

Spring Edition 2013

# TillyTattle

LOCAL NEWS DEDICATED TO YOUR COMMUNITY



Featured in  
this issue...

**LADS CLUB**  
2012 Review

**SCHOOL UPDATE**  
News from Riverbank

**MEMORIES**  
Growing up in Tilly

**OUT OF THE DARKNESS**  
A Story of Recovery

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## dates for the diary

### TILLYDRONE NETWORK

*Meetings are held on the last Monday of the month at St Georges Church from 6pm to 8pm - 25th March 2013, 29th APRIL 2013, 27TH May 2013 and 24th June 2013*

### TILLYDRONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*Meetings are held every third Wednesday of the month from 6:30pm in St George's Church - 20th March 2013, 17th April 2013, 15th May 2013 and 19th June 2013*

*St George's Church acts only as a venue for these meetings.*



L to R - Mary Clare, Elsie, Gary, Morven, Wendy, Cat, Sonny & Margaret.

### Questionnaire Results

A few months ago the members of the Tilly Tattle editorial team put together a questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out what the local people of Tillydrone thought of the Magazine and to see if they knew other information about the area.

Below are the collated results, We asked a group of 12 people the following questions:

The first question asked was if they read the Tilly Tattle magazine? All 12 agreed that they read the magazine.

When asked if they liked the content? 11 out of 12 agreed that the content was good.

Then the group was asked if there was anything else they would like to see in the magazine? 3 out of the 12 suggested more local sport updates. Someone also stated having more written articles from children and another one stated having a 'what's on' page.

The last question asked to the group was if they could name any of the three councillors of Tillydrone - 6 out of the 12 said no, and the rest of the group could only name one or two councillors. The majority of the group mentioned Ross Grant and Jim Noble.

The editorial team have reflected over the questionnaire and aim to make the necessary changes in order to improve the magazine. If anyone else has other suggestions in how to improve the Tilly Tattle then please pass them onto the editorial team. The Team meet every Monday morning at 10am at the Tillydrone Community Flat.

Supported by



# BEFORE

# TILLY

Tilly means little hill in Gaelic and Druin means ridge. So Tillydrone means 'hill on the ridge'.

These names came into use away in the very early years of the area with many small villages appearing along the estuary of the Don.

This is the area where the Zoology Building now stands along with flats and houses. There was also a loch just a little to the south of this area named Loch of Aberdeen. In the mid 1600's a Parson Gordon began to drain the area and plant wheat to start with and then other crops. Then he rented out his fields and thus became a land owner and businessman, later owning Gordon's Mills.

His sons did not live past childhood so his daughter's husband took over the running of the estate after his death. A few generations later one of his descendants married Sir Hay of Seton; thus the name of Seaton Park.

Gordon's good fortune in business made it that he had to build houses for his employees, so in the late 1700's he built homes along what is now

Hayton Road. There were also farms even up to the early 1900's and gradually it became as it is now.

Originally, a small road that ran from the cathedral meandered up to the Old Inverurie Road which is now Great Northern Road. The road was called Tillydrone Road and is still in use today. Tillydrone Avenue was the area where the river used to run after it was diverted.

Near the Tillydrone hill a chapel was built in the 1300's and dedicated to Thomas A Beckett who was martyred. This was also a way to raise funds for various things as people had to pay for a candle to place at the altar.

People were mainly Roman Catholics in those days. There were several wars at that time in the cause of independence from Edward III.

There are many more stories that can be told at a later date. If you have any stories about the history of Tillydrone, contact The Tillydrone Community Flat and they can be printed in future Tilly Tattles and used for the upcoming Info Pack.

