River to RECOVERY

CLYDEBANK AFTER INDUSTRY

Clydebank's Makers and Menders

This project has explored Clydebank's return after industry. It is a return that is storied by Clydebank's makers and menders; people who have not only lived the change, but who are also *enacting* change in response: stitching, fixing, digging, sharing, skilling, and storytelling, *to tend to* health, wellbeing, community and environment in the area. These stories are rich conceptual resources which the art, architecture and greenspace strategy of the new Clydebank Health and Care Centre can engage with in important ways. There are two specific recommendations emerging from this research at this stage. The first recommendation is that the visioning strategy seeks to *champion* Clydebank's story of recovery through its themes and commissioned works. And second, that the visioning strategy *draws inspiration* from the grassroots health and wellbeing practices that Clydebank's story of recovery describes.

Why does this matter? Some say that Clydebank is still trying to work out a new meaning for itself after all the change has been endured. In places there is still yearning for a past that was distinctive, recognisable, and imbued with a collective purpose. Word on the street? 'The heart has been ripped out of it', 'What does Clydebank have now?', 'I find it hard to talk about'. 'Clydebank has been thrown to the four winds'. 'It's struggling to find a meaning for itself now that the shipyards, and Singers have gone.' Key landmarks, portals of memory and treasured objects

have been demolished or removed. The QE2 curtains inside the La Scala cinema and The Singer's clock, are still hot on people's lips. So too Clydebank's public face. 'You could drive down Glasgow road through Clydebank and not even know you were here'.

This anthology of stories reveals that what has endured is the Bankie spirit, and all its collective purpose. What emerges is a fierce local activism, borne of loyalty, and a strong sense of belonging to a home turf. There is a desire for learning and betterment and reconnection with the environment. There is generosity and humour. And there is also an undeniable resilience that, while born of necessity on one level, has on another level propelled Clydebank's greatest experiments in community, creativity and green learning that have been observed in recent years.

It is important that these enduring sentiments find their place in the public imagination today, that they are mapped and understood, that they are tended and extended, and finally, that they are reflected in the local urban fabric once again. The new Clydebank Health and Care Centre, is uniquely positioned to engage with this story of post-industrial recovery, to champion it, and to draw inspiration from the grassroots health and wellbeing practices that it describes.

Contents

1 Water
2 Resilience
3 Skyline
4 Boats
5 Soil
6 Team Spirit
7 Family
8 Storytelling
9 Adrenaline
10 The Seasons
11 Fuel
12 The Future
13 Pollination
14 Activism
15 Skill
16 Creativity
17 Reading

1 Water

It is a phenomenon; fishing in Clydebank. Everyone does a bit, whether it's bait fishing, or rod and reel. Youth leader and keen angler Daniel thinks it's probably to do with the abundance and diversity of fishing spots. Daniel started when he was four. His next door neighbour used to bring all the kids from their Whitecrook street up to the canal in the summer to give them lessons. 'The canal and the river are very central for everyone. At the canal you can set up for an hour or two. The river you'd go for the whole day. It's relaxing. You can just get away from the modern world'. In the canal, there is perch and pike at Whitecrook, eels and brown trout nearer Bowling, and carp and rainbow trout swimming between. In the river, there is sea trout, rainbow trout, salmon, eels, conga eels and mackerel. The best spot on the banks of the River Clyde is under the Erskine Bridge. There is an invisible meeting of water worlds here at low tide; freshwater and salt water meet, and the salmon like to play here on their runs upstream. But none of this should be taken granted. Ten years ago, the canal and river were heavily polluted and there was no fish. In the river, the salmon was extinct. During industry, the River Clyde was heavily dredged to accommodate the biggest boats. This affected the mix of water in the channel: freshwater rich with oxygen flowing downstream from the Clyde Valley, didn't mix properly with the dense salty water that came in from the Firth, because the channel was so deep. The fish couldn't survive. Since the dredgers have gone, the river is silting up again, and water life is flourishing. Daniel

has often seen the Clyde River Foundation doing their conservation work on the waters around Clydebank. They monitor the fish life, and also enrol the local anglers, Daniel included, as citizen scientists. 'We just tell them the numbers and weight of what we're catching'. The Foundation also go into Clydebank's primary schools and give them rainbow trout eggs and fish tanks so that they can rear the fish in the classroom. When they're old enough, they release the fish into the Clyde. 'I've seen a huge difference in the environment, in the river especially. There's fish, but also otters, herons, all sorts on the banks – you get familiar with these things. The only reminder is the tails of the Brown Trout that have stayed black, because of the lead that was in the water.'

by Daniel (Y Sort-It)

