

# CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POPULAR PRESS

ISSUE 15 SPRING 2021

FREE



## Playing the Pipes of Hope

COMING OUT OF COVID - ONE YEAR ON



# White Jewels by Wingnut Walker

Are ye renew'd  
Smile in the sunlight  
The Ben glow flows from  
The woods

Streams are richer laden  
Flow through the glen  
Are these the meadows  
Undulant and fresh

Is this the vale

Coolness cerulean  
Now!

White Jewels fell  
To leave a shine in my step  
Into the light we left  
A warm auburn lash  
And raw sienna dash ...

Gallop speed burst into scrub  
And tumble down mud to  
Slippery shingle, rust metal  
Mingle  
On light sprinkled shore  
Now tooth gnash for more!..

It's there, aware  
Tacet to my ear  
Beneath the breeze  
And in between the stone brown  
Rush and the leaves  
Breath it in all lichen  
And velvet as a Viridian  
Dream  
Evaporates like dew  
Umber flash  
Dragons breath shivers  
Down to rustling carpets new

Issue 15 Poetry Comp Winner



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**Front Cover Photo by Emma Latham TCB Photography**



Photo by Leona MacLeod

## Welcome

There seem to be new signs of Spring appearing every day at the moment and with each new bud flowering or bird singing, it feels like the light at the end of the long, dark Covid tunnel is getting that little bit closer.

It's hard to believe we have all been cocooned in our own little nests for a year now! As we slowly and carefully make plans to start reconnecting with friends, family, schoolmates and work colleagues, it seems a good time to reflect on the many different experiences and stories of how people in Dumbarton, the Vale and Clydebank have coped with Covid.

And though the past 12 months have undoubtedly been tough in so many ways, there is no shortage of inspirational stories to share. From the young piper who entertained elderly care home residents, to a Dumbarton grandmother who took part in the Covid vaccine trials, to a father and son who spent cold January days pulling trolleys from the canal in Clydebank - you are all amazing!

Some have used the long months of home hibernation to tap into their inner creativity with incredible results - a graphic novel, a cookbook and an online arts community, are just a few of the inspirational creative offerings to come out of Covid. There are also many hidden heroes in our community - the people who have survived this year, sometimes against all odds. It is a real privilege to share the remarkable stories of homeschooling parents and carers, young students and individuals who were dealing with life's challenges long before Covid came along. Thank you.

Enjoy & Stay Safe!

**Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry, Editor**



Advertisement

# Martin Docherty-Hughes

*Your MP for West Dunbartonshire (SNP)*

## CONSTITUENT ADVICE SURGERIES



### Here to help you

Throughout the Coronavirus outbreak my constituency team and I have been working hard to provide advice and support to people across Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven.

In order to be as accessible as possible I'm holding weekly virtual advice surgeries for my constituents. Every Thursday I'm available via phone or video call - please get in touch if you'd like to arrange an appointment.

Thanks,

**Martin Docherty-Hughes MP**

### Contact information

**email:** [Martin.Docherty.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Martin.Docherty.mp@parliament.uk)  
**phone:** 0141 952 2988  
**local office:** Titan Enterprise, Queens Quay,  
Clydebank, G81 1BF  
**website:** [www.martindocherty.scot](http://www.martindocherty.scot)  
**Facebook:** @martindochertySNP  
**Twitter:** @MartinJDocherty



Surgery dates may be subject to change depending on public holidays or parliamentary commitments.  
Due to high demand appointment slots of 15 mins are allocated on a first come first served basis.

# Musical Youth

By Jenny Watson

Photos by Emma Latham

It will be a few years before we fully realise the impact this last year has had on our children but one local young man has been making a big impact himself.

Mark Morrison, 15, from Alexandria spent much of 2020 visiting local care homes and sheltered housing complexes entertaining elderly residents who were isolated from their family and friends during lockdown.

"It all came about when I added a comment on a Facebook page saying I played the bagpipes, if anyone would like me to come play for them." Mark said.

From there his diary was filled with at least one or two garden concerts a week throughout last summer.

Before that Mark played his pipes outside for the Thursday evening clap for the NHS. Quite a few of his videos went viral across the local area so a fanbase was building, and people were starting to know his name.

Kind-hearted Mark not only entertained the care home residents with his music, he also raised over £3,000 to buy iPads for them to see and speak to their families who couldn't visit. He also donated copies of his DVD of music and songs.

These are a few of the many reasons why Mark was nominated for a Provost Award and is a finalist in the Arts & Culture Champion category.

Mark, and his family, discovered very early on he had a love of the arts and the talent to back it up.

At the age of three he started singing, winning his first trophy a year later. When he was nine he began learning the chanter, graduating to the bagpipes at 11 and in 2019 made it to the final stages of the hit TV talent show, The Voice - Kids.

He has a busy schedule of activities to help improve his skills and abilities.



"At one point we were out of the house every night of the week going to various classes." Mhorag, Mark's mum, said.

Not only does he sing and play bagpipes, he is also a member of the National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland, takes piano lessons and previously attended the UK Theatre School, for drama classes.

## Virtual Concert

Last month he was scheduled to perform in 'Movies to Musicals' at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, alongside an amazing cast of West End stars and musical theatre group Collabro.

This couldn't go ahead in the Concert Hall but a virtual concert happened live on Facebook. This is still available on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSccduNSrGO&t=22s>

His main focus right now is his school work and while blended learning has had difficulties for some, Mark is managing to stay on target with all of his school requirements.





Although he may have discovered a niche market, as there are not many pipers who also sing in the same performance.

In fact, according to his coach there is only one...Mark!

To say this is a difficult skill is an understatement, one that Will.I.Am and Danny Jones of McFly, both attempted and failed, when Mark successfully auditioned for The Voice - Kids in 2019, making it to the final 60.

Mark said: "It was great to experience the audition process and what it was like on set but it was different from how I imagined it to be. Even though I didn't make it further, it was great to be there and try."

Mark is still doing what he can to help local charities, recently performing live on Facebook to raise funds for Glasgow's Kindness Homeless Street Team project

To buy a copy of Marks DVD, find out more about upcoming events or watch previous videos visit his facebook page [www.facebook.com/markjmorrisonbagpipe](http://www.facebook.com/markjmorrisonbagpipe)

"I want to do as well as I can in school because while I love playing the bagpipes and singing, I am not sure if I want to have a career in it yet," shared Mark.



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## Golden Friendships - Our Story

### Sponsored Editorial

Golden Friendships charity started with the aim to set up a karaoke group for our friends in the community with additional needs.

Creating a safe and friendly environment was of utmost importance, it was the minimum our friends deserved.

The first day my mother Agnes McLaren sat with a raffle book and I hosted, we started getting to know everyone who attended. Week two my Auntie Molly Kelly joined, to this day they have been my wing girls.

The love and friendship we experienced was unconditional. What was to become of this small group of 28 was unimaginable!

We started growing in numbers, volunteers joined and by November we had a board of trustees and were officially a charity.

The opportunity arose to buy the building we used so we asked the community to help. Together we raised £84,000 and now own Golden Friendships community halls.

I was privileged to become manager of this wonderful organisation, trusted with looking after the welfare of others. I listen to suggestions and share ideas with the board. Together we decide actions as a collective.

Most of our 310 Golden Friendship members have been the subject of bullying, name-

calling or ridicule at some point in their lives. Our aim is to create a safe and comfortable environment with services tailored to meet our friends' needs.

So it gives me great pride to write that, post Covid, Golden Friendships will open the first wheelchair entertainment venue in the whole world - yes THE WHOLE WORLD.

On hearing about our new lowered bar for wheelchair users my great friend Jackie Maceira said, "it will be nice to be seen by the barman when ordering a drink." WOW!

We plan to run daily clubs for our friends with additional needs, disabilities and our pensioners. We will tackle loneliness, isolation and poverty.

Thanks to sponsorship from local businesses we will provide FREE theatre nights so families get a night out and take financial pressure off parents who may be struggling.

During school holidays we aim to continue working with WDC to provide food and entertainment for kids, as we don't want any children going without.

It's all about Community Helping Community - when you spend money at Golden Friendships it goes right back into helping others who may be less fortunate than yourself.

Thank you all for your continued support.

**Jim McLaren, Manager**





## Love, Family & Food

Words & Photo by Jenny Watson

What do you get if you take a pinch of a popular TV show, mix with a ladleful of social media and add the love of a local Nana?

You get 'Streetch Yer Kite' - a wonderful Scottish cuisine cookbook by Margaret MacKinnon from Alexandria.

"It all started when my husband Tony, came home from work and told me he thought I would like the TV show he had been on set for," Margaret explained.

Tony, was a freelance Health & Safety officer on the set of Outlander TV show.

Not your typical beginnings to writing a cookbook, but it was certainly the start of a whole new part of Margaret's world.

"I just loved the show but I didn't know anyone else that watched it," Margaret explained.

So she hopped on to Facebook and set up a fan page for main character Jamie Fraser, played by Scottish actor Sam Heughan.

This page now has over 14k members from every corner of the globe. "It started as a wee place to talk about the show. Then I would start putting up pictures of things I loved about Scotland, my family, or even what I was cooking for my dinner that night," Margaret said.

Her food posts were so well liked that people would often ask for the recipes

That's when one of the page admins suggested she pull all the recipes together and make a cookbook.

