



CLYDESIDER

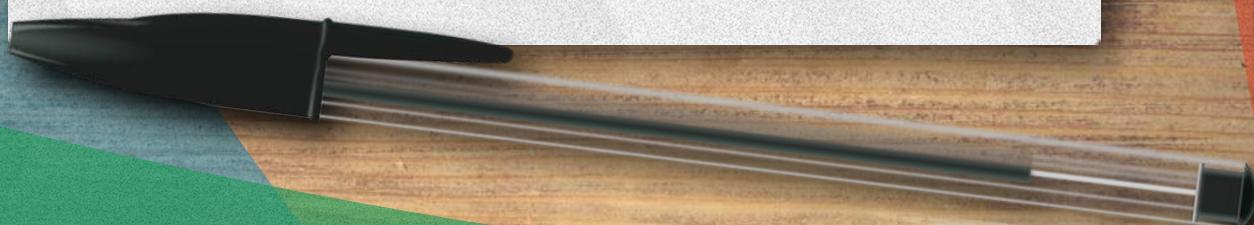
OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

Issue 5 Mar/Apr 2018

Free



Looking Back To Our Future
A Clydesider Community History Special



GOOD TIMES

When I was wee, we played street games,
An' aw oor neebors knew oor names.
We played up hills, or in the park.
Only went hame when it wis dark.

We held wee concerts oot the back
And aw oor pals played in a pack.
We'd ask for 'Brokies' fae the Van
Caught Baggy Minnows wae a can.

On Saturdays we got some money
Go tae the matinee, if it wisny sunny.
Play Jacks, or Jiggies. Bounce a Ball,
Buy Comics, Chips or a Lee's Snowball.

The Rag Man came and blew his trumpet.
We'd get a balloon. Like it or lump it.
We'd go wee trips Doon the Watter.
Having nae money didny matter.

No more football in the street,
Or bursting tar bubble wae yir feet.
Nae mair trips doon tae the pawn.
Those days were good, but now they've gone!

Ann Pryce



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Clydesider is designed by

 KEVIN MONAGHAN
DIGITAL DESIGN

Welcome to **CLYDESIDER**

Regular *Clydesider* readers may remember that as the last issue was going to print we got the keys for our new premises – the former rent office in Old Kilpatrick.

However, the journey from handover of keys to moving into our new office - dubbed the Hobbit House as it is very dinky - took longer than expected, involving much gnashing of teeth as we did battle with awkward utility companies.

So it was with much excitement that we finally moved into our new home in January. We hope that having a permanent base will make it easier for more people to get involved with *Clydesider* and allow us to develop our existing team of volunteers and contributors.

We are also hoping to get more young people involved with the magazine and it has been a great pleasure to attend the annual career fairs at local secondary schools and talk to teenagers keen to pursue a career in the media. It reminded me of my own school days, wondering what I would be when I grew up - I was never someone with a clear career plan so I think my younger self would be pretty proud of what *Clydesider* has achieved.

And so to this issue, which has a distinctly historical flavour to it as we celebrate the area's past and look at how the rich heritage of Dumbarton, the Vale and Clydebank can offer hope and inspiration for future generations.

We have features on local community historian Elspeth Crocket who is campaigning for a museum in Dumbarton, we also take a sneak preview at the Singer Festival opening in Clydebank Town Hall in May and enjoy listening to some of the memories of those who worked in the world famous factory. Taking us much further back in time Kenneth Brophy, archaeologist and lecturer at Glasgow University, tells of the remains of Clydebank's prehistory to be found on the hills above the town and we hear of Rab Taylor's alter-ego as a 17th century Scottish Covenanter.

Coming bang up to date, Issue 5 has a spotlight on beating the winter blues as we focus on some of the local groups and organisations offering a helping hand at what can be a difficult time of year. We have also teamed up with Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce in this issue to tell the good news stories behind some of our local businesses.

Enjoy!



**Amanda
Eleftheriades-Sherry**
Editor



MILTON DANCE STORIES

Toddlers in Milton have been putting a new style of dance class through its paces as part of an initiative by the local community council to offer more activities in Milton's community hall.

The weekly Dance Stories class which ran throughout February, are the brainchild of dancer Lottie Barker who recently moved into the area.

Designed for 0 – 3 year olds and 'their bigs' the group learn how to dance a story by playing games, learning dance moves and read stories together.

Lottie said: "I've danced since before I could walk with my mother and my grandmother both being dance teachers and I'm delighted to now be able to share my passion for dance with my local community.

"The classes are based on well-known children's stories and involve singing, moving and playing together as we travel through the world of the book. I hope it will encourage families to spend quality time together both in the class and at home.

"The Milton Community Centre is a beautiful space which I am keen to



get people using and ever more exciting events programmed in."

The dance classes are the latest in a series of groups and activities being set up by Milton and Bowling Community Council to encourage local people to use the community hall.

Chairman Ian McBride explained: "We have been working with the local libraries to run computer and tablet classes in the hall, these started last year. We are also trying out a photography class to see how that goes and I would like to get something up and running for older residents in the community.

"We are keen to hear from anyone in the area who would like to run a workshop or activity from the hall. We would also love more people to get involved as volunteers.

"It is a great space which the community campaigned long and hard to get so it would be good to see more use being made of it."

Anyone interested in running an activity in the hall or volunteering can contact Ian on 01389 730486.

For more information about Lottie's dance classes email lottie@lottiebarkerproductions.co.uk

HOLIDAY FUN FOR BANKIES

Clydebank families struggling to make ends meet can enjoy a seaside break on the Ayrshire coast thanks to the Clydebank Group Holidays Project.

The fully-equipped modern static caravan at Sandylands Holiday Park in Saltcoats sleeps up to six in two bedrooms and is close to the Park's reception centre and entertainment hub and just a five minutes walk from the beach with stunning views over to the Isle of Arran.

Sandylands Holiday Park has a heated indoor pool, adventure playground, restaurant and chippy, launderette and amusement hall with a full programme of dancing, music and cabaret for all the family.

A 10-minute walk takes you into Saltcoats, which has supermarkets, amusements, play parks, softplay and cinema to keep all the family entertained if the weather isn't playing ball. The nearest station is here and has a regular service to Glasgow.

There are many more sandy beaches to enjoy just a little further afield either by train or car – south takes you to the seaside towns of Troon, Prestwick and Ayr or north to Ardrossan and Largs. For a real change of scene

jump aboard a ferry from Ardrossan to Arran or head over to Millport from Largs and hire a bike to cycle round the little island.

The low cost caravan is available for anyone in the Clydebank area who is on a low income, in receipt of benefits or is a pensioner.

Anyone interested in having a holiday in the caravan or helping the group in anyway should email: clydebankgroupholidays@gmail.com or write to: Letting Officer, c/o Double L Centre, Jowitt Avenue, Linnvale, Clydebank G81 2RJ.

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WRITERS LAUNCH OPEN MIC NIGHT

By Mary Irvine

Three local writers - Ann MacKinnon, George Gibson and myself Mary Irvine - were coming home one night after giving readings at the Scottish Writers' Centre in Glasgow.

George commented on the fact we needed to travel so far from our homes in order to perform at spoken word events.

Ann mentioned previous 'Open Mic' evenings that had been held in Dumbarton. The seed was sown. After much searching a suitable venue was found at Balloch House Hotel.

We had an initial meeting to judge the level of interest with invitations sent out to all local writers. The response was very encouraging and 18 writers attended the first meeting held in the community space at the Chest, Heart and Stroke charity shop in Dumbarton.

The atmosphere was friendly and the enthusiasm for regular monthly evenings palpable plus an eclectic mix of writing of a very high standard was enjoyed by all.

Everyone thought it was an excellent afternoon and were looking forward to it becoming a regular monthly event.

