



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

Issue 9 Spring 2019

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RECIPE FOR: A NEW BEGINNING

To make a new beginning,
You'll need a bowl and bin,
Fill the bowl with real beliefs,
Then put honesty in.

Take out Negativity,
And put it in the bin,
Then you bin unfounded fears,
Jealousy, greed and things.

Now back to the recipe,
Humility goes in,
Then you add acceptance,
You'll find this from within.

We can only change ourselves,
Forgiveness plays a part,
Don't hang on to resentment,
Our new life now can start!

Boil this inside your mind,
For six months and you'll see,
When you've added action,
You complete the recipe.

By Alex King
Bonhill

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Cover photo by Caroline Finn	



Welcome to CLYDESIDER

It's been a long time since I wrote a Clydesider welcome article – too long. Please accept my apologies and an explanation.

We were due to publish this issue at the end of January but we had so many developments we needed to take a short pause to bring everything together.

In Issue 8 we announced our success with several funding applications and plans to launch new training and creative activities this year.

Well, the good news continued into December when we received an email from the Engaged Journalism Centre to tell us we were one of just eight news organisations from across Europe selected from 126 applicants to join their Accelerator programme (see page 6 for details).

After spending so long building Clydesider with next to no money it was really rewarding to have the hard work and dedication of our wonderful team of community volunteers and contributors recognised in this way by trailblazing journalists and academics looking to do news differently.

These funding successes meant we were now in the fortunate position of recruiting three new members of staff (*and trying to find space for everyone in the Hobbit House*), launching three new projects, hosting two community events, attending our funders' learning events in Edinburgh, Amsterdam and Birmingham - all before the end of March.

While most of these funding boosts are short term they do come with training and mentoring which we hope will ensure Clydesider has a sustainable future.

So over the coming months you will see us out and about with our 'pop-up community newsroom' as we try to find new ways to involve our communities in sharing information, stories, experiences and ideas. Please come and have a chat – we'd love to hear from you.

We also plan to increase our social media presence and give our website an overhaul but one thing we won't be changing is Clydesider's inspirational positive news ethos because we know its what our readers value.

But writing isn't for everyone – that's why we launched our Creative Café story-telling events (see page 29) and in this issue, which focuses on health and wellness, we have several first-person articles from local contributors who share personal experiences - some with words, others with photos.

Enjoy!



**Amanda
Eleftheriades-Sherry**
Editor



MUCH MORE THAN BOOKS

Local libraries offer much more than a lending service these days.

They also provide a welcoming space for Macmillan drop-in services where anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis can get support.

That could be a patient, carer, family member or friend. If you are looking for advice, information or just someone to talk to your local library is the place to go.

Macmillan's free confidential services are delivered by fully trained volunteers who are there to listen, give you time to talk and help you find the services you need in your area.

There is a whole network of support available across West Dunbartonshire including access to Macmillan Benefits and Carers services, free counselling and complementary therapies.

One local service user commented: "The volunteers arranged for a member of the Macmillan Benefits' team to visit me to look at any financial assistance I was entitled to as I was having problems with my energy allowance. Within a short period of time I received a Macmillan grant and now have someone to contact directly if my

circumstances change."

The Macmillan Drop-ins are available Monday 10.30 – 12.30pm in Alexandria Library; Tuesdays 2pm – 4pm in Balloch Library; Wednesdays 11am – 1pm in Dumbarton Library and on Tuesdays (10.30am – 12.30pm) and Thursdays (1pm – 4pm) in Clydebank Library.

Or contact the Macmillan Team at: 01389 608049 or email: macmillan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk




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CLYDESIDER IN EUROPE

By Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry

The Clydesider journey took an unexpected twist at the end of 2018 when we were catapulted on to a global stage and selected as one of just eight news organisations from across Europe to join the Engaged Journalism Accelerator.

The term 'engaged journalism' was pretty new to us until near the end of last year when we attended a conference in Cardiff and discovered there is a growing tribe of media outlets all trying to do news differently.

Some are small local organisations like ourselves, others are national or even international, publishing in print, online and by broadcast. The one thing we have in common is a desire to make news more relevant to our readers by including them in the reporting process in some way.

Ben Whitelaw, Accelerator Engagement Lead, explained why they chose Clydesider from 126 applications: "It's not only the Clydesider magazine that we were drawn to. The training, community cafes and workshops help to equip local volunteers to tell their own story about the area and what it means to them. In

some cases, you are challenging the existing narrative played out by other media. That's really important.

"Clydsider fits the ethos of the Engaged Journalism Accelerator in lots of ways: Amanda and the team are driven by the needs of West Dunbartonshire, keen to experiment and open to sharing what they learn with other grantees."

Being part of the Accelerator provides Clydesider with a training and mentoring programme plus one-year funding which we are using to employ a Community Engagement worker and set up Community Newsroom Hubs.

So 2019 is going to be a huge learning curve for Clydesider - we will be trialling new activities, offering a range of training and trying to work out how to make sure the magazine is here to stay.

And we are really keen to get more people involved in our journey. Please follow us on social media or drop me an email to theclydesider@gmail.com to find out more.



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Frilled with Love



BY AMANDA ELEFThERIADES
PHOTOS BY CAROLINE FINN



An Aladdin's cave of frills, fabrics and wicker lies hidden in Faifley's Skypoint Community Centre.

It is here that local creative genius Alison Bell conjures up stunning wedding backdrops and light installations, the front-facing element of her social enterprise, Frill Factory.

But, a bit like the entrepreneur herself, Frill Factory is a multi-layered concern and behind the glamorous exterior there is an important social mission rooted in life struggles which are both very personal to Alison and commonplace in her beloved local Clydebank community.

A note pinned above her desk bears testimony to Alison's strongest motivators – her family and her creativity - *'my cards are handmade using my grandpa's typewriter and my gran's Singer. Each fabric a scrap is donated by someone locally making your card unique. The quotes expressed are inspired by my soulmate and our banter.'*

A lover of human stories, Alison took Clydesider on a journey exploring how difficult times and challenges helped channel her creativity and humanity.

"As a creative person it can be a thin line between sanity and insanity at times.

"I was brought up with mental health in my family - my uncle was diagnosed as a schizophrenic at the age of 19, so I learned very young how to have a relationship with someone who was unpredictable.

"Every Saturday we used to go with my Mum to the charity shops and that was how I got interested in other people's lives – through their objects that held their stories and their pasts.

"My Dad was a 'functioning alcoholic' and these shopping outings took me away from the reality of our family life. I would build tents where I could hide and feel protected. I did this my whole teenage life, that is where Frill Factory was born."

Bullied at high school by what Alison describes as "real pieces of work," she left as soon as she could and went into an admin job where she faced a new bully in the form of her boss.

Deciding it wasn't for her she quit the job and enrolled in an art course at Clydebank College, one of the few things she remembered enjoying at school.

She loved every minute and at the end successfully applied to Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen.

But it was while at art school that Alison lost two close friends from home to suicide – siblings Nicola and Craig.

Turning to her art she used the heartbreak as inspiration for an urban art project called *Dreams Come True*, which she dedicated to the pair.

She explained: "It got me thinking what sort of mindset you need to be in to take your own life, I wanted to reach out and try to do something to stop people feeling that way."