2 Resilience

Every week in Dalmuir's community hall a group gather for Tai Chi. By exacting, flowing movements they make a little breathing space, regardless of the sounds of rush hour that flood in from Duntocher Road. Don has been practicing for many years and wouldn't be without it. 'After the fall of industry, everyone in Clydebank had to just get on with things. It was all DIY, people getting on with their lives and trying to make things better. There is this resilience, and it shows in all the groups we have. It's been a journey'. But no one could have imagined any of this back then. Don recalls that back then, industry was just part of the fabric. 'The first horn went at 6am. Every morning. Every day. It went in the evening and the wives got the potatoes on. Right on cue, there were the same crowds, brown overalls, caps'. This rhythm was tied up in all aspects of daily life. When the last woodcarver who made the balustrades of all the great ships was retiring, Don and the rest of his techie class clubbed together to buy his tools. 'Our techie teacher brought us down to the yard and we collected this great big casket from him, and he gave us all the carving samples that he'd show to clients too to hang on the classroom walls'. Everyone went in to a trade back then, parents didn't see a future in anything else. Don wanted to go to Glasgow School of Art and he had to fight hard to get there.

It was so much a part of life that inevitably, there were many challenges when industry fell. Fortunately new people moved in with new ideas and this made all the difference. In 1969 the Clydebank Rugby Club was started.

Don was as surprised as everyone else that it held. 'Whoever would have thought of it? Rugby in Clydebank?!' Don became the president and a devoted coach and he could see the difference it was making to the young men in the area who were still charged with the energies from the yards. 'A lot of the Whitecrook boys turned up and within a few years Clydebank had 4 15s. That's a success. There's been a lot of successes like that. It's only a micro one, but that's what's makes the bigger change.' Another legacy, a lesser known one, were the challenges that carers faced. A lot of people became ill with the work that they had done, and family members became full time carers. This brought stress, anxiety, isolation, and Clydebank had to find ways to deal with these things. This is a subject close to Don's heart, having been a carer for more than 40 years. 'I reckoned myself, I was getting to the end of my tether. I decided to build a sort of toolbox, of well, methods I could use to help myself, to keep myself right. Breathing exercises, tai chi, yoga, all of these that help create a bit of self-awareness. I think this more holistic view of wellbeing is beginning to permeate through, especially in Clydebank where it's been needed. When it works, you begin to see the world in a clearer way.'

by Don (Clydebank Tai Chi)

3 Skyline

Clydebank's youth centre Y Sort-It is up on the hill on one of the town's finest sightlines, Kilbowie Road. This is 'tap ae the hill' territory, or Radnor Park as it's officially known. 'We have quite a lot of these sayings that only we use', 9 year old Lauren explains. She's in Y Sort-It with the other Young Hubbits, making a model of her dream health centre with paper mache. Creativity, community and active living are all encouraged here, not to mention empowerment; the young people are making the decisions about how the service is run. They were the first organisation in Scotland to be awarded government funding that was solely managed by 16-25 years olds. Limitless horizons are a theme here.

From Y Sort-It, look south and you can see the River Clyde, the Titan Crane and the evergreen Newshot Island beyond, which is a feeding and resting point for migratory birds travelling to and from regions such as North America, Siberia and West Africa. Look north and you can see the Kilpatrick hills that wrap around the town. Duncolm, Fynloch, Middle Duncolm, Darnycaip, Doughnot Hill, Auchineden, Craigarestie, Berry Bank, Brown Hill, Cochno Hill, Knockupple, Craighirst,. This is Clydebank's timeless landscape. Lauren lists the view from her bedroom window as one of her favourite things, second only to her choice of libraries in the town – six altogether, each with their own appeal. 'I do love the water and the mountains. They bring a peacefulness to Clydebank.'

by Lauren (Y Sort-It)

4 Boats

The finger pier at Clydebank's Rothesay Dock has come back into working use after decades of abandonment. It used to be a busy depot handling exports of coal from the many local collieries, and imports of iron ore for the Lanarkshire steel industry. You can still see the railway lines that connected the dock to the Clyde valley's big black pits. Today it is a busy boatyard with a 75 tonne boat hoist and plenty of work and storage space. There are local people restoring their boats here, and some people building boats from scratch. Ian has been living and working on the yard for some ten years and his latest project is his biggest and most challenging. He's rescued The Seagull, an old fishing trawler that was written off as scrap, and he has big plans to restore her as a fishing boat for tourists. 'I'd sooner take a boat out to sea and let it sink than scrap it, if there was no other way' Ian says. 'They have a soul these boats, you'd have to give her back'. The living quarters below deck are in a bad way, but Ian has clear visions of the galley, saloon and sleeping berths that his guests will use. It's a huge undertaking for one man, and he's undergoing chemotherapy which makes things even slower, but Ian is determined it will only take him three more winters. At the heart of the trawler, below deck, there is a red-painted, 10 tonne engine. 'It's Norwegian, the best you can get. I've been offered a huge sum for it - enough to find a nice house back on dry land. But I just couldn't rip it out'.