From February 2018 it will be on the first Monday of the month in the function room in Balloch House Hotel. There will be a rolling chair and 5 minute slots can be booked on the night from 6.30pm. Readers may bring along their books for sale on the night.

There is no charge for the room and food and drinks are available from the bar. Thanks again to everyone who is supporting the project, we look forward to seeing you at the next event.



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MAKING WEDDING DREAMS COME TRUE

A Dumbarton woman has raised thousands of pounds to help terminally ill patients make their wedding dreams come true.

Kathleen MacGregor set up the Joan MacGregor Matrimonial Fund in 2009 after her son Charles' partner, Joan, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and the pair had just 24 hours to organise a wedding.

Two days after the wedding Joan passed away and money collected at the funeral was used to set up the fund.

With help from friends and family Kathleen has been fundraising ever since and to date has raised over £47,000. This has paid for 42 couples with a terminal cancer prognosis to get married.

They have also put together a list of suppliers who will provide wedding services and goods free of charge and within 24 hours notice if required.

Kathleen explained: "The fund provides each couple with £1,000 - we don't know anything about the people



who receive the money - that is all handled by the Beatson to allow them the privacy they need at this time.

"The money isn't means-tested in any way and the only conditions are that they are being treated through the Beatson and have a terminal prognosis.

"As well as the money they are given our book of suppliers who will provide all kinds of wedding services free of charge.

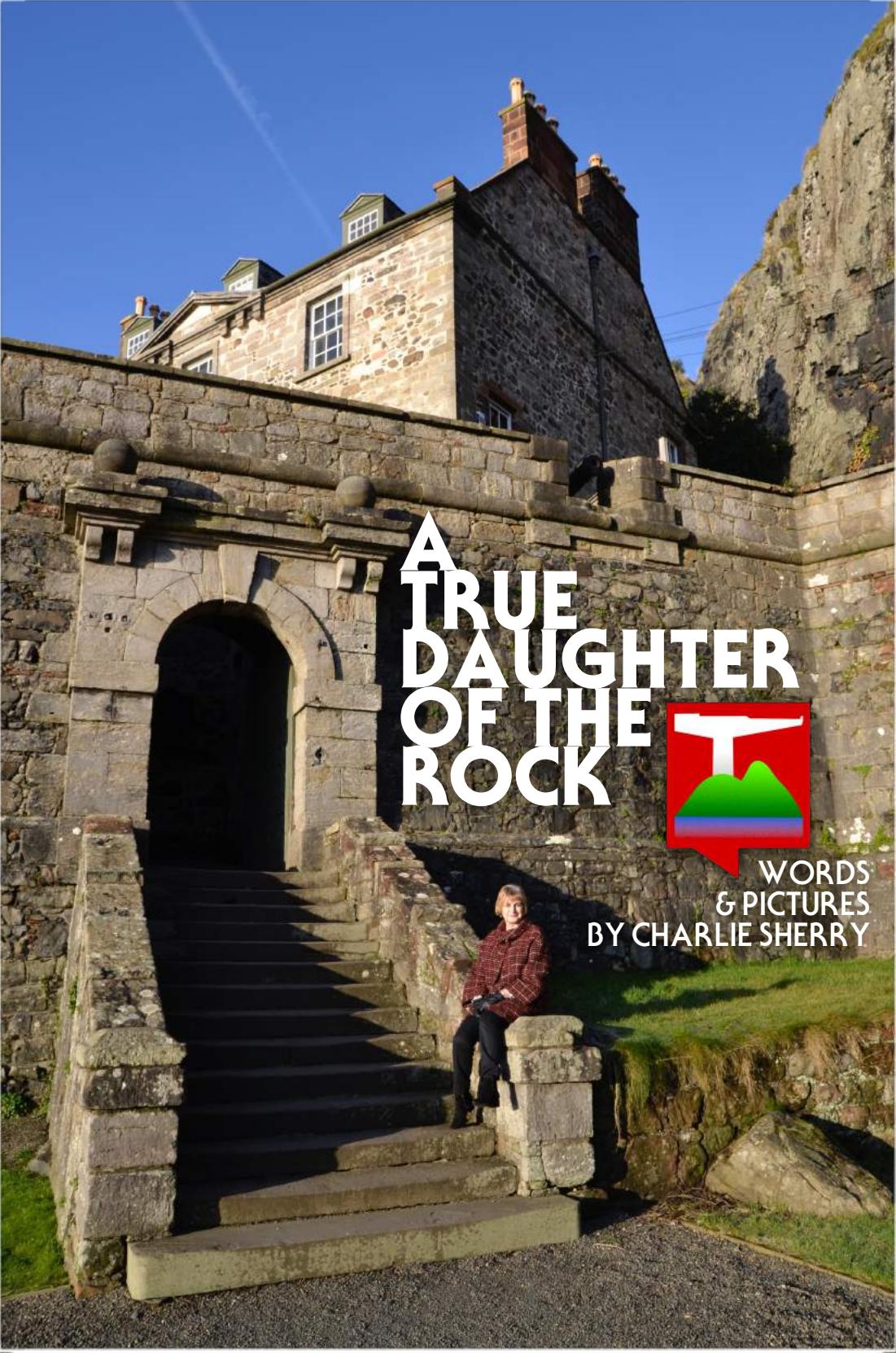
"We as a family pay for all the running costs of the fund so every penny raised goes into the fund and no expenses are ever taken."

Donations to the Joan MacGregor Matrimonial Fund can be made via their Just

Giving page - <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kathleen-macgregor> or by texting 70070 using JMMF99 £ and adding the amount you wish to donate.

And if you have any unwanted Christmas presents cluttering up the house Kathleen can use them to make up baskets for raffle prizes.

Unwanted presents or raffle prizes can be left with Sculptures Hairdressers, 108 Glasgow Road in Dumbarton or given direct to Kathleen by calling 07531441060.



A TRUE DAUGHTER OF THE ROCK



WORDS
& PICTURES
BY CHARLIE SHERRY

The history and fate of the County town of Dunbartonshire, the Royal Burgh of Dumbarton, could almost reflect that of Scotland's story itself.

The town has in some guise played a role in key stages of Scotland's traumatic history, stretching back over 1500 years to when it was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde.

From being the home of King Robert De Bruce in his final years, to the imprisoning of prominent Jacobites in Dumbarton Castle after Culloden and through the ground breaking physical and cultural transformation of the industrial revolution, to the disastrous economic decline of the latter half of the 20th century.

Throw in wee visits from Mary Queen of Scots and our national bard, Robert Burns, along the way and that brings us to the too-long neglected post-industrial town it is today.

There are many who would look upon Dumbarton as a lost cause, thankfully though there are enlightened folk out there who do not share that view, Elspeth Crocket is one such person.

The term 'Daughter of The Rock' could have been invented with Elspeth in mind.

Born Elspeth Lang, her family can be traced in the town all the way back to the times of Robert De Bruce. Indeed, the Clan name Lang is more common in and around Dumbarton than anywhere else in the world.

The town Elspeth grew up in is a far cry from the one we see today as she explained: "The Dumbarton of my childhood still had the shape of the old medieval town with now long gone back lanes running off the High Street and a lovely square for folk to meet in the centre. It was very sad watching it being demolished when they built the bypass."

The decline of Dumbarton's economic fortunes is also a source of great sadness for Elspeth: "When I was growing up unemployment was virtually unheard of in Dumbarton, there was full employment, the town centre was always bustling and people seemed happier."

To many in the town Elspeth is known simply as Mrs Crocket the French and German language teacher who taught in Our Lady and St Patrick's High School in Castlehill for 17 years. Retired, she now combines her teaching skills with her passion for Dumbarton and its fascinating past, not only to pass on her knowledge to future generations but, hopefully to help revitalise the cultural and economic fortunes of the town she loves by tapping into a hitherto much neglected resource the area has in abundance – its illustrious history.