**Margaret Mead**

## The Lighthouse shines on.

*Welcome to 2013. It's been another fantastic start to the year at the Lighthouse Support Centre, so much is going on but we still can't believe it's been nearly ten years since the centre first opened its doors in Tillydrone Shopping Centre, starting with one unit then expanding into a second and we could now benefit from having a third!*

*For those of you who are not already part of our growing community, The Lighthouse Support Centre offers one-to-one holistic (material, emotional and spiritual) support and group support to men and women in the surrounding community who are socially excluded, disadvantaged and lonely; single parents, people who have life controlling issues such as alcohol and drug addiction, ex-offenders and families of prisoners.*

*The projects are coordinated by a small team of professionals, who support a team of 40+ enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers, under the responsibility of Deeside Christian Fellowship Trust.*

*A Support Worker provides advocacy and support for clients and a Parish Nurse provides information and support on physical, mental and spiritual well-being. The Working Group meets regularly to oversee the overall running of The Lighthouse Centre.*



# City Centre to Donside

## The McKenzie Family

The family moved from Seamount Court in the city to Donside in June last year and have already noticed changes in the whole family's lifestyle.

What's the best thing about living in Donside? Almost in unison they replied "the garden", mum Lyndsey and dad Alan saying before moving they stayed on the tenth floor so there was no way their three boys - Connor, Lucas and Zak - could go out and play without their parents. They also had noticed an improvement in the family's health as a result of being able to get outside - it's been a case of dragging the boys into the house to have tea or get ready for bed!

Lyndsey stated that Donside felt like a wee village. This feeling is enhanced by the fact that they see and speak with their neighbours.

At this point the boys - and in particular seven-year-old Connor - said that his new house was better because it was not



upside down! Their old flat had the bedrooms downstairs and the living room upstairs. The boys have made lots of new friends and enjoy how fun it is playing outside. Connor's 7th birthday party was held in their own garden. Lucas (5 ½), liked that he had new friends and could play outside but would like to have somewhere to use his skateboard. When I asked Zak (2 ½) a question his reply was generally, "I'm 2" but with a wee bit of coaxing said that he would like to be able to play on roundabouts and slides, like every 2 ½ year old.

So the downside? Alan said that instead of the 5 to 10 minute walk to work he now has to get

the number 19, and has become a commuter.

City centre or Donside? Donside was the reply.

**Mark Thomson**  
Community Development  
Officer Donside

## Riverbank Primary School Seasonal Gift

Pupils and staff from Riverbank Primary School made their way down to Donside on an extremely cold day to bring some seasonal cheer to residents and friends.

The pupils who came down to the urban village in three groups of about 50 kids did a fantastic job, singing seasonal songs with a huge amount of enthusiasm and gusto!

It was a great way to spend the afternoon. I know that everyone who saw and heard the children were very impressed by both the singing and the behaviour of the pupils, they really are a credit to the school.



## New Tillydrone Website in Pipeline

Work continues on an information pack which is soon to be delivered to every household in the Tillydrone area. It will contain basic details of all of the local services within Tillydrone and will also give some information about the history and natural resources of the area.

The project has been funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund as a result of an application put in jointly by Tenants First and Station House Media Unit. Initially the pack was meant to be a welcome pack for tenants in the newly built Donside Village but it was then thought that it would be better if the pack went out to every house in Tillydrone instead, and not just Donside.

They have been busy encouraging local people and organisations to come forward and get involved in the various jobs that need to be done,

such as gathering information and working out what needs to be put into the info pack.

It soon became clear that there is so much going on and so much history involved that the info pack will not be big enough to give everything the space it deserves. As a result, it has been suggested that a website be created so that people in Tillydrone can be kept up to date on what is going on. This will also mean that a lot more information can be made available for anyone interested in more in-depth information about something specific.

If you would like to become involved with this project, please contact Mark Thomson from Tenants First who is based at Donside Village on 07799 591 689, or you can get more information from the Community Flat.



## PEEP in Tillydrone Family Centre

*Parents as Early Education Partners is really talking off in Tillydrone. There are new groups happening at Tillydrone Family Centre now too.*

*The idea behind the groups is that children and their parents or carers can get together with others in the community to have some fun and learn together. It's all about sharing really.*

*The Family Centre on Pennan Road has a group for children aged in their 1s or 2s meeting on Wednesdays from 1:30 - 2:30. They also have a group for 0 to 5year olds who have English as a second language. They meet every Friday between 10 and 11 am. Please drop in by and get involved or contact the PEEP team on Aberdeen 486114 or email [peep@aberdeency.gov.uk](mailto:peep@aberdeency.gov.uk)*



# ABERDEEN LADS CLUB REVIEW OF 2012

2012 has been a very busy year for the club. We have found that the number of families that need our support and community services has intensified.

