



# WRITE ON!



## BEFRIENDERS HIGHLAND LITERARY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER 8

SPRING 2016



Welcome to Issue 8 of our terrifically talented group of writers. The New Year has brought lots of great stories, ideas and thoughts together and it is a pleasure to be able to bring you the first issue of 2016. We have had some great short stories for children submitted in recent months which we look forward to publishing. There are simply not enough pages to publish them all at once so keep your eye on future editions. In this issue we have a fantastic fairy story for 5-6 years olds written by Jenny titled 'Auntie Lemonetta Sugarsticks and The Boggart'. And once more Stephen invites us to savour his compelling words in his piece called "Life on the Ledge".

If you're inspired by these or any other pieces why not give your own story or poem a go and see where it takes you.

Members have really taken to the **T-shirt Wisdom** feature created by Isolde. So we have some more designs on page 6. For people new to creative writing it's a great way to begin your own exploration into writing. Experienced authors say that a great skill is being able to put your message across with the fewest of words. So if you can say what you want to say in one or two lines it will set you in good stead for your own story or poem. Congratulations to Isolde for the great idea.



If you have an idea for a feature or challenge you would like to start in the group get in contact. The group is entirely shaped by you so let us know your ideas, no matter how wacky!

### Breaking News Just In!

### The Theme for this year's Mental Health Arts and Film Festival has just been announced as: TIME

If you have a creative idea you wish to explore get in touch with Alan to discuss it and you can either perform or showcase your work at the festival in October- this could be a reading, performance, a music piece, film or an exhibit. Being involved is a great way to display your talent, build your confidence and get involved with other like-minded people. **Isolde** who performed at Last year's event had this to say about what it did for her:

*"Planning and participating in this event has given me a sense of belonging to something worthwhile and I can't think of a better way to encourage mental wellbeing than finding creative purpose. To have the opportunity to develop and share my artistic side with others means a lot to me these days. Standing up there on stage in front of an appreciative supportive audience does wonders and I would recommend this experience to anyone. It takes courage but I ask you, who wouldn't have his or her spirits lifted at the sound of everyone's joyful applause?" - Isolde*

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

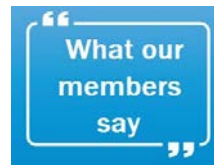


Alan's Welcome News & Invites  
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Next submission deadline: **June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016**

## A SHOW OF APPRECIATION

It is always nice to hear how much our readers appreciate what our contributors have written and shared with everyone. In our last issue of Write On! we featured poems by Stephen who began composing poetry soon after his partner Margaret became a resident at Moss Park in 2012. His poetry reflects the emotions he has been feeling since that time. His struggle with depression, loneliness, and his need for acceptance, companionship, love and understanding are all beautifully expressed in the lines of his poetry and they have especially touched two of our members. They wrote to our magazine and we print their appreciative comments for Stephen's work.



### A Letter from Irene

*I just wanted to say a big thank you to the Write On team who do such a brilliant job producing the magazine. I get a lot of pleasure from making my own contributions and also really enjoy reading all the stories, poems and other articles from everyone else. After having read the last issue, I would like to make a special mention of Stephen's three poems. To say that I "enjoyed" them isn't the best choice of words because of the subject matter. I found them very moving and I appreciate the honesty in Stephen's writing. I love the variety of topics that we write about and I am looking forward to the next issue!*

### A Letter from Maureen

*Congratulations on Stephen's use of imaginative and descriptive words which make his emotions and responses seem much more alive – more real somehow. His poems are beautiful pieces of writing about aspects of a difficult subject to share with others but these things should be expressed openly so that others who find themselves in similar roles to Stephen's will know they are not alone. They can identify with what Stephen is saying and say to themselves, "Gosh, I've felt that way too!". His thoughts can give us a sense of perspective thereby offering a release from feelings of self-blame often brought on from facing situations alone.*

*It is time to stop the stigma surrounding talking about emotional ill health. The devastating effect of anxiety or depression on someone's life is something generally hidden for fear of the consequences of revealing it to people who won't acknowledge what are actually commonly felt emotions. To me, they don't want to talk about it because they don't know enough about it to talk about it. I suggest here a web site of the International Health Service: [www.seemescotland.org](http://www.seemescotland.org) which openly addresses the need to end the stigma and discrimination and thereby enable people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.*

### My Friend Irene by Jenny

**My friend Irene is my long distance friend who phones me on Tuesday without fail.  
I look forward to our chats and hearing what she has been doing in the week gone by  
in her home on the mystical island of Skye.**

**I know that she has children but not sure how many.  
Iren's husband is called John and he sounds a lovely Mannie.  
And there are grandchildren galore.**

**I can imagine Irene and John playing with the kids on the front room floor.  
Although there are many miles between us, I treasure our long distance friendship.**

**It was sorted out in an office just who would get on with who.  
I am very glad we were chosen and I hope Irene is to.**

**We both have an interest in writing though reading this drivel I hope hers is better than mine.  
Must go, my long distance friend will be phoning in ten minutes time.**



## All Sorts

(poem by Jenny)

Bits of this and bits of that  
 And roses stuck in an old felt hat  
 Socks on hands instead of gloves,  
 Pieces of rag to make a Cloutie rug **of Camberwell**  
 All sorts of everything I remember well  
 Made the old Bag Lady of Camberwell.  
 She sat on her stool on the Village Green.  
 All seasons round she could be seen,  
 Stabbing at pieces of cloth of many hues  
 And snippets dropping round her shoes.  
 Toes of socks cut off so her fingers could move.  
 The children sat round her as if in a spell.  
 That old Bag Lady from Camberwell,  
 She sat on into the night when children had gone  
 And in the morning she'd be back before the sun.  
 In the winter, who knew where she went at night.  
 By morning she would be there and what a sight,  
 Wrapped in castoffs from bags and bins,  
 Kept together by safety-pins.  
 One day she wasn't there at all,  
 Just a Cloutie rug was all to be seen  
 Lying stretched out on the Village Green.  
 On top was a felt hat with a rose sewn on  
 And the picture was "amazing" said everyone.  
 It showed all the children that she had ever seen  
 Playing the on the Village Green.  
 Under her stool were some black plastic bags  
 Stuffed chock-a-block with colourful rags  
 And to this day the folk that live by that Green  
 Dine out on the story they have to tell  
 Of the old Bag Lady of Camberwell.