Absorbed in the area's past she devotes her time between being a volunteer guide at Dumbarton Castle, where she shares her vast knowledge of the Rock and town with its many appreciative visitors from near and afar; contributing to the Lennox Heritage Group where she is a regular

speaker and campaigning to get a museum opened in the town's Glencairn House.

She believes the oldest building in the High Street, which dates from 1623, would make the perfect venue for a Dumbarton town museum. "It would be linked to the castle by a new path from the town centre along the River Leven, through the old Ballantyne site, thus re-connecting the castle with the town once again," she said.

Elspeth is quick to point out that the historical towns in Scotland which attract tourists, and with them vital income for the whole community, are those which actively promote their historical heritage and locations.

"Places such as Linlithgow and Inveraray both, like Dumbarton, have rich histories and castles, the difference being is that they have promoted themselves wisely over the years and reap the economic benefits through the influx of tourists.

"Although Dumbarton may not be on the same scale as places like these, we do nonetheless, have a very rich history and historical sites to match."

Her belief - that Dumbarton's cultural and historical heritage, promoted

and managed correctly, would reap economic benefits for the town and surrounding areas - is as solid as the town's famous rock.

With the 800th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Burgh charter to Dumbarton just round the corner in 2022, at least one daughter of the rock has a vision for the ancient town that will put it on a good footing to begin its second octo-centenary with a degree of optimism and confidence in what lies in store for future generations.

"If we had the town museum in Glencairn House, we already have the Maritime Museum and the castle with its wonderful collection, presently in storage, all linked by a new riverside walkway, there is absolutely no reason why we would not attract a good percentage of the millions of tourists that by-pass the town each year on route to Loch Lomond and the Highlands."

It is hard to believe that Dumbarton's fortunes will not again become prosperous when it has citizens with Elspeth's passion and determination fighting its corner.

Of course, like many towns across Scotland, the era of Dumbarton being



an industrial heavyweight has come and gone. However, as Elspeth has pointed out, this does not have to mean the perpetual decline of the ancient town's fortunes. On the contrary, it would appear that the past may hold the key to Dumbarton's future.

And she is delighted to see West Dunbartonshire Council working towards this same end goal and investing in the town's architectural heritage.

The old A-listed Dumbarton Academy in the town centre is being given a new lease of life with a £15.4million investment which will see the Council headquarters relocated from Garshake.

She added: "The Municipal Buildings

are looking fantastic and it is very exciting to see the Burgh Halls being brought back to life for the new Council offices. That will make a huge difference to the local economy having all those people in the town every day.

"I am also looking forward to seeing what the new look Levengrove Park will look like with the investment from Heritage Lottery fund. It is long overdue but I think this will make a huge difference to the area, there are definitely some very exciting times ahead."

The driving force behind Elspeth's obvious passion for her hometown is quite simple - she has a deep love for Dumbarton and its people: "I was born in to a beautiful town, when it's my time to go I would like to leave behind a beautiful town once more."

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GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS GOES GLOBAL

Walkers from across the world are lacing up their training shoes to help raise cash for a much-loved Clydebank charity.

The Golden Friendships Club organises free social events and days out for elderly and disabled people who often struggle to get out of the house.

The charity is the brainchild of former Dalmuir cabbie Jim McLaren and it has gone from strength to strength since being set up last year.

Jim has been overwhelmed by the support from the local community and he is now turning his fundraising efforts to the wider community of Bankies and friends and family spread across the world.

He explained: "We started off planning a sponsored walk here and now have people walking to raise funds for us in Perth in Australia, Liverpool, Middlesborough and Alicante.

"There is also the possibility of one in Canada and another in Melbourne Australia.

"The main walk here will be along the Kelvin Walkway from the Transport Museum to Milngavie.

"There are also two short disability walks, one in Victoria Park in Glasgow and another in the Vale of Leven. These are suitable for people on scooters and wheelchairs, we want as many people to get involved as possible – that's what the Golden Friendship Club is all about."

The walks will take place on March 25 and Jim is expecting over 100 people to take part in the local walks and he hopes many will come in fancy dress.

He added: "The money raised will help us bring a lot more events to the 543 Club in Dalmuir which we use as our base. We are making it fully accessible with a portable ramp and disabled toilets and have big plans for this year.

"Last year we took people up to the panto in Glasgow but as there are limited spaces for wheelchairs it meant only a few folk could go at a time so this year we will be bringing the panto to Clydebank for a week.

"We also have 240 people coming to Valentine's Day dinners and we will be organising other plays and social events in the 543 Club and other community venues."

To sign up for the walk or to organise one of your own contact Jim McLaren by messaging him on the Golden Friendship Club's Facebook page.



ARDOCH



ADVENTURES OF SNOOP & SKULK ARDOCH TO DUMBARTON

Words & Pictures by Douglas Young

Poring over maps and detailed planning played no part in our Snoop and Skulk along the banks of the Clyde, whereas the first anniversary celebrations of Clydesider may have.

Actually it did have, as we had a vehicle to fetch home from the previous evening's entertainment in Dumbarton's Ben View Centre and the walk on a beautiful Sunday afternoon turned into a wee bonus.

Afore we step out into the sunshine a quick word about the event.

It's uplifting and inspiring to see at firsthand poets, musicians, singers, authors and photographers perform and display their superb talents, knowing every single one lives in our community. It's what you'd expect from a community magazine and the invited audience loved it.

Volunteers organised the entire evening, setting up and clearing away and providing super refreshments. If you missed it hopefully next year you'll be luckier.

Anyhow, setting off from Cardross along the A814 – there is no alternative footpath yet – past the fruit and veg market gardens squeezed between road and railway along the Clyde to our right, and fields with many horses to our left, we reach somewhere which doesn't really exist.

Or didn't until the residents of Ardoch got together and put up signs telling us it does.

Drivers might not see the difference between these fine road signs with the Ardoch Crest and thousands of others across the county, but pedestrians will, especially if they happen to bump into a local resident also out snooping and.....err...out walking, and one of the people involved in their installation.

Community spirit in action.

We leave the road and take the marked footpath shoreside under the railway which has one of the lowest arches anywhere – easily touched by outstretched arm – and pass the 230-year old Ardoch House, the latest in a line of houses owned by the same family for over 600 years on the same site.

And run out of footpath. Vegetation and tree pruning may have obscured the path completely so we headed towards the beach and crossed a small bridge over a burn adjacent to the railway, picking up what may have been the path, but is now a mud-churned mess between high bushes and a broken fence. Single track and not easy on the ankles it appears to be churned up by cattle.

Here we move back onto the shoreline, much of it seaweed-covered boulders, and begin to think sticking to the road may have been easier. Low-tide permitted us to traverse wet sand for much of the way.

As the sun lowered behind Greenock and Port Glasgow a beautiful graduated sky of orange and blue reflected on the calm surface of the Clyde, just as we reached a fine tarmac footpath along the river's edge.

Looking up the hill there is a fine, clear view of Cats Castle, normally obscured by vegetation, bathed in golden sunshine. Feline gargoyles are a feature of the house which was previously known as Hazelwood. A bonus for skulkers, bare trees and bushes reveal new places to seek out at a later date.

Easy walking on level ground now, we saunter past Levengrove Park and pass a footpath sign with three choices – all bleached white by the weather – so we continue to follow the shore.

Fine views of the castle and Dumbarton Rock come into view along a very pleasing tree-lined street. On a warm summer's day the bench seats would be well used but today all are deserted.

With the light failing fast we loop round the River Leven towards the beautiful stone bridge which carries Bridge Street into the town centre.

In darkness the structure glows with the recent lighting installation, turning the stone pale purple, crowned with raised single posted lamps along the balustrades.