We have seen many new families move into the area and the knock on effect of this is an increase in the number of families enquiring about and accessing our Community Learning and Development services.

Our Nursery and Kindergym classes have run and continue to run at full capacity and we are operating a large waiting list. We would like to be able to offer additional childcare places but this is not possible without the appropriate funding, not only to support the activities and additional running costs but also to be able to employ and train the staff that would be required.

We have had no increase in our budget this year and are unfortunately unable to offer the additional services that are

needed to meet the need of this ever growing community.

Our Community Café is running well and is attended by local families and young people from both of the local schools. Our menu contains a wide range of healthy options and gives our local families a friendly and welcoming place to come for great value meals and snacks. Our café also offers young people an alternative place to go rather than hanging around local shops and residential areas during their lunch break.

Our Holiday Activity Club has also seen the effect of the reduction in services available to local people and we have had an increase in the number of families looking for affordable holiday childcare. The Holiday Club was fully booked and with the demand increasing this year we had to operate a waiting list and, unfortunately, not everyone was offered their much needed childcare place.

Youth work has always been at the heart of the Lads Clubs services and our youth work provision has seen the biggest increase in numbers of children and young people attending our evening youth clubs with numbers doubling what they were last year.

We are lucky to have both experienced and enthusiastic staff who recognise their role as youth workers and how youth work contributes to the young people individually, as well as their communities.

In the coming year we are hoping to add new members to our Executive Committee who can breathe in new ideas and possibly have new contacts that may benefit our organisation to enable us to continue to provide the valuable services to the local community of Tillydrone and families from across the city.



How has oil affected your community? The Power Politics project looks at the positive and negative impacts of oil, and compares life in Aberdeen with life in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Aberdeen is 'the oil capital of Europe', and Port Harcourt is 'the oil capital of Nigeria' but life in these two places is very different. In Aberdeen, many people have benefited from higher than average wages, but in Nigeria, many people live on less than \$1 per day. In Aberdeen we take it

for granted that when we switch on the lights, we get light, but in Nigeria power cuts are an everyday occurrence. What do you think? Has oil been good for Aberdeen? Has oil been bad for Aberdeen? Living Earth Foundation's Power Politics is an EC funded project that aims to raise awareness of international development issues. We are working with schools and community groups across Aberdeen City and Shire as well

as in Nigeria and looking at the oil and gas industry and how it has changed the way we live. If you've got an interesting story about how oil has affected your life contact the Development Education Co-ordinator; Claire\_Needler@hotmail.com. Working with volunteers at ShmuFM, we plan to make a podcast to share with schools in Scotland and Nigeria. If you'd like to know more, check out our website [www.powerpolitics.org.uk](http://www.powerpolitics.org.uk), or get in touch!

# UPCYCLED TILLYDRONE

## **Re-thinking and reusing waste items and furniture to create beautiful new things.**

During October, Arts Development launched its Creative Communities programme with the first project kicking off in Tillydrone. Creative Communities is Aberdeen City Council's Arts Development programme of imaginative and inspiring art projects for residents of all the city's regeneration areas which is funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund.

Up-cycling was the theme for the Tillydrone workshops and were lead by artists Craig Barrowman out the back of the M26 unit at Tillydrone Shopping Arcade. The day before we had been out in the van and spotted some chairs by the bin area in Alexander Terrace, so they went into the back of the van, a circuit round Fersands and we found a wooden chest.

During one of our workshops someone in the group pointed out a sofa that had been dumped by the side of the road, again by the bins. It was not long before the sofa had been skinned and it was used to upholster the wooden chest, now a portable TV studio for the SHMU Youth TV team.

There was a great spirit out the back of the M26 unit. The first day Cat nipped back home and appeared with a coffee table on a re-purposed pram/transporter. People stopped to see what we were up to and to have a chat.

**One man arrived with an old chair, "What can you do with this?"**

It was a great quality chair that just needed a bit of attention; we got it cleaned up and Cat replaced the supporting strut at the base. The chair is fully functioning once more while still retaining its character.

Part of the stash of wood was made up of abandoned pallets. Once taken apart the wood panels were pretty good quality and sanded up really well.