## A Carer's Thoughts & Poems

(poem by Stephen)

Where in the dark, is the light  
 Where's the bark, not the bite  
 Where in the clouds is that silver lining  
 Where's the guide when you need defining

Where is the sweet, as you grow bitter  
 Where, for the ice, is the gritter  
 Where are those to put right, the wrong  
 Where as you fall, have your friends gone

Where is the laughter, where is the joy  
 Where were you when you were a boy  
 Where are those you'll need at the end  
 Where's the hope for around the next bend

Where's the map for when at the junction  
 Where's the drive to even function  
 Where's the familiar in this everyday land  
 Where for my head, the hole in the sand

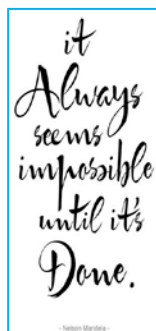
Where's the calm to unfurrow the brow  
 Where's the help when it's needed now  
 Where's the way out of this rut  
 Where's the indifference for not making the cut

Where are those arms for the war on pain  
 Where are the wise when going insane  
 Where's the days end when it never ends  
 Where's the love you want to send

Where is that love, not the hate that lies in wait

## This Place

This place is large.  
 This place is small.  
 This place is big enough.  
 This place is full of trinkets.  
 Add some, throw some out.  
 Make room for the collections.  
 This place is full of pictures.  
 Got to keep collecting.



## Surviving

That's the outside done -  
 Surviving the snow -  
 Now it's continue with the inside,  
 Surviving with the cooker and kettle  
 And only going out as far as the Post.  
 It's a long haul, but it's worth it.  
 Even the bins seem far away,  
 Yet I can manage them several times a day.

Poems by Keith





## AUNTIE LEMONETTA SUGARSTICKS AND THE BOGGART

Auntie Lemonetta Sugarsticks owned the Sweetie Shoppe on the Green in the village of Woodnorth Forest. It was a lovely Sweetie Shoppe with lots and lots of brightly coloured sweets in it.

Auntie Lemonetta was very tall as Fairies go, they are usually between 6 to 8 inches high but Aunt Lem (as she liked to be called by the Fairy children but has also said we can call her Lemonetta just for this story) was 9 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. She was also quite young to own a shop being only three hundred millidust sprinkles and a half.

She lived with her cat Pythagoras who had been a Siamese twenty-seven lifetimes ago and still was of course. He had come back to live in the woods that he had loved so much before had his 'accident'. He hadn't taken notice of the Green Cross Code when he crossed the road and a car had knocked him over.



Lemonetta had a friend called Sarah-Jane Clavicle Tanterpegs who lived next door. Where Lemonetta was tall and willowy, Sarah-Anne just about reached 4 and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Also she was quite rotund, unlike her friend, who wore pretty, floaty dresses. She wore dungarees and an old rain Mac, and wellington boots for every season – different colours of course. She always had a piece of string hanging out of the pocket of her Mac in case a button fell off. They were a very odd couple indeed but they got on exceedingly well and were great friends.



Lemonetta's shop was very, very neat and tidy and spotlessly clean, but recently some odd things had been happening. Toffee's that lived in tall glass jars were appearing in bowls under the counter. The marshmallows were stacked in packets in the window, not where they should be on the shelf and when Lemonetta put them back they appeared in the window again. The sherbet lemons were repeatedly being moved from the top shelf to the bottom one, and sometimes the

treacle toffee glowed bright pink, but worst of all there was a nasty smell in one of the corners.

Lemonetta sat down one evening and said to Pythagoras 'there is something funny going on here Pye. I think we should have a word with PC Peterkin Pixie and see if he has any ideas as to what it is.' Pye said he would pop out and see the PC and also have a word with Tripod, his three-legged police dog, and see if he could sniff out any clues.

While Pye was out, Lemonetta sat down in her comfortable old Thistletwig armchair. But as she sat quietly she thought she heard a scuffle and a rather nasty smell wafted across the room. 'Whatever is that?', she exclaimed. 'I have never smelled anything like that before in my life.' She ran across the room and knocked three times on the wall, their secret code if they needed each other, and within moments her friend arrived at the door, looking her usual pulled through a hedge backward self.

Lemonetta explained what had happened and Sarah-Anne, looking quite alarmed, came into the house but before she could sit down a whirlwind of dust flew across the room and knocked her off her feet.

'Goodness gracious me' she cried, scrambling to her feet. 'Whatever was that? And what an awful smell there is in here, do you have some rotten fish in your bin Lem?'

'No I don't, that is the same smell I smelled before' replied Lemonetta. Sarah-Anne sat down hurriedly in the big armchair (it was big for Lemonetta but for little Sarah-Anne it was enormous) and said I have smelled that smell before but I can't for the life of me think where or what it was.

While Lemonetta and Sarah-Anne were enjoying a cup of Cowslip Flower tea, they had opened the windows by then to let the smell out, Pye and PC Peterkin with Tripod came bursting through the front door. PC Peterkin was shouting 'Where is it?' 'Where has it gone?'



Lemonetta and Sarah-Anne asked what on earth he was talking about. Whilst this was going on, Pye and Tripod were sitting with their backs to the others staring at something in the corner. That 'something' shifted, shook itself letting fly a shower of dust and making itself sneeze. I thought so, said the Policeman – you've got a Boggart.

There in the corner for all to see was the ugliest, dirtiest looking Gnome like creature there ever was. The Boggart sat and looked at them with its malicious little face screwed up, and it's vicious eyes blazing out of its filthy, dirt encrusted face looking really evil. But under the outer mask he was trying really hard not to cry. Sarah-Anne said 'Oh my goodness, whatever is that?'



Lemonetta said 'Poor little soul, it's only a little Boggart, and not a very good one at that! I have heard of Boggarts doing a lot of damage but this one was just a bit mischievous, my guess is that he is only very young.'