by Ian (Clydebank Boat Yard)

5 Soil

Dalmuir allotments has 50 plots that are worked by local residents, each with a shed, a greenhouse and a wealth of crops – leeks, beetroots, carrots, potatoes, courgettes. It's been worked like this since the blitz: the land helped the community to get back on their feet again, to grow their own produce, and become self-sufficient during the scarcity of rationing. Six years ago an unexploded grenade was found by a plot holder transplanting an apple tree. The event fuelled speculation that has given the plots their poetry: "were growing vegetables on ruins". The plots also work hand in hand with the community. West Dunbartonshire's Pay Back team have taken on a plot free of charge, and in return they maintain the grounds. Their vegetables fill the shelves of local food banks. Five more plots are run by community groups in the local area. Secretary Patrick Canning has an open door policy. "We don't say no to anyone. So long as they're keen to do a bit of gardening, and get the work in." Patrick's father Alan held a plot here for 40 years, and Patrick was down here growing with him since he was a boy. Alan worked at Singers and the land and fresh air provided welcome respite after a day in the factory. Patrick has been on the committee for four years. "I do it in my father's memory".

People take on plots for all sorts of reasons, but really the common denominator is the wonder of growing. And there has been a small revolution on the plots in recent years. "It was a bit of a male dominated pastime back then, but we've got women coming in now, families, young ones,

and people from different cultures." This diversity is reflected in the variety of plot schemes, the growing strategies, and the new ideas that pass between plots. A recent arrival, a mum of Jamaican origin has been laying down pistachio shells to replenish her soils and hanging CDs from her apple trees to attract the bees. Patrick is interested in the growing culture that she has come from. "If you have *any* patch of soil there, no matter *what* the size, you grow something on it. We're all learning from each other here". The plot neighbouring Patrick's will be taken over by a new plotter next weekend, and it has been planted full with potatoes in the meantime. "It's a welcome gesture we do, and it builds up the soil. Always our thoughts are on building up the soil".

by Patrick (Dalmuir Allotment Plots)

6 Team Spirit

The synchro team line up on poolside, googles and nose clips on, and bright red swimming caps emblazoned with 'Clydebank. A.S.C. 1902'. They dive gracefully into the deep end and begin their session with a vigorous warm up. Many of the Clydebank girls started as club swimmers, but wanted to continue their love of water in other ways - development in swimming is judged by the stopwatch, but these synchro swimmers know many more capacities beyond speed alone. 'The girls have to have great strength, endurance, flexibility, grace, artistry and precise timing, as well as exceptional breath control when they're upside down underwater', coach Anne says. 'It's fantastic for their development'. The synchro swimmers are a part of Clydebank's oldest swimming club, and they are fiercely proud of their history. The club began life in 1902 in Clydebank's very first pool, the Hall Street Baths, and later moved to Bruce Street Baths in 1930. These baths were essential to Clydebank's public health back then: people were engaged in dirty industrial work, and very few homes in Clydebank had bathing facilities beyond a steel tub and bucket. The swim team was something of a bonus. In 1962, their swimmer Mary Black went to London to do her swimming teacher's certificate, where she witnessed synchronised swimming for the very first time – a combination of swimming, gymnastics and dance performed in water to music. She returned to Clydebank full of big ideas, and set out develop Clydebank's first synchro team. They became a local sensation. They gave

performances at the Bruce Street Baths galas and opened many swimming pools across Scotland. Mary's team developed a reputation internationally, they travelled far and wide for competitons, and Mary went on to become an Olympic judge. Present coaches Elizabeth and Anne were part of Mary's original team, and their synchro swimming daughters Linda and Susan also coach, keeping the knowledge and the passion in the family. During training sessions they practice their individual 'figures' over and over again, aiming for absolute precision. The 'Barracuda' is one of the hardest in their repertoire. The swimmers submerge and work furiously with their arms underwater to lift their legs up into the air, and then maintain this height while they perform a series of splits, spins and height changes. Elizabeth and Anne direct from the pool side, measuring every figure by the nth degree - 'Higher!' 'Straighter!' Then the underwater music comes on, and the team begin their spectacular group routines. They have Scotland's number one synchro duet, Gabby and Tabatha, and the team has won the Scottish club championships for 4 years running. 'It's the team that makes it' Tabatha says. 'We all have to be on the ball. We all have to be synchronised with each other, literally. That's what makes our team bond so strong'. Coach Anne films the routine on an iPad, and the coaches and swimmers watch it back afterwards, picking out every last detail. 'I thought it was brilliant myself, but they're complete perfectionists' one mum says.

