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Welcome

After one of our busiest months ever, we are delighted our first foray into festival organising has proved such a success.

With well over 1,000 attendances at nearly 50 events - most of them free - the positive comments on our feedback postcards shows there is a real interest to learn more about our community's rich heritage, people and places.

A few people asked why Clydesider - a community media organisation - chose to organise a heritage festival.

For me it seemed logical: Many of the positive stories happening today, which are featured in the magazine and Clydesider TV are rooted in our area's past.

In this issue for example you'll read about Crafting Together, a social enterprise supporting young adults with additional support needs to create jewellery, arts and crafts inspired by the area's architectural and industrial heritage; local artist Katie McGroaty shares how the local places, myths and stories which shaped her youth find their way into her art and you'll discover how the skills and trades learned in the Clyde shipyards and factories are being put to good use today in Clydebank's Men's Shed.

And we are never short of stories about local activists who see a problem in the community and decide to do something about it.

This issue read about the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat volunteers who head out in all weathers to save lives, and our new volunteer Jill Clark explains why she campaigned for a Changing Places toilet in Clydebank Shopping Centre.

This tradition of activism seems to be ingrained in the area's heritage, with stories of local heroes passed from one generation to the next.

Louise Robertson, featured on our front cover, was one such inspiration for me, both when I was setting up the magazine and for our 'In Peace & Revolution' multi-media heritage project which captured stories of local activists.

So, I hope you enjoy and are inspired by the past and present featured in this issue. And don't forget to also follow Clydesider on Instagram where we share even more local stories, behind-the-scenes content and community updates.



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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Contents

8

More Than Just Crafting Together
by Laura Giannini

12

Celebrating a Shed Full of Talent
by Patricia Laws

16

For the Sake of Wee Peter
by Rob Williams

20

An Unfinished Revolution
by Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry

22

Enterprising Students
by Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry

24

Clydesider Photo Competition

26

Meet Our Volunteers: Lorraine

28

This is Me
by Jill Clark

30

Devoutly Dumbarton
by Katie McGroarty

33

Empower Yourself
by Layla Blackwell

33

Mental Well-being Top Tips
by Sarah-Ann Dillon

34

Our World in Words
by Niamh Friel

36

Coping with Current Affairs Without Having all the Answers
by Emily Fraser

38

Our Stories Heritage Festival: It's a Wrap!

44

Women Supporting Women
by Laura Giannini

48

Reviews & Recomendations
by Mary Irvine

47

Hunky Stan the White Van Fish Man
by Andrew Connolly

48

Photo Tips
by Harvey Smart

49

Clydesider 10 Year Lookback
by Jenny Watson

50

Clydesider Community Directory

52

Clydesider Community Diary

54

Puzzle Page
by Steven Hastings

Cover Photo by Charlie Sherry



Sponsored Editorial
Old Kilpatrick
Food Parcels

Local charity Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels (OKFP) is putting into practice the saying ‘two heads are better than one’ as they continue to build their collaboration with PALS ASN Community group.

Scott Brown, chairman of PALS, recently took over as the new Chair of OKFP and has exciting plans about how both charities can work in harmony to bring greater inclusion and enhanced community engagement to the Napier Hall.

He explained: “OKFP with its ‘Taste not Waste’ and food pantry activities will continue to operate much as they have been doing over recent months.

“The existing café, operated by the OKFP CIC, will also continue its operations within the Napier Hall.

“In addition, the PALS charity has created a unique space within the Kilpatrick Suite of the Hall and will operate a Coffee Club Café on the days when the ‘Chatty Café’ of the CIC does not operate.”

The organisations will work alongside each other to increase the opportunities to create an accessible, inclusive space for all, reflective of Old Kilpatrick as the welcoming community it has always been.

Scott added: “This is about the charities and CIC working together under the one roof to make the area a better space for everyone.”

He paid tribute to the hard work Maureen Cummings, founder of OKFP, has done to establish and grow the charity and in taking on the challenge of the Napier Hall when it faced closure.

He said: “The goal is to build on the legacy that Maureen and her team have delivered so far. The real-life impact of this legacy is that on average OKFP provides food support for 100 – 150 people a week (including children and pets) and saves 300 – 400kg of food from going to waste each week.

“The impact this makes on people’s lives can’t be overstated. This is down to the years of hard work and devotion Maureen has committed to the charity and her legacy will live long in the families and community of old Kilpatrick.”

In terms of PALS ASN Scott advised that the charity has just received a grant from the UK government’s ‘Pride in Places’ fund which will allow the group to put in a ‘Changing Places’ toilet and create an outside space with wheelchair accessible equipment and a space for all families to share.

He views this as the ‘start of good things to come.’

For Scott, being involved in the development of Napier Hall has a very personal dimension. He explained: “It feels like things have come full circle – my grandparents were members of the early Community Council who were handed the keys to the hall in the 1950s. This hall is integral to my family! My mum and dad met at a dance in the hall and my children attended pantomimes, parties and events at the hall – it has meant a lot to my family over the years.”

Moving forward, the OKFP Taste Not Waste and Pantry operation will continue to operate Tues – Thursday from 11am-1pm. The Chatty Café will also continue to operate on a Tues – Fri from 11am – 2.30pm.

On Mondays the PALS Coffee Club will operate for parents, carers and families of children with additional support needs.

In closing Scott advised: “I believe by us all working together we can leave a real legacy for children like my son Oliver and build a place where they can go now and, in the future – nothing will be a barrier.”

The charity is keen to recruit new volunteers to help support OKFP as it continues to develop and grow. Anyone interested in volunteering can drop in or contact Scott at Scott@okfp.org.uk



Community News

The Art of Recovery

An exhibition of sculptures and poetry created by members of the Authentic Voice Panel, shared the emotional stories faced by women leaving abusive and controlling relationships.

Working with sculptor and director of 'Breaking the Mould' the AV members created pieces which explored themes of isolation, loss and confusion alongside strength, with clay being used to capture both fragility and endurance.

Inspired by kintsugi, the art of mending with gold which shows the visible cracks and joins, the exhibition at Centre 81 recognised pain as part of the story, while honouring the courage to rebuild identity and restore dignity.

One piece entitled 'Bearing World, Becoming Light' shows a woman bent forward with a world on her back, a baby in her arms and a child by her side.

Another shows a house of cards held together with fabric, thread, wire and tape – a testament to the resilience of survivors: a delicate architecture of hope held together by mutual support.

Emergency Food Aid Cuts

A VITAL Dumbarton-based charity offering emergency food to vulnerable people has been forced to reduce services following a severe cut in council funding.

Food for Thought has been told it will receive just £25,750 from West Dunbartonshire Council this year – a drop from its usual annual grant of £42,000.

Now the charity has no choice but to close its doors one day a week and drastically reduce the number of clients it helps.

It will now be closed on Wednesdays and stop food bags to adults, focusing solely on families and pensioners. It is also axing outreach projects in Alexandria and Clydebank.

Operations manager, Charlene Gold, said they no choice. "We've had no explanation from the council for this cut in funding.

"They know we're struggling as we've already had to appeal through the Provost for £5,000 last month as we'd had nothing since March.

"When the council produced their budget in April, they said there would be no changes or cuts to food insecurity. Now they've done it. If we don't cut back our services, we simply won't have a charity anymore."

Seafarers Award

At a ceremony in London, local campaigner Iain Lindsay from Old Kilpatrick was honoured at the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) with a Service to Seafarers Award.

It recognised his outstanding work and support to merchant seafarers and their families in his professional capacity as the Scottish and Northern Ireland Welfare Officer.

He also successfully campaigned for a Merchant Navy Memorial commemorating the 55,000 personnel lost during WWII which is now proudly displayed on the Govan - Partick Bridge.

Speaking about the day, Iain shared: "It was out of this world. I'm still beaming. Walking into that beautiful room with all the big windows, thinking to myself, 'I'm just a wee guy from a housing scheme in Glasgow.'"

Of the six recipients on the day, Iain was the only one from Scotland which was presented by HRH Anne, Princess Royal, a patron of MNWB.

After nine years with Nautilus, Iain made sure to dedicate part of the award to his colleagues.

"Their support has been invaluable the whole way through this process. I felt like I was just doing my job, but they reminded me a lot of the people I had helped and seen.

"If I can keep doing what I do, that's what will keep me happy."



Clydesider News

Clydesider Camera Club Out & About

Just as this issue was going to press, we discovered we had been awarded a grant of £9,850 from the National Lottery Community Fund's Award's for All!

This means from August we will move our Clydesider Camera Club out of its WhatsApp meeting space and head out and about together with monthly in-person meet-ups, photo walks and training plus quarterly photography days out.

The images the group capture will be used to create regular digital displays and an end of project in-person exhibition. So don't forget to follow our social media and watch this space to enjoy the group's work.



Fond Farewell

Although Kayleigh Hirst has been with the Clydesider team for just over a year she will be greatly missed by staff, volunteers and community partners, when she leaves us this month to head for an exciting new job with the National Trust for Scotland.

As our Heritage Lead, she managed Clydesider's 'In Peace and Revolution' multi-media project and planned and organised West Dunbartonshire's first Heritage Festival, bringing together nearly 50 events, workshops, walks, talks and open days, throughout May.



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More Than Just Crafting Together

Words by Laura Giannini

Special needs, learning disabled, neuro-diverse... so many terms we hear often accompanied by promises of more - more interest, more opportunities, more funding.

Yet only 4 - 8% of adults with learning disabilities in Scotland are in any kind of meaningful paid employment.

Now a social enterprise in West Dunbartonshire is challenging that shocking reality.

Long term readers of the Clydesider will remember a 2021 article about the crafting group Crafting Together (CT), the brainchild of two teachers at Kilpatrick School, for children and young adults with additional support needs in Clydebank.

Linda Murray and Elaine McIlree were often saddened and frustrated when meeting former pupils whom they knew had creative skills and talents but when asked 'what are you doing now,' invariably answered, 'nothing much'.

Five years on, CT is a Community Interest Company

(CIC) based in the Titan Enterprise Centre alongside architects, engineers, and energy companies.

Business is thriving and the jewellery and handicrafts they design, and produce are sold across the country from the island of Iona to the gift shop at the Scottish Parliament.

The CIC now has 21 Artists and Makers, 19 volunteers and four part-time staff. Elaine and Linda share the role of Project Coordinator, Flo Dwyer is the Art Coordinator, Linda also has the role of Jewellery Coordinator, and Claire Dean is Sales and Marketing Coordinator.

"It is important to understand that Crafting Together is not just a club," stresses Claire.



"It is a business. The Makers and staff work to develop marketable ideas, turn those ideas into products, and find retailers to sell their jewellery and gifts, just like any other artisans."

Elaine explains: "At this moment we are more like a co-operative where profits from sales are ploughed back to give the Makers subsistence and travel money."

"Our goal is to become a fully sustainable social enterprise paying Makers a wage."

She sighs. "The complexities involved are considerable. When we say we are working towards employability it must be accompanied with a when, where and for what employment and preferably also for how long?"

The artisan Makers of CT are enthusiastic.

Caitlyn, one of the jewellery-makers, comments: "It's not just that I've learnt to focus, follow a pattern, work to exact measurements, CT also gives me a focus for trips with my supporter."

"I like to go to the different places our things are on sale and ask how they're selling. I enjoy going to markets. I'm really looking forward to selling at the pipe-band championships."

Ben not only makes jewellery, he also created a range of digitally worked drawings of iconic landmarks: the Singer clock, the Waverley paddle steamer, the Armadillo building - creating the Clyde Connections range.

Kenny an artist and beadworker says: "I love that I can get an idea, and then we turn it into something for sale. I really like to see people buy what I make."

Crafting Together not only has a positive impact here in Scotland, their beads, including the Scotland Map Collection, are made by an artisan in



Uganda.

"A group of friends travel regularly to Uganda. They take Scotland street maps supplied by publisher Harper Collins to

the charity Awamu, which works with women and children in the slums of Kampala," explains Linda.

"Sarah Namaganda and her

group turn them into beautiful beads. When the beads come back they are inventoried by the makers. Mikey has learned to count, measure and mark off the beads sent back.

"We are learning what returns, how many bracelets and earrings we can make with how many maps."

While Mikey checks inventory, his brother Aidan works at a truly impressive speed to produce strung bead bracelets.

In my short visit both Ben and Aidan, despite the fiddly work, made five pieces each. With a growing number of retailers, the Makers work hard to ensure the quality of their products. They do this with focus and enthusiasm.

Elaine explains: "It is important to understand CT produces high-quality products. We want

Sponsored Editorial

Board Member Vacancies



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

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

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

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

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

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

people to buy them because they like them, because they are lovely, not because of who made them."