The Boggart sat listening to what was being said, and to be honest, he wasn't nasty at all, in fact the only happiness he had had in his life was since he came to live in the shop. He loved the look of the coloured Dolly Mixtures and the Humbugs, and when Aunt Lem (as he thought of her) unscrewed the top off the jars to serve the children, if he sat very still, he could smell the lovely aroma that came out of the bottles. Sometimes if he was lucky she might spill a little of the sugar on the counter and he would scoop it into his hand and pop it on his tongue. It tasted lovely and sweet. He also thought the little Sherbert Pips looked pretty in their different colours and when he put the fluence on the Treacle Toffee, it looked a lot more interesting when it was bright pink and he was sure it sold better. He also liked to hear the laughter of the Fairy children as they came in with their pocket pennies to buy sweets to take to school. In fact, he had never been happier, and now he would have to go away but where to? He could feel the tears he had been holding back forcing themselves between his dirty eyelashes making his eyes sore.

Lemonetta came over to him holding a handkerchief over her nose because the smell was so awful and very gently said 'Hello little one, do you have a name?' This was the moment he had been dreading.

He pulled himself up to his full 5¾ inches, looked down at his ugly, dirty feet and mumbled out of the corner of his mouth.

'What did he say?', asked the policeman. 'It sounded like Alice-Elizabeth', said Sarah-Anne. They looked at each other and fell about laughing, all except Lemonetta who had noticed how unhappy he looked. The little fellow could hardly speak for his tears.

'Go on, laugh. Everyone does. I was the 19<sup>th</sup> baby, all boys, and my Mum really wanted a girl so she gave two of her favourite names, Alice-Elizabeth, and I have been laughed at ever since until I came here and you are going to send away.' He looked at them defiantly, the tears running down his cheeks leaving deep furrows in the dirt that was encrusted on his skin.

'Now I will never be happy again, I am no good at being a Boggart, I smell so no one will sit near me, I loved being here, I wasn't naughty, I was helping!'

The Boggart was sobbing so loud it sounded like someone was jumping up and down on the ceiling and he tried to wipe away his tears with his fist but only succeeded in making big muddy streaks down the sides of his face.

Lemonetta felt sorry for the little creature that she wanted to give him a big hug and she told him so (still holding her hankie over her nose) but said there were a few things that must be done first – like a bath, hairwash, clean clothes and would he like a cup of cowslip flower tea. He said 'yes please'.

He had never had any of these things but anything Aunt Lem suggested was okay by him, and he secretly hoped Aunt Lem would put some sugar in the tea because he knew he liked that. He looked at Pye and the cat grinned at him, then he looked at Tripod, the little dog looked towards his GUV and stuck his tongue out. The little Boggart giggled, he felt happy.

A while later after a nice warm bath in scented water (the first one ever), a hair wash (also the first one ever), and some clothes borrowed from a neighboring Pixie who wasn't the same shape (so they did look a little odd but Alice-Elizabeth

didn't mind). They were all sitting beside him and he was warm and clean and comfy (again for the first time ever) and Lemonetta had given him a cuddle, yet another first.

Lemonetta then surprised them all (except Pye, Sarah-Anne, Peterkin and Tripod because they knew her very well) by saying that she would like to keep Alice-Elizabeth here, but I think perhaps we should find a name he likes better. 'How about we call you Al, will that be okay?' They all laughed with the little chap as he nodded his big

hard so they thought it was in danger of falling off.

That is why if you ever stumble across a very small sweetie shop, on a village green, in a fairy forest, you should not be surprised to see a Boggart wearing plastic gloves and weighing out sweets for tiny Fairy Children, watched by a Siamese cat, a three-legged dog and two very different looking fairies – one in a pretty dress and one wearing wellies.

**THE END**



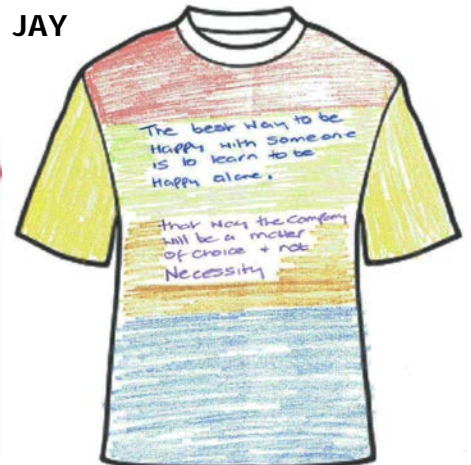
**NORMA**



**NORMA**



**JAY**



**ISOLDE**



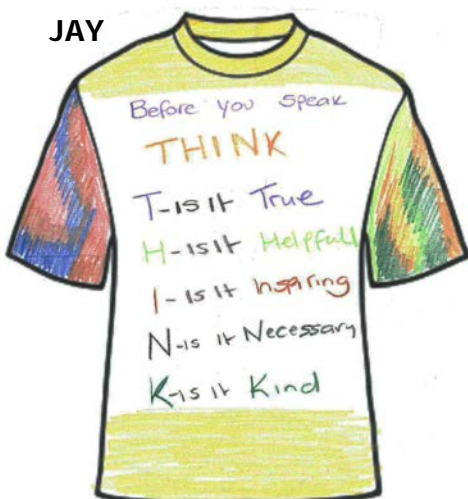
**MAUREEN**



**BETTY**



**JAY**



**ALAN**



**JAY**





## MEMBER PROFILE: STEPHEN



**So Stephen, it's great to discuss your interests with you. Can you start by telling us a bit about what first garnered your interest in Writing?**

*I enjoyed writing stories at school, and from the age of 14 I have kept nature diaries off and on. I always enjoyed writing letters by hand before computers and emailing came along. Apart from keeping diaries and letter writing I didn't really get into writing until after my partner, who has Alzheimer's, went into a residential care home. This evoked a lot of strong feelings, and I wrote my first poem soon after.*

**Can you talk a bit about your writing process and how your work comes to fruition?**

*I'm not sure really. Something gets inside my head, sometimes good, sometimes bad, but whatever it is if it's strong enough to move me to write I just start. I may not think straight away that I'm going to write about whatever it is, but my thoughts are spoken silently in my head, and sometimes I might catch a string of thought words and think that it could become something, a poem, or just the beginning of something descriptive, and I'll just go with it, follow it and develop it. I have to grab a scrap of paper and a pen right away, or my mobile phone, because if I don't get those thought words down as they first appear I might not remember them later on as they first came into my head and they're then lost. I have to grab words and ideas when things are first thought or spoken, even if silently to myself in my mind. If I don't and I try to recapture it later on, after the passion or inspiration of that moment has faded, it just doesn't work, it's gone, but if I get those initial first thoughts and words down that were there in the moment and I go back to them later I can rekindle the feelings I had felt at the time.*