by Clydebank Synchronised Swimmers

7 Family

Every Friday the Clydebank walking group walk along the river's edge of John Brown's which has, up until recently, been off limits. It's a blustery day but everyone is glad to take in the fresh air. Amongst the walkers is Raymond Cross, a former employee of John Brown's who began his welder apprenticeship here aged 16. The group skirt the edge of the old building berth, taking in views through the security fence. Raymond points to the large dirty shed, long gone, where he first got a handle of the welder's rod making small parts under the guidance of Tam Elder. Next he was moved to the assembly bay where he spent two years working alongside a Plater and his mate. 'In this section you found new friends, some to be lifelong friends, as a lot of men were at the same stage as you'. He still remembers the day he was finally summoned to join the welding foreman on the berth: 'now it got dangerous and exciting, having to climb and crawl into small places'. All the welders were paired up, and together assigned their own section that they took full responsibility for. 'In most cases it took a while to find someone that you would be compatible with, and once this was achieved you stayed with that person. I was fortunate only to be mated with a few in my time because I got on well with them. They called it a big family and you can imagine why'. After five years of training, he finally became a journeyman. Raymond was proud of what he was, and what he was leaving behind, and he was good at it - so much so that he was the first welder to be sent out on to the berth to work on the keel of the QE2. His foreman

Willy Auld announced to him one day: 'Go out there and make history'. He worked on this ship until its completion. But all the men worked extremely hard – six days a week, sometimes Sundays, lots of late nights, and families at home paid the price. 'They spent more time with their workmates than their wives, and they were working so hard that they didn't even have time to *think* about it. There was a real lack of affection in those days', Raymond recalls. 'It was a very macho, competitive environment, their jobs were hard. They drank after work to come down, and eventually they drank because they couldn't face up to what home life had become. This only got worse with the drip drip failure of industry, with the uncertainty of contracts, and the deterioration of working conditions. The workmen suffered stress and many other related problems that stayed with them, and when they were finally let go, it was like man and wife finally meeting again after a long time away, and it didn't always work out'. That's why you get so many groups like this – there was terrible loneliness and isolation, and people needed ways to new ways to build their relationships. Things are much better for families these days. 'Nowadays you see men pushing prams and trollies. That would never have happened back then. I don't think we should long for the past, but learn from it. The gates of the yard created separate universes for men and women back then - too much inequality. I hope that we can learn from that and move forwards'.

by Raymond (Clydebank Walking Group)

8 Storytelling

Through the changes that the town has endured, the Clydebank Local History Society have stuck firm to their constitutional aims: 'To promote the history and heritage of Clydebank, for present and future inhabitants of the town'. Anne has been a member since the society was set up in 1974 after a series of successful talks given by the Worker's Educational Association. 'Telling stories about the past is a powerful thing' Anne says. 'It connects the older generations to the younger ones, and the younger ones to the place where they live. It's like a kind of glue'. This is what the society try to encourage through lots of different local initiatives in Clydebank. The tours that they have been giving to schoolchildren of the local museum have been especially popular. 'In books the past is dead and gone. Storytelling keeps the past in people's heads so it can be passed down. It keeps memory alive. If these stories are lost then all that knowledge will leave our language, and the group memory. And the past doesn't remain in the past either: it gives us wisdom, it reminds us that the present can't be taken for granted, and that there is *always* a possibility for change, even when things seem to be stuck as they are'. Anne's grandfather was the head of the plater's yard in John Brown's, and her father was a highly skilled shipwright. Following in their footsteps, she entered the yard aged 16 and began her apprenticeship as a tracer. 'I loved my job. I worked in the drawing office alongside 80 other tracers, and our responsibility was to turn the design

drawings into proper engineering drawings, or blueprints as they were known back then'. In the 50s, Anne was chosen to trace the proposed plans for the QE2. This was a big secret at the time because the engineering was so forward looking. 'I did all the plans of every bit of that ship, except the engines. Oh it was wonderful seeing it grow in front of your eyes on the yard'. Clydebank's famous La Scala cinema once had a beautiful set of dark blue velvet curtains that would open and close a film with the QE2 embroidered in gold on them. Sadly they seem to have been lost somewhere after the cinema's closure. 'You wouldn't just chuck out all your own mementoes; you keep them, reflect on them, and take care of them. These objects should have the same value – they are our shared history, *our* inheritance.'

by Anne (Clydebank Local History Society)