"But it is nice we have QR codes – that's another thing I've learned about – and people can see us making the jewellery," Caitlyn adds.

The boxes and packaging for all Crafting Together's jewellery and gifts have QR code links to photos and information about the Maker, allowing buyers to see how their purchase enhances someone's life.

The CT Makers also had the great satisfaction of hearing that, in Kampala, Sarah had earned enough to move out of the slums and build her own house for her family and the orphans she cares for.

"Tourists love the Map Collection as they can take a little piece of Scotland home with them," says Claire.

The Crafting Together studio is

a hive of creativity with workshops in jewellery-making, art & design and sewing, with the teams collaborating on new ideas. The art team hand-form and paint ceramic beads for the jewellery team to use making necklaces, earrings and bracelets.



Inspiration often comes from outings and trips. Danielle Hardie's Rennie Mackintosh style t-shirt design, the Makers' unofficial uniform, followed a trip to Kelvingrove Museum. The Clyde Connections range, including a tea towel and greeting cards, was born out of a landmarks drawing project along the River Clyde.

The Artists and Makers are also available for commissions. One recent project was artwork for a new coffee blend, created for Down River Coffee in Port Glasgow. Another was creating a logo for the Revitalising Clydebank regeneration project.

This is a community company with real growth potential and a place where adults with learning disabilities can truly flourish.

They also have exclusive designed tea-towels and aprons made by the sewing team using fabric hand-painted by the art team. The ability to communicate, develop products as a company is just one more skill.



Sponsored Editorial

Community Links Scotland



REGENERATION SERVICES

Supporting wellbeing, connection and confidence within our communities

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

One of our key programmes is Healthy Pathways, which has been developed to support adults build confidence, connections and create a stronger sense of community. The project provides a safe, welcoming space where people can take part in creative, therapeutic and social activities that encourage connection, self-expression and renewed confidence.

Healthy Pathways offers a weekly creative café every Tuesdays 11-1pm at the Community Links Scotland office in 63 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank. These informal sessions allow people to try activities and connect with others in a relaxed and supportive environment. All sessions are free, with materials provided. Sessions include a wide range of arts and crafts such as painting, needle felting, decoupage, clay, jewellery making, photography and sewing. Sessions change every week, depending on the interests of the group. Creative sessions can also be delivered in an outreach capacity, so please reach out if your group could benefit from any free creative sessions, which we can deliver at your own premises.

In addition to the creative café, Healthy Pathways will be running a series of free health and wellbeing workshops. Themed sessions will include mindfulness, healthy eating, budgeting, healthy relationships and health and fitness. We are keen to work in partnership with local organisations to widen the support available to participants, so please contact Laureen if you think this would be an option for your groups. A free mindfulness taster session is being delivered on Tuesday 23rd June, from 2-3.30pm at 63

Kilbowie Road, Clydebank. Message Laureen to book a space.

A third aspect of the Healthy Pathways programme will be the creation of a new women's group around gender specific issues. This will have a human rights focus and will seek to address poverty and gender inequalities across West Dunbartonshire. If you are interested in getting involved, or you work with women who may benefit, please contact Laureen to find out more.

A core strength of Healthy Pathways is its emphasis on peer support. Participants can be supported by volunteers from Mindful Moments, a group of women who previously took part in the project themselves. Drawing on their own lived experience, they offer encouragement, understanding and a listening ear to those who are new to the programme.

If you live in West Dunbartonshire and would like the opportunity to take part in any of these activities, sessions are free and designed to be accessible and relaxed, allowing you to engage at your own pace. If you would like to try new experiences, step outside of your comfort zone, meet others with similar experiences, and develop a stronger sense of belonging, Healthy Pathways is for you.

To find out more, to get involved, or discuss referrals, please contact Laureen

Phone: 0141 952 4382/ Text: 07749 390 108

Email: laureen@comlinks.org.uk



Celebrating a Shed Full of Talent

Words by Patricia Laws

To boldly go where no woman had gone before...filming the Men's Shed in Clydebank for Clydesider TV.

My mission, as part of Clydesider's Heritage Project was to interview two of the founder members, Adam Mirren and Neil Etherington, whom I immediately addressed as the "elder statesmen" of the Shed. They seem to enjoy this accolade.

Men's Shed Clydebank will mark 10 years at their Dalmuir Shed with an Open Day on Wednesday, 5th August.

It will include guided tours of the workshop, tea and a blether with "the boys," a sale of the Shedd's handcrafted goods...and an exhibition: 'Men's Shed Clydebank: Then and Now.'

Adam and Neil were here to tell me about the early days setting up the Shed, together with the first chairman, George Drain, and Colin Smith, West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Officer credited as being "the person" who helped make the Men's Shed a reality.

Some readers might be wondering what the Men's Shed is. Some may not know we have one in Clydebank.

The Men's Shed movement started in 1993, in Goolwa, South Australia after Nurse Maxine Chaseling noticed a big deterioration in her Dad

following his retirement and the loss of his wife.

Maxine identified a lack of activities for men and observed her Dad at his happiest pottering about in his Shed...the rest is history.

From its humble birth, it has become a global phenomenon with over 3,000 Sheds worldwide spanning 12 countries. In the UK alone there are approximately 1,300, with over 200 in Scotland.

Professor Barry Golding, from Federation University in Australia, called Men's Sheds: "Australia's gift to the world" - a gift Colin Smith heard about back in 2014.

He thought the concept would work well in Clydebank because of the town's high-quality talent, many of whom had worked in the shipyards or in Singers.

He recruited George Drain, a man with a background in social work who had set up many community groups - he seemed the ideal choice for first Chairman.

George told me: "Men's Sheds are for the men and run by the men. They are great for your self-esteem. You get to talk with like-minded folks. If you don't know what to do, you just ask..."

"They give men the opportunity to get up, get out and get on with it when they might have lost their way a bit..."

Coincidentally, on 21st Feb 2014, just as Colin and

George were mulling over the Shed idea, Professor Golding, now a world expert on Men's Shed, came to Strathclyde University to launch his book, 'Men Learning through Life' which concluded: "the most effective learning for men of all ages is informal, community-based, building on what they know and can do."

This seminar was a pivotal moment for Men's Shed, Clydebank. Colin and George met other Scottish Shedd's who provided first-hand knowledge of setting up a Men's Shed. This was uncharted territory for West Dunbartonshire, although Colin believed George could make things happen...

"George had set up groups before, and Adam and Neil came along with a whole bunch of skills and knowledge to drive the thing forward and not stop - they were committed and determined..."

Colin told me the men were a glowing example of what activism is: "If you see something is wrong, you challenge it and if you see something broken, you fix it. If something is missing, and is needed, you set it up. You make a change in your

community."

Colin and his team certainly did.

"The whole process lasted about two years, but they never gave up, despite several failed applications for premises, lots of tangled red tape, door chapping and what seemed like a fruitless search: writing letters, making calls, seeing councillors and officials.... Finally, we got the keys in early 2016.

"The Shed was dilapidated with holes in the walls where squirrels had been living."

George continued: "It was in a hell of a state... It had no toilet, nor heating..."

The day they finally got the keys, Colin was on holiday but he and his daughters brought old calor gas heaters from his late mum's house.

Many donations appeared: Filing cabinets, desks and chairs, microwave, cooker, sofas; some from the members themselves...

Adam explained: "Unfortunately, men our age pass away and their widows don't know what to do with their tools, so they donate them to the



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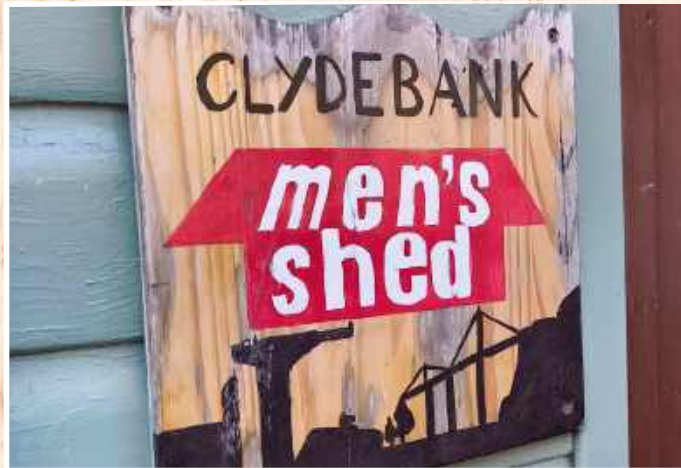


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Shed. Things just appeared..."

He played down the difficulties of transforming this empty shell into the purposeful thriving hub of today with drills drilling, hammers hammering, peals of laughter...

"I love problem-solving," said Adam, "whenever there was an obstacle it made me want to keep going and rise to the challenge."

You can feel Adam's energy and can-do attitude.

Neil's forte is admin. He has a folder full of the social history of Men's Shed, Clydebank. He is a man for whom precision and making sure a job is done to the highest degree, is his very byword:

"My favourite thing is administration...Communication is crucial for Men's Shed...in those early days we designed and distributed leaflets and flyers and stuck posters up all over."

I looked from Adam to Neil and realised how transformational the Men's Shed was for them, and indeed for the other Sheddors.

Both complete strangers when they met for the Shed's preliminary planning meetings in 2014, they now seem like friends who finish each other's sentences, friends united in belief in each other

and in the proven benefits of Men's Shed: the camaraderie, problem-solving, the banter, the health benefits.

Neither want any credit for setting up the Shed: they are too humble to boast and too polite to moan about the reality of trying to get the Shed off the ground.

Colin Smith praised the Clydebank Sheddors: "Every nail, every screw was put in by a member of the Shed for the benefit of their members. Everything was achieved by the sweat of their brow. They even scrambled under the floorboards..."

And Adam concluded, as though he had nothing to do with it: "The founding of Men's Shed has been a wonderful thing for Clydebank and the surrounding areas. We have helped schools and countless other groups.

"We have around 200 members on the books, which has grown from about seven members in the Hub back in 2014."

Come and join the Sheddors' 10th anniversary celebrations on August 5 12 – 4pm.

Sponsored Editorial

The Next Step for Stepping Stones Mental Health Services

As a member led organisation Stepping Stones believe that it is vitally important to be transparent with the people of West Dunbartonshire, and the news they have to share could be potentially distressing for readers.

It is no secret that the need for mental health support is increasing, people are struggling, NHS services have been cut and the waiting lists for help are growing.

Stepping Stones are aware that due to the country-wide budget cuts there could be reductions to funding for mental health services over the years to come; this would impact not only existing members of the services but those who need help in the future.

The impact of reducing current funding could be catastrophic to Stepping Stones, with services potentially being significantly reduced, job losses, and an immeasurable decline of people's mental health.

This worrying news follows on from recent cuts in other local health and social care funded contracts, where long-standing West Dunbartonshire services have been lost.

Chief Officer, Bronwyn O'Riordan, and the proactive Trustees and Members at Stepping Stones are taking a very vocal stance on campaigning for funding and asking the local Council to continue to fund the work of this well-established organisation to continue to deliver the mental health support needed by our community.

Bronwyn shared: "Stepping Stones has never been needed more.

"I am incredibly proud of the work and outcomes delivered by our amazing team, and I know that our organisation will do everything it can to achieve a better future for people with mental health issues.

"Budget cuts to such a vital service, is in my opinion a disgrace, our community deserve better and I genuinely hope to see the local council continue their commitment and support of Stepping Stones.

"We shall continue to keep our members informed of any updates on the funding situation, and we appreciate any support people can give.

The reality is that the next contract for mental health services will go to tender, should the next commissioned service

contract not be awarded to Stepping Stones then we would struggle to keep our doors open, and West Dunbartonshire could lose a provider who has supported tens of thousands of people over the last 35 years.

As a reminder, Stepping Stones Services include: Person Centred Counselling, Peer Support Work, General Mental Health Support Work, Guided Self Help, Social Groups, Men's Group, Women's Groups, Relaxation Groups, Bereavement and Loss Peer Support Groups, Neurodiversity Steering Group, and Psychoeducation.

Due to the uncertainty of mental health services funding, Stepping Stones recently held a public consultation. Members and stakeholders were able to raise concerns and reassured that the next steps for Stepping Stones are to champion for local people and secure funding to invest in our communities' future.

You can show your support by completing a 5 minute survey on how you feel the mental health budgets should be spent, or by making a donation to help fund the vital work of Stepping Stones Services.



Stepping Stones invite you to participate in a Public Consultation on West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Services.