Lights shine out from houses and shops, street-lamps reflect across the flowing waters and the sky is an inky blue, we

could be strolling across the Seine. A short walk through the silent Artizan Centre and down into the underpass towards the Ben View Centre, we retrieve our car and head back the short drive to Cardross.

This can be a circular walk, most of which is fairly level and easy going, part road, part rural, just be prepared

for the poorer Ardoch section – the part with the official signpost.

But had it not been for Ardoch's delaying tactics we would have missed seeing Dumbarton under cover of darkness and the beautiful 250-year old bridge, built in 1765 and in 1934 gaining the fine balustrades.





PREHISTORIC ROCK ART STORIES WANTED

By Kenneth Brophy
(University of Glasgow)

Clydebank is famous for its history and heritage, but its prehistory is less well known, despite there being ancient sites that are still easy to visit and see today.

Some of Clydebank's prehistory is no longer around, such as the Knappers Farm Stone Age ceremonial site and Bronze Age cemetery, excavated by Ludovic Mann in the 1930s and now beneath high rise flats and Great Western Road.

Other places, like the Cochno Stone rock-art site in Faifley, still exist but are impossible to visit, in the case of Cochno because the stone was buried in 1965 to protect it from damage being done by visitors.

The story of the Cochno Stone was told in the last edition of the Clydesider by Andy Boyle and he mentioned my project which uncovered the Cochno Stone for two weeks in 2016.

But we should not despair because one of the most interesting groups of prehistoric rock-art sites in Scotland is also the most accessible – at least 15 on the doorstep of Clydebank, in the park and fields on the northern fringe of Faifley.



None are quite as spectacular as the Cochno Stone but the rock-art sites in Auchnacraig Park and around Whitehill farm, all near good footpaths and within 15 minutes walk of Faifley, have more than enough cupmarks, cup-and-ring marks and other weird ancient symbols to keep most visitors happy.

Some of these sites are tough to find and make sense of, or need a little cleaning up, but the good news is that these sites are going to get a new lease of life in the coming years and come out of the shadow of the Cochno Stone.

Cupmarks and cup-and-ring marks are circular shapes carved into rock outcrops, and are found across much of Britain and other parts of Europe. The ones in Scotland date back to between 5000 and 4000 years ago.

NO IDEA

Archaeologists have no idea what the symbols mean or why they were repeated so obsessively over such a large geographical area, but half the fun is visiting the sites and trying to make sense of them.

Understanding the meaning of the symbols is one of the most common things I am asked about but actually I prefer to see these rock-art sites as exciting opportunities rather than ancient codes to crack.

As an archaeologist, it is assumed that my interests all lie in the ancient past, but in fact I am more interested in thinking about how prehistoric sites are used by people today and how they might benefit communities in the future. Knowledge about the past needs to be useful to people today, not just confined to dusty textbooks.

In this spirit, in the coming years there will be lots of opportunities for people who live and love West Dunbartonshire to help with the Cochno Stone project and celebrate the rock-art of Faifley.

TRAINING

For instance, Scotland's Rock-art, a major project run by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Edinburgh University, will provide training and support for anyone who wants to get involved in recording Faifley's rock-art and this includes learning how to do photogrammetry and make 3D photographic models.

This will happen in 2018, and at the same time I will be trying to find out more from local people about their memories of the Cochno Stone from before it was buried in 1965 and collecting stories and photographs.

There will also be chances to have your say on the future of the Cochno Stone: should a replica be made or the Stone uncovered again for all to see? I hope there will also be a walking trail, school activities, public art and exhibitions based on Faifley's rock-art.

The Cochno Stone and Faifley's rock-art are unique resources, and archaeologists can only make sense of these sites with the help of the people of Clydebank.

CONTACT

If you would like to help with recording rock-art, share memories of the Cochno Stone, have an opinion on its future, or want to be kept up-to-date with developments, please contact me at Kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk

Image 1: Auchnacraig 5 rock-art site and participants in a workshop held in Faifley in November 2017 about the future of the Cochno Stone

Image 2: The Cochno Stone being cleaned during the 2016 excavations



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Photo by Charlie Sherry

SINGER STORIES

By Amanda Eleftheriades

It's not every day that you get the opportunity to sit down for a chat with someone born at the end of World War One so it was a great pleasure to join Margaret Wright at the Singer Sensory Sewing workshops.

Organised by West Dunbartonshire Heritage in Clydebank Town Hall the workshops involved a mix of sewing class and reminiscence sessions and were open to anyone with an interest in Clydebank's internationally-renowned factory.

Margaret was one of the participants who came along to share her memories of the factory where she started her working life at the tender age of 14.

FOND MEMORIES

Now, just shy of 99, Margaret remembers her years at Singers with a mix of fondness tinged with sadness as the factory played a massive role in every aspect of her life.

She said: "I started working in the factory when I was 14. I had to get an exempt line to allow me to work as I was still at school but as I was one of eight we needed the money to buy food.

"My brothers and sisters all worked there as well and so did my uncle who was a gaffer.

SENSORY SEWING

"My job was putting transfers on to the machines, we worked from 8am to 6pm and it was piece work, you didn't get paid if you didn't do the work.

"You got a big transfer sheet and you had to cut it all out and it would stick to your fingers, it was really hard work and you had to be awfully quick.

Margaret remembers they were always struggling for more money. "It was a very good factory to work in, they were as good to us as they could be but we would always be going on strike for more money – it was always to do with money because you wanted more to give to your mother.

"But the gaffers were good to you and I thoroughly enjoyed it the only problem was the money – it wasn't very much but it paid for our dinners, my mum would make big pots of soup for us."

Factory workers enjoyed a good social life, much of it laid on by Singers. Margaret remembers going to the dancing and it was here she met her

future husband who also worked in the factory.

"I started going to the dancing when I was 17 or 18 and I was still dancing with my husband until the day he died.

"I had to give up working at Singers though as back then you couldn't work there if you were a married woman.

Photo by Charlie Sherry



"So I stayed there until I was 27 and then left to get married. I went back when I was 49 and was there until my man died, I had to stop then. He took a stroke and then a heart attack in the factory - he was only 55. I couldn't go back after that."

Margaret's story of her time at Singers is one of many that have been captured by volunteers working with West Dunbartonshire Heritage and will form part of the Singer Festival at Clydebank Town Hall in May.

Jen Smith from West Dunbartonshire Heritage explained:- "We had three Singer Sensory workshops, they were part of the Luminare Scotland Creative Ageing Festival. The materials were donated by the Council's staff so everything we used meant something to people and were used to make sensory crafts and cushions that help people with Alzheimer's or dementia.

"Lots of people who hadn't sewn before or hadn't done any sewing in years got right into it putting buttons, beads, braiding on to tactile fabrics like velvet and taffeta. At the same time we had people come along and chat to one of our volunteers about their memories of Singers and we also have postcards for people to jot down their stories about the factory."

sensory sewing, children's activities, a Dram & Drawing evening, Great British Sewing Bee competition, book reading by author Natalie Fergie and a display of some of the machines which the Council has in its archives.



Photo by Charlie Sherry



Photo by Charlie Sherry

The Volunteers Showcase of memories and stories will launch the Singers Festival which will run from 3 – 5 May and involve a mix of activities open to the public. They will include more

Daphne Mackay from Old Kilpatrick had slightly different memories to many of the other women attending the Singer Sensory workshops as she had worked in the office on the retail side of the business, rather on the factory floor.

She said: "I started work when I was 16, that was in 1955 and I was there for 18 years. I had a wonderful boss and I moved around from office to office doing shorthand, typing, stock control and sales figures.

"My boss had 12 shops under his control in the west of Scotland and one was in the Singer factory, they sold the sewing machines which were originally made in Clydebank.

"The office next to where I worked was the 'education' department, they were responsible for training new staff on how to use the sewing machines so they could show the new improvements to the public.

