



**LOCKDOWN WITH DACCA  
OUR STORIES**



**A YEAR TO FORGET?**

# COVID-19

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BY MARTIN

At first, I felt a relief, the earth got a chance to breath.  
No cars no buses or planes, just a peaceful earth.  
Three months was kind of cool, first time I have followed  
rules,  
Then we were allowed back out, but somebody told the  
fools,

Filled beaches and pubs, the crazy's were all around.  
The COVID-19 tin foil hat brigade, the COVID-19 deniers  
Sometimes on the net and set it on fire.  
And people moaned about wearing a mask,  
But guess what after a short while the virus came back.  
No wonder, it was a lot of the 'I am alright'  
Very selfish, but it was also a time of helping each other out.  
Real people doing wonderful things, we had each other's  
back.

People helped, they sang from the gardens and in their  
street.

We felt a bond, but now a year later it was looking bleak.  
But now there is a vaccine, and isn't that just neat?  
There is hope, there's a light at the end of the tunnel.  
I, like many others, will finally get to hug the grandchildren.  
For most the others the first time  
So come on people, come on Scotland it is time to do all the  
right things.

It's time to shine like a star, take your vaccine, it is the only  
way.

And some day soon, we can all hug, have and maybe  
Lead a better life stronger than before, and you're all stars.  
We never suffered and enjoyed anything like it.  
So, I still have faith in the human's race  
We come back fighting, we are all ace!!

The Warrior Poet

# Foreword

Our worlds became very small over this last year. The mechanisms for human connection and socialising that we all rely on were made forbidden overnight, and instead we sealed ourselves in our homes, isolated and worried about the unknown future in front of us.

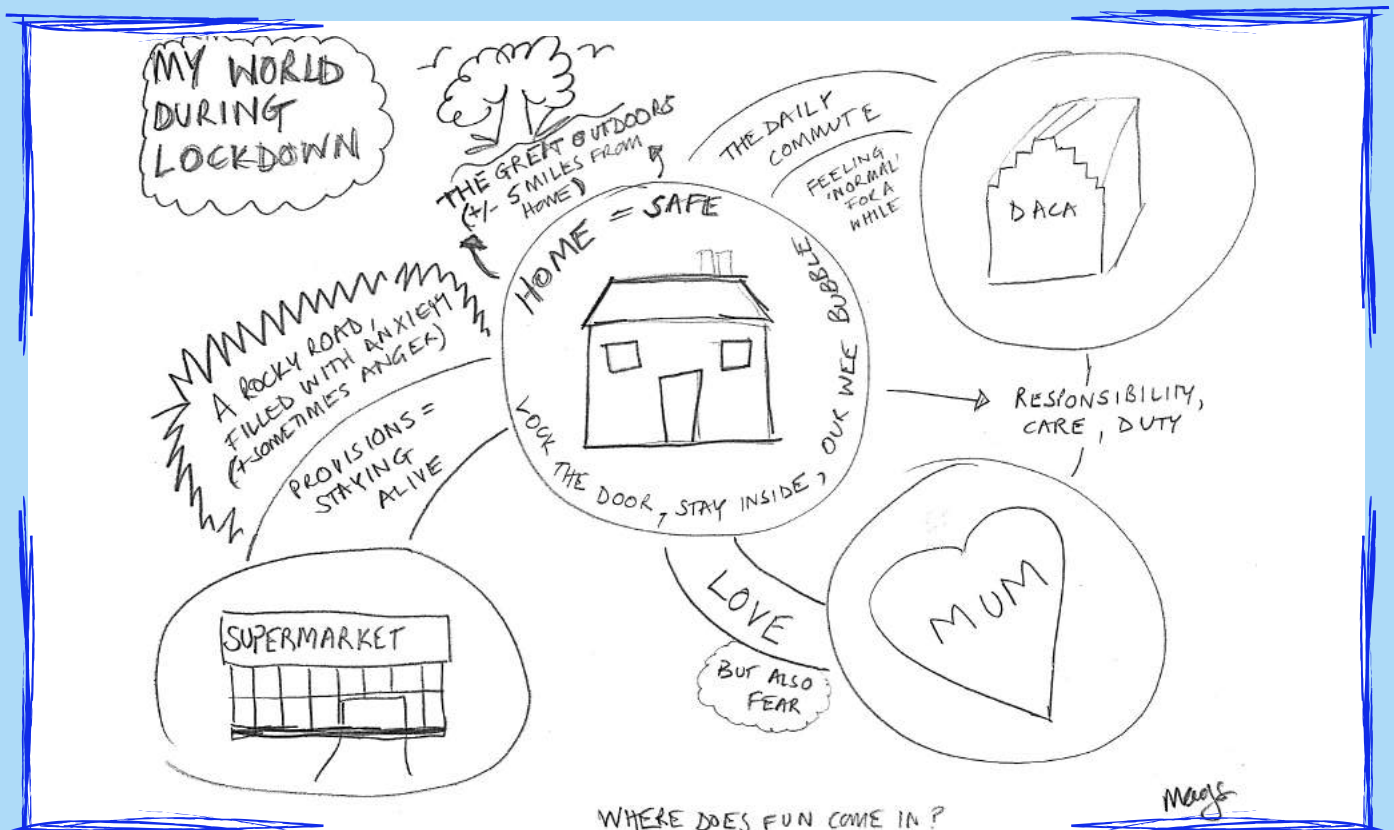
Even before the lockdown, many of the people who use DACA services had found themselves navigating through life solo. Isolation and loss are frequent by-products of problem drinking, and recovery is often characterised by a sense of starting fresh, which includes casting off old and unhelpful relationships.

And so I wasn't surprised to witness an amazing sense of resilience across our client group as the pandemic lockdown took effect. I hope some of that will be evident in this compilation, and I hope you, the reader, find it as inspiring and motivational as I do.

But isolation and exile from support services can lead to loneliness and angst and there are few of us who are completely resilient to that. It's important that we recognise the challenges that we've faced, and take stock of what we've come through.

I hope, in the future, we can all look back on this compilation and feel proud of having made it through and ready to build back stronger.

**Mags Mackenzie**  
CEO Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol



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# A Year To Forget?

The year 2020 will go down in the annals of history as the year of the coronavirus, Covid-19. Life as we all knew it changed, massively! The global pandemic brought our everyday, week-in week-out routines to a halt. Phrases such as; 'the 'R' number', 'rate of infection', 'social distancing', 'furlough', 'quarantine', 'self-isolation', were common throughout, but the one phrase which had the biggest impact on us all without a doubt, was LOCKDOWN.

At the outset of lockdown in Spring 2020 and through Summer and Autumn into Winter, with the reduced restrictions in place at the time, all of our individual life journeys were impacted in different ways. I knew how I felt, both emotionally and physically, as a result of those enforced but necessary restrictions. The impact on all of those individuals, I came into contact with, either within my circle of family and friends or my colleagues at work here in DACA, was plainly evident.

In my role as the Steps to Recovery Project Co-ordinator, I can honestly say it is a privilege to be in a position to provide our clients with a varied schedule of diversionary activities, which reduce their social isolation, improve physical and mental wellbeing and increase their social skills and confidence. These are the outcomes which our funders look for and client feedback to date has confirmed this is welcomed.

However, for me this was not a time to just focus on service outputs and service user outcomes. I felt there was more to this than meets the eye and it got me thinking about the impact on our client group and those less fortunate than myself, who had nothing to focus on, such as work volunteering or college, and who really were isolated within their own communities.

I was of the opinion that our clients' voices needed to be heard, and their stories told. Therefore, a quick word to Mags, our CEO and our wee group was formed online back in November 2020. Working with Amanda from Clydesider Creative we shared our feelings of apprehension, fear, anger and frustration, but also our new experiences, unforeseen opportunities, and learning.

Hopefully, the true impact of lockdown on their lives and the essence of individual journeys is captured here in the words and images shared by our group.