9 Adrenaline

The Titans are the home team on Clydebank's BMX track. Young people from the local area are training hard here every Thursday evening: the sport offers them something that can be found nowhere else. 'The excitement!' 'The adrenaline!' 'The racing!' They all line up at the starting gate in their Titan team shirts and protective gear. 'Back wheels square, heads forward' coach Fred shouts. They're balanced on their pedals, poised against the start gate. 'Riders ready. Watch the gate'. Beep. Beep. Beep. CRASH. The gate slams into the ground and the riders sprint off, pelting around the tight bends, over extreme jumps and rollers, and on the finish line. 'Whaooo did you see that!? I did a manual on that one!' Fred explains to a new Titan: 'A manual is when you lift the front wheel off the ground, shift your body weight backwards and ride on the back wheel'. The new rider looks awed and terrified in equal measure.

'It's a sprinter's sport. A very powerful sport. They're fearless, and determined - you can see it in the way they pick themselves back up after a fall. It's a sport made for Clydebank', club founder Kenny says. 'It would be great if everyone got behind the team'. The club has riders that are competing nationally and internationally and they have had great successes. 9 year old Harrison is 4th in Britain; he has been racing the worlds since he was 6, and he has dreams of winning an Olympic medal one day. Kenny and his friends started the club in 1979 when they were still at primary school, and it was his mum's appeals to the local council that brought Clydebank a proper track. Kenny

remembers how important the space was for young people back then too. 'It was a difficult time. There was a lot of gang violence, and this one patch brought all the kids from the different schemes together. You couldn't imagine – back then it would have seemed impossible. They shared the track and eventually they started sharing their skills.' The Titans have a big container next to the track full of BMX bikes and equipment, so training sessions are open to everyone, and they pride themselves in the kinds of development pathways that they forging our for young people in the area. Some go on to compete, and others go on to coach. 17 year old Mia has been riding here since she was 10, and she is training to become a BMX cycling coach. When she completes the course she will be the first female coach in Scotland. Kenny says, 'It's amazing to watch them develop. Just get them on a bike and they're flying'.