Scan the code to complete the survey and have your say on identifying the priorities for local mental health services provision.

If you would like to support the funding of Stepping Stones services, please donate via our website 'Donate' button.
www.stepstones.org.uk



Words by Rob Williams & Photos by Harvey Smart

Take the Old Military Road to Luss. A few metres offshore in Bandry Bay, Aldochlay stands a statue of a small boy, erected by a stonemason in celebration of a happy childhood spent in the area in 19th century.

A common myth surrounding the statue is that it commemorates a drowned child and locals have christened him 'Wee Peter'.

If the statue draws attention to the dangers inherent in water-based activities in and on the Loch then it does the community a service.

However, when things do go wrong, there is the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat.

The award-winning independent lifeboat charity, organises and runs a rescue service catering for people who use the Loch and its surrounds for recreation.

Established in 1977 with a generous gift from an anonymous benefactor, it is

funded entirely by donations and is manned by local volunteers.

The 22 feet RIB powered by twin 150 HP engines can be at an incident within 20 minutes. However, as current cox'n Andrew Biddulph, explained: "It is fast but when you are going somewhere and you know someone is in trouble it can feel very slow; the longest boat ride."



This was my first assignment for Clydesider magazine, and we were treated to a 'trip around the bay' - not what I had expected!

As we sped northwards towards Luss, I was amazed at

how stable a platform the boat is even turning at high speed and how professional and confident the crew are in their handling of such power.

Until recently the charity was based at Luss but the pressure of traffic on the A82, meant that a move was essential and currently it is moored in Balloch, a space on the jetty provided by the National Park Authority.

Andrew pointed out: "This will drastically reduce call-out times and make a big difference. We are in the process of building a new boatshed locally."

With a team of about 25 volunteers, local folk, who give their time to train every Wednesday evening and Sunday morning, they attend call-outs to people who find themselves in difficulty on

the water or, indeed, on the more inaccessible areas of land surrounding the loch.

Their volunteers are well-qualified.

All are powerboat drivers or instructors, certified VHF radio

users and first aid trained. Some have more advanced medical training in pre-hospital care as the charity acts as first responders to incidents which depend on their presence. The boat is crewed by two or three members, depending on the nature of the call-out.

Most incidents in the south of the Loch are water-based.

"If we get a cracking weekend we can get as many as eight call-outs a day, sometimes being re-tasked whilst undergoing a rescue. Last year we assisted 213 people in trouble," Andrew explained.

Incidents in the north of the Loch are mainly concerned with hill walkers.

Andrew added: "People get trapped or lost and in 2025 there were six cases of falls over 20 feet.

"Certain stretches of the West Highland Way can be treacherous; there are no roads around that way so ambulances can't get there so they ask us."

And he was quick to point out: "No blame is ever apportioned to anyone who find themselves in trouble. We stay completely neutral; you can't have folk scared to call you out."

Each 'shout' is followed by a detailed de-brief and phone calls to individuals to re-assure and support. The National Parks Authority helps with counselling for crew members

affected by particularly distressing incidents.

The personnel can become something of a family affair. Indeed, Andrew's son and daughter are 'on the boat'. All volunteers are quickly made aware of the golden rule - one hand for self or preparation, the other for the boat. If two hands are needed, then a fellow team member will give safety support.

There may be a misconception that the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat is part of the RNLI but it is an independent charity with no links to the institution.

It does work with other like-minded emergency services - the police, mountain rescue, the fire and rescue service and is in contact with helicopter rescue and the Special Operations Rescue Team based in Linwood.

Andrew grinned as he remembered one training exercise: "Basically, they unloaded a fire engine on to the boat - pumps, ladders BA kit and a full fire crew to tackle a dummy fire on Inversnaid."

I asked Andrew why did he get involved?

"Who knows," he answered.

"It is time consuming and sometimes the family can get annoyed. Two o'clock in the morning, torrential rain or snow, trudging out of bed to go to the boat and get freezing.

"But somebody needs help and

there are some places we go to where we are the only people that are coming to help in a decent time.

"Over the years we've made a difference. We've helped a good few people," he added modestly.

We can be justifiably proud of the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat and its volunteers. They are unsung heroes who live in our community and deserve our utmost support. What then can we do?

If you do intend using the Loch for recreation, abide by the simple guidance surrounding water safety. Be aware that the Loch is cold and there are many ledges where even simple paddling can be a hazardous activity.

The move to Balloch is to be made permanent which will need a new boathouse and slipway. Planning permission has been granted and clearance work will soon get underway.

The new facility will include a boatshed, communications, medical, training and crew rooms. Funds to build the structure are hard come by and there will soon be a big fundraising effort.

If you would like to become practically involved or help with fundraising, visit the website on lochlomondrescueboat.org or look them up on Facebook.





Provided by Advice Direct Scotland

Her job is a far cry from the humdrum nine to five.

Linda Johnston deals with people in crisis across West Dunbartonshire – from victims of sexual abuse to families facing mental and physical breakdown.

But rather than taking a toll on her, Linda revealed that her job is hugely rewarding as she seeks to “change people’s lives” each day. Linda, 57, from Bowling, said: “I have worked as an advocate for more than three years now.

“I love my job, every day is different. Advocacy is really about changing people’s lives and that is incredibly important and rewarding.

“I have helped people who have been involved in serious accidents. One case involved a firefighter who had a leg injury.

“He was out of commission due to his injury and I helped him get thousands of pounds that he was due.

“I also helped a neurodivergent woman and her husband who was suffering from cancer.

“I supported her to make a successful claim for benefits and it helped to unlock so much for her.

“Sadly, her husband got more unwell and sadly passed away. I helped her to make a successful claim for £3000 Funeral Support Payment.

“It was great to be able to help her at such a difficult time. I do this job because it means I can help people on my own doorstep.

“It is hugely rewarding and means the world to me to be able to support people in my own community.”

Linda works for Advocacy.scot which gives independent advocacy to help people understand, apply for and challenge decisions about Social Security Scotland benefits.

The service is run by charity Advice Direct Scotland.

Independent advocacy means speaking up for

people who face barriers and working with people to understand and express their own views on their own terms.

Linda, who previously worked in social care and HR, added: “Sometimes giving people the help they need, opens a whole new window on life for them.

“Advocacy can be life changing and it is great to be a part of that. People do not need to try to get by on their own. We can help.”

Advocacy.scot helps disabled people throughout the whole benefits journey including applications, appeals and assessments.

Our advocates will:

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AN UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

By Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry



"Louise was a feminist, a peace activist and a socialist bold and true."

For all who knew Louise Robertson these words, shared on Facebook by Les, her husband of 55 years, captured the essence of this much-loved Vale woman.

Louise leaves behind a legacy of hope and inspiration both in the form of the ground-breaking organisations she helped establish and in the hearts of almost everyone who knew her.

She was in at the start of so many positive initiatives in the community; from Faslane Peace camp and Dumbarton District Women's Aid to Haldane People's Theatre and Alternatives Recovery service and, more recently, A Brew & a Blether and Friends of Drumkinnon Woods.

Clydesider was fortunate to have Louise attend some of our early planning meetings and she inspired our 'In Peace & Revolution' multi-media heritage project about local community activists.

Her passion for people also took her to the centre of local and national campaigns to protect services and human rights, from Greenham Common campsites to striking miners' picket lines, from Save the Vale Hospital marches to sit-ins to stop sheltered housing closure... Louise was there willing to lend a hand, an ear, a placard and her voice.

A tattoo on her arm read 'the unfinished revolution' with the CND and feminist logos either side of the Christy Moore album title.



This brief collection of stories from a few of her closest friends aims to preserve the inspiration for change that will always be Louise Robertson.

Adrienne McAulay recalls getting to know Louise when the Robertsons returned from Faslane Peace Camp.

"We were both involved in the Labour Party at the time. It was 1984, the middle of the miners' strike and Louise was involved in organising meetings and trying to raise money and awareness for them."

Both women lived in Haldane which was then designated an 'Area of Priority Treatment'.

"This meant we could use places like Mill Hall for free. Louise suggested we set up a Women's Group, so I got involved. There weren't many of us at the start, but it grew.

"Our friendship was cemented by working together for women - we would go out to support women who were struggling in abusive relationships, even before the refuge existed."

The forerunner to Dumbarton District Women's Aid, the Women's Group provided a safe space for local women to meet, talk, learn new skills and share ideas.

And it was through this group that Ann Pryce first met Louise. Struggling with the loss of her youngest brother, Ann was referred to the group by a local GP.

"I didn't really know anyone, and I was terrified of speaking up; through the group I started meeting new people, it actually changed my life - it probably saved my life," Ann remembers. It was also the start of a friendship with Louise which would span the next 40 years.

This core group of women, including Louise, Ann and Adrienne, then worked with the local authority to establish Dumbarton District Women's Aid.

Adrienne remembers it wasn't without its struggles as a small group of locals opposed the plans, but Louise's "strength, spirit and humour" kept them going.

"The day before the refuge was due to open a woman knocked at the door to ask if she could have a place. We were concerned she would be alone, so we agreed on a rota of women to keep her company.

"But by the end of the first week the refuge was full - it took 10 women. It just showed what the need was."

Ann and Louise worked together at the refuge. "It is how I got to know Louise really well - I was the Children's worker and Louise was a Support worker.

"Louise had such a passion for the community, and for the local women in particular. I remember we organised several Reclaim the Night marches after some serious attacks in the Vale and she always stood by her beliefs."

Although dealing with some of the most serious issues on this

planet, Louise had an ability to make them meaningful and manageable. Ann laughs as she remembers Louise wearing a mop-head as a judge's 'wig' for a play about women's rights and equal pay.



"We had a Drama group and a Creative Writing group and were part of CANS - the Community Arts Network Strathclyde. They wanted us to put on a play about the refuge, and Peter Mullan and Peter Arnott came down to work with us.

"We took it on tour through all the Unemployed Workers groups and then to Glasgow Green on May Day - we had such a laugh. I never knew anyone like her. I didn't know anything about feminism or the things she used to fight for before I met her.

"If there was something needed doing, she would just get up and do it - she was amazing, a force of nature and one of the most caring people I know."

Councillor Jim Bollan represents the Community Party on West Dunbartonshire Council - a local party which Louise helped establish.

He remembers: "Louise was a fierce fighter for peace and equality all her adult life. She was inspirational and would have faced a lion for her beliefs.

"Louise, along with Les, was a founder member of Faslane Peace Camp to oppose Trident nuclear weapons and was arrested and imprisoned many

times for calling out the abhorrence of these weapons of mass destruction.

"During the Iraq war, Louise, Les and I dressed up in white boiler suits and entered the Base to inspect for weapons of mass destruction.

"At the trial, we wore the white boiler suits we had worn on the Base.

"The Sheriff said: 'Take off those ridiculous clothes in my Court,' to which Louise instantly replied, 'Have you looked in the mirror this morning?'

"Louise spoke truth to power all her adult life and judged nobody."

Jim also recalls Louise playing a key role in the six-month sit-in to keep open Leven Cottage sheltered housing complex in Alexandria.

"As a result, Robert and Annie, the two elderly residents, were allowed to stay in their home for the rest of their lives.

"Louise detested the inequality that is woven through our society. She never wavered in this struggle. Her ideals were rooted in Socialism and the struggle against poverty and inequality.

"It was a privilege to have known her."



Enterprising Students

By Amanda Eleftheriades



Two schools from West Dunbartonshire made it to the regional finals of the 2026 Young Enterprise awards.

Pupils from Dumbarton Academy and St Peter the Apostle High School took to the stage in Clydebank Town Hall to share their entrepreneurial experiences and products.

This was the final local stage of the programme which saw 1,200 students from across Scotland set up 130 companies from scratch and gain SCQF qualifications in the process.

At the start of their journey the students had to generate a business idea, then identify board positions which played to the strengths of each team member. They were responsible for creating a business plan, organising a launch event, raising funds and running their business.

They also had the opportunity to sell their products at a special Trade Fair in Braehead shopping centre.

The final presentation stage in Clydebank Town Hall was in front of a panel of four judges from the business world and invited guests.

Speaking to the Clydesider before their presentation the Dumbarton Academy team D &

A explained the idea behind their product - a mindfulness colouring book for young adults.

D & A director, Sam, said: "We started to come up with things we enjoy doing and from that we had five ideas. We put it to a vote to decide which one we all wanted to work on.

"As young adults we all enjoy colouring after we've had a long day, it helps you relax."

After contacting local suppliers they were delighted to get a good discount on print costs.

Designer Arren created the artwork for the colouring book and also designed the team's logo.

