

CREATE A ST/R

THIS ISSUE'S COVER



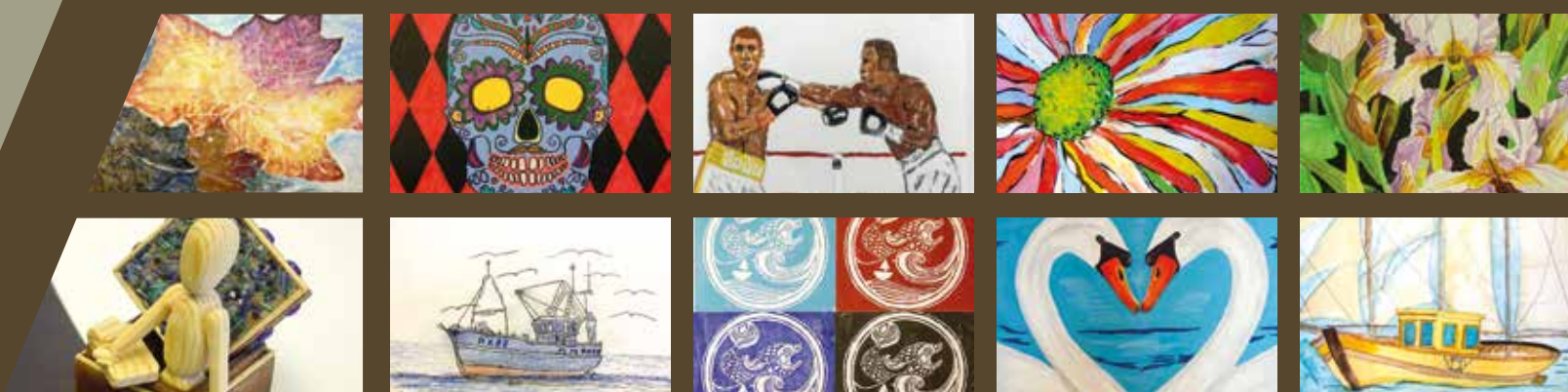
SHOT PUT PLAYER
Gerard Barlinnie
Acrylic on canvas

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR ISSUE NINE

Issue Nine will have a music theme. We want you tell us about your favourite pieces of music and why they are so important to you. Perhaps you'd like to review an album or a recent concert you attended for us? Does music inspire painting or drawing?

Think about designing an album cover or creating a painting inspired by a particular piece of music. Do you have the opportunity to participate in music projects in prisons – tell us about what you've done and how you felt about it? Have musicians visited your prison and performed for you? If so write us a review. We are sure you will have lots of other ideas and we're really keen to hear them! The deadline for submissions is 4 July 2014.

Check in with your learning centre for the latest updates in the STIR newsletter. We are looking for any visual art, short stories, poetry, excerpts and life writing. £20 will be awarded to the creator of the best picture and written work.



We can't feature every piece of artwork we receive but here's a selection of what we got for this issue.

CONTACT

Hand in your work to your New College Lanarkshire Learning Centre through the following contacts:

WENDY MILLER
HMP Barlinnie

MARISA FARRELL
HMP YOI
Cornton Vale

ANTHEA SUMMERS
EM STRANG
HMP Dumfries

RACHEL CLIVE
HMP Glenochil

TESSA DUNLOP
JACCI STOYLE
HMP Greenock

ANNA MACKENZIE
HMP Low Moss

IÑIGO GARRIDO
HMP Shotts

www.stirmagazine.org



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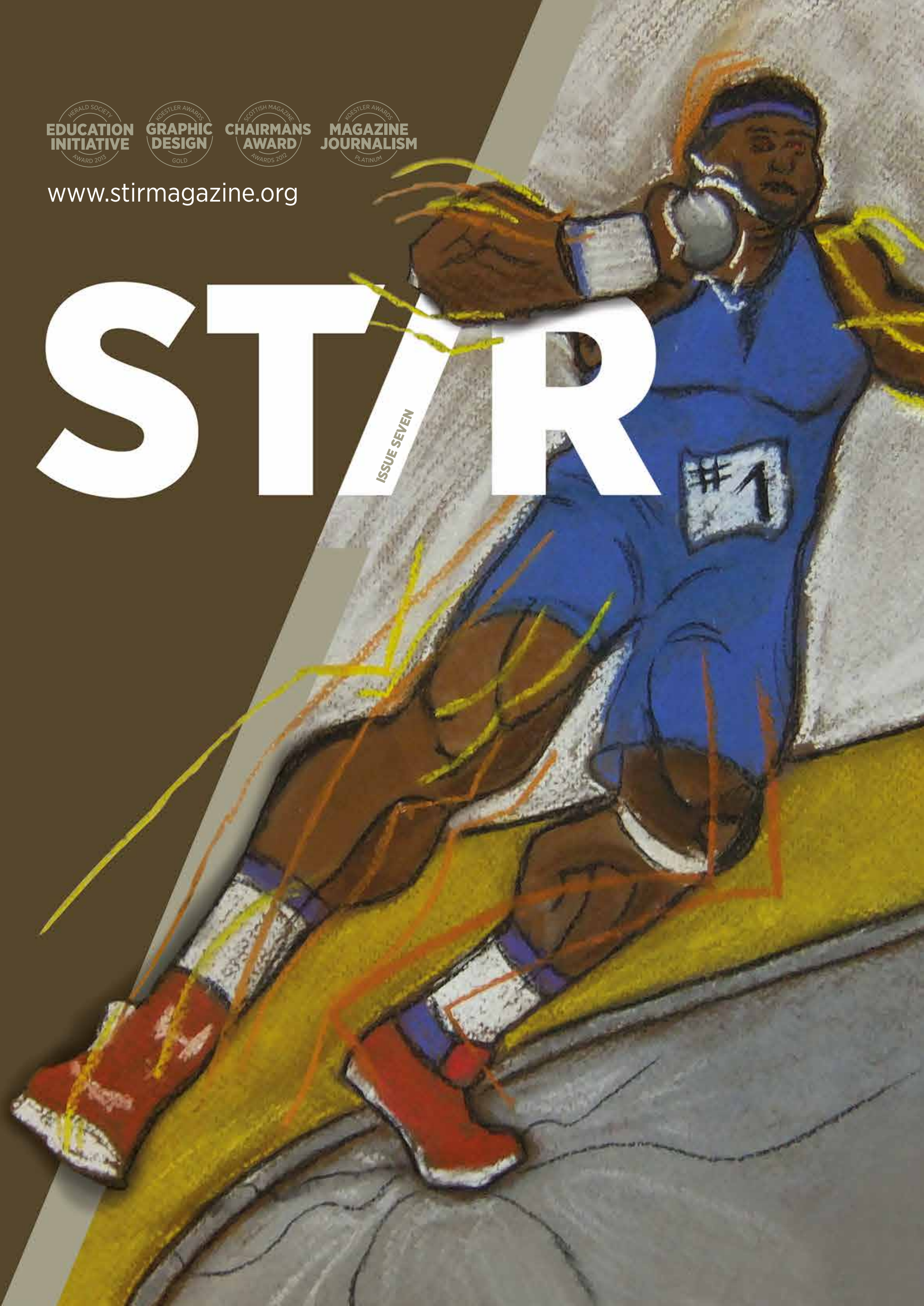


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ST/R


ISSUE SEVEN


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COMMENT CARDS

- 

I liked the variety of art forms shown, and the comments alongside. I found Christopher Brookmyre's interview interesting as I've read some of his work.
- 

This magazine gives people a great sense of achievement.
- 

Stir is a great platform with a good mix of expression and art. The magazine has a great layout and design.
- 

A long gap between editions/publications, but worth waiting for.
- 

More stuff, perhaps postcard art etc



WINNING ARTWORKS

VISUAL

Ian Greenock *Environment of the mind*
Ian's painting stands out as a good interpretation of the theme, environment. He was also interactive, holding up the painting for a photograph, with the image of himself becoming part of the work.

WRITTEN

Mags Corton Vale *My Favourite Place*
Mag's poem is well written and has a touching insight into the mind of a prisoner. We all have precious memories which, like Mags, we treasure and like to revisit.