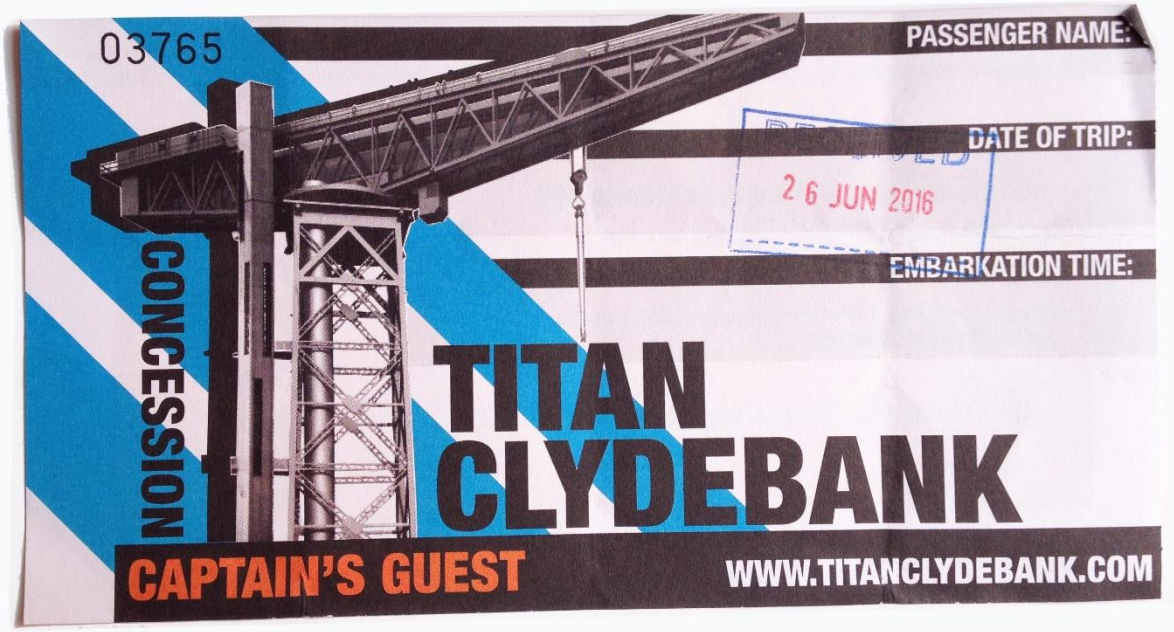
by the Titans

10 The Seasons

Every Wednesday and Thursday, West Dunbartonshire's community volunteers travel the length of the canal path to collect up any litter that they find. The group is made up of young people and retirees alike, all of them wearing fluorescent jackets and wielding a litter picker. They have two bags, one for recycling and one for general waste. The public passing on bike and foot shout out their praises. 'You're doing a great job!' 'Oh it looks so nice, thank you'. Margo volunteers with the group and she says that the changes in recent years have been tremendous. 'When the public see the work that the group do, and the difference it makes, I think it encourages people to take more care. 10 years ago you'd see half a sofa hanging out the water. At the end of the day, change has to start from the ground up. It's part of an attitude thing. If you see something, sort it. And that kind of idea can only grow into bigger and better things'. The volunteers are getting a lot out of it too. Exercise, fresh air. They are learning about waste, the environment, and themselves, what skills they have, and what skills they can develop. 'There is a strong mentoring element for the younger volunteers. If things come up then they'll speak to the older members of the group. Its environmental, educational, emotional support. And a good laugh too. They do it all through the four seasons, and they can see the changes in the landscape you know. They become more perceptive. Just last week the young lads

were pointing out these big white flowers that had come up. I'm not a botanist myself but we worked it out eventually, with the help of modern technology of course. Angel's Trumpet'.

by Margo (W.D. Litter Pickers)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11 Fuel

The garden coordinator for Centre 81's Community Garden, Carolanne, has a big red bound book where she does all her carbon calculations. This morning, there are freshly picked courgettes, potatoes and a squash to weigh. The squash comes in at 3.9kg. The vegetables are fighting Whitecrook's carbon footprint: the more vegetables they can grow, the less people need to travel to the supermarket to buy veg that has been flown in, and trucked in from all over the world. This morning Carolanne is going to bag up berries, carrots and beetroot and give them out to the Whitecrook bingo ladies. 'People really do appreciate that they can get all this fresh at the end of their street'.

The garden itself was borne in unlikely circumstances. Carolanne had just moved to Whitecrook from Duntocher with a young family and was struggling to put her own roots down when she noticed the spare ground around Centre 81. The soil was full of weeds and waterlogged by the canal above, nevertheless, Carolanne got to work planting potatoes and carrots. 'I had no idea what I was doing – I'd never done anything like it in my life. I was the manager of Clydebank bowling alley for 9 years for goodness sake! Potatoes were not my thing! My monthly Kitchen Garden magazine was a lifesaver'. Things took off: the council donated raised beds and a polytunnel, and soon Clydebank Housing Association made a permanent job for her. In the early years, Carolanne entered her vibrant community garden into garden beauty awards with great success, but this year the priorities have changed: they've

taken up the 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' Climate Challenge. To become a climate fighting garden they need 1000sq metres of productive land, but the garden is only 25sq metres so they have had to think beyond their fence line. 'I went knocking on the doors and managed to get 10 gardens involved. So we've gone in and taken up their turf and turned it into something useful. Other people are looking after pots of potatoes on their patios – it's all helping us make up our numbers.' The garden has also taken on 6 climate fighting chickens in recent years: Betty, Marley, Snowdrop, Rosie, Camelia, and Joan. Tradesmen living on the street helped to build the henhouse and they're sustained on produce from the garden. The community centre café uses their eggs to make their infamous omelettes peppered with courgettes and onions. 'They taste much nicer than the ones you get at the supermarket'. On the subject of climate change, Carolanne says that you don't need to be a scientist to be thinking and acting on the matter. 'It's the air we're all breathing after all. Only 40 years ago this place was black with smoke. This is the beginning of something different'.

by Carolanne (Centre 81 Community Garden)

12 The Future

I was the future, when I was built. I was the world's first electrically powered cantilever crane, and the largest crane of my kind when I was completed in 1907. 150 foot tall with a lifting power of 160 tonnes, increasing to 203 tonnes in 1938 when I was refurbished. I was built at the foot of John Brown's fitting out basin, where I lifted engines and boilers on to ocean liners and battleships, including the Three Great Queens: Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Elizabeth 2. It was my lifting power, and the location of the River Cart over the water that made our yard so successful, because we could build the biggest ships.