Each team member invested £5 to get the business off the ground and did a bake sale to help raise funds for their product.

With money in the bank, they ordered the colouring books and launched it at their school Careers Fayre.

Sales resulted in a net profit of £114.07 for D&A.

The financial gain was an added bonus as the experience, employability and teamwork skills gained during the programme will stay with the young people for years to come.

And at the Awards Night the judges selected D&A for the Most Inspirational Journey Award. Clydebank students from St Peter the Apostle also took home a trophy winning the Teamwork Award for their Sip n Co business.

Their products were personalised sustainable coffee cups and lanyards which they worked together to make from scratch.

They told the audience: "Our focus was on items that were authentic, sustainable and personalised."

Using a Cricut machine they designed each product to order and made a profit of £503.

The two local teams were up against eight schools from East Dunbartonshire.

And the title of Dunbartonshire Young Enterprise Team 2026 went to a talented group of students from Bishopbriggs Academy for their 'One Wee World: Aon Saoghal Beag' children's storybook.

Written in English and Gaelic with artwork by team members the book explored and celebrated diverse cultures, languages and stories from around the world.

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Clydesider Photo Competition: Hidden Heritage

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

The next competition theme is 'Planes, Trains and Automobiles'. See pages 48/49 for some tips plus details on how to enter.



Harry Kielty



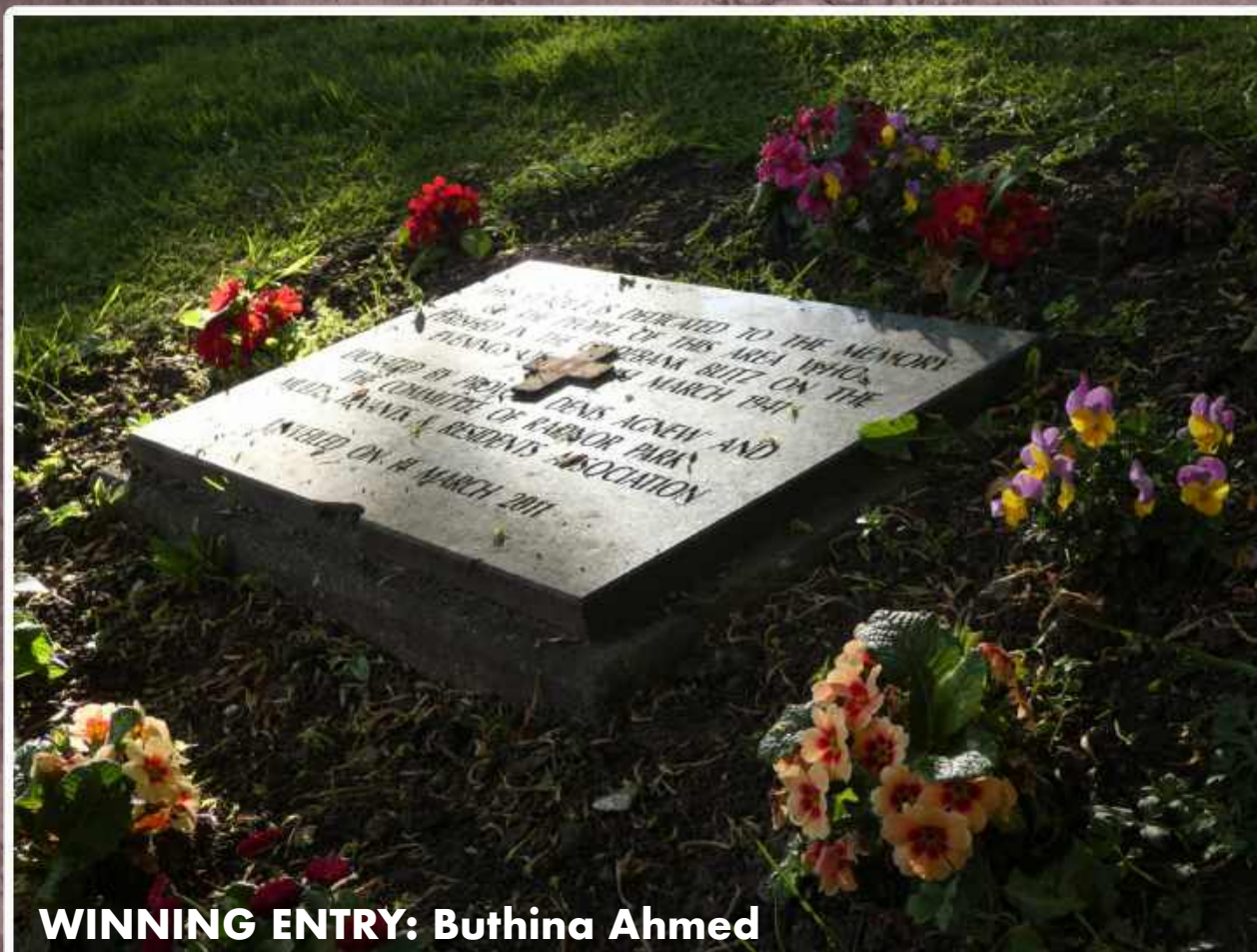
Martin McGeachie



Fiona McIver



Yvonne Gallagher



WINNING ENTRY: Buthina Ahmed

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





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Meet Our Volunteers: Lorraine!

 By Team Clydesider



How did you get involved with Clydesider Camera Club?

It was through Charlie whom I had met previously doing a project with Stepping Stones.

What do you enjoy about being part of the club?

I really enjoy being part of the wee community and the friendships I have made and also love going out and taking photographs.

When did you become interested in photography?

I've always loved taking pictures of things, my phone is ridiculous and I've always had cameras.

Do you have any advice for people thinking about volunteering?

Go ahead and do it, you'll meet the nicest people you'll ever meet and have the best time.

What's your favourite biscuit?

I like a tea cake!

Clydesider Summer School

We're excited to announce our second Clydesider Summer School which will offer a series of FREE media skills workshops throughout July and August.

Starting on July 7, the weekly sessions will run from 12.30pm - 2.30pm in Clydebank Library and include basic photography and composition skills, introduction to filmmaking, interview techniques, writing and editing.

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Community fund these sessions are free to anyone living in West Dunbartonshire. No experience or equipment is required but places are limited and need to be reserved.

To find out more or to reserve a place please email jenny@clydesider.org

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This is Me

By Jill Clark

This is my first article as a Clydesider volunteer and I'm excited to tell you about myself.

My name is Jill Clark and I am 34.

I live in Knightswood in the west end of Glasgow with my Mum and Dad. I have a big sister, and I am an aunty to a nephew and a niece who I love being with.

I have so many hobbies and interests... I love to go swimming and to the gym at Strathclyde sport centre. I go to Guides every second Monday where I am a young leader. I am a big country music fan; my favourite country singers are Nathan Carter and of course the queen of country music herself Dolly Parton (she is my hero). I love going on holiday - my favourite place is Orlando Florida where I love the shopping and the restaurants there. I am the biggest Mr. Blobby fan ever! I love to write and at the moment I am studying Journalism through the NCTJ.

I have a physical disability called Cerebral palsy.

Cerebral palsy is a group of conditions that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. It is caused by damage to the developing brain, usually before or during birth. People with cerebral palsy may have muscle stiffness, weakness, or difficulties with coordination and speech. It is a lifelong condition, but with therapy and support, many individuals can lead active and fulfilling lives.

My cerebral palsy affects my muscles, my movement and my speech, therefore I use a wheelchair all the time.

Even though I can't speak myself that doesn't stop me getting my word across as I am an AAC user. This stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, it just means communicating in a different way. This could be through a communication device or through a symbols book/sheet or through sign language.

I use a communication device to speak or 'talker' which is what I call it. My talker is called Accent 1000. I use a tracker dot to access my programme on my device. The dot is on my head, it is just like infrared.

An interesting fact - I was the first person in Scotland to try the head tracker.

I use a programme called LLL 144. That stands for Language, Living and Learning. On my talker there are 144 boxes and under these boxes there are subject words. So, for example under the 'burger' is all food or under the 'house' are all places or under the 'judge' are all sentences, and so on.

My talker isn't just my voice it is my hand too and it also a computer so I can use it to send emails, and I can use a word document. Also, I mirror a mobile phone to my talker which allows me to control a mobile phone on my talker.

One of my favourite quotes is "a Disability is an ability to do something different" and I believe that my Disability has given me the ability to campaign for disabled people's rights.

About 12 years ago I discovered I was very limited in where I could go because I couldn't get to the toilet when I was out as I require a hoist to get to the toilet and there was a huge lack of changing places toilets.

So, I decided that I would start my own campaign for these toilets. My campaign is The Toilet Woman.

Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. Over 1/4 million people in the UK with a disability need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by changing places toilets. These have all the right equipment in such as a hoist, a changing bed and it is very big to move around for a wheelchair user and two carers.

With this campaign I started off a petition which I

got over 100 signatures. I have made two videos about changing places toilets. I was in the Glasgow Evening Times a few times and I appeared on STV and BBC news.

Back in 2021 I was on the programme inside Central station where I was talking about changing places toilets. Back when I started my campaign there were only two changing places toilets in Glasgow but now there are 26 this includes Central station, Queen Street station, Riverside Museum, the Burrell Collection, Science Centre, Kelvin Hall and many more.

These toilets have made a huge difference to me and to other people's life.

But the greatest success of my campaign was getting a changing places toilet installed in Clydebank shopping centre.

As Clydebank is my local shopping centre, I am down there a lot, but my time was very limited as there wasn't a changing places toilet, so I decided to campaign for one to be installed.

Even though it took six years, I am very proud to say that Clydebank shopping centre opened their changing places toilet in December 2023, it is great to have it here in the town centre.



Devoutly Dumbarton

Words by Katie McGroarty
Portraits by Petra Kotkova

At any afters, any empty, any staffies, I know I sit with an ace in my pocket.

You can sit back, nurse your can and let them rhapsodise about the turmoil of a dog getting into their playground; then knock them out the park with the great escape of 2005 when the cows escaped the field behind our street, led by BlueJeans the miniature horse, cows just looking for the wind through their wee cow fringes, doing a few laps of the street via the Jamestown main road and before being happily ushered back into the field, BlueJeans delighted with her one minute mutiny, retied to one of the trailers on the spare ground.

You can sit, sunken into a sofa, knees to chest, in the early hours, listening to someone chat about wild school days and watch while their eyes fill up with gleeful nostalgia, quite happy with themselves; then let them know about the unexplained ghost-nuns handprint in OLSP, everyone on the bus getting late slips because the cows decided to cross the Renton road on their own schedule, or because the bus started to fill with smoke for no discernible reason.

Let them go on about whatever vampire or ghost stories are from their bit, then snooker them with the Renton Devil stories; with the moral of the story sometimes being to never trust a stranger, other times being to always lend a hand whenever you can.

I'm not even usually partial to an eleven-arife, but it's irresistible when I know the Vale and Dumbarton provide such a wealth of stories rendered unbelievable to outside ears but typical to those who know, so often overlooked and unheard by my friends from cities who think nothing special happens in towns and villages they only know for castles, forgetting all the schemes occupied by people who live and grow alongside this enormous lore.

At 19, I left to go to art school in Edinburgh, I was immediately enrolled into a year group of 200 where only a handful were Scottish, and as the only one with a discernible west coast (often mistaken as Glaswegian) accent, I became the unofficial travel agent or ambassador for the west coast.

I'd never considered myself especially Scottish, or ever even realised or think to realise that I was working class - everyone I knew was from the Vale or Dumbarton, and everyone I knew was working class - it kind of shaped how people spoke to me at the Edinburgh College of Art, and what I spoke about daily in return.

Scotland and the intersections of Scottishness ended up becoming a focal point in my art practice and the basis of my undergraduate dissertation.

In studying for my dissertation, I came across this

phrase and I felt like so many conversations, sentiments, thoughts and feelings clicked into place: *Caledonian Antisyzygy*.

Coined by literary critic G. Gregory Smith just after the first world war, the phrase essentially refers to Scotland being made up of opposites all at the same time, although he was referring to literature and language; this exists everywhere in Scotland.

Highlands and lowlands; east coast and west coast; high road and low road; countryside and cityscape; islands and mainland; catholic and protestant; very friendly and infamously dangerous; always forgiving and absolutely merciless; brownies that clean your house for free and faeries that will steal your baby and not think twice about it.

In my second year at the ECA, my friend Freya Yeates lent me a book called *The Glass Half Full: Moving Beyond Scottish Miserablism* by Eleanor Yule and David Manderson.