"They also ran dress-making classes for staff. I remember buying my first sewing machine when I started work there. It was a 201, it was really good – one of the best machines they had at the time I used to get lessons from the education staff and I started dress-making for myself.

"I never had any formal lessons as such but they were very good at helping when I got stuck on anything. I made most of my clothes, a lot of women did back then. I made tops and skirts, suits, matching two-pieces and even made a coat.

"I even got to help with some of the training courses myself and would play an awkward customer for the sales reps and the education department also made all the dresses for the Singer gala queen and her entourage – that was something that the whole of Clydebank would come out for.

"There were huge changes with shops closing and getting smaller – they used to have enormous shops in Union Street and Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow but

by the time I left the only one left was a pokey wee place.

"And the closure of the factory had a huge impact on the town as the whole workforce was out of work.

"It's 40 years since I left but I have a lot of happy memories of my time there."

For more information about the Singer Festival or to share a memory of your time at Singers contact West Dunbartonshire Heritage by emailing singer@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or calling 01389 771147.

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Steven Kerr

CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

By Charlie Sherry

Having been given the honour of judging this edition's photography competition, I have to say, the standard of the images entered were of the highest quality, making the task really very difficult.

However the nature of a competition is that winners have to be chosen and in my first choice I believe we have a well-deserved one.

This time round Clydesider asked for photographs to be based around the

theme of 'People' leaving it open to the photographer to interpret.

In Steven Kerr's superb shot, taken in Levengrove Park and titled 'Two Old Dears,' you have a brilliantly composed image, using the trees to create a natural frame for the sunset. He has captured two old dears who may be in the sunset of their lives, along with an actual sunset helping to create another layer to the narrative of this image, the black and white filter also works magnificently, well done Steven.

I chose Rab Taylor's enigmatic portrait 'Mother and Daughter' as runner-up. It is a fantastic example of an image that draws you in and leaves you wanting to know more, I found it quite a quirky composition which left me with a wee smile on my face, again, well done Rab - loved it.

My third and final choice is John Kelenfoldi's wonderful shot of the man

leaning against the banister at the River Leven with a pigeon standing on his arm. In today's fast-moving world of social media we are bombarded by images that most people just flick through without seeing, only stopping to look if one stands out. For me John's image does just that and again it gets the viewer thinking about the narrative behind it so on both counts it is a much deserved runners-up spot to John.

Clydesider would like to thank Charlie Sherry photographer and director of Inclusive Images for judging the competition and Iain Wilson from Photo Ecosse in Dumbarton for providing the prizes for our winners – a 20 x 30" canvas print of Steven's winning entry and framed prints for Rab and John.

Photo Competition Issue 6 – take a photo of your favourite place in West Dunbartonshire. Please email entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com by Friday March 30 2018.

The usual rules apply:-

One entry per person and you must live, work or be part of a group based in West Dunbartonshire.

All images entered must be your own work.

By entering you give Clydesider Creative Ltd permission to publish your work in print, digital and social media outlets – this in no way infringes your copyright.



Rab Taylor



John Kelenfoldi



Photo by Charlie Sherry

NEW YEAR, NEW ME

By Amanda Eleftheriades

It seems that every time we switch on the radio, television or computer, glance at our phone or pick up a paper we are bombarded with more bad news.

It can make it hard to believe there is anything good happening and there is lots of evidence to show that bad news can be bad for our mental health.

Which is why, here at Clydesider, we are all about highlighting the good news stories and positive groups and activities which are out there in our communities in West Dunbartonshire - and there are loads of them.

This issue we decided to focus on some of the local groups, activities and individuals who are doing their bit to promote positive well-being and help us when struggling with the challenges life throws at us all.

One such woman is Mari Graham who has been practising and teaching Tai chi for over a quarter of a century.

Standing in front of her weekly Friday afternoon Tai chi class, dressed in an embroidered Chinese tunic and loose-fitting black trousers she looks the very personification of calmness.

And she has one of the most relaxing voices I have ever heard. Just listening to her chilled tones as she talks the group through their warm-up routine seems to have a de-stressing effect on everyone in the room including myself - and Charlie, who came along to take the photos. In fact he was so relaxed that he actually dropped off to sleep for a few moments!

Tai chi is a beautiful exercise to observe and the slow, meditative movements are practised every day in parks and open spaces across the world.

"When you come here this is your time to yourself," Mari gently reminds the class.

She tells me that Tai chi is a "holistic exercise", similar to yoga which works on the mind as well as the body, adding: "Over the 26 years I have

been teaching I have come to understand that anybody can learn this ancient form of exercise, as long as they practise regularly.

"Although it may be thousands of years old this system is tailor-made for the 21st century and is the perfect antidote to stress.



Photo by Charlie Sherry

"As you become familiar with the movements then your mind begins to relax – it's like meditation in movement."

And it has all the physical benefits that come with regular exercise such as improved flexibility, stronger joints and better posture as well as being a workout for the mind.

Mari has worked with several organisations which support people who are struggling with their mental health. She said: "The first class that I taught locally was Stepping Stones – that was over 20 years ago and the class is still running today, with one of my students from back then as the facilitator."

Two of her students who have been enjoying the Friday afternoon class in Whitecrook's Centre 81 for several years told me why they keep coming back each week.

Hugh Beattie, 64, from Whitecrook said: "I started doing Tai chi 25 years ago and then fell away from it and started back again about five years ago.

"I do several classes, it helps me physically because I get backache and pains in my joints but the class keeps me supple and I feel more confident when I'm walking plus it is really calming and I find it very easy to relax."

Photo by Charlie Sherry



Martha Wilson has also been going to Mari's class for five years. When she tells me she is 74 I can't help but gasp with surprise because she looks about 20 years younger.



Photo by Charlie Sherry

She believes the Tai chi has contributed to her youthful appearance because she feels so much better since starting the classes.

She explained: "I used to have really bad sciatica but that has gone away altogether. My blood pressure has also gone down and my circulation has improved tremendously I used to have that white finger because my blood didn't circulate properly but that has all gone now.

"Even my balance is great now – it took a lot of time to get the hang of it but I couldn't walk in a straight line before and now I don't even think about it."

Hugh added: "There are people in here in their 80s who wouldn't be walking about the streets if they didn't come to the class and it's not just the physical benefits – it's a real community group. People come because it's very sociable and welcoming and you get to meet new people."

Having enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere of Mari's class, I have decided to listen to Hugh's and Martha's wise words and plan to pop along to join the Friday group when I can.

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SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Forum works with statutory and voluntary groups from across West Dunbartonshire, Helensburgh and the Lochside to help people find out more about the support available.

It also works at a strategic level to help shape mental health services of the future.

The member-led Forum is open to anyone using local mental health services and also their carers. They provide regular opportunities for people to learn more about local services.

In December WDMHF held their annual Beating the Winter Blues event with 15 local organisations on hand to provide information and advice about their services.

On February 28 the Forum is hosting its first Coffee, Cake & Chat afternoon of 2018 in Community Links, Clydebank from 12 – 2pm. This year's sessions will focus on how to plan for a crisis when your mental health is not good. Places are limited so register in advance by phone or email.

The Forum's Chairperson Liz explained: "We will be giving people information about Advanced Statements, these are legal documents which give you the

opportunity to say what care you do – or do not – want should you become ill.

"You put them together when you are well and then should you become unwell your doctor should look at your advanced statement and take your wishes into account."



Future events on the same topic will be held in Dumbarton and the Vale and are open to individuals and carers.

Last year the Forum compiled an Easy Stress-Free Recipe Book with favourite recipes contributed by members and staff from community mental health centres.

And Forum members have worked with West Dunbartonshire Educational Services to compile a lesson plan on mental and emotional wellbeing which is being piloted by Clydebank High School.

For more information or to become a Forum member call 01389 742294 or email wd.mhf@btconnect.com

BREAKING THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

Members of a local charity are using their experiences of battling with mental health problems to create a board game which can help others.

