an office in Glasgow, sadly it was a job that she quickly grew to hate.

She explained: "When I started I was providing admin support to six people, that became 12 and by the time I left 20 years later as a result of stress, I was supporting 22 people and each of

them expected their work done by yesterday.

"The stress just got too much so I had to leave and was out of work for a couple of years."

In 2011 Gillian's grandfather passed away leaving a small legacy for his children and her mother decided to invest her share into turning Gillian's youthful dreams into reality - and so Crafts u Make was born.

Gillian said: "I have had that name in my head for years so when we set up the business I knew what it was going to be called. We started out in the small unit in the Factory Outlets in April 2013, then had a year in one of the upstairs units and in November 2015 we moved into the big unit downstairs and have been there ever since."

When the old Torpedo Factory was sold earlier in the year the local rumour mill went into overdrive with tales of the building's demise as a retail outlet but Gillian carried on regardless and is now looking forward to being part of exciting new plans for the building.

Her unit is an Aladdin's cave of all things crafty with everything from wool

and embroidery threads to decoupage materials, ribbon and cross-stitch patterns and her passion for crafts brings customers back to her shop from across Scotland and beyond.

"We quite often have people who come up on holiday every year and they come in to stock up while they are in the area, it's good to see people returning each year because so many independent craft shops are dying out with people shopping online."



But Crafts u Make is much more than a shop – part of Gillian's idea was to make it a community space for local crafting enthusiasts like herself and she hosts regular classes including Sewing Class, Crochet Class, Knit & Natter group, Get Crafty, Basic Jewellery, Wire Wrapping Class and Xmas-themed crafting days.

She also has a vast knowledge of crafting which she has built up over the years and is keen to pass on to others. She explained: "I have picked things up as I tried new crafts and learned from the family or just taught myself. If someone asks me how to do something I like to go away and find the answers.

"When I left school I fancied going to Art College but back then it was just drawing and painting which I wasn't really into but I have always loved to learn new things.

"I also run 1-1 classes for clients with special needs. It's fun coming up with ideas that suit each individual person's abilities and what they are physically able to do without making it seem childish and they love it because they have something to show at the end like key rings or button artwork which they have made."

Gillian is keen to promote the work of fellow crafters and her unit has a corner full of hand-knitted baby clothes, home-made jewellery and hand-made cards.

And her business and crafting play such an important role in her life that she has even had a specially designed tattoo on her arm to show off her passion to the world.



"It was inspired by a dream I had that my arm had split open and all the crafting stuff had burst out of it. I couldn't stop thinking about it so I decided to have it made into a tattoo."

HIRAETH

A Short Story by Ingram Wilson

(n) A homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was. The yearning, the nostalgia, the grief for the lost places of your past.

To say that I was not on the best of speaking terms with my estranged father when I set off for New York would be an understatement. My relationship with him had always been seasonal.

I had been accepted for the Mountbatten programme, an international business programme for graduates to live and work for one year in New York City. This was an exciting opportunity for me and would change my life forever. I left Scotland with a suitcase of dreams, hopes and optimism. Blue skies all the way, the only dark cloud was my father's silence and resentment.

I think that it was for this reason that his sister, my aunt Julie, promised me that she would keep in constant touch with me, somehow making up for her brother's disappointing behaviour. We agreed that she would send me a word...just one word, weekly, every Sunday.

Stepping into my first big yellow taxi from the airport to my temporary hotel, I was already looking forward to receiving that vital link with home.

As promised, a word would arrive in my inbox every Sunday, sometimes I would give it no more than a cursory glance, a quick look at it as I hurried across 5th Avenue.

Other times, I would savour the moment and sit with the word as long as I could, as it reminded me of home, black pudding suppers, tartan and the screaming swirl of the bagpipes (not).

Lochs, hills and glens were sadly lacking in this buzzing 24-hour city and for the first time in my young life I missed them; the open spaces, the smirry rain that was our summer, god I even missed the midgies.

I noticed that, as I daydreamed with the word, tears would roll gently and silently across my cheeks and I would smile and then get back to the hustle and bustle.

