

FREE



CLYDESIDER

Our Community's Positive Press Spring | 2026 Issue 35



OUR VOICES, OUR STORIES

Inside... Journey of a Lifetime | Love, Hope & Sunny Days
Blitz Memories

Check Out Clydesider TV

Clydesider TV is where the community takes the spotlight. Powered by our passionate readers and volunteers, this YouTube channel puts real voices, real stories, and real creativity front and centre.



Scan the QR Code to visit Clydesider TV youtube.com/@clydesidertv



Welcome

Did you notice our new logo on the front cover?

It's hard to believe, but this September the magazine celebrates its official 10th anniversary!

We'll be celebrating this throughout the year and sharing the story of where it came from (an idea shared with friends around my kitchen table), how it has grown, and why support for community media in West Dunbartonshire and beyond is essential.

You can read more over on page 7 and check out Charlie's memory of his first interview for the magazine - with author Irvine Welsh no less, on page 49.

As well as a new logo anyone who visits our website www.clydesider.org may notice it too has a new look. It is now a one-stop shop for the magazine, Clydesider TV and Clydesider Heritage. You can also sign up for our newsletter there to receive regular updates from the team.

Our regular readers should notice this issue feels a bit chunkier than usual. That is because we've added an extra eight pages with six of these being filled with our guide to West Dunbartonshire's first Heritage Festival.

When we started the magazine back in 2016 heritage was one of the topics we wanted to focus on and celebrate, so we're delighted that in our 10th anniversary year we're able to do this not only in multi-media formats but also by bringing people together to explore and discover the area's proud past.

Please do take your time to peruse the programme and come along to some of the many walks, talks, workshops and community events happening throughout May.

This issue is also packed with some truly inspirational stories from Clydesider's volunteer and staff team.

Some of these are very personal.

So, the trust in each other and in our organisation to share their stories respectfully and safely is what I take the most pride in when I look back over these past 10 years.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of our Clydesider journey.

Enjoy!



Amanda & The Clydesider Team

Clydesider Creative Mission Statement

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

Clydesider Credits

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



About Clydesider

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

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



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Sponsored Editorial "This year is all about collaboration"



Maureen Cummings, founder of Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels (OKFP) charity, is excited about the year ahead.

After a busy and emotionally challenging 2025, Maureen and OKFP start the new year building new partnerships - and

friendships - which will help sustain Napier Hall as a community hub.

Maureen explained: "At the end of 2025 I was tired, running a charity like OKFP is much more than a day job. You don't clock on at 9am and finish at 5pm, my brain is always ticking through a never-ending to-do list.

"I love what we have created here, together with our volunteers and the local community, but sustaining this long-term is a challenge, and that takes its toll."

After sharing her concerns with Jim McLaren, founder of Golden Friendships charity, an exciting new community collaboration began to unfold.

Scott Brown, chairman of Play and Learning Support (PALS) group, had also been talking to Jim about his worries - that PALS was without a base.

One phone call later and the link between OKFP and PALS was made.

Both Maureen and Scott believe in working quickly, so by February 1 2026, plans were in place, paperwork signed, and the OKFP/PALS community collaboration began.

This will see PALS taking on and refurbishing the small hall (now renamed the Kilpatrick Suite) for their headquarters, transforming the Board Room into an inclusive sensory room and renovating the disabled toilets into a fully accessible changing room/toilet with hoist.

Scott explained what the partnership means for PALS and for families like his own.

He said: "The PALS group was set up in 1988 to support families of children from Kilpatrick's

School and provides a range of groups and activities.

"Our biggest challenge is finding accessible spaces we can make fully inclusive for our families.

"This collaboration with OKFP means PALS now has a future. Our children and families have somewhere to call home which will be accessible for all.

"We have been overwhelmed by the interest and support we received since sharing the news on our social media - they are all messages of hope."

This new collaboration also sees OKFP's Chatty Cafe open every Monday exclusively for families and carers supporting someone with Additional Support Needs.

Maureen added: "Monday was always our quiet day and our committee was planning to operate a four-day week during the winter as there are not enough customers to cover heating and running costs.

"So we're delighted to instead make this a time and space where ASN families can pop in for a cuppa, a bite to eat and know they will be given a big OKFP welcome at our Chatty Cafe.

"The hall has ramp access, disabled toilets and various seating options including a chill-out zone with comfortable sofas.

"We are also working with OK Stay and Play this year and looking to collaborate with other groups needing access to the ASN services within our building.

"It looks like 2026 is going to be an exciting year for us all."

To find out more about collaborating with OKFP call 07916 310806 or email contact@okfp.org.uk



Community News

Who Lives in Balloch Park?

Local children are shining a spotlight on nature in Balloch Castle Country Park to celebrate the awesome plants, trees and wildlife who have made it their home.

Balloch Primary School and Haldane Youth Services (HYS) are teaming up with local charity Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group (BCCPRG), West Dunbartonshire Council's Greenspace team and an artist to bring the Park's wildlife alive using technology like augmented reality and other colourful displays.



Artist Laura Henderson from Good Stuff Creative, who worked with the children, families and staff at CHAS Robin House last year, is leading the **Who Lives Here?** project, which will be completed in the Spring.



Local Heroes

A volunteer team whose bravery has saved countless lives was named Citizen of the Year at the 2026 Provost's Civic Awards.

The Loch Lomond Rescue Boat volunteers were honoured for their extraordinary commitment to public safety, responding to more than 80 emergency callouts last year alone.

And 79-year-old Annette McPhie was named Community Champion, in recognition for her decades of service across the Vale of Leven and beyond. Annette continues to volunteer tirelessly in schools, hospital wards, community groups, and with vulnerable individuals.

Finalists Courtney Devenney, Tommy Miller, St Patrick's Lunch Club, Tony Ercoli and Yvonne O'Neill, also received certificates.

Big Clyde Clean Up

Local community groups, football clubs, schools and businesses are joining forces to give the area's rivers and canal a good spring clean.

The Big Clyde Clean Up kick-started on Saturday March 14 as local groups joined forces with litter-pickers across the Clyde estuary in Inverclyde and North Ayrshire.

Follow-up events are planned throughout March and April, see pg 51/52 for details.

To get involved email Community Greenspace officer Andy Devine on andy.devine@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or contact the local litter-picking groups via The Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook group.

Adult Storytelling Returns

The 2026 session of 'Adult Storytelling' makes a welcome return this month with local author Paul Underwood sharing what he sees through tiny windows.

Other tellers will reveal memories of the past, talk about Scottish folklore, share stories of Havoc Shore, preview Clydesider's Heritage Festival, and highlight facts and fiction around famous events.

Sessions are 11am on last Tuesday of the month in Greentree Remedies, Alexandria. All events are free, inclusive and accessible. Free refreshments available. Donations welcome! More information from Mary at 01389 729279.



Clydesider News

Clydesider Anniversary Celebrations

At Clydesider Creative we're delighted to be celebrating this magazine's 10th anniversary this year!

Launched in September 2016 at a time when print media was already struggling against an online tidal wave, we were uncertain if we would make our first anniversary.

So, to be here 10 years on feels pretty special.

Over the past decade we've grown from a small team of six folk who first met around my kitchen table to a current staff of six supported by a sizeable army of local volunteers.

Last year we branched out from print with the launch of our Clydesider TV YouTube channel. We also started our first multi-media heritage project to capture and share the stories of the many inspirational community activists who call WD home.

Oh, and we're also organising the first West Dunbartonshire-wide Heritage Festival this May. Check out our guide from page 36, there's something happening pretty much every day in May!!

But we couldn't do this alone...

Our fantastic team of volunteers, who are as interesting and inspirational as our community, help fill the pages of every issue and are now developing their film-making skills creating quality content for our digital spaces.

Thanks to the local businesses and charities who support us with their advertising we are still able to keep the magazine free for all to enjoy.

And we're eternally grateful to our many funders - not only for their grants, but also for believing in us as we work with our volunteers and community to reimagine a media which showcases solutions and creativity over trauma and tragedy.

Throughout this year we'll be sharing some of our highlights and memories in the magazine, on Clydesider TV and our social media, so follow, subscribe or pick up a copy to find out more.

And if you like what you read or watch please consider becoming a paying member from as little as £4 per month. Just head over to our website www.clydesider.org and click on the JOIN button.



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crack a joke, but can't really take praise.

Over the years, I have gradually learned a lot about Steven.

He loves drawing: "I have drawn since I was a kid. It's really good that Clydesider has given me the chance to really use it..."

Steven is Clydesider's regular cartoonist: he began with the Clyde and Baxter cartoon, which has since evolved into a comic strip.

Steven thanks Clydesider editor, Amanda, for seeing his drawings on Facebook and giving him the chance to develop a passion he'd had from his childhood.

Steven explains: "It was originally going to be a dog

but then I drew a wee man. The name Clyde came from Amanda...And I gave him a dog called Baxter. My sister's got a dog called Baxter..."

I ask if cartoon Baxter resembles his sister's dog?

Steven takes a fit of laughing: "No, no, the real Baxter's not a Westie, he's a border terrier."

"Must be hard finding ideas..." I interject, and Steven admits it is hard but he has been developing as a writer since joining Clydesider.

"I had always enjoyed writing and had written wee poems. My first piece for Clydesider was about Tai Chi" He used to go there too and interviewed his Tai Chi instructor, Chris.

When Amanda asks Steven to attend any course, festival,

exhibition or community event, or cover a certain assignment or interview, his answer is invariably 'Yes' - he loves to challenge himself.

A couple of years back, Steven joined a creative writing class organised by Working4U and West College Scotland.

When Council funding came to an end, they secured a grant from the National Lottery of Scotland and became a constituted group: Castle Valley Writers.

"Our classes as a group are going well, going forward we're aiming to get more involved with the local community."

Steven teases me about Creative Writing and all the classes I have NEVER joined: Tai Chi, Folk Club and Castle Valley Writers. I agree.

Who is Steven Hastings?

By Patricia Laws

Steven giggles: "What d'you mean....Who is Steven Hastings? What kinda question is that?"

I explain that we know each other, but we don't really know each other, if you see what I mean...

He and I first met online at Clydesider's Zoom meet-ups during the pandemic, where he was quick-witted and "cheeky" - in the good sense of the word.

He's like lightning for naming articles, suggesting themes for the Clydesider photo competition as well as titles for various projects: 'Help, Hope & Know-How in West Dunbartonshire' is one of his.

He often comes up with the theme for the year ahead: People and Places in West Dunbartonshire was his too.

When you try to give him credit for it, he bats it away: "It's no big deal, it's easy."

Recently he has been judging the photo competition on Clydesider TV: his comments are always spot on.

Zoom was a good and bad way of meeting folks. We regulars on Clydesider Zoom got to know each other quite well.

Or did we?

I learned about Steven's sense of humour online. He can take a joke very well and he can

Sponsored Editorial



Board Member Vacancies

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steven follows things through and joins all these clubs, whereas I constantly deliberate about things and put them off.

Steven seems to be loving Castle Valley Writers: "You could come to Castle Valley Writers: you don't need to worry about reading your writing out to the group," he reassures me.

"Michael the tutor has it on his laptop and brings it up on the screen. He may read it sometimes, but we don't have to. And if you really don't want anyone to see it, you don't have to, he could give you private feedback and not show anyone..."

This little reflection shows me how perceptive Steven is and how well he knows me and can empathise with the way I feel about my writing.

Steven is also enjoying the social life of Castle Valley Writers: "Recently we had a wee trip to the Denny Civic to a play called, 'Up a Close'. The writer, Tina Conway is coming to our group next Tuesday..."

"And what was the play about?" I enquire

"Somebody up a close....." he jokes and I pull a face.

"I'm kidding you on!" Steven chuckles, "It's about a woman reflecting on her past whilst waiting for her husband to come home."

"You're interested in writing a play, aren't you?" I ask Steven.

"Yeah, I've kind of written one but it's difficult to get started as I don't have an organised writing schedule...Late at night could work..."

Steven wants to be a published writer.

I joke that he already is, with Clydesider.

He has a children's book on

the back burner: a poem written around Christmas time that someone at Clydesider suggested he turn into a book.

The writing group are publishing an anthology and Steven has various pieces that he has submitted...So watch this space.

Steven also has his own TikTok which he started in 2020 and has nearly 100,000 followers. Check him out over on TikTok @Legowheelz20.

He worked on Clydesider's Cost of Living project and was so incisive at film-making and interviewing, I nicknamed him Steven Spielberg (I think he liked it).

He loves performing and has been on River City, done photoshoots for VisitScotland at University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum and, most recently, the Commonwealth Games. This was filmed up in the Merchant City, which hasn't been viewed yet so no spoilers.

He has an agent for his acting and photoshoots.

I laugh, "An agent? Of course you do!" I think he's kidding me on again, but he's not.

He does have a real-life agent who books "gigs" for him.

And he's also been an ambassador for Historic Environment Scotland and other heritage organisations.

"Sometimes they need me to test things out for the disabled..."

And Bingo! I remember why we are here again.

I am here to interview him about a recent award he got from the Brittle Bone Society in Dundee.

One of the things I didn't learn from Zoom meetings is that Steven is disabled. He uses a

wheelchair to get about.

So I have learned many things about Steven over the years - his drawing and writing, his folk club and love of performing, oh and his beloved family who are all his champions: his sister, nephews, brother-in-law and especially his devoted Mum and Dad who recently accompanied him on a caravan holiday where both he and his Dad won cash prizes.

However, I didn't learn much about his disability: Osteogenesis Imperfecta, or OI for short.

"OI means your bones break more easily," explains Steven.

"Sometimes it's called Brittle Bone disease. I don't like the disease part."

I have to agree with him. We decide a more acceptable word is 'condition'.

I will call it OI. Steven rarely speaks about it.

It is a very rare condition which affects one in 15,000 people. There are estimated to be 5,000 people with OI in the UK.

I feel my way carefully, as I sense OI is not really up for discussion, although Steven does tell me of numerous breaks as a child and how easily bones can be broken.

"You can sneeze, or laugh, or do nothing at all and break a bone.

"During Covid, I broke my leg in the first week, I woke up and it was broken.... I don't get X-rays or casts or anything. They could make things worse ...so I just created quizzes."

I am in awe: "Quizzes? What are you like? Life gives you lemons, so you make lemonade."

In the interview, Steven tells me very little of his childhood but

later texts me his achievements - winning a talent show in Majorca telling jokes and opening the Gartocharn Football Club's Pavilion, both around age nine.

In P6, he was the captain of a spaceship in a school play about the Broons in Space and aged 11, he was the winner of a Burns competition.

Steven doesn't want to speak about his childhood with OI. Only that he didn't like to go to the meet-ups in Dundee "as a wee kid." Now as an adult, he doesn't mind them, although he does get nervous.

Why Dundee, Steven?

"It's the home of the Brittle Bones Society, the world's first charity for people with Osteogenesis Imperfecta."

Wishbone Day is held on 6th May every year, an international awareness day for OI to raise public knowledge about the condition. People are encouraged to wear yellow on the day.

"Margaret Grant from Dundee founded the UK Brittle Bones Society in 1968 and initially wrote an article in the Sunday Post to highlight her condition."

I have a million questions about OI.

Steven thrusts a magazine in my direction: "Read this!"

It's a graphic novel produced by Dundee Comics Creative Space (DCCS) as a souvenir edition for the 50th anniversary of the Brittle Bones Society in 2018: a very informative and beautiful production.

Steven alludes to how hard it was as an adolescent with OI.

He jokes that he spent "two

dark nights" at his local secondary and then transferred to Ashcraig Secondary, a special school instead.

"It was hard going as a teenager...." is all he will say.

Steven is passionate about Mental Health but his own mental health and "hard times" are something he doesn't dwell on too much.

He gives credit to Stepping Stones for helping him. "I was so low at the time I was desperate for help..."



He currently attends a social group at Stepping Stones and is thinking of volunteering himself.