Stepping Stones have teamed up with arts charity Project Ability to develop their 'Living Life to the Full' game.



They started work on the initiative in January and at the end of six weeks hope to have a prototype ready to be trialled by groups in local mental health services.

John White, Director of Operations at Stepping Stones, said: "Group members and staff organise activities that have a positive impact on mood and confidence and the idea of a board game was born from one of these activities.

"We saw the potential impact the game could have and members and staff formed a working group to develop the idea further."

Elaine McWilliams, Group Development Worker with Stepping Stones, is now working with a small team of the charity's members and an artistic designer from Project Ability to turn the idea into reality.

She said: "The basis of the game is the idea of a vicious circle that people can get trapped in when they are struggling with poor mental health.

"The aim of the game is to get out of the vicious circle by dealing with your mental health and there are different cards to do this which involve discussion on things that have a positive or negative impact on you. There are also contemplation and relaxation cards so the group will share ideas that helped them.

"Our members have a range of skills, some are creative and artistic, others are good at quizzes so they are all bringing different talents to the group."

The group will also produce a facilitator's guide to accompany the game so that it can be played in a mix of settings including schools and mental health services.



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

Sharon McGinley decided after over two years volunteering as a counsellor to set up her own business Mental Health Matters. She is a professional Cognitive Behavioural Therapist (CBT) who provides one to one counselling and groupwork. She is registered with BABCP and is a member of COSCA.

She said: "I have been working locally volunteering with DACA and Alternatives, both addiction organisations.

"I wanted to set up Mental Health Matters, because I was aware people are struggling with issues such as anxiety disorders, grief, depression and addiction and they feel there is no one who is willing to listen and hear their story non-judgementally and empathetically.

"For some people trying to cope with grief is terrifying, as they encounter emotions of which they are unfamiliar due to suppression of emotions from childhood and to block out the pain, they turn to alcohol or drugs. This is where CBT can assist through cognitive restructuring looking at linkage between thoughts, feelings and behaviour and how you view yourself, the world and others around you.

"CBT is a talking therapy which has been shown to be effective for a wide range of problems. I also use compassion-focused therapy which assists people with acquiring courage and honesty to explore the origins of self-blame and self-criticism. I want them to know that people do care, I genuinely care."



Sharon will be offering both one-to-one and couples counselling in community venues across West Dunbartonshire and Glasgow. She also runs group work programmes which address topics such as Working With Grief, Understanding Emotions, Self Care & Compassion and Substance Abuse.

"Groupwork gives people additional support - being part of a group helps people realise they are not alone and others have now acquired the strength, tools and cognitive restructuring to empower them to attain their goals and move forward in their lives."

For more information or to book an appointment contact Sharon on 07979 952920 or on Facebook Mental Health Matters.

BOYLE BOOKS

By Gail Russell

Peter Murray, of Old Kilpatrick, has drawn upon his experiences working as an assistant principal to write his series of books, 'Boyle Breath'.

Originally from Scotstoun, Murray took up writing in his retirement and has penned a five book series about 'life, love, family, school, bullying, farting and... aliens?'

The books revolve around Bernard Boyle, an English teacher at 'Roquefort High' (who also happens to be an alien from the planet 'Zeronia'). He helps his students overcome familiar real-life problems, like those which arise when his characters encounter Nicholas 'Nikki' Dedson, Roquefort High's resident bully.

"Anti-bullying is one of the main themes," says Murray. "The books include a lot of school incidents like class-scenes of snot-loaded paper aeroplanes and playground dustbin-lid skimming."

Readers of the books may discover more familiar real-life links, as the series is set in a locale greatly resembling West Dunbartonshire.

"Roquefort is Old Kilpatrick," Murray told me, "with its nearby Erskine Bridge as the 'Rogue Rapids Road bridge' in the books."

Other landmarks can also be found in the text, including McMonagles chip shop, the Titan Crane and Dumbarton Rock amongst a whole host of recognisable places. Murray, who uses the pen name 'Murray L. Peters', has also hand-drawn maps which are included in the self-published titles.

He sees the books as being somewhat autobiographical, and, with his years of experience as an Assistant Principal at Dumbarton Academy, the stories are bound to be full of comedic anecdotes.

Peter's ability to publish the books has been largely down to his aunt, a former medical secretary who he looked after in her later years.

"My Aunt Celia was always supportive of my writing. When she died she left me some money in her will with the instruction that it should be used to help my book." Murray followed her instruction and went on to publish his book with self-publishing firm Authorhouse.

He is currently writing the fifth instalment, a prequel titled 'Boyle-Breath: Beginnings,' which will be published through the same firm.

You can find Peter's books by searching 'Murray. L. Peters' on www.authorhouse.com.

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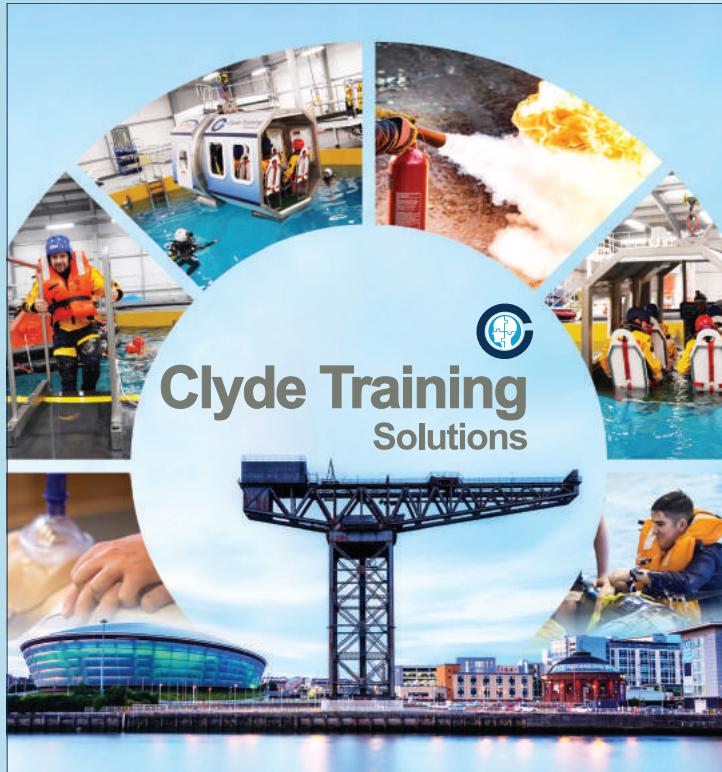
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At Clydesider we recognise the importance of investing in our communities so we are keeping the majority of our advertising local and encouraging people to shop and trade local when they can.

And we have teamed up with Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce (DCC) to include a section in the magazine which promotes local companies and business people. This issue we feature Titan Tattoos and Transmit Ceramics.



dunbartonshire
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DCC is a membership organisation that promotes, represents and supports businesses from a wide range of

sectors from sole trader start ups, social enterprises and public sector to PLCs and some of the largest local employers. It offers business support, networking events and a host of benefits including legal and HR support, promotion, workshops and business mentoring.

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Photo by Gail Russell



TRANSMIT CERAMICS

By Gail Russell

By the age of 21 most of us are either in the midst of our university education; partying at the weekends and cramming through the week, or finding our feet in the work environment, settling into jobs we may or may not grow to love.

For Summer Logan, however, her 21st birthday saw her unlocking the doors of her newly opened ceramics studio, Transmit Ceramics, and welcoming in her first customers.

“Opening my own business hasn’t been easy,” she told me. “There’s always that fear of failure, but if you never try you’ll never succeed.”

Apprenticing under Geraldine Russell

at the studio’s former Glasgow location, Summer was able to learn the ins and outs of business and the art of ceramics while many others spent their daytime hours in education.