While working at the M26 unit, there were a few little people very interested in all that was being made. Artist Craig Barrowman took inspiration from the children and came up with a design to make a sledge from the pallets. The sledge was so quick to make and totally free.

The M26 group have also worked on the portable TV studio for the Youth TV project with everyone taking a turn at sanding, cleaning, upholstering, painting. This project has encouraged everyone to be very practical, resourceful and creative. So think twice before you chuck stuff out and always keep an eye out for something interesting in the bin areas.

## **Blooming Bottles**

Have you seen any late flowering blooms in Tillydrone? If so, they may have been made by the children from the lads club play scheme. The children worked with Arts Development artists Kelly Shankland and Sophie Ormerod to transform waste bottles into beautiful coloured flowers that will withstand most weather conditions, even last week's snow. Make your own flower here today to take and place somewhere you think need brightening up.



## **Meadow Court Housing**

Residents of Meadow Court worked with artists Kelly and Sophie to produce the delicate flowers that are on display in the coffee bar. They have been made from news paper, wire, beads and buttons.

## **TYP Wednesday Youth Group**

The Wednesday youth group have been creative with artist Craig Barrowman and Gray's School of Art student and volunteer Vicki Shennan. The group have created bottle flowers and on Halloween made some very Scottish neap lanterns.



# School News

## Riverbank Primary

### Northsound Visit

Gregsy from Northsound One came to visit Riverbank School to record 'Topple the Class' on Wednesday 9th January. Five children from the P2/3 class were chosen to answer three questions. They included:

*What would you like to be when you grow up?*

*Where would you find a treadmill?*

*The third was to repeat a quote from a well known film.*

The questions were given to Northsound One callers, the following week and they had to guess what the children had said. The children had such a good time recording the answers and then to hear themselves on the radio was brilliant! A huge thanks to Gregsy and Northsound One for choosing Riverbank School!

### Early Morning Club at Riverbank School

There are still some places available for our Early Morning Club. We operate from 7:45am Monday to Friday during term times. Costs for a session are £1.50 per child or £1 for families



receiving benefits. We have lots of fun and the children have a great start to the school day. Contact Wendy or Linda for more information.

### Success for Aberdeen City Primary Teacher!

#### *A well done from: Fiona Saunders, Science Curriculum Development Officer*

Riverbank teacher, Mrs Barber, has been awarded a National Primary Science Teacher of the Year Award.

Mrs Barber was nominated by her Head Teacher, Maxine Jolly. She was put on a short list of 24, where an assessor observed her teach, then she had an interview. Having obviously impressed the assessors, she was told

she was one of 8 prizewinners for the UK and was invited to attend the ASE (Association of Science Education) conference at Reading University at the very beginning of January.

AZSTT (AstraZeneca Science Teaching Trust) have sponsored the Primary Science Teacher of the Year awards since 2003 and traditionally there have been six awards per year, one being for teaching under difficult circumstances - the Keith Bishop Award. This is the award that Mrs Barber won.

Aberdeen City is immensely proud of her achievement which is indicative of the outstanding science that is taught at Riverbank Primary.

Mrs Barber will be somewhat embarrassed at me informing all the schools (a bit of an understatement!) as she is not one for lauding her achievements.

On the other hand, it's such a great achievement is just HAS to be shared so we can all enjoy a bit of the pride and happiness that such success brings.

### *Well done Mrs Barber and Riverbank!*



## Resident's Letter

I have been a resident in Tillydrone for more than six years now since moving in around June 2006.

I have lived in many parts of the city and indeed many parts of the UK or from further afield are all extremely pleasant to live alongside.

I accept that I have been lucky in this respect and there are pockets the community as there are in all communities where the community spirit is perhaps not so apparent. Isn't this the case in all areas whether it be in social housing or indeed within the private sector.

There are a good number of shops and all the staff within the shops get to know their customers, the Nisa and the Coop the chemist and the Post Office and of course the take away restaurants.

I was surprised to read the other day in the Press and Journal that there is so much empty and unused land in the area - come on council get on with doing something with this land and not let it stand empty.

# Mind your Steps

We have been approached by a member of the community who claims they been trying to get the Council to repair a set of stairs - without success - for the past 26 years!