**What excites/ inspires you to write?**

*It's usually a strong feeling or emotion or a sense of wonder that just has to come out somehow. And I have a strong imagination and we can go anywhere with our imaginations. I may have been moved by something during my day, a kindness maybe, perhaps an injustice, maybe something happy or sad. Something I've felt deeply. Or I might see something, especially in nature that I just have to try and write about. I'm a dreamer and a thinker and a hopeless romantic, and so my mind is forever in a state of thought, and thoughts are usually accompanied by words, even if they are just words that only you hear said silently to oneself in your head, and that's when the thoughts may become writing.*

**What do you look for in a good piece of writing/ what do you most value in a writer's work?**

*I like straight forward no nonsense writing, things told how it is, no beating about the bush. I like to be able to read and comprehend what I'm reading, not struggle with it.*

**How do you overcome the dreaded writer's block? What do you do? Have you any tips on overcoming it?**

*I don't see myself as a writer and don't know that I write enough to know of writers block. I have started to write a number of stories in recent years, and really got into the ideas for them, and I wrote several chapters for each. As I wrote I thought ahead about how things would develop. I really got into them and quite excited about them. I wished I'd carried on with them and tried to finish the stories. I wouldn't say it was writer's block that stopped me. It was other things, tiredness, and not least the black dog, making me think what I had written wasn't any good. I think maybe just a break might beat writers block. Leave it, then go back to it later, but I haven't really experienced it.*

**Can you tell us a little about your favourite books or ones which have had a significant impact on you during your life, and perhaps what were the circumstances around how you came to read them?**

*To be honest I haven't read many books at all, in fact probably if I had to estimate how many it wouldn't be many more than a hundred or so. I've only read a few of what I'd call grown up books, mostly I've read children's books. I like that these just get on with it. I've not read any adult fiction. I've read quite a few books about nature. I enjoyed reading two volumes by John Muir entitled 'The Wilderness Journeys' and 'John Muir: His Life and Letters and Other Writings' and I envied him his time and freedom in the Yosemite when it was still completely wild. I watched a TV drama about Ann Frank but had no idea how it was going to end so afterwards I felt compelled to read about Auschwitz, where all but I think one or two of the people in the drama and in real life went and died. I looked carefully into which would be the best book to read about this subject, and found and read 'If This Is a Man' by Primo Levi, and the follow up to that entitled 'The Truce'. I have no doubt that 'If this is a Man' will be the most powerful and thought provoking book I will ever read, and it is one that everyone should read. A book that has helped me recently has been 'Shoot the*

*Dam Dog: A Memoir of Depression* by Sally Brampton, where without pulling her punches the author writes about her journey through depression. I have a quote on my wall from it that I refer to more than any other when in need.

**What are your other interests outside of writing.....favourite films, music other interests?**

*Nature has been the most influential thing in my life, being in wild places, enjoying encounters with wildlife. Music is important to me. It helps me a great deal. A lot of my music isn't really music, its "sound art" I think, where the artists use sound to create feeling, mood, atmosphere and a sense of place. Not all of what I listen to is like this and a lot of it is music. I would be very surprised if I named my top five album if anyone had heard of any of them. It's a shame because these artists and composers are producing such beautiful and powerful music. I'm also into art and photography, and hope at some point to try and get into those things more. I enjoy beach combing and finding beautiful natural things such as driftwood.*

**Have you read any unknown hidden gems that you have enjoyed that you could recommend to the group?**

*Well I'll have to recommend a few children's books! 'In the Midnight Garden' by Philippa Pearce, 'Clodsailors' by Hugh Montgomery, 'The Mortal Engines Quartet' by Philip Reeve and 'The Tales of the Otori', a trilogy by Lian Hearn.*

**Over the years what do you think reading/writing has done for you? Do you have any stories on how writing has linked into your life?**

*Writing has without doubt helped me especially in recent years. It has been a way for me to express how I'm feeling and for me to get things out of my head that I felt no one understood, so I tried to get those things down in writing in the hope that people might. My nature writing too has helped as well. I'm always seeing and experiencing things in the natural world that I somehow want to capture and share, and writing has been a way to at least try and do that. I think nature is hugely beneficial and healing for all of us, and I'm always feeling that I want to try and put that across somehow.*



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*Life on a Ledge* by Stephen

What's it like on the Ledge?

Well you just have to get along on it.

How did you come to be on it?

I guess it's that paths I've both chosen and didn't choose have led me onto it, or maybe I just lost my way.

Can you get off it?

It doesn't seem to be very easy. Above, it is a steep climb and below, a sheer drop.

It doesn't sound like you can get around very much on it.

No, you can't. You feel trapped and the pressure of having to make the steep climb can push you towards the edge of the drop.

It sounds like it's a dangerous place to live.

I guess that is. You feel vulnerable on it and yet, as long as you avoid the climb and keep from falling, it can feel like a safe place to, like a sanctuary. Sometimes the only time that you feel



safe is at night. When you're asleep you can hide from the fear of the fall and of the climb.

Have you ever tried to climb up off it?

Yes, often. Again and again you get just so far and then you seem to slip back down.

What's up there at the top?

I'm not sure. I can't see. I don't know what I would find if I made the climb. It is a bit scary not knowing.

Will you keep trying?

I guess so but you get tired of trying and from living on a ledge.

Does anyone else know where you are?

Yes but they seem to forget that you are there.

Do people come and see you on the ledge?

Very few.... people who live up there prefer to keep their distance. Everyone who is above you looks down on you.

Don't you ever get to speak to anyone?

Yes but I have to shout to make myself heard.



Isn't it a lonely place to be?

It is indeed lonely but it is also away from everything and everyone. Sometimes, living on the Ledge makes you feel like you want to be away from everything and everyone. But mostly it is lonely and you feel very isolated.

It can't be a very warm place to live.

No, it's a cold place to live but you become numb and don't feel the cold.

Living on the Ledge, surely there can't be much to do.

No there isn't but although you've got lots to do, lots to see to and lots of things you'd like to do, you can't do them because you can't get off the Ledge and you need to get off of it to do them.

Do you think that you'll always live on your Ledge?

I sometimes think that I will because living on it makes you feel and think that way.

Do you want to?