“I’ve been home educated since I was eleven,” says Summer. “That has given me the freedom to pursue interests I may not have had time for had I been in the school system.”

This extra time to work on what began as a hobby has certainly paid off and Summer is now adept at both hand-building ceramic items and throwing clay on her pottery wheels. I had a go at it myself, and found it much harder than Summer makes it look.

“It takes a lot of practice to get it right. If all else fails you’ll end up leaving with a tealight holder at least,” she laughs.

True, my offering does look like its only use will be decorative, and not the mug I was aiming for. Luckily, Summer offers 8-week courses so you can hone your skills and leave with the item you initially envisioned by the end of your last session.

There’s something for everybody, from messy play for babies and home educator sessions, to homeware or jewellery classes for all. There are even sensory-friendly classes for those who would rather work in a low light and noise environment.

Summer is now looking to develop her new business venture into a social enterprise and is teaming up with local community groups such as the Leamy

Foundation, to run sessions for people using their services.

The amount of work Summer has put in to the studio is evident and it's well worth a visit.

You can contact Summer through the Transmit Ceramics Facebook page, by email at transmit.ceramic@gmail.com or by phone on 07447976222 or pop into see her at Unit 15 Lomond Galleries, Alexandria G83 0UG – upstairs and just through the Lagavulin Bistro.

If you fancy trying your hand at a Transmit Ceramic class, Summer has kindly offered a £25 gift voucher for her Jewellery Workshop as a Clydesider competition prize. To enter simply tell us what landmark birthday

has Summer just celebrated. Email your answer to clydesidercomp@gmail.com or post to Clydesider 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG. Closing date March 23.

Photo by Gail Russell



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RISE OF THE TITANS

By Linda Morrison

According to the Collins English dictionary, if you describe someone as a Titan in their field of expertise you are saying that they are important and successful in that field.

Where is this story going I hear you ask? Well, recently I had the great pleasure of meeting Matt Hird, owner of the Titan Tattoo Company in Clydebank.

It was my first assignment for Clydesider Magazine and I will confess to being a little bit nervous. As soon as I entered the tattoo studio on Glasgow Road all my tummy butterflies disappeared.

Matt and his team are quite simply some of the nicest people I have had the pleasure of chatting to and to say they are important and successful in their field of expertise is quite simply an understatement.

Proof of that success adorns the bodies of the staff and was proudly on display all around the shop. To have such a welcoming and talented bunch of artists in Clydebank is important, both to the economy of the area and to the people of Clydebank as they attract customers and followers from Glasgow and beyond.

The attention to detail of the artwork is absolutely fabulous and these guys work around the clock to deliver a top notch service.

Matt came to Scotland all the way from North Queensland, Australia. While studying art at James Cook University he worked in a tattoo shop and secured an apprentice position there after he graduated. Here he fine tuned his tattoo art and his employer encouraged him to gain some international experience. So he came to Scotland to work for the summer where he worked with Glasgow tattoo giant Terry Wrigley at Terry's Tattoos.

Matt loved being in Scotland so much that he decided to come back to work and eventually set up Titan Tattoos here in Clydebank.

He first opened the doors five years ago and has worked so hard to provide an excellent service that I don't think those doors have ever closed.

Matt now has a talented, hard working team at Titan Tattoo. As the business grew so did the number of staff and the Titan team is currently seven-strong. Judd, Lorna and Carron do body

piercing. Matt, Marcus, Megan and Renaldas are the tattoo artists.

And Matt is keen to bring exciting new talent to the fore. In 2013 he took on Marcus as an apprentice, seeing a future for this young man who has great artistic ability. Marcus, then aged 21, worked hard undertaking art classes, online art training and most importantly on the job training with Matt, watching him work and practicing many intricate artworks.



The training and the hard work paid off, he qualified in March 2015 and his artwork is simply amazing.

Marcus, now 24 years old, is a successful tattoo artist, he has a fiance and two young children and still manages to work around the clock to satisfy his many customers and followers. If you have an Instagram account you can view his work at [marcusodonnelltattoo](https://www.instagram.com/marcusodonnelltattoo).

I am a tattoo virgin. I have often thought about getting a tattoo but a few factors always put me off. One of those was I needed to be sure the ink was cruelty free and contained no animal-derived ingredients. Matt and Marcus showed me a sample of their products all clearly marked suitable for vegans.

The other thing that concerned me was the feel and ambience of the tattoo studio itself. My vision of these places was dark little parlours with pot smoking tattoo artists - maybe I watched too many Steven Seagal movies as a kid.

Matt's shop is as far away from my vision as it is possible to get. The shop is welcoming, brightly lit and has a professional yet relaxed and friendly feel.

For any business to be successful there needs to be one major requirement to ensure its survival and that is passion. I sensed that passion when I visited Matt

and his team. Marcus, on my arrival, was sitting with a sketchbook. He was clearly engrossed in the artwork he was creating. Matt spoke highly of all of his team and showed great enthusiasm for his work.

If after reading this article you feel ready to be inked I suggest a little visit to the Titan Tattoo Company. If on the other hand you have 'I love Lucy' emblazoned across your chest and Lucy is no longer part of your life, then these guys will do a cover up or Tattoo removal. Check them out on Facebook, visit them at 272 Glasgow Road, Clydebank or call on 0141 952 1922.



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Photo by Rab Taylor

PAST LIVES

By Amanda Eleftheriades

“Buttons are the bane of my life,” said Dumbarton-born Rab Taylor. The burly IT consultant does not look like a man to be troubled by an outfit’s fastenings but there is more to Rab than meets the eye – a lot more.

For while the company director spends his working days fine-tuning business IT systems here and now in the 21st century, his evenings and weekends are taken up with the muskets, cannons, costumes and – when needs must – the changing design of buttons in 17th century Scotland.

It is this passion for historic re-enacting which has shaped much of Rab’s life, but it was a hobby that he stumbled into almost by accident over 25 years

ago and not out of any great interest in the religious and political turmoil that was occurring across Europe at the time. No, his original motivation was much more mercenary - it was a chance to make good money while having a fun weekend away with his mates.

Rab explained: “It all started for me back in 1990. I was a young, single bloke and shared a flat with two guys who made swords and chainmail for Viking re-enactment.

“I was into photography and used to tag along because it made for good photos but I wasn’t too interested in the re-enacting side of it myself.

“I was in the pub with them one weekend and these guys were looking for extras for a Disney film to be shot at Alnwick Castle and I liked the idea of getting a bit extra money so I put my hand up.

“To be official re-enactors and appear

in the film you had to join the English Civil War Society and the Regiment of Loudoun so I signed up."

After the filming Rab decided to make the most of his year-long membership and find out what all the fuss was about re-enacting so put his name down for a weekend event in Aldershot.

He was picked up in a white transit van which whisked him down south with fellow re-enactors from Scotland. They arrived in the early hours of the morning into what Rab describes as "a rock festival full of up-market tents and camper vans, a beer tent and about 2,000 people."

Photo by Rab Taylor



As a newbie Rab was provided with a 17th century Covenanter's outfit and then sent off to, as he described it "play soldiers for the day."

"There were cannons, cavalry, musketeers and foot soldiers, there was smoke billowing around the battlefield and there was this sense of panic," he remembers.

"Over the weekend I was ridden over by a group of horsemen, shot in the

back by a cannon and it was the best fun I'd had since I was a child.

"Then in the evening after the day's battle I realised that half the 'guys' I had been fighting with were actually women and they got changed out of their military outfits into 17th century dress and we all headed for the beer tent.

"It was the same again on the Sunday then back in the transit van and up the road to Scotland arriving back in Partick at 5am Monday morning. I was covered in bruises and hooked on 17th century re-enacting."

Since then he has travelled across Scotland, England, Ireland and over to Holland following in the footsteps of the Loudoun Regiment of Foote - the only Scottish regiment to fight in the English Civil War.

