

FREE



# CLYDESIDER

Our Community's Positive Press Winter | 2025 Issue 34



## OUR REAL LOCAL HEROES

Inside... Above & Beyond | From Darkness to the Light  
Why Mentors Matter

## Clydesider Poetry Competition Winner

# A Gift from the Heart

A gift is more than what you see,  
It's love and thought wrapped tenderly.  
Not just the ribbon, box, or bow,  
But feelings warm we hope to show.

Each present holds a story true,  
Of memories made and moments new.  
A token small, yet full of grace,  
A smile that time cannot erase.

So take this gift, both near and far,  
A simple sign of who you are.  
May joy and peace be yours each day,  
With love that grows along the way.

By Khudeeja Begum

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## Welcome

I often wonder if other communities have as many inspirational individuals and organisations as we do here in West Dunbartonshire – or is it just that I have the pleasure of knowing so many of our local activists...

I recently had the privilege to attend the annual Cost of Living event organised by local MSP Marie McNair and get a catch up with some of these local heroes who work tirelessly providing support to others facing tough times.

This year as part of our In Peace & Revolution heritage project we have been learning about local activists of the past, we're compiling their stories in a range of media formats and will be sharing them during West Dunbartonshire's first Heritage Festival next May – find out how to get involved on page 6.

Many of those local community activists of our past have helped pave the way and inspired today's activists and this issue is packed with stories of those providing support while campaigning for change.

Sometimes it's people like Monique Wright who, through personal circumstances, unexpectedly find themselves leading these individual battles to make life better for their loved ones.

Other times the need to change comes from within as Jamie MacLean discovered three years ago when he set up Mentor Scotland and found his struggle touched a nerve with so many others in the area.

And then there are the many amazing organisations who feel part of the fabric of our community they have been with us for so long.

In this issue find out how WD Citizens Advice Bureau teamed up with young students at St Peter the Apostle to co-create a graphic storybook to challenge the stigma of poverty and inspire change and how the Carers of WD have compiled a powerful read to share the stories of the extra-ordinary folk caring for a loved one.

Enjoy - and have a peaceful and relaxing festive season.

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.



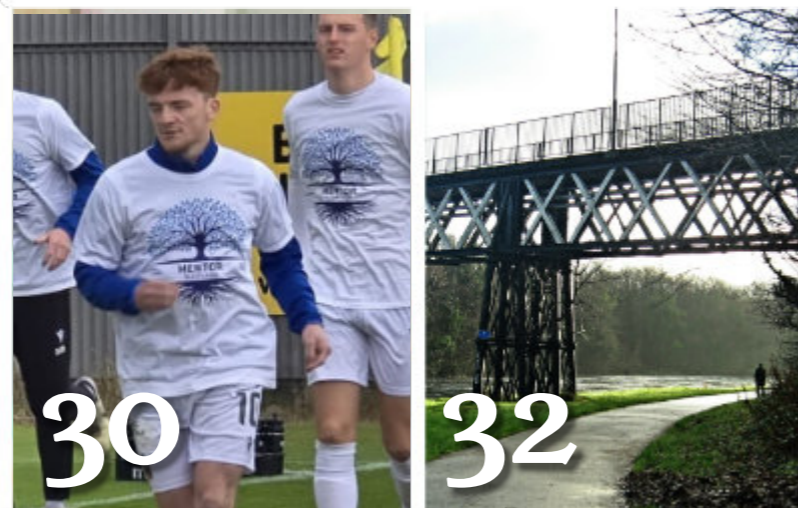
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## Sponsored Editorial New Year, New You?



Looking to try something new in 2026? Why not volunteer and make a difference not just to your life but to your local community...

Volunteers from local charity Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels (OKFP) are urging others to give it a go.

Helen McCoo from Dalmuir, started volunteering with the charity this summer. She explained why she got involved: "I moved back here in 2023 from Paisley and went to the old OKFP in Station Road.

"I fell and fractured my wrist and being stuck in the house was really getting me down.

"So, I decided that when I got better I would get out and do things that help my mental health. The food pantry helped me - so I wanted to help them.

"I'm so happy to have joined.

"If someone is thinking about it, I'd say go for it! It's a bit hard but give yourself that push to get out the door and volunteer - it's a great wee place!"

The OKFP charity was started by just two volunteers - Maureen and Gordon Cummings - who wanted to help the local community during the pandemic.

And with the support of local volunteers, it has gone from strength to strength.

Now volunteers help with the running of OKFP Napier Hall, the Wee Chatty Café as well as the Food Pantry.

Maureen said: "Since we started in 2020, we've had nearly 200 people volunteer their time with us.

"Our current team of over 40 volunteers range in age from 10 - 80.

"We're an inclusive charity there are no qualifications or experience required - you just need to be kind-hearted."

There are a variety of volunteer roles available with OKFP including admin support, social media, help in the food pantry, cleaning, driving to collect food donations, supporting arts and crafts activities as well as fundraising and board members.

Maureen added: "It's a well proven fact that volunteering not only helps the organisation but also helps your own well-being and mental health.

"We'll be looking for new volunteers to help with all aspects of our work in the Food Pantry, Napier Hall and Wee Chatty Café in 2026.

"So why not make your new year resolution to find a local charity and donate an hour or two of your time a week - you never know, it could change your life!"

**To find out about volunteering with OKFP pop into the Napier Hall hub between 11am - 3pm Monday to Friday for a chat.**



# Community News

## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

Local youth charity Y Sort It celebrated their 25th birthday this year and were treated to a Civic Reception in Clydebank Town Hall, courtesy of Provost Karen Conaghan.

The Provost also arranged a special flag-raising ceremony for the charity at the start of National Youth Work week in November as they recognised the incredible impact of youth workers, volunteers and young people to inspire, support and empower others and change lives.

## Reclaim the Night

A rally to Reclaim the Night will take place in Clydebank on Wednesday December 10. Organised by Clydebank Women Supporting Women and Y Sort It, the event which is only for women and children aims to shine a light of hope and solidarity on those affected by violence against women and girls in West Dunbartonshire. Meet at Y Sort It Hub at 5pm.

## Crafting for Scotland

Young makers and artists from Crafting Together CIC now have their products on sale in the Scottish Parliament.

Thanks to support from local MSP Marie McNair the Clydebank-based social enterprise, which works with young creatives with additional support needs, have a selection of their hand-made Scotland Map jewellery and artwork on sale in the Parliament shop, just in time for Christmas.

## Skylark Award

The team at local charity Skylark IX Recovery Trust were delighted to receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service this year. The award recognises the hard work and dedication of their volunteers, many of whom are in recovery.

Inspired by the Dunkirk little ship, Skylark IX, which saved lives in 1940 during Operation Dynamo, the award is a celebration of what is possible when recovery, heritage and community come together.



# Clydesider News

## WD 'Our Stories' Heritage Festival

Clydesider is delighted to be organising 'Our Stories' - West Dunbartonshire's very first area-wide Heritage Festival!

The Festival will take place in May 2026 and is a chance for people to explore and celebrate local heritage from Clydebank to the Vale and right out to Kilmarnock.

There'll be a range of activities and events taking place across the whole month and we'd really like to encourage as many groups and organisations as possible to take part.

Whether you have a heritage project you want to share, could organise a guided walk around your area, or want to host a reminiscence coffee

morning, all ideas are welcome and we'll support you all the way.

Working with our Heritage Network we have put together a detailed guide to get you started and will be adding all the planned events into a festival programme and website.

Our community media team and volunteers will also showcase the Festival in the magazine and on ClydesiderTV.

So if you have an idea and want to get involved or just find out more please email [kayleigh@clydesider.org](mailto:kayleigh@clydesider.org)

## Digital Changes

Regular readers of our e-newsletter may have noticed some changes of late, as a fresh new voice has joined our team.

Petra Kotkova is our new Community Media Support worker, she brings with her an expertise in all things digital and is using it to brighten up our online spaces and ensure our content reaches a wider audience.



We also have a new website which is in the final design processes and should be fully functioning by the end of the year. Visit [www.clydesider.org](http://www.clydesider.org) to check it out and please sign up to our newsletter for all the latest Clydesider community and heritage news.

## Nature Volunteers Wanted

Residents are being encouraged to connect with nature and improve their wellbeing as part of a new partnership between West Dunbartonshire Council and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). The Biodiversity Action Team programme will run volunteer sessions every Tuesday and Friday from 10.15am to 2.15pm across The Saltings, Auchnacraig Woodlands, and Faifley Knowes. Activities include tree planting, wildlife surveys, boardwalk repairs, and habitat restoration which are all designed to support biodiversity while helping participants stay active, learn new skills, and enjoy the outdoors.

To find out more contact Liz at [elizabeth.walshaw@tcv.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.walshaw@tcv.org.uk) or 07740 899733



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# Deep Dive into Swimming with Autism

By Annie Jordan



Sometimes there is a story which is greater than the story itself: one which grows arms and legs and eventually takes on a life of its own.

Clydesider sent me on one such assignment to meet Aaron Wright, a young autistic swimmer aged 25, and his mother Monique.

Monique would love to shine a spotlight on a story that perhaps hasn't been told: the story of countless other children with disabilities who have come before and will come after, some who are possibly in the same situation and need a voice.

I planned to interview Monique and Aaron about his many swimming medals, 96 or so! The many competitions and triumphs swimming at regional and national level in

venues up and down the country.

My prepared questions focused on his golds and silvers and how he felt about winning and swimming: "I think about it all the time," he says.

Initially, I was fixated on getting all the fine details correct: times and dates, competitions and venues, swimming strokes and racing times.

Suddenly, I realised my story didn't lie in facts and figures, nor chronological order.

Putting all these to the one side, which is difficult because Aaron has achieved awards that others could not even dream of (see footnote), I found my real story: a perfect tale of love between a mother

and her son - a devoted mother who recognised her son's passion for swimming at an early age.

"When Aaron was very little, he couldn't go past water whether it was a puddle or the Clyde but he'd try and get in..." laughs Monique. "It became a handful!"

A mother who has made it her lifelong mission to help her child unlock his exceptional talent and fulfil his potential, despite all the factors which conspired against it, not just his "barriers to learning" but the availability of facilities and coaching provision; a mother who selflessly swept aside her own grief after the loss of her husband 10 years ago to focus on Aaron and help him develop as a swimmer; a mother who has

somehow managed to get him to competitions they didn't even know existed.

It is Monique who sources them, they don't land in her lap; a mother who has left no stone unturned to get him all over Scotland to destinations as far-flung as Inverness, Dundee and Glenrothes.

And Monique wants to especially thank the parents of Aaron's swimming pals for helping with lifts.

Although Monique doesn't drive Aaron has trained in pools such as Tollcross pool, the Arlington Baths, the Meadow Centre, the Beardmore pool, many involving multiple buses and trains.

I imagine her trudging around in the winter on the dark, chilly nights on her own "with two vulnerable youngsters" -

Aaron and her grandson Jack.

When life intervened and she needed to care for elderly relatives, she took a taxi because of time constraints.

I get a sense she would walk on hot coals to get him there.

I learned about a mother's search for more advanced training and a swimming coach for a young swimmer with autism who wants to "keep swimming and competing."

Monique explains: "Mainstream swimmers in West Dunbartonshire get training every day, but for Dunbartonshire Disability, Aaron gets only one hour per week, which is not enough if you want to compete at a high level..."

