



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

Issue 8 Nov/Dec 2018

Free



UNITED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE

VALERIE

The long walk home from a night on the tiles.

Who would have thought it was just seven miles.

It felt like a trek right across the country.

By the time we got home we were freezing and hungry.

We squabbled and argued and laughed in the rain.

And come next weekend we did it again.

By Conrad Gross

Clydesider Poetry Competition Winner



CONTENTS

Valerie by Conrad Gross	2
Welcome to <i>Clydesider</i>	4
Creating The News	5
Community Camera Club	6
On The Map	7
Building Bridges With The Beautiful Game by Charlie Sherry	8
SCE - Gael Music	12
Clydesider Club Card	14
Clydesider Competitions	15
Growing Back to Your Roots by Ross Fullarton	16
Creating Change by Angela Clark	20
Clydesider Photography Competition	24
Community Fundraisers by Charlie Sherry	26
Taking Action is AOK	28
An Interview With Rag & Bone	30
Lights, Camera, Action in G81 Studio	33
Creating Community	35
A Writer Recommends by Ann Mackinnon	39
Gardening for Bumblebees by Angela Clark	40
Inspirational Moments with Billy Scobie	42
Trade Directory	44
Clydesider Community Calendar	45
Clydesider Contacts & Advertisers Directory	46
<i>The Dinosaur (or Grandpa)</i> by Alex King	47



Welcome to **CLYDESIDER**

"There's no such thing as society," a former prime minister once infamously said.

Well, looking around Dumbarton, Clydebank and the Vale of Leven I would beg to differ. We have some wonderful people who not only look out for themselves and their families but they are also looking after their community and repairing a society that has gone through some really tough times.

This issue of *Clydesider* celebrates our strong community spirit which refuses to be beaten by unemployment, poverty, poor health or many different ills which are too often out of our control.

From Syrian refugees welcomed into the Clydebank community with a game of football to community gardeners, creative communities, local activists and fundraisers all doing their bit to help both their neighbours and total strangers, this issue is packed full of the power of human kindness.

And at Clydesider 'hobbit house' HQ we are looking forward to getting more of the local community involved in our activities and giving them the tools to tell their own stories.

When we set up *Clydesider* two years ago we didn't realise involving our local community in sharing their stories was becoming 'a thing'. Well, apparently it is as more people turn away from mainstream media and are unsure what online news is real and what is fake, they are setting up their own news outlets and learning how to report what is happening on their doorsteps.

We are delighted to reveal we have some new funders and their support will allow us to provide more opportunities to get involved with all aspects of Clydesider. This will include running free Citizen Journalism workshops and new Creative Cafes - read more about these over the page.

And to get a better understanding of what is happening elsewhere I am heading down to Cardiff for an Engaged Journalism conference and look forward to sharing the *Clydesider* story with other community-led media.

None of this would be possible without support from our new funders, so I would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund, the Glasgow Flightpath Fund and the Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Trade Up Programme, in partnership with the School for Social Entrepreneurs and jointly funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the Scottish Government, for their support.

So as we look forward to an exciting time ahead in 2019, I just want to wish all our readers a peaceful and relaxing festive season.



**Amanda
Eleftheriades-Sherry**
Editor



CREATING THE NEWS

Ever thought about writing for *Clydesider* but not quite sure if it was for you?

Well now is your chance to find out more and take part in our first Citizen Journalism training sessions.

Thanks to funding from the Glasgow Flightpath Fund we will be hosting three training programmes over the next few months.

The first programme kicks off in Dumbarton Library on Wednesday November 7 from 10.30am – 1pm.

It will run for four weeks and cover topics including news writing, interview techniques and digital journalism.

All sessions are free to attend and no expertise or equipment is needed. Just bring along an inquiring mind and a passion to tell your community's good news stories.

We are also delighted to announce that we have received a National Lottery award from the Big Lottery Fund.


This will allow us to run Creative Café events across West Dunbartonshire for the next three years and we plan to offer a range of free

creative taster workshops.

The funding will also allow us to take on a new part-time Creative Development Worker – see page 15 if you are interested in joining our team.

To sign up for our Citizen Journalism workshops at Dumbarton Library visit our Eventbrite page or drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com.

Spaces are limited but if you miss this programme we will be running sessions in Clydebank and the Vale of Leven in 2019.



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Clydesider Club Card

COMMUNITY CLUBS

By Tommy Crocket



Dumbarton Cine, Video & Digital Club is open to people with an interest in photography and video filming and editing.

The club has been running since 1988 and with the evolution of video and digital members have coped with changes from photos, slide, film and video to the digital age. In making this transition training has become an important part of the club's work and old and new members are always available to help those less knowledgeable in editing techniques, slideshow preparation or burning film to DVD.

Through the years the club has compiled a comprehensive history of the local area in film and photograph. Some of this has been converted from cine film and is an invaluable archive history of West Dunbartonshire and the surrounding areas.

Club enthusiasts also participate in filming local events for publication and archive use and are happy to help convert old film to digital formats.

Members undertake joint projects such as the Argyll Classic Car Rally which saw the local film buffs travel as far afield as Killin to capture footage of the classic motors at strategic points on the route.

Another very important project was the welcome of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to Dumbarton on their return from Afghanistan. This project

proved so successful that numerous videos were requested by the soldiers, their friends and families.

Members also filmed the prestigious Loch Lomond Folk Festival and footage was used for several other projects, they also produced a 50 minute video for Loch Lomond Shores.

The group meets twice a week in Dumbarton's Concord Centre. On Tuesdays from 7 - 9 pm members work on individual or joint film or photograph projects and on Wednesdays 1 - 4 pm they convert old cine film or video to digital format.

Club members are enthusiastic and committed to filming local events so if you have an event you would like captured on film please contact them either on Facebook or at the Concord Centre and they will endeavour to help.

ON THE MAP



"This covers both community based groups, where a detailed list of all groups run in all centres and offices, and a separate map of all digital services. This shows where all free wifi, access to public computers and free computer courses are available."

To obtain either a paper or digital copy of these maps or to find out more pop in to Centre 81 in Whitecreek, call Michael on 01415337070, or email Michael@clydebank-ha.org.uk

Clydebank-based community groups are leaving their mark on a new map of the area.

The Community Map produced by Clydebank Housing Association captures over 40 local community services and activities on one map.

As part of the project, which was funded by the Aspiring Communities Fund, a second digital map of the town has been created to show where there are public computers and access to free wifi.

Digital Connector Michael McLaughlin worked with Community Connector Alan Karas on the project. He said: "We completed a mapping exercise of local services and activities within the wider Clydebank community.



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WE'LL
BEAT ANY
QUOTE



BUILDING BRIDGES WITH THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Words & Photos by Charlie Sherry

Any one walking past Goals five-a-side complex on a Sunday evening would hear the usual argy bargy and banter emanating from the various games.

However, if they listened a little closer, they will be surprised to hear that in amongst the usual Glasga slang flying about, there were Arabic voices as well.

While they may not understand the actual words, they would understand that the universal language of football was being spoken and if they looked closer, they would see a group of Syrians, laughing and joking, and having a wee go at each other in that

footballing way with Clydebank man, Big Davy McAleer, keeping goals and giving as good as he got in the old banter stakes.

For over two years now Davy McAleer has been organising a five-a-side kickabout for some of the Syrian refugees who arrived in Clydebank after fleeing for their lives from their war-torn homeland.

Davy explained how it started. "A couple of years ago some of the Syrians were brought along to a Bankies game, in my role as a member of Clydebank FC committee I was to meet and greet them.

"We got talking and I said next time we'd arrange a kickabout. They were really keen to do so and we've been coming here every Sunday for two years now."