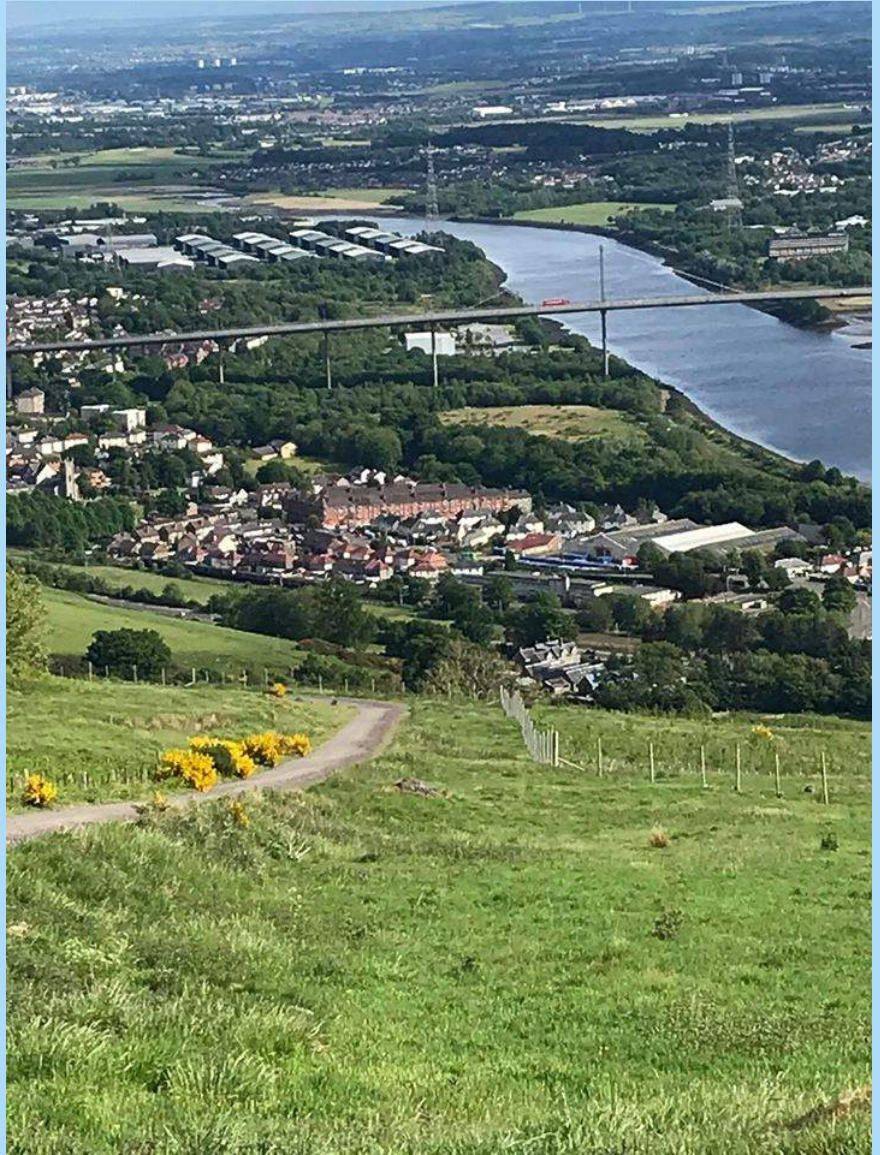
**Tommy Turner, Steps to Recovery Co-ordinator**

# Mark's Story

## MISSING THE BOOKIES

I go to the bookies every day. With the bookies being shut there's a void. I don't seem to let it affect me, I still go out and get my exercise and back in, just do what I'm doing. The one good thing about it is I'm saving money. I don't even need to touch money for the next month. Not bad considering I'm on benefits.

One thing I noticed when I was in the bookies, a lot of people were going to drink down in Helensburgh because they can't get a pint here and seemly people from Cardross and Helensburgh



weren't happy about that, so now you need ID to get a pint or go into the bookies down there, that's fair play because there was a lot of that going on.

The only downside is the smoking - because I'm sitting around a lot, I don't smoke when I'm outside. I nearly quit there about a month ago. I've got COPD. If I go out it goes right into my lungs. I need to stop smoking but it's part of my life, I've been doing it for over 40 years.

I'll work my way round it.

## **Covid**

My cousin caught Covid, he teaches out in Paisley and he came and visited me in May. I was worried I had given it to him but it was his eldest daughter. She was with her boyfriend in Croatia and when they came back she gave him a hug and her mum a hug and they both got it. My cousin's wife ended up in hospital for a week and neither of them smoke or drink, they're healthy people - it shows how potent this virus is and how dangerous it is. It opened my eyes up to it because people are ignoring it but that is how easy it is to catch it. Just one hug and that's how they got it.

There's an old guy down at the bookies and he's walking about with an oxygen tank in a bag, he keeps saying everyone who

takes this lightly is a fool because it's dangerous this disease.

I've got COPD so I've got to watch what I do, I'm tending to keep away from people.

## **Community**

I've helped the wee woman next door. She gets all her shopping delivered now but I was helping her out because she's new to the area and doesn't really know anybody.

The young ones about here, especially the ones who take drugs and drink they don't care, they're going from house to house but if anything happens to them it could be too late.

Look at America there's 70million people voted for Trump, that's 70million people not taking it seriously.

## **LOCKDOWN LIFE - THE POSITIVES**

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

**Linda**



# LOSS OF THE MEN'S SHED

BY RJMAC

The Men's Shed is a major part of my life. I've always had a major interest in woodwork, it's always been a thing of mine but it's been a hobby, never an occupation, so when I found out the Men's Shed is just down the road I went down and got to know the guys.

It's fantastic, it's a fully functioning workshop with every machine you can think of. The thing I miss the most is the lathe, the woodturning lathe, any chance I can get my hands on one of them I'm in.

I also got the opportunity to help out a few people who didn't know so much. A lot of the guys who come to the Shed, they haven't really had much to do with woodwork so it's nice to pass on things to people and show them how to use machines, I really do miss it, it was a big part of my life I was down there four days a week. That's one of the things about this lockdown that has really ticked me off.

It's a great bunch of guys and because I've been going down there for so long I got to know everybody and we got on well and I



kind of miss that. What I found is when I was at the Shed - because all that macho crap that guys don't talk about things - is that when it's just guys together they do talk about things which they wouldn't do if there was a woman there. I miss that as well because if I do have a problem I could talk to them.

I was bored so I decided to make this little man out of nuts and bolts, like I say I was bored. But it's now grown arms and legs and I've been making these little Usain Bolts and it's quite fun.





# CRAFTY CLUB

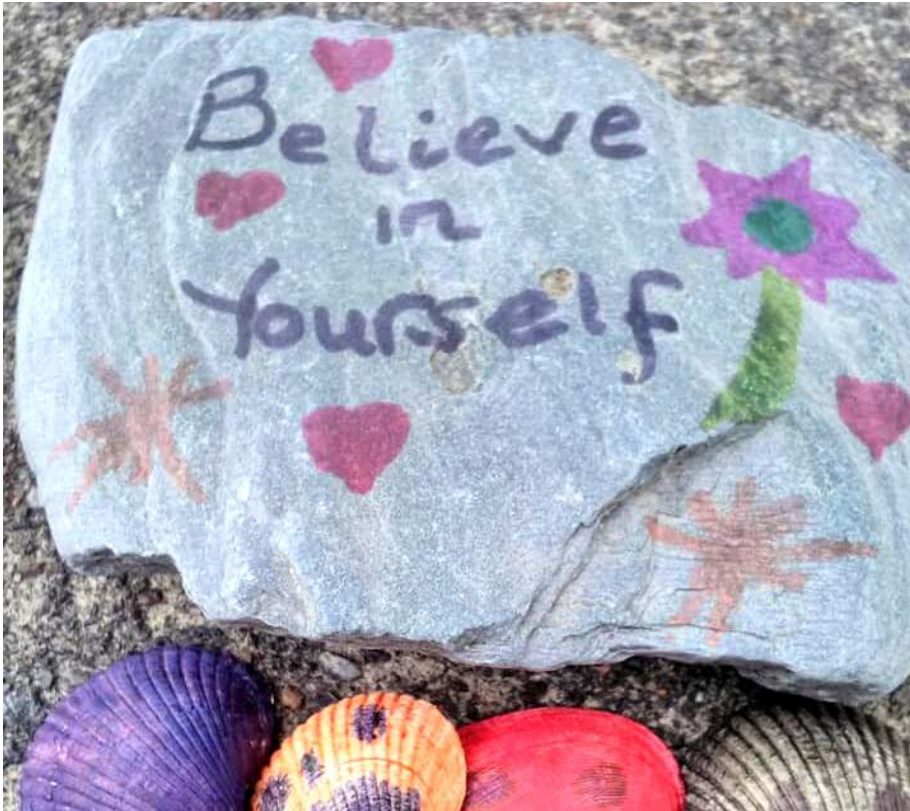
BY LINDA

I just do arts and crafts, that's what I do. I stay in every night and make this or that, it stops me getting bored.