"I'm kind of becoming a volunteer with them as well as a supporter."

"You'll be brilliant at that.." I say, and Steven knows I mean it.

He's keen to give of his time and energy to others and is always an encouraging companion, despite his "cheek". He's full of mischief.

In Clydesider, he is one of our most creative participants, always full of ideas.

Steven, John, another volunteer and myself have known each other for a wee while now and there is an ease and a relaxed banter which we all enjoy.

We just "get" each other.

At Clydesider, we are all justifiably proud that Steven was given an award by the Brittle Bones Society last July.

I presume it is an "OI Can" award, though he has hardly spoken of it.

I prize the following details out of him:

The ceremony was held in the Apex hotel, Dundee. He was presented with a lovely glass plaque with a gold star on it.

"Another two guys got it as well, Mark and Jamie."

"How did you feel?" I ask, excitedly.

"Alright" says Steven, totally unfazed. "I think it was for speaking to Paramedic students about my condition."

This was at Glasgow Caledonian University in both March 2024 and 2025 and he's speaking to them again this year.

"I also did a talk to my Writing group in May on Wishbone Day."

When I suggest that his talk must have been inspirational, he states: "That word inspirational gets bandied about!"

"Aye but in your case, it's true!" I quip, getting the last word at long last.

Sponsored Editorial

St Margaret of Scotland Hospice

Be Part of Our Next Chapter!



We are reaching out to our community, asking for your support as we begin an important new chapter in the life of St Margaret of Scotland Hospice.

For decades, our Hospice has been a place of peace, comfort, and dignity for thousands of patients and their families during life's most delicate moments.

As we look to the future, we are seeking to raise £5 million for vital areas of development that will enhance the lives of those we serve.

St Margaret of Scotland Hospice plays a vital role in helping patients from our community maintain dignity, independence, and comfort. Our current facilities are stretched, and we dream of a Hospice that offers more privacy, better accessibility, and a therapeutic environment where healing, physical and emotional, can flourish.

That is why we have started work to modernise our facilities, to ensure our Hospice reflects the high standard of compassion and excellence we are known for.



Our primary focus is the full redevelopment of our Specialist Palliative Care Centre, the St Joseph's Ward. This refurbishment will build upon our existing standard of excellence, creating a contemporary and nurturing environment that promotes healing and comfort.

Additionally, we will replace our external cladding, windows, and roofing, improving the aesthetic appeal, energy efficiency, and overall comfort of our Hospice.

As we begin this exciting next chapter, we invite you to join us in transforming our Hospice.

Katy Paterson, Senior Physiotherapist at the Hospice, shares what the works will mean to her, our Clinical Team, and families who rely on our care and support:

"The refurbishment of St Joseph's Ward will create a comfortable, modern, and nurturing environment that promotes healing and well-being.



"The updated layout and improved accessibility features will enable us to provide personalised, efficient care tailored to each patient's unique needs and allow us to adapt to the evolving needs of our patients and their families, introduce innovative treatments, enabling us to continue making a profound difference in the lives of those we serve."

As we begin this exciting next chapter, we invite you to join us in transforming our Hospice. Your support represents a commitment not just to our current patients, but to all who will one day walk through our doors seeking care, compassion, and comfort.

Please get involved and be part of our next chapter.

There are so many ways our community can get behind our campaign. To discuss in more detail email buildingappeal@smh.org.uk or call 0141 737 0584. We need your help today!

To donate today, simply scan the QR code or visit our website www.smh.org.uk.



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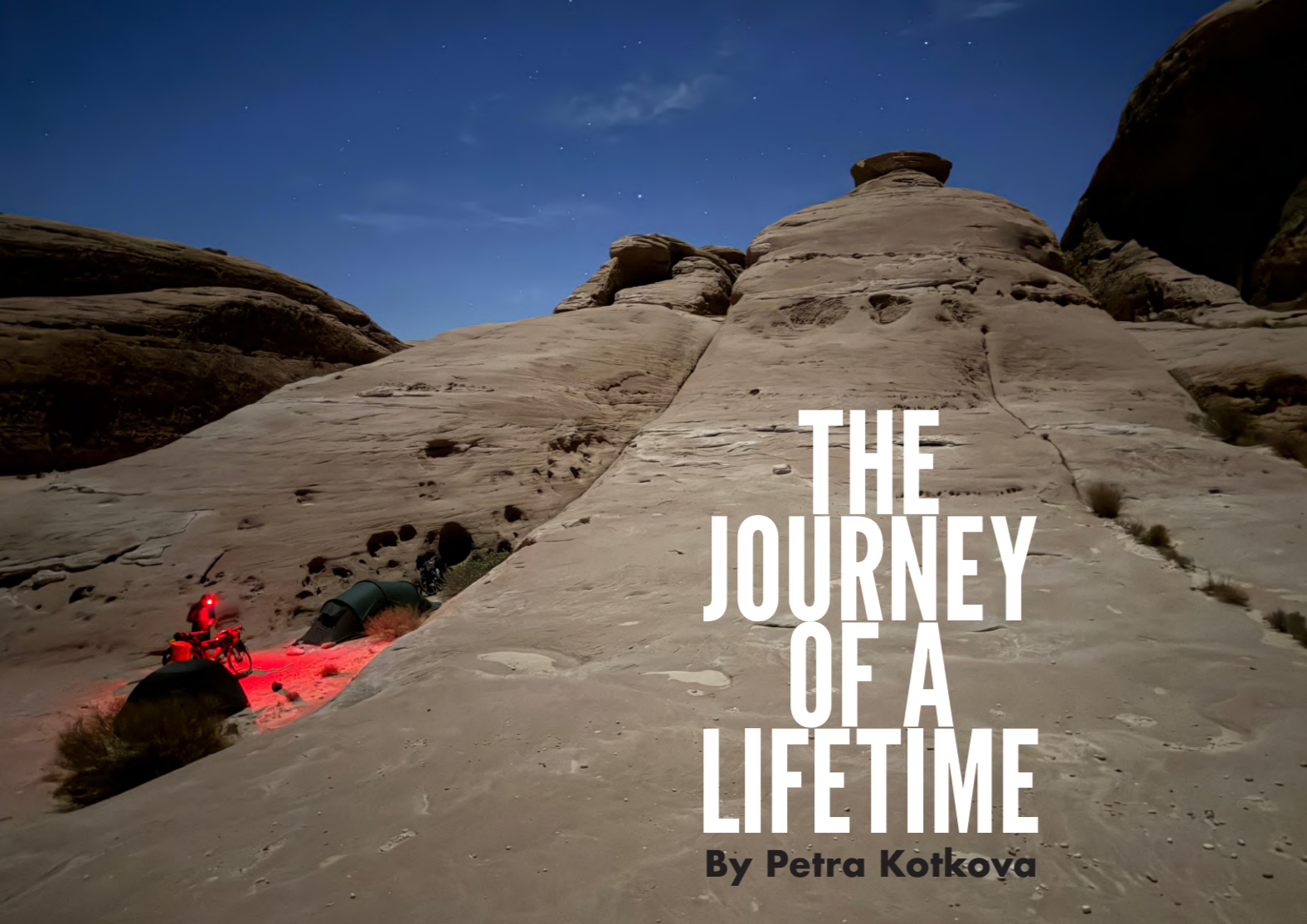
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THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

By Petra Kotkova

On the west side of Clydebank, along the quiet Canberra Avenue, stands Connor's grandparents' home – the starting point of his epic journey.

Last September, he pushed off from their doorstep and began an 18,000-kilometre cycle, determined to ride from Canberra Avenue in Clydebank to Canberra, Australia.

Five months later, he has reached the coast of Oman.

His face is tanned, his smile wide, and the Gulf of Oman glows behind him as he pauses to talk to me.

"The first couple of weeks

were really hard.

"I remember cycling through the Netherlands and Germany, which seems like a lifetime ago. Back then, my body was sore, and I had aches and pains in my knees.

"But now it just feels quite straightforward."



Connor cycles around 100 kilometres most days, sometimes stretching to 160 in a single push.

"It has become part of the day. But mentally, it can be tough – that's more difficult to get used to.

"Some days the wind is right in your face, and you're not moving, and

it's hot, and you're really grinding out every bit of the kilometre... that's tough.

"And being away from friends and family – that kind of comes up every now and then as well. You get these feelings of just wanting to sit and watch TV and have a comfort day. But that's just not possible."

Before the long days in the saddle, Connor's life back in the UK was very different. He has spent the past seven years working in school leadership at a secondary school in London.

"It was a real privilege to be in that job, and I got a lot from it, but I thought there has to be more to life than just work. I wanted to have a reset and take on a big adventure.

"And this was something that I wanted to do. I just thought

to myself one day: well, if I don't do it now, when will I?"

"It was quite scary to walk away from a career, friends, and family; to put your stuff in storage, pack up your bags, say goodbye, and jump on your bicycle.

"But it is one of, if not, the best decision I've ever made."

His family has been very supportive of his decision, even helping him along the journey by bringing him the necessities to refuel.

And what exactly does Connor need to get him to Australia?

"Tablets, macaroons, and Irn-Bru. And the Villa Bakery in Dalmeir does great cakes, so I've asked for some pineapple cakes and some proper Glasgow rolls as well, because you don't get them out here."

It's not just his family and friends supporting him on this journey. Connor is also working with Venture Scotland, the charity he is fundraising for.

Based in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the organisation uses outdoor experiences to help young adults facing challenges in their lives to improve their mental health.

"It's a phenomenal charity. They do incredible work. And to be raising a bit of money for them and raising awareness of their cause is

also a real joy of this trip.

"I've struggled with mental health and wellbeing and finding my place in the world. And the outdoors has



always been somewhere that I've went to help me with those things.

"Whether it be going for a hike or doing cycling... the outdoors is just so powerful, giving you a sense of who you are and building your self-esteem."

What initially began as a cycling challenge for Connor, gradually became something far greater.

"I've learned so much on this trip, about life and the way people live. The bike is a

"You end up in bizarre situations that fill you with joy. Because no matter where I've been, people have been cheery and friendly. They're curious, you

know, who is this man? What is he doing here? Why is he on a bike?"

"And then people come up and say hello, and you have these fantastic conversations.

And sometimes you just don't know where the day will take you. You end up speaking to somebody at a café, and you end up inspecting their camels and going to their date plantation. That's part of the joy of this trip."

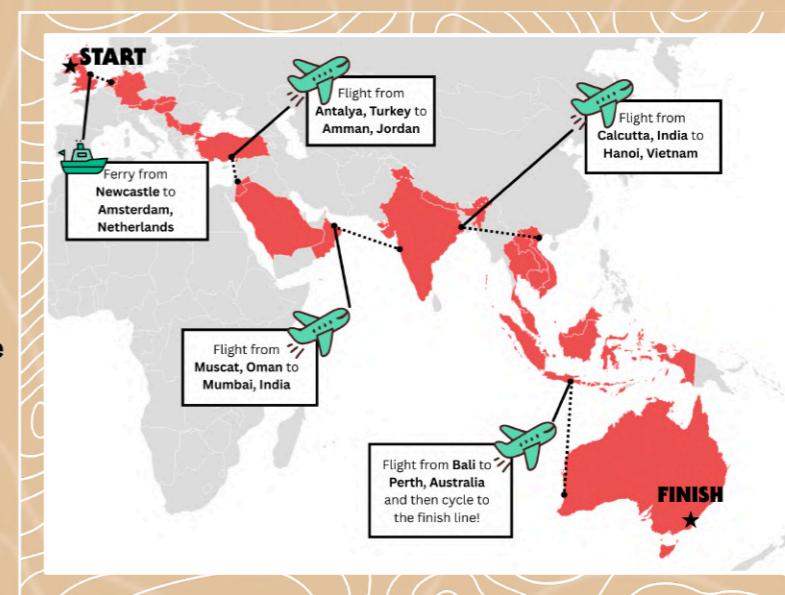
And what advice would Connor give to anyone longing for an adventure?

"Go for it! Embrace it! Don't think, what could go wrong? Yes, things will not go as you foresee, but [that's] the adventure. It teaches you so much in life and really makes you feel as though you're living."

And with that Connor continues to pedal, one kilometre at a time, towards a city on the other side of the world that shares the same name as the road where it all began.

Follow Connor's journey on his

Instagram page [free_mcelwheeling](#) and keep an eye on [Clydesider TV](#) for a short film about his adventures.



way into conversations with people, into towns and villages across Europe and the Middle East that you would otherwise never go to.

Autistic Radio Insights

By Jenny Watson

Walking into Alexandria Library on an unusually dry, mild day, I wasn't surprised to see the space bustling with life, and I was even less amazed to see Harry McCormack waiting for me.

For as long as I've known Harry, he has always been early, organised and ready to get to work. Exactly the type of skills you would look for in a radio show host.

Which was the reason for our meeting that day.

Harry hosts a weekly radio show on Autistic Radio and has done for several years now.

"Autistic Radio is autistic-led," Harry tells me.

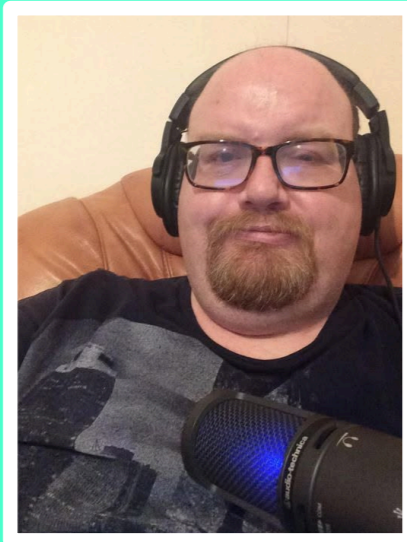
"It's led by an autistic charity, led by autistic people called Autistic Association. I came into contact with them during COVID, when there was a lot of online meetings.

"At one meeting I was asked if I was interested in doing it, and I thought, well, it's something I haven't tried before. And the things I've done before are generally autistic organisation that's so official and formal, and limited, but autistic radio

gives you an opportunity to be freer and talk about your experiences."

The radio funded by Autistic Association was formed in 2021 by Julian Barton. Identified as autistic in his 50s, Julian thought he would try the radio out himself to see if there was space and interest for an autism-centric radio show.

Through meetings and planning, everyone who became involved noted one thing...autism can be lonely and isolating. A radio show would definitely provide a space for people to tune in to hear about shared experiences and feel less alone.



"A lot of people live alone, and Sunday nights seemed to be the worst time for a lot of people because even if you had a busy week coming up, it was just this kind of downtime in terms of feeling. And it was like somewhere to go on a Sunday evening," Harry shares.

From that realisation, Julian committed to broadcasting live on a Sunday evening, making the show accessible all over the world.

It would be streamed through a platform called StreamYard and also available on Facebook and YouTube. Depending on the conversations had during the show, the live stream was then turned into a podcast to be available to listen to at any time.

Harry tells me about what has evolved from the original show: "I created a Facebook page for Autistic Radio. To promote the project, and network with other autistic people and organisations from all over the English-speaking world, basically. And just to share it and be safe space for people to look at on Facebook, because as we know Facebook can be quite a dangerous place and it doesn't always feel safe."

On Harry's 5:55 show, he discusses the various things he and others have shared in the Facebook group throughout the week. The topics can range from general issues that happen to people with autism, to the services they access, to controversial experiences someone may have experienced.

"It's not always serious. Sometimes it's about people sharing their hobbies, things like writing, art, stuff like that.

"And promoting the positive side of autism as well. Even though it has to be talked about, the more what some would say negative or sensitive side - like people needing support - it's good to say, 'look, it's not all doom and gloom', it's like things can be done if things are set up properly for people."

With no formal training or

experience in running a radio show, the association got some funding to purchase equipment.

Through practice, everyone learning they tried together to figure out what set-up and programmes worked best for them.

They chose audio only as, for some, they felt shows and podcasts with visuals can be distracting. Plus, some people did not like to show their faces, which put a barrier in place for being involved.