Her project took her into some of Scotland's poorest communities where

she would spend time talking to people, listening to their stories and leaving in her wake a trail of public art work emblazoned with the phrase 'Love Yourself'.

Nearing the end of her degree Alison took a position in London with Wayne Hemingway, co-founder of designer label Red or Dead, but the high stakes pressure of the fashion world proved too much for the young designer.

Anxiety and stress led to a panic attack blackout and realising London wasn't for her she returned to Aberdeen to complete her dissertation.



But one challenge was followed quickly by another as a computer meltdown thwarted her goal of a first class honours. Devastated, she turned her back on her art instead taking a job working with young people on regeneration projects.

Again the pressure of long days and travelling around the country took its

toll on Alison's health and she was diagnosed with Bells Palsy.

"I couldn't lift my arm above a certain height, my mouth tasted of metal and I seemed to be losing the sight in one eye. I thought I was having a heart attack," she remembered.

"I didn't even go on the sick, I just left my job and took time to heal."

This time out proved to be a turning point, leading Alison back to her Clydebank community and eventually to the birth of her own social enterprise.

While unwell she spent days in the archive section of Clydebank Library and became fascinated by stories from the Singer Factory.

Inspired by these tales she decided to dig out her grandmother's Singer sewing machine – lovingly named Violet – and take control of her own destiny by turning Frill Factory into a reality.

It was her lightbulb moment.

"A lot of people felt sorry for me because of the Bells Palsy but I felt it was the best thing that happened to me – it showed me how strong my body is and this was its way of saying enough, I needed to listen to it.

"I felt that all the noise had gone and I was able to listen to myself, for my mental well-being that is really important."

With start-up social enterprise funding Alison found a home for Frill Factory in Skypoint and started breathing life into her creative ideas.

The social entrepreneur's aim was to take some of the commercialism out of the wedding industry by using materials heading for landfill sites and transforming them into bespoke backdrops for couples to glam up any wedding venue, helping them save thousands of pounds in the process.

"I started experimenting with fabrics and doing what was in my heart. That was the beginning of my journey. When I started to get clients I felt they believed in me and in the concept of Frill Factory.

"I had felt trapped by working in an environment where I was made to feel worthless but since I have been taking

my life into my own hands I don't feel trapped any more.



"The fear is still there but now I have the confidence to face it."

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Dalmuir Library

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

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

Clydebank Central Library

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

Faifley Library

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

Balloch Library

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

Contact information

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Clydebank, G81 1BF
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Facebook: @martindochertySNP
Twitter: @MartinJDocherty



No surgeries on bank holidays, school holidays or library closure days.
Surgeries may be run by staff due to Martin's parliamentary commitments.

SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

A HUB FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY



Clydebank is home to a new multi-million pound sports hub, cafe and community space which is just waiting for local people to come and use it.

The Clydebank Community Sport Hub in Whitecrook has replaced the old Clydebank Rugby Club and Gaelic football pitch with a vibrant new building fully-equipped with meeting rooms, disability accessible changing rooms, cafe and even a community allotment.

And Fred Wallace, the new manager, is keen to encourage local groups and organisations to have a look and find out

how they could use the space available.

He explained: "The four founder members of Clydebank Community Sport Hub - Clydebank Rugby Club, Glasgow Gaels Gaelic Football Club, GTF Tae Kwon Do and Drumchapel Amateurs Football Club - put in seven years hard work sourcing funding and getting the place transformed.

"Anyone who knew the old rugby club will be amazed at what has been done with the space.

"The new hub is already well used by sports groups and we now want to support more community activities whether it is for groups to hire a space to meet or run an activity or if the community has ideas of things they would like us to offer.

"We just need local people to come in and tell us what they would like to see in this space."

The Sport Hub was officially opened in December and in February the Scottish National Rugby Team held an open day in the impressive building.

Fred added: "The space is well used in evenings and at weekends, but during the day it would be great for community activities from art groups to drama classes.

"The outdoor space is impressive as well and the community allotment space will be available later in the year so come along to register a space now."

To find out more about hiring a room, booking an allotment space or getting involved with the Clydebank Community Sport Hub contact Fred on 0141 9511777 or email Clydebank.csh.info@gmail.com or pop into the building at Dean Street, Clydebank G81 1RH.

SPONSORED COMMUNITY EDITORIAL



An exciting new social enterprise in West Dunbartonshire is using the power of creativity to help inspire young people to consider future careers within the UK's most rapidly expanding sector – the creative industries. Braw Talent have recently received funding through Firstport's Start It award, which is focused on piloting entirely new start-ups. Budding entrepreneurs can apply for up to £5000 to cover essential start-up costs.

Braw Talent deliver cultural and creative education programmes in schools, providing an insight into the many career opportunities in filmmaking, visual art and music in Scotland.

Profits from the social enterprise will be used to fund free-to-access creative projects for young people within Scotland's most deprived communities.

The business is the brainchild of Clydebank-based Darren Osborne, co-founder of BAFTA and BIFA nominated film production company 14c Studio, and has evolved into something even more exciting after teaming up with artist Lydia Everitt and musician Colm Keegan.

Braw Talent co-founder, Darren, said: "Developing youth filmmaking

projects that we delivered with Y-Sort-It over the past few years was the inspiration really. I witnessed young people discover exciting talents that were still buried within them. We had kids who had initially been a bit unsure of themselves, taking part in a Q&A in front of a packed cinema, absolutely beaming about what they had achieved.

"I wanted to do this all the time, and I wanted to do it better. I decided to study education and became a qualified secondary teacher, which also afforded me an invaluable year working in the classroom. Through this I met Lydia and Colm, who are also vastly experienced practitioners in their field and qualified teachers who share a passion for all things creative."

Braw Talent have been working closely with Firstport, taking advantage of free training, workshops and networking opportunities.

The team will be launching their website brawtalent.org on Thursday 14th March.

Contact:

Darren Osborne, Braw Talent

M: 07895 906440

E: hello@brawtalent.org



CLYDESIDER Competitions

We have three great giveaways for you in Issue 9.

1. Poetry Competition – the theme is 'Potential' - prize is a £20 gift voucher to spend locally plus an annual membership for the Clydesider Club Card (see page 15 for details).
2. Photography Competition – the theme is 'Local People, Place and Past' - prize is a £20 gift voucher to spend locally plus an annual membership for the Clydesider Club Card (see page 15).
3. Clydesider Survey – complete and return our survey on page 44 to be added to our Spend Local Prize Draw to win £50 gift voucher to spend in a local business of your choice. Plus three runners-up will receive an annual Clydesider Club Card membership (see page 15 for details).

Usual rules for the Poetry and Photography Competitions apply:-

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

Email entries to clydesidercomp@gmail.com or send to Clydesider, 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG by Friday May 31 2019. Good Luck!

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Do you know that spending money in local shops and businesses, rather than with national chains or online can have a huge benefit to the local economy?

That is why last year we launched the Clydesider Club Card.

We initially signed up businesses who advertised with us. This year we plan to roll it out FREE to any local business willing to join our 'Spend Local' campaign and offer a discount or deal to our readers.

So, if you run a local business and fancy joining the campaign – please get in touch, we'd love to sign you up. Just email advertising@clydesider.org or call 01389 381110.