I see Celine every now and again when she drops me off stuff, she does a good job as the messenger and so I sit at home doing my arts and crafts. It was Celine who started me off doing it, it's been quite good, really relaxing. The activities help.

On a Wednesday I've been doing the crafts, my settee is just covered in glitter. I think we're making gnomes this week. I send pictures into DACA on Facebook.

I think I'm just like a big kid again, that's what my daughter said. I just told her let me be, I'm fine I've got my arts and crafts and I went out and bought more stuff, pipe cleaners and glitter and sprays.



"Lockdown has been blocking my creativity. I'm finding it difficult to concentrate at the moment.

I've thought about writing a lockdown journal but never got round to it."

Derek

# Linda's Story

LIFE IN THE VALE



Hopefully I should be back to work in a few weeks, just got to wait and see what happens. Not got a clue what's going to happen. I've been working in the hotel for 12 years now, a little bit of rest is okay but I had a routine before because I had to get up in the morning but now I'm baby-sitting if my daughter is working but apart from that, just have to wait and see.

Today I have this call and on Wednesday there's the Crafty Club and the Supper Club, just take each day as it comes.

This is all I'm going to be doing now, it's baby-sitting but I thought it keeps me fit and it keeps me young.

I was up Clydebank this morning with my daughter, She did quite a bit of shopping and it was quite quick. The other day I was in B & M and it was lunchtime and all the kids were in there and they weren't wearing masks and I got really angry. It's like in the Vale outside Greggs and they are all in their huddles and there is no social distancing going on so I just keep my mask on when I walk through the Vale.

I won't be going out much. I might go out with my daughter and take a walk round Balloch Park when she's off work, I don't know when I'll be going back to work now, maybe a couple of weeks. I don't think anyone really knows.

This year has been rubbish, it really has, can't travel anywhere, no holidays.

I miss the walks, I'm babysitting and doing arts and crafts but I like getting out walking - that's what I really miss.

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

I don't really agree with this five day thing over Christmas and with the tier system people are just going into Argyll and Bute for a treat so I don't think it's working.



# CREATIVE FUTURES

BY STEVIE



I entered a competition that DACA set up, the one you had to do a bit of painting 'Square Gogh' I think I won that, actually I think everyone won it.

We got the outline of what it was and we had to colour it in or paint it - I painted mine.

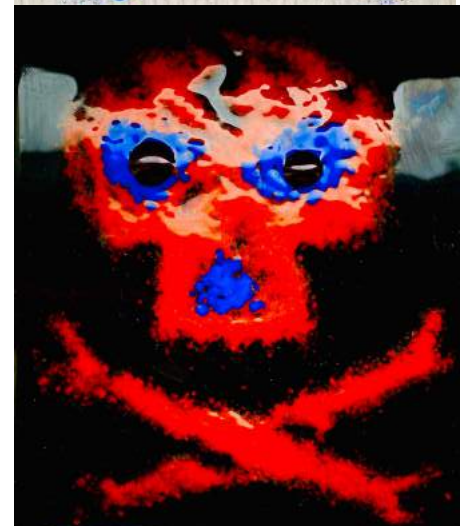
I like to get involved with art. It's not that easy to find work now so I think I might go down the avenue of making art that other people might want to buy. It's just an idea at the moment, but it's an idea. I've got to keep thinking in that kind of direction. Staying busy and creative.



Maybe people have been out working and didn't realise they were creative. I feel personally in the future, time for being creative is going to need to be expanded because a lot of jobs have gone and they're not going to be replaced again.



There are going to be a lot of people who have not got work and not going to have an opportunity to find work so I think the onus lies with the government to rethink how people are going to use their spare time and I think creativity and crafts need to be expanded into communities to give people opportunities to find what they can do.



I think government need to think very seriously about giving people spaces to go where they can be creative because jobs are not going to be there, there's a lot of jobs not going to return People do need something to do and manage their time because they've got a lot more time on their hands than they have ever had.



# GARDENING IN LOCKDOWN

BY CHARLIE

I've just been busy making wee things, the cat doesn't help much he usually destroys what I do. I've just finished making a poppy, it's for the garden. I made a snowman as well, he lights up. It's those plastic fish bowls and I made a tin for his hat, that's my Christmas tree for this year.



The last few weeks I've been collecting bits of wood I found outside. So I made a wee wooden man last year and I'm going to make him a new partner for the summer.

I went and got me a new printer and laminator so a lot of pictures I had I've been downloading and laminating. I made a nice cat sign last night for the neighbour's garden - it's just to warn them.

I like my photography but I don't get out much. It's a big highlight when I go to the shops, I get myself dressed up to go to the shop across the road.

## MARTIN'S POTATOES



I'm not going to try and grow potatoes again.

I've got a veranda here so I bought one of those bags that you can grow potatoes in and I got two bags of compost for it but they're the dearest potatoes I've ever ate in my life.

After waiting for three months I got eight potatoes!

I ate them with my eyes shut because I thought, I'm going to enjoy these, every single detail.

They were lovely but there were only eight of them. I think I left it a bit late when I put them out. That was my first attempt.

I thought I was going to get a bumper crop that was going to last me for weeks, it's been the most expensive meal I've had - and I've been to some expensive restaurants!

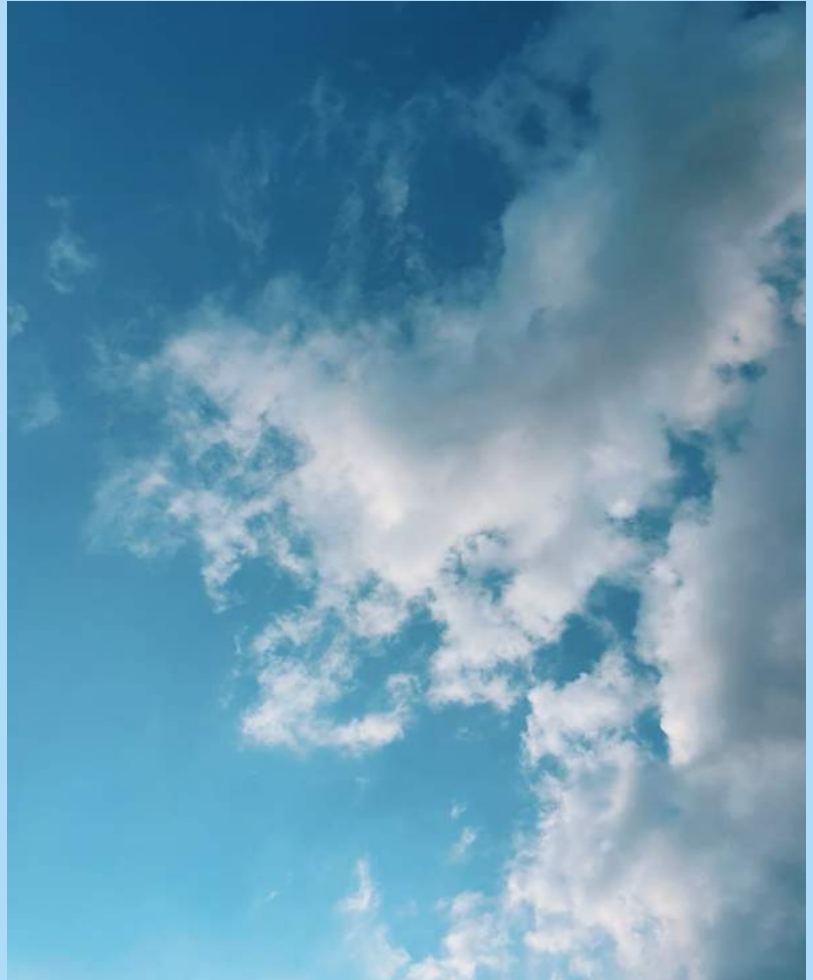
# Wayne's Story

## MISSING FAMILY DOWN SOUTH

I spent a lot of time underwater, being in the submarines. That was hard being away from the family, while they were growing up.

Since this lockdown - two lockdowns now, I thought I was strong going away to sea for long periods of time but when you came back you would see your family.

But the way things are now, this lockdown, this is harder than being away at sea I'm finding it quite difficult I thought I would get on with it but it destroys my mental health and my physical health and not having the motivation to get out and do something.



I can't go down see my family down in England, they can't come up see us and usually we go down quite often to see our families. The grandkids I can see any day of the week but I've got quite a big family as well but they are all down in England and I'm finding that is definitely affecting me. I miss giving them a hug, it's hard but hopefully we'll all get through this in the end.