The offending steps lead from Wavell Crescent, down behind Donbank Place to the bus terminus on Gordon's Mills Road. We are told they are a disaster waiting to happen, especially for parents with young children or for those who are not too steady on their feet. Apparently things are worse in summer months when overhanging foliage blocks out the street lights.

Our reporter claims they have tried repeatedly to get this sorted out by phoning the

08456 number (which is not free) to no avail. Hopefully highlighting this issue in the Tilly Tattle may help bring it to someone's attention?

Do you have any local issues you would like to be highlighted in the magazine? We meet most Monday mornings in the Community Flat from 10am.

Feel free to pop in by or drop us a note.

As with many areas of the town there is an issue with dog fouling and petty vandalism.

Don't let anyone ever tell you Tilly is not so pleasant area to live in because it's just fantastic.

**By Anon**

# Tillydrone Community Centre

Gordonsmill Road, Tillydrone • Tel: (01224) 493388

We are open for **Bingo Mondays and Thursday 6.30 - 9.00pm**. All Welcome. Drop off at Hayton Road going home.

**Tuesday 12.30pm** – open for **Over 50s afternoon** of activities till 3pm. Again lift home.

**Tuesday evening – 6.30pm – Line Dancing** – New members and learners welcome.

**Wednesday – Closed.**  
**Thursday as Monday.**

**Friday Night – Indoor Bowling** – Bowls provided. Starts **6.30 pm**.

**Saturdays** are available for **Birthday parties** - £60.00

**Please phone 493388 for more details.**

**Anna Kidd**

# Police Update

*From Inspector Dave Forsyth*

The Tillydrone Local Policing Team based at the Police Office at Coningham Gardens are responsible for policing the Woodside, Tillydrone and Old Aberdeen areas.

I am the Inspector and I have four Sergeants and a compliment of 24 Constables, divided into five teams to give 24-hour coverage to the area. The officers respond to all incidents in our area and we also strive to maintain a proactive approach to local issues and maintain a high visibility on the streets. We also attend the various Neighbourhood Network and Community Council meetings where we provide an input on local policing and listen to any issues or concerns that are raised. This is one way in which we can respond to the needs of our communities.

We also maintain contact with the schools in our areas with an officer allocated to each primary and a permanent police presence within St Machar Academy and we also carry out general patrols and visits during school term.

In an effort to improve our community contact we will be holding public 'Police Surgeries'

during 2013 where any residents can come along and have a chat with us. These will be locally advertised and if you can please pay us a visit.

We rely on the community telling us about their issues so we can seek to work with partners to resolve them. I am really concerned about the people who are sometimes the most vulnerable in society - who for a number of reasons are reluctant to have a bobby at their door or ever contact us. Surgeries will have uniformed officers available to meet with you, privately if necessary, to provide another option for you to speak with us. There are lots of ways to contact the Police and if you want to do so completely anonymously please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

With the weather now improving, we traditionally see an increase in theft of garden tools and bicycles. Can I ask you to check that all your valuables are secure in locked garden sheds or within

your buildings. Aberdeen is still a safe place to live and work but all too often we deal with theft where valuable items have been left insecure. Another on-going problem is sneak-in theft - these are often to houses which have not been secured overnight. Again we see high-value items including motor vehicles being stolen following the theft of keys from insecure houses. Please lock your doors when you go to bed.

We would like to encourage residents to contact us with any local concerns they may have. You can do this by telephoning the Grampian Police non-emergency phone-line on 0845 6005700 and simply being asked to be put through to officers at the Tillydrone Police office. If no officers are available, the service centre staff will leave a message for an officer to phone you back.

We can also be contacted via the Grampian Police website at [www.grampian.police.uk](http://www.grampian.police.uk) or you can call in at the office on Coningham Gardens.





## Reiki Inspiration

Whaar er ye gan tae  
mae lovely?

Astral travellin aa  
by yersel

Ground yersel saafly  
whaar yer sittin.

Dinna tak a' traivel tae hell.

Mynd an l'wiz proteck  
yersel saaf.

An ither's att ar  
sittin aroon.

Traivel wye, high in e sky.