You will be added to the Clydesider Club Card directory on our website and details of your offer will be sent out to our Clydesider Club Card holders.

To become a Clydesider Club Card member and enjoy Clydesider discounts of 5% to 25% with these companies just complete the form below or visit www.clydesider.org/clubcard

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

 Gil Paterson MSP For Clydebank & Milngavie					
Constituency Surgeries 2019 All surgeries are held between 5pm and 6pm unless stated otherwise					
March 2019			April 2019		
1st	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm	5th	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Road 4pm to 5pm
8th	Napier Hall	Old Kilpatrick	12th	Recess	
15th	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Road	19th	Recess	
22nd	Goldenhill Primary School	23 Stewart Dr, Hardgate	26th	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd
29th	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd			
May 2019			June 2019		
3rd	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Rd 4pm to 5pm	7th	Bearsden Community Hub	69 Drymen Road 4pm to 5pm
10th	Goldenhill Primary School	23 Stewart Dr, Hardgate	14th	Napier Hall	Old Kilpatrick
17th	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Rd	21st	Milngavie Town Hall	71 Station Road
24th	May Bank Holiday Weekend		28th	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd
31st	Clydebank Town Hall	49 Dumbarton Rd			
There are no fixed surgeries during: January - July - August - December Personal appointments can be arranged by calling: (0141) 952 9677					
Constituency Office of Gil Paterson MSP, Suite 1-6, Titan Business Enterprise Centre, 1 Aurora Avenue, Clydebank G81					

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By Noura, Ola, Niroz and Amira

"Freedom is a sun that should shine everywhere."

Freedom is to be where we can be responsible for ourselves. It is not limited to what we want but it is also about having choice and not being forced to do what we do not want to do.

To be free is not just to get rid of the restrictions but to live in a way that respects and promotes the freedom of others - this is freedom. Here you will read our article about freedom.

We are a group of Syrian women, driven out of our homes by war. We came to Scotland in search of safety and a better future for our children.

We have all resettled in Clydebank. We are all neighbours - many of us came to Scotland on the same day - 24th November 2015. It is a very friendly community and we have very warm feelings for the people here. But we still felt there was something missing and we all wanted to connect more with the world around us.

"The difference between here and Syria is like the difference between the earth and the sky, especially the Syria of recent years."

We met with Outside the Box to talk about ways we can look forward, not back. To do this we started our project, 'Moments of Freedom'.

"We thought wherever it goes from here, it could be the start of something big."

The Moments of Freedom Story

"When we first came, everything was new, we were quite socially isolated. Moments of Freedom was a channel to meet new people."

Moments of Freedom is a way for us to share ourselves with the community and for the community to share themselves with us. Being new in a community means that people often don't know about you or your culture.

"It feels sometimes that neighbours are hesitant to engage with us."

Through Moments of Freedom we want our voice to reach everybody so that we can tell people who we are. Since the first meeting, we felt less like strangers. The activities we did together were beautiful and interesting helping us to be more confident and less stressed to be in the local community.

Since this time we held a Story-telling event at Centre 81 open to all the community in Clydebank.

The event made us feel very proud, we felt we had really achieved something. We were so happy to meet so many new faces. People were happy, laughing, enjoying the food, music and story-telling. It was a very joyful day. People gave us such positive feedback. Women told us they felt this was what is missing from Clydebank, a chance to meet in a friendly place, to come together to have

fun and time for themselves. This highlighted to us the gaps we felt were the same for other women of our age in Clydebank.

The event was success but we knew that we had to keep the momentum going and so decided we'd like to hold similar mini events once a month that we call our Community Gatherings. We review the Gatherings as we go so that each one is a little different. We want to focus the Gatherings on wellbeing, using activities like dance, yoga and massage so that people can come to relax.

"We still struggle to meet others and communicate with people."



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"It's hard to carry on relationships with people after an event or Gathering."

We are looking to connect with lots of other women across Clydebank, we believe that wellbeing is very important in life, we are working together to develop spaces where women can come to relax and focus on themselves through different wellbeing activities.

What matters to us is being welcomed and accepted with open arms and we want to share these Moments of Freedom with you.

For more information on our Community Gatherings or the project please contact:

Jill: jill.k@otbds.org or Kate: kate@otbds.org or follow us on social media.



@momentsoffreedom



@FreedomMoments



moments_of_freedom_otb





THE GIFT OF LIFE

Words & Photos by Angela Clark

"Sit with your daughter and say your goodbyes until she passes."

Those were the heartbreaking words uttered to the Boyle family from Clydebank as their daughter Jamie-lee lay in a coma fighting for her life.

A week earlier the hairdresser had been living a normal life to all appearances in good health.

No-one could have imagined that a fall would leave her in desperate need of a liver transplant.

Jamie-lee said: "I fell, went over on my ankle and bruised it badly. I had to take a week off work because of the pain. Then on the Sunday I slipped again and caused more damage.

"I went to hospital on Monday where it was x-rayed. I was told it was too badly swollen for them to do anything,

to go home and take paracetamol."

"The hospital called to confirm I had a bad fracture, they told me to continue taking paracetamol and to come back if it got any worse.

"The pain was keeping me awake so when a friend suggested taking Night Nurse I took it as well - I didn't know it also contains paracetamol."

"By Thursday I had a pain in my side, I was being sick and needed to keep going to the toilet. A family member suggested I keep taking my paracetamol and try to get some sleep.

"The next day I had horrific cramp on my right side and felt really unwell. I called the doctor and was told to call an ambulance. I have no recollection what happened after that until I woke up in the hospital. I was sitting up in my

bed chatting with my parents by my side."

Jamie-lee appeared normal as she spoke to her parents but she was desperately ill. Her organs were failing and the hospital was concerned they wouldn't be able to deal with her condition. The family was advised to go home and they would be contacted if anything changed.

That call came in the early hours of the morning with the news that their daughter had taken a turn for the worse and been put in an induced coma and rushed to Edinburgh Royal.

They were advised to get there as quickly as they could as Jamie-lee was hours from death, a liver transplant was needed to save her life.

Her heartbroken family gathered around her bedside hoping and praying for a miracle. That hope was slowly slipping away, they were told there was nothing else could be done and to spend what time they had left with her.

It was while they sat with their daughter for what they thought would be her final hours, that the hospital learned a donor had become available and it was a match.

When Jamie-lee woke after the transplant she was unaware what had happened and was shocked at the news.

Tests revealed that her liver had only been functioning at 32% and the quantity of paracetamol products she had taken had resulted in the sudden

organ failure. Under other circumstances she would have been placed on the Organ Donor waiting list.



She said: "It's automatic, if you have a sore head you take a painkiller and think nothing of it. I thought paracetamol are not that strong as you can buy them over the counter. I woke up in a room and every part of my body failed that day just from taking paracetamol. I am now on heart

medication for the rest of my life."

There are currently around 6000 people on the UK transplant waiting list, last year 400 people died while waiting for a transplant.

Vanessa Hebditch from the British Liver Trust said: "It's really important people are aware that taking too much paracetamol can severely damage your liver and cause acute liver failure."

Jamie-lee no longer uses paracetamol products and has herself become an organ donor. She hopes by sharing her story she can encourage other people to do the same.