For Davy as well as the Syrians this was a new experience. He had never been involved in anything like this before but felt he had to do something to help the refugees settle in to what was a very foreign environment for them.

He explained: "Like most people I had seen what was happening in Syria and the plight of those escaping that horror on the news.

"When I met the guys I realised how difficult trying to fit in to life in Clydebank must be. I thought how I would feel if the situation was reversed and I was in Syria - after all, these were just ordinary guys like me caught up in a very abnormal situation."

No need to look too far back in Clydebank's history to see parallels between the Syrian refugees escaping the carpet bombing of their towns and villages and the evacuees who were dispersed all over Scotland after the town was totally flattened by the Luftwaffe in the 1941 Blitz.

For Davy stories from his parents' of that tragic event played a big part in inspiring him to do what he could to help the Syrians settle in. He added: "When I met the Syrians I immediately thought about the stories my mother and father told me about the horrors of the Blitz and how they were evacuated to mining villages around Kirkintilloch where the locals took them in and treated them as if they were their own family.



"To me, these poor folk were going through the same traumatic time as my parents had. It didn't matter whether the bombs fell in Clydebank or Syria - a refugee is a refugee. I felt I just had to do what I could to help and there's no better way

to make folk feel at ease than a wee game of footie."

Two years on from that first kickabout the Syrian lads have branched out by organising five-a-side games for other groups of refugees in Glasgow, helping them get settled into their new home city just as Davy had helped them here in Clydebank.

And like children the world over, it didn't take the younger Syrians too long to settle in and make friends.

Considering 12-year-old Mohammed Barghouth arrived in Scotland just two years ago, his command of English is impressive and he has even picked up a soft Scottish brogue.

The Clydebank High pupil was quick to praise Davy and the wider Clydebank community for the way in which he and his family were welcomed to the town.

He said: "The Scottish people have been brilliant to us, they have been so kind, they don't care about us being from Syria, they just want to help."

After displaying some silky skills on the pitch and still wearing his Scotland football top with pride, Mohammed explained since he started coming along on a Sunday night he now plays for his

school team and local club Kilbowie Union.

He added: "I love playing football and it's brilliant playing for my school and Kilbowie, I'm the only Syrian in both teams but I get treated no differently from anyone else, they don't care about the colour of my skin or where I came from, it's all about being part the team."

When he started on this journey Big Davy had no idea how it would work out, he just knew he had to do something to help, so the knock-on affect with the Syrians doing the same thing for other groups of new



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arrivals and success stories like young Mohammed's makes it all the more worthwhile.

"It's brilliant to see how far they have come in two years," he said.

"It fills me with pride when I see the people of my home town carrying on a great Scottish tradition by welcoming those fleeing tyranny."

And he is keen to urge others to get involved helping the Syrians feel part of the community.

He added: "When I started doing this I had no idea how rewarding it would be, I'm convinced I get far more out of this than I put in. Even if it's only for a couple of hours a week, get involved. Trust me, you'll love every minute of it."



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SPONSORED EDITORIAL

Children aged 9 to 16 from communities in Dumbarton, Bonhill, Clydebank and Alexandria are being offered the chance to collect, learn and share traditional tunes that exist across the region via a new folk and traditional music project.



Gael Music, West Dunbartonshire Council and Y-Sort-It are offering free places this year to a new folk music academy based at the Concord Community Centre in Dumbarton. This follows a stage 1 programme of pennywhistle workshops delivered at participating primary schools.

A range of folk related instruments will be loaned free of charge to participating families for 12 months and the young people will receive free instrumental tuition on clarsach harp, wooden flute, melodeon and fiddle plus the chance to jointly create 30

minutes of new music based on pupil's own research.

Pupils offered a place at our new folk academy each have a rare opportunity to develop their musical talents for the benefit of their local communities as a whole.

Developing communities' particular strengths in music and culture will require local support and Gael Music is looking forward to working with participating families to overcome any existing barriers to participation such as cost and transport.

Gael Music is a youth-led arts and heritage organisation that promotes, develops and celebrates folk and traditional music with communities across the UK.

Email office@gael.org.uk for more information about our activities or contact the project leader on 07870 211 501.



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Martin Docherty-Hughes

Your MP for West Dunbartonshire (SNP)

MP ADVICE SURGERIES



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- 4th Tuesday of the month (6pm-7pm)

Dalmuir Library

- 1st Saturday of the month (11am-12pm)

- 3rd Friday of the month (1pm-2pm)

Clydebank Central Library

- 2nd Wednesday of the month (5pm-6pm)

Faifley Library

- 3rd Friday of the month (2.15pm-3.15pm)

Balloch Library

- 4th Saturday of the month (11am-12pm)

Contact information

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local office: Titan Enterprise, Queens Quay,
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No surgeries on bank holidays, school holidays or library closure days.
Surgeries may be run by staff due to Martin's parliamentary commitments.

CLYDESIDER CLUB CARD Discounts & Deals

At Clydesider we are all about promoting and supporting our local community – that includes our local business community.

So in Issue 7 we launched the Clydesider Club Card giving our readers exclusive discounts and special offers when they shop local with a range of local traders, shops and services.

This included Wright for Pets, Carman Fishery, Green Tree Remedies, Lomond Group Fitness and Jackie & The Beanstalk in the Vale of Leven; Big Sparra Café, Franny Belle, the Bowling Harbour Project, Cathie's Dry Cleaners and Photo Ecosse in and around Dumbarton, plus Clydebank Co-op stores, Joe Walker's Flooring, Mental Health Matters, Secret Smile and Essence of the Soul in Clydebank and surrounding neighbourhoods.

In this issue we are delighted to welcome the Flooring Studio, Masala Twist and Rag & Bone to the Clydesider Club Card family and look forward to adding more local businesses in 2019.

To receive your Clydesider Club Card and enjoy Clydesider discounts of 5% to 25% with these companies just complete the form on the page opposite or visit www.clydesider.org/clubcard

The annual Clydesider Club Card membership is £25 which will help us continue to keep the magazine free for all. As a big thank you for your support, we will post a free copy of each issue direct to your door.

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CLYDESIDER Competitions

1. Poetry Competition – the theme is 'New Beginnings' – gift voucher for Loch Lomond Craft Centre
2. Photography Competition – the theme is 'Hidden Gems' prize canvas and framed prints courtesy of Photo Ecosse
3. Loch Lomond Craft Centre Goodie Bag - Loch Lomond Craft Centre have kindly donated some beautiful handmade goodies which would make great Christmas presents – or a treat for yourself. To enter just name three arts and crafts you can buy in the Loch Lomond Craft Centre.
4. 'Song of the River' author Billy Scobie kindly donated a signed copy of his new poetry collection. Read Billy's creative journey on page 42 and tell us the name of the film which inspired Billy's love of art.

Usual rules apply:-

- One entry per person and you must live, work or be part of a West Dunbartonshire-based group
- All entries must be your own work
- By entering you give Clydesider Creative Ltd permission to publish your work in our print, digital and social media outlets – this in no way infringes your copyright.

Email entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com or send to Clydesider, 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG by Friday December 7 2018. Good Luck!

 <h2>JOIN OUR TEAM</h2>  <h3>Be Part of the Clydesider Story</h3> <p>Creative Development Worker 17.5 hours per week £18,200 pro-rata</p> <p>We're looking for a hard-working creative individual, with a nose for good news who is passionate about our local community.</p> <p>Role includes running our new Clydesider Creative Cafes, working with our volunteers & facilitators and supporting Clydesider community magazine, website & social media.</p> <p>Visit www.theclydesider.org or email theclydesider@gmail.com for a job pack. Closing Date Nov 23 2018.</p>	<h2>CLYDESIDER CLUB CARD</h2>  <h3>Shop Local For Great Deals & Discounts</h3> <p>Name</p> <p>Address</p> <p>Email</p> <p></p> <p>Sign up today for exclusive local discounts Plus get your free Clydesider magazine delivered direct to your door</p> <p>Either join online at www.clydesider.org/clydesidermag or complete the above and send with a cheque for £25 to:- 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG</p> <p><small>Your details will be stored securely, only used in accordance with Clydesider Club Card and not shared with any third parties.</small></p>
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GROWING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS

Words & Photos by Ross Fullarton

There's something blooming wonderful going on across Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale.