HOBO
Raymond Barlinnie
Pencil on paper

1 CRAFTSMAN
John Low Moss
Gouache

SEVEN

ISSUE NUMBER

EMOTION THE FINAL FRONTIER

Do you ever get the feeling that you've been set up for a fall? Like a young labourer sent for a 'long stand' or the guy dressed in red on Star Trek about to beam down to a new planet with Kirk and Spock (he'll be the one eaten by a big alien!).

Wow, that's a lot of negativity there, which is kind of understandable considering our living arrangements. But what about the laughs we have with our fellow cons, the feeling of achievement at improving at the gym or succeeding at a subject in education? What about when you see a child or loved one at a visit, read a letter from a pal who is letting you know they are standing by you? What about when the cooks provide a meal that's edible? Ok, I've gone too far, but you catch my drift, there can be positive emotions in prison. Is it possible for us to use all this stuff that's rattling around in our heads to produce some original and thought provoking artwork?

I guess a good way to start answering this is to have a look at how, and why, some other artists have approached emotion in art. There are so many I could choose from but I will limit myself to a couple that jump out.

The first obvious choice is an artist we'll all have heard of, Vincent Van Gogh. This guy is so famous now that we'll all know bits and pieces about him already: his bouts of mental illness, absinth drinking, mutilation of his own ear and his generally accepted suicide. He was clearly a troubled and emotional man but what made him a genius was how he translated this into his paintings. Van Gogh's choice of subject matter vary; landscapes, portraits and still-lives broadly categorise them, but what lifts them from the mundane is the injection of emotion.

Well that's kind of the position I find myself in just now. The STIR editorial team has asked me to look at the subject of emotion in art. I mean come on, discussing emotions whilst in prison, they're having a laugh; this must be a joke. It's not of course and I'm going to have to grow a pair and give it a go. Mr Scott, one to beam down. Prison is crap. I really hate being here and I'm fairly sure I won't be the only person who feels like this. Every second of our lives are controlled and scrutinised: when we get up, go to bed, where we go, what we wear and what we do. It never ends. We are constantly under suspicion and required to prove ourselves, no matter how clean your nose is. It's frustrating too. The simplest of tasks are rendered impossible, ineptitude reigns supreme and personalities clash at an alarmingly frequent rate. It's also probably safe to assume the varied reasons for our incarceration will churn emotions too: guilt, loss, sadness, desperation, anger and confusion all dumped into the melting pot of modern prison life.

Each painting is attacked in a very personal way; thick, dense impasto paint is applied in dashes swirls and blobs that fizz across the surface. Van Gogh's clever use of heightened colour and exaggerated tone engage an emotional response from the viewer; we experience the artist's turmoil, joy in nature, loneliness and alienation. Van Gogh used his paintings to express his mental torture; we veer from ecstatic heights to the depths of despair. In fact it's interesting to note that Van Gogh's last words were apparently, "the sadness will last forever."

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican artist who only decided to become an artist because of an emotional and traumatic experience. Initially she studied to become a doctor, but was involved in a horrific bus crash that left her with a broken spine, collarbone, legs, pelvis as well as a handrail piercing her abdomen and uterus. It was during her long recovery that she began painting and it's certainly true to say that her art became a vehicle to express her emotional state. It became a driving force to create something out of the pain.

Kahlo's method of expressing her emotions is markedly different to Van Gogh's. Kahlo juxtaposes traditional Mexican symbolism with personal elements to express her physiological and psychological wounds. Her painting technique is more restrained and naturalistic, instead relying on the choices of subject matter to show us the pain she felt from the operations she endured, the inability to have children and a troubled marriage. Kahlo brutally shows us the female experience and form. Andre Breton's description sums Kahlo's work perfectly "a ribbon around a bomb." Brutally honest work that could only have been produced from a female perspective.

Those first two artists I picked there were on the jaggy edge of the emotional scale weren't they? I should probably balance them with a big dod of sunny, cheery loveliness and I think the man for the job is Henri Matisse.

Matisse, who was a contemporary of Picasso, was part of the Faure movement (which means wild beasts) and sought to create 'a kind of paradise' with his painting and collages. In many ways you can compare him to Van Gogh (Matisse admired him greatly) in terms of his subject matter, but you'd never confuse the tone of their work. Whereas there is a mania about Van Gogh, Matisse's paintings exude a calmness that washes over you in a wave. They don't attack you but instead give you a big friendly cuddle.