When Monique didn't know quite what to do as Aaron

wanted to keep progressing, she Googled private tuition as her only option.

And she made many sacrifices to fund these sessions with the William Young Swim School because William said "yes" to Monique at a time when others had turned Aaron away.

He told Aaron he had "a nice stroke" and for the first year, Monique paid for tuition herself, the following year she applied for ILF funding, which only lasts one year.

Aaron dips in and out of tuition now in five-week blocks to work on a specific stroke. His favourite is butterfly, which he is trying to perfect, with William's help.

I witness this son's hunger to keep improving and be the very best he can be.

He has a determination to

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succeed despite everything as he seeks to progress in his swimming and loves to compete.

Aaron battled not only bereavement but illness, he speaks of "bad memories," "dark water," "big waves," and "an explosion of epilepsy."

The day he collapsed at the Playdrome and an ambulance took him away.

Monique explains he was badly affected by his dad's death: "It was a traumatic time for Aaron."

In a short space of time, he subsequently lost many other dear ones: grandparents, an auntie and family friends.

Monique credits Karen McGroarty at the Carer's Centre for helping her through.

Swimming was cathartic for Aaron, not only physically and mentally but also giving him a purpose.

Not only does he swim competitively he has also raised money for Diabetes UK, Alzheimer's, MND, Bone Cancer, and most recently the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

Aaron likes to help where he can, particularly for charities close to his heart but really anywhere he can make a difference.

"What a boy!" I reply, and I mean that.

But Aaron and Monique's story left me with more questions than answers...

Can a child with autism only learn to swim to a certain level or can he go further?

Do parents have to pay for private tuition to nurture

exceptional talent?

What is the world of sport like for parents whose child has a disability?

Aaron would like to try bowls or archery - is this possible in West Dunbartonshire?

How do we acknowledge and value the achievement of Aaron and others with disabilities to make sure these excellent young athletes don't slip through the net?

How do we foster the talents of tomorrow's swim champions and show them competing at an elite level is not an unattainable goal?

As Monique eloquently puts it: "These young people deserve to be seen, heard and valued."

As do the parents, I think to myself.

How can we improve things for the Moniques of this world: more specialised training, better communication, funding for getting to training (a taxi)?

Swimming has helped Aaron gain new skills, improve others, cope with illness and bereavement, understand nutrition and the benefits of healthy eating.

He would now like to learn lifesaving skills, but his academic difficulties mean he needs support and extended learning. Existing courses are intense and expensive.

Could a tailor-made course be developed for Aaron or is he excluded from learning vital lifesaving skills?

In a recent swimming event, Aaron was "derailed" by environmental details in the next pool - squeals of laughter and an alarm signalling the

start of the wave machine.

I found myself wondering... would this distraction even occur during a mainstream competition?

Cinemas, theatres and supermarkets do an 'autism-friendly hour' ... do swimming pools and sports arenas offer the same?

Could they?

Are there any private health clubs or hotels, private schools or universities, organisations or even individuals with a swimming pool/coach who could help?

Can any swimming professionals advise?

Too many people like Monique are encountering problem after problem when they just want to do their best by their children with disabilities.

We, as a community in West Dunbartonshire, should wrap around them and help them when and where we can.

Can you help?

#### Footnote:

In the National Games at Stirling in July Aaron won gold in 100m IM, gold 50m backstroke, silver in 50m butterfly, bronze in 100m freestyle and placed 4th in 50m breaststroke.

Monique highlights another up-and-coming young swimmer from West Dunbartonshire, Logan Munro.

Logan won gold in 50m backstroke, gold in 50m breaststroke, silver in 50m butterfly and bronze in 100m freestyle.



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Photo Courtesy of Carers of West Dunbartonshire

# Above and Beyond

Words by Jenny Watson

Carers of West Dunbartonshire have been supporting unpaid Carers for 18 years.

Now they are shining a spotlight on their stories.

On Friday 24 October in the new Clyde Venue on Alexander St, Clydebank, they celebrated the launch of their new book: 'Above and Beyond. The People Behind Unpaid Care.'

Compiled by Lynn Jolly, a volunteer with Carers of WD, the book shares 10 accounts of the diversity of life: the trials, the tribulations and most importantly, the joy.

"The book isn't just a collection of stories, but rather a tribute to the thousands of unpaid carers that live in West Dunbartonshire.

"They are the parents, partners, children, neighbours and friends who step in and give their time, energy and support not just without pay but often without recognition and very

often without adequate rest," Kim McNab, Strategy and Development Manager of Carers of WD shared with us.

The definition of an unpaid carer is: *someone of any age that looks after and supports a family member or friend who, due to their disability, illness, frailty or addiction, would not otherwise be able to live independently at home.*

Many of us would say 'isn't that just part of life, taking care of your loved ones?!'

And while yes, it is part of it, but it's not the whole.

For several it can be a challenging, exhausting, all consuming situation and you may still have to go to work, to earn a wage, to pay the bills on top of your caring commitments.

Along the way, it's quite easy to lose who you are and what you love.

When you no longer recognise yourself or your



life, you can begin to also lose purpose.

This book reminds us of the people they are, before the carer in them, and highlights the importance of holding on to that.

"My hope is that the book sparks conversation and reminds us that unpaid care is not just a personal act, or in some cases a private burden, it is a public contribution, and it deserves visibility, respect and our support," Kim continued.

Born from a conversation on a day out with the Carers Centre Box Office project, the book involved Lynn sitting down with 11 carers over several months, to interview them about their lives.

No easy task in a general capacity, but when you are talking to people about something so sensitive and personal, it is an endeavour that must be done with the utmost care, respect, and given all the time and space needed by the carer to feel comfortable enough to share this part of themselves.

Linda, one of the carers included in the book, shared with us what some of the process of creating the book was like.

"I thought I might have found it challenging but it was actually a very nice experience just sitting down talking.

"In West of Scotland culture we don't really talk about ourselves so it was nice to have that opportunity because I usually only talk about Tom."

She continued: "I enjoyed reading it. For days after it, I was walking around with a smile on my face.

"It opened up a lot of memories, memories I thought I had forgot about. It was a therapeutic experience."

Throughout the process Lynn felt everyone was impacted in a different way, herself included, given that she was working in an area outside of her professional background and on a basis of curiosity and fascination of

others, she wasn't entirely sure where it was going to take her.

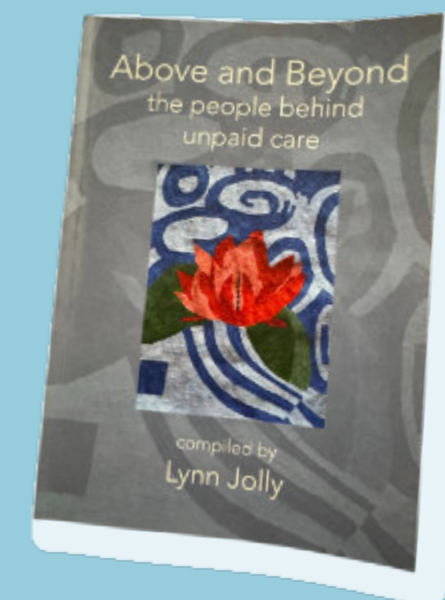
"For me it was nothing short of an absolute education.

"This is a group of interesting, talented people, who deserve to have their stories heard. It was my pleasure," Lynn explained.

The book doesn't only contain stories; it also includes photographs from carers that wished to share a little of themselves through the lens and the front cover was also designed and created by the Carers of WD craft group.

Given the opportunity, everyone should have a read of this book, whether a carer or not, as it reminds us of the

beauty and value of life with all its marvellous and sometimes devastating twists and turns.



To purchase a copy for £10, pop into the Carers Centre on 41 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank, G81 1BL.

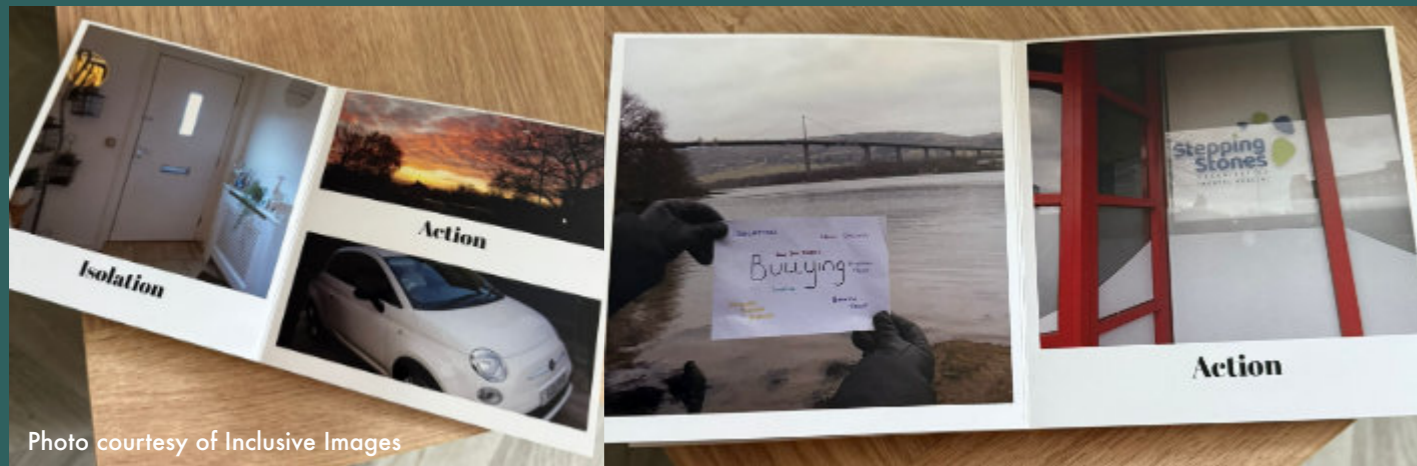


Photo courtesy of Inclusive Images

## From the Darkness to the Light: Reflections of Me

Words & Photos by Sarah Dillon

"I talk a lot, and I write things down as well, but I've enjoyed taking photographs, because that's like another dimension, because sometimes you just can't find the right words to explain how you're feeling. But if you just look at the photos it's all there. I think it's been a great thing."

"In the process of making the photobook; using my own photos, I thoroughly enjoyed it and it has made me fall in love with photography."

"It was a fun way to reflect on a painful journey."

THE ABOVE WORDS are all from members of two organisations based in Clydebank, who took part in the Reflections of Me project which was run by Inclusive Images from the autumn of 2024 through to the spring of 2025.

Alternatives is a community-based drug project helping local people to 'find their own path towards a fulfilling lifestyle.

And Stepping Stones is a local charity supporting people experiencing common

mental health problems.

Both service members and staff from Alternatives and Stepping Stones took part in the project.

The groups met in two separate venues but shared a common purpose: "We were actually each other's support structure in that wee class," said one member.

Another commented: "We've all probably had similar experiences on our addiction and on our recovery journey. And it kind of reinforces that to you, that you're not alone and you're not the only person that's been through that."

Guided and mentored by Charlie Eleftheriades-Sherry from Inclusive Images, the groups met, on average, once a fortnight.

This allowed time to take photographs, indoors and outdoors, one week; and to meet, discuss and show their photos on the alternate week.