'Streetch Yer Kite' (Stretch Your Stomach) was born!

Proceeds from the book sales are donated to Bloodwise and Hillside Animal Sanctuary. And Margaret's fundraising doesn't stop there. She's raised over £34,000 to date by auctioning Outlander memorabilia, Scottish artefacts and has even organised and hosted 3-day 'Clan Gatherings.'

These offered participants tours of Outlander filming locations, Gaelic lessons and a good ole Scottish Shindig in the Vale Masonic!

Peggy Hancock Cox, from Colorado America said: "If I had to describe Margaret's FB page in a few words, it would be Love and Family.

"Margaret and her many wonderful contributors showcase Scotland and all her glory. Margaret's cookbook is a story of her family, her loves, her friends and her home."

And Carol Ferraro, also from the USA was one of the fortunate people to have attended the Clan Gathering in 2019.

She said: "Because of this site, I have made the most wonderful friends from all over the world, learned so much history about Scotland, Scottish phrases and words."

Margaret's husband Tony unexpectedly passed away last year which made an already difficult year that much harder for Margaret and her family.

"The support and love I felt from everyone in the group helped me keep going last year, even on the hardest days.

"They all loved Tony and it was nice I had this to share with them. My daughter Vicky and grandson Harry have been my strength, I would have been lost without them."

If you are a fan of the Outlander books, show or just love all things Scottish, I would recommend joining the Facebook page: 'Sam Heughan/Jamie Fraser 100% Scottish', you won't just be joining another Facebook page, you'll be joining a family.

To purchase the cookbook please contact Margaret directly through the page or by emailing [mackinnon.margaret@yahoo.com](mailto:mackinnon.margaret@yahoo.com)



## The Big Disability Group Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Since 2017



### Sponsored Editorial

The organisation which made accessing information, advice, activities and support for all disabilities and age groups a priority in Clydebank and West Dunbartonshire.

#### **WE DON'T WANT ANYONE TO BE ISOLATED AND ALONE**

For anyone with a disability or long term condition, family members or carers if you need information or the right support contact The Big Disability Group. The Big Disability Group believes everyone should be able to access the information and support they need when living with disabilities.

Being able to easily find the right support for your situation can enhance your life and open up a world of possibilities which is why we are so passionate about what we do.

Set up in 2017 we have made it our mission to put people living with disabilities in touch with the amazing groups, clubs and organisations out there.

We post on our Facebook page about groups, clubs and special events happening in West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow and further afield.

Or check out our Facebook 'Chat Group',

our website, also our Twitter and Instagram! We can be contacted through private messages on all our social media channels.

We also provide FREE Mental Wellbeing Boxes with various items to help coping strategies for anyone who is struggling.

And we host our annual Big Disability Open Day at Clydebank Town Hall where 45 groups and organisations meet the public and showcase what they offer. Organisations vary from national charities to local clubs and cover everything from health care, to financial support, to a game of football and meeting new friends.

It's also a great way for the groups and charities to connect with one another and some amazing partnerships have been created from these open days.

Last year we had to cancel our in-person event and, as organisations adapted their services, we decided to hold our open day virtually on our website to make sure as many people as possible could find out about these activities.

Our staff and volunteers are working from home ready to find you the information that you need.

Contact us on 0141 237 4560 or email us at [thebigdisabilitygroup@gmail.com](mailto:thebigdisabilitygroup@gmail.com)



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## Spring

We have lost the dark,  
I smell the confused air  
Of excited birds, my knees  
Once more unfurled I prise  
Myself from winters chains,  
Teeth, rattling in the cavern  
Of my mouth I drag myself,  
Heavy with sleep  
Towards lighter days,  
Days of sheet metal rooms  
Clad with the promise  
Of warm sunlight, and yet, and yet,  
Spring still in the embarrassed shadows  
Neither ready nor quite worthy,  
Asking our shy permission  
It uncouples itself, sleepy  
From winters heels  
Free at last.

## Clydesider Competitions

### Poetry Comp

Subject - Recovery

### Photo Comp

Subject - Natural Beauty

Prize - £25

**Closing Date** - May 21 2021

**Email entries to:**

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

### Rules

One entry per person for each competition, entrants must live, work or be part of a group in West Dunbartonshire; all entries must be your own, by entering you give Clydesider permission to publish your work in print or online - this in no way infringes your copyright.





## Canal Clean-Up Words & Photos by Stephen Barbour

During normal times myself and the Cubs from 6th Clydebank Scout group would end our term walking from our HQ in Dalmuir along the canal path picking up litter and at the end we'd get a chippy as a reward.

During the first lockdown lots more people started using the canal for daily exercise and escape from the sometimes imprisoning walls of their homes.

When the canal froze over for the first time in early January this year the problem became more evident as many discarded items were no longer hidden in the canal but were clearly visible on top of it.

From trolleys and traffic cones to a single trainer, bottles and a piece of the zipline from Linnvale playpark, they all surfaced. Seeing this made me feel sick, knowing that one of the few things left that Bankies could be proud of, was just being used as a dump and for meaningless fun.

I immediately went home, grabbed an old boat anchor and length of rope and returned to the area next to McMonagle's with my son and we began to remove what we could.

In the first three visits we have removed 30 trolleys, a swing set and a food cage from the area between Linnvale bridge and Swan bridge.

The main bulk of the trolleys belonged to Asda who were very helpful when we made them aware and sent staff to retrieve them, the other trolleys are unfortunately from stores that don't exist any more or are closed due to not being essential. We have secured these, where possible, in a trolley bay as no one else will take responsibility for them.

There was only one trolley that had a pound coin in it, the rest were empty. This likely contributes to them being dumped in the canal, if they were secured by the user correctly, they wouldn't be as accessible to be dumped. In scouting we teach our young people about the values of integrity, care and respect, values I fear are being forgotten by some in Clydebank.

We should all try to keep the canal clear of rubbish which is detrimental to the water, fish and wildlife. It would most definitely cause damage to watercraft using the canal in the summer. If kept clean, the canal could help increase visitors and maybe encourage others to have a little respect for our wee town.

I will continue to do what I can until I'm told I cannot or until I no longer need to. *"Try and leave this world a little better than you found it."* said Sir Robert Baden Powell, the founder of Scouting movement.





The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

*I hope all of my constituents are staying safe during these unprecedented times. While my surgeries are cancelled, I am still here to serve the Clydebank and Milngavie constituency. During this crisis, I can be contacted by email on:*

*[gil.paterson.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:gil.paterson.msp@parliament.scot)*



## **Gil Paterson MSP**

Member of the Scottish Parliament for  
Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency

*The cost of this publication was met through parliamentary resources.*



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## Still Taking Steps In The Right Direction

### Sponsored Editorial

Since the inception of Stepping Stones by a group of concerned local people in 1990 in a local manse in Clydebank, the charity has grown over the years to be a mainstay of mental health support for the local population across West Dunbartonshire.

Stepping Stones employs 11 staff and has 5 volunteers. Counselling services are supported by local universities and educational establishments widening the scope of the organisation across Scotland. The organisation is user led and draws on members to support the work through Peer Support. Stepping Stones' range of individual and group work activities are tailored to the needs of those struggling to maintain good mental health.

Former members of Stepping Stones are encouraged to build on their improving mental health and wellbeing by supporting others. This promotes a sense of community and responsibility.

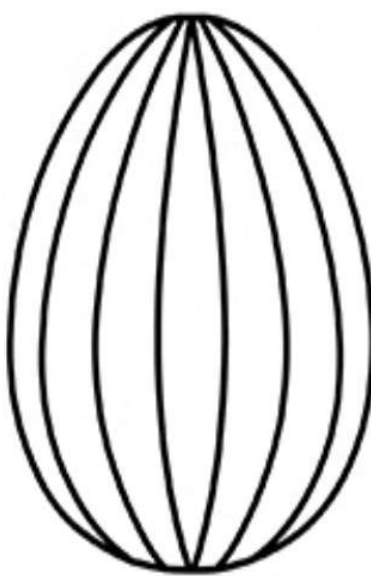
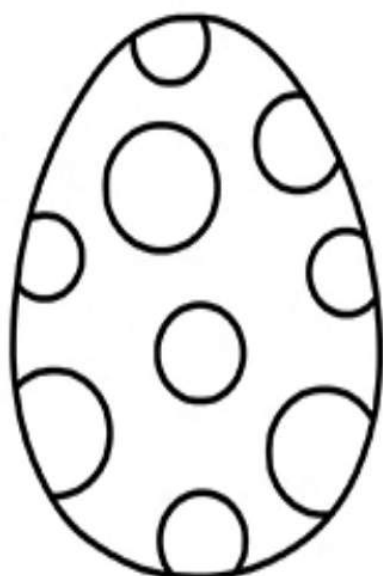
They are supported to take on new roles as 'peer supporters' or volunteer in range of different areas. This allows members to 'give back' which is enormously inspirational for people new to the services. Many of those who come into contact with Stepping Stones struggle to maintain control over their lives. The opportunity to "put something back" and benefit others who find themselves in the same situation is a major source of motivation to them.

Moving into their 30th year as a registered charity, Stepping Stones seeks new ways to support local people's mental health. Recently, they increased work with WD Health and Social Care Partnership with a new Bereavement and Loss Support Service. This new service is really important as communities move into the recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic and will offer 1:1 and group support. Stepping Stones expect most people to receive 1:1 bereavement support before accessing the group options. Referrals have been coming in since the beginning of January for the new service which will run for two years.