This really shows the care and consideration put into making the show a safe and comfortable environment for all.

And Harry's reason for getting involved is the purest form of wanting to help others.

"I've always wanted to do something to help give a voice to autism and autistic people, and I just couldn't find a way in.

"I got involved in different groups and meetings, but it seemed to be very limited, and I just wanted to widen the scope and show that autism and people who are autistic are all different.

"Because there's an assumption, there's always a stereotype to absolutely everything - and autism, being autistic, is no different.

"So, it's just to help, break down stereotypes and use my experience as a positive influence in conversations and basically inspire others."

To finish our conversation, I asked Harry if he could only

express one more thing, what would it be.

This is what he said: "In this society, employment is encouraged, but for some with autism, it is not always an option. I just want to say you don't need to be employed to have worth."

Find out more about Autistic Association here: autistic-association.org/ and Autistic Radio Facebook here: (20+)



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A Legacy of Hope

By Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry

Two local charities which have supported thousands of individuals and families through some of their darkest days should be celebrating a combined 80 years serving our communities.

But in September 2025 DACA and Alternatives learned the difficult news that after tendering for their core funding from West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership, it was awarded to WithYou, a national charity with no previous presence in the area.

So, at a time when they should be celebrating decades of life-changing work, their focus has been on the smooth transition of staff, volunteers and the people who access their services, to the new provider.

But the 50 and 30 year community footprints of these two organisations will be visible far beyond their anniversary landmarks.

For DACA it will be seen in the 302 volunteer counsellors trained and supervised over the past 50 years and in the 100+ local people employed by the charity since it first secured funding in 1986.

Counsellors at DACA delivered nearly 4,000 free 1-1 counselling sessions last year resulting in positive outcomes for 75% of people who used their service.

Alternatives boast similarly impressive numbers, supporting 1,200 people to maintain an abstinent

lifestyle, over 1,500 into education and training, and more than 250 into employment, since their doors opened in 1995.

Each of these numbers represents an individual who found their own legacy of hope when they walked through the open doors of these two charities. These will never be forgotten.

A welcoming smile, a warm drink and someone willing to listen - the ingredients were simple, yet the difference they made to so many local people's lives is probably immeasurable.

Their value is clear to see in the many comments left on DACA's Facebook page - a few of which are republished below with DACA's permission:

"Thank you..I'd be lost without your help and the advice you have given...made me a stronger person..love to you all."

"...you have helped so many people and been a lifeline to so many..."

"I was one of the fortunate 75%. I owe DACA the shirt on my back."

And it is also apparent in the lives of people like Kate Hamill.

She shared how both DACA and Alternatives not only helped her move on in her own recovery but also provided opportunities where she could help others.

In 2006 she was accepted on to the innovative

Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) pilot programme. It was the first employability project of its kind in West Dunbartonshire, providing paid employment, training and work placements supporting people in recovery to become health and social care workers.

Kate explained: "I had already levelled myself out by then but I didn't know what to do with my life. I had come home and was finding it hard to get employment.

"Although I was sober I was terrified to apply for a job or even think about what I could do. Then DACA gave me a chance.

"This job with DACA gave me confidence and skills, it let me believe that I could have a career. I then went on to expand on this with Alternatives.

"I started at the bottom and worked my way up. That job was just the beginning of my career."

Over the next two decades Kate worked for both charities and West Dunbartonshire's Alcohol and Drug Partnership, she also sat on the Board of both DACA & Alternatives.

Although now retired she is still a volunteer

Board member with Alternatives.

"I have seen so many service users come through those doors and they are lost, distraught. They have been stuck and isolated for so many years because of the alcohol or drugs - or both. They don't know what to do with their lives even when they do get sober.

"Going into Alternatives' Safe as Houses or counselling with DACA and then volunteering perhaps with Alternatives' Sweet Success Cafe or Skylark - that gives them a different outlook on life, they start believing in themselves and feel like they can do something.

"Within a few years they are just getting on with life, they have a career, a family and they're moving on with their life.

"I would never have had the life I've had these past 20 years if it wasn't for DACA and Alternatives."

So many readers will recognise the ripple effect of these two charities - not only on the individuals but on their families and wider community.

Anne Dyer, depute manager of Alternatives, has been with the organisation for the past 22



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years. She recalled how the charity was founded by a small group of local women supported by local Councillor Margaret McGregor.

Anne said: "The charity grew because there was a need here in West Dunbartonshire, initially it was around raves and the use of drugs like ecstasy and acid and overtime this evolved as different drugs were being used.

"One of the good things about being a small third sector charity rooted in our community is that we have been able to adapt quickly to support local need.

"And over the years we've become much more than a drug service; we support people to take those first steps finding out who they are without substances. They do this alongside others who understand their story because they've been down that path themselves."

Although the loss of funding means Alternatives will no longer be providing their core group work programme, they are still supporting local people affected by drugs.

Their Safe as Houses project will continue to provide "a 24/7 safety net" in the form of supported accommodation at the start of someone's recovery journey.

They also run a very successful family support work project which is continuing. "That is where we started and it has developed over the years," said Anne.

"Now we're able to offer therapeutic initiatives, small classes and groups for family members.

"Often families and partners just need someone to hear them and then, when the time is right for them, they go into a small group with others in a similar position. Together they recognise how their lives have been affected by addiction and how to regain some control."

Their Dumbarton office also hosts Rocks in the Storm, a weekly family bereavement group,

which has been responsible for awareness-raising campaigns lighting up familiar landmarks like the Titan Crane in remembrance of lives lost to addiction.

And for the many people ready to move on in their recovery, Alternatives will continue to offer a pathway of supported volunteering and employment opportunities via the varied social enterprises it helped establish across West Dunbartonshire.

Their community cafes - Sweet Success in Dumbarton's Concord Centre, Perfect Blend in the Denny Tank Museum and the recently acquired Dalmuir Family Hub - will continue to provide hospitality training opportunities for people with lived experience.



These community venues were all closed prior to Alternatives' involvement and have been given a new lease of life thanks to micro grants and donations.

One trainee commented: "Sweet Success Café really is the best place. I have learned loads and the team are so good at helping each other. My family are

proud of my achievements and that makes me happy."

And Skylark IX Trust and Knowetop SCIO, supported by Alternatives to get off the ground, are both places where people in recovery can embark on a journey of self-discovery, exploring new skills and ways of life, as they learn about heritage and boat-making with Skylark or try outdoor and gardening activities up at Knowetop.

Anne said: "We are proud of our involvement with both organisations, they've been supportive learning environments for our recovery community, but we don't want to hang on to them.

"They will grow and develop as stand-alone organisations - that's also part of our legacy of investing in people and in our community.

"We take a Community Development approach to

moving people on from addiction and celebrating every stage of that growth so they can see the change for themselves.

"We're like a big family, many of the people we've supported over the years come back to us because they want to help others in recovery and they understand what they're going through.

"A lot of our colleagues have been through the whole process with us and then they go on to work with other organisations - local and national.

"We're really proud of our charity and the lives it has touched."

Sadly, DACA's future is less certain as their core work since being established in 1976 was the 1-1 free counselling service.

DACA CEO Mags Mackenzie, summed up what the loss of funding meant for her and her team: "Working at DACA over the last nine years has been a massive privilege, and I've

been inspired every day by the resilience and humanity of our clients.

"We wanted to mirror those positive qualities as we navigated the painful end of DACA's 50-year-long community alcohol service, and I've been really proud of my colleagues' conduct throughout this period.

"DACA has community at its heart, and we'll always be grateful for the connections we made over the decades, and for the wonderful memories, which will stay with us forever."

Anyone interested in volunteering with Alternatives, in need of their Family Support Service or Safe As Houses can contact their Dumbarton office on 01389 734500, email info@alternativeswd.org or pop into 1/3 Quay Street, Dumbarton G82 1LG.

To contact WithYou email westdunbartonshire@wearewithyou.org.uk or call 08006521997



Sponsored Editorial

Community Links Scotland



REGENERATION SERVICES

Supporting Households, Strengthening Communities

For more than two decades, Community Links Scotland has been proud to serve the people of West Dunbartonshire. Based in Clydebank and working closely with community led Housing Associations and local third sector partners, our focus has always been on helping residents who are experiencing hardship, isolation, or financial pressure. By developing practical, meaningful projects, we aim to help our local community be stronger and make sure people get the support they need, when they need it.

One of our key projects is the West Dunbartonshire Energy Advice Service, which provides vital assistance to anyone struggling with the rising cost of fuel. Through this service, households can receive guidance on managing their heating systems efficiently, accessing all relevant benefits and financial support, and understanding energy saving options within the home. Our team can also advocate on behalf of residents who are facing challenges with energy suppliers, including issues related to debt, disputes, or the risk of self-disconnection.

Working alongside national and local partners, we help eligible households obtain emergency fuel vouchers, Warm Home Discount support, and access to the Priority Services Register. We also have a small fund that can assist with essential energy efficient items such as air fryers, heated drying racks, or other low-cost solutions that can make a real difference to household budgets. Support can be offered through home visits, telephone consultations, video calls, or our regular drop-in surgeries across West Dunbartonshire. Our aim is always to make assistance accessible, friendly, and practical.

In addition to our energy work, we can also support households with a Starterpack. This project provides essential household items to individuals and families moving into a new tenancy, often after experiencing homelessness, crisis, or emergency situations. A fresh start can be overwhelming, and many people enter their new homes with very few belongings. Through

our Starterpacks we can supply practical, everyday basics – including bedding, kitchen equipment, toiletries, cleaning materials, and small household goods – helping to create a safe, comfortable environment from day one.

Across all our projects, our commitment remains the same: to stand alongside our communities, reduce inequality, and ensure no one feels left behind. Thanks to funding secured from The Robertson Trust, the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme, National Lottery Awards for All and West Dunbartonshire Council – our support is free for all that need it.

We are always eager to work with organisations across West Dunbartonshire in order that we can identify and engage with households who otherwise may fall through the cracks of support. If you would like to work in partnership with us, find out more, or seek support through any of our services, please get in touch on **0141 952 4382** or e-mail energy@comlinks.org.uk



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WINNING ENTRY: Paul Anderson



Harry Kielty



Carolyn Hutchison



Carol-Ann Cohgill



Sam Gibson

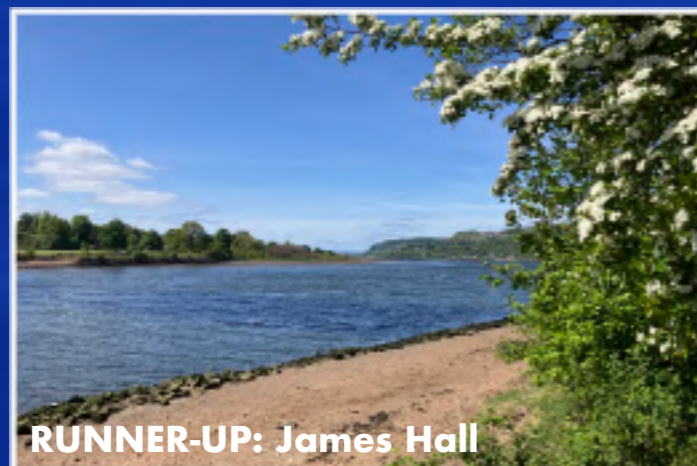
Clydesider Photo Competition: The Clyde, The Leven & The Loch

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

The next competition theme is 'Hidden Heritage'. See pages 48/49 for some tips plus details on how to enter.



Scan the QR code to check out Steven and Billy choosing the winner on Clydesider TV!



RUNNER-UP: James Hall



RUNNER-UP: Liam Hunter

'Space' by Jennifer Kowlaski

High upon meteoric supernova highs,
One can't kiss the Earth below
Or be guided back into orbit
Caressing the atmosphere, hello...

For gods can't risk disintegration
In the sharp edges of the sky
Their shut eyes favoring nebulous haze
They rocket-launch straight into the light

To journey through space junk missiles
Stripped, seared, and smashed apart
Rendered a faceless drifting spacesuit
In a chalk dust cloud-burst galaxy of scars

Not all stars are equal
Some burn up, trying to outshine suns
Implode into all-consuming black holes
Forever taking, but never touched

**Clydesider
Poetry
Competition
Winner**

Meet Our Volunteers: Gemma!



By Team Clydesider



"All these photographs were taken when I have been on walks. I love the different seasons, how the light changes and spotting animals in their natural state."

Q. How did you get involved with Clydesider Camera Club?

A. I got involved with the Camera Club after doing a Photography project, meeting Charlie and doing a taster session with the Clydesider.

Q. What do you enjoy about being part of the Club?

A. I've enjoyed meeting new people which has always been hard for me, finding other people who enjoy photography just as much as me. Seeing everyone's photos always makes me happy and the different ways they capture all sorts of everyday life.

Q. When did you become interested in photography and what do you like about it?

A. I've always enjoyed taking photos but started to really enjoy photography when I was part of the Reflections of Me: Stepping Stones project. It showed me a new way of taking photos which also helps my anxiety and seeing photos in a new light.

You can tell a story through a photo or give emotion through a photo.

Q. Do you have any advice for people thinking about volunteering?

A. My advice would be to give it a go, I would never have thought to try as I've always been anxious, but it's helped in ways that I am so grateful for.

Q. What's your favourite biscuit?

A. My favourite biscuit is a fight between two - a plain old tea biscuit for dipping and a fruit shortcake.

Byrne's Night Extravaganza

By Jennifer Carr

Are you living in the West Dunbartonshire area? Do you enjoy live music? Are you a fan of 70s new wave and funk band Talking Heads and their enigmatic frontman David Byrne?

If you are one or all of these, then something special is coming to Dumbarton this May.

It may be little-known outside of Scotland but lead singer-songwriter and guitarist of Talking Heads, David Byrne, was born in our very own Dumbarton, with his family leaving for North America while he was still a youth.

Now super-fan Aliya Hashmi is bringing David Byrne back to his roots with a special tribute to celebrate his musical legacy, both as a member of Talking Heads and as a solo artist.

Noting the lack of opportunities to experience live music in Dumbarton, Hashmi has set up Byrne's Night in the hope of attracting music lovers away from the big city back to somewhere more local.

It is also a unique opportunity to spotlight the music and artistry of the neurodivergent community, with David Byrne being openly autistic and the event also including contributions from other autistic musicians and artists.

Assisting in bringing Byrne's and Talking Heads' music to life, as well as performing their own original music, will be a host of sensational bands from in and around the Clyde Valley area - the first time this has been done in David Byrne's home town.

Originally from the Glasgow DIY underground scene of the 90s and recently reunited, pop-punk band Lung Leg will be bringing their riot grrrl energy with them.

Meanwhile, formed in 1986 after signing with independent Scottish label, 53rd & 3rd,

The Beat Poets will regale us with instrumental rock 'n' roll courtesy of long-serving guitarist Tom Rafferty and saxophonist Keith Bruce.

Also joining the show will be Inverkip-bred indie-pop sister duo The Cords, with Eva Tedeschi on guitar and Grace Tedeschi on drums, alongside acclaimed Glaswegian dream-pop singer-songwriter Radhika (whose debut album releases later this year), bringing alternative sounds inspired by the 60s.

But it's not all about the music.

Byrne's Night will also feature visual art displays and wall projections provided by artist and illustrator Ash Loydon and a live screen-printing by Manchester's Matthew Rich, as well as a merch table featuring fan art inspired by Byrne's music.

Byrne's Night is scheduled for Friday May 15 2026.

It had originally sold out six months in advance, and the event has now moved to Dumbarton Football Club to accommodate this high level of interest.

Tickets are still available and can be purchased at [wegottickets.com/event/679775](https://www.wegotickets.com/event/679775). If you want to keep up to date with announcements, you can also follow the event on Instagram and Facebook at [@byrnes.night.dumbarton](https://www.instagram.com/byrnes.night.dumbarton).