### LOCKDOWN LIFE - THE POSITIVES

**"I'm enjoying the peace and quiet, you know there's nobody going to be chapping the door."**

**Charlie**



# Q&A with Bernie

## **What has changed in your life over the past year?**

I've gained and lost independence at the same time. I miss looking forward to our craft days, although I'm not sure I was particularly great, it was great that it didn't matter.

## **What have you learned?**

I've learned that I am good at some things, though, and hopefully haven't poisoned anyone. I love cooking for other people, even if the recipes are never the same twice. I've learned I need to put me at the centre and I struggle to know how to.

## **What/who has helped you get through lockdown?**

Chanti, my dog, Celina, Helen, the two Anns, a George, and anyone else who will accept my soup, jams and chutneys. Plus Anne at Barnardos and our days at charity shops, and Lynda from the refuge who is my outreach worker, and Alison.

I'm not sure how anyone has coped through this lockdown. My dog and fresh air are a start. It is a day at a time though, and my difficulties are, or have been, trying to get my head around who I am.

## **What challenges have you faced and how have you coped with them?**

Challenges. That's easy. I'm quite a simple person. Take a step back, to take a step forward. Have found it difficult not to have the human interaction of the craft club. I'm really crap at internet, and not comfortable with it, but want to be.

## **Have there been any positives to come from the past months?**

Positives. I can cook, I can try to make vegan cakes, I still love giving, whether you like it or not, it's who I am.

# FUNERALS

BY MARTIN

My best pal he died at the start of the first lockdown and you were only allowed five people at the funeral. He lived in Drummy so I cheated and went over in my mate's car and we just stood and clapped. Then another close friend died and this was a burial so we had arranged for a few of us to go up and stand at the gates at the new graveyard but all the old team turned up and we had to split up, we weren't bothered about the contact but someone said what do we do if the police come and then we looked round at the crowd.

Before this virus when you went to a funeral you would go for a coffee or to a pub or whatever after and I think that was a big part of the funeral process that is getting missed now. I noticed it when we went to my best pal's because that was an important part of it for closure and you all sit there reminiscing and telling stories, usually funny stories and none of that is there and I really missed that. This time it was just up to the funeral and then home.



BY LINDA

There were two funerals I watched online during lockdown. You want to be there, it's not the same. The first one I think there were about five people there. It was my friend's brother's wife and the other one was one of my late brother's friends and we watched that.

I lost my brother when he was 40 due to asthma and my brother got a mention saying now the two of them are together and that brought tears. You would like to go but this was the only thing we could have done.



# CHRISTMAS

BY LINDA

Unfortunately I'm not going to be able to see my mum, it's too much of a risk. She lives herself but she has got an invite for Christmas but she's so stubborn, I don't know if she will go. If she spends Christmas herself it's her very first one, she's usually up here for Christmas but it's just too dangerous. They've got the five day restriction but it takes a day to get down to her and a day to get back, she's in Hertfordshire - in a car you're talking about eight hours.



It's just a horrible year. It's still not right - my daughter could go down to pick her up and bring her up here but it's just too risky, she's nearly 92 and she could pick up something.

I know a lot of people will be breaking the rules. I'll probably be working on Christmas day and Wayne will probably be working Christmas day so it'll be just the same as any other day, not going to be doing anything too exciting.

It's more for the grandkids. Probably when I finish work I'll try and see them then, they don't live far away.

BY MARTIN

We're all bored and think that cos it's getting towards Christmas people are feeling it. I think we're going to have a digital Christmas. I don't mind, it doesn't bother me - just one year.

We're trying to read up on it. Son-in-law, he's very clever, so we're trying to see once this lockdown finishes on the 11th how many days we need in the house, no contact with anyone - might be a fortnight in quarantine - then we can see each other on Christmas Day and that would be nice.

Her mother stays in Dalmuir and she's on her own, I'm on my own and she doesn't want us two on our own, she's thoughtful right enough.

She's not that far away, just over in Bishopton.



# Stevie's Story

JOURNEY THROUGH GLASGOW'S EERIE EMPTY STREETS



I've been moving house, getting back into my old flat again and getting my life sorted and getting things organised. I got a lot of help and my flat is starting to look normal again, it's taken a lot of cleaning up, it's been lying empty for 16 months. That is because of lockdown as well, I would have been back in much sooner but I wasn't allowed to move back because of the pandemic, but I'm back in again now.

I've been doing a lot of walking, just on my own. I took a trip to Glasgow. I shouldn't have done it but I posed as a worker, I had to get away. I went on the train there was nobody on the train, I had a mask on never met anybody, got to Glasgow, walked through the turnstyle nobody checked my ticket, walked into George Square and there was a woman there feeding the birds and I called her the Virus Bird Lady, I took a video and posted it on the DACA site and called it the

## LOCKDOWN LIFE THE POSITIVES

**"I noticed within the very early days of lockdown it was like the earth got a chance to breathe again without the planes, trains and automobiles killing the atmosphere."**

**Martin**



Virus Bird Lady because the birds were all over her and I thought what if they have got the virus, they birds. That was at the height, I shouldn't have been there but I was walking up and down the streets and there was nothing and no-one there, just graffiti on the wall like a dystopian nightmare, some Orwellian nightmare, 1984.

It was a right weird feeling with no-one on the streets. I walked right down Sauchiehall Street and right back again and it was as if there had been some kind of thing that had happened in the streets because there was loads of graffiti and it was deserted and all the shops were boarded up, it was bizarre. Just the odd tramp wandering up and

and down. It was kind of surreal at first when the lockdown first happened, like walking down Kilbowie Road, it was like what is going on? It was bizarre.

### **Covid**

It is so contagious, I think I may have had it last Christmas [2019/20] because I got the flu twice last year and the second time I got it, it was horrific.

I was in my bed and I thought I was going to die, it knocked me right off my feet, totally exhausted - not like the normal flu, and that cough! I was coughing and coughing and it just knocks the stuffing right out of you. I may have had it but I've not had a test to see if I've got the antibodies or not.



**"I was walking up and down the streets and there was nothing and there was graffiti on the wall like a dystopian nightmare"**

# COOKING & FOOD

BY MARTIN

There isn't any incentive there to cook. Hopefully it will come back when all this is finished but as it stands the now, no.

I miss not cooking for others. That's something I miss. Me and my daughters, every birthday we always went out for a meal or if we didn't go out we'd meet and have a meal in one or other's houses but you can't do that now, you're not meeting up.

I've been cooking since I was very young, my mother worked in a pub and I had to learn from a very young age and its been a good learning experience for me and I've always enjoyed cooking, but now even something as simple as spag bol it's too much so I end up with chips and fishfingers again.

Yesterday I started off making a small chicken casserole in my small slow cooker, but it ended up a large chicken casserole in my large slow cooker. When I'm making mince or stew or things like that I make a lot and that way I can freeze half of what is left.



BY LINDA

I find it relaxing to do home cooking, I made biscuits and chocolates, it's a layer. They're quite nice.