No....I don't want to, but you get so used to it and so accept it.

If there was once a path that led onto the Ledge, won't there be one leading off of it?

Please tell me that there is such a path or tell me that I should make the climb up.

So why do you not look for the path or make the climb?

People make it sound so easy. They don't know how hard it is even to try. You see, you lose confidence living on a ledge because you aren't able to do all the things you did which gave you confidence before you strayed upon it.

But won't you look for a path or keep climbing?

Now and then I do and....now and then I will.

You sound as though you've given up.

Living on a ledge makes you feel that way.

Have you ever nearly fallen?

Oh yes nearly, for you get so tired that you forget that you could fall.

Doesn't that worry you?

Yes sometimes, but then sometimes, you don't care very much.

What are you going to do?

I'll keep walking along it until I find someone who will take my hand and lead me off it.

Is this what you hope for?

Yes, for me it is. All the time. Every day. Even if they didn't know the way off, at least I wouldn't fall if I had someone's hand to hold onto. We could try and make the climb together.

Surely you won't ever find anyone whilst you are living on a ledge.

Maybe not though why should that be?

Perhaps it's because only people who are up there find one another.

Aren't people who find themselves on a ledge worthy of being with someone?

It that is so, doesn't it make you want to make the climb all the more to find someone?

Yes but all the same I'd like to think there's someone somewhere, who would want to be

with me whether I am living on a ledge or living up there and who would keep me from falling.

There are some who would say that the ledge on which you live does not exist. They'd say that it isn't really there – that it isn't real.

Well my reply to them would be that it does. It would feel real enough to them as well if ever they stray onto a ledge themselves.

How did you stray upon it?

I was with some once but after losing her, I became lost. Being with each other kept us from wandering onto a ledge. If one of us did, the other made sure neither of us fell by showing the other one the way back. Ledges do exist, people do find themselves on them and they are lonely places to be.

Why don't they try to find one another?

They know there are others living on ledges but being so out of reach from one another they can't get to them. It's like a great wall that's full of ledges where each one is out of sight and out of reach from the others.

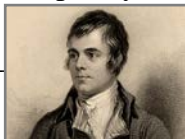
What happens to them all?

Some do fall while others make the climb. Most just exist there, forgotten. I dream of finding myself with someone again one day and finding that the Ledge isn't there anymore.



## *Burns Poetry*

John H's considerable interest and knowledge concerning the much-loved verses of Robert Burns came to our attention when he sent his "Profile" interview responses to Befrienders Highland. Here John shared with us some excerpts from several of his favourite Burns' poems. Written in Broad Scots dialect, we thought our readers might enjoy reading the original lines (in the left-hand column) translated into Standard English (in the right-hand column). Also, before each segment of poetry, a brief summary of the poem's subject matter and historical significance has been provided.



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### *Address To The Unco Guid*

Written in [1786](#), the epigraph that begins '*Address to the Unco Guid*' is a biblical paraphrase in the vernacular, by Burns, of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 7:16, and sets the tone for what will follow. While it may not deal with the most merry of subjects – the 'unco guid' of the title refers to a Scottish term for those who are considered to be especially strict when it comes to morals and religion – it certainly is spirited, highlighting Burns' satirical side and particular disdain for those valuing self-righteousness over compassion.

#### Address to the Unco Guid – lines supplied by John

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 7. Then gently scan your brother man,<br>Still gentler sister woman;<br>Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,<br>To step aside is human:   | Then gently scan your brother man,<br>Still gentler sister woman;<br>Though they may go a little wrong,<br>To step aside is human  |
| 8. Who made the heart, 'tis He alone<br>Decidedly can try us:<br>He knows each chord, its various tone,<br>Each spring, its various bias:<br>Then at the balance let's be mute,<br>We never can adjust it;<br>What's done we partly may compute,<br>But know not what's resisted. | Who made the heart, it is He alone<br>Decidedly can try us:<br>He knows each chord, its various tone,<br>Each spring, its various bias:<br>Then at the balance let us be mute,<br>We never can adjust it;<br>What is done we partly may compute,<br>But know not what is resisted. |

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### *The Cotter's Saturday Night*

This long sentimental poem is one of the best known and most admired of all his works. It was written for inclusion in his first book of poems (the Kilmarnock Volume). Burns is keenly aware of his intended audience using two voices: English for the moralising, self-aware stanza, and Scottish for the descriptions of the domestic scenes. Both voices praise Scotland and the simple practise of religion in the home. It also marks a turning point in the history of the traditionally English pastoral poem by using the Scottish dialect. In so doing, he raises the status of both the dialect and the Scottish domestic scenes portrayed.

A "Cotter" in Burns' time was a poor peasant who was given the use of a Cot or Cottage by the property owner in exchange for labour as opposed to paying rent. This poem relates how the Cotter and his family take time to relax on a Saturday evening after their week's labour, knowing that Sunday is a day of rest. The eldest daughter, Jenny, who has by now left home calls with her new boyfriend and the family eat their peasant meal and join round the fireside to hear the father read from the bible.

#### The Cotter's Saturday Night



- lines supplied by John

At length his lonely cot appears in view,  
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;  
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through  
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.  
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,  
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,  
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,  
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,  
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

At length his lonely cottage appears in view,  
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;  
The expectant little ones, toddling, totter through  
To meet their dad, with fluttering noise and glee.  
His little bit fire, blinking bonnily,  
His clean hearth-stone, his thrifty wife's smile,  
His lisping infants, prattling on his knee,  
Does all his weary distressing cares beguile,  
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil

## Tam o' Shanter

This is a wonderful narrative poem written by Burns in 1790 and first published in 1791. It is one of his longer poems, an epic in which Burns paints a vivid picture of the drinking classes in the old Scotch town of Ayr in the late 18th century. It is populated by several unforgettable characters including of course Tam himself, his own long suffering wife Kate, his bosom pal, Souter (Cobbler) Johnnie, Kirkton Jean, the ghostly, "winsome wench", Cutty Sark and let's not forget his gallant horse, Meg (Maggie).