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Love, Hope & Sunny Days

By Layla Blackwell

Since I remember I have always believed that love has infinite forms and meanings. Each beautiful in their own ways.

The clearest examples of fairytale love all happened for me over a couple of days. It started with an invitation from a loved one and a sign on the back of an assigned seat.

The envelope came through

my postbox, colourful and thankfully not a bill. With two names written there. Something that was a first for me. I remember smiling, knowing the significance of that little detail. It was a show of support.

This was one of the few invitations to a family wedding that didn't fill me with apprehension.

My access is not always

guaranteed and certainly never simple in classic wedding venues. This is usually due to the age and construction of the venue. There is a limit to how historical buildings can be adapted for wheelchair access. So as a wheelchair user, wanting to go and being able to go are often two different things.

This invite, however, was unlike any other and followed



by a logistical planning meeting to ensure not only my access but my comfort. It's a bit like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

So, realising I'd found people who love me so much, they show me that my presence isn't negotiable. I prepared for an adventure. Partly because they deserve to be celebrated wholeheartedly and partly because I deserve this level of inclusion.

A plan was put in place and preparations made.

I was fortunate that my partner understood the importance of this adventure and did what he could to help both in planning and in execution.

We started our journey a full day and a half before the wedding was due to take place. After four trains and a longer roll than intended, we had done the difficult part.

It was then I allowed myself to be excited. The next part of the plan was the next day's worry. I remember looking out the hotel window and feeling immense gratitude for that time in my life.

The next day started early, with clear skies. I gave myself extra time so I could make myself feel not just presentable but photo ready. Outfit on, hair washed and that one bit of hair that never sits right carefully tamed. I was ready.

Passing the sea front, I tried to remember the last time I had been at the seaside. Decades probably, so I took a deep breath full of salt and the sugary tang of candy floss.

We were meeting my father for breakfast before the wedding, at a cheap pub

across from the pier. We caught up with family gossip and spoke about plans for the days ahead.



joy I felt. There next to the space for my chair was the sign marked for my partner in clear, undeniable print. I was so touched I couldn't even say thank you.

My cousin smiled.

I took a moment to compose myself before pointing it out to my partner.

"Are you alright with that?" I said and laughed.

He knelt and put his arm across my shoulders. "Of course."

It seems like a simple thing but it was the first time I felt really seen for who I really am.

That is inclusion, love and all the hope I have for my future. It was all there that day.

Since then, we've had more adventures and I've had the immense privilege of witnessing the tiny moments of love they share and show.

I will always be grateful for the effort, support and time we share. But most, of all, I'm proud to call them my kin.

A peaceful feeling washed over me. A feeling that could only have been hope for the future. I usually get nervous in situations where I have to be in crowds, but not that day.

That day I was there to show two people that their love is worth celebrating.

That day was a dream, blue skies, a fun fair and a love so bright that the sun should be jealous.

Two people who just make complete sense.

The hope and happiness in every little detail of the day. No fuss, just pure joy. I felt grateful to be able to bask in it.

"Did you see your seat?" My cousin asked. Her voice snapped me into the present.

I waited for the people to move out of my way and had to swallow the overwhelming

Got a Story for Clydesider?

Email
amanda@clydesider.org



A Personal Insight to Haemochromatosis

By Jenny Watson

I never imagined I would have a single thing in common with Ernest Hemingway; it turns out I have two.

The first is that we both make a living from writing. Less eloquently in my case!

The second is Haemochromatosis.

I know that is a big ol' mouthful of a word, with very little hint as to what it means, other than some *kind of blood thing*. Which is exactly how it was described to me the very first time I heard it. Followed by "look it up, it's quite serious."

And I did just that.

Haemochromatosis is a condition that causes the body to absorb and store excess iron, leading to iron overload and potentially unpleasant symptoms. If treatment is needed but not received, this can damage many parts of the body.

For me, my Haemochromatosis is genetic (GH), and from what I have read, Ernest was probably the same. I will leave you to read Mr Hemingway's story on your own, as it is quite sad.

I was diagnosed in 2022, almost by accident, and it has taken me this long to wrap my head around it and build up the courage to share my experience. Ultimately, the importance of raising awareness of this condition was the deciding factor. So here goes...

For most of my adult life, I have been back and forth from my GP with two continuous symptoms: fatigue and joint pain. Every time, I was given a different answer for why. I eventually stopped bringing these up. I started to feel like I was imagining it; it was all in my head, it was just how bodies function. I believed and trusted everything I was told.

When I found out about Haemochromatosis and that I would need to be tested, everything clicked into place. I knew what those results were going to say.

It was a long seven-week wait, but when my nurse read out the words on the screen, there was an overwhelming flood of emotions and feelings: vindication, relief, panic, anxiety, confusion, anger and also peace because I finally had an answer. I walked out of the surgery numb. Phoned my husband, the tears fell and worry set in.

I didn't know what step was next, and what did my future hold. Did I even have much of a future?!

That's where Haemochromatosis UK came to the rescue.

The wealth of information they provided, in a format I could understand, calmed my racing thoughts. Not long after I received my diagnosis, I signed up as a member, giving me access to a whole bucket load of help and advice.

I asked Haemochromatosis UK to explain their work for this article. Philanthropy manager Neil Irwin obliged.

"We provide support for people affected, work to raise public awareness and educate GPs, nurses and other healthcare practitioners about this all-too-common condition, which is still diagnosed too little and sometimes, far too late, with tragic consequences.

"Although a small charity we provide a National Helpline and online resources to support people like Jenny who are recently diagnosed. We can provide reassurance and guidance on the next steps in terms of treatment and the implications for the rest of the family."

Many symptoms can be clues to this condition. The most common ones are joint pain, fatigue, stomach pains and bronzing of the skin. People can have none, one, or all of them. High ferritin levels in blood tests can also be an indicator of it.

While most in the medical field classify it as a common condition, it is rarely known. Prevalent in people with Celtic heritage, it is sometimes called the 'Celtic Curse' for the damage it can wreak on a body.

The story behind how this genetic mutation evolved is (to me) quite fascinating.

Untreated, it can lead to cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart failure. And that's just the beginning of a scarily long list. However, if you get an early diagnosis and treatment, that can play a crucial role in potentially preventing this

destruction.

Treatment is fairly simple; it doesn't involve chemicals or medications; it's a straightforward removal of blood - similar to donating.

Diagnosis can be difficult, even in us humans that have been symptomatic for a while, because the symptoms are not exactly specific and often overlap with many other conditions.

But being diagnosed and treated earlier could lead to a reduction in the many diseases our NHS treat in vast numbers. Think of the strain that would relieve on our health services in the future! Not only that, but the blood that is collected from our treatments would boost blood bank reserves.

I am very thankful that I was diagnosed a little earlier than average and have been able to get a headstart on my treatment. *Even if needles and I are still figuring out how to work together!*

The staff on the Haematology ward at the Vale of Leven Hospital are all amazing with me and they make the process as easy as possible.

Most women are not diagnosed until after menopause, which is partly because we have a built-in blood-letting cycle, also known as menstrual periods.

But damage can still be done at an early age. I have diagnosed arthritis in my hips, and I suspect other joints. I regularly battle the pain and fatigue this causes and try to let my body rest as much as I can.

It took me quite a while to not feel guilty about resting. There have been many internal pep talks! However, it has been one of the key parts of managing this lifelong condition, and I now recognise the importance of R'n'R.

I could fill a whole magazine sharing the history of this condition and the knowledge I have gained in the past three years but the information I want to share most is this...

If anything I have talked about in this article resonates with you, please go talk to your doctor. And then share what you have learned with as many people as possible.

You never know whose life it might change.

**For more information visit
haemochromatosis.org.uk
or call 03030 401 102
(Mon - Fri, 12 - 3pm)**



A Museum for Community

by Suhaila Ahmed

I moved to Clydebank last year, and life here has been wonderful ever since.

I quickly grew fond of my neighbours, everyone is welcoming, friendly, and kind.

What I love most is how convenient everything is. There is a shopping centre with almost everything you need, along with several grocery shops just a short walk away.

Moving to Clydebank truly changed my life.

As I settled in, I felt a growing curiosity about the town itself. Clydebank seemed full of stories and history, and I wanted to learn more about the place I now call my forever home.

What better way to do that than by visiting the local museum?

Opened in July last year and officially to the public in August, Clydebank Museum, Local History and Archives is located on the basement floor of Clydebank Library.

Since I visit the library often, discovering that a museum had

opened there, felt like a small miracle. It was as if my wish to learn more about Clydebank had been answered.

The museum clearly took a long time to open, and it is easy to see why.

It is thoughtfully designed to tell the story of Clydebank's past. Alongside this, it houses the Singer Sewing Machine Collection, which was awarded the 'Recognised Collection of National Significance' by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2013.



But here is what truly stood out to me. The museum focuses on ordinary people, the citizens who lived through the Clydebank Blitz.

As I walked through the exhibits, videos played on the

walls, and I could hear a woman describing her personal experience during the bombings. It was deeply moving.

Seeing how a small town endured such destruction yet believed in rebuilding was powerful. Clydebank lost almost everything, but it never gave up. Instead, it chose to look forward.

Even now, I often find myself walking through the streets, imagining how they once looked, reduced to ruins. Over 200 German Heinkel 111 and Junkers 88 bombers flew over Clydebank during the Blitz. The attack lasted more than nine hours.

It is almost unbelievable to think about, and yet, standing there today, surrounded by life and resilience, it makes Clydebank's story even more extraordinary.

The museum may be small, but it brings together the entire history of Clydebank in one place.

You do not only learn about the Blitz; you also discover how Clydebank was built through

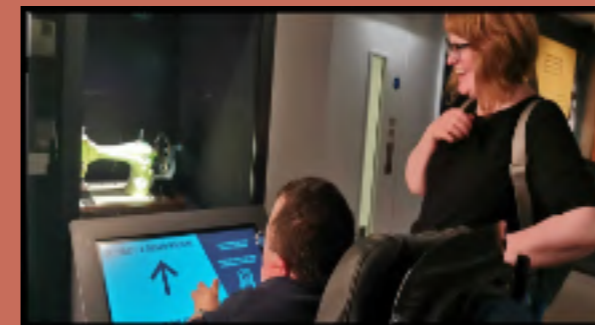
industry. Before the 1870s, the area was largely rural, made up of only a few farms.

Everything changed when a shipyard opened on the banks of the River Clyde, marking the beginning of Clydebank's transformation into an industrial town.

The museum also explores the history of Singer manufacturing.

At first, I wondered why there is a train station called Singer. However, I soon learned that Isaac Singer was such a significant figure in Clydebank's history that having a station named after him almost feels like an understatement.

In 1851, Isaac Singer founded I. M. Singer & Co. with Edward Clark in Virginia, USA, to manufacture sewing machines. Due to the worldwide demand for these machines, the company opened its flagship Singer factory at Kilbowie, Clydebank, in 1884, making it the largest factory on Earth!



Realising that I now live in the very place where this remarkable history unfolded makes me smile.

Visiting the museum was a wonderful experience, and it was about much more than simply learning history.

Being there made me feel like part of the community.

The museum is different from others because it is created for local people. It is not designed mainly for tourists, and that is what makes it so meaningful. Its main objective is to build a sense of community and create a stronger connection with its visitors.

In addition, the museum includes interactive activities, such as a game where you can build a ship, and it also has an archive containing thousands of records and information about Clydebank.

Learning about Clydebank was memorable, it was an experience I will not forget, and I am truly glad that the museum was brought to life. I hope it continues to inspire visitors, reminding them of the strength, resilience, and hope that define Clydebank.

CLYDESIDER MEMBERSHIP



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



BLITZ MEMORIES

By Iain Talman

As shared by
James Maghie Talman
19/7/1913 - 3/1/1990



Dad worked in the drawing loft of Hamilton's Glen Yard in Port Glasgow and after time at Art School worked in the Display Department at Wyllie & Lochhead.

He joined up before the Second World War started in the hope of getting a safer number which came in the form of a Cameronian Battalion converted to an artillery regiment or more specifically a searchlight regiment.

In the first air-raid on Britain, they defended the Forth Bridge with First World War Lewis guns. Searchlights were of little practical use and they were converted again to 125 Light Anti-aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Promotions followed to Lance Bombardier, Bombardier and Sergeant. He began specialising in aircraft recognition and became an instructor. I still have a Bakelite model Bristol Beaufighter.

It was one of the most easily

recognisable being the only twin engine with the engine nacelles going further forward than the nose.

Wing shapes were almost as important as general confirmation.

Engine sound was also important. He could long after still mimic these, including the distinctive pulsating of the Heinkel and the rise and fall of the Dornier. This was a vitally important skill so that the wrong aircraft did not get shot down.

He rose to bombardier. Here he is as such, looking utilitarian as opposed to the more dashing Scottish Horse yeomanry uniform of two ranks lower, brother Gunner John.

Dad later rose to sergeant.

However, before that they were already operating anti-aircraft guns. They had been stationed somewhere up Loch Lomondside when, shortly before 13th March, they and

other units were ordered down to Clydebank. Apparently, the authorities knew something was coming but the town was not evacuated.

Could it have been evacuated? To where? Would it have caused more panic? Anyway, the shipbuilding and engineering town of Clydebank, Dunbartonshire, just along the north bank of the Clyde, west of Glasgow was bombed by the Luftwaffe on the nights of 13/14 and 14/15 March 1941.

As a result of these raids the town was largely destroyed and it suffered the worst destruction and civilian loss of life in all of Scotland - 528 people died, 617 people were seriously injured, and hundreds more were injured by blast debris.

Out of approximately 12,000 houses, only seven remained undamaged - with 4,000 (including some whole streets) completely destroyed and

4,500 severely damaged.

Over 35,000 people were made homeless.

Clydebank's production of ships and munitions for the Allies made it a target. Major targets included the John Brown & Company shipyard, Royal Ordnance Factory Dalmuir and the Singer Corporation factory (on munitions work).

A total of 439 bombers dropped over 1,000 bombs. RAF fighters managed to shoot down two aircraft during the raid, but none were brought down by anti-aircraft fire.

Dad saw not only "ack-ack" fire from his and other batteries but also warships in the docks and dockyards.

In his book *Luftwaffe over Scotland: a history of German air attacks on Scotland, 1939-45*, amateur historian Les Taylor qualified the Clydebank Blitz as "the most cataclysmic event" in war-time Scotland.

He claims that while the raid on 13 March was not intended as a terror attack, it caused extensive damage because there was a lot of housing near the specific targets.

But the bombing the following night was indeed a terror attack as it "was intended to crack morale and force the people to call for an end to the war. However, it had quite the opposite effect, strengthening resolve for the war in Scotland."

Our friend Cathie McMillan had spent the Blitz in an Anderson Shelter with bombs going off all around outside.

Her father, a shipyard worker, was eventually called on to help the rescue efforts when the bombing had finished. She tried to stop him going but realised he had to.

She found it terrifying.

Someone else had to move to safety. As she walked along the street the floors of a tenement with furniture and entire contents collapsed to the ground and shot out into the street through the shop-front windows on the ground floor.

Dad did not have the luxury of an air-raid shelter.

He was outside commanding an anti-aircraft gun (what sort I do not know; it seems to have been a large enough one, although it was a light anti-aircraft regiment) dug into a pit.

It must have been like hell on earth those nights in Clydebank.

Dad saw something coming down on a parachute and realised it was a land mine. He ordered the gun to engage and it blew up in the air with a huge explosion.

He came to again with him and the other crew all blown out of the pit, and with blood coming out of every orifice.

Soon after his aircraft detection skill was put to the test on the night of 10/11 May 1941.

Stationed somewhere in the Lowlands, he reported a Messerschmitt 110 (a twin-engine fighter) going over.

He was told to brush up on his recognition skills because a 110 did not have range to fly from Germany and back; but he was indeed right.

Other such reports were made in Scotland and England by military and Royal Observer Corps outposts.