# SCOOBY SNACKS

BY RJMAC

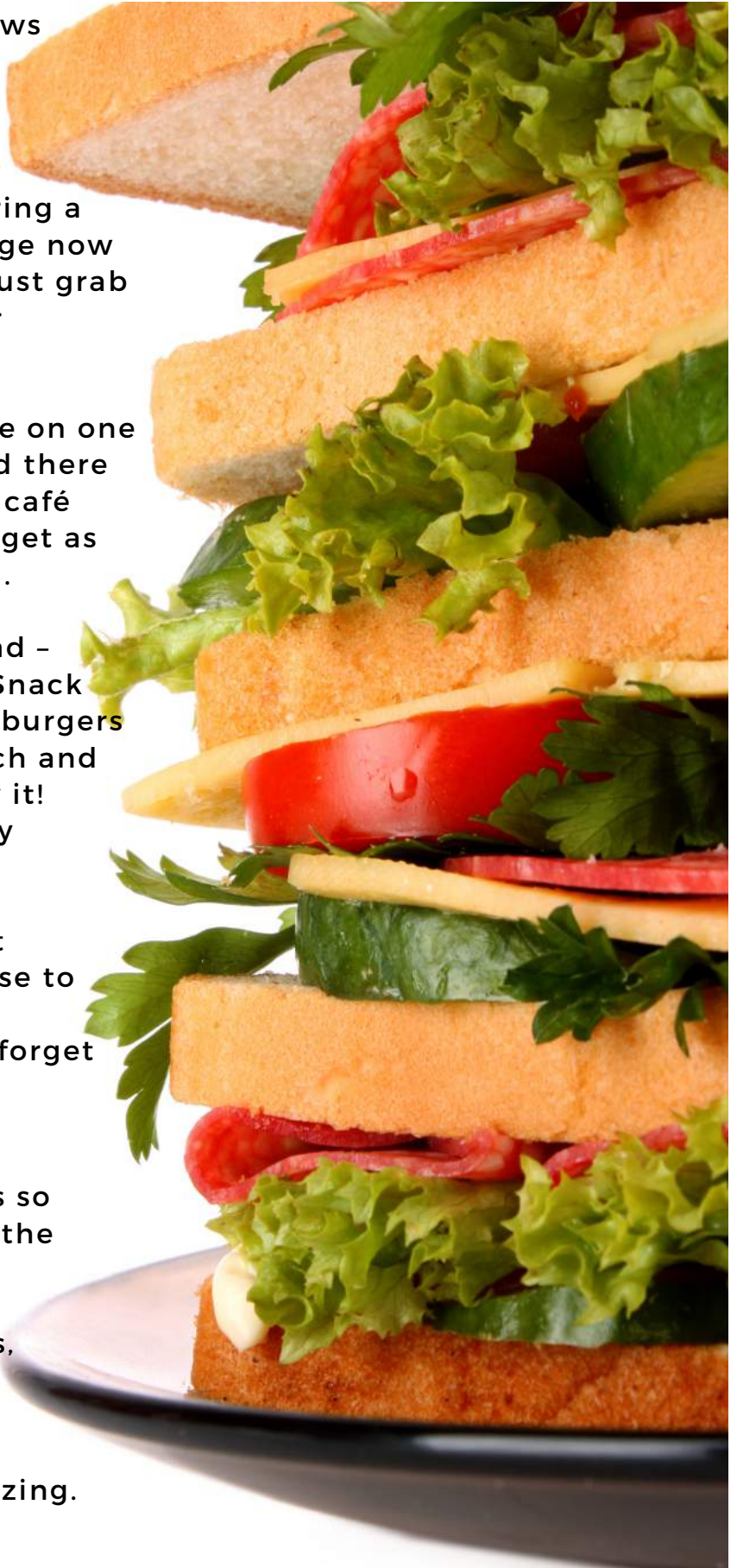
Anyone who knows me knows I'm a huge cook, I love cooking and before all this started I would quite happily spend three or four hours in the kitchen preparing a meal but I've got to the stage now where I can't be arsed, I'll just grab something from the freezer and put it in the oven.

I spent most of my adult life on one building site or another and there was always a burger van or café near you and you'd try and get as much in one roll as you can.

I've taken it one step beyond - it's now become a Scooby Snack you've now got fishfingers, burgers and eggs all in one sandwich and it is gorgeous - honestly try it! You've got to try the Scooby Snack it's amazing!

I make it if I'm getting a bit peckish and it's getting close to dinner time and I'll make a Scooby Snack and you can forget about dinner then.

You get your slice of bread, I usually use five fishfingers so it covers the whole slice of the bread and then you've got two burgers on top of that and then two soft yolk eggs, they've got to be soft because that yolk has got to burst over the rest of it - you've got to try it, it's amazing.

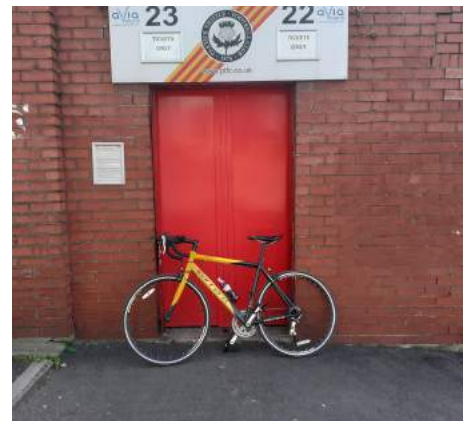


# PHYSICAL FRIDAYS

Steps to Recovery project has, from its inception, focused on diversionary activities that looked to improve both physical and mental wellbeing for all participants. Physical Fridays being a main part of our schedule.

Pre-Lockdown these activities took place at venues and locations across West Dunbartonshire and beyond. However as lockdown restrictions took hold some of our Physical Friday activities went online, such as Yoga, Mindfulness, Gentle Exercise & Relaxation.

Other activities such as cycling and walking, which could be done from the home, were promoted through our regular newsletters. The newsletters also included different challenges providing some variety to those activities.





# Michael's Story

## NOTHING TO DO

Been busy, been cleaning, it's filthy. I was supposed to be getting a visit from my mum but didn't because of the outbreak. Went to Asda on Saturday and I went to Peacocks.

I used to get out to see my mum. She sometimes sends me a message from her email on my mobile.

Before lockdown sometimes go out for walks and sometimes see a friend and sometimes talk to a neighbour.

But now nothing. Nothing. Sometimes I go out to get shopping. And then I change my mind and go back home because there are too many people. I think I had that in my mind when I go to the shops.

Sometimes I've got nothing to do but go to bed.



## LOCKDOWN LIFE - THE POSITIVES

I enjoyed the first lockdown, I would sit out on my veranda because I can't walk too far and I'd sit out in the sun with my headphones on listening to my music. One day I forgot I was sitting on my veranda and I started singing along with it until I heard two floors up someone clapping along - you know what it's like when you sing with your earphones on!

We'd all do the clapping together as well and I'd see people I didn't even know lived here they're waving to me through the veranda."

**Martin**



# RJMac's Story

## MISSING FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT

I'm one of these people I want to speak to someone face to face if I've got a problem, I want to look in someone's eyes and tell if they're lying to me. But even that's been taken away from me, you've no choice but to deal with them over the phone if you can get through to them. I don't know when this is going to end, they're talking March or April next year.

My sister is constantly in touch - that's why I'm not shaving my beard off because it annoys her! She's over in the East End so every now and again she'll get in the car and go for a drive and end up at my door.



I'm trying to learn the guitar, it's something I've picked up and put down over the years and when I heard this lockdown was going to get pretty serious I bought another guitar. I thought I'm going to have plenty of time on my hands - but it's not going well.

I write a journal of day to day things. It's not so much a journal, it's a bit of a book about my earlier life and it's sort of autobiography. It's not really the sort of thing that a lot of people would want to go through.

I'm having to dig through some stuff that I didn't want to go through before. I find it helps to put it down on the computer and it's there.

# PETS

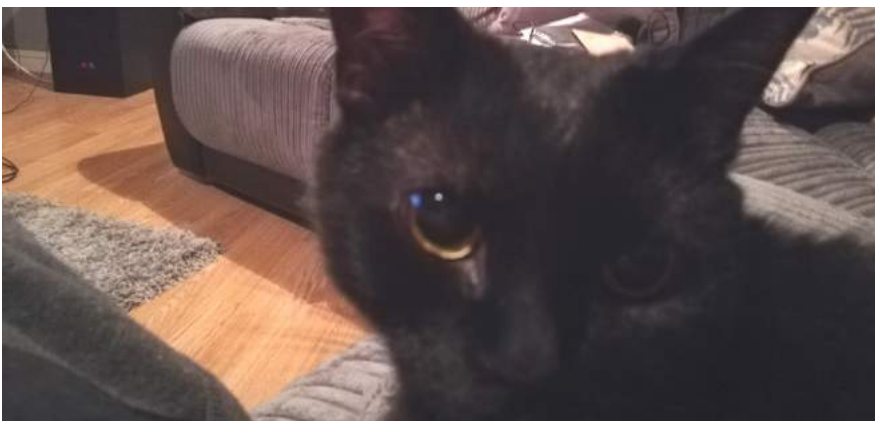
## BY CHARLIE

My cat was an angel, he saved me, saved me from a lot of drinking. When I got him it stopped me drinking, because I was frightened he was going to be locked out or I would miss him so I stopped drinking. I very seldom drank since I got him.

He moved in with me, I never asked him - Street Cat got me. I used to call him that before I got him, I thought he was someone else's cat.

The difference with him he doesn't walk through gardens, he just walks down the middle of the street. He's a tough cat, a Dalmuir cat. He hates missing anything so he's out in the street eyeballing everything, dogs, people, foxes.

He's a beautiful cat, a lovely big cat just don't cross him. If you're nice to him he'll be nice to you.





## BY MARK

I need to try and get out more but I'm kind of tied with these two cats because they are house cats and I can't leave the house for any length of time because then they panic because they don't know what's going on.

The cats are good company, they never ask you for anything, they're part of the furniture. They have never fought in all the time I've had them, I've had them for four years.