The poem describes the habits of Tam, a farmer who often gets drunk with his friends in a public house and his thoughtless ways, specifically towards his wife, who is waiting at home for him, angry. At the conclusion of one such late-night revel after a market day, Tam rides home on his horse Meg (Maggie) while a storm is brewing. On the way he sees the local haunted church lit up, with witches and warlocks dancing and the devil playing the bagpipes. He is still drunk, still upon his horse, just on the edge of the light, watching, amazed to see the place bedecked with many macabre artifacts. The witches are dancing as the music intensifies and, upon seeing one particularly wanton witch in a short dress he loses his reason and shouts, 'Weel done, cutty-sark!' (*cutty-sark* : "short shirt"). Immediately, the lights go out, the music and dancing stops and many of the creatures lunge after Tam, with the witches leading. Tam spurs Meg to turn and flee and drives the horse on towards the River Doon as the creatures dare not cross a running stream. The creatures give chase and the witches come so close to catching Tam and Meg that one of them pull Meg's tail off just as she reaches the *Brig o' Doon*.

Tam O' Shanter – lines provided by John

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg--  
A better never lifted leg--  
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire;  
Despising wind and rain and fire.  
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;  
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;  
Whiles glowring round wi' prudent cares,  
Lest bogles catch him unawares:  
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,  
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!



So Maggie runs, the witches follow,  
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollo.

Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,  
And win the key-stane o' the brig;  
There at them thou thy tail may toss,  
A running stream they dare na cross.  
But ere the key-stane she could make,  
The fiend a tail she had to shake!  
For Nannie, far before the rest,  
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,  
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;  
But little wist she Maggie's mettle -  
Ae spring brought off her master hale,  
But left behind her ain gray tail;  
The carlin claught her by the rump,  
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Well mounted on his grey mare, Meg.  
A better never lifted leg,  
Tom, raced on through mud and mire,  
Despising wind and rain and fire;  
Whilst holding fast his good blue bonnet,  
While crooning over some old Scots sonnet,  
Whilst glowering round with prudent care,  
Lest ghosts catch him unaware:  
Alloway's Church was drawing near,  
Where ghosts and owls nightly cry.

.....a dance of witches!



So Maggie runs, the witches follow,  
With many an unearthly scream and holler

Now, do your speedy utmost, Meg,  
And beat them to the key-stone of the bridge;  
There, you may toss your tale at them,  
A running stream they dare not cross!  
But before the key-stone she could make,  
She had to shake a tail at the fiend;  
For Nannie, far before the rest,  
Hard upon noble Maggie pressed,  
And flew at Tam with furious aim;  
But little knew she Maggie's mettle!  
One spring brought off her master whole,  
But left behind her own grey tail:  
The witch caught her by the rump,  
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

## Jim's Diary Entries

WEEK ENDING 19<sup>th</sup> August 1979

Well Madelyn has been wetting the bed all week except for one afternoon during the week. Sunday morning came as a surprise, a dry bed so it is not bad really. Later that day Madelyn gave Evelyn two of her *Refreshers* (a type of sweet) and nearly choked her to death. It was lucky I saw her. I know she was being nice to Evelyn but it certainly made me jump.

WEEK ENDING 27<sup>th</sup> August 1979

As it was bank holiday week-end we were getting things together during the week well Thursday night we looked in on Madelyn before going to bed. After closing her door, she began to sob. Then, looking more closely we saw she was lying in a cold wet bed so she came into our bed. That night we got perhaps 2 hours sleep if that. Later when we finally arrived at Nan and Grand-dad Harper she was shy only for a short time. In fact, she ate well and we had difficulty trying to get her to sleep. In the end, Grand-dad watched over her until she finally went to sleep. Oh yes. I forgot to mention that Madelyn was sick on the way down just before reaching Brixton. Saturday Nanny, Grace and Madelyn went down the road to do some shopping and they called at a Chemist. While their backs were turned, Madelyn picked up a pottie from the shelf intending to use it of course.

Next, up to Auntie Belle's who gave both Evelyn and Madelyn £5 each which goes into Building Society? By this time Sunday Evelyn was enjoying all the fuss and we think, started cutting her first tooth. Madelyn also had a rash. Sunday afternoon she did not want to know me because I had spent Saturday and Sunday decorating the bathroom. So I got no kisses or cuddles. Monday, Madelyn came with me to collect her other Grandparents, Brett and Linda Hamilton who arrived by train at East Croydon. They had bought a container of *Skittles* and a dress for Evelyn. £10 each was put into their Building Society accounts so it goes without saying that these children ought to be supporting their parents since they are financially far better off. After dinner we left for home. All in all we got a lot done and Madelyn and Evelyn had been very, very good – a nice week-end.

WEEK ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> August 1979

Madelyn is now telling us what she either wants or does not want. Saturday, we put Beth in the garden while we did some cleaning for Brett and Linda's arrival but God she had the Devil in her. Pulling beans down, pulling rhubarb off, strewing dirt all over the lawn, and putting hands on windows which had just been cleaned; it went on and on.

Evelyn went in her buggy on Saturday which she quite seemed to like. She is beginning to make more of herself; now raising her head and taking notice. Conversely, Madelyn not looking where she was going kicked Evelyn in the chest and fell on her face.

Every night when I do the washing-up, Madelyn gets her tray, puts it against the sink and then stands there handing me the crockery whilst I wash.

WEEK ENDING 9<sup>th</sup> September 1979 [Part 3 begins]

Monday, Grand-Dad and Nan Hamilton arrived for a spell so Wednesday we hired a car and went to Norwich for the day.

Madelyn had a travel sickness pill and perhaps it worked this time because she was not sick. Also Madelyn has eaten well this last week. Madelyn, Evelyn, Grand-Dad and myself went to the Wildfowl Park at Lamarsh while Grace and Nan went to Colchester to buy among other things, presents for Madelyn's Birthday on Sunday. This week Evelyn made her first real movement on her own.

I had changed her then left the room when Grand-Dad noticed she was not on her back but on to her stomach. When we turned her back again she just rolled over. It will not be long now before she can crawl.

WEEK ENDING 16<sup>th</sup> September 1979

Madelyn has started to improve with her speech, both answering and telling us what she wants. Saturday Madelyn went swimming - from the bath to the pool, this is the culmination of her trust in me.. She was in there laughing and splashing, not one tear for a good hour. Really she did not want to leave but that was enough for one week. Soon hopefully it will be Lorna following the same. However for this week Evelyn has had an injection for Polio, Diphtheria and Tetanus which put her off her food a little that day We decided that Evelyn will be sleeping in the cot from Monday.