Residents are taking a stand against the sad decline in social and environmental resources, picking up their pitchforks and trowels and joining the Green Revolution.

With the establishment of community gardens, they look to take back the once vital community spirit, under threat in an increasingly isolating world.

June O'Nians of the Leamy Foundation - set up to assist local residents by using community gardens to combat

the crisis of isolation and ill-health - explained the situation.

"Having community gardens brings people together who might not have socialised before.

"It's got everybody working and looking out for one another again. It gives a sense of purpose for the community and its working."

June points to social media as she suggests: "We're supposed to be more connected but it actually leaves us more isolated.

"In the old days when people had to support each other, they did.

"Over the years life has overtaken us. We need to start taking time out to do positive things for ourselves and others.



"This is about getting back to our roots, its about community."

So how does joining one of the numerous community gardens taking root across West Dunbartonshire help locals ease a sense of isolation?

June revealed: "It helps people come out of their shells."

"People don't have to garden, some just come down to see what's going on or potter about."

"They can do as much or as little as they want. Pop down to have a cup of coffee and a blether."

"You don't have to be stuck in the house."

For the unsure, June offered:

"We will teach you. I'm up there to learn as much as anyone else."

"You can grow lots of different stuff too and you don't need a huge bit of space. A box on the veranda will do."

June added: "We would like to see every child and family in West Dunbartonshire able to grow their own fruit and veg."

"Working with neighbours to grow different things and share the work between them."

So is there a new culture on the horizon? June said: "We hope so and hope is growing."

Gardens of all shapes and sizes are springing up.

Scott Avenue residents in

Bowling have been developing a small area adjacent to the disused railway viaduct. This has inspired a railway theme to their landscape design, including use of rail sleepers, train-like planters and signage. The broad intention of the gardens is to allow for various local groups and children activities to take place there.

The St Mungo's Community Garden in Alexandria is another great example of community spirit. This group has more than a dozen regular members ranging in age from 16-year-old Teagan to Pat 78, who've come together from a mix of different backgrounds.

Rag & Bone

Projects

www.facebook.com/ragandboneprojects

TOOL LIBRARY

Borrow hand tools, power tools, gardening & decorating equipment for a small annual fee. Our first Tool Library opens in Alexandria Library this autumn/winter - more to follow.

WORKSHOPS

Enjoy expert tuition in DIY, upcycling, tool use, mend & make, plastic replacements at our fun, enviro-friendly workshops across West Dunbartonshire.

ZERO STALL

Our plastic-free stall in Arch 7 Pop-up Shop in Bowling Harbour stocks a range of toiletries & household products.





Stevie McConnachie of Haldane has been involved for the past 18 months.

The 55-year-old has early onset Alzheimer's, but clearly isn't being held back with the condition.

He explained: "It's slowed my dementia down. Coming here helps my condition and gets me out.

"It was a case of 'aw you've got dementia - you cannae work anymore,' and that was it.

"I've been a joiner for 35 years and never been near a plant. If I looked at one it would die!

"Then I get dementia, meet John, Allan, Stuart and the rest of them, and now I'm growing everywhere. It's given me purpose."

The St Mungo's group are going into the community, educating residents, families and school children with their own gardens.

Stevie added: "We are teaching kids to reduce the amount of waste we create. They're getting an education.

"In fact a hud a 10 year-old boy asked me 'don't you get potatoes out a shop' so I asked him, and where do chips come from?

"His response was 'ma Ma gets them in Iceland'!"

It seems there's much to learn.

"A small piece of ground can yield a serious quantity of food, its saved me a fortune and you've never tasted a tattie like it in yer life.

"Tatties in the big warehouse get gassed to keep them 'fresh' for 6/8 months. Instead any foods unused by our growers goes to support the local food banks."

Stevie hopes to encourage more folk to get involved. He said: "The gardens are for everyone's use, every kind of abled body. Margaret for instance, we've adapted her bed to suit her needs by raising them to a suitable height for her chair."

Another local in the garden is Rose Dorman, of the Grow Beardmore community garden.

She said: "It's my sanctuary. Watching and helping things to grow is a mindful practice.

"It gives me the pull to get out there in a non-judgmental environment.

"All areas work together, Clydebank, Alexandria and Bonhill, everyone's in this together."

A formidable pair 'in this together' is Catherine and Sarah Jayne McGlashan - mother and daughter from Bonhill - who together with others have been instrumental in a 'land asset transfer'.

Here a disused play park overlooking Loch Lomond acts as a stunning backdrop to create a hub for a community lacking in investment and much-needed boost to community spirit.

Support from the Leamy Foundation and Your Community fund plus a donation from the passing of founding member Roy Hepburn have spelt the beginning of hope in Bonhill.

"This space has been lying empty for years. We're addressing the poverty factor by growing our own food, together with reducing our carbon footprint by recycling waste," the pair explain.

The Scottish government's 'Food Strategy 2014', aims to create a 'good food nation' while being ecologically sustainable and Bonhill community gardens are ahead of the game.

Already workshops have taken place like 'sow and grow' to educate kids and adults in the art of gardening.

But to get there they need the continued support from organisations and members of the community who are willing to help.

"It's been a great show of community spirit"

Catherine added: "We still need funding for paths, access for wheelchair users. We've had terrific contributions from the Community Payback teams, which is invaluable. We've had members of the community help move six tonnes of soil! It's been a great show of community spirit to start us off."

Through participation and togetherness the 'green revolution' in community gardens could be the real 'social network'. If we just let it grow

Would you like to be involved? Visit www.theLeamyfoundation.com for information on numerous garden communities. Alternatively email Kevin Mason - knamason@gmail.com or call-07583285016.

For information or to help Bonhill Community Garden email bonhillcommunitygarden@gmail.com



CREATING CHANGE

By Angela Clark

The eyes are said to be the pathway to the soul but I had never met anyone who so clearly embodies this metaphor before meeting up with one exceptional and inspirational Vale woman.... Anne Bardsley.

A published author of two books, 'My Journey to Freedom,' a collection of creative writing and her autobiography 'Echo's of My Time,' Anne's whole being seems to spark with energy as she talks about her writing and jewellery-making.

Yet behind her gentle, bubbly nature is a steely strength that Anne has built within her to get through some of the most traumatic life experiences imaginable.

A survivor of child abuse in the care system, she has struggled with mental and physical health problems but her

strength and determination to move forward and not be a victim of life's challenges is both inspirational and humbling.

"I tick every box that's out there," she gently pokes fun at society's need to label people. "I've been abused, I'm disabled, had mental health problems. I was told I wouldn't amount to anything when I was younger - that I just wasn't good enough."

Anne's fiery spirit refused to accept other people's labels and tapping into her own creativity she found a passion for writing.

This was her first creative love and one she would return to throughout her life, putting pen to paper and sharing her experiences in poetry and prose.

However after enrolling in a jewellery-

making class run by West Dunbartonshire Mental Health forum she discovered that writing wasn't her only creative talent.

She said: "I didn't think I would be any good at it, but I just went along and really enjoyed making things."

Unfortunately the classes came to an end and Anne stopped making jewellery for a year or so, however when a friend suggested she try it again, that's exactly what she did.