The aim was for members to be able to talk about life challenges, lived experiences

and ongoing recovery.

Using the medium of photography, we would reflect on periods of addiction or of poor mental health, and on the ways in which we overcame these challenges.

It was good to talk.

People seeking help for addiction or poor mental health problems often face stigma, ignorance and misunderstanding. Traditionally these issues were hidden and became sources of shame.

Nowadays it is more acceptable to talk openly of our difficulties and to seek help.

We get that help from support organisations as a whole and also through meeting and sharing 'our own story'.

Talking about common lived experience as peers is invaluable, irreplaceable and life changing.

At the start of the project we drew up a list of difficulties we had faced – addiction, anxiety, depression, panic attacks, physical ill-health,

reactions to bereavement or loss - to name a few.

We took photographs of places, objects, and symbols which represented sadness and times of struggle in our lives.

Members who had attended the same organisation for differing reasons met and got to know each other.

Quickly, due to the nature of the subject matter, people shared stories of their individual experiences in a place of confidentiality and safety.

As we listened, we grew in trust and confidence.

Looking at and discussing each other's pictures was a source of both tears and laughter. It was a truly humbling experience to hear what other people had come through.

The depth of sharing and of emotions expressed, was way beyond what we had expected or thought it could be.

We then went on to take pictures representing times when we began to get help; to feel better and to do things that led to, and helped maintain, our recovery.



We took photographs of family, friends and beloved pets who had supported us. We photographed nature, the change in the seasons, our outdoor wellbeing

walks, the Forth and Clyde canal and the River Clyde – the canal and the river right on our doorstep. We are so lucky.

It was easier, and of course somewhat more pleasant to find and capture images which brought us happiness and joy.

When we had collated all our photos they were printed into full-colour booklets.

Every member of each group had their own individual booklet to illustrate their own recovery story.

None of us had ever before, been given the opportunity to create such a personal and creative photographic record.

We took our booklets away to delight in; to show to each other and to family, to friends and to support workers.

A few months later we all met again to give our feedback to Charlie; and to Amanda who was making up a project report.

Members shared their thoughts:

"It's good to look at when you're feeling down. Just pick up the photobook and it puts a smile on your face."

"What I like is that you've got the negative and then

the positive on the same page. The lightness is there on the same page. I think that's important."

"I think it's a good prompt for yourself when you go in to see a support worker, sometimes you go in and you don't know what you want to talk about... but now you've got your photos to show what you've been through..."



"For me as a group worker, born and bred in community work, I love the medium of how it was done."

And one member summed up the experience beautifully:

"I think when I first looked at mine from the start to the finish, I think with pride of how far I'd come."

We all had a great time and learned so much.

We express our gratitude and thanks to Charlie who facilitated the project. This was a new venture and we hope that our ideas and photos maybe of benefit to other people who are on a journey of recovery.

This reflection was written by Sarah Ann who has herself benefitted from the support of Stepping Stones through times of poor mental health; who then had the privilege of working for Stepping Stones and now continues to volunteer with the charity.

With gratitude and thanks.

## Sponsored Editorial

### Wellness, Wellbeing & Recovery Just a Stone's Throw Away

Stepping Stones Members and onlookers alike may have noticed how busy this year has been; with the number of referrals for mental health support increasing, some staff changes and lots of new opportunities to get involved – Stepping Stones are proud to announce they have supported over 1000 people with their mental health this year.

You can read the annual impact report online.

Following on from coproduction with members, the small but impactful team have been redesigning services, trialling new activities, and updating their training to ensure they are able to best support the people of our West Dunbartonshire community.

You may have seen them out and about - the fabulous Peers and Walk Leaders sporting the branded t-shirts, or perhaps Stepping Stones staff attending local events, Information Stalls, NHS events, school events, and delivering workplace training.

If your organisation would benefit from a mental health awareness or Stepping Stones services presentation then email your request to: [Admin@stepstones.org.uk](mailto:Admin@stepstones.org.uk)

You can follow what's happening at Stepping Stones by checking out their social media accounts on Facebook, X and LinkedIn.

And keep an eye on their website [www.stepstones.org.uk](http://www.stepstones.org.uk) as it is about to have a refresh and rebrand before the end of the year with a new layout, new colours and other changes all based on member feedback and the inclusion insights. You'll soon be able to self-refer directly online, assessments and waiting times will still apply.

The new Chief Officer, Bronwyn O'Riordan, is now seven months in post. She shared a few words about her experience to date: "Stepping Stones has been so welcoming, the Trustees, staff and members have helped to make it feel like a real community that I've joined.

"The work being delivered is simply exceptional, the team are amazing. I am proud to be part of it and I don't hesitate to recommend it.



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OUR MEMBERS, & YOUR  
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"I genuinely believe if you are looking for support or advice for mental health, groups, counselling, a volunteering opportunity or a way to get involved in your community then I cannot recommend it enough.

"We operate across West Dunbartonshire and have such a variety of options available, we're just a stone's throw away and we really can help make a difference."

Stepping Stones services are available to West Dunbartonshire residents aged 16yrs+. Services include: Person Centred Counselling, Peer Support Work, General Mental Health Support Work, Guided Self Help, Self-Management Classes, Social Groups, Men's Group, Women's Groups, Relaxation Groups, Bereavement and Loss Peer Support Group.

With the festive season upon us, don't feel isolated or alone.

If you are a member then remember to book your place at the Christmas Party. Family and friends of members are welcome to accompany them but tickets must be booked in advance.

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Are U passionate about your local community?

Would U like to make a difference?

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**MARIE MCNAIR MSP**

Member of the Scottish Parliament for  
Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency



The Scottish Parliament  
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## Witches of Dumbarton

By Laura Giannini  
Photos courtesy of  
RAWS

It is mid-October. I am surrounded by orange pumpkins, angry black cats and old ladies with green faces, long noses and huge conical hats. It will soon be Hallowe'en.

How many people, I wonder, looking at those stylised farcical displays give even a passing thought to the many thousands of unfortunates actually accused of being witches?

I am pleased to say that I met someone who does.

Louise Wilson, is Secretary of the Remembering the Accused Witches of Scotland (RAWS) charity.

This group of historians and social activists are documenting the 4000 people known to have been accused, tortured and killed as witches in Scotland alone.

Of these, there is a huge disparity with +80% women; one more example of the discrimination against women in our male dominated society.

The RAWs charity has already managed to obtain a formal State apology for the 'witches' from then First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon.

Louise, why is it important to honour a few women who lived centuries ago?

"Remembering those poor people, and particularly the women, accused of witchcraft is important because it is an example of the way one group with an agenda will manipulate another, coalescing them into a force, uniting them by the easiest, quickest way known to man - hate and fear of another.

"And it is important to realise it is still happening.

"Today with social media, it involves bigger groups, is more widespread, has quicker diffusion, but it still uses hate and fear.

"It really doesn't matter if it is one nation against another, one religion against another, blue against green ..."

And, of course, the repression of women.

Even now, this year, the rights of women have been eroded, history moving backwards. Despite supposed equality, women are abused and those who should protect them, don't, because the abusers are more important, powerful, respected or feared.

Louise continues: "Whichever way we look at it, women were and still are less powerful in society than men. That is their downfall. It was then and it is now.

"That is why it is important that we remember and acknowledge those women who were tortured, killed then literally swept away, out of life, out of the roles, out of history."

I have to agree that women

are very second, third or fourth rated citizens. I have written about this in this very magazine, but witches in Dumbarton? Surely not.

"Oh yes. No place was exempt. Imagine this, because this story is real, it's well documented in the account records I've searched.

"So, as an example, one woman, Jonet Boyd, was accused of witchery by a man, a notary, who states she pulled away, pulled him around and threw a stone at him - note that he does not say what he did to her to have her react that way.

"It could have been she repulsed his advances, or perhaps the milk she brought was soured, or a cow died, a sheep lost its lamb ... any mishap could be an excuse/ reason."

Louise explains what happens next. "So, first there is 'the examination' of the accused.

"Such examinations included being fitted with iron boots and stakes inserted into legs and feet, thumb or finger screws that would twist the fingers around, they would be made to walk and stay awake for three days and nights, during which time she would be asked repeatedly to confess to her misdeeds.

"Note, this was not seen as torture!

"If she survived the exams, she would then be stripped naked, shaved all over and brought before the judiciary.

"These 'worthy' men would have her examined again, perhaps by pricking her with pins.

"It was considered proof of protection by the devil if any part of her skin was not sensitive to pain - always

assuming she was conscious enough to still feel what would be relatively minor pain compared to the torture of the examinations she had already endured.

"Can you imagine her screaming, 'stop, please stop. Yes, yes, just stop?'"

Her confession obtained, she was brought to trial at which witnesses would testify they had seen her cavorting naked, holding discourse with animals, dancing with the devil, and, yes, even flying on her broom.

Poor Jonet was then dragged from the tollbooth, which would be where Poundland is now down the High Street, to the corner of Church Street to be executed.

In a 'merciful' execution the witch would be tied to the stake and the executioner would apply a garrote which he would twist, hopefully she was dead before the fire started.

"In Dumbarton she was strangled then burnt at the stake," Louise tells me.

"And imagine this, the way I was able to document 32 by name, is more from the records of payments.

"You see their goods, everything they had, would be sold and could be used to pay the 'executioner for his pains'.

"And in Jonet's case, the records indicate payment to a landlady of a tavern for food, drink and cigars for the judiciary panel to 'refresh them after their labours'." The charity that is sponsoring a memorial for these women, is called Remembering the Accused Witches of Scotland, the emphasis is on Remembering, why is that?

"The 'witches' were literally swept out of history. Even their ashes would be swept up, washed away. The only way to link women past and present is to remember them, a memorial would do that."

The RAWs charity wants to raise money for a memorial plaque, do you see this as a good use of funds in these cash-strapped days?

"Yes, anything that makes people stop and think about hate and the manipulation of one group against another has to be a good thing.

"It will be heritage grants and this is part of the history of the people of Dumbarton. Local art students will be invited to design the memorial and our panel - which has members from all over Scotland - will select the one they feel most appropriate."

A colleague, Caitlyn, proof-reading this showed me a tattoo 'they didn't burn witches, they burnt women'; that is worth remembering.



For more  
information visit:  
[www.RAWS.scot](http://www.RAWS.scot)

# Our Voices, Our Stories



Words by Annalese Brown, S2 pupil at St Peter the Apostle High School

Photos by Gemma Wilson

First year pupils, now in second year, have had a brilliant and exciting journey with West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau (WDCAB).

Working together we looked at how to challenge poverty stigma and created 'Our Voices, Our Stories' - our very own graphic storybook and animations.

The CEO of WDCAB, Joe McCormack, emphasised how great but also how scary the experience has been.

From asking how to start, not knowing how we would take it on and show interest in the subject, until now where we recently facilitated an awareness raising event in Clydebank Town Hall where attendees included multiple influencers from our community, including our local MP and Councillor.

Joe shared his initial concerns

to a few of the pupils who are ambassadors of this project saying: "I was quite nervous because I've never done anything like this before.



"It made me think about things differently. It's made me think about stepping back and just listening to other people's ideas."

The local Bureau started in the 1970s and Joe said they were inspired to start this

project by local people like Maureen Cummings and her husband who started Old Kilpatrick's food pantry.