The book detailed how this antiszyzygy manifested, and how Scottish visual culture could be separated into the Kailyard (nostalgic aesthetics set in the countryside where Scottish people are portrayed as backwards, uber-traditional, sometimes even stupid or blissfully ignorant of the rest of the world, and often drunk).

Or Miserbalism (urban and gritty aesthetics set in cityscapes, where Scottish people are portrayed as unforgiving, often selfish or scathing, with a backdrop of drug use and violence, where the protagonist has to choose between leaving their home or die trying).

The authors went into depth about why Scotland was portrayed in this way and how it is a shame that Scotland and Scottish people aren't afforded more nuance culturally, especially on screen where Scotland is on show to the world.

It made me think about how people perceive Dumbarton and the Vale.

Geographically sat on the southernmost tip of the

highland line, we're too lowlandish to be Highlands but maybe too bumpkin to melt into any cityscape, still we sit sandwiched between Clydebank and Luss, not being more of one than the other.

Known for Loch Lomond, the song and the body of water, conjuring a picture of quaint picnics and welling up at the end of a wedding; the lived experience being one of drinking up the back woods of the park and young team culture.

People might have known about the textile heritage of the place, but not about the significant Communist history and heritage where workers banded together to create a Little Moscow.

Maybe they recognise the convent or have heard of the Carmelite nuns, do they know they'd let you go on Bebo in class though?

Dumbarton and the Vale are a patchwork of all these schisms, a delicate balance, precisely at the precipice of every cultural biting point, every thread of our knit is a schism and there is no greater schism than the doggy suicide bridge...

Overtoun House is locally known for bringing babies into the world, but is globally infamous for the bridge where many dogs meet their deaths; cherubs swim on the ceiling in the

Angel Ward only feet above the accidental pet cemetery.

The merciless fatalism of nature meeting the woman made softness of a maternity unit; where some say their animals won't even go near, and others say they've seen a white lady in the window, bricks laid by men make a bridge imbued in the supernatural, a bridge connecting us to Overtoun House and Overtoun House to somewhere else: nothing is straightforward but it all makes sense if you're already part of the ecosystem.

Unbelievable facts, never discussed or considered fiction.

I've been thinking a lot about the schism Overtoun Bridge provides recently. I often listen



to podcasts in the studio while I'm painting, one podcast was discussing fear and I tried to remember a time I was genuinely terrified.

I was reminded of a sleep paralysis nightmare I had years ago where a demon disguised as a nun (or a nun gone bad - we never spoke enough to clarify) was trying to drag me somewhere, clawing at my face, sitting on my chest and screaming.

At the time, I think I'd been feeling bad for leaving Dumbarton and the Vale to go to uni, a very common feeling amongst especially working class people at universities, as for the first time in your life the world at home goes on without you; life at uni is fast paced and everything feels temporary, it leaves you questioning if this temporality is worth missing the permanence of home for.

The paralysis aspect was especially terrifying as any control I would typically have was gone; I wasn't asleep enough to lucid dream as I usually would in a nightmare, nor was I awake enough to know it wasn't real or do anything about it if it was.

Ironically, this schism in consciousness was the most West Dunbartonshire thing I could have

done or been: not awake, not asleep; mind racing, pulse steady; my guilt manifesting in oxymoron, plaguing me for leaving an oxymoronic place, obviously having never left me. Maybe the nun was the Vale in me, coming to make me realise it could never leave me.

In 2021, I went to Dundee to complete my postgraduate degree, where I'm currently sat in my studio.

As I write this now, my mum has sent me a picture of a newspaper clipping where my Grampa was featured in the paper talking about driving buses full of the injured during the war, whizzing around West Dunbartonshire while bombs were dropping.

The place names and the stories are all familiar.

I heard them from him and then made memories in these places with my friends during the summers or after school as I grew in and with the place.

Every day, in little ways like newspaper clippings, or bigger ways like demonic visitations, I am reminded that I am, and cannot help but be, painfully obviously devoutly Dumbarton wherever I go.



Empower Yourself

by Layla Blackwell

Hi, I'm Layla and I'm an Empowerment Coach. In this column I'm going to share useful hints and tips to help you become more Empowered.

Today we'll be discussing: Reframing.

This is the skill that builds resilience and that I use most often. Reframing is when you take something negative and choose to see it positively instead. It's shifting the focus to something better like you do in photography.

Step One: Identify the issue.

Step Two: Analyse how it is making you feel. (Try and do this in as much detail as possible). Think where and what you feel. For example: You might feel anxious. I quite often feel that in my stomach.

Step Three: Take some big, deep breaths. Imagine you're blowing out candles on your birthday cake and there's a lot of them.

Step Four: When you feel ready. Find one positive thing in the situation. If struggling, repeat Step Three until you feel calmer and then try again.

I'll give you an example of when I had to do this myself.

Recently, a train journey I was on went wrong because there was no one to help me off the train. I overcame it by reframing. Here's how:

The first emotion (often the biggest) I felt was helplessness, but I needed to be confident to fix the situation. I thought about the rest of my day and what I had achieved. I then realised that I was more capable than I thought. Tapping into that confidence I was able to help come up with a plan to get myself home.

For more information on empowerment skills visit: laylabecoaching.com



Mental Well-being Top Tips

'Playology' by Sarah-Ann Dillon

According to the internet this lovely word refers to the belief that children's hearts and brains need playful, creative experiences.

And what about the idea that as adults we need the same thing in our lives? Play.

Dr Joseph Jebelli, a neuroscientist, who advocates this, has published a book, 'The Brain at Rest - Why Doing Nothing Can Change Your Life'.

Reviewed on Amazon, one quote related to this best-selling book reads: "When we let our brains rest and our minds wander something magical happens."

We don't need to be napping or in a deep sleep for our brain to be at rest. We can be in a calm, relaxed, yet attentive state. We can be so absorbed in an activity which we enjoy so as not to be aware of the passing of a few hours of time.

In the 1970s, the Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi spoke of 'a state of flow'. In the field of positive psychology and fostering good mental health we refer to

being 'in the zone'.

This relates to a mental state where a person performing some activity is fully immersed in a feeling of "energised focus".

To create this state of being in the zone for yourself, begin by thinking about the kind of activity or hobby you enjoyed as a child or young adult.

It could be an active hobby like a sport - where you enjoy being part of a team; and love the joy of competing and winning.

Or it could be an activity where you like to spend time alone - to walk, to write, to draw to sing.

Anything at all.

The important thing is you have chosen it for yourself, not because a friend has suggested it.

So, what might be your own hobby that you could resurrect?

To find out more, read Dr Jebelli's book and discover how to do more - nothing - apart from relaxing and enjoying yourself.



Our World in Words

By Niamh Friel

As a child, you are told anything is possible, that the world is your oyster and the sky is the limit. As you get older, you are told to sit down, face the front and listen but when you are a writer, this act of obedience is more like a punishment.

Young minds are not designed to be constrained and as a young girl growing up in Dalmeir, I was fascinated by the world around me, which meant I was constantly writing stories and everyone from family to primary school teachers encouraged me to continue with it.

Yet when I entered high school

there was nowhere for me to put my words.

While my peers were spoiled for choice in extracurricular activities and boundless career opportunities, I was limited to the creative writing in English class and the brief interlude of Burns poetry for one week a year.

Little did I know, this was a sign of things to come.

Life is full of hard pills to swallow, none more so than for the budding creative to be told that you are on your own because there is no one who knows how to nurture your dreams.

'You're great at writing speeches, you should go into politics!'
'Broadcast journalism is a viable career path'
'Writing is great and all...but you need to be realistic'

The weight of expectation is a heavy burden for any young person, never mind for those of us that are fuelled to pursue gifts that fall outside the container of a system that was never built for us.

They say that 'you are always one choice away from changing your life', that 'God works in mysterious ways' and when you're least expecting it;

and one day, as I was passing the school library:

Free poetry workshop with Miko Berry Library @ Lunchtime

Ironically, until then I hadn't spent too much time in the library but as I sat down at this roundtable, I felt the world wash away.

I looked round at the faces either side of me, some familiar and some not and before me, a man with jet black hair, a ripped striped sweater and chipped black nails - someone who looked like me.

In the weeks that followed, the library became my save haven, the faces became familiar and a world that I never knew existed had emerged in the most unlikely of places.

Each of us were given an A5 notebook, a pen and a chance as we were taught a myriad of writing techniques and different ways to apply them in a medium known as spoken word poetry.

Towards the end we were given the opportunity to perform in front of each other, even those who were the most shy had the heart to stand up with their newfound courage.

For the first time in my life, there came a sense of validation that I too could make a living from my passion and that it wasn't just a pipe dream.

It was this small act organised by our school librarian that confirmed there was indeed a way for me to pursue my career as a writer and although nothing grand came of it immediately, it was

the lasting impact that has served as a guiding light when the world around me tells me to abandon my craft.

However, the world has a way of convincing you otherwise.

The winter of 2023 rolled around, five years after graduating high school and completing a degree in an entirely unrelated field because I had eventually bought into the lie that I'd never make a living as a writer.

I graduated with severe burnout and felt utterly directionless because everything I had tried as an alternative to writing had left me feeling empty and, despite my vow to reconnect with writing after graduating, the uphill battle of getting published only fuelled my despair.

like to join.

At that moment, the words of Wayne Gretzky flashed through my mind: 'You miss 100% of the shots you don't take' because even in an endless sea of Facebook posts, you never know what could come of it.

I sent off my high school poems that were collecting dust and returned to my day, although I couldn't ignore the spark that had begun to re-ignite inside.

Two years later and the second global anthology of **The World in Our Words** sold out in less than a day, but I often ask myself, *what would have happened if those workshops hadn't been available?*

Because it was those series of workshops that planted the seed, which would later sprout into those two global poetry anthologies.

Support for the arts has always been an afterthought but the impact of the arts, well that is something we just can't live without.

While the world is rapidly changing, the needs of young people have not - they are still as creative and full of ideas just waiting to be heard.

Be it a library or an empty classroom, never underestimate the power of these spaces for young people and it is thanks to those at Clydebanks High school who held this space

for us that we were able to discover a part of ourselves we did not even know was there.

That was until one of those rare moments occurred again.

Would anyone be interested in submitting their poetry for an anthology? Comment if you'd



Coping with Current Affairs Without Having all the Answers

By Emily Fraser



How are you coping with the world outside West Dunbartonshire at the moment? Do you consume a lot of current affairs content? How are you managing to process what you absorb? To me, the world has never been heavier with fear, rage and grief than it is now.

'Current affairs' can cover a multitude of topics in a short time. And now, we don't have to wait, we have 24/7 access via smartphones and social media. Certain events will affect us directly, whether or not we learn about them, but what I want to discuss is this:

How do we cope, mentally and emotionally, with bearing witness to a constant stream of deeply upsetting news, at home and abroad, which seems never to have let up since 2020?

How should we deal with feeling powerless to help those suffering? And how can we process current affairs together, without falling out?

It's *not* easy! I often sense that some folk reckon I take it all too personally.

Maybe I do.

Honestly, I haven't been handling current affairs well recently, but that's understandable. My heart truly breaks over many, many situations we have seen in the last few years. I know I'm not alone in that.

It seems wrong to talk about coping with 'stressful news content'. I'm not a politician, a soldier, a parent. It's not my loved ones trapped in dangerous places, nor have I lived through persecution, conflict and ruin.

However: I am human, I have loved ones, sympathy for strangers, I am hurting and sometimes I'm scared by what I see. It's okay for any Earthling to be feeling pretty bleak right now. Don't beat yourself up if you are, too.

You might be thinking "just switch off" but I can't, not totally.

I'm not judging anyone who has disengaged. Sometimes it's necessary for your sanity, but I can't not care.

Plus, avoiding bad news is an impressive feat in the digital age, not to mention the unavoidable snippets heard at work, at school, on the bus, in the supermarket... everywhere, people are discussing really emotional subjects and it's a minefield. Particularly if you struggle with mental health problems and self-regulation in public, or inside your own spicy brain, to begin with.

Sometimes I go numb from caring this much, and suicidal ideation steps forward (a condition I've struggled with for other reasons, since my twenties) so I did try coming off social media and not consuming any news, but it backfired.

I was blind-sided by important developments, got overwhelmed by what I'd missed, and ended up feeling worse. Guilty. And very isolated.

Living in a cosy, 'ignorance is bliss' bubble never lasts for me, and it's not actually possible. Some events will take an interest in you, regardless.