Anne said: "I was a bit apprehensive as I hadn't done it in a long time and I thought I would have forgotten what to do. You have to keep doing something

when you learn it or you forget. So I just gave it a go and what I had learned started to come back to me."

"I couldn't believe people were buying my items."

Anne didn't think there was anything special about the jewellery she was making, until people started commenting on how pretty and colourful her creations were.

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This encouragement spurred her on to keep adding to her collection and gave her a new confidence. So on a chance visit to the old Clyde Shopmobility base in Alexandria she discovered a collection of stalls selling a wide range of crafts handmade by people in the local community.

She said: "I didn't know it had become a craft shop and there weren't too many stalls. I was a wee bit cheeky and asked for a cup of tea and then had a look around and saw all the different crafts being sold and thought, I could do this. Then I asked if I could bring my jewellery in to sell and they said yes, so that's what I did."

Anne secured a stall within the Lomond Craft Centre and wasted no time in putting her heart and soul into creating a beautiful collection of necklaces, bangles, matching sets and earrings.

She was so happy and content that she

was doing something she loved, still never believing for a minute anyone would purchase her items. However that's exactly what happened - her gifts were selling and she was absolutely delighted.

She said: "I couldn't believe people were buying my items, that was a turning point for me. I thought, maybe I do have a something here and it was a huge self-esteem boost as I'd always thought who would want to buy my jewellery I had no chance."

I can almost see her heart smiling with pride as she gives me a tour of her little stall. Eagerly pointing out her favourite pieces - a pair of fun earrings which are as flamboyant as her fabulous character, Anne tells me making them gives her a sense of comfort.

She said: "I love experimenting with colours and these little earrings are fun to make, they make me smile."

A beautiful energy of happiness and love surrounds Anne, it is clear this is transferred into her work. It's almost impossible to walk away from her stall without making a purchase. And that's exactly what I did - a delightful child's necklace adorned with bright red beads and a captivating silver star. After my purchase Anne says: "I had better get to work and start to make some more stuff now, every time I make a sale that's what I try to do."

Anne doesn't waste time between sales and creations as she has a form of polymyalgia rheumatic arthritis that affects memory, vision, balance, concentration and gives her pain in her joints. This restricts the amount of time she can spend on making her jewellery and doctors have told her she will eventually lose her sight.

"I want to just make and sell as much as possible before I am unable to," she explains. "I also love wildlife and photography and would love to capture a shot of a puffin with its red bill, lifting its feet and taking off in flight."

We are dealt a hand in life sometimes not always a good one and have a choice, to take what we have been given or change it. This

remarkable lady has changed hers and continues to follow her aspirations, she believes if you want something in life you have to go get it, believe, dream and make it happen.

"I want to just make and sell as much as possible before I am unable to do so."



Gil Paterson MSP

For Clydebank & Milngavie



Constituency Surgeries 2018/2019
 All surgeries are held between 5pm and 6pm unless stated otherwise

September 2018			October 2018		
7th	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm	5th	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Road 4pm to 5pm
14th	Napier Hall	Old Kilpatrick	12th	Recess	
21st	September Weekend		19th	Recess	
28th	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd	26th	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd

November 2018			February 2019		
2nd	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm	1st	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Road 4pm to 5pm
9th	Napier Hall	Old Kilpatrick	8th	Goldenhill Primary School	Hardgate
16th	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Rd	15th	Recess	
23rd	Goldenhill Primary School	Hardgate	22nd	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd
30th	St Andrews Day				

**There are no fixed surgeries during:
January - July - August - December**

**Personal appointments can be arranged by calling:
(0141) 952 9677**

Constituency Office of Gil Paterson MSP, Suite 1-6, Titan Business Enterprise Centre, 1 Aurora Avenue, Clydebank G81



John Leino

CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

By Charlie Sherry

In Issue Seven we asked readers to send in images of the natural world for our photo competition and boy did you send in some amazing shots!

The entries were outstanding, it has taken me a week to go through them time and again to choose a winner and two runners up.

Before I announce the winners, I would just like to take a wee moment to thank all who sent in their brilliant photographs, great work folks.

But as I always tell you, as tough a job as it is, winners have to be chosen.

First place goes to John Leino's fantastic shot of a male pheasant. The photograph is technically superb, brilliant edited with spot on composition. To add to all that, it is stunningly beautiful as well. Congratulations John.

In no particular order, the first of our two runners up is Martin McGeachie's wonderful sunflower shot. Another beautiful photo, cleverly composed and with really vibrant colour, all round just a lovely image, well done Martin.

Nan Caldwell's shot of sunshine bursting through a cluster of moss is one of those photographs you look at a few times to work out what exactly it is you are looking at. There's so much to love about this shot, the capture of light, the sharpness, the shallow depth of field all speak of a secret world which most of us never take too close a look at. I think you have created a wonderful image Nan, great work.

Keep snapping folks and don't forget to send them in to Clydesider. Who knows, you could be our next winner.

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

Photo Competition Issue 9 theme –
Hidden Gems

Please email entries to
clydesidercomp@gmail.com by Friday
December 7 2018. Good Luck!

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 our print, digital and social media outlets – this in no way infringes your copyright



Martin McGeachie

Nan Caldwell





COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS

By Charlie Sherry

The tragic death of a close friend inspired a group of Clydebank pals to embark on a fundraising journey which has rapidly grown arms and legs. Duntocher man Martin Walsh and a few friends started raising money for the Beatson Hospital and St Margaret Hospice after witnessing the loving care their lifelong friend Stevie Burns received during his battle against cancer which tragically ended with Stevie's passing.

Martin explained: "We were all devastated when Stevie passed away, however, on the many occasions we visited him, both in the Beatson and the hospice, we were overwhelmed by the care and attention he received. It was around then we decided to make sure we helped them out by raising a few bob."

By organising raffles and football cards at the gigs of a local folk band the friends regularly raised £300 to £500.

"We also ran an annual Stevie Burns memorial golf tournament, we still do, which always raises a few hundred quid," Martin added

"Really it was quite straight forward, we just handed the money straight to the Beatson and the Hospice."

They continued in this fashion until 2016 when they realised they could do more in their own community after being inspired by a local charity in Greenock which provided direct support to individuals, as well as to local groups and charities.

Martin said: "The one case that really jumped out for us was they had paid for four new car tyres so a woman could visit her husband in the Beatson."

It was then Martin, along with Davy Cunningham and Campbell Booth, decided to do something along similar lines to help those in and around Duntocher and Clydebank who were suffering great personal hardship.

A meeting was called which over 20 of their friends attended and the result was the Duntocher Charity Foundation came into being. Martin, Davy and Campbell are the named trustees and the other 20 or so are committee members.

In the two years since it was constituted the Foundation has raised over £31,000 mainly through golf days, pub quizzes and social nights and a bunch of them even walked the West Highland Way. In Martin's words "we like to keep the "Fun" in fundraising."

They also receive sponsorship from local businesses and have donated just over £24, 000 to charitable organisations, to local schools to buy clothes and supplies for disadvantaged kids and used some of the money to buy items for individuals in need.

The Foundation has a policy of not handing out cash to individuals, rather paying for expenses such as buying tickets or purchasing items they require.

Martin explained the objectives of the Foundation is to "help charitable organisations in the area to continue with their great work. We also help individuals whose circumstance have been altered dramatically and they are struggling financially - for example buying a bed for a pensioner, each case is decided by the committee on its own merits."

He added: "Given we began this journey following the tragic loss of our friend Stevie, it is quite fitting that we continue to help families who are coping with the curse of a terminal illness."

Martin said the Foundation would like to reach more people. "We would love for more individuals who are in need to contact us directly, if you need help, please get in touch.

"We would also love anyone from

the community who may have experience or expertise with organisations such as ourselves, to get in touch with us.