Referrals are accepted by calling 0141 941 2929, or emailing [admin@stepstones.org.uk](mailto:admin@stepstones.org.uk). Their YouTube channel has two short videos about the new service, view at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCONdt5iISlx43ziV039vWsQ>

Stepping Stones, Unit A10, Whitecrook Business Centre, 78 Whitecrook Street, Clydebank. G81 1QF. [www.stepstones.org.uk](http://www.stepstones.org.uk)





**Full Name:**

**Park:**

**Contact number/email:**



## Y Sort It Easter Egg Hunt

Sponsored Editorial

Y Sort It are holding an Easter Egg Hunt around six parks in West Dunbartonshire from Thursday April 1 to Tuesday April 6. Our Easter egg hunt sheet can be used to copy the patterns of six wooden eggs that can be found hidden in each park. We advise going to the park nearest your home. Young people should copy all six patterns of the egg they find before forwarding on their completed sheet - this can be done by taking a photo of your sheet - and sending it to [lyndsey@ysortit.com](mailto:lyndsey@ysortit.com)

All completed and correct hunt sheets will automatically be entered into a prize draw and we have 10 vouchers up for grabs!

Eggs can be found in - Goldenhill Park, Whitecrook Park, Dalmuir Park, Christie Park, Levensgrove Park, Dillichip Park.

Winners will be contacted by telephone or email on Thursday April 8 and staff will arrange for vouchers to be dropped off.

**GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY HUNTING!**

# Local Activist In Vaccine Trial

By Amanda Eleftheriades

Community activist Rose Harvie, has been at the forefront of many local initiatives. From Knowetop Community Farm, to Greenlight Recycling, Home from Home, Food for Thought and Robin House Children's Hospice, Rose has volunteered her time and skills in many different ways. So when she spotted an advert for volunteers to take part in Oxford University's Covid-19 vaccine trial, the 79-year-old grandmother didn't think twice before putting her name forward.

After a brief telephone interview Rose was invited to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow to be enrolled in the trial.

## Double Blind Trial

She explained: "It was a double blind randomised trial so I didn't know if I was getting the Covid vaccine or the control, which was a drug used to prevent meningitis.

"They gave me a whole lot of swab kits and I had to send one in every week - I've been doing that since last June. I've had negative results every week.

"The support I had from them throughout has been fantastic, I can't fault them, they have been so careful."

After both jabs Rose felt "really rotten for about a week" so thought she had been given the Covid vaccine.

It was only when she got the call to go for the jab that she was able to find out which vaccine she had been given.

"When I got the call I had to ask to be unblinded from the trial, it turns out I didn't have the Covid vaccine - I had the control."



Rose, who trained as a midwife in Overtoun House's Angel Room and then worked at the Vale Hospital for many years, doesn't see her actions as in any way heroic.

She said: "Several people said I shouldn't be doing that at my age, but if you have any kind of medical background you know someone has to stick their neck out and take part in research otherwise we wouldn't have vaccines and medicines for so many diseases.

"I don't feel noble, I just feel the research needs to be done to get us out of these lockdowns. The phrase 'civic duty' is what springs to mind."

Though not interested in plaudits, Rose did receive a round of applause in the Scottish Parliament when her son, Patrick, the leader of the Scottish Green Party, mentioned her involvement in a debate about the vaccines. Now the vaccine programme is being rolled out in the community another research trial is recruiting participants to help monitor their effectiveness.

The Vac4Covid Study by the University of Dundee aims to recruit a million participants worldwide to track the vaccines' impact.

**If you would like to follow in Rose's footsteps and help medical research visit <https://www.vac4covid.com/>**



# The Place For Every Carer To Turn Sponsored Editorial

Are you looking after someone? Who looks after you? Carers of West Dunbartonshire is here to help.

Carers of West Dunbartonshire is an independent, voluntary organisation dedicated to supporting unpaid carers in West Dunbartonshire. We provide support to carers via:



If you are looking after someone and you think we can help, please contact us on 0141 941 1550, or visit [www.carerswd.org](http://www.carerswd.org) for more information.

Find us on social media at @CarersofWestDun

During current Covid-19 restrictions, our team are working from home, but we remain dedicated to providing support to unpaid carers. Contact details for each member of our team are available via our website.



**"My experience with Carers of West Dunbartonshire has been excellent. The information they provide is exceptional and there is always someone available when I need to talk."**

**Steven**





## Conversations With Nature

### Words & Photo by Johnny Dale

I feel nature and being outside watching the wildlife out in the garden or on my walks has helped me a lot during these unprecedented times.

I have to admit I loved last year's lockdown, not for the point of many people losing their lives, but for the stopping of noise and aircraft and car noise.

It seemed everything was so quiet, and the birds seemed louder and nature's natural noise, that we really should be hearing to help us mentally as it is what our minds really crave, there was less of the city noise of cars and buses, and this was amazing.

I felt the birds and nature was speaking to me, like Mr Bullfinch, he was looking right in my window saying "thanks Johnny for these berries of Cotoneaster Rosaceae Simonsii."

Cotoneaster are evergreen or deciduous shrubs, mostly hardy they range from prostrate mat-forming types and hummocks, to large bushes and trees with brilliantly coloured red berries which birds like the bullfinch love.

Members of the finch family will happily gorge on these delicious natural foods. It is important to provide food to help birds but not too much and not always throughout the year as they become dependent on that food and sometimes it is good for them to have a balance of looking for food and having a little helping hand.

During Covid times I've been out locally, listening and closely watching with care and affection the habits of our natural world. It has fascinated me for many years how adaptable nature is and birds are, despite extreme climate and weather changes they still keep going.

Many of these little birds only have a short lifespan too, Imagine for a minute if our lifespan was only 3 or 4 years at best, it's important to put our self for a bit in nature's shoes, and small birds too. They are so beautiful to see and I felt Mr Bullfinch was out early, having his breakfast and saying "hello Johnny good morning, just gorging myself on these lovely juicy berries if you don't mind.

"Johnny do you know." said Mr Bullfinch, "that it's so hard to find bushes like this, as so many people are replacing their gardens with tarmac bricks and their hedges with wooden or walled fences and replacing overgrown bushes where I used to nest and hide, with concrete?"

"It's getting more and more difficult each year as hedges are ripped out and gardens replaced. Even grass is replaced with artificial grass, bushes are chopped down or ripped out.

"Yes there are green spaces, but most of them have only the same types of things and for my family, a good source of berries and seeds is very helpful. Soft fruits help, seeds of ash, dandelion, buttercup, dock nettles and bramble.

"But I can be destructive to young trees as I do like native tree buds like oak, willow and hawthorn, but these trees are hardy and can withstand as I only take a few.

"My only wish John, that there is more food and more places where I can raise my family and increase the population over time. Each year is getting harder and harder for us.

"So please during this pandemic, please spare a thought for us and the other bird population too who are declining lots, due to the non action and only words said by the few. I know the many are on our side.

"Thank you, Johnny for spreading our message, goodbye."



# I Heart Music

I love how it feels **IN THE MOMENT**  
When I connect my heart  
to notes, chords, rhythms and words

If I'm lucky, I can bypass my brain  
Going straight from heart  
to voice, or keys, or lyric book, or strings

Not brain. Well, 'thinking brain'.  
It's the barrier.  
Where everything stops,  
and has to be processed  
and re-processed  
and re-processed until,  
Brain ruins it.

Kills it.  
With self-critical, over-analytical,  
doubt. Why?  
So many questions, Brain.  
Let me ask you, Brain:  
are your questions necessary?

"What are you playing/writing/singing, and why?"  
Brain asks.  
"Where does it fit?" "What purpose will it serve?"  
"Will people like it?" ad nauseam  
"Do YOU like it?" Hmm.

DO I like it...?  
For once, a good question.

I'm pretty sure I can say  
that I like how I feel in the moment  
of the making of the thing (I think).  
I enjoy that feeling  
My heart feels lighter  
My inner smile feels brighter...  
I don't **HAVE TO** enjoy  
hearing myself or watching myself,  
do I?

Sudden, life-changing  
realisation (tongue in cheek)  
That's not **MY** job!  
Enjoying the output is  
the job of the **AUDIENCE**.  
I just need to enjoy the input  
and the (hopefully minimal) process.

But Ears tend to back up Brain, with  
"you're flat" "wrong chord"  
"you sound breathy" "pick up the tempo"  
and the classic  
"this song doesn't suit your voice"  
A lifetime of musical training  
guarantees this constant inner narrative.

Then Eyes will chime in with  
"um, those weren't the notes printed on the page" or  
"we've definitely seen those lyrics somewhere before:  
you're unoriginal"  
Got to love Eyes, so observant.

You know who never doubts or criticises?  
Heart.

Something inside wants to come out:  
"Let it out, Emily", Heart says.

"Just want to play for no reason? Do it!"

"Don't worry that it's been done before,  
there's only one you!"  
(and to be honest, it has **ALL**  
been done before, Heart knows).

"What do you mean it doesn't suit our voice,  
we're singing it, aren't we?! So it suits us!!"  
Heart reasons,  
in typical 'Heart' logic,  
"you're not a parrot, Emily,  
you're a peacock!".