I don't have all the answers, nobody does, but my approach to coping with current affairs while the world goes mad is now as follows:

- Don't ignore the news, but don't obsess. Take wee breaks. Doomscrolling is not allowed
- Have compassion for yourself and others, focus on your shared humanity above all
- Consume a range of information from independent sources and retain critical thinking (look up Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'Theory of Stupidity' and thank me later!)
- If you can take action to help, do it quickly. Write a post, send an email, sign a petition
- If you can't take action, send positive energy. Not fake platitudes - focused intention. This helps you, as well as the recipient
- Making art of any kind gets your feelings out, and it doesn't need to be seen by others
- Boundaries, for when you do and don't talk about current affairs with your circle, are good
- Keep in mind, you can share how you're feeling without deciding who's right or wrong. That being said, it's also important to take a stand now and then (but

especially now)

- Hugging animal companions, partners and the occasional consenting stranger is therapy
- Look at the sky and take comfort in the fact that we're infinitely insignificant
- Crying is allowed, no matter who you are. So is screaming into a pillow. But *singing* is best
- Have faith in the good things out there. And read about them in the Clydesider!

Recommendations

I'm currently reading...

Naoki Higashida 'The Reason I Jump' (2005 non-fiction book)

and listening to...

Joan Baez 'Gracias a la Vida/Here's to Life' (1974 album)

and watching...

Corina Nika's 'Cocorrina' YouTube channel (relaxing, mystical, AI-free art videos "made by a human" as the artist says)

beautiful to fall asleep with, or to have on during work, hobbies, meditation ♥ enjoy



Got a Story for Clydesider?

Email
amanda@clydesider.org

Our Stories Heritage Festival – It's a Wrap!

This May saw a raft of activity across West Dunbartonshire as our first ever local Heritage Festival took place.

Co-ordinated by Clydesider Creative with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and additional sponsorship from Clyde Bed Centre, the festival saw 48 events and activities take place throughout the month.

We were delighted that over 20 local groups and organisations got involved to help people discover the fascinating heritage on their doorstep.

There were more than 1,000 attendances over the 31 days of heritage activities which covered everything from the 5,000-year-old Cochno Stone to sharing the stories of local community activists making a difference today. There really was something for everyone!

We hope you managed to get out and enjoy some local heritage – the reviews and photos from Clydesider volunteers on the next pages give a flavour of just some of things that took place.



Here's what Our Stories Heritage Festival Volunteers thought...

Kilbowie St Andrew's Open Day by Patricia Laws



It was my great privilege to visit Kilbowie St Andrew's Church at the "tap o' the hill" during the Heritage Festival. I had passed the church zillions of times but never visited.

It miraculously survived the 1941 Blitz, despite being in the epicentre of the bombing.

The congregation made it their "collective duty to remember their community's loss" and in 1997 set up a Blitz Memorial Chapel so "the memory

of those who perished should never be erased."

Church volunteers welcomed me warmly and suggested I peruse the Blitz dedications on my own: stark white posters with quotes in black from Blitz survivors are hung on the left, together with poignant photos of devastating destruction.

Moving further down the aisle, the Blitz Chapel is off to the left.

A memorial stained-glass window and tapestry by artist Eilidh Keith are central to this chapel of remembrance and reflection, as is a triptych 'Map' by local artist, Tom McKendrick: a moving series pinpointing the vast scale of the bombardment of Clydebank.

Tom has dedicated much of his artistic life to the Clydebank Blitz paying tribute to lost lives, the indomitable spirit of the Bankies and ensuring they are never forgotten. His work also features prominently in Clydebank Museum as a testament to their horrific plight and their endurance.

Also, in the Blitz Chapel are photos and memorabilia: including newspaper articles and a beautiful calligraphy album detailing street names and names of those who perished in the town.

Finally, I spoke with former Dalmuir teacher, Mrs Margaret Mc Dougall, née Muirhead, who lived not far from the Church during WW2. Her tenement flats were bombed and she was buried with her family, who remained trapped under the floor.

Margaret paid tribute to her Mum for keeping her and her baby sister safe in such turmoil, with war literally raging round them. Margaret left Clydebank and spent about a year near Strathaven...although she shrugs off both the ordeal of being buried under rubble and leaving their home: "We just did it..." I could have talked to Margaret all day...

The volunteers urged me to try the delicious home baking prepared by their members and of course I took one for the team!

I feel I need to return...



Dumbarton High Street Guided Walk by Rob Williams

On a sunny but chilly Sunday afternoon, I undertook the Dumbarton High Street guided history walk - part of the 'Our Stories' Heritage Festival.

Armed with an early 19th century town map and led by Jeremy Watson and Elspeth Crocket this was two hours of sheer joy, enjoyed by myself and about two dozen other interested souls.

Starting at the Artizan Centre we traced the history of the town's development through various stops including St Augustine's Church, the Old Academy, the Sheriff Court, Old Dumbarton Prison and the Denny Shipyard.



From each vantage point, our attention was drawn to other major aspects on the Dumbarton horizon and we were entertained with a variety of anecdotes and character sketches as our imaginations worked to take in what the old town would have looked like in its heyday.

Naturally, the castle commanded our attention and the knowledge imparted by Jeremy and Elspeth was absolutely fascinating, meaning that a walk initially scheduled for 90 minutes was easily extended to two and a quarter hours.

Again, the conversations between those 'en route' and their input from memory or family hearsay were equally important and actively encouraged. How else would we have known that Marks and Spencer underwear was once manufactured on the site of the old glassworks?

Thanks must go to Jeremy and Elspeth whose knowledge and delivery were exemplary.

Agnes Owens Centenary by Sarah-Ann Dillon



Saturday May 23 2026 was, at Alexandria Library, a day of celebration to honour the memory of local writer, Agnes Owens.

Agnes was born on May 24 1926 and died in October 2014, leaving behind an important literary legacy, portraying the reality of working-class life.

Writing from her own 'lived experience' she wrote without sentimentality; with grit and a searing dark humour, about those living on the edge of society.

Her great skill was to speak to us from inside the minds of her characters – 'people like that' – and to portray their vulnerabilities with dignity and compassion.

Agnes attended an evening class in creative writing in the Vale, and went on to write her first novel, 'Gentlemen of the West' published in 1984, when she was 58.

A working mother, who raised seven children, she went on to write a further five novellas and three short story collections.

This 100th birthday celebration, complete with tea, coffee and birthday cake, was a big success.

Visitors to the library, including members of Agnes' family and people who had known her, were able to chat together and share memories.

On a community memory map, Claire, who had known Agnes as one of the founding members of Balloch Library Reading Group, commented: "the group just wasn't the same without her. She is much missed." In the Vale of Leven Heritage room there was a specially curated display – photos of Agnes and typewritten pages of her work.

From Daydreams independent bookshop there was a colourful display of newly published paperbacks of Agnes's stories with cover images from the work of the late Joan Eardley who, like Agnes, portrayed the lives of working-class people.

A lovely sunny Saturday in Alexandria, in the convivial company of other booklovers; plenty books and birthday cake. It was indeed a lovely way to honour the memory of a local writer – one of our own.

Folklore Frolic by Jennifer Carr



On these glorious, blue-skied mornings, why not take yourself down to Balloch Park for the Folklore Frolic, one of many events celebrated during the Heritage Festival this May.

It's the perfect time of year for learning about growing things, as Beltane has just passed.

Beltane, one of the traditional Celtic fire festivals, marks the beginning of summer, where the Pagan goddess Brigid triumphs over Cailleach, the Queen of Winter, and brings longer, warmer days and new life to our forests and woodlands,

with spring plant life being a key focus of the Folklore Frolic.

As it turns out, many of the common woodland plants we pass by on our walks have uses that might surprise you – the white latex that bleeds from Scottish bluebell plants works as an adhesive, while the sap that oozes from the stems of dock leaves rivals any aloe vera gel.

But the most eclectic use for wild plants is in culinary pursuits.

Many of our favourite wildflowers are actually relatives of the onion and cabbage families and perfectly suited for eating.

Beech leaves, still young and tender on the branch, have a pleasant zingy flavour reminiscent of apple peels, while peppery ribwort (as well as being a miracle cure for tonsillitis) can be boiled down exactly like spinach.

But it's not just practical applications that should entice you to come along. There's magic in these woods too.

On the road up to Whinny Hill, there is a hawthorn tree, and while it may be ill luck to take hawthorn blossoms into your home, they are also known as "wishing trees" in Scottish folklore. Who knows? Maybe your heart's desire will be granted.

For those intrigued, similar walks will take place come autumn, when the fungi is ripe on the ground, and your guides will be enthusiastic, knowledgeable and welcoming.

Come on down to the woods and give nature a taste.



Kilmarnock Kirk Open Day

By Steven Hastings



In West Dunbartonshire there's a historical building you may not have heard of, Kilmarnock Kirk just outside Gartocharn.

The church, built in 1813, was recently purchased by Kilmarnock Old Kirk Trust, which is made up of local people and is now a heritage centre and events venue.

When I first visited, I used my own ramp to get in. It has now been transformed, and everyone enters via a flat surface.

All the pews were removed but the pulpit remains for services, funerals and weddings. There are information walls about the Kirk's history and photos from the village.

One of the most well-known people who lived in Gartocharn was climber, author and presenter Tom Weir. There's a photo from the 1960's when Tom took his Sherpa friend to meet some local school children.

I can't access the upstairs area at the moment; there is no lift. I heard, upstairs you can listen to local people telling their stories. It is hoped the lift will be installed by the end of May 2026.

The volunteers are very welcoming. There are church open days every Wednesday 10.30am – 2.30pm where you can have a guided tour of the graveyards, research your family tree and get a cup of tea.

Old Kilpatrick to Bowling Walk Review by Rob Williams



What a pleasant way to spend a Spring evening - a walk along the Forth and Clyde Canal between Old Kilpatrick and Bowling, led by the knowledgeable Florence.

Who would have thought that such a short stretch could encompass so much history.

I arrived early and was delighted to discover a small nature reserve, The Saltings, whose footpaths weave their way beneath the towering supports of Erskine Bridge.

There were eight of us in total - eight new friends - and the stories which surrounded Erskine Ferry Road alone were enough to fill a history text book. From witchcraft to the building of the mulberry harbours, from light bulb factories to anecdotes of the ferry itself, and this was just the start.

We heard of days when the area was a centre for renowned artists from Glasgow who went on to form the Glasgow Art Club and this was added to by a sketch drawn by JMW Turner of the canal with the steeple of Old Kilpatrick in the background.

There were sites of Roman temples and the stables of Clydesdale horses - so essential for towing the barges down the canal.

We followed the old railway line to Bowling basin and its Custom House once visited by the celebrated Frederick Douglass - escaped slave and fervent abolitionist - whilst on a speaking tour to the UK in 1846.

This was a fascinating evening encouraging people to research deeper into what they had learnt.

And the eight new friends? That was a bonus!

Skylark Skiffs Review by Suhaila Alrashid

On a beautiful Saturday morning, I decided to attend the Skylark IX rowing taster session as part of the Heritage Festival, and I can proudly say it did not disappoint.

Not only did I learn something completely new, but I also met wonderful people whose kindness and support created such a welcoming atmosphere from the very beginning.

Rowing was definitely challenging at first, especially since it was my first time, but the people around me made the experience feel relaxed and encouraging.

There was no pressure to be perfect or fear making mistakes.

Instead, it felt like I had all the time in the world to learn at my own pace and the sound of the water, the fresh air, and the peaceful scenery created such a calming experience which helped me a lot.

I also discovered that rowing is an excellent way to clear your mind because, while rowing, your focus is entirely on the movement of your hands and working in rhythm with the water. I found that especially fascinating and what made the experience even more special was learning the history behind the Skylark IX itself.

In 2010 the little boat, once used to rescue stranded soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk during World War II, sank in Loch Lomond and after an appeal for help, Alternatives, a local recovery project, stepped forward and this was when Skylark IX was born.

Through the project, they not only helped bring boatbuilding back to Dumbarton, but also became a source of hope during times when darkness seemed to take over.

With their welcoming and accessible community-led approach, they have helped many people and continue to do so by remaining open to all adults and providing opportunities to learn both on and off the water.



Witchcraft Trials in Dunbartonshire Review by Sarah-Ann Dillon



On May 13th, I attended a packed workshop, held within the museum space of Clydebank Library. I was not sure what to expect. What followed was a very informative and moving account, from the ladies of RAWS, of the lives and deaths of very real people.

RAWS - Remembering the Accused Witches of

Scotland - is a registered charity whose purpose is to raise awareness of horrific injustices inflicted upon women and men wrongly accused of witchcraft.

The numbers are staggering - in Scotland over 4,000 people, mostly women were accused. So, figures much higher than Salem and yet we are largely ignorant of this part of our own history.