It was Rudolf Hess, Deputy Fuhrer, on his solo mission to reach the Duke of Hamilton, possibly with a view to treating for peace. He parachuted into a field near Eaglesham and surrendered to

a local farmer.

I am told by an Eaglesham resident the farmer made money long after describing his capture at pitch-fork point(s) - and then persuaded (at a price) to part with the "very pitch-fork" several times over.

After other adventures, including at Rosneath, my father went on to take a commission. He was seriously wounded in Normandy, spending several years in hospital.

I still have his red and blue forage cap although it's more than a little faded now. His sergeant's gold stripes survived many years but could not be found after he died.





OUR STORIES HERITAGE FESTIVAL

This May, immerse yourself in the past with the inspiring stories on your doorstep...

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Clydesider Creative is delighted to present the first WD-wide Heritage Festival, which celebrates the amazing and proud heritage we're surrounded by in our communities.

With over 40 events taking place from Clydebank to Dumbarton, through the Vale and out to Kilmarnock during May's Local and Community History Month - there's something for everyone.

And what's more, most events are **ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

At Clydesider we've also been busy with our own heritage project, 'In Peace & Revolution', celebrating the stories of inspiring local community activists. Find out all about them during the Festival with an opening film screening, photography exhibition, plus interactive events in collaboration with Isaro, Knowetop and Improving Lives, all exploring the rich seam of activism that runs through West Dunbartonshire.

But the Festival is not just about activism - it celebrates all aspects of local heritage from the ancient mysteries of the Cochno Stone, to local writers and artists, the wonders of nature at Havoc Meadow and Balloch, and just about every topic and era in between! We're thrilled so many groups and organisations have joined us to be part of this first festival and now we can't wait to welcome you to these fascinating events.

So, join us for guided walks, talks, hands-on workshops and taster sessions, exhibitions, film screenings, discussion groups, open days and more!

Please note that some events require advance booking - you can find details of how to do this, as well as accessibility information for every event, in the full programme on our website: clydesider.org/festival

Clydesider presents: Local Activists Film Screening



Fri 1 May, 6pm - 8pm
OKFP, Napier Hall, 31
Dumbarton Rd, Old Kilpatrick,
G60 5JH

Accessible

Join Clydesider for an exclusive premiere of short films showcasing stories of inspirational local activists. We'll be screening a new Take a Minute series, alongside films by our Clydesider volunteers. Featuring strikers, suffragettes, peace campaigners, nature defenders, community instigators and even football fans - come hear these fascinating stories!

Free - Book via Eventbrite

Maid of the Loch Hard Hat Tour

Reduced entry fee all weekends
in May
11.30am and 2pm
Maid of the Loch slipway near
Balloch pier

Partially accessible

Get an exclusive update on the Maid's restoration programme from knowledgeable guides. £5 (usually £15) book online: maidoftheloch.org/maid-shop/tours Free entry, as always, to the Steam Winch House, Exhibition cabin and Gift shop - no booking required, donations welcome.

Skylark IX rowing taster session

Sat 2 May, 10am - 12noon
Denny Ship Model Experimental
Tank, Scottish Maritime
Museum, G82 1QS

Partially accessible

Skylark IX Community Rowing

are working to bring rowing back to Dumbarton. Colourful skiffs (row boats) built at the Scottish Maritime Museum by the local community, in the name of Skylark IX - a Dunkirk Little Ship who remains a local symbol of remembrance and hope. See the skiffs up close, learn their history, and try rowing on dry land. No experience necessary, suitable for all ages.

Free - Sign up on the day

Open Day at Kilmarnock Old Kirk

Sat 2 May, 10.30am - 4pm
Kilmarnock Old Kirk,
Gartocharn

Partially accessible

Visit the newly restored Kilmarnock Old Kirk to discover its fascinating past. A new exhibition showcases the history of the area. There'll be opportunities to explore the historic graveyard and the Old Kirk's beautifully restored interior which now has a new life as a community venue.

Free - No need to book

'Agitators, Activists & Campaigners' with Florence Boyle



Mon 4 May, 7.30 - 8.30pm
Dalmuir Barclay Church, 1
Durban Ave, Dalmuir, G81 4JH

Accessible

Jane Rae and Jimmy Reid are known for their leadership in campaigns that started in this community, but stories of other local campaigners are less well known. This is an opportunity to look at some long-forgotten battles like the abolition of slavery or votes for women, and the local activists involved.

Free - no need to book

Foraging Walk at the Saltings

Tues 5 May, 2pm - 3.30pm
Meet at the car park at Erskine
Ferry Road, Old Kilpatrick

Partially accessible

Join a guided foraging walk led by medical herbalist Jean Senior who will share her extensive knowledge of both medicinal plants and foraging. Look at plants growing locally, learn how to harvest sustainably and how to make tinctures, flower remedies and ointments. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Free - Book via Eventbrite

Threads of Time - Stories of People, Place & Pride



The Bankie Spirit
Designed by
CHLOE PATIENCE

Community Links Scotland
Heritage Fund
REGENERATION SERVICES

Wed - 6, 13 & 20 May: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Tues - 12 & 19 May: 2pm - 4pm
Community Links Scotland,
63 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank,
G81 1BL

Accessible

Following the recent Threads of Time exhibition, join Community Links for a creative workshop and make your own cushion or tote bag using their unique Clydebank heritage fabric 'The Bankie Spirit'. Staff and volunteers will be on hand to help, so sewing knowledge is helpful, but not essential. Also spend time exploring selected exhibition pieces.

Free - please email info@comlinks.org.uk or call 0141 952 4382 to book a place, with preferred workshop date.



Sponsored by



Folklore Frolic

Wed 6 May, 11am - 12.30pm
Meet at Balloch Castle

Partially accessible

To celebrate the Celtic festival of Beltane join Emma from Curious in Nature for a walk in the park. Discover what nature is around in May and explore the Celtic celebrations.

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Free - Book via Eventbrite

Celebrating the Life of Margaret Harrison

Wed 6 May, 2pm - 4pm
Alexandria Library

Accessible

The Leven Litts Writers' Group invite you to join them in a celebration of the life of local peace activist, Margaret Harrison. Margaret was a lifelong member of the group and this presentation from Margaret's friend (and fellow group member) Mary Irvine shares the story of this incredible woman and her quiet approach to peace activism. There will be an opportunity to share your own memories after the presentation.

Free - No need to book

Brew and Blether – Life Around Denny's Shipyards

Wed 6 & 20 May, 2.30pm - 4pm
Denny Ship Model Experimental Tank, Scottish Maritime Museum, G82 1QS

Not accessible

Drop in for a cuppa and a chance to explore photos and letters offering a deeper insight into what life was like for those living and working around Denny's Shipyard. See if you can spot someone you recognise in the photos! Maybe you have stories of your own to share?

Free - No need to book

Sporting Memories taster sessions

Thurs 7 and 14 May, 10.30am – 12 noon
Duntocher Village Hall, New Street, Duntocher, Clydebank G81 6DF

Accessible

Do you love sport? Come along to Duntocher's Sporting Memories group for a cuppa and blether. The group runs every Thursday, and on the first two Thursdays in May they'll be chatting all about local sporting heroes. Come share your memories – everyone is welcome at this friendly and informal group.

Free – no need to book

Old Kilpatrick to Bowling Walk & Talk

Thurs 7 May, 6.30pm - 8pm and
Friday 15 May, 6.30pm-8pm
Old Kilpatrick

Partially accessible

The short walk along the canal between Erskine Ferry Road and Bowling Harbour is more historic and international than you might realise. Discover the stories of the people who worked on and lived beside the canal, the connections with Glasgow's tobacco lords, artists (some very famous) and the 19th century anti-slavery movement. The walk starts at the Scout Hall on Erskine Ferry Road.

Free although donations to Action Old Kilpatrick are welcome.

Register interest through Action Old Kilpatrick Facebook page: [facebook.com/actionoldkilpatrick](https://www.facebook.com/actionoldkilpatrick)

Witchcraft Trials in Dunbartonshire

Fri 8 May, 1pm – 4.30pm
Alexandria Library

Wed 13 May, 1pm – 4.30pm
Clydebank Library

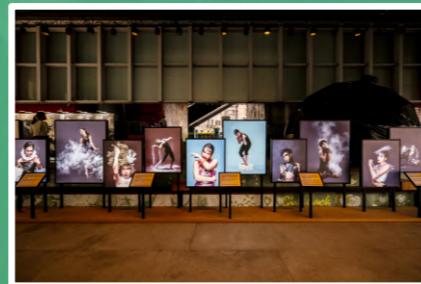
Accessible

This talk and workshop from Louise Wilson, secretary of Remembering the Accused Witches of Scotland uncovers

the Witchcraft Act of 1563 which made both the practice of 'Witchcraftis, Sorsarie and Necromancie' and the act of consulting with such practitioners punishable by death. Louise details how the Act was enforced locally and shares the stories of people prosecuted.

Free, donations to RAWs Charity welcome - sign up via Eventbrite

Clydesider presents: In Peace & Revolution photography exhibition



Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, 12 - 3pm
Training Suite, Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton. Vale Venue TBC

Fri 15 May - Fri 26 June Tues - Fri, 9am - 4.30pm
Clydebank Town Hall

Accessible

This inspirational photography exhibition captures the stories and spirit of local community activists from across West Dunbartonshire. Created by Clydesider volunteers, the exhibition features some well known faces and groups you may not have heard about.

Free - No need to book

Skylark IX rowing taster session

Sat 9 May, 10 am -12 noon
Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway, by Maid of the Loch, Balloch

Partially accessible

Come try your hand at rowing with our open community rowing session - 15 minute taster sessions, all safety equipment and gear provided. Suitable for ages 16 - 99! Subject to weather conditions.

Free - Sign up on the day

Knowetop Open Day



Sat 9 May, 1pm - 4pm
Knowetop Community Garden, Castlehill, Dumbarton

Partially accessible

Spend a Saturday afternoon in the lovely surroundings of Knowetop community garden in Dumbarton West. The open day will feature the unveiling of a brand new artwork inspired by the site's former life as Knowetop Farm. The artwork, created by Clifftop Projects in collaboration with local schools and Knowetop's wellbeing group, is part of Clydesider's community activism heritage project. There will also be fun family activities and time to share your memories and see old photos of the farm.

Free - No need to book

Old Kilpatrick Graveyard Walk & Talk



Sat 9 May, 2pm - 4pm
Old Kilpatrick

Not accessible

Old Kilpatrick graveyard is the oldest graveyard in West Dunbartonshire still in use. The administrative centre of the area before Clydebank was established in the late 19th century, there are many interesting stories and

connections to Clydeside history. Meet inside the church gates on Dumbarton Road.

Free although donations to Action Old Kilpatrick are welcome.

Register interest through Action Old Kilpatrick Facebook page: [facebook.com/actionoldkilpatrick](https://www.facebook.com/actionoldkilpatrick)

Dumbarton High Street guided history walk

Sun 10 May, 2pm
Meet at entrance to Artizan Centre, Dumbarton

Partially accessible

Join the Lennox Heritage Society to discover the rich heritage of Dumbarton in a special guided walk along the High Street. Having become a Royal Burgh in 1222, there are many stories to uncover from the town's 800+ year history. Find out more about the riverside, the old prison, glassworks, churches and the modern development of the town.

Free – no need to book

Carbeth Heritage Trail – Traditional Hutting since 1918

Mon 11 May, 5pm
Meet at St Mocha, Carbeth (parking available)

Not accessible

The Carbeth community of huts was established after the First World War in the hamlet of Carbeth, 5 miles north of Clydebank. Having long been a place where families living by the Clyde could get a break and fresh air, they also played an important role in the Clydebank Blitz as they filled with evacuees and homeless families. Join Y Sort It (who run their own hut providing outdoor experiences and respite for local young people) on a guided walk to learn more about the fascinating hutters history.

Free – book by contacting claire@ysortit.com

Banner Exhibition & creative workshop with Isaro and Clydesider



Tues 12 May, 10am - 12 noon
Centre 81, Clydebank

Accessible

Isaro's sewing group created a stunning banner inspired by themes of togetherness, community and support for Clydesider's activism heritage project. On display for the first time, hear the story behind it and also get a rare chance to see a 19th century banner created by the Duntocher Irish Forresteres, which inspired the project. Then, work with textile artist Suzanne Marshall-Smith to create your own rosette inspired by the women of Red Clydeside!

Free - no need to book

Advanced Family History Workshop

Tues 12 May, 10.30am - 11.30am
Clydebank Museum and Local History & Archives, Clydebank Library

Accessible

Join local archivist Jennifer Lightbody for an hour long presentation on some advanced techniques for progressing your family history research. Perfect if you have started tracing your family tree or are struggling to get past some difficulties. All welcome.

Free - Sign up via Eventbrite

Adult Storytelling – 'I remember when...'

Tues 12 May, 11am - 12 noon
Green Tree Remedies, 4 Church St, Alexandria G83 0NP

Accessible

Celebrating the rich heritage of

WD in poetry & prose, with memories and readings of local people, including those no longer with us. Enjoy extracts from 'The Lady of Alcluith', a collection of memories of the life of Margaret Harrison. Join in and share your own memories.

Free - No need to book

Birl with Byrne

Thurs 14 May, 10.30am - 12 noon
Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton

Accessible

Enjoy a morning to get you moving! Celebrated musician David Byrne, born in Dumbarton on 14 May 1952 is famous for his love of cycling and dancing. Help celebrate his birthday by dancing, walking and maybe even a spot of cycling in a specially designated area! Cycling Without Age will be there with trishaws if you fancy a birl round the park to some Byrne. There will be an area for little ones to try out balance bikes.

Free - No need to book

Clydesider presents: A Creative Heritage Cafe



Sat 16 May, 11am - 3pm
Dalmuir Barclay Church, 1 Durban Ave, Dalmuir, G81 4JH

Accessible

Join Clydesider and our community partners for a day of free, fun creative workshops and activities exploring local heritage. There'll be something for the whole family and sessions you can sign up for on the day - keep an eye out online for more details. Also a chance to find out more about local heritage from groups from across West Dunbartonshire.

Free - No need to book

Open day at Kilbowie St Andrews Church and Blitz Chapel

Sat 16 May, 10am - 2pm
Kilbowie St Andrews Church, 12 Melfort Ave, Clydebank G81 2HX

Accessible

2026 is the 85th anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz, while next year marks 130 years of Kilbowie St Andrews Parish Church being a site of worship. Visit the church during this open day to access the memorial chapel dedicated to those who perished in the Blitz. With artefacts, memorial book and a triptych from esteemed local artist Tom McKendrick on display. Members of the Church will provide tours and answer questions. The Tower Centre opposite the church will host a tearoom for lunch and hot drinks.

Free - no need to book.

Guided walk at Bowling Harbour

Sat 16 May, 11am and 2pm
Meet at Customs House, Bowling Harbour

Partially accessible

Join Scottish Canals for an hour-long guided walk exploring the fascinating history of Bowling Harbour, the Forth & Clyde Canal and the area's industrial heritage.

Free - book via Eventbrite.

Strathleven Doocot Project Talk & Activities

Sun 17 May, 10.30am - 12.30pm
Strathleven House, Vale of Leven Industrial Estate, Dumbarton, G82 3PD

Accessible

Enjoy a morning of history, heritage and activities focusing on the Strathleven House doocot. Learn about its fascinating history, have your say on how it could be restored over a coffee in the historic Oak Room, before heading out for an up-close look in the grounds, and then get crafty and create your very own doocot!

Free - Book via Humanatix or show up on the day

Clydesider presents: Vale TV 50th Anniversary Screening



Tues 19 May, 4.30pm - 6.30pm
Alexandria Library

Accessible

Join Clydesider for an exclusive 50th anniversary screening of footage from Vale TV - a pioneering cable television channel which broadcast community-made programmes across the Vale of Leven in 1976. Featuring a brand new film created by Clydesider volunteers which tells the story of local women who used the new medium to raise awareness of issues affecting them. There'll also be a very rare chance to see footage from other Vale TV programmes - an amazing time capsule of life in the Vale in the 1970s!