An twice circle e; moon.

*Sonny Ogg*

# Niver Forget yer Childhood

Weel kent faces fae the 50s/60s fae Kilgour an Hayton Road!  
Noo kent as Alexander Terrace or jist the Terrace by maist  
nooadays. Jist a puckle o' names fae an auld timer wha bade  
there as a loon.

Div ye mind o' the Hutchies faa bade in No5 wi there flashy cars  
an their rug store up it Woodside. They went on tae get twa  
bungalows built on Hayton Road een aside Nisa for the mither.  
An the ither at the post office for the son they ca'd the "Pot"

Georgie Robertson bade in No7 wi his bonny gairden. Tootie  
Stewart bade above, a' harmless crook at best. At No9 bade  
Beldie Park she hid 1 loon an 5 good quines. Ayeways made me  
pee on her floors, jist tae mak em growe she wid say.

Doon at No13 wis Joey Stewart every Saiterday morning without  
fail her an Bella Masson. Were awa tae aa the Jumble sales.  
No14 wis far Mary Ann Smith bade, an affa wifie tae clek about  
aathing an aabody. A' rare wee sowl wi a hairt o' gold tho.!

In the chipper worked Susan and her da, aul Joe. Next door wis  
far Mr Thompson a richt fine Grocer man bade. Across the road  
Sandy at the time Licensee o' the Broadsword, wi his silver hair  
and fine mowser a' real patter merchant.

Gan back tae Kilgour Avenue a' bade in No8 wi a lovely Ma and  
my auntie Peggy too. Wee Ruthie wi her docker man John also  
bade in No8. An afa wifie tae bawl an sweer. But an afa  
guid neebour.

At the corner hoose on Hayton Road wis far the McNolty's bade  
aa the loon's went poaching. The finest at there game.

A gran place tae bide wi memories too many.

Fae a' Kilgourer born 'n' bred

"Enjoy"

*Peter Forbes*





# A Safe Place to Play

Carrie-ann Holland

**When you think of your childhood, what do you remember? Going to the park? Playing on the swings? Aren't these memories we would like our own children to have?**

My local play park is on Gordon's Mill Road and my little one is almost at the stage where I want to take him to the swings, but they are no longer there. Aberdeen City Council have removed nearly all the play equipment and laid turf in its place. We all know about council cutbacks, so I'm sure it will come as no surprise that there are no plans to replace the play equipment at present.

Councillor Ross Grant recently told us that he is "heavily involved in the quest to reinstate new play equipment in our community in [his] role as chairman of the Tillydrone community development trust."

As it would seem that it is down to our community to reinstate our park, I thought we could take inspiration from The Seaton Backies Project.

The Seaton Backies Project is a community action group which aims to increase the outdoor play opportunities for local children, through the improvement of green spaces surrounding the housing within Seaton.

Their committed team of volunteers works with several organisations in Aberdeen City to ensure that Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is met in Seaton. This ruling states that local authorities have an obligation to provide access to suitable play spaces and opportunities.

Elsie Macrae of Seaton Backies Project was kind enough to answer a few questions for us.

**What experience has Seaton Backies Project with regenerating play areas?**

*We have worked with different people to help us achieve projects. We very much work hand in hand with Aberdeen Green Space to manage all projects and Aberdeen City Council to ensure the work we are doing meets their approval.*

**What obstacles have you faced?**

*Initially, lack of support from the community, people used to be sceptical at the beginning but slowly we are building a trust, our support group is growing and we have noticed a great change in our residents.*

**What fund raising activities did you hold?**

*So far, most funds raised have been by applications found on the internet or ACVO website.*

**Do you have any words of encouragement for the people of Tillydrone who are looking to regenerate their play areas?**

*It's not as daunting as it looks, the most difficult part is getting started and having a communicative committee. ACVO are a great help and Seaton Backies can be approached for help if need be. The committee needs to work closely with the community to ensure needs are communicated throughout and also involve the council and local MP in everything you are doing please feel free to contact us at [seatonbackiesproject@gmail.com](mailto:seatonbackiesproject@gmail.com)*

**What are we waiting for? If the people of Seaton can do it, so can we!**

## SHMU JOURNALISM COURSE

SHMU is currently running Journalism courses to anyone who lives within our seven target areas. The course runs for six weeks and is held once a week at SHMU. The six-session course will take participants through all the essential basics of journalism, looking at the following areas:

- **What makes a good story: news values and feature writing**
- **Differences between news and features**
- **Sourcing: How to find a great story**

- **What is a style guide and how do you apply it to your writing?**
- **Interview technique**
- **Research skills**
- **Writing workshop – how to get the most from your story and create engaging, lively copy.**

If you are interested in signing up for the next session please contact [denise@shmu.org.uk](mailto:denise@shmu.org.uk) or call on 515013.