We heard how you could be accused of witchcraft if you expressed an unfavourable opinion; had a dispute with a neighbour; were in any way 'different' or even had a mole or birthmark on your person.

To set the records straight and to acknowledge the accused, RAWS has secured apologies from both the Government and the Church.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon apologised, in 2022, on behalf of the Scottish Government and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland apologised for historical wrongs.

The Church has said that it stands in solidarity with victims (and their descendants) and continues to affirm the dignity of those who suffered so much, in particular some 2,000 people put to death.

It is vital that these, our fellow human beings, are not forgotten.

RAWS has a wealth of knowledge and resources if you are interested in following up on individual stories. They are also working towards the creation of a national memorial.

Louise Wilson, a local resident and Secretary of RAWS ended our session by reading out the names of those, locally accused or who lost their lives and for me this was the most moving part of the whole experience.

More information visit RAWS social media, website or email info.raws.scot@gmail.com





Women Supporting Women

By Laura Giannini

The Scottish Women's Institute was first formed in East Lothian in 1917. From its inception the SWI has worked to improve women's lives.

They provide an important place where women of all ages can find solidarity, understanding, support for mental and physical well-being, and the chance to try out and learn something new: computer skills, photography, baking, knitting, gardening... all in a relaxed, easy atmosphere.

The newest group meets in Dumbarton's Riverside church on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 7pm. All are welcome and there's no fee to pay.

I arrived late and walked into a darkened hall where a yoga taster was in session.

Nonetheless, just minutes later, one of the women came over, welcomed me in, and offered me a seat in the circle facing the speaker.

It was an interesting session that covered breathing, tapping, circulation stimulation and the relaxation of a music bowl. It was a terrific introduction to the speakers that the group invites along to share information with them.

At tea-break another woman, Lorraine MacGillvray, greeted me and invited me to introduce myself.

This done, there was no shortage of people to talk to.

It is certainly a very chatty, welcoming group. An excellent thing since combatting the social isolation of women is one of the core missions.

June told me: "Things are getting more difficult for women again. What with so many living alone, working from home again, divorce and so on; they need a place to relax, to meet other women, to talk, to try out new things. That's what we get when we come to this group."

Another first-timer, Louise McPhail, told me she'd been meaning to come along for several months: "I do Guiding too, so I like 'doing' groups. I think women have always traditionally gathered to chat and to do.

"In the past it would be to gather and spin wool, butcher a large beast, gather and winnow crops. The WI offers a modern version of that, you can try new things, you can learn, you can do things, but don't have to. That's nice."

Lorraine agreed: "We do as much or as little as we choose. There's never any pressure. We have a couple of wee competitions each month; this month we have knitting and pancakes."

She smiled: "As you don't know anyone, how about you judge?"

I dug into memories of Calendar Girls to select Arlene Maxwell's pancakes based on texture, uniformity and taste, and my idea of a Scottish pancake.

The offerings for the knitting group were, as far as I could tell, all great and so different one from the other I was hard-pressed. I chose, what I felt was a modern take on Aran knits, a lime green ear warmer as runner up, and an immaculately presented basket weave scarf by Alison Freeman as winner.

Alison is also a member of the SWI Heritage Group, which is working to preserve and catalogue the crafts and information from the hundred plus years of the WI. The group is currently trying to find an archive in which to keep the collected data.

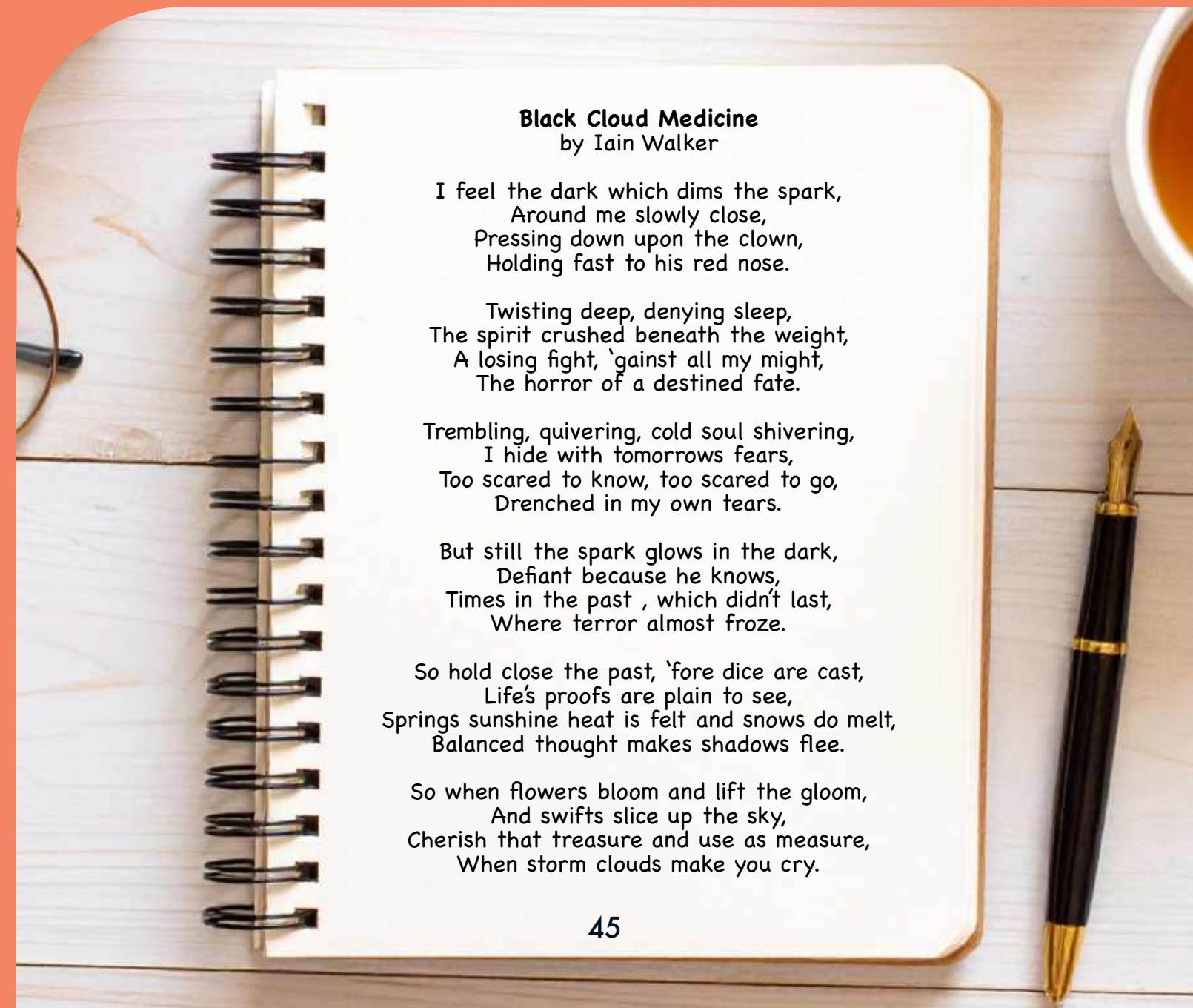
The information is indeed much and varied: "The WI published a cookbook each year. We're working on the 1928 one and I notice that some of the ingredients don't exist or would be hard to find now."

I mentioned a heritage knitting skill: Sanquhar knitting, a pattern built up in squares. "It's a difficult style, but so worth saving. So many of the traditional heritage crafts are. It's important we pass these skills on, because once they're lost, they're gone.

"That's where the WI can be so important, so many of these crafts are in the hands of women. We hold so much of the heritage and traditions of a place, a country."

This is so from Scotland to Siberia, from Congo to Cardross. Women are what the world needs to move forward.

The Dumbarton WI group is certainly upholding this tradition.



Black Cloud Medicine by Iain Walker

I feel the dark which dims the spark,
Around me slowly close,
Pressing down upon the clown,
Holding fast to his red nose.

Twisting deep, denying sleep,
The spirit crushed beneath the weight,
A losing fight, 'gainst all my might,
The horror of a destined fate.

Trembling, quivering, cold soul shivering,
I hide with tomorrows fears,
Too scared to know, too scared to go,
Drenched in my own tears.

But still the spark glows in the dark,
Defiant because he knows,
Times in the past, which didn't last,
Where terror almost froze.

So hold close the past, 'fore dice are cast,
Life's proofs are plain to see,
Springs sunshine heat is felt and snows do melt,
Balanced thought makes shadows flee.

So when flowers bloom and lift the gloom,
And swifts slice up the sky,
Cherish that treasure and use as measure,
When storm clouds make you cry.

'The Dragon Prince of Beithir'

by Doreen Hopwood
Review by Mary Irvine



This issue I had two new publications to review. Both local and both by female authors. One is 'The Dragon Prince of Beithir' the second of Doreen Hopwood's trilogy, 'The Dynasty of Dragons Series', eagerly awaited by fans of the

first book. An epic adventure of magic, great battles, romance and lost love, as the fight against evil continues. A real 'page-turner'. Doreen explained she created two endings for the first novel, as prospective publishers stated they only wanted stand-alone novels. Although these worked well, she wasn't really happy with either, feeling the flow of the book suggested more to come - hence the trilogy. As one would expect, this book, as with the first, is professionally presented and well written. Doreen said she doesn't have a set writing regime, writing as the notion or inspiration takes her, but she does try to write something most days, even if only to go over something already written.

Doreen's Advice to Budding Authors

Go for it - just sit down and write, allow your imagination to take over. If writing about something unfamiliar don't neglect the research - it will show if you do, especially important if writing in 'real time', dealing with real life issues. You have more leeway writing fantasy, but you still need to research certain subjects.

These novelists follow different genres and styles but share the ability, not always demonstrated these days, to write well and engage their readers. Two very different books each probably appealing to a different audience, each, once again, bearing witness to the wealth of talent on our own doorstep!

'A Week in May'

by Ann Mackinnon
Review by Mary Irvine



The second book can also be described as a page turner, although a very different genre, is both a debut novel and the last, according to the author. That's Ann Mackinnon's 'A Week in May'. Known primarily as an award-winning poetess, in both English and Scots, she previously entered the world of prose, achieving several successes in short story

competitions.

But some years ago, Ann decided to venture into longer prose. Thirty thousand words materialised. A 'rest' period followed. When Covid struck Ann took up the quill pen of prose again, deciding to complete her novel.

A labour perhaps not always of love, Ann firmly declares there will be no follow-up. Perhaps a book to buy and keep as a 'collectable of the future'! Set in Narbonne, France, an area well known and loved by Ann, a young woman, on holiday with her friend, disappears and the ensuing search takes place as the title suggests. The plot flows well, moving in real time, making the time span of the title utterly believable. With description and visual imagery verging on the poetic, and the occasional French phrase, Ann reminds us we are in France. The reader is drawn into the action but not the secrets. One might suspect the 'villain' but not the reason why. We are kept guessing to the end.

Ann's Advice to Budding Writers

Join a writers' group. It is good to share your work and plans with like-minded people. Don't be afraid of criticism, it all helps develop your writing. Give yourself a little time every day to devote to your writing and just write. You never know what it will develop into.

Hunky Stan the White Van Fish Man

(The Ballad of a Lonely Housewife)
Clydesider Poetry Competition Winner
by Andrew Connolly

About this time every Friday
I stare oot the windy across Avalon Lane
condensation runs like teardrops
doon the reflection o' ma widow pain.

I'm waitin' for Stan the fish man
he arrives about a quarter past wan
he must get his fish from a dreamboat
but sells it from a rusty white van.

He thinks he looks a bit like Elvis
hair slicked back covered in gel
there's definitely something fishy about 'im
and I don't just mean the smell.
'Good afternoon Stanley's Angels.'

You'll always hear him on his horn
to let people know he's arrivin'
there's a queue on the street already
he's a regular star fish attraction.

First in line is top me up Tracey
she's always got a good drink in her
she all over Stan like scales on a salmon
she'll dae anythin' for a free fish finger.

She's got on her short skirt and fishnets
a think she's out to make a catch
an' we all know who she's after
it's hunky Stan the white van fish man.

Fur god's sake wumin he's a fish merchant
he doesnae serve mutton dressed as lamb
can you no haud on tae yer dignity
just like I very nearly can.

When he drives doon the street ma hearts a flutter
a feeling a just can't explain
but am no wan o' his groupies
swoonin' at the mere mention o' his name.

Next in line is stay at home Harry
a one man neighbourhood watch
he fancies himself as a bit of a Columbo
a fancy he's just a nosy wee sod.