Heart... have you ever **HEARD**  
the noise a peacock makes?  
"You know what I mean."  
Yeah, I do...

Heart doesn't care about  
tuning and tempo,  
Head voice or Chest voice,  
Heart only wants to connect and be happy!

Heart knows, there **IS** no  
'creative process' or 'performance theory'  
there is only **BEING**,  
and Heart knows, that  
Music doesn't **BELONG** to anyone.

It belongs to everyone, everywhere,  
Can be made by anyone, anywhere  
To be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere,  
**OR**, nowhere but in your imagination.

Heart is wise beyond my years.

I love Heart,  
I should listen to her more often...  
Brain has good intentions, but  
he's overworked,  
cynical,  
and he desperately needs a holiday.

Em Fraser 20th April 2020





## Photo Competition - Spring



Winning entry by Connor Bryce (top) with runners-up Bryan Hutton (above left) & Sarah Campbell (above right)





Photos  
clockwise  
from top left  
by Peter  
Jarvis,  
Frances  
Courtney,  
Aleena Rafi,  
Fiona  
McBean, &  
Dale Logson



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## Art For Everyone

Words by Amanda Eleftheriades

Photos byCarolynn Bowman

What started as a campaign over a mural on a local pizza shop has mushroomed into a virtual home for local creatives and art lovers, thanks to Dumbarton artist Carolynn Bowman.

Carolynn was furious when she spotted Bangin Pizza's Facebook post saying West Dunbartonshire Council had told them to paint over the artwork mural on their Dumbarton East shop.

She explained: "There are so many buildings in Dumbarton that could be turned in to art displays – the wall murals in Glasgow look amazing and have brightened up whole areas of the city, why not Dumbarton as well, the town is full of creatives.

"I love the American artist Keith Haring, his thing is that art is for everyone and at times like this when we can't get to museums and art galleries, we should be looking for ways to celebrate local art – not shut it down."

This prompted Carolynn to set up the public Facebook group Art for Everyone Dumbarton which was an instant hit.

The page is for anyone to share their art – no matter what level – and enjoy the wide array of creative talent that exists in the



local community.

For Carolynn, her own art has been her salvation over the past year and she is passionate that everyone has the opportunity to share in the therapeutic pleasures that creativity can offer.

She said: "I do suffer from mental health problems and recently it has been quite bad. Whenever my mental health goes down I'm at my most creative and my art also helps focus my mental health.

"In 2013 I had a terrible breakdown and got into painting and sewing, I was fortunate to have Ross Muir as my mentor at the time and he encouraged me to try different styles. "I went to night school to do patent drafting and then I had my daughter four years ago and struggled really badly with post-natal depression."

Being kept busy with her young daughter and her own well-being Carrie struggled to focus on her art, it was the pandemic that actually helped her get her creative focus back.

"At the start of lockdown I was really bad mentally and then when winter came I was struggling again but my work has helped me focus.



"When I was at my crazy points last year I started doing abstract art and I had great fun with it - I did a lockdown painting of everything that was going on in my head, it really helped and I felt I got it all out of my head.

"Lockdown has brought me back to my art." And the pandemic has not only helped her creativity it has also helped her find new markets for her art.

In 2018 she set up Saffron Liberty Makes making luxury cushions and bags to sell at craft fayres.

When lockdown put an end to this she started using Facebook to sell her designs instead and this was when her business really took off.

"I started drawing Dumbarton and someone asked me to make a bag of it and then I got asked to do bags for Clydebank, Helensburgh and lots of places I've never even heard of.

"Someone wanted their life as a bag - the pub they drank in, their first house. It was something that just took on a life of its own and the bags have been sent all over the world."

Now Carolynn is keen to encourage others to tap into their inner creativity or enjoy the art of local creatives and the Art for Everyone page looks like being just the start.

"It's the process and therapy of doing art that matters - not what happens at the end.

"I'm really enjoying watching the page grow, people are giving each other support and tips and advice.

"There are so many brilliant makers and artists in the area - the page has shown this and it's something our community should be proud of and celebrate."

**The Art For Everyone group is open to anyone to enjoy and visit Saffron Liberty Makes to see Carolynn's own artwork.**



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## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

FOR CLYDESIDER'S VIRTUAL EXHIBITION PART OF SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL 2021

FESTIVAL THEME: **NORMALITY?**

SEND A PHOTO OF YOUR ARTWORK TO [CLYDESIDERCOMP@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CLYDESIDERCOMP@GMAIL.COM) BY 23 APRIL ONE SUBMISSION PER PERSON



## Morning Has Broken

The beautiful song broke the hazy dawn  
Chirps the noisy chorus the birds unseen  
Bringing feathered life to the early morn  
Awakening sound sleepers from their dreams  
Ears now awakened from a dreamless sleep  
I hear the fledglings in their happy play  
The warbling of the thrush and blue tits tweet  
Entertain feathered friends this glo'rious day  
In awe she stands with dew upon her feet  
She braves the cold to where the birds doth dwell  
The gath'ring of birds, a vision to keep  
Until tomorrow, goodbye and farewell  
A beautiful start to this day of rest  
An honour to be your unfeathered guest.

By Christine Robertson



## Homeschooling Heroes

### By Angela Clark

As schools began re-opening their doors this month we spoke to parents and carers who had become temporary teachers for a second time in a year.

Despite the uncertainty about their children's futures and trying to cope with limited resources most were doing their best to remain positive.

#### **Sledging & Slime**

Karen Hamilton cares for her grandson Caden who has additional support needs and she tries to occupy him as best she can. Like many children Caden misses his friends at St Stephen's Primary and finds it hard being out of routine.

She said: "My grandson loves school and has found the change of routine difficult.

"It has been our biggest struggle and has been hard for him to adapt outwith his school routine.

"He has meltdowns because of his autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and being kept in the house constantly.

"It's hard enough trying to get a CALMs appointment for him, never mind services contacting us.

"We are trying to remain positive and do

things to keep him occupied. We have been sledging at Dalmuir golf course where he met his friends and he loved it.

"He has been making slime and spending a lot of his time outside with his drone which takes him away from the internet and gets us all out in the fresh air."

Many families are getting more fresh air as they find exploring outdoors is a great way to take timeout from the stresses of teaching.

But for parents with more than one child, homeschooling proved especially challenging as they tried to balance multiple curriculums.

Jacqueline Elizabeth Pairman knows this too well. As a mum of two and a full-time student herself she is trying to teach two different curriculums alongside her own studying commitments. Although worried about the pressures she is happy that her family is safe.

Jacqueline said: "It's such a difficult situation to adapt to, having kids at such different levels is really challenging, it's hard to divide my attention between them both equally.

"Jessica is preparing to choose specific subjects for the transition into 4th year at the Vale Academy and I feel she hasn't really had the full experience of her current subjects to make a fully informed decision.



“Cameron is at Lennox Nursery, he is due to start school this year and I've found it challenging trying to prepare him for it.

“We have a busy home with many tasks to complete, however, we do what we can and if it doesn't get finished today we can start afresh tomorrow.

“We are safe and well, that's what matters most. We're making the most of the situation and doing our best.”

Another mum who was making the most of the situation is nursery practitioner Annemarie Stewart who was furloughed and homeschooling her daughter Sarah, alongside her daughter's friend Ava whose mum works full time.

### Quality Time

Having quality time with her daughter has been welcomed by Annemarie.

She said: “I have really enjoyed being a stay-at-home mum and have felt very lucky to have this precious time with my daughter.

“Homeschooling is new to me as to everyone else right now, however being a nursery practitioner this is something I have thoroughly enjoyed and it did make it easier for me.

“Homeschooling my daughter and her best friend has been great as the girls have the social skills and company of each other. It makes it more fun and consistent for them.

“I try my best to make this homeschool experience a positive, fun and consistent adventure for the girls as this has been a tough time for the children not being allowed to socialise with anyone, go to school or go to clubs.”

Much to the relief of parents and carers, younger children returned to school at the start of March, with all primary and many secondary pupils in classrooms before the Easter holidays.

Time will tell if the tough winter lockdown and vaccine rollout will finally make homeschooling a thing of the past.

## Control Bunker Starfish Decoy Site

Melding with ghosts in this murky fog,  
we trod beneath a thick grey cloth of sky  
where the mossy bunker  
keeps its ever-vigilant eye  
open on the grazing cattle; prying day trippers.  
Talking in a previous generation's tongue,  
you wax lyrical about scorched grass –  
night-blinded pilots  
lighting countryside with kerosene and oil;  
the shallow bomb ponds  
in which our jam jars snared tadpoles.

In this field where bees are mourned  
and a kleksograph of white tuxedo trees  
rally like mourners at a graveside,  
we too stand respectfully in silence.  
Listening, acorns drop around us  
like faeries' footsteps, the flutter  
of dandelion clocks  
imitating their spring breath,  
and a translucent rainbow protects  
us overhead like a domed shelter –

guarding the town's secrets  
and bones  
and swallow nests.

By Stephen Watt

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Photo above by Dean Robinson

## Clydebank Can Sponsored Editorial



Clydebank Can is a Community Links Scotland project, funded for two years by the Scottish Government's Investing in Communities Fund.

This new project aims to bring people together to create a more vibrant and socially and economically active Clydebank town centre. We believe that small scale community-led activity is the way to do that, and that together we can create a community which meets the needs of local people and gives everyone the opportunity to be involved.