She added: "I had never even thought

about organ donation before. Whether or not you believe in God when you pass on you're not going to need your organs wherever you are going.

"A family has been kind enough to save my life, and many others, on the day they lost someone close to them which must have been an extremely difficult decision for them and one which I will be forever grateful."

Jamie-lee intends to write to the donor's family to thank them for their gift of life. She knows it will be one of the hardest letters she will ever have to write.

To register your decision to donate on the NHS Organ Donor Register.
<https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/>

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258 Faifley Road
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0141 435 7706



COOK A STEAK CHALLENGE



Words & Photos by Charlie Sherry

A Dumbarton man is spearheading a campaign to raise awareness and funds for mental health issues – one steak at a time.

Former camera operator, John Kelenfoldi, became a full-time carer for his wife a few years ago when she suffered serious health problems.

Now he has decided to combine his carer's role with a campaign to increase awareness and funds to help people struggling with mental health issues.

He decided to do this by focusing on his love of the great outdoors to promote the 'Mental Health Awareness Cook A Steak Challenge.'

His plans are rooted in an experience John had many years ago when someone very close to him became mentally ill and he felt angry that he was powerless to help.

John said: "A close family member developed a mental illness and as much as I wanted to help, I had no idea how to go about doing that. I felt there was no-one to turn to, that we were more or less left to deal with the problem by ourselves. This made me so angry at the time, I never forgot that feeling of total frustration."

The idea behind the 'Cook A Steak Challenge' is quite simple, as John explained: "I want people to go out into the woods, the countryside or even their back garden and cook a steak and it would be great if they could video or photograph themselves

cooking the steak and post it on social media to encourage others to do the same."

As much as cooking a steak and eating it seems like great fun, there is a serious side to the activity, John said. "I hope each participant will donate at least £1 to a local mental health charity, in that way they will have increased resources to reach more people suffering alone in our communities."

"If we raise enough money to make sure there is someone manning a telephone for a couple more hours a day to help even one person in despair, then the whole thing is worthwhile."

Mental health issues are a serious challenge in West Dunbartonshire with 20% of the population – that's one in every five people in our communities – suffering from some form of mental health issue.

Of the plethora of fundraising 'tasks' out there, John's must be one of the most pleasurable.

Not only do you get to eat a nice juicy steak – or vegetarian equivalent - you also get to experience the great outdoors, make some new friends in the process and your contribution could help those isolated within our communities who are struggling to deal with mental illness.

John is hoping to get as many folk as possible to take part in the 'Cook a Steak Challenge' on or

around the 10th October 2019 to tie in with World Mental Health Day and he hopes supporters will meet up with others taking part in the challenge.

However there is no need to wait until then - you can take part any time.

John hopes the Challenge will also make a difference to friends and families supporting someone with poor mental health.

He added: "All those years ago when I had no idea how to cope with someone struggling with mental health, I was all alone to deal with it and to be honest I couldn't handle it at the time."

"If the organisations here today had been around back then it would have made coping a lot easier."

"I just hope the Challenge with help raise awareness of the issue and raise some much needed funds to help reach people who otherwise would be left to suffer alone."

To sign up to John's Cook A Steak Challenge visit Facebook page: Mental Health Awareness Day Cook a Steak Challenge...2019



Jackie Baillie MSP
Monthly Surgeries

THIRD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

2.45pm – Alexandria Library, Gilmour St, Alexandria
4.45pm – Helensburgh Parish Church, Colquhoun St, Helensburgh
6.30pm – Constituency Office, 6 Church Street, Dumbarton

*No surgeries in July. Surgeries may be subject to change.
Please phone 01389 734214 for more information.



Colin Mckenzie

CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

By Charlie Sherry

We had a wonderful selection of entries for our latest photography competition and the topic of 'Hidden Gems' seemed to stir the creative imaginations of our readers.

So to celebrate this creativity we decided rather than get our resident volunteer photographer to judge the competition we would put the final decision out to the local community.

And where better to do this, than at our first Creative Café event (see page 29 for the full story).

The team selected six finalists and we had the images printed and displayed at the Creative Café where we asked

members of the public to cast a shell vote for their favourite photo.

The clear winner was a beautiful capture of a spider's web weighed heavy with water droplets taken by Colin McKenzie. The web is hidden away amongst ivy leaves and cleverly shows off the web's fragility and strength.

Second place went to Jamie Murray, an S1 student at Clydebank High, who took a cracking photo of a heron on a school photography trip to Dalmuir Park. Jamie's photo was one of a selection of natural images sent into the competition by the school's art teacher and all of the photos show what talented young people there are in our community.

The third place photo was taken by Liz Daly. This shot of a stunning sunset on the Clyde is filtered through a line of trees in Levensgrove Park giving the picture an extra dimension and fitting perfectly with the Hidden Gem theme.

Clydesider would like to thank Iain Wilson from Photo Ecosse in Dumbarton High Street for providing the prizes for our three winners.

Photo Competition Issue 10 theme –
Local People, Place and Past

Please email entries to
clydesidercomp@gmail.com by Friday
May 31 2019. The finalist photos will be
on display at our next Creative Café
which will be in Clydebank. Good Luck!
The usual rules apply:-

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



Liz Daly



Jamie Murray



FRIENDSHIPS ARE GOLDEN

Photo essay by the Golden Friendship photographers Jamie Stein, Martin McGeachie, Mathew Kelly, Stephen Coombe and Susan Moir

Golden Friendships is a grassroots charity set up by former Clydebank cabbie Jim McLaren to provide groups and activities for people who feel lonely and isolated.

Each week the Dalmuir-based club attracts hundreds of older folk and people with disabilities from across West Dunbartonshire to their free sports activities, social afternoons and events.

Members of the Golden Friendships 'Photography For Fun' project captured a flavour of a week in the life of the charity as part of their recent photography project.



"I love Golden Friendships sports, especially the boxing. The club gives me something to do and keeps me fit." Kevin



"I would be stuck in the house if I wasn't coming here. I just love coming here and joining in. It's great fun and the people are brilliant." Noah



"A big thanks to Phoenix Fitness for volunteering their time." Jim McLaren



"Everybody knows and looks out for each other, it's like one big family" Lawrence

"Everybody can come along, feel safe and really enjoy themselves. The club gets me out to meet my friends" Rosemary



"If it wasn't for this club I would be at home lying in bed. I can't praise them enough." Ronnie



"I lost my wife last year, I was so lonely. The club has given me a new lease of life." John

"I love the club, I wouldn't miss it for the world. They are doing such a wonderful job here, bringing so much happiness to folk who otherwise would be sitting in their houses alone with no-one to talk to." Christine



"I really enjoy everything about Golden Friendships, playing games, dancing and even singing. Most of all though, I enjoy being with all the new friends I have made here." Martin



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Photos by Robert Wilson

At Clydesider we love doing things a little bit differently.

We were the first community-led good news publication in Scotland – possibly in the whole of the UK.

And now, as far as we are aware, we're the first news outlet to launch creative storytelling workshops in this country.

The idea behind the Creative Café events was to provide a story-telling space for people who are more comfortable sharing their ideas and experiences creatively.

Thanks to three-year funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we launched our first day-long Clydesider Creative Café and Community Marketplace in Dumbarton's Concord C.E Centre on March 2.