One of the pupils asked Joe where he sees the project in the next five years.

He replied they will hopefully get it to all S1 year groups in the whole of West Dunbartonshire by then, but as of 2026 he would like to get this across the whole S1 year group in SPTA and hopefully go further as this project has been "incredible and a great learning experience."

But the impact of the project could reach much further than West Dunbartonshire as Joe has been approached by several CABs from Aberdeen to the Borders who want to find out more.

And the project has a four-page feature in the national CAB Network magazine with the storybook graphics on the front cover!

"We never believed we would get this far in 12 months," said Joe.

"I think that getting all the S1 and probably S2 pupils

talking about this, talking about how they can help, I think that's a good thing for the community, for local people, just to find local solutions themselves."

My peers in my class interviewed each other about the project and what they had learned.

One pupil said: "There is always a place to go if you need help and you never really know what is going on in other people's lives behind closed doors."

Another one added that they liked the project, the communication and that they got to speak out about poverty from a child's point of view, as well as saying they enjoyed the project.

I think all my peers agree.

This project has made a huge impact on how we see things now. We are more aware of what is going on in other people's lives, our community and even the world.

From the start, Joe and the Citizens Advice Bureau have been amazing. They didn't know how this would go or

how the class would respond.

The project has come so far from just sitting in a class - we even had Paul from Magic Torch Comics to help bring our comics to life and have an interactive day.



challenges people face in their day-to-day life.

I am very proud of how far this project came to life with the help of Joe, Robyn, Mr Allan and the other facilitators from Citizens Advice (James, Gary and Lonjezo).

I hope for it to grow even further in the next few years.

'Our Voices, Our Stories' was created as part of a pilot project led by West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau, the Glasgow Social Policy Project, Glasgow Caledonian University and St Peter the Apostle High School. Read and download the comic FREE by scanning the QR code.



Finally, from my experience, I thought it was a meaningful and heartfelt project as it teaches us not only the struggles others are going through but also the





## West Dunbartonshire

### Sponsored Editorial Don't Wait Until Winter

Millions of people across Scotland, including here in West Dunbartonshire, are worried about their energy bills, keeping their home warm, and the cost of living this winter. The financial pressures people face in the lead up to Christmas only add to the burden.

Staff at West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau have repeatedly expressed concern about the toll on local people trying to cope, firstly with Lockdown and then with the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

Last year West Dunbartonshire CAB helped 4,559 people with 33,486 issues and unlocked £1.56m in client financial gains. The majority of these enquiries were about benefits, debt and energy costs.

We always worry about how people will cope through the winter and in the last few months we've been running a 'Don't Wait Until Winter' campaign.

We're already giving advice to people who have self-disconnected from gas and electricity and feel unable to re-connect. In some cases, people have reported being unable to afford additional energy costs where medical equipment is used in the home.

Our Advisors know that people struggling with energy bills are likely to be struggling with other costs – some may even be borrowing and going into debt to pay for every-day essentials. This is why it is important that people have their benefits checked again and make sure they are getting all the financial help available.

Our advisers get life-changing results, in the words of one client:

**"CAB have helped me to be able to keep my heating on. I've been so scared to use it in case I'm unable to afford it, especially on a low income. The payment that the adviser got for me makes a huge difference to both my physical and mental wellbeing."**

People don't need to come to the CAB for support - we have online information pages and interactive self-help tools that allow people to see how they can boost their income or cut their costs.

Lots of people don't necessarily need one-to-one advice, just the right information about what support is out there and their rights.

The most important thing is to not put things off, and let money and debt worries build up until they are overwhelming. Debt happens, but the Citizens Advice Bureau can help you through it.

That's why we would encourage anyone worried about the cost of bills, whether energy or otherwise, to seek help from the CAB.

You can phone us on 0800 484 0136 or visit [www.wdcab.co.uk](http://www.wdcab.co.uk) and work with us to go through your options to find one that works for you. Our advice is free, impartial and confidential. We never charge anyone for advice.

We are here for everyone, whether they are working or not. We don't judge, we just help...and our advisers get real results.

### Sponsored Editorial



## Board Member Vacancies

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

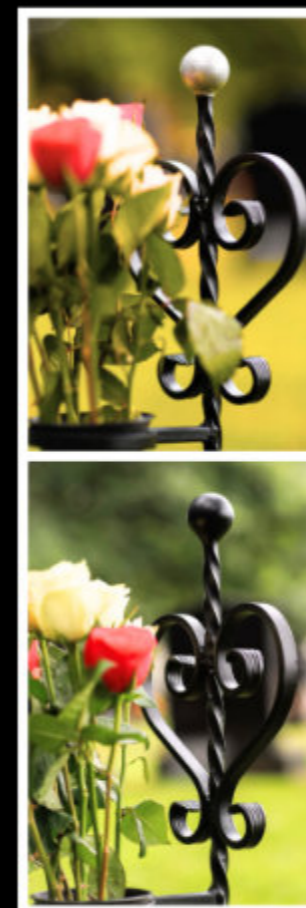
We currently have vacancies on our Board of Management, and we are looking for people who share our purpose, vision and values and who are passionate about the provision of good quality affordable housing to our customers.

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

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

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

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



# SMA

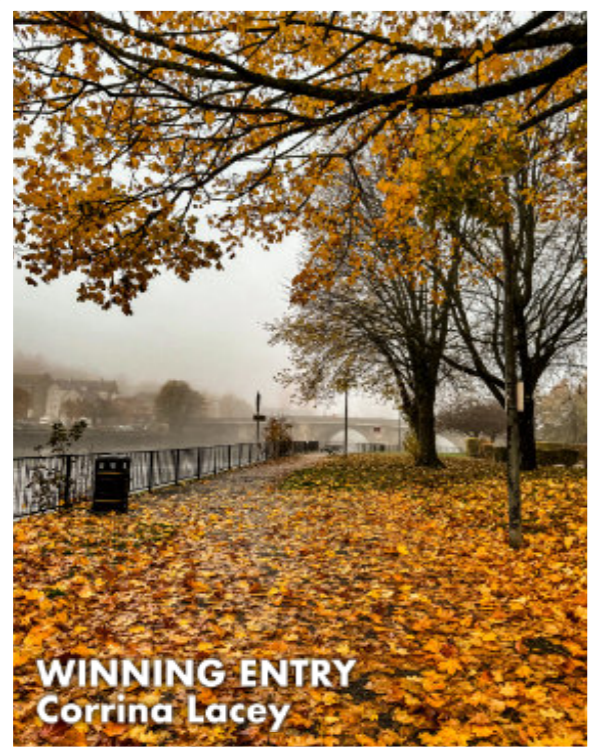
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**WINNING ENTRY**  
Corrina Lacey



**Pix by Pedro**



**Carolyn Hutchison**



**Jacqui Harley**



**Iain McLaren**



**Susan Smyth**

## Clydesider Photo Competition Trees & Leaves

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

Scan the QR code to the right to watch our volunteers Steven and Suhaila judging choosing a winner on Clydesider TV!

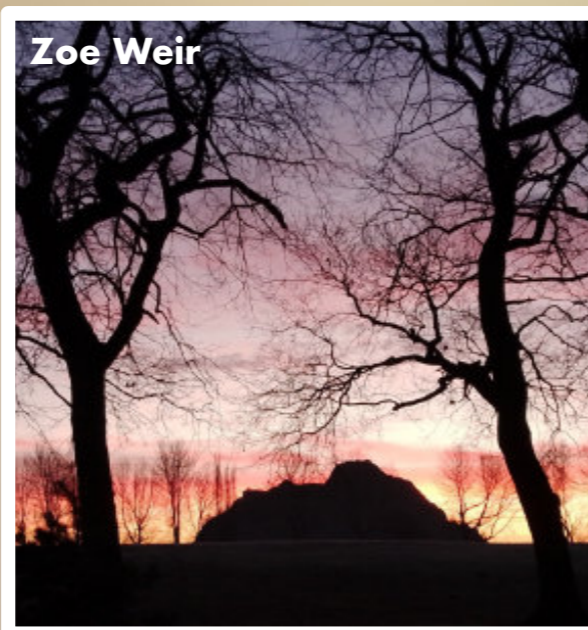
The next competition theme is 'The Clyde, The Leven and the Loch'. See pages 40/41 for some tips plus details on how to enter.



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## Sponsored Editorial

### Community Links Scotland



#### REGENERATION SERVICES

The overarching role of Community Links Scotland (CLS) is to work with individuals from fragile deprived communities, developing partnership projects to: support the transition into further employment; develop new skills and opportunities; create social connections; increase income; sustain homes. We do this through a combination of consultancy work across the west of Scotland and the delivery of three targeted programmes within Clydebank, West Dunbartonshire.

We have been based in Clydebank for 23 years and our local programmes engage with the most isolated and vulnerable households. Our programmes aim to support individuals and households to develop knowledge, skills and confidence, to build their social connections reducing isolation and loneliness and to take greater control of their household, their energy and their finances.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, our heritage project **Threads of Time...Stories of People, Place and Pride** is drawing to a close after two years delivery.

Through this project we have aimed to bring stories about local history and heritage narratives of Clydebank and the surrounding areas to life through creating a graphic novel, creating a series of film reels capturing memories, learning about individuals' lives and how they came to live in Clydebank and bringing all these groups together to design and create a new Clydebank fabric that celebrates the rich heritage of our community.

Working with young people from **Y Sort It** and Magic Torch Comics, a graphic novel was created, sharing a series of vibrant stories drawing on the heritage narrative of Clydebank and the surrounding areas.

The **Clydebank Asbestos Group** made a series of short narrative reels that provided personal accounts of the human cost of industrialisation and that celebrate community resilience.

Members of **Kilbowie St Andrew's Church** created a series of reels commemorating Clydebank's history, specially relating to The

Blitz. The **Women's Guild Group** was one of three craft groups involved in creating a heritage textile linked to Clydebank's Singer sewing machine and textile trade. This initiative aimed to celebrate industrial legacy through creative workshops led by artist **Chloe Patience**.

**Mindful Moments**, a local peer-support and social group were supported to research and develop their family trees and create a series of stories about their family lives and how they came to live in Clydebank.

We have an official launch of the project on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January** in the Community Gallery Space in Clydebank Town Hall and the exhibition of work will be available to view until the end of January 2026.



# For a Dear Friend

By Laura Giannini

It's that time of year: clocks back, darkness, Hallowe'en, the Remembrance of those passed. It is a time of mild melancholy.

It seemed like a good time to speak to Karen Burt and hear her ideas for helping us cope with the loss of our furry friends.

Karen is an embalmer to trade, with years of experience in the funeral industry and knows the grief, pain and bewilderment that death brings.

She understands that the need for a send-off is part of the closure that helps the bereft move forward; she also knows that funerals, of all kinds, come with a heavy burden of anxiety for the spiralling costs.

And as Karen has dealt with anxiety and depression herself, she knows how damaging to life they can be.

Help came to Karen through a series of fortuitous events.

The chain of know someone who knew someone at the right moment, brought Alfie,

her beloved dog, into her life.

She said: "Alfie was a wise old soul in a furry body. He and I bonded from the first, he got me.