This emotional calmness that comes from Matisse is due to his mastery of colour theory and his eye for decorative pattern. Matisse could make colours sing. He wasn't concerned about mixing accurate colours for skin, sky or armchair. He was only concerned with creating a beautiful, harmonious whole. Through his understanding of the power of colour Matisse creates his paradise, we experience beauty and calmness along with him.

I've only really scratched the surface of emotion in art, but I hope it might start a few of you thinking about how you could express yourselves in the visual arts. What the artists of the past show us is that subject matter doesn't necessarily control the emotional tone of a work. A landscape can express joy or despair, a portrait love or hate, a still life can be confusing or calm. The key is letting whatever emotion you feel inside you out and into your artwork. Emotion isn't a dirty word, in fact it can be the key to lifting an ordinary painting up to a work of art. Beam me up Scotty!

Benno Shotts

Welcome to the Art and Sport themed issue of STIR. Scotland's only creative arts magazine by prisoners, for prisoners.

In our last issue we set you the challenge of combining Sport and Art for this issue's theme and once again, we were not disappointed. We are truly amazed, not only at the content and quantity of the work submitted but, by the quality and care that can be seen in every word and every brush stroke.

There was much debate within your editorial team while selecting this issue's content. There was so much work of a high standard, especially that by our emerging artists and writers, that we were blown away. Everyone should be proud of what they have achieved and we are sorry that we cannot print all of the work submitted but do not forget that we catalogue every submission so don't be daunted if you didn't get in this time. Keep sending in your work! Don't forget to check out your local STIR!

Since the last issue your editorial team has had to say good bye to one of our beloved members Alex. We wish him the very best outside! However, like many clouds it has a silver lining in the form of our new members, Craig and Eddie who we welcome to the team.

In the last issue the winning poster "A Colour Has Many Faces" (Rury, Low Moss) fuelled discussion throughout our readership. "Why was it chosen?" Simple. Your editorial team wanted to highlight abstract art, as it is something we rarely see but absolutely love. The artist's work was well balanced both in colour and composition and should be encouraged. So STIR would now like to set you a challenge, why not try to create some abstract art for our next issue or even find out a bit more about it for yourself? Finally, apologies to John B from Barlinnie who we failed to credit for his work "Three Thoughts on Nature" in STIR Issue 6, page 11.

We would also like to remind you that the STIR website is finally up and running and can be viewed by anyone with Internet access, so please tell your family and friends about it. It's a great way to show them your work! The site is viewable on all mobile phones, tablets and computers so it should be accessible by all. The site can be found at www.stirmagazine.org which contains all back issues of STIR as downloadable PDFs.

After seeing an issue of STIR, the Robertson Trust recently commissioned work from several Scottish prisons to display in their new building in Bath Street. The work produced was on the theme of 'Scotland'. The result is impressive and you can see some of the art on page 10. The Scottish Prison Arts Network, who produced a column for our last issue, will now be providing regular updates on their activities. We couldn't be more excited to have such an organisation featured in our pages.

"Freedom!" is that famous word that most Scots – if not all – will recognise. Appropriately this fits in well with our chosen theme for Issue Eight: Independence. With the referendum looming, the issue of independence appears to be a hot topic of debate – should we or should we not? However, it's not all about the vote! What do you think independence means? You could write about how you first became independent, about independence of thought or about the independence you wish you had – there are so many interpretations of the theme. Well this is your chance, whether it's through a written or visual piece, to express how you feel. Think outside the box! Remember, STIR is your stage; stand up and speak up!