"When I started I knew nothing of that period of Scottish history but I have learned a tremendous amount about both the military history and the social history since then both from books and from talking to people.

"I also enjoy the social side of it. I met my partner Lesley in a beer tent in Cheshire 22 years ago and we now have a 19 year old daughter Mhairi who is our regimental drummer and my younger daughter Niamh can't wait to turn 16 so she can join us on the battlefield, for now she is one of the camp followers and takes some of the photos for us."

Rab was the regiment's Commanding Officer for 10 years and recently took up the role again. He is responsible for

getting his 70-strong band of troops from across Scotland to events throughout the UK and Europe as well as organising and hosting gatherings here in Scotland.

The history, which Rab is now so passionate about, is one of the least told periods of Scotland's past sandwiched between the 16th century Reformation and the 18th century Jacobite uprisings.

But it is an important link between the two and the Earl of Loudoun and his men played a key role in it. As part of the Scottish Covenanters they initially fought against the crown during the first English Civil War then switched to the royalist side to oppose Cromwell's army.

Rab explained: "The regiment was raised by John Campbell, the Earl of Loudoun in 1640 and was based in Glasgow. They fought in Newcastle, near York, Kilsyth and at Aldearn near Stirling.

"They were all but wiped out at Kilsyth, the battle was on the site where the reservoir is today but few people know this. A lot of Scottish history focuses on the time of Bonnie Prince Charlie and 1740's but more people died at the Battle of Kilsyth than at Culloden."

It is this forgotten history that keeps Rab going back for more and he is keen to encourage more people to give it a try.

He added: "For me the purpose of my hobby is ultimately to educate people about our history.

"When I got into it I started reading books and asking people questions. But seeing it happen live in front of you makes it real, that's why it is called living history."

There are small annual membership fees to join both the Regiment and the Roundhead Association but that's all you need to pay to give it a go. Basic outfits are provided so newcomers can find out if the hobby is for them before committing themselves financially and the regiment also tries to raise funds by running sponsored events which helps cover - or greatly reduce - the cost of travel to events in England and further afield.

Though once you get the bug, Rab warns, it can become an expensive hobby. For the Taylor family holidays abroad have been replaced by weekends journeying back in time and the correct outfits and accessories have become must-buy items.

And when you become as serious about it as Rab is, the devil most definitely is in the detail. "There are lots of Facebook discussion groups and we have a lot of debate about the outfits and styles because they changed over time and we want to our costumes to be as true to life as possible.

"I had taken a break from it for awhile and when I came back I found out that the wooden style of button was out and they had to be covered in cloth and then they changed again and I have a 70 button cassock which I need to keep changing the buttons on."

So, that explains why buttons are the bane of Rab's life!

Clydesider Short Stories Presents...

HOLIDAYS

by
Marie-Therese Kielty

I hate the adverts on TV.'

I'm a pushover.

They had worked their magic spells for Christmas. But I wasn't ready for the holiday promotions, quite, so I went to put the kettle on at a break in Time Team, safe family viewing, which we were watching, live.

Anyway, off I went innocently enough to make tea, and so it came right out of the blue. In I came, carrying mugs and mince pies, and found them all psyched up, with exchanges as bad as a political broadcast and an atmosphere like the outbreak of war.

Apparently I'd missed an advert for a bargain off-season holiday in Spain.

Absolutely everyone goes there and where do we go? Caravan holidays! In Dunoon! The words were practically spat at me.

I like my wee holiday in Dunoon. I like to knit while the kids paddle or play on the swings and meet new pals. And there are cafes and charity shops - what's not to like?

But mutiny was on my hands. I could see that even dad was joining the revolution.

'Aye...sunbathing on thae beaches...I'd get a rare tan...,' he said dreamily.

Daft gowk! It was the lassies he was thinking of, with those bikinis they were nearly wearing. Fine figure he'd cut in Spain standing in the waves, knotted hanky over his bald head, trousers rolled up, braces on display.

'What about it mum,' the kids whined 'You can bring your knitting.'

But will they have charity shops in Spain? I wondered.
If not, what would I do for a fortnight?

Time Team had started again. No-one was watching.
Everybody knew somebody who had been to Spain. Kirsty was talking about Spanish waiters. I didn't like the sound of that. Teenagers - you have to watch them, even in Dunoon. She can be silly about boyfriends. Another reason not to go.

On the other hand, I could get myself a Gigolo...one of those tall slim dancers who stamp their feet.

Ole!

That would use up a couple of days.

Then, back to the knitting, I suppose...

Jonathan was talking about bull-fighting. I'm not sure I approve. I don't want him anywhere near that. He is at that stupid stage.

On the other hand...Toreadors and Matadors. They look so elegant. Would there be many around. Some flighty men liked to chat up vulnerable women of my age, or so I had heard. Could be fun. I could get to like that, since I well knew what their game was.

Well! There went another couple of pleasant days...

And back to the knitting?

This might not be as bad as I feared.

Wee Morven fancied the foreign food. I wasn't so sure. You knew where you were with mince, tatties, and rice pudding. I made a mental note to pack the diahorrea mixture, and check up on travel insurance.

No, though! I would never forgive myself if my wee one ended up in a foreign hospital with a tummy bug.

I imagined the Spanish doctor looking soulfully into my eyes and saying: 'We have managed to save her...I know how you must be feeling...Senora...' as he took my hand in his...

The image pleased me.

I could stay at her hospital bed, cooling her fevered brow, and in between times, sitting knitting while the good-looking Spanish doctors...

Here I was interrupted.

'Oh, go on, mum. Please mum...'

'Maybe,' I said. 'I'll think about it. Now drink your tea before it gets cold.'

And we returned to Time Team.

Now...I'll have to think about packing, and what knitting to take with me...

CLYDESIDER Mission Statement

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire. The Clydesider community magazine 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.

Support and Contribute to Clydesider

There is no charge for the magazine but if you like what you have read and want to support 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, you can make a contribution by cheque.

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

We really are a magazine that is *for our community and by our community*, and a big thank you goes out to our fantastic team of volunteer contributors including published and novice poets, authors, journalists, photographers plus local artists, designers, cartoonists and web designers – you are a real joy to work with.

We would also like to thank all our advertisers, our supporting subscribers and social enterprise funder Firstport. 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.

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Clydesiders



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Lift It. Read It. Love It.

MAKING THE WORLD GO AWAY

My mother settled me to sleep under
a Bakelite radio, so I fell
in love with the tone morning noon and night.

I kept a pad and pen to catch the words
of Stranger on the Shore when I was ten
but it's the drums that hypnotise, hold me.

The rhythm, the race towards the rising
chorus gets me deep...and when Springsteen sings
Maria's Bed, the mix of instruments

entering one at a time takes me off.
Drops of Jupiter...Mississippi. Train's
laid-back mooosic lays it on, wants looping.

Play playlist dreams – swing on that melody...
sail down lazy rivers, jig in blue grass.

By Irene Cunningham

Poetry Competition Issue 6 – To enter write us a poem on the theme of 'Spring' and email your entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com or send to 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG by March 30 2018.

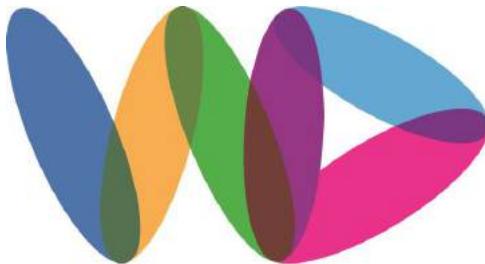
The usual rules apply:-

*One entry per person and you must live, work or be part of a group
based in West Dunbartonshire to enter.*

All poems entered must be your own work.

*By entering you give Clydesider Creative Ltd permission to publish
your work in print, digital and social media outlets – this in no way
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Good Luck!



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