We recruited (mostly) local creative facilitators to run the workshops and

drop-in sessions which were linked to this issue's theme of Health and Wellness.

We chose this topic because we know West Dunbartonshire has some pretty woeful statistics when it comes to well-being. It has the lowest female life expectancy rates in Scotland and some of the highest levels of long-term health conditions in the country (see www.nrscotland.gov.uk and www.scotlandcensus.gov.uk for details).

These are important statistics that shouldn't be ignored but as a positive news publication we are trying to work out how best to do this in Clydesider – we would love your thoughts (please see our survey on page 44).

We decided to start by creating a space to bring together local organisations tackling health issues and use the creative workshops to encourage people to find out more.



The workshops included a Mindful Photography Walk, Children's shadow puppetry, song-writing, wax painting and even a laughter therapy session!

We also had an open art drop-in, therapeutic and creative taster demonstrations, a Clydesider Community Media drop-in and local charity Food 4 Thought kindly provided a pay-what-you-can afford Community Kitchen.

It is really important to us to keep these creative activities free as we know part of the reason for the poor health statistics in our area is because a lot of people don't have money to spare.

An estimated 80 – 100 people attended the event and there was a real creative buzz around the Concord Centre. Feedback from all the workshops was really positive and one of the unexpected comments we received from many of the participants was they actually felt better after being creative.

The next Creative Café will be in Clydebank on Saturday June 8. We are also planning some outreach activities in community locations – please follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat for details.



"I was so stressed out when I got here, this calmed me right down."



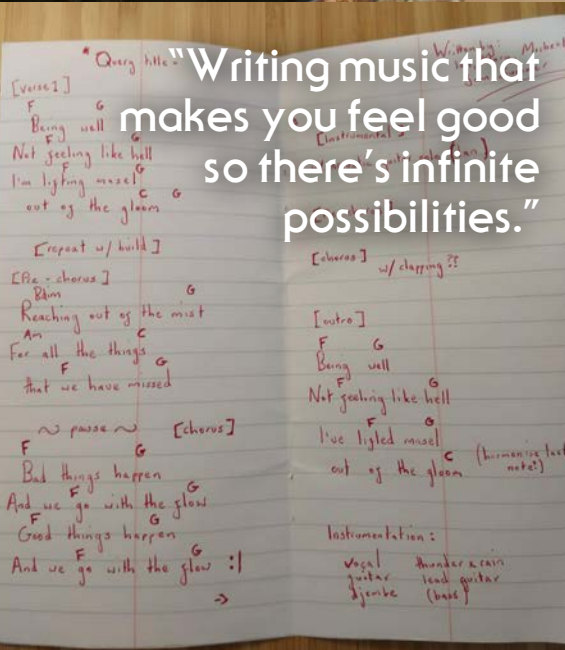
"My soul has been enriched."



"I like words. I like putting things in writing, it helps."



"It's good to mingle with new people."



"Writing music that makes you feel good so there's infinite possibilities."



CLYDESIDER GALLERY

BY CAROLINE FINN

DREW HOUSTON MAKES FURNITURE AND SCULPTURE USING LOCALLY SOURCED WOOD, METAL AND RESIN CREATING BEAUTIFUL NATURAL ORGANIC PIECES OF ART.

Q: HOW DID YOU GET INTO ART?

A: I built my first table at school when I was 14 and sold it - I knew instantly that building things with my hands was for me. When I left school I went into joinery and worked in construction for years all the while still making my own furniture as a hobby. About 10 years ago I decided to create full time as the request for commissions increased and it allowed me to work on my own ideas.

Q: WHO OR WHAT INSPIRES YOUR WORK?

A: Natural organic forms inspire me, I've never been a fan of straight lines. I enjoy the juxtaposition of the organic shapes of the wooden table tops against the clinical straight lines of the metal base. I feel like I'm revealing the natural beauty in the timber as I work. I love to create fusions of wood, resin, glass and metal.

Q: WHERE CAN WE SEE YOUR WORK?

A: I am currently based in Arch 9 at Bowling Harbour working on a

residency with Lodestone Creative.

Pieces of my work are also on sale in the Made in West Dunbartonshire shop. Anyone can pop by for a chat, I really enjoy showing people around the studio, they always see things in my work I haven't spotted yet.

Q: IS THERE A FAMOUS ARTIST WHO INSPIRES YOU?

A: I admire Tim Stead, he worked as a non traditional furniture maker and left behind an incredible body of work. The reason I came across him is because someone saw my work and said it reminded them of his. He also loved the materials I do and had great respect for the timber we work with.

Q: WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?

A: I seem to be developing into working in animalistic shapes and forms, I find my sculptural pieces often remind me of the human form in an abstract way. As I'm in this environment I'm also working a lot with found objects that I've come across down at the shore of the Clyde. I found a part of an old Singer sewing machine that looks like a little man in a top hat, I'm working with it at the minute.



The Bay Inn is a traditional public house located in the heart of Bowling, close to the Forth Clyde Canal and walking routes to Loch Lomond. We provide the ideal friendly village pub atmosphere for our customers to kick back, relax and enjoy a hot or cold drink from our well-stocked bar.



Children are welcome to join you in our Beer Garden until 8.30pm. We even show all major sporting events on our widescreen TV's.



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SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS THIS... ...A VENTURE INTO THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

By Ross Fullerton

*'Ur ye a hippy?' 'You've no gone aw
religious on us, huv ye?'*

Sharing the news of my intention to give the practice of meditation 'a go' and that I would be spending the next 10 days in silence was met with some confusion.

It wasn't so long before that I may have been the one asking those same questions, but what began with similar skepticism and a leap into the unknown, turned out to be the best decision of my life.

Faced with a growing feeling of unhealthiness in my body and mind, coupled with a sense of aimlessness in life, I had resolved to find a new purpose.

The question was how?

Poring through endless self-help books I'd repeatedly come across references to 'mindfulness', 'Yoga' and 'meditation'. The question was how best to put these suggestions into practice?

Searching online I discovered Vipassana meditation. A free 10-day

intensive course set in the lush surroundings of Castle Douglas. It was there I threw myself into the deep-end, desperate for fast results.

Meditation is described as a practice involving the mind and body, purposefully directing one's attention on the moment or experience to bring about a new state of being or understanding. It is suggested as a remedy to treat universal ills of mental and physical suffering.

The course in question didn't require religious beliefs, it was a practice open to all. Perfect, I thought and off I went like an apprentice Buddha, facing my fears, ready for change.

Promises of 'liberation' through 'hard work' seemed like a fair sacrifice to make and over the coming days, with closed eyes and hard determination, what I discovered turned out to be the beginning of a new me.

To say it was an easy transition would be misleading.

On the first day I realised my mind was in no mood to learn something new. I was directed to pay close attention to the sensation of breath entering and leaving my nose and it was then I realised my lack of concentration. For too long I'd allowed my mind to wander freely, so now seemed like the right time to change that habit.

The following days had their own share of ups and downs, the

meditation technique was simple but the difficulty lay in getting my mind to follow suit. Physically I had my doubts too. A dodgy knee throbbed as if on fire, which played havoc with my concentration and on top of everything else the new vegetarian diet clearly wasn't going down well with the other meditators, there was more than just good vibes in the air!