'Am no that keen on fresh fish really
but honestly I swear to god
wee Kitty's at the front door slaverin'
at the prospect of a nice piece o cod.

But she's been puttin' on too much weight lately
all she does is eat and nap
I had to smear her all over wi' butter
when she got stuck half way through the catflap.

Stan doesnae really float ma fishboat
but I'll just go and slap on a bit more lippy
if he ever asked me back to his place
I'd settle for a fish supper at the local chippy.

CLYDESIDER MEMBERSHIP

clydesider.org/#/portal/signup

Supporting Membership

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

£4
per month
or £40 per year

Friendship Membership

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

£6
per month
or £60 per 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.

£10
per month
or £100 per year

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

Name:

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☐ Supporting: £4pm or £40pa

☐ Friendship: £6pm or £60pa

☐ Community: £10pm or £100pa

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



Clydesider Photo Competition: Planes, Trains and Automobiles

By Harvey Smart

The theme for our photography competition this issue is **Planes, Trains, and Automobiles**. From the sleek lines of a sports car to the giant looming wings of an airliner, the world of transport offers a huge range of photographic possibilities.

Lighting - As always, golden hour (the time just after sunrise or just before sunset) tends to create the best conditions. Try shooting with the sun behind your subject to backlight it and create a silhouette.

Perspective - Get low to the ground and shoot cars through puddles on the street, or a plane flying through the sky. This can look almost like a window to another world!

Shutter speed - Think about any moving elements in your shot. Use a fast shutter speed or flash to freeze motion, or a slow shutter to blur it. This often creates an interesting effect if you are shooting a fast moving subject like a train or cars, while there are also still elements. You could also try shooting from a train window to blur things outside. This works best when using a tripod to steady your camera.

Leading lines - Use natural geometry such as railway tracks, aeroplane contrails or road markings to lead the viewer's eye directly toward your subject.

Contrast - Look for the contrast of colours between a bright red car against the deep green of a summer woodland or more abstractly, a brand new car against the backdrop of a dilapidated building or wall.

Most importantly, stay safe while you're out exploring! Whether you're at the end of a runway or the side of a road, keep a safe distance. We can't wait to see the images you send in!

Send your entry to clydesidercomp@gmail.com by August 7 for a chance to win £25 and have your photo featured in Issue 37. Usual competition rules apply – one entry per person and all entrants must live, work or be part of a group based in West Dunbartonshire.

Good luck!



Please email your entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com by 7 Aug 2026. Open to people living, working or part of a group in West Dunbartonshire and only one entry per competition! Good luck!



Clydesider 10 Years On

By Jenny Watson

A little over 10 years ago, on a beautiful sunny day, Amanda and I sat down on a bench in Levensgrove Park, and she said, "I have an idea."

That idea was Clydesider.

I thought it was a brilliant, community-minded media space for those who very rarely have room made for them in the media environment. Never in my wildest dreams, however, did I think I would still be involved or that it would have grown to the capacity it has now.

My involvement has varied throughout the years, starting with attending planning meetings and progressing to where I am now as the Volunteer Co-ordinator on the staff team.



There have been a lot of favourite moments for me throughout this past decade: conducting my first ever interview with Salvino Volpe about his artwork; aching all over for days after my first time distributing 10,000 copies of the magazine; travelling to Birmingham and Budapest to share what we do and how we do it as part of the Engaged Journalism Accelerator; and having a stranger come up to me and tell me how much they love the magazine! And that's just to name a few.

Nothing yet though has topped how proud I felt of our Volunteers creating content for our Cost of Living project in 2024. Watching them learn all aspects of making short films, then go out there and do it, on top of all the researching, planning and designing they did for every aspect of the project. It truly was something special.

It's a rather strange feeling to look back and remember everything we have achieved, but it also makes thinking of the future more exciting.

Who knows what mischief the next 10 years will bring!

CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Local Support Services

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

GLASGOW & CLYDE RAPE CRISIS - Support line 08088 000014

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

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

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

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

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

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

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE - Text 61016 to discreetly report non-urgent crimes or anti-social behaviour on trains and at stations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WD KINSHIP CARE SUPPORT - information, advice and activities for kinship carers and their families; Meets bi-weekly Tues 10.30am - 12.30pm Level 2 1 North Ave, Erskine House, Clydebank G81 2DR, 0141 2373303 or 07490720123

YOURS FOR FREE (OR NEARLY FREE) IN WD

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - Emergency food aid. Opening hours vary, best to phone first to check. Unit 14A Artizan Shopping Centre, Dumbarton, G82 1LL. 01389 743908 admin@foodforthoughtwestdun.co.uk

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

OLD KILPATRICK FOOD PARCELS COMMUNITY PANTRY - Tues - Thurs 11am - 1pm & OKFP Chatty Cafe Tues - Fri 11:30am - 2:30pm, Napier Hall, 12 Dumbarton Rd, Old Kilpatrick, G60 5LW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE RECYCLE ROOM - Free recycled unwanted clothes, toys, household items & community laundry, 137 Onslow Rd, Clydebank G81 2PW or therecycleroom1@gmail.com Opening hours vary, keep an eye on Facebook for updates.

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 3.15-5.15pm. Lunch club for over 65s in G82 & G83, Mon - Fri. 11.30am - 2pm. All FREE Ben View Resource Centre, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BA

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 37 Clydesider Community Diary and What's On, email jenny@clydesider.org by Aug 12 2026

WHAT'S ON...

25 Jun Antartex Tea Dance. 1pm - 3pm. Tickets £20. Contact 01389 542632

26 Jun Pitter, Patter, Potter pottery painting event, 6pm - 8pm Tickets £6.13 from Eventbrite plus pay what you paint. Spectrum Coffee, Unit 19 Dumbarton

27 Jun Haldane Youth Services 20th anniversary celebration 10am - 2pm, Haldane Youth Services Annex Building; enjoy displays, light refreshments, meet the staff and young people and help plant a memorial tree in Nessie's Orchard. For more info call 01389 600367

28 Jun Discover Havoc Meadows 1pm - 3pm. Join Friends of Havoc Meadows for a gentle stroll and discover the hidden wildlife and nature secrets with a local guide. Tickets free, reserve a space in advance.

28 Jun Tulloch Wedding Fayre, 12pm - 4pm (last entry 3:30pm). Dumbarton FC, Castle Road, G82 1JJ. Book your tickets now: www.tullochan.org/wedding-fayre

14 Jul Wildlife Wanders at RSPB Loch Lomond, 10.30am - 12.30pm. Tickets from £6.50 available from the RSPB website

21 Jul Tetrapack Etching, Alexandria Library 4.45pm - 6.45pm. Tickets £10 via Eventbrite

24 Jul An Evening with Author Maureen Cullen 6.30pm. Caffeinated Escapism Bookstore Alexandria. Free. Book on their website

5 Aug Men's Shed 10th anniversary celebration 12 - 4pm, join the Shedders for a birthday celebration at Dalmeir C.E Centre, Duntocher Road, Clydebank

15 Aug Golden Friendships Music Festival, £10. 1.30pm - 10pm. Contact club for tickets.

28 Aug An Evening with Author Alan Cope 6.30pm at Caffeinated Escapism Bookstore Alexandria. Free. Book on their website

29 Aug Bat Night at RSPB Loch Lomond, 7.30pm - 9.30pm Tickets available from the RSPB website

12 Sept Doors Open Day - various events and open days across West Dunbartonshire

EDITORIAL
Call Amanda on 0791302934
email amanda@clydesider.org

CLYDESIDER TV
Call Kevin on 07471426303
email kevin@clydesider.org

ADVERTISING
Call Charlie on 07502460273
email charlie@clydesider.org

COMPETITIONS
clydesidercomp@gmail.com

ADDRESS
48a Erskine view,
Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

WEBSITE
www.clydesider.org

CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY DIARY

Creative, Heritage & Leisure

DALMUIR BARCLAY CHURCH
Indoor Bowls every Thurs 10am - 2pm, Arts & Crafts Drop-in every Thurs 6.30pm - 8pm

HEALTHY PATHWAYS

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

TULLICHEWAN CRAFT DROP-INS

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

CRAFT GROUP

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

MAGGIE'S YARN BUDDIES

Meet Wed 10.30am - 2.30pm in the Improving Lives Hub, Dalmuir

FRIENDS OF LEVEN RIVER VALLEY

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

FRIENDS OF LEVENGROVE PARK

Meet last Wednesday of the month at 6pm in the Training Suite in the Park.

DUMBARTON CINE & VIDEO DIGITAL CLUB

Meet Tues 7pm - 9pm and every Wed 1pm - 3pm in Concord C.E Centre

LOMOND FOLK CLUB

Free, friendly folk club every Mon 8pm, Loch Lomond Hotel, Balloch Road, Balloch. Join in or just sit and listen

CLYDEBANK LADIES CHOIR

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

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

BIG HAPPY NOISE CHOIR

Try out FireCloud's community choir for fun, informal singing. Thurs 7.30pm - 8.30pm at St Eunan's Church Hall, 1 Gilmour St, Clydebank. Free entry/ donations welcome.

YOUTH CREATIVE NIGHT

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

Support & Well-being

QUIT YOUR WAY

Free 1-1 smoking cessation clinics at Clydebank Health Centre, Tues 9am - 12.30pm, Vale Health Centre, Wed 12.30pm - 4.30pm & Dumbarton Health Centre, Thurs 9am - 12noon plus Clydebank Library Support Group Tues 1.30pm - 2.30pm. Book appt on 0800 9168858; find out more www.nhsggc.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 - 2.45pm - women's group focused on self care, free, no booking required

BALLOCH WALK IN THE PARK

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

IMPROVING LIVES GROUPS

Art for Anxiety Tues 12.30pm - 2.30pm. Autism Support & Discussion group Wed 3pm - 5pm. Men's Fishing Group Thurs & Sun 9am; ADHD Support Group Tues 6 - 7.30pm. Adult Literacy Tues 10am - 12noon. Sensory Garden Tues 10.30am - 12.30pm. Walking group Weds 9.30am. 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, Management Suite, Clyde Shopping Centre & 2nd Thurs 7pm at Improving Lives, 627 Dumbarton Road, Dalmuir

BRAIN INJURY EXPERIENCE NETWORK

Community based support for Brain Injured people. Meetings and outings third Wednesday of the month. Contact John on 07999 441376 or visit BIEN FB: <https://www.facebook.com/BIENetwork/>

ROCKS IN THE STORM

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

POSITIVE FUTURES

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

MENTOR SCOTLAND GROUPS

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

COMMUNITY CONNEXIONS

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

INTO NATURE

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

GOLDEN FRIENDSHIPS

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

Employability & Advice

CARERS OF WD RISE PROJECT

Advice, info and support to unpaid carers living in specific areas. Phoenix Centre, Castlehill - 2nd Tues of the month, 11.30am - 1.30pm; Mill Cabin, Haldane - first Thurs of the month, 11.30am - 12am; The Recycle Room, Drumry - 2nd Wed of each month, 11am - 12.30pm. Contact Clare Sweeney on 0141 941 1550 or clare@carerswd.org

ADULT LITERACY

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

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Classes are available in both Clydebank and Dumbarton for more information contact Eric Makeham on cld@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or 07900052290

WDC THRIVE

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

WDC COMMUNITY SURGERIES

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

Family & Young People

PHOENIX CENTRE

Baking Buddies Mon 10.30am - 12noon; Mini Youth Group (P1-3) Tues 3.15pm - 4.15pm. Youth Club (P4-7) every Thurs 5.45pm - 7.15pm 50p per child; Baby Massage on Wed 11am - 12noon. Phoenix Fun Toddler Group Thurs 10.30am - 12noon. Engage Youth group for S1+ Thurs 7.30pm - 9pm free. Zumba Class 25+ Thurs 12.15pm £3.

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 or call 01389 733030

PHOENIX CENTRE

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

BEN VIEW YOUTH GROUPS

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

TULLOCHAN YOUTH ACTIVITIES

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

AWESTRUCK MUSIC SCHOOL

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

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, 07931228462

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.

FROM FEAR TO LOVE WORKSHOPS

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

To be included in our
**Issue 37 Clydesider
Community Diary and
What's On, email
jenny@clydesider.org
by Aug 12 2026**

CLYDE & BAXTER

By Steven Hastings



Time for a Riddle by Steven Hastings

My first is in Sun and also in Rise
My second is in Fun and in Surprise
You'll find my third in May but not in June
My fourth is in Music but not in Croon
My fifth is in Ice-cream and also Cone
My sixth is in Together but not Alone
This word is a time for lots of holidays
A time for lots of exciting getaways!

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