"We're just a bunch of local lads who believe we should be helping those less fortunate within our communities, any help or guidance along this journey would be very much appreciated."

"We like to keep the 'Fun' in fundraising."

To contact the Foundation for support email info@duntocherfoundation.com.

To contribute directly to the Foundation visit www.duntocherfoundation.com and click on the "Donate" link.



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TAKING ACTION IS AOK

By Amanda Eleftheriades

Bringing a community together is no easy task, as members of Action Old Kilpatrick discovered.

But by mounting a three-pronged initiative to make the village more physically attractive, capture a record of its local history and organise social community events, AOK seems to have hit on a winning formula.

Issy Plunkett, co-chair of AOK, explains: "There was a regular litter-pick in the Glen and we thought it would be a good idea to see how we could make the village a more attractive place to live.

"Several of us were on the Community Council so we held a public meeting and filled Napier Hall.

"From here we set up a small working group, became constituted and got a number of volunteers involved.

"We have loads and loads of ideas but we can only do what we can with the number of people on board."

To date the volunteers have increased the number of flower beds in the village, took over the greenhouse at Old Dalnottar Cemetery to grow the flowers for the village, continue with their litter picks and hold a major fundraiser once a year which pays for Old Kilpatrick's annual Santa Parade at Christmas.

With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund they also organised an oral history project, 'A Walk Through the Past: Memories of Old Kilpatrick, 1940s – Present Day.

Volunteers from AOK were trained in oral history interview techniques and recorded local residents' memories of the village. These were then used to produce a book, leaflet and guided audio walks around Old Kilpatrick.

Issy added: "Part of our ethos is to work in partnership with other local groups, this has included the local primary school, Y Sort It, Growing West Dunbartonshire as well as local businesses.

"We're not short of ideas - just short of people."

"We are not short of ideas – just short of people to help carry them all out. Some people just like to come along and get involved with one activity, not everyone wants to be on a committee – that's fine with us.

"Others enjoy being part of a group and meeting regularly. We're delighted to get people involved and active in whatever way they want to."

If you are interested in finding out more about Action Old Kilpatrick they meet on the third Tuesday of each month in the back room of the Twisted Thistle or you can contact them via Facebook.



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Pauline Sweeney, founder of Rag & Bone Projects gives Clydesider her inside story

Q. Who Are Rag & Bone?

We are a local social enterprise, a not for profit organisation. Our three main areas of operation are our tool library – Rag and Bone - Repair and Loan; our plastic free shop - Zero, aspiring to be... and a series of workshops on repair and waste reduction. Zero is currently operating from Arch 7 in Bowling Harbour and the tool library is in the process of starting up in Alexandria Library.

Q. What Inspired You to Set Up Rag & Bone Projects?

As a mum and environmental campaigner I am really saddened by the way our society is becoming so complacent about waste. People are

buying items and chucking them out when fads change or coz they've worn it once already!

Our planet can't sustain this relatively new way of life. Right up until the '70s it was the norm for people to make do and mend. Shopping was not covered in plastic and carried away in single use plastic bags. In the last 50 years we have really lost our way and we need to find our way back and become more conscientious.

The initial idea of a tool library was in my mind for a couple of years and I always thought 'someone' really should open one here. I never thought I would be able to do it.

However, in August of 2017 through volunteering, I met the founder of

another local social enterprise, Lodestone Works who provided guidance and support to move the idea forward to the stage we're at now.

The idea for the shop grew from seeing a gap in the local market and we needed to fund the library and workshops so it tied in well.

Q. Love The Name - Where Did it Come From?

Good question! We were brainstorming and it came from the fact that we will accept old tools to repair/clean up and re-use to make things useful again. Also it rhymed as at the start we were just Rag and Bone - Repair and Loan.

The name for the shop - Zero, aspiring to be... - came later. We plan to operate it from the back of a truck and drive around local neighbourhoods helping people limit waste by selling reusable items such as water bottles, refillable coffee cups, plastic-free toiletries etc. In the future we plan to stock package-free wholefoods and produce and will collect tools for the libraries on our runs.

Q. How Can People Get Involved With Rag & Bone Projects?

We would love for skilled people or lifelong menders and handypeople to volunteer to pass on their knowledge and skills. Make do and mend is a dying concept and as such our environment and bank balances are suffering. We love the idea of forging links between generations and hope to

see older members of our community come along to show younger folk how to do things like change a fuse, mend a sock or make a pair of curtains.

If volunteering isn't your thing you can join the library or come along to one of our workshops which are free thanks to funding from the National Lottery Awards for All.

Q. How does the Tool Library work?

To start with we will be in Alexandria Library on Tuesdays 5pm - 6.30pm and Saturdays 9.30am - 11am for members to pick up and drop off tools.

For an annual membership of £20 (less if your skint) you can have access to unlimited borrowing. Members will be able to reserve tools online to collect from the library during our opening hours. If you are unable to access the online system you are welcome to drop in to borrow a tool or we can make reservations if what they are looking for is unavailable.

As well as tools we have a range of camping, decorating and gardening equipment for hire.

Q. Tell Us a bit more About the Zero Market Stall?

Zero is operating from the Makers Market pop up shop at Arch 7 in Bowling Harbour at present. We've been here since August we also did a trial weekend at Lomond Shores but while we focus on getting the library open the markets are on hold for the moment, so it's a real blessing to be

selling in Bowling.

My real dream is to get a horse box truck and fill it with goodies and hit the streets taking our products to customers in their own neighbourhoods as well as attending events and festivals.

Q. What Plans Does Rag & Bone Have for the Future?

We have so many plans but not enough hours in the day, so get in touch if you can donate any time!

Seriously though we aim to have the library operating from three locations as well as a workshop premises and vehicle for the shop which, if large enough, may also contain a mobile workshop space.

We will start up repair cafes as soon as we have enough volunteers and enough reach. The concept of a repair cafe is for people bring along their broken belongings, anything from clothing to furniture to electronic items to have them either repaired or to receive advice on how to repair them with help on the day.

This is something that will take time to grow so we are running more specific workshops at present where people can try out the tools and learn new skills.

"We have so many plans but not enough hours in the day."



Our website –
www.ragandboneprojects.org is
currently under construction – so for
now find us on Facebook.



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION AT G81 STUDIO

Interview by Aidan Macdonald

Michael McLaren

There can be few places in Scotland where anyone can access a community-owned state of the art film, photography and recording studios.

Yet here in West Dunbartonshire we have this community facility just begging to be used.

Based in the former gym hall of the old Our Holy Redeemer school in Clydebank, the G81 Studio is a social enterprise set up by a group of volunteers keen to bring something new to the area.

Trustee John Hannah, a retired sound engineer, explained: "It was something we hadn't been able to find anywhere else locally and we wanted to provide a facility that no other area has.

"We hope to make music videos and other promotional work to pay the bills, then the rest of the time community groups can use it to film their activities and help to publicise themselves.

"They can do audio, video, photography, ultimately live-streaming.

Anything that you can do in any other studio – there aren't any limits, just your imagination."

All of the walls are covered in thick black backdrops which John and Davie put together themselves and the studio boasts top of the range equipment which wouldn't look out of place in a BBC recording studio. A phalanx of lights are pointed at the back wall, which apparently can be transformed into a green screen as required, and a jib boom mic hovers overhead.

The righthand corner of the room is set up for a photography studio with different backdrops available at the press of a button and in the recording studio itself there is a dashboard of switches and lights which when turned on look ready to fly the Starship Enterprise. Meanwhile upstairs a computer equipped with full editing software sits silently, waiting to be used.

It is not just the equipment that the community has access to but the five

trustees themselves bring a wealth of expertise which they are keen to share.

And as none of them are looking to take a wage from the enterprise they are able to keep costs to the absolute minimum – even for the commercial work.