# Martin's Story

## BRUCE THE BUGGY

I've always been in and about this area, used to be a plasterer but I've not worked for quite awhile for lots of different health reasons.

I've not been doing too much because one of the health reasons, which I class as one of the minor ones, is osteoarthritis.

I always said I would never go in one of those wee buggy things but eventually I gave in, that was during the lockdown because my family and my pals couldn't come to give me a lift so I thought I need to get independent again so I bought one.

Second-hand but it's a good 'un and I'm getting quite used to it now but I still don't like using it.



I've not been out that much. I can have weeks, sometimes months, that I get out and about quite the thing and then it can go downhill and I don't get out for months and recently it's been like that for quite awhile and I've had more not going out than getting out and I got fed up taking photos through the veranda. If it's pouring with rain you don't go out in it. Hopefully I'll get out and about in the Bruce - that's what I called my buggy, the Bruce!

Between not having the right frame of head and the pain, it was too bad. I was doped up with morphine, it's not a nice feeling.

It's been a bad time for me again, I've been messed about with appointments. I had prostate cancer and I'm in remission but I'm getting pain in that area again.



My doctor has been trying to push them and I've been trying to push them but one of the letters I got saying it would be six months and then I got another letter saying it would be 21st of this month and then another letter cancelling that, then I got another appointment sent to me for 12 December, so here's hoping.

It'll be the first time I've been in a hospital since it all happened but it's awkward to get to. You're not allowed to be at the appointment any more than five minutes early, that's the new rules so I'll get a taxi over there and get the bus back and I'll put on one of those blue masks and look as if I've just finished a shift in the hospital.

### **Family**

I've got two daughters in their thirties and two granddaughters oldest is 13 and youngest is 13 months, but I've not had much contact with the youngest since lockdown.

So it's been really quite bad as I've not been able to get to know my granddaughter, she doesn't know me. The one day I did manage to go over when we could go into one another's houses she crawled away greetin'. She's walking now and I'm missing it all, she doesn't know me because she doesn't see me enough to get to know me.

I'm just missing everything. I remember when I was on a bender I used to say I want my life back. Everybody just wants their life back now, it's been going on that long.

It is sore though because I still haven't lifted wee Jessica since she was about three months old and she's a year and four months now. We tried the video call the other day, my daughter got a portal for the telly so my face is on that and the wean is just looking at it and looking away again because she doesn't know me.

They're saying they miss me and they're always thinking of me. Their mother looks after Jessica and they're looking after their mother so they can't add me to their household. I'm used to that, but this time I'm out on my own without a reason - I've been a good boy. I must admit I get wee twangs and then I just rubbish it in my head.

## **Community**

Up here where I stay it's quite a good wee community, I just moved up here three years ago to the top of the hill. I never thought I'd find a high flat so well looked after, no problems, the neighbours are great and there's a community shop in the middle there.

I got friendly with the people in the shop and they told me anytime if I can't get out just to phone up and they'll get it delivered up to me.

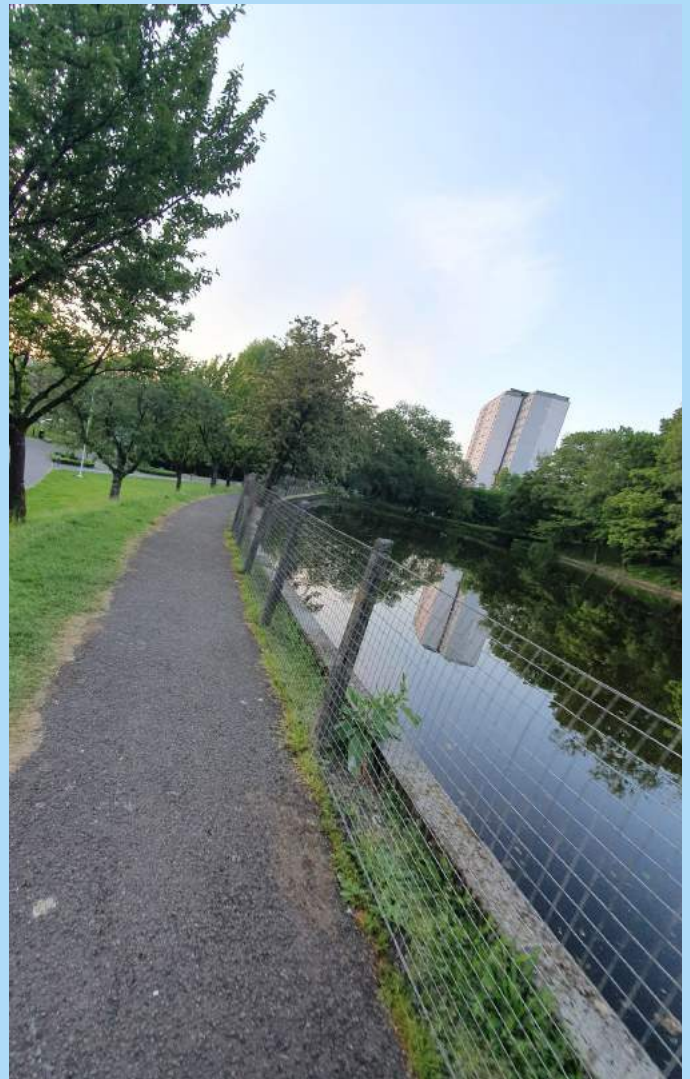
They're all friendly up here. The other flat across from me, I had a lassie from there come in and I paid her to do the cleaning for me because I can't bend or kneel down but unfortunately she got Covid five or six weeks ago and she's still suffering.

She started a thing in her flat - and I'm thinking of starting it here - is put up a goodwill box. I've still got stuff from the food parcel I got when I was shielding - so I'm thinking of putting it out with a sign saying if you are in need take, if you don't need please add. I spoke to the concierge and he thought it is a good idea as well.

## **Local Shop**

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

If I go there for bread and milk I could be over there for three quarters of an hour talking away to them, I don't mind paying the extra prices because it's the entertainment value and if I'm



sick and can't get out they deliver. They don't do delivery services it's just to locals in these flats. It's been a great help. It's like a wee community that shop.

If you grew up in the seventies and put up with the crap I did back then, I can put up with this. I think back to the seventies and the three day working week and the power cuts and we'd all be fighting for candles and waking up with ice on the inside of the windows, if you can survive that you'll survive anything, I've beat two heart attacks and beat prostate cancer as far as I'm concerned, you can't put me down.

I'm the healthiest looking sick man I know!

# DACA RECIPES

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## MENU - ALL INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 bag of frozen peppers
- 1 bag of frozen onions
- 1 soup mix
- 1 garlic granules
- 1 jar of curry sauce
- 1 bag of new potatoes
- 1 head of broccoli

Poach all chicken in just water and salt, take chicken out when cooked and place in ice-cooled water but keep water as stock. While doing this prep and cook your broccoli slightly undercooked as you will reheat this.

### **Chicken and Veg Soup**

Saute soup pack with a handful of frozen onions and a sprinkle of garlic granules till all is soft, then add the chicken stock from before. Bring to boil then thicken if needed with cornflour. Chop one of your chicken breasts into pieces and add to soup, simmer and taste to season (remember the water was already seasoned) add some broccoli if you want.

Serves up to 5

### **Easy Chicken Curry**

Sweat 2 handfuls of onion. Add garlic granules put in your sauce and 2 chopped cook chicken breasts, half bag of pepper, some broccoli. Simmer and while waiting cook some pasta or rice to go with it.

Serves 4

### **Peppercorn Chicken with your choice of potatoes and Peppercorn Sauce**

Saute onions and crack in a load of peppercorn add as much as you like then add water bring to boil add gravy granules to thicken. Slice your last remaining chicken and add in sauce so it's not dry.

Then put together new potatoes, chicken, peppercorn sauce and don't forget broccoli you have left.