## SHMU TRAIN IN ST MACHAR ACADEMY

The shmuTRAIN team is back working with St Machar Academy for the second half of our Early Interventions programme working with 11 young people who plan to leave school in the summer. shmuTRAIN take pupils along to Tillydrone Youth Project for two double periods a week to deliver 'employability' and 'digital media' modules. In the winter term the young people worked with Adele on a radio module and for this term they are doing music and sound production with Iain. As part of the radio module the group planned, researched, scripted and recorded pieces which were played out as part of shmuFM's Tuesday Youth Radio Project programme. Topics included TV, music and Christmas films. This term they will create their own music tracks, record sounds and learn how to edit and customise them. An exciting part of this module is that the shmuSOUND team are working on bringing in a band; the group will then get training in how to record and produce a number of tracks in a live situation. Over both

terms the shmuTRAIN employability development worker, Michelle, has been delivering sessions helping young people get ready for entering into either employment or college. Michelle will be supporting pupils to apply for College early in this term and will cover everything from putting together CV's all the way to preparing for interviews and everything in between, including job search skills, application forms and cover letters. Michelle also delivers sessions focused on how to sustain employment helping pupils develop their communication and team work skills as well as personal responsibility.



*Station House Media Unit (shmu) is situated just off Great Northern Road in the old Station House Community Centre, Woodside. We offer free access to, and training in video and radio production, and magazine and online publications to residents of all ages living in Seaton, Woodside, Middlefield, Tillydrone, Torry, Northfield and Cummings Park.*

# memories

**I have been to Disneyland, Codonas etc, but the best theme park for me was the one around the part of the River Don we called the Dooker.**

At the Dooker there was a large corrugated fence with spikes and barbed wire where the current fence is now, beside the Community Centre.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's the Second World War and the after-effects were still very much in evidence. Rationing was still in effect got quite a while after the war ended and toys were things handed down or self-made.

Swingees were the main entertainment and the first place to look for your friends. Made from old rope and tied round a thick branch high up in the large trees they were surprising safe until the rope snapped and someone was to hospital and the rest of us would feel sorry for ourselves as we sometimes had to go hours before another bit of rope was found and a new swingee made.

The civil defence buildings were also a great place to play - the bombed buildings and the ones which were still intact were dangerous but great fun with secret passages and tunnels. I still remember seeing my first

dummy casualty with his gas mask still on and being convinced by the older boys that it was a real dead person. My mother was not amused when my little sisters told her some time later that I had shown them a real dead body.

Raft or boat building was another of my great passions especially when the prefabs were being cleared and there was plenty of material. Some efforts were successful others not. Of the nine ships my father was on during the war two were sunk, perhaps we should have been submariners.

**By Steven Clyne (Cat)**

## COMMUNITY FLAT

# Tillydrone Community Flat

If you are interested in learning something new or would like to offer some time to help benefit the area, please get in touch with us at the Community Flat at 3b Alexander Terrace.

We have various classes and groups and can offer crèche spaces for some of them too if needed. We also offer support with benefits and other basic advice. If we can't help you, we will put you in touch with someone else who can.

Our big news is that we have now been registered with the Care Inspectorate, which means that we can technically open up our childcare to more than two hours per day. This will mean that we can have more classes and more crèches - if there is a

need. So, please get in touch and give us some ideas of what you would like to take part in and we'll see if we can get things off the ground.

### Flat Garden

Over the past couple of months you will hopefully have noticed that the garden in front of the Community Flat has been tidied up and some signs of life are starting to appear in it. This is largely down to the hard work of a local resident called Billy who has been inspirational in getting things moving there.