John explained: “We’re doing things very, very cheaply.

“As we are all volunteers here we don’t have to worry about wages so that halves the costs. The Trust got some grants which allowed us to buy a lot of this and a lot of it is personal equipment as well.

“If there are groups out there who have the know-how and can use the equipment, we’re quite happy to sit back and let them get on with it and help out if needed.

“Likewise if there are other groups who don’t know how to use the equipment, we can show them and hopefully get

them involved so they will have a better idea if they want to come back another time.

“Ultimately we want it to be a community facility and any member of the community can come in if they want to film, record, photograph - we can provide the facility for it and if they need some help we can provide that as well.

“It might be a community group who don’t have a chance to hold a proper meeting as they have members all over the place, so they can come in here to record maybe we’ll even get the council in here to hold their meetings.”

For more information contact them via Facebook, email g81studio@outlook.com or call 0141 563 5583.

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CREATING COMMUNITY

A creative muse seems to be whispering gently across West Dunbartonshire, unleashing an artistic force that hasn't been seen in the area for many a year.

In communities once home to printers, dye-workers, seamstresses, tailors and the multitude of talents needed to create such majestic titans as the Cutty Sark, Queen Mary and QE2, there are some highly imaginative genes which have not had too many opportunities to shine for awhile.

But over the past couple of years something has begun to stir and West Dunbartonshire seems a buzz with creativity.

Awestruck Art Gallery in Clydebank is undoubtedly more than just somewhere to buy a painting.

As gallery founder and creative genius, Allan Rutherford, talks about the

space, folk pop in with sandwiches, cards and cake for him - as well as art work for a forthcoming show.

There's definitely nothing conventional about the cavernous space Awestruck occupies above Clydebank In-shops. Formerly Reds snooker hall, it has been transformed by Allan and his ever-growing band of volunteers into a community arts space.

There's a bar/café area, several small office/classrooms, a huge open venue with stage, lighting and sound system for the music and open mic nights Allan has planned and, of course, the actual art gallery.

Just two years ago Allan was putting the final touches to Awestruck's former home off Kilbowie Road, now he has filled the old snooker hall with art work, music and creative activity.

He explained: "My plans were too big

for the space we were in and I knew the snooker hall had been lying empty for a few years, so I just asked – and got it.

“There was so much work needed done to these premises – the walls were dark, dark red and we needed them white for the gallery space. The first two weeks we didn’t have any lighting or electricity and trying to clean it in the dark with cold water and bleach was a nightmare.



“We pulled it together for the launch night but it was a miracle considering the size of the place and the state it was in. It was the volunteers who got it up and running in time – if it wasn’t for them I would still be sitting in a building site.”

Since the launch Awestruck has become a magnet for people from all walks of life who want to get involved and try something new.

Volunteer Tam, explained: “I came in here to get a passport photo taken and I’ve been here ever since.

“We’re one big happy family in here. We have homeless people come in for support, use the phones do some photocopying. My grand-daughters have been in here and love it, if there’s anything we don’t do just let us know and we’ll do our best to organise it.”

And Allan added: “People just want a place they can come in, relax, appreciate the artwork on the walls and feel welcome – that’s what we have created in here.

“We have had over 30 volunteers and there’s a hard core of 12 people aged between 16 and 76 who have been with us throughout. They bring different skills and experience to the place.”

Over the summer Allan and his team launched the Awestruck Academy offering young people classes in a range of different arts and music activities. It is something Allan wants to be able to do more of and is determined to keep costs to a minimum.

He is also linking in with other community groups and delivering arts activities across West Dunbartonshire and further afield, recently bringing an Australian band over to play alongside his young drummers at the Balloch Festival.

It is not just Clydebank that is witnessing a revival of creative energy. Further down the Clyde in Bowling Jain McIntyre established Lodestone Creative social enterprise.

Starting with a series of creative workshops and networking events she discovered one of the big gaps locally was affordable workspaces for creative folk.



So she set up a co-working space first in Bowling then moving into bigger premises in Dumbarton where she now provides workshop and studio spaces to, amongst others a fashion designer, ceramic artist and circus group.

Meanwhile Arch 7 in Bowling Harbour was given a makeover and in July reopened as a Pop-Up Makers Market selling the wares of local artists, crafters and makers.

Jain also wanted to provide a space for artistic minds to get together and the large glass windows looking on to Bowling Harbour and further out to the

Clyde offer the perfect backdrop to inspire creative thinking.

She said: "It's not just about people giving us their stock to sell, we also have a chat about what is selling and how best to market their work.

"We charge a small commission and that goes into a pot for the makers to decide how to use it. For example it might pay for new shelves or for a training session on copyright – it's up to them.

"I get to know the stories behind all the crafters and their work and can see ways they might want to collaborate so we hold pot luck dinners to encourage them to meet each other.

"We have some well established artists and others who have never sold a thing in their lives - it's becoming a real community of makers in here."

Leaving Bowling our tour of creative West Dunbartonshire takes us further west where another pop-up shop appeared – quietly at first but quickly leaving a rather large creative footprint on the Vale of Leven.

The Loch Lomond Craft Centre tentatively opened its doors in the old Clyde Shopmobility office in Alexandria in April, initially for a trial month.

Susan Maxwell, one of the volunteer organisers, picked up their story:- "At the start we had six people with some

stock for the shop so we hired some bric-a-brac from an antique shop to fill the space as it seemed quite a big premises.

"By the end of the month there were over 25 crafters in there and now we have over 70, most of whom are local and we look set to be here at least until Christmas.

"We could actually do with bigger premises now. We're definitely not your average craft shop though, the aim is to keep the prices right down because there isn't a lot of money in the community here."

Like Awestruck the Loch Lomond Craft Centre has a strong community vibe.

Mags, of 'Mags Creates', volunteers in the shop. She said: "Having a focus point for local crafters is bringing like-minded folk together and there's a lovely vibe in here, we all bounce ideas off each other.

"It's good to be in the town centre so people can see what local folk are doing, it inspires others to come in with their arts and crafts as well. We also run creative classes from the shop."

Ann spreads her time between all three local arts hubs. She said: "I go to the Knit & Natter at Awestruck and also spend some time at the Pop Up shop in Bowling and there is a different vibe about each of them.

"I'm a stay at home carer and can't commit to work so it's nice to have somewhere to go and feel part of a

community. For me it's very therapeutic coming in here and having my work valued by others."

Susan and her fellow crafters have big plans not just for the Vale shop, but for the local area as a whole.

She added: "The main aim is to regenerate the area with local arts, history and culture at the heart of that process. It is amazing the skills that are coming in and out of our door every day.

"It doesn't make sense having so many tourists visiting up the road in Balloch but not giving them a reason to head a mile or so down the road and spend some of their money here when there is so much deprivation in this area.

"It is up to the Council, the government, Scottish Enterprise and other national bodies to take this up and we want to work with them to address the poverty in this area – that's the motivation for setting up the shop here.

"If we wanted just to make money from our arts and crafts we would have opened a shop in Balloch."

"The aim is to regenerate the area with local arts, history and culture."

A WRITER RECOMMENDS

By Ann MacKinnon

My name is Ann MacKinnon and I live in Balloch although I am originally from Fife. I write poetry. I taught in Dumbarton Academy for almost forty years.

Your Life as a Writer in 50 Words?

In 1996 I realised that poetry was what I most enjoyed writing so from then on I concentrated on that. The beauty of writing poems is that they can come to you at any time and you can jot down ideas. I write as and when the muse takes me. I attend various writing groups and they help me to organise my thoughts better. It is also good to read your work aloud then you hear the inconsistencies.

Your Favourite Novel?