Free - Book via Eventbrite

Guided History Walk around Edinbarnet and Cochno estates

Wed 20 May, 10.30am - 12.30pm
Meet at Auchnacraig car park G81 5QW (top of Cochno Road)

Not accessible

A walk around the Edinbarnet and Cochno estate, learning about their history, taking in the remains of an old sawmill which used Cochno Burn for power with an optional extension to the old Hamilton graveyard and the Lady Linn waterfall. The route is partially on metalled roads but is also on woodland paths and includes some slopes, shallow burn crossing, tree roots etc. Please wear walking boots.

Free - book via Eventbrite

The Cochno Stone, with Kenny Brophy

Thurs 21 May, 2pm

Clydebank Museum and Local History and Archives, Clydebank Library

Accessible

Uncover the secrets of the Cochno Stone in this fascinating talk by Kenny Brophy, senior lecturer in archaeology at Glasgow University. Discovered in 1887 on farmland near what is now Faifley, the stone is covered in about 90 carved indentations, or 'cups', grooved spirals, and other rare and mysterious markings.

Free - Sign up via Eventbrite

Agnes Owens Centenary Celebration

Sat 23 May, 10am - 12.30pm
Alexandria Library

Accessible

Agnes Owens, a celebrated Scottish author who lived in the Vale of Leven, was well known in the community. Born 100 years ago, the Agnes Owens Archive was established to keep her memory and work alive. This session is the beginning of a series of events to highlight Agnes' work and life. If you have any memories or photos of Agnes we would love to see you there!

Free - No need to book

Guided Heritage Walk of Dalmuir



Sat 23 May, 10.30am - 12 noon
Meet at Beardmore Hotel, Dalmuir

Partially accessible

Join local guide Paul Murdoch

for a fascinating tour round the history and heritage of Dalmuir. From Dalmuir Park (this year celebrating its 120th anniversary) to shipbuilding, the Blitz and the canal, explore the area's many stories. The walk finishes at Improving Lives on Dumbarton Road, where you can visit their open day.

Free - Book via Eventbrite

History Unlocked - Improving Lives Open Day

Sat 23 May 12noon - 2pm
Improving Lives, 627 Dumbarton Road, Dalmuir

Accessible

Come discover the hidden history of 627 Dumbarton Road, now home to the Improving Lives charity. Over the past few months, their History Unlocked group has worked with Clydesider to research the building's 100+ year history, finding fascinating stories from the past and its links to local activism. Discover the mysterious rooms at the back of the building, its role in the local rent strikes and life as the Independent Resource Centre. Then share your stories of the building and the area.

Free - No need to book

Robert the Bruce Heritage Centre Open Weekend

Sat 23 - Sun 24 May 12 noon - 4pm

Robert the Bruce Heritage Centre, Renton Station, Renton

Accessible

Did you know that King Robert the Bruce spent his last days in Renton, and this year marks the 700th anniversary of his arrival in the area? Visit the Robert the Bruce Heritage Centre where you'll be welcomed by enthusiastic volunteers who can tell you where his mansion is thought to be, and relate stories of this Scottish hero. An ideal place to bring the kids. The Centre is accessible from the station platform.

Free - no need to book

Discover Havoc Meadows guided walk

Mon 25 May, 1pm - 3pm
Dumbarton

Partially accessible

Join Friends of Havoc Meadows for a nature walk exploring the unique wildlife and natural heritage of the Havoc Meadows in Dumbarton. On this relaxed stroll you'll learn about the birds, insects, mammals and wildflowers that call this special place home, and how generations of use have shaped this much-loved site. Discover this hidden gem on your doorstep!

Free - Book via Eventbrite

Adult Storytelling - Myth, Legend and Folklore

Tues 26 May, 11am - 12 noon
Green Tree Remedies, 4 Church St, Alexandria G83 ONP

Accessible

The importance of myth, legend and folklore in heritage should not be overlooked. Oral tradition has always been with Man. Doreen explains why this plays a strong role in our lives and introduces us to 'The Dragon Prince of Beithir', the second book in her trilogy 'The Dynasty of Dragons'.

Free - no need to book

Nature and Heritage walk

Sat 30 May 10am - 11.30am
Balloch Castle Country Park

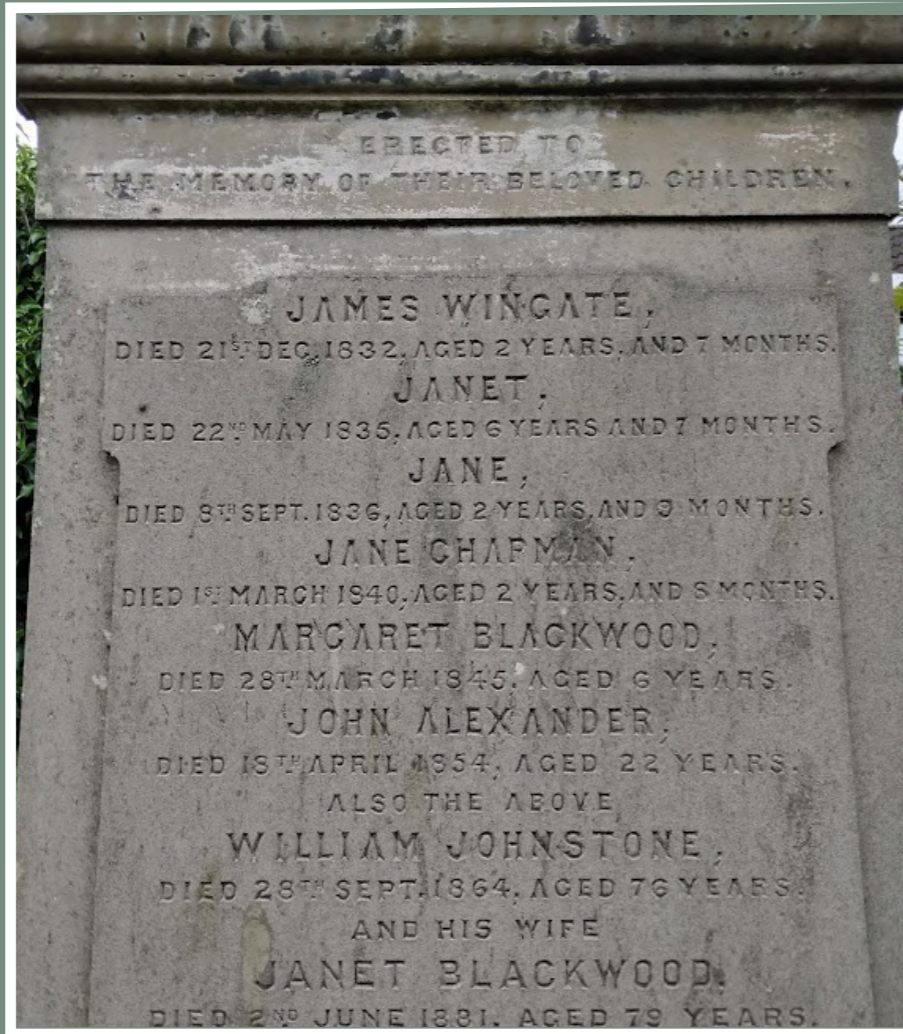
Partially accessible

Join local author and filmmaker Paul Murdoch to have a look at the nature found in the park and learn about some of the fantastic local history associated with the area. Meet at the noticeboard at the main gates to the park across from Balloch Bus Station. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Free - Booking essential via Eventbrite

Hidden Heritage: Unlocking Churchyard Secrets

by Florence Boyle



It's a mark of how significant a place Old Kilpatrick was, that it's the only place of settlement between Glasgow and Dumbarton which appears on a 1595 map of Scotland.

Old Kilpatrick has been a place of human settlement for thousands of years and not only on land, Neolithic people also lived on crannogs (man-made islands) on the Clyde.

Where people lived, they died and Old Kilpatrick parish churchyard was the burial place for generations of locals, a place where the great and the good were laid to rest alongside their neighbours of more modest means, irrespective of denomination.

Before the current church was built in 1812, on the site of a previous medieval church there was an earlier informal place of worship across the road on the site of St Patrick's Well.

Old Kilpatrick was also an important place of pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage was the medieval equivalent of a holiday where people packed up their belongings, brought their own food and drink and travelled to a place of homage.



And one of those destinations was Kilpatrick - translated from Scots Gaelic, Kilpatrick (Cille Phàdraig) means the Church of Patrick.

I've been researching the graveyard since the pandemic, and it didn't take long for a picture to emerge of how varied and important the stories of the people who lived here were and what those stories said about the industrialisation of Scotland in the 19th century, the growth of shipbuilding and immigration from Ireland into the area.

Tucked away in the corner of the graveyard is one of the oldest grave enclosures, containing the remains of the Stirling of Law family, one of the oldest noble families in Scotland, whose roots date back to the 12th century.

The Stirling family were part of Scotland's landed gentry and various branches owned huge tracts

of land across Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire (including the Edinbarnet estate).

The enclosure is in some state of disrepair, and it looks like it might have had a roof at one point, but it is clearly marked with the family's heraldic shield.

Then there is Captain William Johnstone, "an Old Kilpatrick man", who died at Olinda Cottage in 1864 aged 76 was Glasgow's first harbourmaster.

He began the job in 1828 and continued in service until a few weeks before his death. Johnstone oversaw the rapid expansion of Glasgow as one of the most significant ports in Britain and is an important character in the story of Glasgow's maritime history. In January 1915 John Halkett, an old soldier was laid to rest with military honours.

Halkett was no ordinary squaddie; he had fought on the Northwest frontier and was awarded the Kabul to Khandar star in recognition of his contribution as part of a hand-picked contingent which marched 320 miles in less than a month in August 1880 to provide relief to soldiers under siege.

TOOK PART IN KABUL TO KANDAHAR MARCH.—The remains were interred in Old Kilpatrick Parish Churchyard on Monday afternoon of Mr John Halkett, an old soldier, who was with the late Lord Roberts in the memorable march from Kabul to Kandahar, and for which campaign he possessed the much- prized medal. A number of the 9th (Reserve) Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who were quartered at Dumbarton, accompanied the cortege.

Members of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders accompanied the cortege, and the awful irony was that these soldiers could only be present because they were stationed in Dumbarton waiting to leave for yet another war.

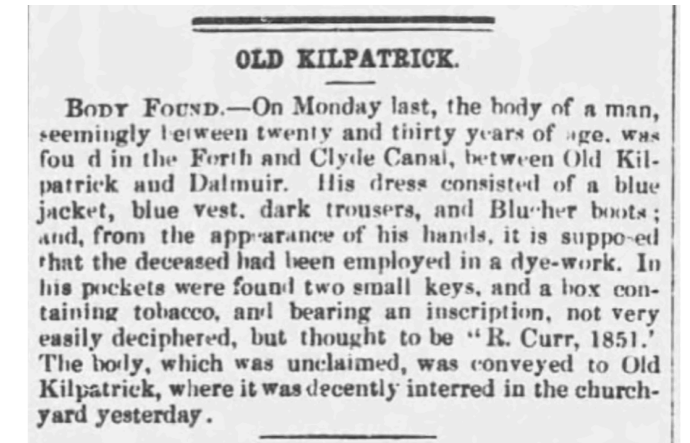
The Forth and Clyde Canal opened in 1790. The final stretch from Kelvinbridge to Bowling was completed by the Whitworth family, originally from Halifax in Yorkshire. Canal building was a family business and after the Forth & Clyde was completed the family moved on to build the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

But Robert Whitworth junior met an Old Kilpatrick girl, Jane Fleming, and stayed here. He died in 1802 and is buried in Old Kilpatrick alongside his daughter Mary Ann who died in 1803 and his wife Jane who died in 1807.

Then there were those who remain anonymous.

In the time before fingerprints and DNA, identification of strangers was all but impossible.

It may be hard to imagine now but Bowling harbour and the canal were bustling places with ships, from across the world, berthed ready to take on or deposit cargo.



Inevitably there were drownings and accidents, bodies washed up on the shore or retrieved from the canal with nothing to say who they were. These nameless souls were given a decent burial in a common grave.

There were others too poor to afford a burial where the parish council stepped in, we know some of their names, but their grave is unmarked.

This is just a small selection of the stories from the graveyard but finding more and locating the graves is difficult because there is no map.

Archaeology Scotland have agreed to accept Old Kilpatrick graveyard (the old graveyard surrounding the Church) into the Adopt-A-Monument scheme. The scheme unlocks access to archaeological expertise on preservation and recording.

In the last few months, the digitised burial records, dating back to the 1870s have become available.

These registers record who is buried in each grave, no matter whether the graves are marked or not or whether their names appear on the gravestones; matched with a map of the graveyard it has potential to unlock many more stories of the people who lived here.

Volunteer training will take place in the Spring, this will teach volunteers basic archaeological recording, digital mapping, and how to assess the condition of gravestones. No previous experience required. Volunteers will acquire valuable heritage skills.

If you are interested in helping unlock local history, please contact Action Old Kilpatrick via their Facebook page.

Threads of Time

Words by Dhyani Crawford
Photos courtesy of Community Links

A new community exhibition opened its doors in Clydebank's Town Hall at the start of 2026.

Threads of Time brought together work created by local groups from across Clydebank.

Led by Community Links Scotland and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund the exhibition shared stories shaped by people with deep roots in the town.

It explored Clydebank's past and present side by side, showing how local industry shaped daily life, how the Blitz changed the town, how people rebuilt through strength and solidarity and the reality of the community behind it all.

Textile prints, installations, graphics, and short films shared these stories in ways people could connect with in one large exhibition.

Local groups sat at the heart of the project.

Participants included Y Sort It youth organisation, the Clydebank Asbestos Group, Kilbowie St Andrews Church Guild, and Mindful Moments Healthy Pathways.

Each group worked alongside award-winning

textile artist Chloe Patience, taking time to talk, research, and reflect on which stories mattered to them and how they should be shared.

Groups focused on different aspects of the project, working separately before coming together for the final exhibition, where the full range of voices and experiences could be seen together.

Y Sort It created comic storybooks sharing stories of Clydebank's past, many of which had been passed down through families by parents and grandparents.

Gillian Kirkwood from Y Sort It said: "It was good to see the young people getting really involved and coming up with all their different ideas."

"The challenge was how we were going to pull it all together into one comic book. I think they've done a really good job. I'm just really proud."

Other groups worked with textiles, embroidery, and fabric, with pieces lovingly created through talking together about their own memories. Working with textiles gave time to talk, remember, and share personal stories.

A key moment of the exhibition was the launch of the 'Bankie Spirit' fabric.

The design brought together memories, voices, and symbols from across Clydebank, which reflect pride, resilience, and shared identity shaped directly by local people.



The symbols included famous landmarks such as the Titan Crane and the Singer Clock.

The fabric appeared across the exhibition in everyday items such as bags, cushions, scarves, and even a chair!

Three themes ran through the exhibition and helped make sense of the stories on display.

Industry looked at working life in Clydebank and the role heavy manufacturing played in shaping the town.

The Blitz focused on loss, survival, and remembrance, and how those experiences are still remembered locally.

Community reflected everyday connection and care, showing how people have supported one another and how that has created a unique community spirit.

Many of the people involved felt the project highlighted the strength of community spirit in Clydebank and how it continues to exist today.

Community Links' Mindful Moments also included a genealogy project, allowing participants to research family histories and personal links to the town, adding another layer of meaning to the work on display.

Short written pieces and film reels added further depth.

One participant spoke about how emotional the process had been, describing how revisiting memories of Clydebank's past brought a sense of sadness when comparing Clydebank in its bustling heyday to present time.

Another commented: "Seeing all the people who have come here today it feels like we are getting that community spirit back."