#### WEEK ENDING 23rd September 1979

This week-end we still went to Colchester for some shopping. Madelyn has been to the Doctor because she has a swollen gland in her neck so no swimming. Sunday I gave Madelyn a beverage drink but she refused it. In the end it was more the case of her chucking her drinking glass away.

#### WEEK ENDING 30th September 1979

Lorna has had a very rough night and slept in our bed. The Doctor's prescription was for drops given 4 times a day and a junior Aspirin in the evening. She had a high temperature and was lying with her back supported by a high pillow to help her breathe. Madelyn had to copy this but then she screamed. Grace cried out so Madelyn shut up and then replied that no one can shout to which I burst out laughing much to the disgust of Grace who clearly thought it was not funny. I told Madelyn that she can have a bar of chocolate every time she gets in and out of a dry bed but I do not hold out a lot of hope. Evelyn caught a cold which passed on to Madelyn and Grace and finally to myself so come the end of the week we were all in a pretty mess.

#### WEEK ENDING 7th October 1979

Not a lot happening. Evelyn and Madelyn have been getting rid of their colds. Evelyn is coughing and Madelyn's nose is running. Saturday I was cementing when Madelyn felt she ought to put her foot in it then grab a handful. After the cement had been smoothed she decided several more handfuls of cement were to be the order of the day. This was to be the last time. Madelyn had been in the garden all afternoon. When she came indoors at about 5 p.m. she was covered in dirt. Sunday was quite a long day - one probably best forgotten. I took Madelyn to the workshop in the morning and forgot to come home in time to feed Evelyn and was told that Evelyn had been a right pain in the backside so I got what can only be termed a bollocking.

#### WEEK ENDING 14th October 1979

This week has been a breakthrough week for both Evelyn and Madelyn. Evelyn has taken her first movements towards crawling and Madelyn has gone the best part of a week without wetting her bed. Monday Grace got Madelyn out of a dry bed. Madelyn used the potty in the afternoon too. Then came the week-end and we hired an Estate car. Evelyn and Madelyn travelled in the back. Madelyn being given a travel sickness pill, gave us a sick free journey; arriving Friday evening at Grand-Dad and Nan Harper. Saturday afternoon we went to Kim and Rob's where both Constance and Madelyn had a great time once Madelyn's shyness was cured. The Playroom was devastated.

In the evening we went to Genevieve and Kenneth's saw the new baby Paulette and compared

her size to Evelyn who was bigger  
or rather a heavier build. By this time Madelyn went with Grand-Dad to get the Paper's.  
Auntie Madge and Uncle Matt gave  
Madelyn and Evelyn some money for their savings. We saw Auntie Belle then went to see  
Auntie Meryl and (Scrubber?) my Auntie  
Flora but they had gone to Church. After dinner which Madelyn would not eat, she had two  
helpings of Grand-Dad's Cheesecake  
for pudding. When we left Madelyn lay in the back of the car and slept nearly all the way  
home. However because we were an  
hour late for Evelyn's feed she wanted hardly anything and slept soundly until the morning.

#### WEEK ENDING 21st October 1979

Not a lot of news Saturday. We took Madelyn and Evelyn into Colchester and bought clothes for  
this coming winter plus a pair of boots  
for Madelyn We spent about £60 then decided to have dinner out. Madelyn had Cod and Chips  
but it was so hot she hurt herself eating.  
Later we did not go swimming because Beth was playing up. Sunday was a nice "Family Day" at  
home. The children went to bed while  
we watched a film. We also had bought an Apple Tree and Strawberries so when planted we shall  
see what develops.

#### WEEK ENDING 29th October 1979

Highlight of the week: Evelyn gave birth to her first tooth! We all went to Ron and Vanessa's  
Wedding Reception where Evelyn was  
passed from one person to another until we left and where Madelyn's initial shyness was soon gone,  
making herself at home running up  
and down stairs and pinching everyone. Provided with coloring pencils, she certainly used them,  
making herself muck. That's it for now.

#### WEEK ENDING 4th November 1979

Highlight for this week was Evelyn's event. On Sunday morning I changed her and went  
upstairs to get some clothes, leaving her  
on the carpet edge furthest from the fire well. In the time it took to get those clothes Evelyn had  
crawled into the hearth and ashes  
of a fire which had just been lit an hour or so ago. With my heart pounding at the very thought of  
the consequences, well God she  
certainly gave me a fright! She had started to cry presumably because it was too hot and she  
wasn't able to crawl backwards.

#### WEEK ENDING 11th November 1979

Madelyn took the lard from the fridge, bought it into the Living Room, unwrapped it and then  
started to spread it into the carpet.  
Evelyn cut her second tooth. The Health Visitor also called in and did some tests on Evelyn. We  
were told that there was a  
deficiency in her right ear and would we take her for further tests which we will although we  
ourselves tested Evelyn for reaction  
to noises in both ears and Evelyn quite plainly responded so should there be anything wrong then  
it can't be too much.

This week-end we spent with Grand-Dad and Nan Harper in (Horsham?) then on the way home we  
saw Genevieve and Kenneth together  
with their children Sadie, Clarissa and Paulette. Then on to (Norwood?) to Grand-Dad and Nan  
as well as Kimberly and Robert and  
their children Constance and Lawrence. After Tea we loaded up and made our way home.

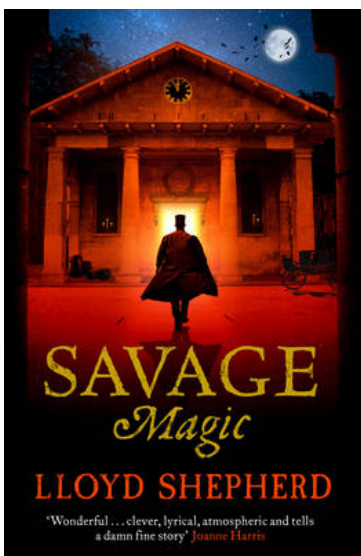
#### WEEK ENDING 18th November 1979

Madelyn helped bring in the logs for the fire. She has been taught to pull Evelyn away from the  
fire when she sets too near. Saturday

afternoon Madelyn went swimming for the second time. She was a bit hesitant of the water but I think this was because it was colder than before. Before long she was swimming around the bathing pool and jumping into the deep end. She had me swimming like crazy in order to be in the right place where she finally jumped in. Now I think she is she learning to respect water.