I have many favourite novels but my most recent favourite is 'Mid-Winter Break' by Bernard McClaverty. Before I read this novel 'Grace Notes' also by McClaverty was my favourite. I enjoy his sparse style and his use of subtle images to convey a mood. He tells you so much about relationships in very few words.

Your Favourite Work of Non-fiction?

I have just read 'In the Days of Rain' by Rebecca Stott. It is a memoir of her childhood and her relationship with her

father but it gives a fascinating insight into the life of the Exclusive Brethren and what it was like to grow up under that regime. It also shows what happens when you leave it.

Your Favourite Author?

Norman MacCaig is my all time favourite poet. He observes life and uses irony and subtle images to convey his views on life. He writes short poems with a wealth of cultural history in them. He writes about nature in Assynt where he spent his summers and about Edinburgh where he lived.

What Books are Lying by Your Bed Right Now?

On my bedside table is the novel I am in the middle of at the moment - 'Alone in Berlin' by Hans Fallada based on a true story of resistance to the Nazis. I always have several poetry books to dip into. At the moment I have Charlie Gracie's 'Good Morning' and two local writers- 'Under the Sky' by I.M Cunningham (Irene) and 'Song of the River' by Billy Scobie and another favourite of mine Jim C. Wilson's 'Come Close and Listen'.

**"I write as and
when the muse
takes me"**



GARDENING FOR BUMBLEBEES

By Angela Clark

Young, handsome and extremely talented the Gardening for Bumblebees duo are not your traditional folk band.

Childhood friends Sam Begbie and Joe Doyle from Clydebank, have been playing together musically for just over a year but have already left a big impression on the indie folk music scene.

Now they look set to do it all over again when they take to the main stage to wow the crowds at next year's Celtic Connections Music Festival.

Their break onto the folk music circuit came when they were chosen as the Danny Kyle Open Stage winners at this year's Celtic Connections.

The Danny Kyle stage, dedicated in memory to the legendary folk singer who was a constant campaigner for the revival of traditional music, gives a platform to upcoming folk and indie

talent from Scotland and across the globe.

Sam, the band singer, songwriter and guitarist, said: "This was our second gig, we were really nervous there were some really talented people there. We played alongside a line up of 80 bands who played the Open Stage throughout the festival.

"A couple of weeks after our gig we received a phone call and were asked to come in for the showcase concert with the other finalists.

"This time we felt great, it was the biggest crowd we had played and it was a good positive reaction, we had a lot of fun."

After the competition the boys saw their popularity increase playing the West End Festival and headlining at Cottiers in Glasgow, to the point where they were turning down gigs -

something they said they would never do. But it was becoming impossible, as demand for their music rocketed.

This was a far cry from their first gig which they played at the Mugstock Festival in Mugdock Country Park.

Sam laughs as he recalls the event: "We played in the Butterfly tent, it was a funny first gig we were in this tent and there was almost nobody there.

"My Mum and Joe's dad were there, they managed to sneak in my dog, it was such a big tent but it was empty. Everybody was outside the tent standing around a big fire, covered in mud and making more noise than we were."



The boys brushed off the mud and continued on undeterred with their music.

Sam said: "As long as people are enjoying it, we love playing. It sort of uplifts people in the same way that Clydesider is positive and gives joy. That's all we want our music to do. But it doesn't matter to us if we have an impact on 500 people or one person, we are happy with either.

"I love the creative side of it. I'm really into words, I'll take it to Joe and we'll

flesh it out together. He's a phenomenal drummer and he gives it that real tension about some of the stuff that it needs."

The pair are quite spontaneous about what they write. A lot of their ideas come from "general chat", like the name of the band which came from a poster and Sam's time spent with the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust.

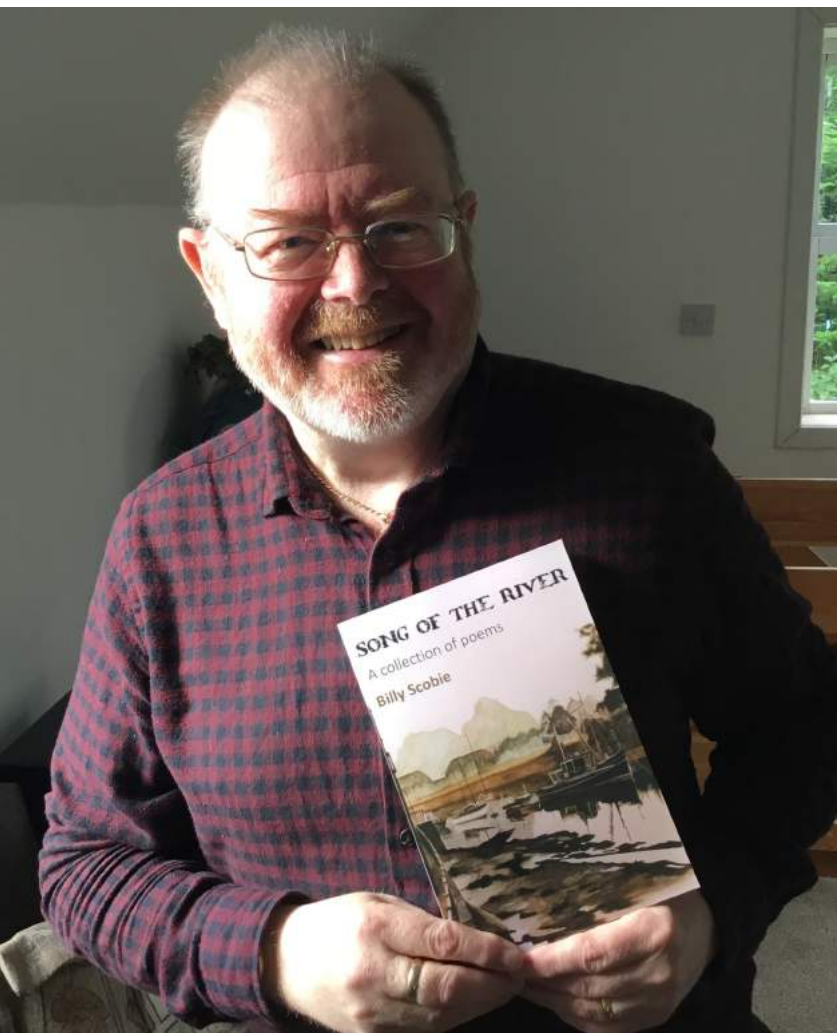
Some of their material is about their

own struggles and experiences. One particular song called 'Anna' was written about a wee girl who was struggling with mental health issues and they changed the name to protect her identity.

The friends are currently working on an EP just now and hope to see themselves with an album in the very near future.

And the generous lads are giving their fans their music for free - they just want people to have a listen and see if they like it. You can download their tunes from Soundcloud - <https://soundcloud.com/gfbees> and keep an eye on their Facebook page for dates of future gigs.

INSPIRATIONAL MOMENTS WITH BILLY SCOBIE



Billy Scobie, local author, poet, artist and historian shares some of his inspirational moments with Clydesider.

I was born in Braeholm Maternity Hospital in Helensburgh but lived my first six years in Clyde Street in Dumbarton East. I have many, many

memories of childhood which would fill a book in themselves. We lived so close to the La Scala cinema that my father used to pop over to 'the pictures' in his slippers.

Both of my parents were born in the Vale of Leven and when I was six we moved to Bridge Street in Alexandria.

I think drawing and painting came before writing. My father encouraged me in art and gave me some basic tuition. Even in my adult years he was still giving me advice. I recall working on my painting 'Three Bonhill Bridges' and he looked over my shoulder and advised me to paint the buildings in the distance a shade darker which I did and it clearly improved the work.

I sold that painting to the local Council. For a while it hung in Alexandria Library, then for a number of years in my then workplace, the Council offices at Garshake in Dumbarton. Presently it hangs in Bonhill Primary School.