Serves 1

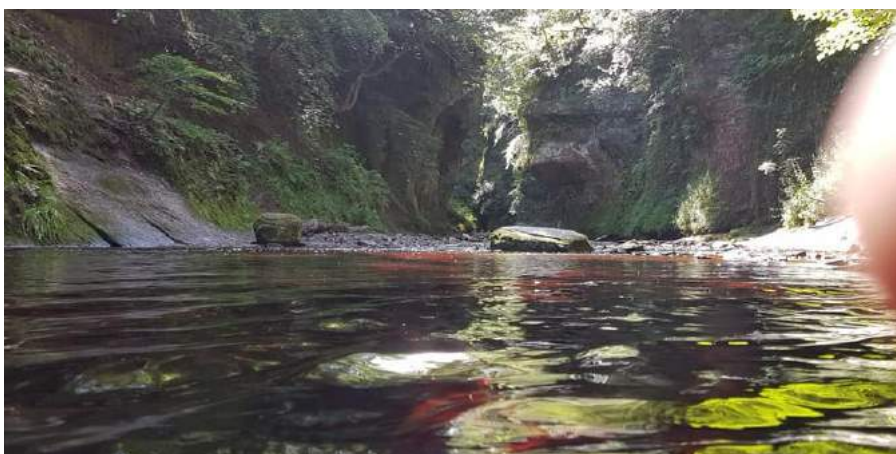
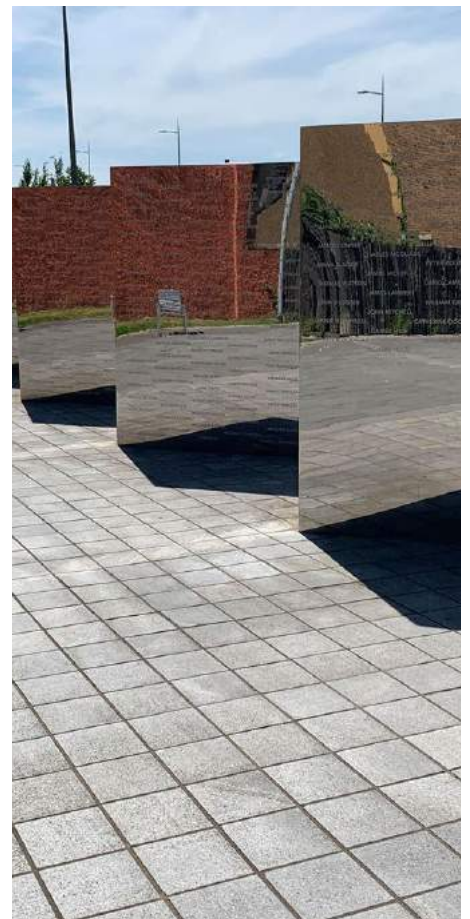
**Don't forget portion & freeze the rest so no waste.**

# CHANGING FOCUS

Changing Focus was our online photography group delivered in partnership with Inclusive Images, whom we had worked with in the past.

The workshops, facilitated by Charlie Sherry, allowed all of our participants to learn and develop new skills in the art of photography.

Words and phrases, such as picture composition, framing, and leading lines became commonplace and are now part of the group's vocabulary.



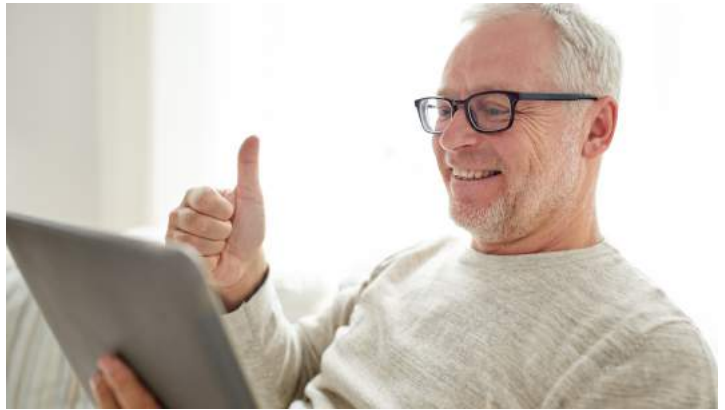




# TECHNOLOGY

## BY MARTIN

I'm the older brigade but I'm not too bad with the technology. I've been using computers but 10 or 15 years and all self-taught. I've done video messaging before but all this Zoom is new to me but it's not too bad now.



## BY STEVIE

I use Zoom just for DACA, the first time I used Zoom was for DACA and I do like it, I think it's a great tool, it's a great piece of software, it works perfectly.



## BY RJMAC

I've been doing a couple of computer courses. I'm not a novice when it comes to computers but I want to keep up with the latest technology and keep up with everything that is going on at the moment, it's probably one of the upsides of all this because I would never have done this if we hadn't been in lockdown.

The Tuesday course is primarily Excel and the Friday one I took on to keep myself ahead of the game, I'm okay with computers I've been messing about with them for years but I don't want to get left behind.

I used to spend a lot of time down at the Men's Shed but I'm doing it to keep myself occupied. It is quite intense, I've already gone beyond what I used to know years ago.

# THE 'BIG' LOCKDOWN CLEAROUT

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SHORT STORY BY STEVIE B

The backdrop for this is a world, yes, a world, that has changed indescribably in the last months and weeks. Humankind has been under attack and in conflict with an enemy whose entire advance guard would probably fit into a test tube. Our microscopic nemesis has but one unconscious objective and that is the replication of itself. It has no ambition for power, control, wealth or territory and the onslaught was without malice or hatred. Yet the devastating impact of this virus has changed our lives irrevocably.

But enough of the dramatic intro. Previously I would have said that something like this could not happen in a month of Sundays, it was the stuff of science fiction, then came the lockdown and we had three months of Sundays.

I woke up one morning and I had nothing to do, there was nothing I could do and I had all day to do it, unlike last summer when I was going to outdoor theatres, visiting museums, going to the gym and sauna, all became but wistful memories.

Confined to barracks so to speak, I, like many others I suppose, decided my first course of action would be to have that 'big' clearout of my flat, the big clearout that I had been umming and erring about for a number of years. So, I spent about three days on the clearout and I made a startling revelation, indeed, a light bulb moment.

This revelation did involve a re-classification of certain items in my flat. You know when you have a 'thingamy', an odd nail or screw, or piece of string and you think to yourself 'I'll hang on to that, it may come in useful'. I gave all these types of things a new description and name. I called them rubbish and threw them out by the bagful.



# Ryan's Story

## A BRUSH WITH COVID

Near the end of October Ryan became ill with Covid.

The 38-year-old chef had none of the classic symptoms of the virus - the cough, sore throat or high temperature. Instead after cycling home from work he felt very light-headed and collapsed.

The next thing he knew he was being rushed to hospital where he spent three days in the High Dependency Unit.

Tests showed he had pneumonia and myo-cathartis (inflammation of the heart).

But at first the tests came back as negative for Covid. "It was only when they tested my antibodies that they came back positive - that's how they knew I had it," Ryan explained.

Six weeks later and he is still feeling the after-affects. "I'm still struggling to breathe and I feel dizzy when I stand up, I feel it in my chest and arms. I'm on the sick now and I've been told I can't do any physical activity for six months.

"I had been sticking to all the guidelines but I was working throughout and would cycle to Dumbarton station and get the train from there to my work so I don't know if I got it on the train or at my work - there's always a chance.

"None of my family have had it, they were all really worried about me."

Before catching the virus Ryan was in good physical shape, cycling most days and a regular at the gym.

Now he spends most of his time in the house and needs to make regular visits to the hospital for more tests and check ups.

"It's not a joke - this is definitely for real."

## LOCKDOWN LIFE THE POSITIVES

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

**Mark**



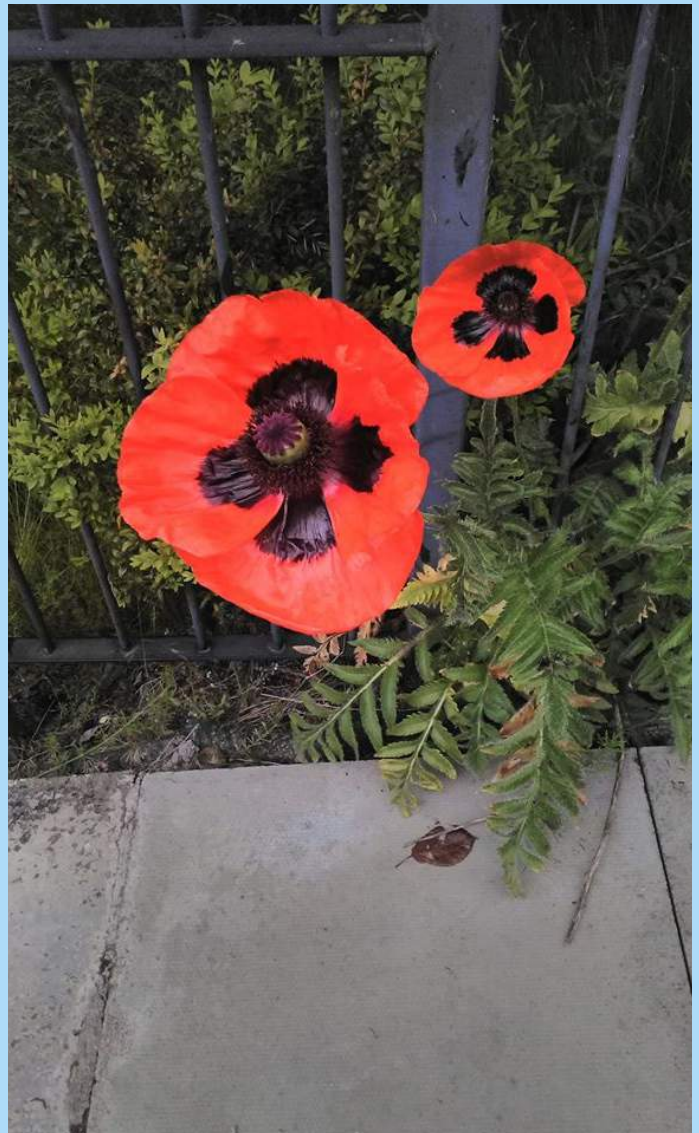
# Charlie's Story

## THE GREAT BOOT RESCUE

I've hardly been out, I just keep as busy as I can doing craft stuff. I think I've only been in Clydebank once since March.