Clydebank Can enables local people to come together and enjoy learning new skills. Y Sort It, a local youth charity, are offering free cycle hire for local families. They also provide free lunch, safety equipment and route maps. Awestruck Academy are offering young people free music lessons and the opportunity to come together for a live band performance at the end of a 10-week course. For adults there is a free online photography course delivered by Inclusive Images and RIG Art's are providing online arts and craft sessions, also for adults.



Check out the website or follow us on facebook to find out how to book!

Many more activities are planned for the summer including free canoeing, kayaking and paddleboarding, as well as more music lessons and outdoor activities. We hope that more people from Clydebank will get involved, and also make use of the fantastic online Directory which lists over 200 local groups and organisations which help support our community. Find out more at [www.clydebankcan.com/whats-on](http://www.clydebankcan.com/whats-on)

Fiona Clark, Project Co-ordinator, said "Once lockdown restrictions are eased, we hope that the project will facilitate more live music and entertainment in Three Queen's Square. We would like to see local people make the most of the canal and bandstand area, and bring more life into the area through community events and activities."

Stephen Singer, Director of Community Links Scotland, said "In the future we hope to create a Development Trust, represented by local organisations, through which we can identify local needs and bring more funding into Clydebank to support our community as a collective."



# Reliable Resources

Local & national helpline numbers and information sources to cut out and keep.

## Local Numbers

**Food For Thought** - 01389 743908.

Emergency food aid referral line.

**West Dunbartonshire Community**

**Foodshare** 01389 764135 - emergency food aid delivery

**Dumbarton District Women's Aid** - 01389 751036

**WDC 'No Homes for Domestic Abuse'** - 01389 738510

**Clydebank Women's Aid** - 0141 952 8118

**Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol (DACA)** - 01389 731456 or 0141 952 0881

**WD Citizens Advice Bureau** - information on benefits, welfare rights, employment rights and general well-being  
Freephone - 0800 4840136

Alexandria - 01389 752727

Clydebank - 0141 435 7590

Dumbarton - 01389 744690

**Independent Resource Centre** - benefits advice 0141 951 4040

**WD Housing & Homeless** 01389 738282 or Freephone 0800 197 1004 (option 5)

**Clydebank Community Addiction Team** - 0141 562 2311

**Dumbarton Joint Hospital** - 01389 812018

**Stepping Stones** - 0141 941 2929 - mental health charity providing telephone support

**Big Disability Group** - 0141 237 4560  
thebigdisabilitygroup@gmail.com and on Facebook - support and information to people living with disabilities

**WDC Additional Support** - text 'help' to 07800 002582 or visit [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/additional-support](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/additional-support)

## National Helplines & Websites

**NHS 24** - 111 for urgent health advice if GP or dentist is closed [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**NHS Inform Scotland** - 0800 028 2816 - General advice line

**Breathing Space Scotland** - 0800 83 85 87  
[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot) Mental Health helpline

**Age Scotland** - 0800 12 44 222 - advice, help or simply a friendly voice of support  
[www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland)

**Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland Nurses Advice Line** - 0808 801 0899. Text: NURSE to 66777. Specialist nurses answering questions, provide advice, and information to anyone with a chest or heart problem.

**Scotland's Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline** - 0800 027 1234.  
Available 24/7 [www.sdafmh.org.uk](http://www.sdafmh.org.uk)

**Rape Crisis Helpline** - 0808 801 0302 or TEXT: 07537 410027

**Samaritans Helpline** - 116 123 anytime or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) (response time 24hrs)

**Alcoholics Anonymous** - national helpline 0800 917 7650  
[www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk)

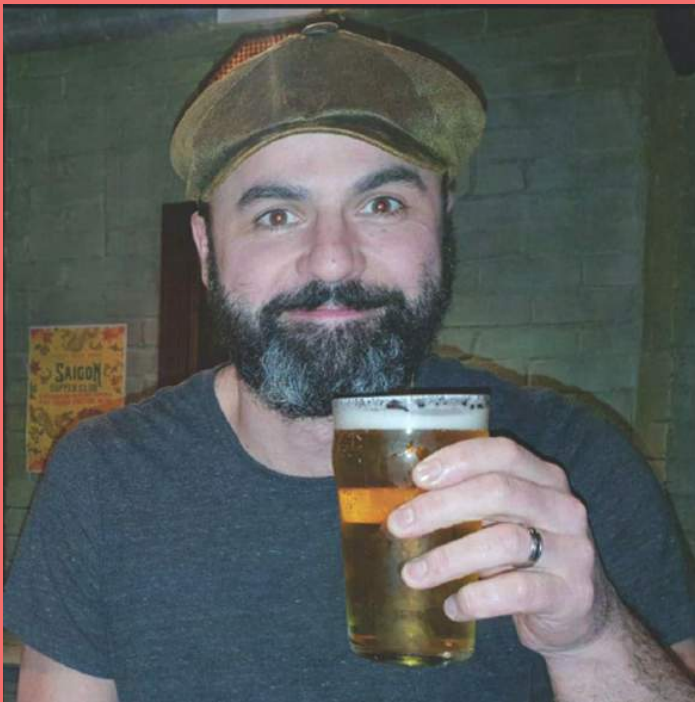
**Gov.uk** - Government guidance on all aspects related to impact from COVID-19  
[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**World Health Organisation** - [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

**Young Scot** - Information and advice for young people  
[www.young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus](http://www.young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus)

**Parent Club** [www.parentclub.scot](http://www.parentclub.scot)

**Togetherall** - online mental health support 24/7 for anyone in WD aged 16 - 24  
[www.togetherall.com](http://www.togetherall.com)



## Graphic Dreams

By Jenny Watson

As kids we dream of being astronauts travelling to space, scoring the winning goal for our favourite team or writing a comic book. Very rarely we get to follow our dreams into adulthood.

But David Cranna from Alexandria, has kept his childhood dreams alive, penning a graphic novel about a detective in the notorious and gritty world of Glasscity.

David explained how his love of comic books, started at a young age. "My dad used to get the Sunday Post and I'd read the funnies in that, Oor Wullie and The Broons.

"Then I got a Judge Dread annual for Christmas and that was me right into it." Although a teenage encounter did pause his comic book passion.

"After meeting a couple of girls I knew in the local newsagents, I never picked up a comic book again until my mid-twenties.

"Looking back, I was raging at myself for being that embarrassed, but I think that's part of the teenage awkwardness everyone has."

Adult life took him into hospitality. One day, during a quiet spell, David started writing a story idea on an order pad.

Reading it back he realised he had the makings of a great tale.

So he joined a few groups online to research how to get an artist, but had no money to fund his plan.

Eventually he met Costa Rican Roman Gubskii and the pair agreed to work on the 28 pages in their spare time.

David's next challenge was finding a letterer, this also happened online.

"I put up a post saying, 'Who wants to join my band?' I got a bit of a slagging for it, which was expected, then Ryan Bielak in California pops up saying, 'I'll join your band,' and that was us.

"Between the three of us we put the comic book together in about three years."

### Kickstarter

With advice from members of the Scottish Cartoon Society, David set up a Kickstarter to fund his dream.

It launched in June 2020 and has already raised 172% of his original target, covering the first volume costs and beginnings of Volume Two.

When the pandemic hit, David was furloughed and took advantage of the time to finish Volume One.

### Pandemic Pressures

The time helped in other ways. "Creatively I felt a little hindered as I had so much to do but I definitely took more time for myself and my family.

"Now when it comes to work, I worry less. I used to get so stressed out, but the pandemic has really reminded me to find value in the people around me, not to focus on the negative."

David hopes he can continue to build Glasscity and share it with the world.

As the first page of his limited-edition copy says: *"Don't leave your dreams in your head."*

**To buy a copy join Glasscity Facebook [www.facebook.com/ComicsGlasscity](https://www.facebook.com/ComicsGlasscity) or visit [www.comichaus.com](http://www.comichaus.com).**





## **Creative Clydesider: Allyson Johnson** Interview by Jenny Watson

Allyson is a local artist who enjoys the creative freedom of expressing her talents and skills through various genres of paintings. She creates a wide range of work from landscapes to portraits and also paints commissions.

### **Q. How did you get into art?**

**A.** I took Art at school but then never really followed it up until a couple of years ago. I was at home caring for a family member, found an old box of paints and started drawing and painting again. I really enjoy it, it's relaxing. It has gone from strength to strength. It started as a hobby, then people liked what I was doing and started asking for commissioned pieces.

### **Q. Do you have a favourite medium?**

**A.** Oil paints. I tried other mediums, but they just don't work for me. I do a lot of pencil sketching but oils work best. I do a lot of wet-on-wet working as I like the blending of the oils.

### **Q. Where can we see your artwork?**

**A.** Currently on my website [www.allysonjohnstonart.co.uk](http://www.allysonjohnstonart.co.uk) or my Instagram @allysonjohnstonart

### **Q. Who or what inspires your work?**

**A.** I love the therapeutic process of painting and trying different subjects. My husband is a hill runner, he takes some fabulous pictures, so I paint them. I always shied away from portraiture because I thought it was too difficult, but I started trying them and found I'm quite good at it. I've been advised to stick to one genre or work on one style but I find that hard because I enjoy painting all random things, whatever I feel like at the time.