When I was around eight, I saw the Tony Hancock film 'The Rebel' with my father. There is a scene in it which Hancock (farcically devoid of authentic talent) enters a studio which he is to share with an artist friend. Something of the atmosphere of that room spoke

to me. Canvases, brushes, tubes of paint. The vast window looking over the chimneys of Paris at night. Its romance seduced me. From then on I wanted to be an artist.

I was impressed with Van Gogh, but curiously more by the man than by his paintings. I admired the way he struggled to be a sincere Christian preacher and how he stuck doggedly to his art in spite of receiving no recognition during his lifetime. I owe a certain amount to my old Vale of Leven Academy art teacher, Farquhar Fraser, who taught me not so much how to draw and paint, but how to think as an artist.

Also when I was eight my Aunt Cathie took me to Butlin's holiday camp in Bognor Regis. There was a day trip from the camp to Arundel Castle. When I got home after the holiday I wrote a wee poem about our visit to the castle. I think that was my first ever poem.

My father was a Robert Burns enthusiast. I recall an occasion when he and I were walking along Alexandria Main Street, near the old Albert Hotel. I asked him if Burns had ever been a soldier. He thought for a moment and replied: "Some men fight with a pen". I've never forgotten that.

I have no preference between painting and writing. Since my sons and daughter were born, however (Jamie is now 14, Johnny 12 and Maggie 8), I have not had the peace and space to

paint. My last painting was of my mother's hands. I wanted to say something about the lifetime of work those hands had done for me, the tears they had wiped away, the embraces...

So it's been just the writing for the past 14 years really. Again I have no preference as to the nature of the work.

Ian Miller has been a tremendous guide and support in so many ways since I joined Bonhill Church in 1997 and paid me a huge compliment in asking me to design a stained glass window to commemorate his ministry at Bonhill.

I loved working on my novels, perhaps more than the short stories. Poetry is, I feel, more intensely personal. I think I'm getting more satisfaction from getting my poetry out there and from the feedback for 'Song of the River' than from any of my novels.

I don't have a favourite poem from 'Song of the River' - that would change from day to day... but it is wonderful to write a poem for the woman you love.

The Vale? I am a Vale man, born of Vale folk. I have never left the Vale physically, spiritually, artistically or in any other way. This valley and its people have made me who I am.

Copies of Song of the River are available from www.neetahbooks.com and in the Loch Lomond Craft Centre in Alexandria

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CLYDESIDER Community Calendar

November

Nov 3 – Music Night in Vale Masonic hall with the Karaoke Clowns. 7pm – 11.30pm money raised for Dalmonach Community Centre kids Christmas party. Raffle, bar, bring your own nibbles. Admission by ticket - £5. Contact Brian on 07833153632.

Nov 3 - Skylark IX Recovery Trust Remembrance Concert. Denny Civic Theatre, Dumbarton 3pm – 5.15pm. Tickets £5 (£3 conc) available from Skylark Trust via Alternatives in Dumbarton; Vale Newsagents & Grocers, Alexandria or Loch Lomond News, Lomond Shores. Also from box office - 07432121590 or at box office on day.

Nov 9 - Dumbarton Acoustics music night in St Augustine's, 7pm -10.30pm. Entry £5, BYOB and glass. Proceeds to local charity. Tickets from Discography Records or on door. Call Alistair on 07787 310 391 or visit Facebook - DumbartonAcousticMusicNight.

Nov 10 – Women Walking for Food For Thought. 10am Clydebank Shopping Centre walking to Moss O'Balloch. Donations of tinned & dry goods, toiletries, baby & pet food. Collection points at start and end of walk – Clydebank 10am – 12noon, Moss O'Balloch 12noon – 2pm. Get involved, sponsor the walks or donate. Email caroline.advocacy@hotmail.co.uk or sponsor walkers on www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/foodforthoughtdumbarton

Nov 25 - West of Scotland Autism and Aspergers Christmas Fayre, Station Rd, Renton 12 - 4pm. Santa's grotto, home baking, face painting, balloon modeling.

December

Dec 1 - Old Kilpatrick & Bowling Church Christmas Fair 12 – 3pm. Arts & craft stalls, home baking, Christmas cards, win a Christmas hamper. Stalls £10 to book contact: claire-stuart@virginmedia.com

Dec 1 – Family Disco, Dumbarton Harp Social Club 7.30pm – midnight, in aid of Ben View Resource Centre. Games, face painting, raffle, Santa. Adults £5, Kids £4 tickets from Ben View office or call 01389 733030.

Dec 9 – Dumbarton Santa Dash hosted by Ben View Resource Centre, register by Dec 6. Check-in 10.30am for 11am start. 1K Fun Run & 5K, Contact 01389 733030 or Ben View's Facebook page for details.

Dec 8 – Screening of Lesley Riddoch's Nation films Faroe Islands & Norway showing what small nations can achieve, Clydebank Town Hall 2 pm. Followed by a Q & A with the awardwinning journalist and broadcaster. Free – book tickets via Eventbrite.

Dec 16 – Kid's Christmas party, hosted by Dalmonach Community Centre Management Group at VoL Masonic hall 1 pm – 3.30 pm. Children's entertainer, Santa and buffet. Ticket only admission, contact Brian 07833153632.

About **CLYDESIDER**

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire. The *Clydesider* community magazine promotes the positives our area has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery and history and showcases the creative talents, ideas and experiences of local people.

Clydesider Credits

A big thank you 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. If you would like to get involved just drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com

We would also like to thank all our advertisers, our supporting subscribers and funders. You are all helping to shine a light on the good news stories and creative talents in our communities.

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Advertiser Directory Issue 8

Masala Twist	5
The Flooring Studio	7
Titan Tattoos	9
The Duntiglennan	11
Gael Music	12
Martin Docherty-Hughes MP	13
Clydesider Creative	15
Rag & Bone Projects	17
Clydebank Co-op Funeral Service	21
Gil Paterson MSP	23
Business Development & Support	29
The Commodore	29
Business Gateway	35
T. Scullion Joinery & Building	44
John Doherty Plumbing & Heating	44
Brian Johnstone Caravan Services	44
VB Motors	44
Whitcrook Business Centre	44
Wilson Photography	44
ABR Quality Foods	48

THE DINOSAUR OR (GRANDPA)

The dinosaurs a creature,
Who scowls when he dwells,
On people walking round with phones,
And talking to themselves.

He really doesn't understand,
The new technology.
iPad's and computer things,
He makes no apology.

To him the world's gone quite mad,
A million passwords needed,
To get a look at his own bank,
Help me please, he bleated.

The animal just can't keep up,
With all the constant changes,
Even the supermarket tills,
At this change he just cringes.

The dinosaur is happiest,
Amongst his veg and flowers,
In his garden, rain or shine,
With dogs and birds, for hours.

By Alex King



Supported by the Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme

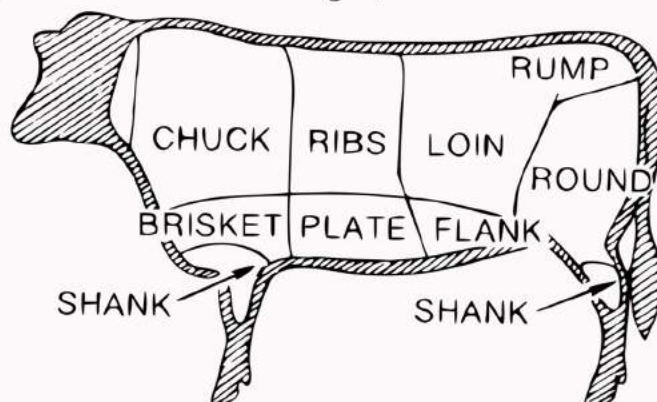


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