We bought Evelyn a baby walker although she's not keen on it. Sunday I took Madelyn and Evelyn for a walk up to Bulmer.

Continued.....WEEK ENDING 25th November 1979



## Book Reviews

### **SAVAGE MAGIC**

Author: Lloyd Shepherd, 2014

Lloyd Shepherd has a magical way with words well-suited to his story's themes of witchcraft, illusion, madness and vice. The novel gives an intriguing overview of the different classes of people in England in the early 1800's - aristocrats, witches, gypsies, prostitutes, doctors, servants.

This is Lloyd Shepherd's third novel and although it stands entirely alone, in many ways it also relates back to his previous novels, *The English Monster*, and *The Poisoned Island*. There are recurring characters in the investigator Charles Horton and the magistrate Aaron Graham, with both of them again employed in solving a criminal mystery brimming with truth and superstition.

Charles' wife, Abigail Horton, an intelligent but fragile woman tormented by imagined visions of an "exotic" woman in relentless pursuit of her, which leads her to voluntarily admit herself into a private asylum. What happens to Abigail in the asylum, not to mention her fellow inmates and to the head doctor, is the pivot upon which this mystery spins. And oh how the tale spins and twists and turns. In our quest to find and fit seemingly unrelated clues into place to solve the mystery, we are led through a cleverly crafted mental labyrinth, which plunges us into a fog of confusion and incomprehension. The reader is led through a bewildering world of witchcraft and madhouses, whores and aristocrats.

It's 1814 and the streets of London's Covent Garden are at the centre of a dark trade, enticing those seeking the pleasures of drink and sex. We are introduced to a secret club where aristocratic men disguised in the masks of satyrs attend evenings of unbridled indulgence. However, when the debauchers begin to die in hideous ways, each found murdered in his bed and wearing his satyr mask, a motive does not easily reveal itself. Who has such easy access to guarded premises?



We are also invited into privileged homes in country houses where witchcraft seems to be taking a deathly hold on the residents. Perplexing events that transpire here in the shires are somehow related to those taking place back in London but how are they linked? What connects these hunted London men, savage with the pursuit of pleasure, and a country village awash with folklore and talk of burning witches? The answer lies, yet again, under lock and key, in a madhouse for the deranged, where Horton's wife Abigail seeks refuge from her disordered mind.



FILM REVIEW by Graeme



## THE REVENANT

Leonardo DiCaprio plays the lead role in Alejandro González Iñárritu's survival drama *The Revenant*, the real-life story of legendary frontiersman Hugh Glass, a 19th-century fur trapper. While exploring the uncharted wilderness in 1823, Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) sustains injuries from a brutal bear attack. When his hunting team leaves him for dead, Glass must utilize his survival skills to find a way back home to his beloved family. Grief-stricken and fueled by vengeance, Glass treks through the wintry terrain to track down John Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy), the former confidant who betrayed and abandoned him.

**"This film was about survival. It was about adaptation. It was about the triumph of the human spirit, and more than anything, it was about trust."** said DiCaprio.

DiCaprio has indeed finally won his first Academy Award after five previous nominations where each time, the actor and his fans have been let down. The list of past nominations is impressive: Best Supporting Actor for 1994's *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, and three Best Actor nominations for 2005's *The Aviator*, 2007's *Blood Diamond*, and 2014's *The Wolf of Wall Street*, for which he was also nominated for Best Picture as one of the film's producers.



In *The Revenant*, DiCaprio shows his full range of acting talents, which he requires as he on screen for so long and does not speak much either. This is the film that everyone agreed was supposed to finally give him his Oscar. Someone commented that this film was "made for that purpose". On viewing it, I certainly thought he deserved to win one, although he has had better performances, including *The Wolf of Wall Street* which takes the viewer on a journey from the beginning of a career to getting addicted, to the high life, to total demise and to rebuilding yourself from the bottom up.

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⇒ **JUST FOR YOU** ⇐ **Following on from the review of the 'The Martian' in the last issue, we have copies of the book to give out to members. Members can contact us to request a copy and we will send it out. This is on a first come first serve basis.**

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### Stories of the Sea – a workshop with storyteller Patsy Dyer attended by Isolde

It will come as no surprise to you that Scotland is home to a wonderfully rich and diverse network of storytellers. So what is so magic about storytelling? It's a completely simple ancient art form, which requires nothing but a teller and a listener. The great beauty about storytelling is that it is the audience who does half the creative work; each person imaging what the spoken words describe within their own heads.

So last February I came along for a hands-on, practical introduction to live storytelling held at The *Ocean Explorer Centre* at Dunstaffnage in Dunbeg. **Patsy Dyer** led this participatory workshop for anyone who is curious about discovering and developing their own storytelling talent. **"Everyone is a storyteller!"** she explained, adding that **"there isn't a right or wrong way to learn storytelling, just as there isn't a right or wrong way to be a storyteller."**



Her own repertoire includes tales from Ireland and Scotland including sea sagas, supernatural and trickster tales, creation myths and folktale legends which she has collected through travel and research. If you are looking for



inspiration you might want to have a look online at storytelling resource pages. Naturally stories are mainly passed on orally, so she also recommended that we listen to stories being shared by joining a storytelling group which would offer a supportive platform for anyone wishing to try out their storytelling skills.

The work of the storyteller is tailored to particular situations or for special reasons, ranging from sharing tales for pure entertainment, to leading group educational projects. Though some may choose to develop their storytelling skills to become professional storytellers like Patsy, she encourages amateur storytelling within communities and places of learning. Regularly engaging with storytelling and story-making activities in the home and in the classroom not only develops a love of language and vocabulary it also promotes a social atmosphere of communication, confidence, collaboration, understanding and respect. Patsy has also assisted many special needs students to find their narrative voice through sponsored workshops and arts in education projects. She is hugely experienced working with any age group from babies to elderly people and is at home in any venue.

We are taking submissions for next year's calendar..

People can submit any kind of photo throughout the year  
under the broad theme 'What inspires you?'



Members can send them on to:

[admin@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:admin@befriendershighland.org.uk)

(or)

Befrienders Highland,  
19 Church Street, Inverness, IV1 1DY.



There are so many inspiring  
Images in our world

Take a photo of one and  
Share it with our members

January 2017						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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