"Like the very best kind of friend who knows when to talk and when to hug, he didn't need to be told he just knew what would be best at that time: a walk, a snuggle cuddle, or quiet time on the sofa with him... I think he saved my life.

"He brought the sun back."

So, it was a dreadful blow when Alfie fell ill last year and Karen was advised to let him go.

In the odd way that sometimes happens, having to face the cost of Alfie's cremation gave Karen a new purpose in life: she would try to raise money to help others in West Dunbartonshire facing the same difficulty – paying for a pet cremation.



This brought Karen's life parts together and resulted in My Only Sunshine, because that's what Alfie was to her.

We've been hearing a little about the loss of independent

veterinary practices and the overwhelming costs of veterinary care on the news recently. Sadly, this includes cremation and burial costs. Pet cremation starts about £100, rising to over £400 and more.

Karen added: "Of course, I understand the why of rising costs, but that doesn't help people facing an upfront payment at a time of pain and grief. I know how they feel, so I want to help.

"Right now, I make and sell colourful paracord collars to order.

"Crafting is a double benefit, it's good for mental health and, hopefully, for My Only Sunshine. I have lots of other ideas, too.

"In the past I've skydived, trekked the Sahara Desert, and abseiled from the Titan Crane for other charities. Now, I'm fundraising for my own cause.

"I think and hope there will be other people who feel this is a good thing to do, so I've been looking into fundraising possibilities such as a skydive, a psychic night, and a fire-walk event."

Karen is reaching out to anyone who'd be interested in joining her fundraising journey to help with pet cremations.

"Please contact me through the Facebook page My Only Sunshine. Alternatively, there's a GoFundMe page, if anyone wishes to make a small donation."



Visit Clydesider TV



## Clydesider TV Catch-up By Team Clydesider

Clydesider TV was launched earlier this year, a new digital project designed to bring community voices, stories and creativity from across West Dunbartonshire to your screens in a modern, engaging format.

From musicians and poets to green spaces and community champions, Clydesider TV is all about shining a light on the stories that make this community unique.

This idea stemmed from two key inspirations - the sweeping

success of our first serious foray into the world of video content, our *Take a Minute: Local Heritage* series, and the invaluable short films created by our amazing volunteers as part of our *Cost of Living* multi-media project, which showed a huge appetite for similar content.

This year we held filmmaking workshops for volunteers and the public and have been blown away by the ability and enthusiasm exhibited.

Building on this success, we're

now aiming to involve even more volunteers in every stage of the project - from story development and filming to editing and presenting. If you're interested in getting involved, email [jenny@clydesider.org](mailto:jenny@clydesider.org) for more details.

And to give you an insight into the guys behind the cameras our volunteers decided to throw a few questions at Clydesider TV's Kevin and Harvey, to see how the project is going.

**Billy: Where can we watch Clydesider TV?**

**Kevin:** Folks can access Clydesider TV on YouTube, and also see updates of what is going on with Clydesider TV on our Clydesider pages on Facebook and Instagram.

**Patricia: What's the best thing about working with Clydesider volunteers?**

**Harvey:** My favourite part of working with our volunteers is their enthusiasm and the chance to share what I know with them. It's incredibly rewarding to watch them put those skills into practice and create something they never thought they could. That's a fulfilling feeling.

**Steven: What has been one of your favourite experiences whilst making a video for Clydesider TV?**

**Kevin:** Filming Harvey's big breakout moment, 'Mushroom Spotting with Harvey', was definitely a highlight. We had a couple of quiet afternoons with decent weather and thought we'd try something different - no grand plan or big expectations. What I didn't realise was that Harvey is basically a walking mushroom encyclopedia plus a natural on camera. I spent half the time behind the lens trying not to laugh, and I think that genuine sense of fun really comes through in the finished videos. We just need to make sure Harvey doesn't turn into a diva now!

**Janet: What experiences or influences shaped you before joining the team, and what continues to motivate you at**

**Clydesider?**

**Harvey:** Before moving to the area I lived all over the place but never really felt like I belonged anywhere. Since moving to West Dunbartonshire four years ago and joining the Clydesider team I have met so many great people and learned so much about the history of this place that I feel as if I have lived here far longer! I think when you have lived somewhere your entire life you don't realise how special it is - I want to help change that by celebrating the stories, people and heritage that make this area unique.

**Mary: What's your most embarrassing moment while on a Clydesider assignment?**

**Kevin:** Well, that depends. If we're counting work-related embarrassment, it'd have to be the time I turned up for a Board meeting two weeks early. I sat there like a right numpty for nearly an hour, wondering why everyone was late. Turns out, after I had called a very confused Amanda, it was just me who was early - by a fortnight. To add insult to injury this was also my day off.

**Patricia: What would be a dream project for you?**

**Kevin:** Harvey and I have a few project ideas up our sleeve, but I shouldn't name any as we've not ran them past the boss first! We're always keen for volunteers to be as involved in the process of brainstorming video ideas as we are.

**Steven: Have you learned anything new since working on Clydesider TV?**

**Harvey:** I feel like every time I go out to film, I learn something new. Just recently, I was out shooting with our volunteer and resident tree-whisperer Johnny, who shared loads of fascinating knowledge with me. For example, I had no idea that horse chestnut trees aren't actually native to the UK! Moments like that make every filming day an opportunity to discover something unexpected.

**Billy: Do Harvey and Kevin have any good outtakes?**

**Harvey:** Watch our Mushroom Spotting bloopers video on YouTube this coming Christmas to see me acting like a complete fanny!



**Kayleigh: How can people get involved with Clydesider TV? ...And who has the best dress sense Kevin or Harvey?**

**Kevin:** We're always on the lookout for new ideas, stories, and brave souls willing to hold a camera on set. If you'd like to get involved, have a cracking video idea, or know someone with a story worth telling, send us a wee message to [tv@clydesider.org](mailto:tv@clydesider.org) - we'll take it from there.

Oh and for the sake of avoiding a fall out, it's Harvey. No-one rocks a pair of stonewash Wranglers like that man.



## Why Mentors Matter

By Layla Blackwell  
Photos Courtesy of Mentor Scotland

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with Jamie McLean, founder of Mentor Scotland and learning more about the services they offer.

The Men's Group started in November 2022 and has now expanded to include a Women's Group. They also offer a peer support group for all every Friday night 5.30-9.30pm in the Ben View Resource Centre in Dumbarton.

This includes their mental health talking groups that meet from 7pm - 9pm.

Both groups meet separately to ensure that sessions are safe and supportive and allow members to feel comfortable to share their

experiences. The groups are open to anyone over the age of 16.

When describing the services they offer, this is what Jamie had to say.



"Mentor Scotland, is a peer led service, mostly run by volunteers. We aren't professionals, we don't give advice. We just create a safe space for people to feel comfortable enough to share their experiences.

"The majority of our volunteers are trained in suicide prevention. So, if we feel that anybody's struggling, we've got the people there who can help keep them safe until we can signpost them to the appropriate services."

In the near future they are working with a counsellor to provide their volunteers with training and skill building to help them to better facilitate the groups.

If you fancy getting into nature, Mentor

Scotland has a Cold Water Therapy group which meets every Tuesday from 8pm at Loch Lomond Rugby Club. They also have a Walk & Talk group leaving from Ben View at 10.30am every Thursday.



I'm told they provide some waterproofs and hot chocolate for those willing to brave the winter weather.

With it coming into the festive season, I asked Jamie if there's a difference in the need for the services.

"On a Friday evening last December, we had 35-36 attendees. So, there was high attendance through Christmas and January.

"There's so much happening in the world right now.

"A lot of people struggle with Seasonal Affective Disorder and the cost of living crisis.

"You've got a lot of parents who are probably finding themselves in a bad financial situation. There's a lot of people that have experienced loss and grief. So, there's a lot that's maybe happening in life, and a lot moving for them."

Mentor Scotland, work hard to ensure they have a welcoming atmosphere but they also have the necessary qualifications to safeguard those members that require it.

Jamie explained: "Peter Prior, he's our chairperson. He's a Safe Talk trainer, so he's just learned to be able to deliver Safe Talk.

"He's trained to help somebody that might be struggling. To keep them safe.

"And I'm also a provisional ASIST Public Health Scotland suicide prevention trainer. I'm currently registered with Public Health Scotland, so I've come a long way in this journey."

Mentor Scotland have won several awards for their work including Community Group of the Year at the West Dunbartonshire Provost Awards and the Citizens of the Year award, presented by former Provost Douglas McAllister.

Jamie himself was awarded the inaugural VIVA Third Sector Volunteer Manager of the Year 2024 and has been nominated for SCVO Scottish Volunteer of the Year 2025.

When speaking about his experiences starting and developing Mentor Scotland's services, within West Dunbartonshire Jamie added: "I've got some great connections and amazing people throughout West Dunbartonshire that have been a great support to me.



"Sometimes you're just not sure because you're just learning and we're all in this trying to do the same thing."

Jamie and Mentor Scotland have some great plans for the future. This is what it says on their website:

'Mentor Scotland is growing! We're

committed to working alongside local community groups, charities, and services to ensure that everyone has access to the support they need.

By partnering with others, we're building a connected, community-led approach to mental health support that reaches far and wide.

As we grow, we're excited to extend our reach by offering groups and services during the day and expanding into new areas.'

Thanks to Jamie for sitting down for this interview and I wish him and Mentor Scotland all the best for the future.

**To find out more about Mentor Scotland visit <https://www.mentorscotland.org/> and follow them on Facebook.**

# FINDING OUR INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN THE VALE OF LEVEN



By Jeremy Watson

All those dates and names made history dry and boring for me at school, but over the decades I changed my mind.

I discovered **History is Like Completing a Puzzle or Solving a Mystery**. It is amazing what you can find once you follow the clues.

Signs of our once proud and vibrant industries within the Vale of Leven are all but gone, but they do exist.

For this article I am concentrating on just one small part of West Dunbartonshire – the area around the **Stuckie Bridges** across the Leven and the **Croftengea lade**.

The Vale of Leven was once an area of intense industrialisation concentrating on the manufacture, printing and treating (eg bleaching) of textiles. We can count 12 different works (13 if you count two that merged).

You will no doubt have heard of 'Turkey Red.'

That name conjures up images of turkeys, or at least the country of that name. Neither of these are accurate.

Turkey Red is a dyeing method widely used in the 18th and 19th centuries to give cotton a distinctive bright red colour.

It was made using the root of the madder plant, which came from the country of Turkey, but the laborious processes

were developed in India and China.

What we did was the sourcing of raw materials from elsewhere in the British Empire, processing the products and then exporting them around the globe.

But only some of the local works actually used this method.

'Turkey Red' though has stuck as an all encompassing term across the Vale, with United Turkey Red (UTR) under which much was to be combined, becoming synonymous with the industry generally.

Not only was this industrial innovation a commercial success, it also saw vast changes in society, class structure, education and personal rights; aspects that contributed to the quality of life we enjoy today.

Over time though, technical advancements such as the development of modern dyes and also market competition

from Manchester, Asia and elsewhere, eroded this monopoly until it completely disappeared from the local scene.

Well not entirely. Remnants can be found and these are important to our history.

If you look at that over-marked satellite image below you will see what was to become the most prominent of the textile works, **Croftengea**, now Lomond Distillery towards the bottom end.

This article focuses on the area within the dashed line where we can find other interrelated historical features.