I did miss it because I was usually down at DACA twice a week and would go a wee walk around Clydebank after that but now you have to wear those masks and I don't like wearing them so I just try and keep away from there and go to the local shop but I am going to have to go in the next couple of weeks because there are some things I need which you can't get around here so I'll probably have to go in. I think I've made the guy in the corner shop rich though - he's been getting all my money.

My boots were stuck in the cobblers for six months. I had to go and rescue them. I didn't get to Clydebank until September it was just when the cobblers opened again so I could rescue my boots but I'll have to get back in again. I need a few things for the cat that I can't get around here.



# THROUGH THE DOORS OF DACA

BY RJMAC

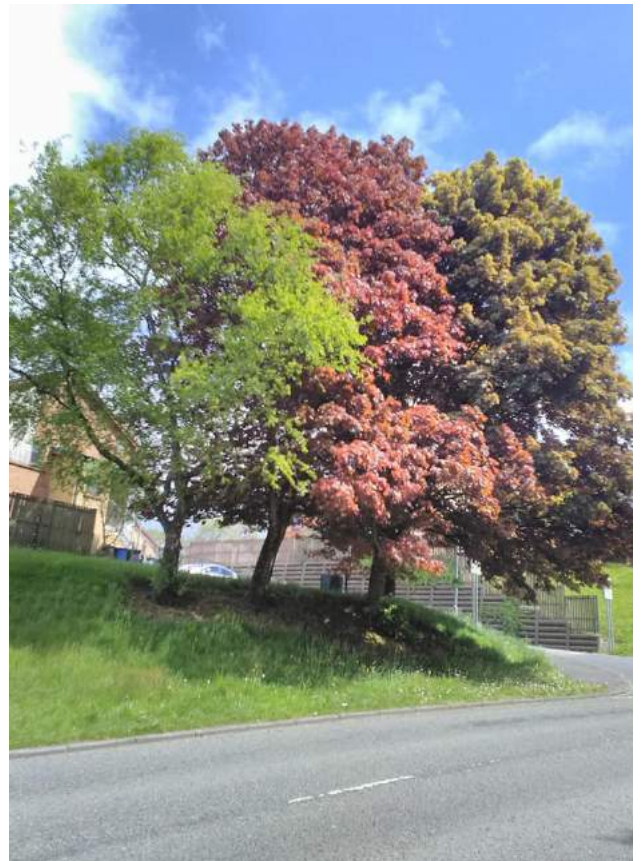
I think everyone who goes through the doors of DACA, they all go through for the same reason, everyone knows what DACA does, I'm extremely grateful for the help and support they offer, they have been brilliant and everybody who works there has been brilliant. I probably wouldn't have got through what I was going through without their support.

That's why I started volunteering at DACA because I wanted to give something back because they really had helped me through an extremely hard part of my life and I felt with my experience I could help other people coming through that door, that's why I started doing some of the volunteering with Celine.

When you're in that sort of situation I think it's important to have people who have experienced what you're going through, I'm a great believer that you can't beat experience. I'm going there tomorrow for a meeting with Theresa, it's not because I need to, it's because I want to.

I like the inclusion because when I was drinking and sitting in pubs all the time you forget there's another way of living your life. I did it for years and years. You don't have to be sat in a pub, there is so much more to life than drinking alcohol.

They make you feel part of something, that inclusion and you think - why is this not costing me money to be part of - friendship doesn't cost anything and that's all part of what I like, I love that.



"There was avoidance on my part at the outset and I shut myself away. It was a comfort to know that the S2R communication was always there, it was just up to me to utilise it. Happily, enjoyed the chat and newsletters, it kept me in the loop. I have recovered from my recent illness and starting to feel stronger. I particularly liked my recent F2F contact." Lynn



"Remaining abstinent. Support has been brand new with phone calls and a newsletter. The support in general has really helped and made a difference. Getting me the bike has been magic, Cheers! Feeling a lot fitter now when using the bike to go up and down to my girlfriend's." Steven D

"I think as the lockdown got worse rather than better, it is nice to know that there is a support structure at the end of the phone, or being able to access the office, if possible. It's been good for me." RJMac

"It was nice to have a group of people to go out with just before lockdown started. I have managed to get through lockdown, however the phone calls and newsletter has been good, as it is nice to see what other people, whom I don't know, have been up to. It is really encouraging at times. The weekly challenges have been helpful, as it has given me something to do." Tony



"I don't know where I would have been without it, it has been a life saver. I may have slipped down that road if it wasn't for S2R." Charlie

“Felt very on my own until the crafty packs were delivered. The phone calls and social media is also good.” Louise



“S2R contact has definitely helped me through lockdown. I still find it a struggle when not engaging with DACA. The activities are awesome, definitely uplifts my mood. The phone calls & newsletters have been positive and cheered me up no end.” David S

“I was encouraged by the newsletters & Facebook posts. It makes you feel better, when you know other people are looking out for you and that you were not forgotten.” Tommy G

“I enjoyed the phone calls and newsletters. This keeps you connected, and I loved to read about what other people were up to and it made me think about other options. I would never had considered attempting a hill walk or any other type of walk if it wasn't for the Physical Friday challenges. It has not been all bad during the Covid-19 lockdown because of this.” David M



“It certainly helped doing the crafts because, it has given me confidence, that I didn't know I had.” Bernie



# MISSING DACA MEETINGS



BY STEVIE

Prior to lockdown I was going to DACA because I had a drink problem but I managed to knock it on the head, we're talking 16 months ago. I was doing the gardening and helping out at the Lodge but I've not been down at all since the lockdown because it's not really appropriate. It's a healing space and the people have been great.



I was quite a serious drinker because I was drinking a lot and starting to get into things I shouldn't have been doing, but I really do thank everyone because I kind of got my life back again.

It can happen to anybody, drink gets a hold of you and then it's hard to put it down.

It's one of those things when you realise how much life is actually worth it's easier to keep going and doing the right thing rather than making excuses to go and do the other thing. I'm quite pleased with all the people I have met.



I miss being at the meetings because we've not been able to because of the social distancing.

I enjoy going to the Supper Club, it's a good laugh and we have some regular members that play the guitars.

We enjoy our sing-a-longs, at the end of the evening you're just enjoying yourself and maybe getting up and having a wee dance and singing,

It's just a bit of fun and we all seem to enjoy it and that's what matters, enjoying life and appreciating what you've got. You don't realise what you've got until it's away, until it's all gone.

We know we have all been through something or other, some kind of trauma in our lives that has caused us to meet at this point so we have a certain kind of understanding for each other.

Alcoholism is very complex, it's not a simple thing. It's easy to fall back into your old ways and I can say quite honestly they have made me better than I have ever been because of the kind of support - it's an ongoing support it's not just to the end of the course because that's not what alcoholism is. When someone says that's the end of the course that's like saying go on back to your old ways.

But DACA's been there for us and you can always go through those doors and someone will have a nice word and whatever you feel like they'll discuss, whether it's serious or ridiculous someone will listen to you, it's like part of our lives in a way and I like that idea of it being part of our lives.

Everyone's on the level.



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THE 'LOCKDOWN WITH DACA' PROJECT  
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[WWW.CLYDESIDER.ORG](http://WWW.CLYDESIDER.ORG)





If you live in West Dunbartonshire and you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, simply call or email us. Our team is ready to take your call, five days a week from 9am - 4:30pm (3:30pm on a Friday).

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