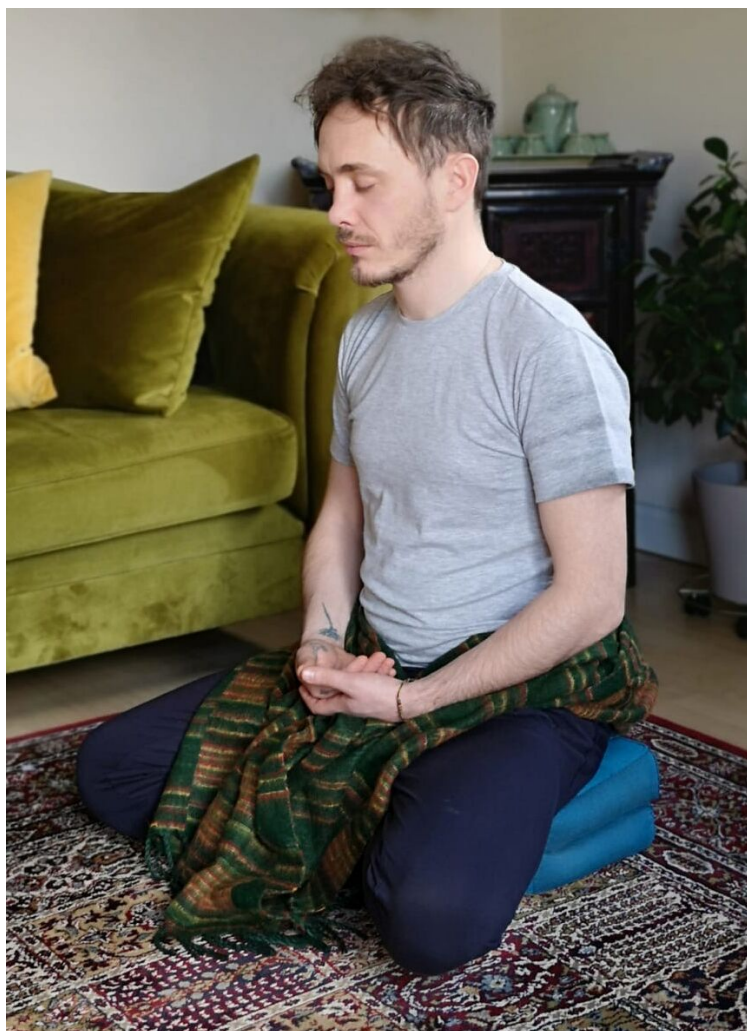
Thankfully I got through the early challenges, the teacher reminding us to accept all physical and mental distractions, to remain focused.

Though difficult, training my mind to remain neutral gave me optimism towards escaping my displeasures. I was beginning to take back control of my mind, no longer obsessing about my painful knee... nor the smell in the air!

As each day passed I began to feel more confident maintaining focus on my breath, and already it felt like a new tool I could use to tackle my concerns in the 'real world'.

It seems however I was getting ahead of myself, the challenges were not yet over. As present concerns began to disappear, past thoughts and memories began to find a new voice and the discontent returned.

Vipassana meditation has been likened to a 'surgical extraction' of our past reactions to painful experiences stored in the unconscious, only to be brought up again and dealt with anew.



This process cleanses the mind from old harmful memories and thoughts we collect during our lives and though it hardly sounds appealing, the practice of dealing with old negative thoughts with a new

equanimous reaction left me feeling like a 'rebooted' computer, cleaned out and working again.

On completion of the course, I realised meditation was not exclusive to 'hippies' or 'spiritual' types, as most people I met came from different walks of life - mechanics, doctors, grandmothers. The only requirement was getting to the course and 'taking the leap'.

What most people shared in common from the experience was the initial apprehension of trying something new but more importantly their need for change. I was amazed that

something as simple as this could be the beginning of taking control of my own life again.

There are resources online and local classes in West Dunbartonshire where you can drop by for more information.

Online resources

<https://meditateinscotland.org/courses/dumbarton/>

<https://www.dhamma.org/>

<https://www.gaia.com/blogs/discover/meditation-101-techniques-benefits-and-a-beginner-s-how-to>



outside the box

Do you know your rights?

Learning About Rights our FREE training is open to anyone interested in learning more about human rights and how this impacts community supports and activities for older people.

Who is it for? All welcome, including older people, families, friends, community groups and workers from any sector working with older people.

What's involved? We come to you to run a free taster session. If you are interested in more sessions we can deliver at a time and place suitable to you.

Local People Linking by Outside the Box helps link older people with local activities and supports. The project brings groups together to learn about each other and create new community opportunities. We can help groups hold mini events, days away or just get together for a chat.

Contact: Jill Keegan - jill.k@otbds.org 07841015949

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PLASTIC-FREE PERIODS

Members of local campaign group Plastic-Free WD share their experiences of plastic-free periods.

Sam McLean

I started my plastic-free period journey in October 2017 with the purchase of three reusable sanitary towels from Earthwise Girls. I had fallen out of love with tampons and had always hated the plastic feel of disposable pads, so this was my chance to find an alternative.

It was daunting at first because I don't remember any alternative to disposable tampons and towels ever being mentioned during the standard period talk in school or by anyone I've known since – until now that is. I searched the internet, watched YouTube videos of reviews and with so much choice, settled on buying three pads to gradually incorporate into my routine.

I've never looked back. I've built up a full set of reusable pads which cost me roughly £50 in total but – with care – they will last 5+ years and they are easy to just bung in the machine – no hand washing necessary!

As I got involved in Plastic-Free WD and local litter picks, I have never been happier that I made the switch – collecting used panty liners off beaches really opens your eyes to

the amount of period waste that ends up in our waterways.

At Plastic-Free WD, we want to raise awareness that many disposable products such as tampons, pads and baby wipes contain plastic and should not be flushed down the loo. Our current 3P's campaign is designed to spread the message that only the 3P's should be flushed; that's Paper, Pee and Poo!

In addition to this, we would love to encourage 100 women in West Dunbartonshire to join our Plastic-Free Period tribe in 2019. We have a closed group on Facebook (wearethe100women) for those interested in having a plastic-free period. Whether you've had a plastic-free period for years or are just full of questions and don't know where to start, we hope the group will have something for you.

By choosing plastic-free sanitary products, we can all have a positive impact on the environment.

Jaxx Bruce

I'll be honest that plastic in my period products wasn't something I'd given any thought to. Why would you? The tampons themselves look like cotton wool and the holders I bought were made from cardboard.

I like to find out information and learn more about why I'm making the decisions I do. A quick Google of 'plastic in tampons' brings up an excellent Huffington Post article, "according to the Absorbent Hygiene

Product Manufacturers Association (AHPMA), a small film of plastic inside the tampon is used in the majority of tampon ranges to aid insertion and stop fibre shredding, while some use plastics to strengthen the withdrawal cord. The AHPMA expressly discourages the flushing of feminine hygiene products. This is a key way that plastic makes its way into our oceans.” I’ve shared the post on Plastic Free WD’s Facebook and Twitter feeds and would urge all females to have a read.

Of course, it’s not just tampons. Those plastic tampon applicators that are all too common on shorelines (and nothing more than a marketing gimmick), pads and panty liners all contain plastic too. In fact, according to research carried out by the

Marine Conservation Society and Natracare, one pack of sanitary towels contains the same amount of plastic as four carrier bags.