The **Stuckie Bridge**, or more accurately, the pair of Stuckie Bridges stand prominently.

The name is old Scots for Starling, but referring to Stirling. That is not so much to do with the bird, but what it sounds like.

What is today a popular pedestrian and cycle route was a railway bridge until it closed in 1934.

The line was owned by the Forth and Clyde Junction Railway Company and ran on to Caldervan, Buchlyvie and Stirling.

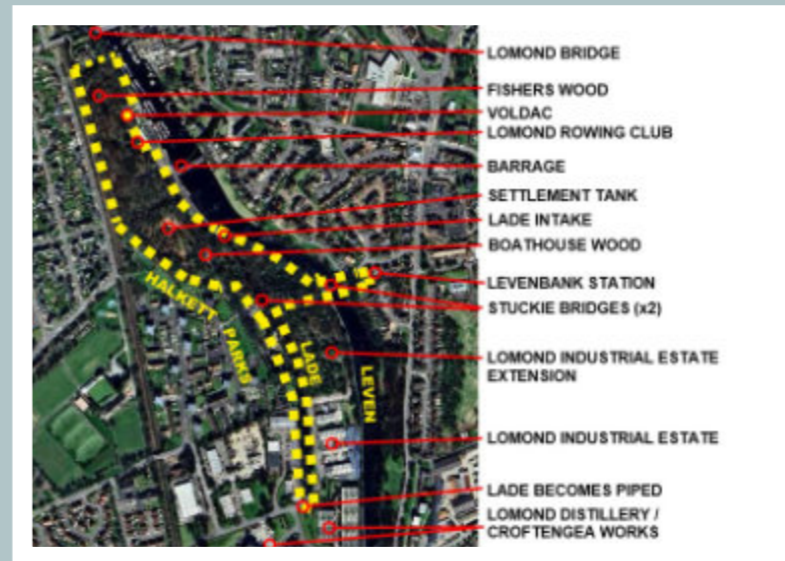
To the east side of the Leven there was a small platform that served the Levenbank Print Works. Although there is now housing there (Honeysuckle Lane), you can still see part of the retaining wall and fencing.

Another line ran up to Loch Lomond from Dumbarton, serving some of the textile

works on the way.

That was the Caledonia Junction Railway, the two merging alongside Fishers Wood.

At the junction of the two railways there was a small cottage called Rosehead. You can still see the spikes of its iron garden fence.



This lade leading fresh clean water into that Works remains much as it was in the heyday of what locals call 'the Craft.'

From this point it runs below the Stuckie Bridges where there is a flow control sluice, up to the boundary of Lomond Distillery.

This latter today takes up much of what was an extensive textile works complex and still utilises some of the original buildings.

The lade ducks underground within their fence and re-emerges downstream through a pair of vaulted tunnels.

While it no longer flows as it should, it remains picturesque

and a home to many water birds and other creatures. It also serves as a valuable sustainable drainage system catchment (SuDS) which should not be underestimated as we experience more severe weather events, such as flooding, as our climate changes.

It is hoped this article engenders some interest in and respect for these interrelated surviving historical industrial features within the Vale of Leven.

Further information and references are available on the **EXPLORE WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE website**.

**Explore West Dunbartonshire | TEXTILE WORKS LADES and RAILWAYS**

A second channel made of iron crosses the lade just where Heather Avenue reaches the Leven. The textile industries flourished with the ample clear waters from the Leven, but efforts were necessary to avoid contamination along the way.

We have lost all the textile industry related lades along the Leven – except this one. Mill Lade.

This one served what is arguably the most important of all the local textile works, that of **Croftengea Print Works** (which had merged with the Alexandria Works).



# LOCAL FOOTBALL THE EARLY YEARS - AN IMPORTANT CHOICE

By Brian Wright



For the world's first officially recognised association football international, played at Partick on 30th November 1872, a team formed from nine clubs representing the separate football associations of London, Nottinghamshire and Sheffield travelled north to face 11 players of Scotland's Queen's Park club.

Officially recognised, yes, but Scotland did not yet have any organising body to oversee its game. In truth neither did England, although the London FA regarded itself as pre-eminent.

The English, whose game relied on brute strength, weighed-in an estimated two stones (12.7 kg) heavier than the Scots. Yet, despite this, the encounter ended goalless. The technical ability and scientific approach of the Scots' was sufficient to cancel-out any benefit which may have lain with their opponents.

From within the crowd, many observers returned home to

local towns and villages entranced by the spectacle and determined to establish football clubs of their own.

However, Queen's Park was concerned by the potential effect of the world's forthcoming third rugby international also scheduled to be played in Partick at the West of Scotland Cricket Ground, only a little over three months later; on 3rd March 1873. Queen's Park's concern centred on groups juggling with a decision over which winter sport to adopt - football or rugby. So, the Hampden Park club grasped the nettle and took on the dual role of evangelist and missionary, encouraging clubs to its favoured association code and away from rugby.

Having already faced its neighbouring cricket club, Granville, in a short series of three football challenges, Queen's Park wrote to encourage other established cricket clubs in and around Glasgow towards football as a winter sport.

Very keen to make contact with Queen's Park was an existing multi-sports club formed of workers from textile factories in Alexandria. The Vale of Leven club already fielded teams at shinty and cricket and was actively considering winter sport options.

Three weeks after the 1872 St Andrew's Day football international in Partick, *The Vale* arrived to play at municipal Queen's Park Recreation Grounds in Crosshill, south of the Glasgow boundary.

It was the first of four instructional challenge matches over 10 weeks in which Queen's Park introduced the Alexandria boys to the basics of football; regularly stopping play to explain aspects of the rules.

Consequently, the resulting scores were generally irrelevant but interesting nonetheless.

A 3-0 home victory in

Crosshill was followed by successive 0-0 draws in Alexandria and back at Crosshill, before Queen's Park won 1-0 in Alexandria on 1 March 1873.

The Vale players were quick learners. The Vale public turned out in numbers. Both were hooked on football as their winter sport.

Dumbarton FC was formed on 23rd December 1872, a few locals having travelled to witness the Vale of Leven's initial match with Queen's Park.

March 1873 proved to be a defining month in Scottish sport circles.

Following the rugby international on 3rd March, Scotland's rugby-playing clubs formed their national

Union to oversee the sport's development.

Ten days later, a Scottish Football Association was finally formed upon the Queen's Park players arriving home from London and the first return football international against England. Of the SFA's initial eight clubs, six were already playing cricket.

A further eight clubs joined the SFA before the first playing of the Scottish Cup beginning in October 1873. Six of those were also cricket-playing clubs.

So, the first Scottish FA Cup draw consisted of the newly encouraged association football sections of 12 cricket-playing clubs, plus Queen's Park and three other of Glasgow's earliest footballing

teams; Callander FC, Rovers FC, and the Alexandra Athletic Club.

The 16 clubs included Dumbarton, Renton and Vale of Leven.

Whilst Renton was also a multi-sports club formed from the village's textile works, Dumbarton's origins are held in some doubt.

At least one Scottish cricket historian considers it founded by cricket players. However, no evidence exists that it played cricket thereafter. In fact, it is known to have played against a Dumbarton Cricket & Football Club.

Perhaps the football club we know today had been formed by a break-away group of cricketers.





# Meet Our Volunteers: Mary!



By Team Clydesider

Mary is one of our more life experienced volunteers...she just celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday! She loves nothing more than to cause a little mischief from time to time, keeping us on our toes.

Quite a few of our projects and campaigns have either been an idea of Mary's or inspired by her and we are forever grateful for her involvement and acerbic wit!

**Steven: When did you first get involved with Clydesider?**

**Mary:** I was thinking about this one and I have no clue. I know Amanda ran a course in Dalmuir in the Golden Friendship Club and I went along, the main reason was journalism, it was something that I'd never touched upon. So, it was new. But I can't remember when. The first issue I was in, I imagine it

probably wouldn't have been too long after because I thought this was worthwhile and I wanted to support something local. And I thought well, she was trying to do something good. And if it works, it'll work, if it doesn't, it won't. And it's grown a lot of legs like the centipede. You must all be very tired from having all these legs.

**Amanda: Why have you stayed involved?**

**Mary:** I still think it's worthwhile and as my mother would say, 'it keeps me off the street and out the pub.' Which I never understood until I was much older. No, you know I love writing reviews and I like supporting local authors very much. Most of the books I do for the Clydesider are local. And it also gives me a chance to put local books on a Glasgow website. [A friend of Mary's runs Pat's Guide to the West End so she shares a lot of her reviews with her]. And I meet some really interesting people, of course. People that perhaps I would never have met.

**Harvey: What do you do at Clydesider?**

**Mary:** Not a lot lately. I mostly write reviews but I'll do anything that Amanda asks, you know, if I can help out. I believe she's got a folder named 'Mary's Folder' I think. And she admitted to occasionally dipping into it, and that's great because writers write so much that is never seen or heard. You might write it for a particular occasion and then it dies the death. I'm quite happy to write and share whatever with Clydesider.

**Sarah: What do you enjoy the most about Clydesider?**

**Mary:** I think it gives a voice to the people who wouldn't normally have one. And the people on the team are very good at supporting people. Especially often people who would not have a voice. It's fully inclusive. I know the buzzwords.

**Patricia: What is your favourite thing that you have done for the Clydesider?**

**Mary:** I think making people aware of the talent that is local, you know the writing. That you don't need to bring in people from Glasgow to talk and give lessons and workshops. That talent in writing both poetry and prose is actually here locally in West Dunbartonshire. And I think it's a bit unfair they are not given enough credence. The Clydesider, with the reviews, it allows them to spread their word, their work. I'm happy to do

it because I think it's beneficial for them.

**Billy: Do you have any funny stories about Clydesider?**

**Mary:** None that I can repeat (**Jenny:** that's what we said you would say). Oh there was a time I wrote something under a nom de plume, which was actually my father's name, George Edward, but I called it Georgia. And I decided

to write a review of a novel. And I thought well, Amanda will know very well it's me because she knew the pseudonym. But it was fun to do it knowing that it would be accepted as fun and not seriously, you know.

**John: Do you have a favourite article in the magazine outwith your own work?**

**Mary:** I don't think there's one particular one because there are so many groups that I read about that I didn't know existed. I think that's one of the great things about the Clydesider, it gives a voice to groups that you never knew existed. And it's the way they're presented. It's very personal, but you know, it's factual. What they do and how they do it. The term unsung heroes, comes to mind.

**Jenny: Do you have any advice for people thinking about volunteering?**

**Mary:** I think possibly people think well I've got

nothing to offer. And everyone has something. Even if it's you know, telling stories that grandma told you. And I think people underestimate their own abilities. Give it a try.

**Traditional last question: Do you have a favourite biscuit?**

**Mary:** Well, I don't eat biscuits. That's a lie, actually I just told a lie because in my cupboard is a packet of fig rolls. I wouldn't say they are my favourite, but it's the only one I eat now. Unless I go to a Clydesider meeting in which case I break the rule and eat a chocolate biscuit!

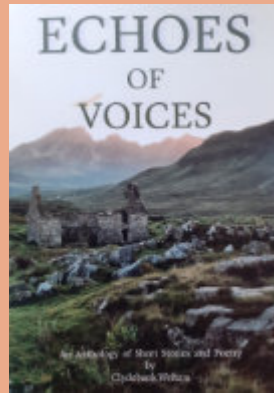
"People think well I've got nothing to offer. And everyone has something. Even if it's telling stories that your grandma told you. People underestimate their own abilities. Give it a try".