It was his idea to collect discarded tyres from the riverbank and paint them up to make flowerbeds for the children at the crèche nursery to plant

up. He has also created a border around the garden and plans to get the children to help decorate some boards along the fence to brighten things up and help keep dogs and rubbish out.

Billy has a lot of good ideas which we hope to put into action over the next few months. We are hoping to get some funding to do a lot more gardening work out front but also in the disused space between Alexander Terrace and Formartine Road. If you are interested in helping or have some ideas that you think would benefit the community, please come along to the Community Flat and let us know.

# OUT OF THE DARKNESS

## A STORY OF RECOVERY BY KEITH MURRAY

Sixteen. Sixteen. Don't want it. Don't want it. Yes you do. The dark, mad, bad voice inside my head again. Get it down you. That's my boy. Every last drop. Beddy-byes now. Sleep it off. Up bright and early for your next fill. Sixteen. Sixteen.

Then up in the morning ... off to the corner shop --- before it's open. First in the queue, sun or rain, or snow. Must get the supply in. Sixteen. Something about sixteen. Obsessive compulsive disorder into the bargain. I could never stop drinking. Towards the end it was always sixteen. Sixteen cans of strong lager obsessively drowning all my bad memories. I was bullied at school you see. Not just by kids but teachers too. Every day for years. Stuck with me like uncried tears. Alcohol I thought was the solution. Made up for all the bad times with good drink. But it too turned on me. I liked the calming effect it had on me. But the more I drank the more I wanted ... needed. The calming, soothing, forgiving effect it had on me gradually fermented into resentment, anger, rage, retaliation. As the old saying goes, alcohol is 'powerful, mysterious, baffling', and much as I fell in love with beer, and sometimes spirits, it became my enemy. Twice in my life I have experienced the cold harsh reality of a police cell. One nine month long agonising wait for my one and only court appearance. Breaches of the peace. The sheriff was so very understanding of the mental pain that had disabled me. Carried out hundreds of hours of community

service. I like to think that some good came from my unpaid work, where I used my skills and talents. I believe that in every negative aspect of human life and experience that there is a solution...that some good can come from it.

When I finally gave up alcohol, more than seven years ago now, it was a life-changing decision for me. In fact, I believe to this day, that it was much more than a personal decision. I cried on the morning of the day I ditched the booze. I pleaded for help to someone...something... and I cannot help but wonder that some intervention was at work here. It was probably the very last remaining glimmer of common sense and self-respect within me that altered my whole course of life...that, and some guiding force that led me out of 24/7 drinking existence and back on the rails. I have, for the past seven years, regained and retained my self-respect and equally as important, respect for others. My writing is improving all the time and I am now very prolific and have gained the respect, good renown, and friendship of fellow poets in Aberdeen and beyond. Some of whom are now close friends. My physical health is back to normal, where at one point during my drinking, I nearly died, and was hospitalised for five weeks. What a terrible abyss I slipped down, filled with darkness, despair, verging on madness. But what a remarkable recovery I have made. Though OCD still causes me problems, I am beginning too to

chip away at this. But no amount of OCD can possibly be as disastrous as the consumption of alcohol at such a dangerous level I experienced for so long a time.

Human life is scarred from the moment we enter the world to the moment we leave. Open to so many clashes, collisions, differences of opinion, misunderstandings... we are still very much a primitive being, because we fail to understand the beauty and brevity of this wonderful gift called life. Our folks before us experienced war first hand, and I grew up in a time where society was not simply adjusting to a kind of peace; on the contrary, it was still living with effects of war, which resulted in fear, anguish, mistrust not only in strangers, but within families, schools, workplaces. I grew up within a very much damaged environment, within a typical working class drinking culture, or tradition, and I falsely believed that alcohol soothed it all for me too. Now with my understanding of what happened makes me all the more determined to succeed and whatever life is ahead of me I shall make every second count. The world is a dangerous place, but in my experience, it is far better a place if you remain sober, level headed, without alcohol. Forget about the booze. Be as good as you can be, with your own vision, and things will work well for you. The world suddenly brighter. More liveable. Life is becoming exciting again.

Keith Murray