### **Q. You could have an art tutorial with a famous artist - who and why?**

**A.** I don't really follow any one particular artist. At the moment, I am really enjoying the work of local artist Ross Muir. I love his work, where he's come from and how he's put his own stamp on things. As far as the Masters go, I'm not really drawn to any one particular artist, I like a little something from all of them. Van Gogh I like because of his use of colour and his brush work, he might have been a good one to learn from.

### **Q. What do you love most about painting?**

**A.** I paint almost every day; I find real pleasure in it and have taken great joy in trying different subjects. I'm still learning and hopefully getting better with everything I do.





**Pictured above left - right :** Fraser Nicoll, Murray Grayston & Robbie Gardner

## **Student Solutions**

### **By Aidan Macdonald**

The last 12 months have been a struggle for everyone. From those who work in the NHS to those who have had to shield. It really has been a year to forget.

One group significantly impacted by the pandemic is young people.

From the constant stop-start of sectors opening and closing, causing many in this age group to become unemployed, to the moving of university and college teaching online, taking away a significant part of my generation's social contact. It is clear those who are medically cited as young and healthy have suffered as well.

As someone who is a student, I thought it important to talk to others in a similar position and try to get some perspective on the struggles of the last year and the hopes for some normality in the near future. I decided to speak to a few pals to get their thoughts on how things have been.

My friend Fraser Nicoll (20) told me what he found most challenging during the pandemic.

He said: "I think not being able to see friends and family in person has been really tough for students, like it has for the wider population.

"Away from university work and your studies, it's so important to have that downtime and turn off for a bit to keep yourself ticking over. "Over the pandemic, it's been a case of sitting at your laptop all day and there isn't that balance between work and socialising."

He then went on to speak about what had helped him personally over the last year, saying: "I think I've been quite lucky to have university work and a job to keep my mind busy for the majority of the year.

"There was a period during the first lockdown when I had neither for about 12 weeks, and that was really tough because it felt like I was living without a real purpose. I think also the feeling of collectiveness has helped me through a lot of it - that everyone is making sacrifices and that we're all going to reap the benefits when we can see each other again."

To try and find out views on universities' support networks over the course of the coronavirus crisis, I talked to my pal Murray Grayston (21).

He said: "I feel like this really differs from module to module.

"Some lecturers have definitely got to grips with it well and their online content can be particularly engaging. On the other hand, I feel some are particularly set in their ways



and methods and the adaptation to their content online has been a struggle for them, something I feel comes across in how I engage with it.

"Live classes are definitely the biggest challenge, it is too easy for people to hide at times leaving the same people to contribute every time.

"I don't believe it is always their own fault, but it cannot be good for their development."

He then mentioned how some lecturers have provided more support than others, saying: "Some tutors will take feedback gratefully and adapt their teaching accordingly, others it seems very much a case of, this is the way it is, take it or leave it.

"In terms of outwith the tutors specifically on my course, I can honestly say I have heard little to nothing at all from them which is a shame but I suppose they have thousands of pupils to try and work with, so that can't be easy to do remotely."

With there being so many young people currently unemployed, I asked my friend Robbie Gardner (20) if he had concerns for his future job prospects.

He said: "There is a slight worry, but I do still feel confident about the future. While jobs may be tight and I might not get my dream job or even something close, I'll persevere and get a job I enjoy and work my way up to what I want.

"I don't really see a point in thinking negatively about the future as no-one knows what will happen, so why not have a positive outlook on that."

Young people are a resilient group, and we will play a significant part in the recovery from coronavirus from both an economic and social perspective.

From hospitality workers to supermarket workers to students, just to name a few, I like to think we won't be labelled as part of the Covid generation but instead contribute many more positive things long term.

## Awaiting Spring in The Vale

On Carman's braes the sheep return, we  
await the lambs

The Leven swells and floods the park, we  
await the calm.

Ower the Craggs the sun is quicker, we await  
its warm

And sets as we set the table, we await an  
earlier dawn

Our valley shrugs its salted grime, in  
freshening rains and squalls

And gardens in Balloch see nestling rooks  
and hear more the parklands calls

For spring is warming

The earth is flourishing

Our walks abune the valley floor no longer  
smart our eyes

The visions of Argyll and Clyde magnificent  
and magnified

For the air is clearing

As spring is nearing

Our homes we ready for the days,

we await the days, we await the days

When mud-less feet trip light and neat,

we await the days, we await the days

When hearts will like the birds start singing,

we await those days, we await those days

When Easter bells are ringing, we will  
realise,

we are in those days,

our springtime days.

**By Bruce Biddulph**

## Remember to Follow

### Clydesider



# Lockdown With DACA



## A Year To Forget? Our Stories

At the end of 2020 Clydesider had the pleasure of teaming up with a group of people accessing support at Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol.

Over five weekly virtual conversations they shared their highs and lows of 2020.

They were powerful stories and we are now collaborating on a publication which will make sure a record is kept of their experiences.

With the group's permission we used a selection of their words and photos to create this photo essay to give a flavour of their lockdown lives.



Photo by Martin Cameron

"I miss the walks. My work just shut down again so I'm babysitting and doing arts and crafts but I like getting out walking, that's what I really miss.

I go for wee walks to Balloch or somewhere like that. We used to all meet up with Tommy and go for walks and I do miss that." **Linda**

Photo by David Swainson



"My best pal died at the start of the first lockdown. Before this virus when you went to a funeral you would go for a coffee or to a pub or whatever after and that was a big part of the funeral process that is getting missed now. You'd all sit there reminiscing and telling stories, usually funny stories and none of that is there and I really missed that. It was just up to the funeral and then home." **Martin**



Photo by Martin Cameron

"I can't get out shopping much on my own so when I do get out I tend to do it in local shops and we have a great local shop here, they are a great couple who run it.

Now if I go for bread and milk I could be over there for three quarters of an hour talking away. I don't mind paying the extra prices because it's the entertainment value and if I'm sick and can't get out they deliver - it's just to locals in these flats. It's been a great help. It's like a wee community that shop." **Martin**

Photo by  
Ronnie  
McKechnie



"Before lockdown sometimes I'd go out for walks and sometimes see a friend and sometimes talk to a neighbour. But now nothing. Nothing. Sometimes I go out to get shopping. And then I change my mind and go back home because there are too many people. I think I had that in my mind when I go to the shops. Sometimes I've got nothing to do but go to bed." **Michael**





Photos by Anne Murray

"I have lots of pyjama days, I'm enjoying my pyjama days. Also more grandkid days, when the grandkids come round, they're probably my best days we do all the arts and crafts when they come round." **Linda**



Photo by Linda Wiltshire

"The lockdown is actually good for me, I'm actually keeping money aside and can maybe do things different next time. I need to find other things to do, just going through the motions for now. We're all in the same boat." **Mark**



Photo by Ronnie McKechnie

"I suppose one of the upsides I've been doing a couple of computer courses I wouldn't have done if we hadn't been in lockdown because I used to spend a lot of time down at the Men's Shed. I was bored so I decided to make this little man out of nuts and bolts. But now it's grown arms and legs and I've been making these little Usain Bolts and it's quite fun." **Ronnie**



Photos by Linda Wiltshire

"I've hardly been out doing anything I just keep as busy as I can doing craft stuff. I think I've only been in Clydebank once since March. My boots were stuck in the cobbler's for six months. I didn't get to Clydebank until September it was just when the cobbler opened again so I could rescue my boots." **Charlie**



Photo by David Swainson

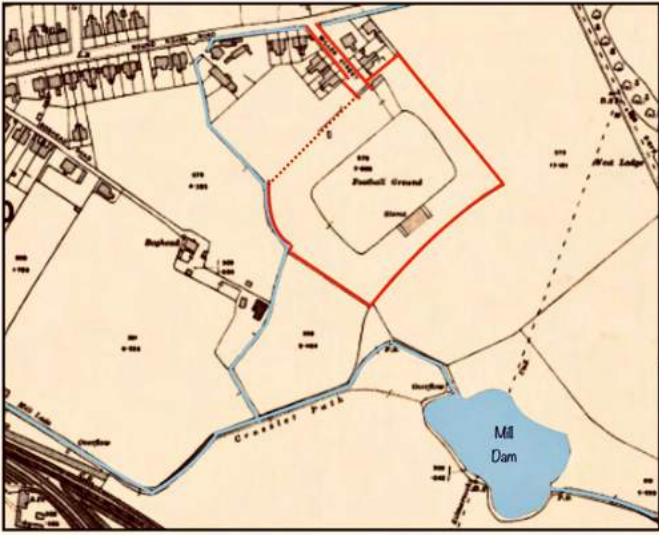
"Before this lockdown, two lockdowns, I thought I was strong going away to sea for long periods of time, but when you came back you would see your families. But the way things are now, this lockdown is harder than being away at sea I'm finding it quite difficult. I thought I would get on with it but it destroys my mental health and my physical health and not having the motivation to get out do something." **Wayne**



"This year has been rubbish, it really has." **Linda**



1914



## All Mapped Out By Brian Wright

Have you noticed how maps sneaked their way into our lives. It used to be there was maybe a touring map on a shelf in your hall cupboard, under the BT phone book and the Yellow Pages. It was always at least a year or two out of date when planning next summer's holiday route to North Berwick, or Newquay, or possibly all the way to a ferry for Ostend – but roads didn't change all that much. Then the map would be put back in the cupboard until it was needed again; another year out of date.