## Echoes of Voices - An Anthology of Short Stories and Poetry by Clydebank Writers

Review by Mary Irvine

This is the third anthology published by Clydebank Writers who present us with a variety of subjects in diverse styles.

We have both poetry and prose - the informative, historical, opinion, observation, the serious, the amusing, the thought-provoking and the very personal.



This anthology, as with their earlier ones, displays the great range of talent in the group with their contributions being arranged by author name.

I wouldn't normally single out anyone in particular in

an anthology comprising several people, but I kept returning to two poems, both by the same poet, which stood out for me, not only in the author's contribution but in the entire book.

They were 'Let it Be Me' and 'Sometimes' by Dora Wright. These two poems, each different in form, were moving and poignant.

I also enjoyed the gentle humour, satirical, maybe cynicism, of Frank McNulty.

I did find the front cover art work somewhat dark. A brighter, cheerier cover tends to draw people to a book. A recent survey suggested that some 40% of people are first attracted to a book by the cover.

There is a breadth and wealth of talent showcased in this book with something for everyone.

Buy it. Dip into it - open it at random. Repeat!! Just enjoy it.

**Echoes of Voices is available to purchase from the Clydebank Writers' Group website - [www.clydebankwriters.com](http://www.clydebankwriters.com)**

## Havoc Shore by Maureen Cullen

Review by Mary Irvine

Despite a widely held belief that short stories are easier to write than a full-length novel this belief is erroneous. Writing a short story is a skill not all authors achieve.

However, Maureen Cullen is an author who possesses that gift for short-story writing as she proves in Havoc Shore.

Collections of short stories are usually stand-alone tales. This collection is different insofar as they are connected, spanning the years from the early fifties up to the present time.

Although not always presented in chronological order, the author's control of the timescale, as well as each title stating clearly the year it is set, clarifies what might be termed flashbacks.

These 21 stories are interwoven, following families or their members but the clarity of writing eliminates confusion.

It's almost 'a moment in time' book. Life is full of such moments which often make a greater impression on us than we may realise at the time.



In 'The Heron' a story unfolds illustrating such. It works well. Not everyone can do this.

Ordinary people living their lives and the challenges they face day to day.

At first read one might be forgiven for thinking where are the heroes so expected these days. The

heroes are there. They are the ordinary people trying to live their lives as best they can.

The McLean siblings each carry their own version of a life-altering event, revealing the fractures and fierce loyalties within a working-class family.

We read how they deal with everyday adversity and poverty, just surviving but it is not all doom and gloom. There is humour and joyfulness.

As in 'The Heron', possibly my favourite story, these are well drawn, highly believable characters. One suspects the majority from life. It matters not. They are alive!

Although the town in this book may be fictional the author has woven her stories into the background of places such as Wallace's cave and Overtoun Bridge, which many will instantly recognise.

Havoc Shore is written in both standard English and the local vernacular. This divide of narration and speech works very well. There is always something to which the reader can relate - 'rivalries' /division of class /religion/ race, almost mentioned in passing but enough to suggest a greater background therein.

## For the Love of Writing

After exhausting all available courses and local authority funding, a group of local writers who attended Creative Writing classes in Alexandria Library decided to become an independent group.

And the Castle Valley Writers Group was born.

The group successfully applied to the National Lottery for funding to employ a tutor who helps and advises on their work.

They have met weekly over two terms and hope to publish their first anthology in the coming months.

Their tutor Dr Michael Rodgers, is also an English lecturer at West College Scotland.

They are a diverse group of individuals whose common ground is a love of writing.

One member explained: "We have come together with different experiences, different backgrounds and different capabilities and strengths. However, we gel as a group and as well as giving each other feedback on work we do, we offer friendship and support to one another.

"Many of us in the group have either mental or physical health challenges and all of us have found great benefit in having a support network of like-minded individuals.

These stories can be read as 'stand alones' but I would advise the reader to take them as the author has written them.

However you read them I am sure you will enjoy such a highly talented author whether or not you are local.

A list of awards and accreditation prove the previous statement about this author's skill as a short story writer but see, or rather read, for yourself. I am sure you will agree.

**Havoc Shore is available from:  
Amazon - Paperback £9.63 + P/P,  
Kindle Edition £5.99  
Ringwood Publishing, Glasgow £9.99 + P/P**

"We are currently 14 but looking at expanding so others can enjoy these same benefits.

"The only qualification is a love of writing - although there is absolutely no obligation to produce writing on a regular basis."

Some group members shared their thoughts on why the sessions are important to them: "Through my writing I have been able to tackle traumatic life experiences. It continues to be a powerful cathartic journey."



"The group understands my disabilities and capabilities. I feel included, allowing me to be me."

"Having been in movies, TV, and theatre productions, I've always enjoyed immersive cultural experiences. Also, with my daughter, I've discovered a passion for writing from my imagination.

From short stories, flash fiction, poetry, and even kids' stories, I'm able to continue my written journey with the group today."

"I had written a few poems before but no prose since I was at school. It is good being part of a group of similar minded people. We are all from slightly different walks of life and have become good friends through our writing. Some members have known each other for many years and have welcomed me and other newbies with open arms. I hope our wee group continues to keep going for many years."

**To find out more, please contact Castle Valley Writers Group - Email [castlevalley.writersgroup@gmail.com](mailto:castlevalley.writersgroup@gmail.com)**

# Photo Tips: The Clyde, The Leven and The Loch

By Harvey Smart

The theme of this Issue's photo competition is 'The Clyde, the Leven & the Loch.' We're lucky enough to have these fantastic bodies of water right on our doorstep, so let's show them to the world in the best light possible! Here are some tips to get the most out of your shots...

**Work with the light** - As always, consider the time of day you're shooting at. Golden hour (sunrise or sunset) is generally the best period for soft warm light, while blue hour (dusk or dawn) can provide calm, cold hues and mist or fog - very atmospheric.

**Play with reflections** - Still water can provide great opportunities for interesting shots. Look for symmetry and mirroring of subjects along the water's edge or in the sky. This will work best in calm conditions such as early mornings or on very still days.

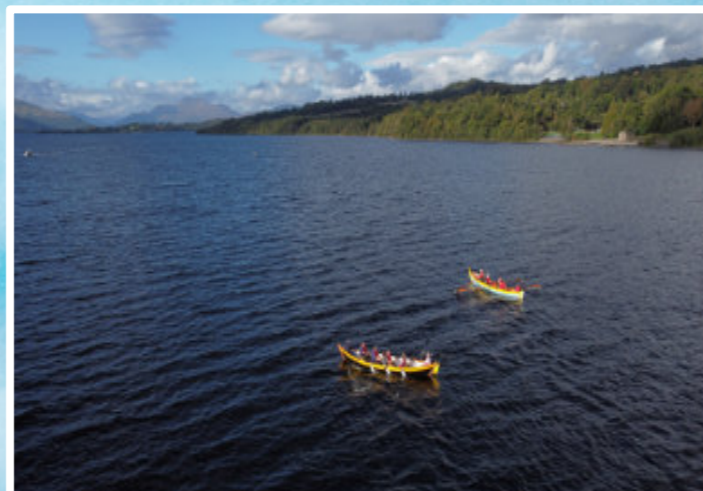
**Composition** - Think carefully about your foreground and background. Use elements like rocks, driftwood, or plants to add depth or consider including a person, boat, or wildlife to give a sense of scale and distance. Use the rule of thirds and leading lines such as in bridges or river banks to draw the viewer in.

**Capture moods & moments** - Use a fast shutter speed to catch water droplets rippling on the water's surface, or a slow shutter to blur fast moving water or waves. Capture mist or rain descending to create a peaceful yet sombre atmosphere. Shoot through clear water to shine a light on what lurks beneath.

Most importantly, stay safe and watch your step!

In Scotland at this time of year our local bodies of water can be freezing - don't get distracted by getting the perfect shot and get soaked.

And as always, happy shooting!



## CLYDESIDER MEMBERSHIP

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

### Supporting Membership

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

**£3**  
per month  
or £30 a year

### Friendship Membership

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

**£5**  
per month  
or £50 a year

### Community Membership

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

**£9**  
per month  
or £90 a year

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

Name: .....

Address: .....

Email address: .....

Supporting: £3pm or £30pa

Friendship: £5pm or £50pa

Community: £9pm or £90pa

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



## CLYDESIDER POETRY COMPETITION

Theme: Space

Prize: £25

Closing Date: Feb 13

Email entries to:  
[clydesidercomp@gmail.com](mailto:clydesidercomp@gmail.com)

## CLYDESIDER PHOTO COMPETITION

Theme: The Clyde, The Leven & The Loch

Prize: £25

Closing Date: Feb 13

Email entries to:  
[clydesidercomp@gmail.com](mailto:clydesidercomp@gmail.com)



## 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

**DUMBARTON AREA COUNCIL ON ALCOHOL (DACA)** - Community-based alcohol support service 01389 731456 or 0141 952 0881

**STEPPING STONES** - Community mental health support services, 0141 9412929 or email [referral@stepstones.org.uk](mailto:referral@stepstones.org.uk)

**ALTERNATIVES** - Community-based recovery support for individuals and families affected by substance use, 01389 734500 or 0141 951 2420 or [info@alternativeswd.org](mailto: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 562 2311

**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](mailto:admin@mentorscotland.org) or 07470 461685 [www.mentorscotland.org](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:clydebankcc@carerswd.org)

**Y-SORT IT** - information, support, advice and activities for 8 - 18 year olds 0141 9413308 [info@ysortit.com](mailto:info@ysortit.com)

**WD ENERGY ADVICE SERVICE** - Community Links contact 0141 952 4382 or [energy@comlinks.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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 Mon - 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** - Tues, Pantry 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 & Thurs 8am - 10.30am & 12 - 1.30pm Weds 9.30am - 10.30am. Phoenix Centre, Castlehill, Dumbarton. All donation based.

**SOUP SPOT** - Tues 12noon - 1.30pm, Lennox Evangelical Church, Risk Street, Dumbarton returning 3rd February

**WESTBRIDGEND CLOTHING BANK** - Free recycled clothes, open Mon & Tues 11am - 3pm in Community Flat, 1 Lomond Court, Dumbarton [elaine\\_41@hotmail.com](mailto:elaine_41@hotmail.com)

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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 9.15am - 10.30am. Family Food & Fun - free two course meal, games, crafts, for families with children under 16, Thursdays 3.30-5pm. 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 35 Clydesider Community Diary and What's On, email [jenny@clydesider.org](mailto:jenny@clydesider.org) by Feb 13 2026**

## WHAT'S ON... from December

**Dec 9** NHS Golden Jubilee Christmas Fair 11am - 3pm. Enjoy some festive shopping with local crafters, makers and small businesses

**Dec 10** Reclaim the Night rally organised by Clydebank Women Supporting Women. This is a Women & Children only event, meet at Y Sort It Hub, Kilbowie Road at 5pm

**Dec 12** Clydebank Ladies Choir Christmas Concert 7.30pm. Dalmeir Barclay Church. Tickets available at the door

**Dec 13** Balloch Castle Country Park Christmas Tree event. A range of Norway Spruce trees from tabletop to +8ft available for a donation from 1pm - 3pm. Part of non-native conifer thinning in the park.