I'm all that's left standing on the yard now; the workshops and shipyard offices around me have been demolished. Beyond Clydebank, most of the cranes on the Clyde have been dismantled too, and their parts sold for scrap, but I've been lucky. Historic Scotland category A Listed me, and in 2007 I was reimagined as a tourist attraction. Bungee jumpers jump from the jib, and there is a shipbuilding museum at my feet. They call me an icon of Clydebank; a symbol of the town's great achievements. I've seen a lot here, more than living memory. For now I watch over the empty yard that was Clydebank's origin. But another chapter is beginning now, and I'm still here to witness it.

by Titan Crane (John Brown & Company)

13 Pollination

On the top of Clydebank Shopping Centre, there are three busy bee colonies. The footprint of the shopping centre is expansive so the management are pleased that the roof is being put to good use. There are 50,000 bees in the first colony, 30,000 bees in the second, and the third is a rogue nest in the insulation cavity of the roof so numbers are unknown. The operations manager - more typically responsible for shop fitting and repairs - tends to them throughout the year. The bees pollinate the wildflowers along Clydebank's canals, and the climbing ivy that has greened John Brown's wall. You can see them hard at work throughout the summer season. Carder bees, white tailed bees, buffer bees and red tailed bees. The shopping centre's security man gets a small jar of honey every week for his son. 'A teaspoon each morning and his hayfever isn't nearly such a bother'.

by the bees (Clydebank Shopping Centre)

14 Activism

'It's been a good year', according to Rose, present secretary of the Senior's Forum. Important local campaigns have been initiated, fought, and seen to their successful end. They have brought access improvements to the Clydebank Shopping Centre, and a new direct bus service from Clydebank to the new Queen Elizabeth hospital. 'That's the type of group we are. That's what we're here for. If there is anything happening in the community and nothing being done about it, we'll campaign for it, and eventually we'll get it.' Former secretary Mary helped to set the Forum up 20 years ago, and since then their numbers have risen from 24 to 137. Members enjoy the social side, and their spirited activism has earned them an esteemed reputation across the West. Many are born and bred Bankies, and its fierce loyalty to a home turf that compels them on.

Mary's grandfather moved to Clydebank because of the arrival of Clydebank's first shipyard. 'My great-grandfather had said to him, 'get yourself to Clydebank; there is going to plenty of work there'. So he brought his family from Ayrshire, and started work here as a shipwright'. This trade carried on through the generations of her family, and each subsequent shipwright advanced a little further because of the knowledge that had been passed down to them. Mary's brother finally went into Brown's as an engineer in his early career. 'His great-grandfather would have been proud'. When Mary's own daughters had to leave Clydebank to find work after the fall of industry, it was a great disappointment. 'When you have

this longer view, you start thinking about the kind of Clydebank that you are passing on'. So the Senior's Forum forge on doggedly with their campaigns. In their favour, there is a long lineage of local activists that they can draw inspiration from. 'We're not the first ones to be fighting the good fight. There is a rich history here. In the middle 70s, shipyard worker Jimmy Reid was the main spokesman when Brown's was getting shut down. He organised a sit in, with no fighting, no nothing: a fighting spirit – it's still here, and it's all that can make the difference'.

by Mary and Rose (Senior's Forum)

15 Skill

In Clydebank's Men's Shed there is a blackboard with two chalked headings: 'Skills we have to offer', and, 'Skills we'd like to learn'. Under the first is listed welding, fly fishing, carpentry, French polishing, baking, gardening; under the second is furniture making, guitar making. Founding member George says that it's important they define themselves by their capacities; it's part of the kinds of legacies that they're dealing with. 'Many of these men have worked in industry all their lives, and they've lost their jobs or retired. Loneliness creeps in, confidence falls away, and they feel devalued. What you can do has always been so tied up in a Clydebank mentality – it's still important. Knowing what you can do, and that you can share that with others makes you feel good.' The Men' Shed is still new but they have big renovation ambitions for the old scout hall that they've moved into. They will have a workshop filled with their own handmade workbenches and donated tools. Here they will begin a big upcycling program, building furniture, instruments, and anything else that needs making for the wider community. George has brought in an electric guitar he has recently made using an old floorboard. 'See the things yeh can dae!? Necessity is the mother of invention, as Frank Zapper used to say!' George came to volunteering after his own personal struggle. 'I was going through a bad patch, and finding it hard to leave the house. Women pick up the phone and meet for a coffee to talk things through, but it's not so easy for men.' Having met others in a similar situation he decided to set up a learner's group in

Clydebank, for companionship and continuing education. Today, the Linnvale Lifelong Learners have many strings to their bow; there is the Sewing Group, the Cinema Group, the TLC group (who are learning about mindfulness and meditation), the Blether Group, and the Jewellery Group. The Men's Shed is a much anticipated addition. 'We're all trying to better ourselves – 'How am I gonnae manage to do that for myself?' 'How am I gonnae manage to get that for myself?' If you could take that, and do that for the *community*; if you could figure out the rights for your brother, and your sister, your neighbour, your street, suddenly you find yourself thinking differently, acting differently. I'm hopeful about Clydebank. There is always someone who sees a need, and does something about it. And these men have a huge amount to offer. They might well have retired but they're no deid yet'.

by George (Clydebank Men's Shed)