Apart from the potential effects of plastic toxins to us, these plastics don’t biodegrade. They deteriorate into microplastics that are eaten by fish and marine life. Which then makes it’s way back into our food chain.

My own personal jump to plastic free periods only happened last year. When I started the Plastic Free WD group in February 2018 I signed up to Monthlies – ‘a period subscription box’ containing Natracare products which are made from 100% certified organic cotton and nothing else.

one pack of sanitary towels contains the same amount of plastic as four carrier bags



In October I cancelled my monthly subscription and made the leap to a menstrual cup. And I'm glad I did! Whilst I appreciate they're not for everyone, the positives far outweigh any negatives. Less cost, no buying period products every month, no remembering to pack period products when I'm going out and no waste! A menstrual cup makes me aware of my own body and my flow. When I'm out and about and need to 'empty', I take a small jar or bottle to fill with water to rinse it out.

I'll echo what Sam says about our 100 Women campaign to encourage local ladies to switch to plastic free periods. Please get involved in our

private group on Facebook - 'We are the 100 women' and join our tribe. We also have two cool posters for our Pee, Paper and Poo Only Down the Loo campaign. They highlight some facts and figures around period waste. We'd love to have them on the back of the door in women's toilets. If you'd like one for your local pub, restaurant or office, drop us a message on Facebook or send an email to plasticfreewd@gmail.com. The message we want to get out is two-fold. Switch to plastic free or waste free/reusable products. Or at the very least, put your period waste in the bin, not down the loo and on to our coastlines.



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DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH

By Kay Young, Therapist

Described as the silent killer there are no limits to how stress can affect our lives or where it sneaks in to corrupt our peace.

Work, environment, finances, relationships can all wreak havoc on our minds and bodies. Just a few examples include weight gain, memory loss, aches and pains, skin flare ups, low self esteem – chronic stress can even lead to constipation.

Untreated, the affects of stress grow and impact our physiology in a progressive and lethal way.

But stress is not silent in warning us that we are suffering. It is yelling at us to take heed and do something about it.

So how do we do this?

Anyone can learn. Everyone has 'calmness potential' deep down, underneath the tension. A few therapies and techniques to try include:

- Hypnotherapy helps your brain to declutter
- Relaxation, imagination and visualisation help communicate with sub-conscious processes which generate anxiety
- Behavioural therapy asks our subconscious to calm
- Chair-based group activities gently stretch and strengthen muscles relaxing both body and mind.

Physical health benefits of laughter:

- Boosts immunity
- Lowers stress hormones
- Decreases pain
- Relaxes your muscles
- Prevents heart disease

Social benefits of laughter:

- Strengthens relationships
- Attracts others to us
- Enhances teamwork
- Helps defuse conflict
- Promotes group bonding

Mental health benefits of laughter:

- Adds joy and zest to life
- Eases anxiety and tension
- Relieves stress
- Improves mood
- Strengthens resilience

Laughter makes you feel good and this positive feeling remains with you even after the laughter subsides.

Kay owns Imagine You therapy hub in Dumbarton East.

BE KIND TO EVERY KIND

By Linda Morrison

"Non violence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution"

Thomas Edison

I remember it well. It was a Sunday afternoon, I was 13 years old and we only had three or four channels we could watch on TV. A far cry from what we have now.

So I settled down to watch a farming programme. I love animals so I thought this would be right up my street. I even had a book about farm animals. I remember their lovely smiling faces and all the different breeds of sheep and cows.

So imagine my surprise when the animals in my book looked much happier than the animals in these large windowless sheds. My book animals were outside in the sunshine. These unfortunate souls on my TV would never see the light of day on these money and time-saving intensive farms.

I sat there in disbelief.

That was the last day I ate meat. Needless to say my parents were not happy. They firmly believed it to be a fad but when weeks changed to months my Mum thought she had better buy in some suitable food for me.

The Thomas Edison quote above finishes like this-

"Until we stop harming all living beings, we are still savages."

Many people told me that once I have a family I would go back to eating meat. Children need meat to survive. I am now in my 50's with two adult children who have never eaten meat. We are all doing pretty good.

Approximately five years ago my daughter opened my eyes to the intolerable cruelty of the dairy industry. It broke my heart. I will not go into detail as my intention is not to upset anyone, but if you want to know more about where your milk comes from ask Google about the truth of dairy.

The one question that I have is - why are human adults drinking milk meant for bovine babies? Or indeed, why are human adults drinking milk at all?

So here I am. Five years vegan, still alive, pretty healthy, enjoying my food and wondering why an intelligent species such as my own can turn a blind eye to the suffering of billions of sentient beings. Beings who have the same capacity to breathe, feel, love and nurture their young as we do.

The only answer I can give is clever marketing and propaganda from the organisations who profit from the systematic cruelty in the meat and dairy industry.

There has been an incredible shift towards veganism in the past few

years. People are privy to information they didn't have access to before thanks to the internet and social media.

The truth can no longer be hidden.

I would like to clarify the term vegan as it can often be confused with vegetarian. A vegan is someone who does not eat or wear any animal derived products. This means no meat, eggs, dairy, leather, wool, fish or honey as far as is practically possible. Animal derived ingredients tend to crop up in the strangest of places making life very tricky but we do our best.

Many people argue that humans have always eaten meat. This is very true. Back in the day meat would have been a rare treat for cave dwellers if they survived long enough to bring it home. The animals stood a chance of surviving. They were free. They had meaningful lives that were important to them. The intensively reared animals of today do not have natural, meaningful lives. They are treated as commodities.

I have heard people say they have a right to eat meat if they want to. This statement totally disregards an animal's right to live if it wants to.

We really need to place ourselves in another's shoes from time to time. To walk around in them, experience what others experience before we make such statements.

Lest we forget, it wasn't too long ago that people had the right to keep slaves

and men had the right to stop women voting. Look how those things changed. How did they change? People power. People stood up and let it be known that enough is enough.

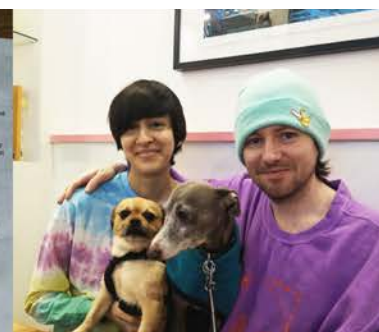
Cutting out animal products from your diet is much easier now than it has ever been. Just search online for vegan recipes and be adventurous with your food.

You can download an app to your phone called www.thehappycow.net and be guided to local vegan and vegan friendly restaurants and cafes.

One of my favourite places to eat is Serenity Now in the West End at Kelvinbridge. They are totally vegan and do the best sourdough sandwiches I have ever tasted. Matzaluna in Clydebank do a great vegan pizza and Frankie and Benny's in Dumbarton have great vegan choices.

There are many benefits to being vegan and one of them is the knowledge of knowing you are causing the least harm possible. You will find, in time, as you progress on your plant-based journey that you will change, become more peaceful and spiritual. That can only be a good thing.

Remember. Human beings have the power to bring about change when we stand together and challenge the institutions who profit from the misery of others.