**Dec 14** Fire Cloud Nativity. St Margaret's Church, Clydebank. Doors Open 6.30pm

**Dec 14** Kid's Christmas Party @ Dumbarton F.C 1pm - 4pm. Tickets £15 includes a visit and present from Santa, buffet, games and DJ. First adult goes free, 2nd adult £3. Book tickets online

**Until Dec 16** Community Art Exhibition in aid of Mary's Meals in the Community Gallery in Clydebank Town Hall. Great opportunity to pick up an original piece of art for a good cause

**Dec 23** Christmas Bike Ride with the Vale of Leven Trust. Meet at the Hub 9 Mitchell Way, Alexandria 12 noon, book in advance on Vale Trust website or call 01389 752629 as limited bikes available.

## CONTACT CLYDESIDER

**EDITORIAL:** Call Amanda on 0791302934 email [amanda@clydesider.org](mailto:amanda@clydesider.org)

**Clydesider TV:** Call Kevin on 07471426303 email [kevin@clydesider.org](mailto:kevin@clydesider.org)

**ADVERTISING:** Call Charlie on 07502460273 email [Charlie@clydesider.org](mailto:Charlie@clydesider.org)

**COMPETITIONS:** [clydesidercomp@gmail.com](mailto:clydesidercomp@gmail.com)

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

**Website:** [www.clydesider.org](http://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 Tullichewan 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

**DALREOCH CHURCH** - Carpet Bowls Tues 7pm - 9pm everyone welcome; Wed is Ladies Day 2pm - 4pm for arts and crafts, chat and board games

**FRIENDS OF LEVEN RIVER VALLEY** - Meet second Saturday and last Tuesday of every month (weather permitting), litterpicking and occasionally other activities e.g. clearing Himalayan balsam. Taking a short break over Christmas/ New Year, returning in January. Check Facebook page or email [levenlitterpickers@outlook.com](mailto:levenlitterpickers@outlook.com) for details

**FRIENDS OF LEVINGROVE PARK** - Meet last Wednesday of the month at 6pm in the Training Suite in the Park. Taking a short break over Christmas/ New Year, returning in January.

**DUMBARTON CINE & VIDEO DIGITAL CLUB** - meet Tues 7pm - 9pm and every Wed 12 - 3pm in Concord C.E Centre

**LOMOND FOLK CLUB** - free, friendly folk club every Mon 8.30pm, Mavi Kitchen & Bar, 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](mailto: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.

**PHOENIX CENTRE** - Phoenix Jam sessions - musicians can come & have a jam - everyone welcome, 7.30pm - 9pm - every 2nd Mon

**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/ctmdQZ3kPJt4KEdz6>

**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 smoking cessation clinics at Clydebank Health Centre, Mon 9am - 12.30pm, Vale Health Centre, Wed 11am - 3pm & Dumbarton Health Centre, Thurs 9am - 12noon. Book appt on 0800 9168858; find out more [www.nhs.uk/scot/your-health/quit-your-way](http://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

**PHOENIX CENTRE** - Mood Boosting Mondays 1pm - 2pm - women's group focused on self care, free, no booking required; Cocaine Anon Fri 6pm - 9pm

**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](mailto: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 every 2nd Mon, 3pm - 5pm. 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. Outings once a month. Contact John on 07999 441376 or visit BIEN FB: <https://www.facebook.com/BIENetwork/>

**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. May change in the New Year.

**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. No sessions running from 18 Dec 2025 - 13 Jan 2026. -For more info contact Claire 07898 593 629 or [knowetop@alternativeswd.org](mailto:knowetop@alternativeswd.org)

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

**GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS** - Mon: Knit & Natter 10am - 1pm; Chair Yoga 10am - 11am; Disability Fitness 11 - 12noon; Tues: No Bake Baking 10am - 12; Bingo 1pm - 3pm; Wed: Drama 10am - 12; Choir 4pm - 5pm; Thurs: Arts & Crafts 10am - 12; Line Dancing 10.30am - 11.30am; Fri: Boccia 10am - 12 18 Nairn Place, Clydebank

### 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](mailto:clare@carerswd.org)

**ADULT LITERACY** - Tues 1pm - 3pm in Dalmuir C.E Centre; Thurs 10am - 12noon in WDC office Church street, Dumbarton & Adult Literacy and Computing Wed 10am - 12noon in Alexandria Library. Contact Sharon Campbell on [cld@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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 mid January 2026 in Dumbarton and Clydebank. Contact Eilish.O'Donohue@west-dunbarton.gov.uk and Amy.cowie@westdunbarton.gov.uk for more information.

**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; Faifley White Church, 10am - 12noon last Tues of the month; St Augustine's Church Hall 11 - 2pm Fri. [yourcommunity@west-dunbartonshire.gov.uk](mailto:yourcommunity@west-dunbartonshire.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** - Baby & Toddler group Fri 9.15am - 10.45am. 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](mailto:youth@benviewcentre.org.uk) or call 01389 733030

**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 6pm - 8pm, Thurs: Green Skills 14 - 25yrs 10am - 4pm or 12.30pm-4pm. Free meals/packed lunches provided + public travel expenses reimbursed. Contact [info@tullochan.org](mailto:info@tullochan.org) 07931228462

**AWESTRUCK MUSIC SCHOOL** - Wed 4pm - 6pm for P3 - P7 and 7pm - 9pm for S1 - S6, £5 per session. 36 Sylvania Way South, Clydebank

**PATCHWORK PONIES** - Pat and chat sessions every Thurs and Sat 2.30pm to 4.30pm at Overtoun House; free for all to enjoy. For more information see Facebook.

**TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING** School staff session and Trauma Informed Parenting Workshop held every month fully funded. Visit [www.traumainformedparenting.uk/workshop-booking](http://www.traumainformedparenting.uk/workshop-booking) to find out more.

## WHAT'S ON.... from January

**Jan 12 - 30** *Threads of Time...Stories of People, Place and Pride* exhibition in the Community Gallery space in Clydebank Town Hall

**Jan 17** Watercolours with Vincent 10.15am - 12.15pm Alexandria Library. Artist Libby Walker is sharing her love of Vincent Van Gogh and watercolours. £12 incl materials Book via Eventbrite or email [arts.development@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:arts.development@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) for details

**Jan 19** Clydebank Local History Society illustrated talk by Oliver Braid on Miss Cranston and the Willow Tearooms. Visitors welcome. Meetings are held at Dalmuir Barclay Church, Durban Avenue, Dalmuir at 7.30 p.m. For more information visit [www.clydebankhistory.org](http://www.clydebankhistory.org)

**Jan 26** Living Well in West Dunbartonshire. Local advice and support on keeping active, mental health and stopping smoking. Alexandria Library 10am and 2.30pm.

**Feb 2** Clydebank Local History Society illustrated talk by Brian Tennant of GVV'T 'Red Trams Go West.' Visitors welcome. Meetings are held at Dalmuir Barclay Church, Durban Avenue, Dalmuir at 7.30 p.m. For more information visit [www.clydebankhistory.org](http://www.clydebankhistory.org)

**Feb 16** Clydebank Local History Society AGM + illustrated talk by Florence Boyle - 'From Foe to Friend: the enemy soldiers who became neighbours.' The AGM is at 7pm with talk starting at 7.45pm

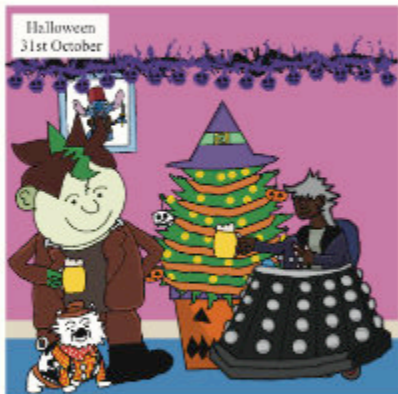
**Mar 2** Clydebank Local History Society illustrated talk by Warwick Louth: 'The Covenanters.' Visitors welcome. Meetings are held at Dalmuir Barclay Church, Durban Avenue, Dalmuir at 7.30 p.m. For more information visit [www.clydebankhistory.org](http://www.clydebankhistory.org)

**Mar 16** Clydebank Local History Society illustrated talk '85 Years on: the Blitz Remembered'. Extracts from Dave Carson's DVD interviews; members' stories and memories. Visitors welcome. Meetings are held at Dalmuir Barclay Church, Durban Avenue, Dalmuir at 7.30 p.m. For more information visit [www.clydebankhistory.org](http://www.clydebankhistory.org)

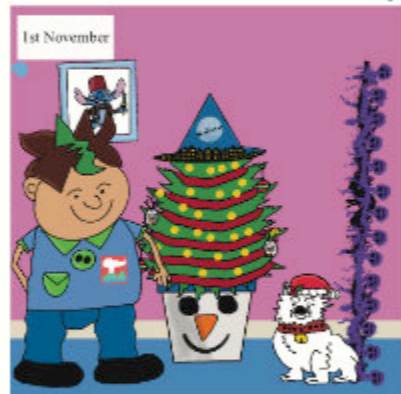
**Mar 18** Living Well in West Dunbartonshire. Local advice and support on keeping active, mental health and stopping smoking. Clydebank Library, 10am and 2.30pm

# CLYDE & BAXTER

By Steven Hastings



Halloween  
31st October  
Look, a party for Halloween.  
And a spooky tree to set the scene.  
Also a lot of drink and beer.  
And lots of Halloween good cheer.



1st November  
1st of November, turn the tree.  
Almost time for Christmas yippee.  
Presents, family, friends and beer.  
And a lot of Christmas good cheer.



Christmas Eve  
24th December  
The snow has fallen on the ground.  
Snowballs flying round and round.  
Good friends having a lot of fun.  
Merry Christmas to everyone.

## Cheery Creature Christmas Cards by Steven Hastings

This winter wordsearch is about Animals you might see on Christmas cards, from the traditional to the not so traditional. The words from the list can be found in the grid, going Left, Right, Up, Down & Diagonally.

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

- |             |                 |            |           |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| Dinosaur    | Hamster         | Penguin    | Redbreast |
| Donkey      | Highland Cow    | Polar Bear | Rudolph   |
| French Hens | Kermit the Frog | Rabbit     | Sheep     |
| Giant Panda | Miss Piggy      | Robin      | Turkey    |



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W: [www.mpcenergy.co.uk](http://www.mpcenergy.co.uk)

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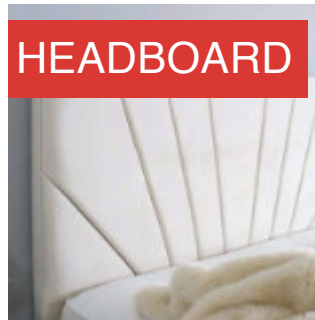
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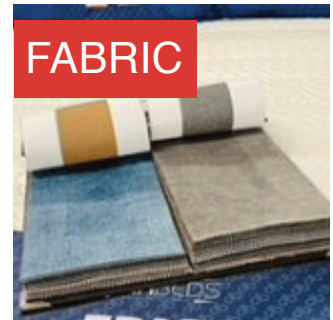
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