16 Creativity

In Faifley art group there are landscape painters, portrait makers, botanical illustrators and dreamscapers. Jim is giving his oil painting of the Kilpatrick hills the finishing touches. The canvas just needs a painted signature in the bottom right corner and then it'll be ready to show at their upcoming exhibition in the Botanic Gardens Tearoom. 'Just need my steady hand!' Jim has been coming to the group since he retired from art teaching. 'In this group there are different techniques, different brushstrokes; there are hardly 2 people doing the same kind of thing'. The artists continue with their own work in the house but this weekly meet gives them a reliable pair of second eyes. 'When you see all this great work, it spurs you on'. When Jim was at school the definition of creativity was quite different. 'We were all churned out to become draftsmen and ships architects – if you showed *any* aptitude for drawing, you got pushed into engineering drawing. At the dancing on a Friday night, you could just see how many there were. They'd all hang their long set squares up with their jackets in the cloakrooms and you'd have trouble trying to find yourself a hook'. Jim was born in Dalmuir and the sights and sounds of industry were part of everyday life. 'I was used to the rattle of the rivets. They'd waken you up in the morning and it would still be going when you went to bed at night. I wondered what would happen when it all disappeared, because it was on the cards that it would go'. Today Clydebank has been developing its creativity in other ways. On the footprint of Singers, small workshops have sprung

up - graphic designers, carpenters and engineers - and Jim is hopeful about their future. The group run art competitions for primary school children in Faifley to encourage the next generation of artists. 'It's important that they get that recognition' Jim says. This is something that he is keen to encourage, having taught at a time when art was not encouraged. 'Teaching art was probably one of the worst things you could do back then. Art was not viewed favourably - it was all about the trades. We weren't encouraged, and there was so much that we could have done - there was colour, there was perspective, there was appreciation of architecture, all of these things, and it just was not on. What we weren't doing then was getting people to appreciate a wider definition of art. I think it enhances someone's life – to be able to appreciate things, and that's what's happening now, it's happening in here. It allows people to be able to appreciate what's around them - buildings, parks, everything, Art changes everything, it enables you to appreciate the environment, and the way you're living'.

by Jim (Faifley Art Group)

17 Reading

Clydebank is well endowed with 6 libraries originally built to service the sheer number of people in each of the town's small burghs during its industry heyday. These burghs were self-sufficient, with their own grocers and doctor's surgeries, and these libraries are an enduring reminder of their distinctive identity. Even when people were busy with their jobs on the shipyard, they still made time to read. Working Men's Reading Clubs met once a week to discuss socialist literature, and workers also attended public talks in the Hub community centre to continue their education. Today people use Clydebank's libraries for a host of practical, social, and studious reasons; for some it's the office, and for others it's a reading sanctuary. The library shelves are well stocked, and you're never more than 2 weeks away from having a book that you've ordered in; the lending goes a long way.

But the future of Clydebank's libraries is not certain. There have been cuts in library funding nationwide, and last year Dalmuir Library was scheduled for closure. Fortunately a public campaign kept it open. Scottish poet Donny O'rourke has been resident Reading Champion in Dalmuir library this year (sponsored by the Scottish Books Trust), to inspire Clydebank's readers and librarians again. Donny can be found in the Dalmuir Library's reading areas, starting up discussions and offering book recommendations to encourage and challenge everyone's reading. Donny is also trying to widen and deepen the

definition of reading. 'We read to understand the world around us, but that's not only the word in the printed book. We read the TV, film, the landscape around us. Reading is about taking the world in, interpreting it, and doing that opens the world up to us. Books are good practice but there are lots of other ways'. Donny has set up a film club and a TV club who are thinking critically about the kinds of things that they are watching. 'They're turning supposed 'entertainment and escapism' into thought provoking discussion – it's always a lively session'. Donny hopes that Clydebank's libraries continue to be loved and valued, and that the town's long enduring triangle of work-family-education stays strong. 'As a boy I knew that the library was a sanctuary. It was supported solitude. I could go there and feel safe – safe in the knowledge that for more than 100 years, people had been donating books, and providing a public service. There is nowhere else like it'.

by Donny (Dalmuir Library)

SEA GULL

Seagull once called Sea Horse.
Your days at sea were done,
But once again you'll push the tide
Because my heart you've won.

For lying in Rothesay Dock
Being stripped of sea going parts
You stood there slowly dying
But it's Now your New Life Starts.

For Love will help rebuild you
From keel to tops of masts
But folk will say forget it
For Nothing ever lasts.

But you will have a second chance,
Cos you're Not just my Boat
You're my Lovely Home Now
It just happens that you float

Ian Watson

An Arts Project for the new Clydebank Health and Care Centre

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