My friends noticed but said nothing as we sat in the outlandish and bohemian Brooklyn bars and bistros, a far cry from our locals back home.

The word became my emotional anchor, my compass, the hour glass marking off the 365 days that I spent as a Mountbatten.

Evocative, curios, mesmerizing... Some words were familiar to me, others I had to find in the dictionary. Who knew that Julie was such a wordsmith? Had she picked them at random or had she spent time and research and carefully selected words which she knew would offer me some support.

No matter, the words flowed across the Atlantic sky, dodging clouds and the wild Canadian geese, on their final destination my inbox.

With all the wonders of social media and modern day technology, my mind would drift to the furious fast-paced advancement of the human race and our rush to discover more and more - to push back international boundaries, expand our networks whilst shrinking the distances between us. What was once unimaginable was now obsolete. With a quick send click, expats were invited into their homes back in 'the old country'. To celebrate in 'real time' with their families and friends. To share loss and sadness, almost as it happens.

There was no opportunity to become homesick as the words continued to arrive faithfully.

On busy Sundays I would save the word, savouring 'the wait' until I eventually read it. Knowing that it was there, waiting for me, was so comforting. It would nurse me through my, now routine, hangovers.

The word established a lofty constant reminder of why I was in New York, what I had set out to achieve.

I set up a folder to save up the words; they became a record of my journey of self discovery, all my adventures. Reckless moments were reprimanded by a swift glance. Celebrations applauded.

On misty Saturday mornings in September I would sit in Central Park beside Strawberry Fields. I could never be honest enough to admit whether it was the watery sunlight or my tear filled eyes that made those words swim before me. And as the tears caressed me I would be reminded of the words in John Lennon's song "Living is easy with eyes closed". Then, before I knew it, the spell would be broken by the incessant horns of the taxis as they ferried folks all over this bagel-filled city.

My collection grew - a connoisseur's encyclopaedia, a literary bank which could never be measured in monetary terms.

The strong, silent force which bound me to my folks back home kept me safe and warm. The words both comforted me and challenged me to succeed. I was inspired to write and create memories of what had become my new home. Lasting memories became entwined in my mind, threading together my life in this great city with my past.

And as the Atlantic sky made up the distance between us, I was mindful that the greater power lay with the one magician who gave us the gift to be one, to share love and to breathe the same air, to share the same sky and to be only a heartbeat away from the people we loved.

I know the value of the word; it is the currency I share with my aunt.
Unspoken until now.

CONCORD COMMUNITY CINEMA

For many people a trip to the cinema has become a rare treat these days as spiralling ticket costs and overpriced food and drink mean more folk instead opt for a night in watching the telly or laptop.

However there is one local cinema which is bucking the trend and has kept its ticket prices unchanged, at just £2, since its first screening four years ago.

Concord Community Cinema is the brainchild of Dumbarton Cine Video and Digital Club and Alternatives, who run a community café which opens before and after the film shows.

No neon lights flicker outside to publicise the latest films being shown - it's part of their licensing conditions that they are not allowed to advertise the screenings.

But word-of-mouth has done the job and the three film clubs - Features, Classic and Musical - are becoming increasingly popular as they cater for such a diverse range of tastes.

Tommy Crocket, from the Dumbarton Cine Video and Digital Club, explained: "We had a lot of old films that we wanted to show and we knew that Alternatives were also showing films for their clients so together we put in a bid to the Town Centre Renewal Fund for some start-up funding.

"I was involved in the Haldane Film Society for years and I knew about the British Film Institute and the licensing restrictions for community cinema - for example we can't sell tickets on the door, it's by subscription membership.

"But this helps keep the costs right down and at the end of each season we are also able to make a donation to charity. Last year we donated almost £1,400 to the local branch of Alzheimer's Scotland."

The Community Cinema is also available to local clubs and organisations in West Dunbartonshire for birthday parties and the like and is regularly used by primary schools and nurseries for end of term film shows.

Features Club films this season include:- Wild Oats, I Daniel Blake, The Fault in the Stars, Sully.

Classic Club films include:- How Green Was My Valley, The Big Sleep, Love is a Many Splendoured Thing and Niagara.