But then the digital age dawned, and along came Garmin sat-navs and Google Earth, smart phones and fitbits, and now we carry a map with us everywhere we go – either in our pocket, on our wrist, or as a built-in part of our car. No more need to plan a journey in advance. Simply switch on and tell your selected system personalisation where you want to go.

In fact, in this lockdown age when we're hardly permitted to drive out of our street, Google's Street View can take you on a virtual trip to anywhere that takes your fancy. The biggest choice you have to make is whether to enjoy it on your phone, tablet, laptop, or PC. I had a stroll down the Champs Elysées on Monday. Tomorrow, I fancy visiting Niagara Falls, or perhaps New

York's 5th Avenue to look at Saks' window display. I'll decide in the morning.

Recently, I've also spent quite a bit of time with different online maps. In one particular visit the "time" I spent was from 1823 through to 1896. And not a DeLorean or Marty McFly anywhere in sight.

Let me ask, did you ever have cause to see an old map of Clydebank or Dumbarton at your local library? All the main branches have a set of wide shallow drawers containing cumbersomely large, plastic protected, Ordinance Survey produced district plans. Well, nowadays, all of those maps, every single one ever commissioned, of every part of Scotland, is available to view online. On the National Library of Scotland digital archive. Du(m/n)bartonshire maps range from 1583 to 1961 in 59 series. That's quite a resource.

I'd used them previously with my family history research. My family lived more than 40 years in the Beardmore Yard's factory house in Dalmuir. It was actually the prototype Atholl Steel House that was itself a forerunner of those widely used post-war prefabs. Orders for the steel houses were completed in the Dalmuir Locomotive Works, and I believe there were four-in-a-block Atholl steel flats put up in Whitecrook, Clydebank, during the late 1920s.

Anyway, all the photographs I'd seen of our family house at Beardmores give the impression of a rural bungalow, vegetable plots aplenty, and a rustic wooden fence and gate. But those images don't sit well with the knowledge that a massive, thundering, riverside dockyard and engineering works sat (almost literally) on the house's doorstep. By uploading the appropriate mapping, I could see how little the layouts related to my imagined reality or, indeed, to what exists in Bridge Street and Beardmore Street today. With an accurate picture now in mind, I could make sense of those photographs.



During this lockdown I've found abundant time to time-travel through these old maps, and found it surprisingly fulfilling.

I live next to Dumbarton's Levensgrove Park, an area that grew out of an old Landed Estate, as much of Scotland has done. A series of mappings from 1823 traces the history of a quarry becoming a bowling green, of an orchard becoming a triangulation of Victorian terraced flats, and of gaps in those terraces that tell of German bombing raids and lives lost. I presented a set of those images to the park's Community Ranger as the story of a Landed Estate transformed into a Public Recreation.

As a small shareholder of Dumbarton FC (I'm actually 5ft 8) I was also interested in why Boghead Park was so named, and so boggy. From 1860 to 1937, the story laid out before me was of a farm surrounded on three sides by watercourses running down from the hills of Overtoun and Bellsmyre. Of a dam, the size of a football field, marginally

east of the football grounds in Silverton, that ensured a continual flow to power the town mills.

Where did all that water go when the dam was eventually drained and backfilled with earth? If the ancient field-drains collapsed (as they often did) with the disturbance of house building and land development, did the surrounding land become forever saturated?

Those maps are now with the football club and held as a "History of Boghead Park in Five Maps".

From working on these personal interests I have now been commissioned to produce a project on the mapping histories of Scottish football grounds.

"From little acorns..." as the saying goes.

I now have a project to fill the emptiness of lockdown, borne out of the very space that lockdown afforded me. Life never fails to amaze.

**Map reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland.**



Remember to Follow Clydesider



Dear Editor,

This is a letter of thanks.

Thanks to the men who took the time and effort to cut back the scrub that threatened to block the path along the Leven, at Renton. This is wonderful walk for dog and partner which was becoming difficult because of the overgrowth. So, on behalf of all of us who enjoy the walk, 'Thankyou for your trouble.'

The same day I met a man and woman, whose names I am ashamed to say I can't remember. They came from Dumbarton to clean the verges of the towpath from Alexandria of all the rubbish that accumulates along them. A big thanks for doing such a wonderful job.

At this point my letter changes. It now becomes a plea.

People, we are blessed with a wonderful amenity; please, please stop dropping dog bags, cans, masks, coffee cups, plastic bags and more along the way. To West Dunbartonshire Council, please do not let the riverside paths degenerate till someone thinks it better to close them. That's still easy.

To finish I'd like to invite anyone willing to join me for an hour or two once a month to help keep the riverbanks clean. I propose a Tuesday morning and a Saturday afternoon. Anyone interested please call Laura on 07922833472.

**Laura Gee**

# Communities Coping With Covid by Amanda Eleftheriades

The past year has been difficult for most of us, being cut off from friends, family, colleagues and social spaces.

As we faced a crisis of global proportions the most vulnerable people in our communities again became those most at risk.

Unable to walk through the doors of community centres, charities, and churches - common lifelines in difficult times - the pandemic exacerbated the loneliness, anxiety and inequalities that existed.

And while many of us transitioned to Zoom or Teams in a bid to stay connected to our pre-Covid lives, there were many excluded from this digital space, lacking the necessary knowledge or technology.

This required local community organisations to get creative in how they continued to provide support to people struggling with an array of life challenges.

A year on, we checked in with some of these groups to find out how they are coping with the challenges the pandemic brought to their doors. These are a few of their stories.

John White, Operations Director for local mental health charity, Stepping Stones, said: "Remote-working works for some of our team, but the very nature of our work means we like to get into the room and see people, so staff had to develop new skills to allow them to do that.

"We have some staff who worked with Childline or other telephone helplines, and we were fortunate as we could draw on their expertise to support those of us who hadn't worked in this way before."

Losing the daily buzz of people in the office also had an impact on the team's energy levels and with a skeleton staff in the office it was more challenging to check on how staff were coping.

John said pay increases, a staff peer support service and inclusion in the early phase of the vaccine rollout have all helped boost staff morale.

Various local and national networks and resources which grew out of last year's lockdown have also helped.

Last March Clydesider set up a virtual Community Response Network (CRN) for local community organisations to stay connected while doors were closed.

John praised the initiative saying, "it has

been the best network that has come together over the past year, it is really, really good.

"Before I would speak to some of the group, but others I didn't have any contact with. "It's good to catch up with what they're doing, with everyone being local it's really helpful."

In the face of extra bureaucracy, increasing demands on mental health services and the constant change over the past year, John is proud of what his team has achieved.

"Working on the coalface we just get on with it, that's the same for most of the organisations in the CRN - we just rolled our sleeves up and got on with providing support to the people we work with.

"The public have been supportive, we've had people fundraising for us and dropping off things and sending in thank you cards - it means a lot."

And his tip for coping through these strange times - "keep a sense of perspective and ground yourself when you can, even when it is hard to do, you need to keep practicing it.

"Sometimes it's just about recognising that what is happening now isn't forever."





Claire Strong is Network Manager for Neighbourhood Networks charity. It supports people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health problems to live independent lives connected with their communities.

Their biggest challenges was keeping the service fully operational during lockdown.

"We acted quickly to set up a digital programme of activities to keep our members connected," Claire explained.

"We were successful in getting funding from Big Lottery and SCVO which has been a massive help.

"Members not digitally connected before, now have mobiles and laptops and can confidently use Zoom and Facetime to come together with family across the globe, as well as members in the network."

Like many organisations Neighbourhood Networks noticed a significant impact on members' mental health. To better understand the issues they created their own mental health group.

It provided "a safe space for members to come together and chat about how they were feeling" as well as offering virtual Mindfulness classes and Yoga plus creativity packs for those who could not get online.

Claire added: "As a third sector organisation we're able to provide frontline support with a lot of others in the local community, where other services such as the local authority had to scale back.

"The Community Response Network has been a great place to come together with other local organisations and share our work.

"It has helped me get to know people and form positive connections, for example with Inclusive Images and Clifftop Projects, who now work with Neighbourhood Networks and our members on a regular basis, which has been amazing."

Post-lockdown Neighbourhood Networks is planning to continue the digital work alongside their community-based work.