CLYDESIDER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Learn How to Relax

Mondays 1.30pm Chest, Heart and Stroke Shop, Artizan Centre, Dumbarton
Practical skills you can learn and use at home. Bring a blanket for comfort and warmth. There's no charge, just a donation to the charity.

Walk In The Park

Wednesdays 10.15am – 12noon Meet at Balloch Tourist Information Centre –
The walks are led by a Volunteer Walk Leader and are fun, safe and easy way to get fit whilst enjoying our beautiful countryside and making new friends. All welcome.

Summer Fete

June 8, 1pm – 3pm Old Kilpatrick Summer Fete has the theme of 'The Lion King' so get your tails on and crayons out to paint on your whiskers and come along for some Safari Fun!. All our usual stalls will be there and more!

Clydesider Creative Cafe

June 8 – Would you like a stall space at our next Creative Café? The day-long event includes a mix of creative and local information stalls plus FREE creative workshops and activities for all ages. Our next event will be in Clydebank.

To book a stall space contact Caroline Finn on 01389 381110 or email caroline@clydesider.org

Lion King Screening

May 19 - Showing of the Lion King in Old Kilpatrick Church 1.30pm - 3pm.
Free, all welcome.

Issue 10 What's On deadline is June 21 2019; Issue 10 will be out at the end of July. Email details of local groups and activities to theclydesider@gmail.com

GETTING TO KNOW YOU WIN £50

Please help us make Clydesider the best it can be - just complete this short survey and return to us by June 8th. To say thank you we're offering one lucky reader a £50 gift voucher to spend in a local independent trader/shop of their choice, plus 3 runner-up prizes of Clydesider Club Card membership.

- Are you a regular Clydesider reader?
Every Issue Most Issues Occasionally First Timer
- How many people are likely to read this copy of the magazine?
1 2 3 4 5 5+
- Do you follow us on social media? Please circle all that apply.
Facebook Twitter Instagram

4. Have you acted on any article or advert you have seen in the magazine or on social media? YES / NO

If Yes please give us a few details.

5. Why do you read Clydesider?

6. What do you like about the magazine?

7. What could we do better?

8. About You: It helps us if we understand our readership better but feel free to leave any questions unanswered.

Gender Age.....
Location: Dumbarton Vale Clydebank Other

Send to 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

Remember to include your contact details if you want to enter the prize draw.
We will not share your information with any third party and will destroy any unnecessary personal data.

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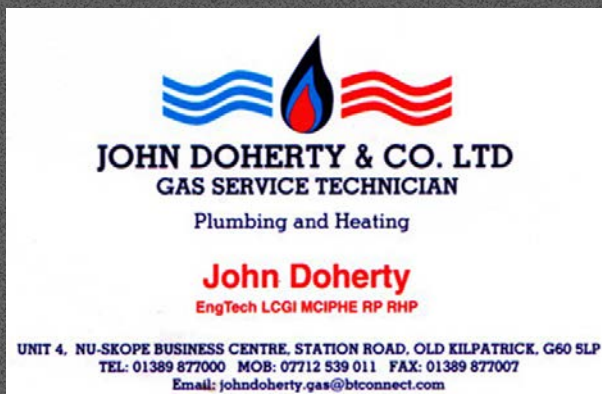
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A FAMILY ILLNESS

By an anonymous local contributor

It took a lot of courage for me to go to Al anon, but I had tried everything else; medication, counselling, alcohol control groups, numerous self-help books and courses. I believed the drinker when he said it was all my fault.

Going along to Al anon meant admitting I had a problem.

On my first meeting I knew I was with people who understood how I felt and had been feeling for a long time. I felt hopeful that my life and that of my family could improve if I gave this a try.

As you may know any addiction causes ripples of stress, distress and confusion. That is why we call it a family illness. The active drinker often causes distress by their attitude, inability to take responsibility and disregard for the needs of others.

At Al anon no-one pushed me to do anything other than turn up each week. Initially I said little - I just listened. I found my story being told by others who really did know what it was like to live with alcohol addiction.

Slowly, week by week, I learned through suggestions from others what to try in order to reduce the levels of stress at home. These were tried and tested by members over years in recovery.

I started to feel more human and more hopeful than I had in a long time. I realised having lived in chaos would take time to undo.

I decided one evening a week was a small price to pay if peace was the result. Learning to make good choices for myself was such a new concept and took time to practise and believe I had a right to a good life.

Al anon taught me much more than I first imagined. I couldn't believe this COMMUNITY RESOURCE was there for me and I hadn't even heard of it.

Today I have a good life. I make better choices for myself. I have a quiet peaceful life. I can keep peaceful when chaos prevails. I work hard at my programme but the rewards for this have been incalculable. I give back to Al anon by letting others know we are there for them.

There is no charge for Al anon, it runs on voluntary contributions. We are a worldwide organisation helping families affected by someone else's addiction to alcohol. There are over 800 groups in the UK alone.

Contact the Al Anon Helpline on 020 7403 0888 open 10am to 10pm 365 days a year.

CLYDESIDER Credits

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteer contributors from all walks of life, willing to share their time, expertise, ideas and experiences with our readers – you are a real joy to work with. We would also like to thank all our advertisers, our supporting subscribers and funders. You are all helping to shine a light on the good news stories and creative talents in our communities.

About CLYDESIDER

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire. The Clydesider community magazine promotes the positives our area has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery and history and showcases the creative talents, ideas and experiences of local people. If you would like to get involved and be part of West Dunbartonshire's good news story just drop us an email to theclydesider@gmail.com

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WHEN I'M GONE

In Memory of Rolf Campbell

It's important folk think on their ending,
And tell other friends of their choice
To be buried, cremated - whatever -
Leave no doubts, let them all hear your
voice.

For myself, I would wish for cremation,
But no garden remembrance for me:
Instead, my remains should be scattered
From the cliffs, high above the North Sea,
In a place I have loved all my lifetime;
In Auchmithie I wish to remain
Until the wheel turns its full circle,
Until I'm reborn once again.

My reason's threefold for my choosing,
For a cemetery holds no appeal.
How morbid, depressing and sterile,
Forgotten loved ones, it seems so unreal
With graves overgrown and neglected
And dead flowers ranked on each side;
I'd rather folk gazed on the ocean
And remembered my friendship with pride.
Have a meal, raise a glass to my memory,
Maybe walk on the beach for a while;
Save your tears for the living who suffer,
And remember my life with a smile.

I've always been proud of my country,
Loved Scotland with all of my heart.
Every atom's a product of Scotland
From my home my remains shouldn't part.
And when all that's left are the ashes,
If everything goes as I planned,
Let the sea winds disperse them through
Angus:

My remains, give back life to the land.
Fertilise all that grows in Glen Isla,
And nourish the berries and fields,
Repay my debt to Caledonia,
Participate in future yields.

While my last reason's really quite silly,
I've never done things by a half.
Even now I imagine the mourners,
For I've always been fond of a laugh.
As the winds that blow up from the harbour
Carry what's left in their wake,
I can picture folk diving for cover,
Hear the voices that shout 'Heaven's sake!'
And while at the end I've departed,
I enjoyed all my days, foul or fair,
Though memories may not long linger,
You'll not get me out of your hair.

By Rolf Campbell