The town has seen many changes but like a boxer on the ropes it always fights on.

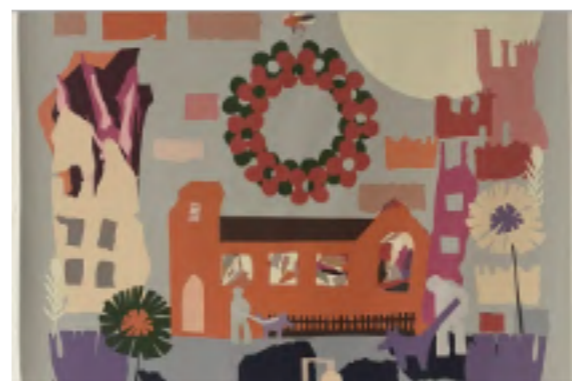
For many visitors, Threads of Time highlighted the contrast between Clydebank's past and present. It brought back memories of a busier town while also showing what it has endured.

The exhibition centred real experiences, family stories, and shared history, leaving people talking about where Clydebank has come from and what still holds the community together today.

Although the Threads of Time exhibition has ended, there's another opportunity to see materials created during Clydesider's Our Stories Heritage Festival. And what's more you can even make your own item using the iconic 'Bankie Spirit' fabric!

Community Links are running workshops on Wed May 6, 13 & 20 from 10.30am - 12.30pm, and Tues May 12 & 19 at 2pm - 4pm.

Contact Community Links at info@comlinks.org.uk or 0141 952 4382 to book a place.



'Ninety Tiny Windows' by Paul Underwood

Review by Mary Irvine



The year 2026 marks 20 years since I returned from foreign parts, choosing to live near ye Bonnie Banks. Glasgow University kindly gave me an M.Litt. in creative writing which led me to writing book reviews for the Clydesider.

I choose mostly, though not exclusively, to review local authors.. I approach each book in the same way. Are they well written with correct use of grammar? Is the spelling correct? I do make allowances for speech. Does it flow? Presentation? Most of all is it a book I could recommend?

The intriguing title 'Ninety Tiny Windows' drew me immediately, wanting to know what lay behind those windows, one of which is used on the cover, simple yet effective, reflecting the contents. As an ardent fan of flash fiction, the secondary title 'A Collection of Flash and Micro Fiction' strengthened the desire to explore more.

Flash or Micro. What's the difference do I hear? Will try a short answer.

There are 'rules' set by 'them' but there is much disagreement on definitions. Some claim flash fiction is a story less than 1,000 words. More is a story. But many short story competitions will not accept submissions less than 2,500 words. I did once enter an international competition with a story of less than 1,000 words and it came third.

Micro fiction is less than 500 or 300 depending on opinion.

What is agreed is a Flash Fiction or Micro Fiction

isn't just a short piece of writing. It should contain all the components of a short story.

Good flash fictions are not easy to write but this author, Paul Underwood, has an obvious gift. He set himself a challenge, each day he would take a prompt and see where it led him - his inspiration as 'twere.

It is so pleasing to read the work of someone who has knowledge and command of the English language. I particularly like the originality of the author's similes. The metaphor of 'the silence felt too loud' is but one example of how the author evokes a variety of emotions in the reader.

Each piece flows, touching on a variety of subjects, sometimes verging on the supernatural. There is often black humour, quirky at times but also subtle, with many 'twist in the tale' pieces.

The illustrations, black and white (with shades of grey), complement the writing well.

Paul invites you to step inside his windows. Please do, you won't be disappointed. Dip into it or read chronologically. Just enjoy.



Paul will be talking about his book at the Greentree Remedies on Tuesday, March 31 at 11 a.m. Free entry and refreshments. As usual books will be available at a discounted price.

'It's a Struggle' by Iain Walker

It's a struggle from the time I rise,
Till I go to bed and I close my eyes,
It's a struggle for me to do,
All those little things that's so easy for you,
It's a struggle not to cry,
When I don't succeed, even when I try,
It's a struggle not to say "I can't",
Not to say "I won't", not to say "I sha'nt",
It's a struggle just to go to school,
Even though I'm smart, can't call me a fool,
It's a struggle trying to make my way,
With these little steps through a great big day,
It's a struggle but just give me space,
For this happy smile on my beautiful face,
It's a struggle but I know you care,
'Cos I feel your love round me everywhere,
It's a struggle but it's one I'll win,
With so much to give, it would be a sin,
Now I've come so far and with all this trouble,
You won't see me give up, even if it is a struggle.

Mental Well-being Top Tips

The Joy of Journalling

By Sarah Dillon

Many people keep a photographic record of special occasions in their lives. But what about keeping a handwritten record of lovely things which happen on the 'ordinary' days? A type of gratitude journal, if you like.

This practice brings about a positive mental state of wellbeing. So that would be one answer to the question of 'why bother?'

Another answer could be 'simply for the fun of it'. .. I write about time spent with a friend; a new recipe; a tasty meal and I have begun to illustrate my pages, using colourful stickers.

They are available in a huge range of subjects - animals; flowers; cartoon characters; alphabet

letters and numbers. The list is endless. Look in bookstores, art and craft shops and even supermarkets. Recently I went to buy a pint of milk and returned with stickers - images of very handsome horses!

Themed stickers celebrate every season and festival - autumn, Hallow'een, Christmas, winter, Easter...Online I may, or may not, have ordered stickers from USA, China and Australia. At least the postal packages are small...

You may fancy the idea of journal- keeping but don't know where to start.

There are many factors which influence our mental wellbeing: physical health; the weather; the company we keep; nature; a sense of purpose; hobbies; relaxation rituals - from arts and crafts to Zumba.

There's plenty to write about and to create, what author Sarah Ban Breathnach, calls an 'Illustrated Journal of Discovery'.

Discover your own JOY. Have fun.

Photo Tips: Hidden Heritage

By Harvey Smart

To coincide with our heritage festival in May, celebrating the rich and often underappreciated history of West Dunbartonshire, we have chosen the theme "Hidden Heritage" for our Issue 35 photography competition. Here are some tips and ideas to get you shooting!

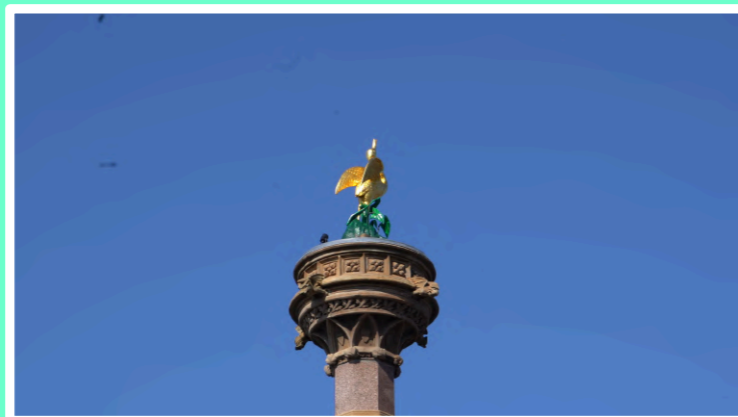
Forgotten industry - Whether it's the Turkey Red factories of the Vale of Leven, or the shipyards of Dumbarton and Clydebank, this area was once a hub of industrial activity. These days there isn't much left, but there are still traces of evidence that suggest its once proud working past. Try to find things that highlight this, such as old drydocks, slipways, parts of old discarded machinery or even something simple as bollards which once lined docks with ships bound for far flung destinations...

Everyday History - Heritage can also be something relatively mundane. Places that shaped everyday life of the past, such as old shopfronts, signage, pubs or community places with decades or even centuries of stories behind them.

Nature Reclaiming the Past - Many historical places have been totally forgotten and left to be reclaimed by nature. Think about abandoned houses, castles or other structures that are now derelict and covered in plants, trees and ivy.

Juxtapose Old & New - One powerful way to explore Hidden Heritage is by showing the past and present sharing the same space. Look for contrasts like historic buildings overshadowed by modern housing or infrastructure, old industrial sites repurposed for new uses or traditional materials such as stone or timber beside glass, steel, and concrete.

Hopefully this has given you some ideas to go out and show off the incredible history of WD! Happy shooting!



Clydesider Poetry Competition

Theme: On Your Street

Prize: £25

Closing Date: May 14

Email entries to:
clydesidercomp@gmail.com

Please email your entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com by 14 May 2026. Open to people living, working or part of a group in West Dunbartonshire and only one entry per competition! Good luck!

Clydesider Photo Competition

Theme: Hidden Heritage

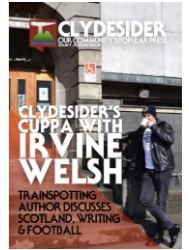
Prize: £25

Closing Date: May 14

Email entries to:
clydesidercomp@gmail.com

Clydesider 10 Years On

By Charlie Sherry



In many ways it's hard to believe it has been 10 years since I jumped on the train down to Dumbarton to interview the author of *Trainspotting*, Irvine Welsh, for the feature article for the very first edition of Clydesider. Armed with a belly full of nerves, a dictaphone, my camera and just hoping, nae praying, I would not make a pigs ear of it, after all this was not only my first interview for Clydesider, it was my first interview ever! You could say it was a baptism of fire.

The controversial Edinburgh writer was giving a talk in Dumbarton Library promoting his latest novel, all the big guns from Scotland's national press were there in force when yours truly arrived from the unheard of Clydesider and boldly walked straight up and introduced myself to Mr Welsh.

I'm sure a few of my 'fellow hacks' jaws dropped when I asked the creator of Renton and co if it was okay if I could get a photo of him outside standing on the library stairs, explaining that our article was not about the new book he was punting, it would be about his views on how we can encourage ordinary members of our community to express themselves creatively just as he had done so successfully.

Thankfully Irvine was up for it. He grabbed his mug of tea and walked outside with me, and there I took the magazine's iconic first cover photo.

About an hour later I interviewed Irvine upstairs in the library by which time I was wondering why I had been so nervous earlier, it turned out to be less a case of a formal question and answer interview and more a conversation between two working class Scottish lads, and of course, no such conversation would be complete without discussing the ups, and mostly downs, of Scottish football.



CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Local Support Services

DUMBARTON DISTRICT WOMEN'S AID - Confidential Domestic Abuse Helpline Office hours - 01389 751036, 24hr Helpline 0800 027 1234

GLASGOW & CLYDE RAPE CRISIS - Support line 08088 000014

STEPPING STONES - Community mental health support services, 0141 9412929 or email referral@stepstones.org.uk

ALTERNATIVES - Community-based recovery support for individuals and families affected by substance use, 01389 734500 or info@alternativeswd.org

WD COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH - Mon - Fri 8.45am - 4.45pm Alexandria & Dumbarton: 01389 812070 or Clydebank 0141 941 4400. Out of Hours Team - please call 111

WD ADDICTION SERVICES - Mon - Thurs 8.45am - 4.45pm, Fri 8.45am - 4.15pm Alexandria & Dumbarton: 01389 812018 or Clydebank: 0141 9414400

OVERDOSE RESPONSE TEAM Greater Glasgow & Clyde - 7 days a week - 10am to 10pm, anyone can make a referral Freephone 08088 008011

WDC EMERGENCY HOMELESS TEAM - 01389 776400, Out of Hours - 0800 197 1004

MENTOR SCOTLAND - Peer to Peer mental health and wellbeing support group. Contact admin@mentorscotland.org or 07470 461685 www.mentorscotland.org

WD CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - Information and advice service Freephone - 0800 4840136 Mon, Tues & Thurs 8.30am - 4.30pm, Wed 10am - 4.30pm, Closed Fri. www.wdcab.co.uk

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

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

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

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

WD KINSHIP CARE SUPPORT - information, advice and activities for kinship carers and their families; Meets bi-weekly Tues 10.30am - 12.30pm Level 2 1 North Ave, Erskine House, Clydebank G81 2DR, 0141 2373303

YOURS FOR FREE (OR NEARLY FREE) IN WD

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

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ALEXANDRIA OUTREACH - Tues 11am - 12noon, CATRA base, Alexander Street, Alexandria

FOOD FOR THOUGHT DALMUIR OUTREACH - Mon 11am - 12noon, St Stephen's Church, 12 Park Road, Clydebank G81 3LD

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY FOODSHARE - Emergency food aid plus Fuel Poverty project; School Holiday Brunch Bags; School Uniform Bank; Baby Bank & Xmas Toy Bank. Call 01389 764135 or freephone 0800 3457050 Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm for delivery

OLD KILPATRICK FOOD PARCELS COMMUNITY PANTRY - Tues - Thurs 11am - 1pm & OKFP Chatty Cafe Tues - Fri 11am - 3pm, Napier Hall, 12 Dumbarton Rd, Old Kilpatrick, G60 5LW 07368 496836

WEE CHATTY CAFE - Tues - Sat 10am - 2pm Erskine Ferry Road, Old Kilpatrick G60 5EU

DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH COMMUNITY PANTRY & CAFE Thurs 6.30pm - 8pm & Fri 11am - 1pm, 1 Durban Ave, Dalmeir, G81 4JH

DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH DROP-IN TOTS TO TEENS - Clothing for kids. Fri 11am - 1pm

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

FAIFLEY FOODSHARE FOOD PANTRY & FAIFLEY UPCYCLING - FREE Food Pantry Tues, 1:30pm - 2:30pm, Faifley Parish Church, 164 Faifley Rd, Clydebank

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

THE SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY CAFE - (donation only) & Employment Plus, free use of Chromebooks to Job Search, update CV & improve IT skills. Weds & Thurs 11am - 1pm. Musical Tops music group, Fri 10am - 11.30am, Sylvania Way South, Clydebank 0141 941 1353

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

FOOD FOR THOUGHT COMMUNITY SOUP & SANDWICH - Wed 11.30am - 2pm, St Augustine's Church Hall, Dumbarton

SOUP SPOT - Community Lunch. Fri 11.30am - 2pm St Augustine's Church Hall, Dumbarton

SOUP CLUB - Community Lunch. Mon 12noon - 1.30pm St Patrick's Church Hall, Dumbarton

PHOENIX CENTRE COMMUNITY CAFE - Tues, Wed & Thurs 12 - 1.30pm & Weds Breakfast Club 8am - 10.30am. Phoenix Centre, Castlehill, Dumbarton. All donation based.

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

WESTBRIDGEND CLOTHING BANK - Free recycled clothes, open Mon & Tues 11am - 3pm in Community Flat, 1 Lomond Court, Dumbarton elaine_41@hotmail.com (re-opening Mar 31)

Y-SORT IT - Youth Clubs offering a safe place to meet friends, have a FREE MEAL, charge phones and access WIFI: Bonhill - Tues: 8 - 9yrs 3.15pm - 4.30pm, 10-11yrs 4.45pm - 6pm. Clydebank - Wed 8 - 11yrs 3.15pm - 4.30pm. Faifley - Thurs 8 - 11yrs 3pm - 4.30pm. Friday Night Youth Café for 12yrs+ 6pm - 8pm in Clydebank & Bonhill. Call 0141 941 3308 or email info@ysortit.com to find out more

THE RECYCLE ROOM - Free recycled unwanted clothes, toys, household items & community laundry, 137 Onslow Rd, Clydebank G81 2PW or therecycleroom1@gmail.com Open Mon appts only, Tues 11.30am - 2.30pm, Fri & Sat appts only 10.30am - 12noon, Sun appts only 11am - 12noon

KILBOWIE ST ANDREW'S PARISH CHURCH - Warm space, free food/hot drinks Wed 10.30am - 1.30pm. Tower Centre, Kilbowie St Andrews Parish Church

BEN VIEW - Breakfast Club Tues & Thurs 9.15am - 10.30am. Family Food & Fun - free two course meal, games, crafts, for families with children under 16, Thursdays 3.30-5.15pm. Lunch club for over 65s in G82 & G83, Mon - Fri. 11.30am - 2pm. All FREE Ben View Resource Centre, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA

GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS - Tues 2 course dinner FREE from 5pm till end of February. 18 Nairn Place, Clydebank

CENTRE 81 - Cosy Afternoons Fri 12noon - 3pm. Free tea/coffee and soup. All welcome. No booking needed, just turn up!