Musical Club include:- Second Chorus, The Jazz Singer, Joseph's Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, The Glenn Miller Story

For more information visit www.facebook.com/concordcommunitycinema or email concordcommunitycinema@hotmail.com

CLYDESIDER COMPETITIONS

We have six great giveaways this issue there is something for everyone. Plus you could have your work published in the next issue of Clydesider for our 25,000+ readers to enjoy.

1. Photo Competition – take a photo which captures the theme of 'People'.
2. Poetry Competition – write us a poem on the theme 'Good Times'.
3. Short Story Competition – write up to 600 words on the theme 'Holidays'. Closing date for these competitions is Friday December 15.

This issue we also have some great prizes donated by local creative Clydesiders who have featured in the magazine.

4. 'Murder of Crows' – author Ian Skewis has donated a signed copy of his debut detective novel. Read our interview with Ian and a review of his book and to enter the competition tell us the name of his lead detective. Closing date Friday December 1.

5. Artizan Hamper – as part of our focus on shopping local the crafters in Dumbarton's Artizan Hub kindly donated a hamper full of handmade goodies which would make great Christmas presents – or a treat for yourself. To enter just name three of the craft products on sale in the Artizan Hub, Dumbarton. Closing date Friday December 1.

6. Boy In the Corner Photo Canvas – Allan Rutherford owner of Awestruck Art Gallery and Boy In the Corner Photography is offering one lucky reader a print of one of his iconic photos. To win this prize simply name one of the creative classes on offer at Awestruck Art Gallery, 75 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank. Closing date Friday December 1.

To enter either email your entries to us at clydesidercomp@gmail.com (please write name of competition in the subject box) or drop them off at the Artizan Hub in Dumbarton, Awestruck Art Gallery in Clydebank or Vale of Leven Credit Union in Alexandria. Please mark them for the attention of Clydesider and don't forget to include your contact details.

Our only rules are:- 1. One entry per person and you must live or work in West Dunbartonshire to enter. 2. All images, poems and stories entered must be your own work. 3. By entering you are giving Clydesider Creative Ltd permission to publish your work in our print, digital and social media outlets – this in no way infringes your copyright.



CLYDESIDER Mission Statement

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

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

Support and Contribute to Clydesider

As a social enterprise the publication needs to be sustainable so we need the support of our community. Local businesses can help by advertising with us - in return we promise to keep the majority of our advertising local.

There is no charge for the magazine but if you like what you have read and want to make a donation to the magazine why not become a Supporting Subscriber. We have a Paypal link on our website www.clydesider.org where you can make a small payment or, if you wish to make a contribution by cheque, please make it payable to Clydesider Creative Ltd and send to Ben View Resource Centre, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA.

We are always keen to hear from writers, photographers and other creative contributors in West Dunbartonshire who would like to get involved. Just drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com.

Clydesider Credits

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

Another big thank you goes to the growing number of businesses and organisations advertising with us and our supporting subscribers. You are all helping to shine a light on the good news stories and creative talents in our communities and we look forward to working with you in the future.

We would also like to thank Firstport, for their support and funding which helped get us started and is helping us grow. And finally we would like to thank West Dunbartonshire Libraries, West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust, West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, the Independent Resource Centre as well as all the *Clydesider* volunteers who have helped with the magazine's storage and distribution - we definitely couldn't have done it without you.

SHOWS

Knotted in neon,
their immaculate faces
are illuminated in amber
by the Ferris Wheel,
submerged
by pink Santa candy floss beards.

The Shows are in town,
trumpeting souped-up tango
with jangly indie pop,
thrill rides that do not stop
until fist-cannibalism
and fizzy balloon hearts
become champagne corks
or alcopops
pulsing in scraggy goth chests.

Stilts stem from shadows
wearing dark Doc Martens,
a soiled, scrunched napkin
tossed from a purring dodgem;
half a hot dog,
sawn from scrotum.

Small ghosts flit between rides
like skins of a tantrum,
demon-children
more sugar than bone
and the strongman game
separates the boys from the men,
turns a mallet into bait,
turns a chime into a grail.

By Stephen Watt



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

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