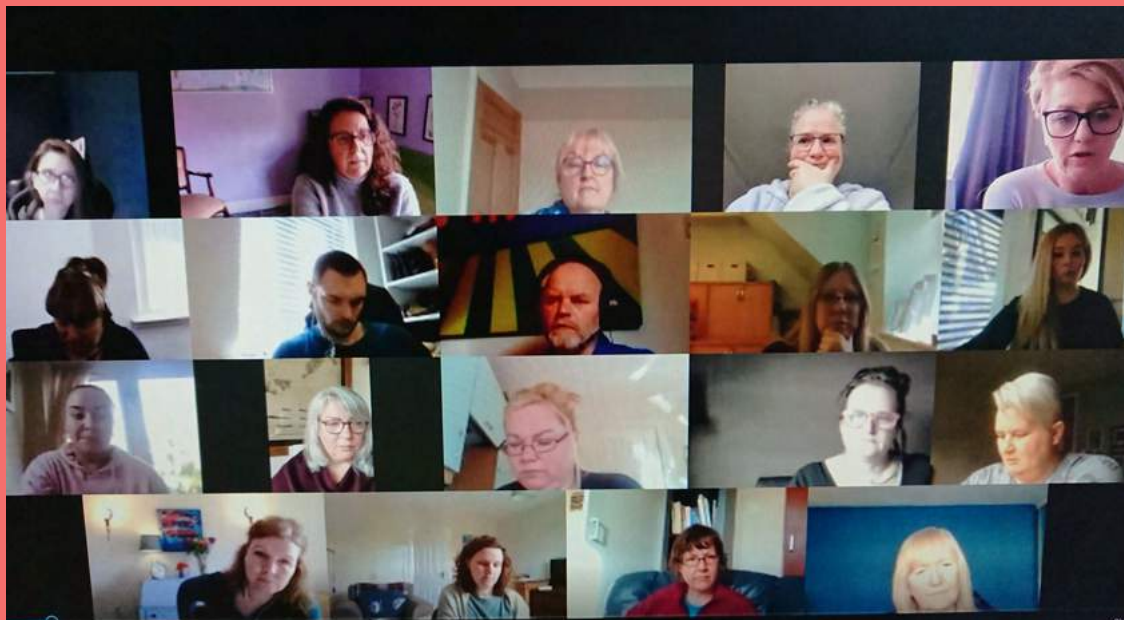
"It has had a significant impact. Individuals can connect digitally to members from across the central belt which is great, some are more comfortable in front of a screen which helped them grow in confidence.

"Now we just need to harness this and build up confidence off screen where they feel confident in their own local community."

The charity is now preparing to help their members ease out of lockdown.

"It has been a non-stop rollercoaster and we need to make sure both staff and members feel ready, so we are starting work on getting members out 1:1 to build up confidence," Claire explained.

"I know Covid has been a very stressful time for everyone but there have been some amazing benefits and the main positive is seeing the transformation in members as they have learned skills that previously they may not have had an opportunity to."



## Clydesider Community Response Network Members

Kevin Crawford, is founder and director of The Big Disability Group. The organisation helps people struggling with any health issues find and access support.

Pre-Covid their staff and volunteers had weekly information stalls in Clydebank Health Centre, regularly dealing with 80 - 100 enquiries a day.

As everything moved online at the start of lockdown Kevin was fearful people they supported would be even more isolated as many did not use social media.

"We started to put our newsletter into every foodbank in West Dunbartonshire, that was really successful but we knew there were a lot of people not using the foodbanks and not on social media who still needed support.

"The other big challenge for us was making sure we kept our information up to date. At the start of lockdown we went through all our contacts to find out what organisations were still open, what support they were providing. This kept changing as lockdown restrictions changed and each time we had to go back and fact check what support is being offered."

Throughout the year The Big Disability Group provided a telephone helpline linking people to support. In the nine months from lockdown to end of 2020 they

dealt with over 1800 enquiries - almost double the previous year.

The irregular nature of home-working saw Kevin trying to provide support at all times of the day and night.

"I would be getting calls from people at 11 or 12 at night and at weekends, when you know someone is struggling it's hard to ignore it, but it started getting into a spiral and I was hardly getting any sleep so I had to bring it back to 9 - 5pm.

"One of big eye-openers is the number of people struggling with mental health problems. Perhaps this is because more people feel able to take that first step and talk about their problems because they don't have to go in and see someone.

"We're providing support via telephone, text, messenger and some people feel much more comfortable talking about their problems this way."

But he knows there are also people missing the pre-Covid face-to-face contact and group activities.

"A lot of people we talk to are worried that when lockdown ends things will go back to normal and the support won't be there for them.

"It would be a shame to go back after people are getting the support they need in the way that works best for them."

**Any local community groups interested in joining the monthly Community Response Network Zoom call please contact [theclydesider@gmail.com](mailto:theclydesider@gmail.com)**



## Clydesider Credits

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteer contributors, even in these trying times you have stepped up to the plate and helped produce this powerful testament to lockdown life in West Dunbartonshire - you are a real joy to work with.

We would also like to thank our advertisers, supporting subscribers and funders. Your support has helped us continue to shine a light on the inspirational stories and creative talents in our communities.

An additional vote of thanks goes out to all the community organisations who are helping with the distribution, making sure the magazine reaches those least likely to read our stories online.

## 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.

We are also busy online with regular video interviews, a fortnightly Clydesider Zoom Catch Up for our contributors and creatives, the monthly Community Response Network and our quarterly virtual Creative Cafe From Your Couch, Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for details or drop us an email if you would like to get involved in any way.

Despite the difficult circumstances we are always keen to hear from people who would like to get involved and contribute to Clydesider - if you are interested in volunteering please email [theclydesider@gmail.com](mailto:theclydesider@gmail.com)

## Contact Clydesider

**Phone:** 01389 381110 (we are not in the office as often as usual so please try our mobiles or email if you can't get us on this number)

**Editorial:** Call Amanda on 07913029234 or email [amanda@clydesider.org](mailto:amanda@clydesider.org)

**Advertising:** call Charlie on 07502460273 or email [clydesideradvertising@gmail.com](mailto:clydesideradvertising@gmail.com)

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

**Creative Activities:** Email [caroline@clydesider.org](mailto:caroline@clydesider.org)

**Community Engagement:** Email [jenny@clydesider.org](mailto:jenny@clydesider.org)

**Address:** 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

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

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# WILDFLOWERS IN SCOTLAND

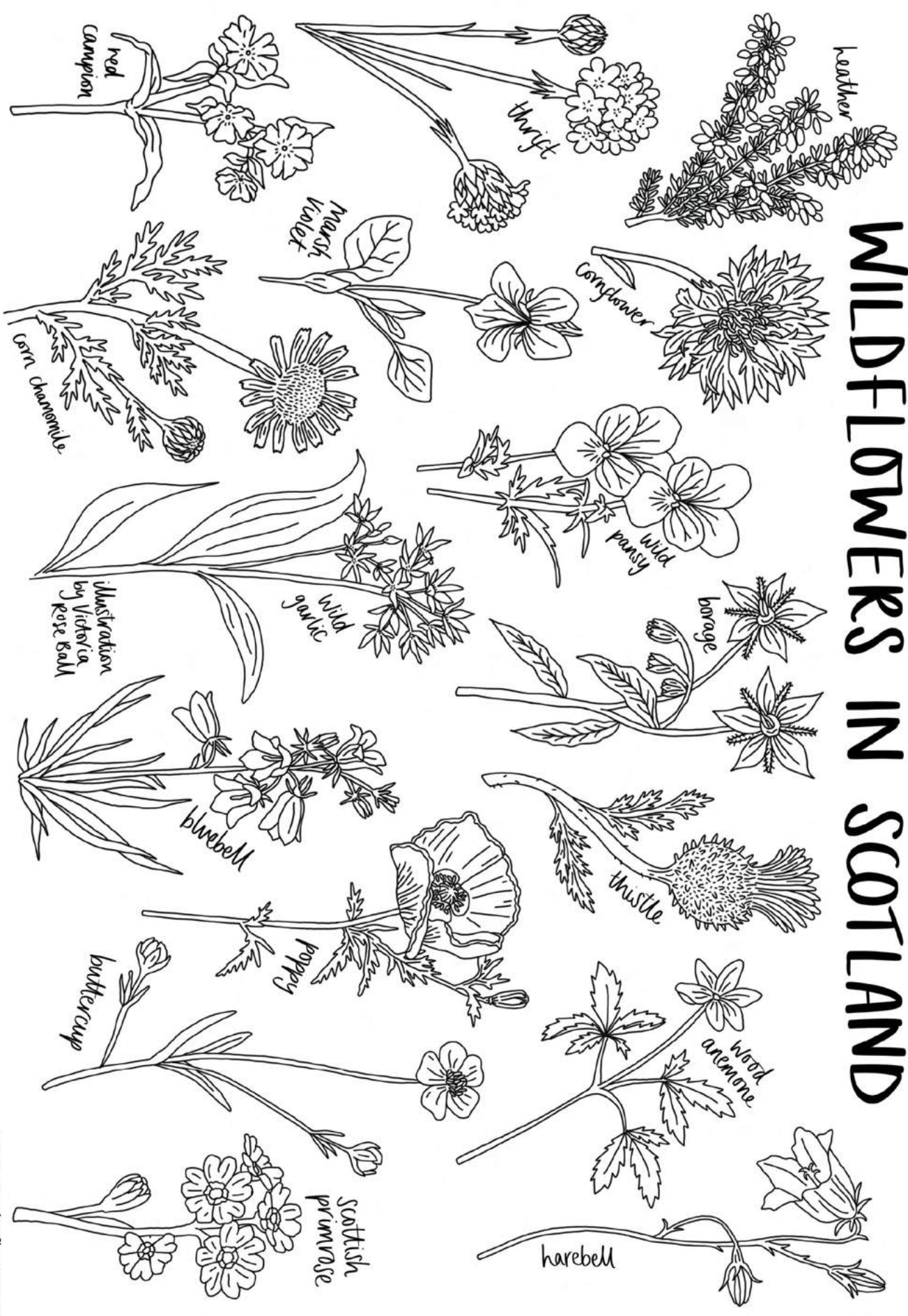


Illustration  
by Victoria  
Rose Ball