To be included in our Issue 36 Clydesider Community Diary and What's On, email jenny@clydesider.org by May 14 2026

WHAT'S ON... from March

Mar 20 Neurodiversity Celebration Event Join Stepping Stones to mark Neurodiversity Celebration Week 11am - 2pm, Ben View Resource Centre, Main Hall, 50 Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA To RSVP please contact us on 0141 941 2929 or at admin@stepstones.org.uk

Mar 21 Sketch & Stroll and Tree ID in Auchnacraig Woods near Faifley, 10am - 12 noon. Free but ticketed book via WDC Creative Learning Eventbrite or email arts.development@west-dumbarton.gov.uk

Mar 21 Big Clyde Clean Up - Loch, Leven Into Clyde community litter-picking at various locations from Duck Bay, Dumbarton Cenotaph and Levensgrove Park. Starting 8.45am - 2pm. Join on the day or check the Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook page for details

Mar 25 Carers' Circles WD - lunch followed by a private chat at the Golden Jubilee Hotel. Lunch is provided at 12.30 followed by a private space to chat from 2pm - 4pm. Open to anyone who cares for a person with a learning disability in West Dunbartonshire. For more details email info@equalfutures.org.uk

Mar 31 Local author, Paul Underwood, in interview with Mary Irvine, talking about his book 'Ninety Tiny Windows'. 11am - 12 noon, Greentree Remedies, Church St, Alexandria

Mar 31 Big Clyde Clean Up - Bonhill Bridge. 10.30am - 2pm. Meet O'Brien's Newsagents or check the Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook page for details

CONTACT CLYDESIDER

EDITORIAL: Call Amanda on 0791302934 email amanda@clydesider.org

Clydesider TV: Call Kevin on 07471426303 email kevin@clydesider.org

ADVERTISING: Call Charlie on 07502460273 email Charlie@clydesider.org

COMPETITIONS: clydesidercomp@gmail.com

ADDRESS: 48a Erskine view, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

Website: www.clydesider.org

CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY DIARY

Creative, Heritage & Leisure

DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH Indoor Bowls every Thurs 10am - 2pm, Community Choir fortnightly Wed 1pm - 2.30pm & Arts & Crafts Drop-in every Thurs 6.30pm - 8pm

HEALTHY PATHWAYS - Free drop-in craft session every Tues, 11am - 1pm Community Links offices at 63 Kilbowie Road. All materials provided. Contact Lisa on 0141 952 4382

TULLICHEWAN CRAFT DROP-INS - FREE Family Craft Drop-In - every Sat 1pm - 3pm; children must be accompanied by adult. FREE Adult Craft Drop-In - every Sun 1pm - 3pm at Tullichevan Community Flat, 2/1 McGregor Walk, Alexandria. Enquiries to Jean Mackay 07927 433 615

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

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

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

FRIENDS OF LEVINGROVE PARK - Meet last Wednesday of the month at 6pm in the Training Suite in the Park.

DUMBARTON CINE & VIDEO DIGITAL CLUB - meet Tues 7pm - 9pm and every Wed 1pm - 3pm in Concord C.E Centre

LOMOND FOLK CLUB - free, friendly folk club every Mon 8pm, Loch Lomond Hotel, Balloch Road, Balloch. Join in or just sit and listen

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

CLYDEBANK DISTRICT CHOIR - Tues 7.30pm - 9pm. The Hub, 405 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank G812TX. Contact wilmamacnicol@btinternet.com

BIG HAPPY NOISE CHOIR - Try out FireCloud's community choir for fun, informal singing. Thurs 7.30pm - 8.30pm at St Eunan's Church Hall, 1 Gilmour St,

Clydebank. Free entry/ donations welcome.

FAMILY ART CLUBS for Dumbarton West Mondays at The Phoenix 3.30pm - 4.30pm P1-3, 4.45pm - 5.45pm P4-7, 6pm - 7.30pm S1-4 Sign up in advance necessary: <https://forms.gle/cmdQZ3kPjt4KEdz6>

YOUTH CREATIVE NIGHT A monthly session for S1-25 year olds to try their hands at something new and creative! Check Clifftop Project's Facebook & Instagram for info on the upcoming sessions.

Support & Well-being

QUIT YOUR WAY - Free 1-1 smoking cessation clinics at Clydebank Health Centre, Mon 9am - 12.30pm, Vale Health Centre, Wed 12.30pm - 4.30pm & Dumbarton Health Centre, Thurs 9am - 12noon plus Clydebank Library Support Group Tues 1.30pm - 2.30pm. Book appt on 0800 9168858; find out more www.nhs.uk/scot/your-health/quit-your-way, telephone consultations outside these times also available

DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH GROUPS - WD Boccia Group Tues 1pm - 3pm; Girls Brigade - Tues 6.30pm - 7.45pm; Savage Martial Arts with Jack Leckie Tues 5pm - 7pm; Bowls Thurs 10am - 2pm; AA - Tues 7.30pm - 8.30pm

BALLOCH WALK IN THE PARK - Wed 10.20am - 11.20am. A free, all ability health walk, led by trained volunteers Contact Fiona on 07843 842323 or email fiona@trustinthepark.org. Meet at 'The Square', opposite The Waterhouse Inn, Balloch

IMPROVING LIVES GROUPS - Art for Anxiety Tues 12.30pm - 2.30pm. Autism Support & Discussion group Mon 3pm - 5pm. Men's Talking Group Mon 12 - 1pm; ADHD Support Group Thurs 11am - 12.30pm. Adult Literacy Tues 10am - 12noon. Sensory Garden Tues 10.30am - 12.30pm. Wellbeing Walking group Mon 10am. Jewellery Group Fri 1pm - 3pm. Breakfast & Blether every day 9am-10am. Improving Lives Hub, 627 Dumbarton Road.

CENTRE 81 FITNESS CLASSES - varied classes age 16+ from £3 - check Facebook page or call 0141 5337070 for details

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE EPILEPSY SUPPORT GROUP - meet 1st Mon of the month 10am - 12noon, Clyde Shopping Centre, Clyde House 170 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank & 3rd Thurs

6.30pm - 7.30pm at Improving Lives, 627 Dumbarton Road, Dalmuir

BRAIN INJURY EXPERIENCE NETWORK - Community based support for Brain Injured people. Meetings and outings third Wednesday of the month. Contact John on 07999 441376 or visit BIEN FB: [facebook.com/BIENetwork](https://www.facebook.com/BIENetwork)

ROCKS IN THE STORM Family Bereavement group - Alternatives Office, 1/3 Quay Street, Dumbarton Mon 6.30pm - 8.30pm - support group for family members who have lost a loved one to addiction

POSITIVE FUTURES - 6 week anxiety management course starts Wed April 15 10.30am - 12.30pm call 0141 9412929 or email admin@stepstones.org.uk to reserve a space

MENTOR SCOTLAND GROUPS - Walk & Talk Thurs meet 10.30am Ben View, Dumbarton; Peer Support for Men & Women (16+) Fri Drop-in from 5.30pm with Structured Talking Groups at 7pm, Ben View, Dumbarton; Community Gathering & Cold Water Therapy Tues from 8pm Loch Lomond Rugby Club, Beechwood Drive, Bonhill

COMMUNITY CONNEXIONS - Alzheimer Scotland groups - Quiz/Bingo & a cuppa every Tues from 1pm - 3pm; Tea Blether on first Wed of the month from 12 - 1.30pm; Carers Café on last Thurs of the month from 2.30pm - 4pm; Friday Fun Day with a cuppa from 1pm - 3pm.

INTO NATURE - free wellbeing sessions for adults at Knowetop, (end of Castlehill Road) Dumbarton. Thurs 11am - 3pm. Volunteer Sessions Tues 1pm - 4pm & Thurs 10am - 1pm - help out with practical work on site, learn new skills, meet new people & get fitter. Boots and waterproofs available to borrow. Open to anyone, no minimum commitment. For more info contact Claire 07898 593 629 or knowetopproject@gmail.com

GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS - Mon, Thurs & Fri Karaoke 12 - 3pm & Wed Lunches 12.30 - 3.30pm (£5)

Employability & Advice

CARERS OF WD RISE PROJECT - advice, info and support to unpaid carers living in specific areas. Phoenix Centre, Castlehill - 2nd Tues of the month, 11.30am - 1.30pm; Mill Cabin, Haldane - first Thurs of the month, 11:30am - 12am; The Recycle Room, Drumry - 2nd Wed of each month, 11am

- 12.30pm. Contact Clare Sweeney on 0141 941 1550 or clare@carerswd.org

ADULT LITERACY - Wed 10am - 12noon in Alexandria Library; Online Learning 2pm - 4pm and Concord C.E Centre, Dumbarton 4.30pm - 6.30pm. Contact Sharon Campbell on cld@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or 07951 398980

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) - classes are available in both Clydebank and Dumbarton for more information contact Eric Makeham on cld@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or 07900052290

WDC THRIVE - supports 16 - 24 year olds from West Dunbartonshire take next steps after school; new groups start May. Contact Amy.cowie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk for details.

WDC COMMUNITY SURGERIES - Speak to WDC Communities Team about any matter concerning your community. They will be in WDC Libraries: Alexandria, Tues 10am - 12noon and Thurs 1pm - 3pm; Dumbarton, Thurs 1pm - 3pm; Clydebank, Wed 10 - 12 noon and Dalmuir, Thurs 10 - 12noon. Plus community venues:- Centre 81, 11am - 1.30pm first Wed of the month; Dalmuir Barclay Church, 11am - 2pm last Fri of the month; Fairlie White Church, 1pm - 2.30pm last Tues of the month; Hope Community Church, 12 - 1.30pm second Fri of the month; St Augustine's Church Hall 11 - 2pm Fri. yourcommunity@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Family & Young People

PHOENIX CENTRE - Baking Buddies Mon 10.30am - 12noon; Mini Youth Group (P1-3) Tues 3.15pm - 4.15pm. Youth Club (P4-7) every Thurs 5.45pm - 7.15pm 50p per child; Baby Massage on Wed 11am - 12noon. Phoenix Fun Toddler Group Thurs 10.30am - 12noon. Empower Youth group for S1+ Weds 4.30pm - 6pm free. Zumba Class 25+ Thurs 12.15pm £3. DND Tues 6pm - 7.30pm.

BEN VIEW YOUTH GROUPS - P1 - P3 Weds 3.30pm - 5.45pm; P4 - P6 Weds 6pm - 7.30pm; P7 & S1 Weds 7.45pm - 9.15pm at Ben View Resource Centre, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA, to reserve a space email youth@benviewcentre.org.uk or call 01389 733030

PHOENIX CENTRE - Baking Buddies Mon 10.30am - 12noon; Mini Youth Group (P1-3) Tues 3.15pm - 4.15pm. Youth Club (P4-7) every Thurs 5.45pm - 7.15pm 50p per child; Baby Massage on Wed 11am - 12noon. Phoenix Fun Toddler Group Thurs 10.30am - 12noon. Boys Group S1+ alternate Wed 4.30pm - 6pm. Girls' Group S1+ alternate Wed 4.30pm - 6pm. Zumba Class 25+ Thurs 10.30am - 12noon £3.

TULLOCHAN YOUTH ACTIVITIES - Mon: Employability 16-25yrs 1.30-4pm, Tues: Timber Transitions 14 - 25yrs 9am-12pm; Furniture Fix 14-25yrs 1pm-4pm, Weds: Personal Development 14 - 25yrs 1pm - 4pm & Wellbeing Wednesday 16 - 25yrs 5pm - 7pm, Thurs: Green Skills 14 - 25yrs. Plus varied certificated courses running throughout the year. Free meals/packed lunches provided + public travel expenses reimbursed. Contact info@tullochan.org 07931228462

PATCHWORK PONIES - Pat and chat sessions most Thurs 2.30pm - 4 pm and most Sat 11.30am - 1pm at Overtoun House; free for all to enjoy. For more information check out the Patchwork Ponies Facebook page

FROM FEAR TO LOVE WORKSHOPS - Trauma Informed Parenting and Creating A Trauma Informed Classroom Workshops for school staff. These are offered online each month, fully funded with CPD. Visit www.traumainformedparenting.uk/workshop-booking to find out more.

WHAT'S ON... from April

Apr 3 Walk of Hope starts at 11am. Join Hope Community Church as they mark the first anniversary of their community-based recovery programme with a walk from the church in Shelley Drive, Parkhall to Old Kilpatrick. Call 07745393649 or email info@hopecommunity-church.co.uk for details

Apr 4 Big Clyde Clean Up - Moss O'Balloch circuit. 10am - 2pm. Meet Chillies car park at council bin or check the Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook page for details

Apr 11 Alexandria Community Market 10am - 3pm, local crafts, food and drink plus the Patchwork Ponies

Apr 11 Big Clyde Clean Up - Drumkinnon Woods 10am - 2pm. Meet Sweeney's car park & Lidl and Shore level 1.30pm - 4pm meet Lidl car park by council bin or check the Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook page for details

Apr 13 Phoenix Jam 7.30pm - 9.30pm Whether you bring an instrument, your voice, or just come along to soak up the music, you'll find great tunes, good vibes, and plenty of community spirit. Free & no booking required. Phoenix Centre, Castlehill. Contact amy@rockcommunitychurch.org.uk

Apr 18 Big Clyde Clean Up - Balloch Country Park. 10am - 2pm meet Sweeneys car park or check the Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook page for details

Apr 18 Clydebank District Choir are holding their Spring Concert at 7.30pm in the Salvation Army Hall, 28 Sylvania Way, Clydebank. Tickets £10

Apr 20 Big Clyde Clean Up - Haldane Burn, Jamestown and Stuckie Bridge. 10am - 2pm. Meet Lennox Hall or check the Big Clyde Clean Up Facebook page for details

Apr 28 Kayleigh Hirst, Clydesider Heritage Lead, shares the story behind 'Our Stories - West Dunbartonshire Heritage Festival' 11am - 12 noon, Greentree Remedies, Church St, Alexandria

May 3 Loch Lomond TV Variety Performance, Denny Civic Theatre from 2pm. Tickets £15 for adults, £10 for u-16's. Visit their Facebook page for booking details

May 11 Phoenix Jam 7.30pm - 9.30pm Bring an instrument, your voice, or just come soak up the music. Free & no booking required. Phoenix Centre, Castlehill. Contact amy@rockcommunitychurch.org.uk

May 12 Remember When . . . Memories from Local People' 11am - 12 noon, Greentree Remedies, Church St, Alexandria

CLYDE & BAXTER

By Steven Hastings



This is 35 Shortbread Street today.
The doorbell's a teacake wrapper that talks.
Why a Tammy Bunnet roof anyway?
To see who lives here check out the next box.



It's Dave. What's he doing with those odd rings?
He has said he's doing some Spring cleaning.
Oh, he's dusting his collection of springs!
In a while I'm sure he'll have them gleaming.

Spring Watch WordSearch by Steven Hastings

All the words in this wordsearch start with a letter from the word Spring.

The words in the list can be found in the grid, going left, right, up, down and diagonally.

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

Gardening
Narcissus
Robins
Strawberries

Geraniums
Roses
Snowdrops
Sunshine

Insects
Petunias
Snails
Irises

Poppies
Newbornlambs

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Air Source Heat Pump ● Solar PV

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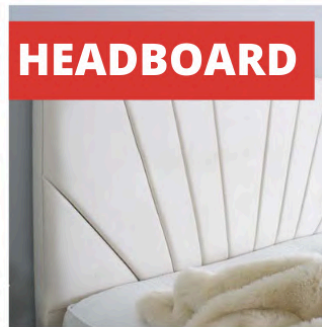
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