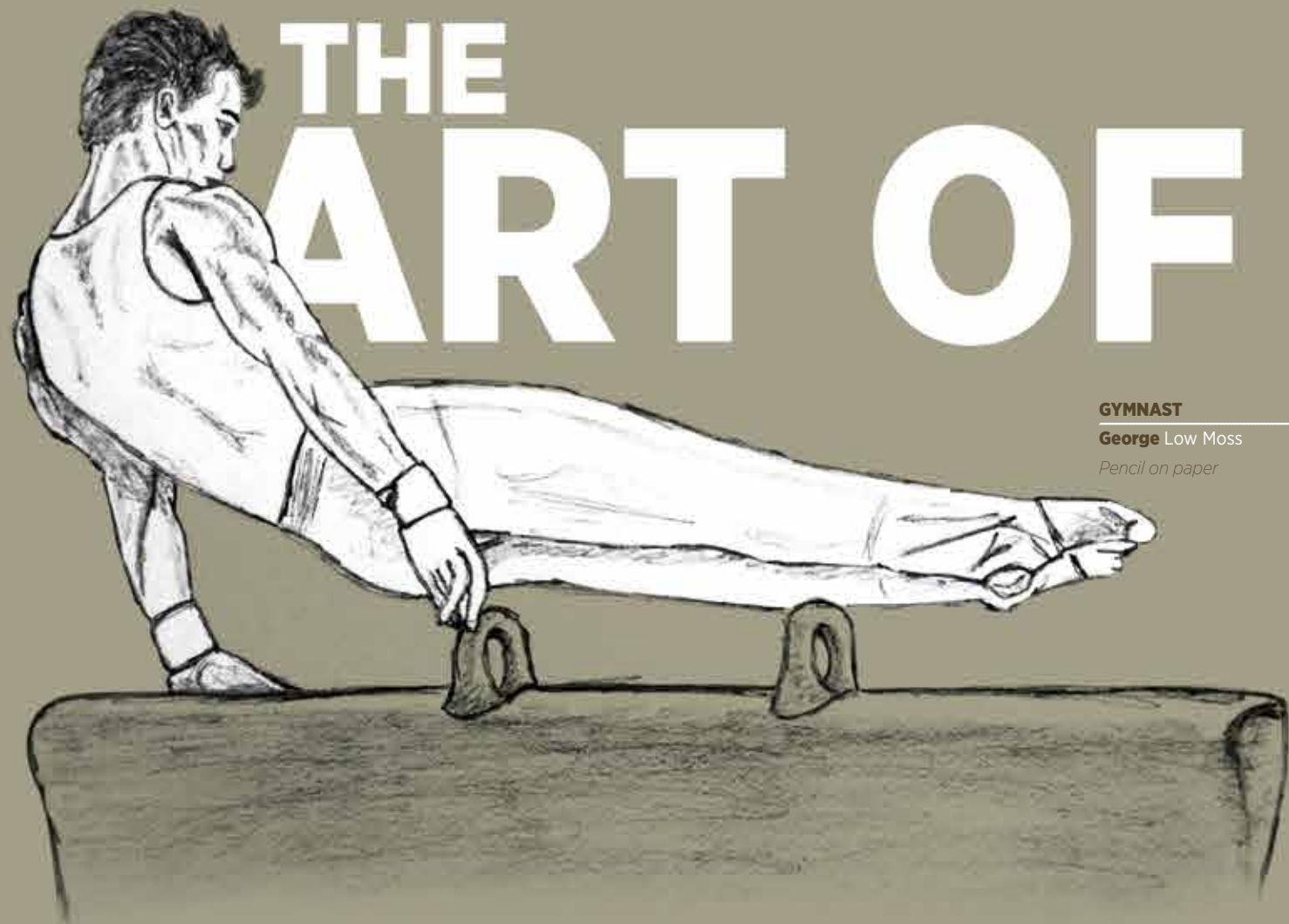
Edited by Benno, Craig, Dean, Gareth, Iain, Jeff and Jok Shotts

The views expressed in STIR are not those of the Scottish Prison Service

FLAMENCO
Andrea Greenock
Ink and pencil



THE ART OF SPORT



GYMNAST
George Low Moss
Pencil on paper

OLD BOXER

A perfect face: no marks, no lines.
I hope I can handle this fight of mine.
I'll just hit for the left cheek and then the right
I'll go under the chin and then knock him out.

But what about me? He's looking real mean.
Staring right in my eyes so bright and so keen.
He looks like he's younger, I can smell his hunger
The eye of the tiger, he's angry and cruel
What the hell am I doing? "Silly old fool."

This was a one off, supposed to be fun
"I wish I'd taken my gun."
He hits me a punch on the side of my cheek.
I fall and I crumble all in a heap.

The ref he counts down 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5...
Come on get up, "hey you, you alive?"
I turn and I look at him –
burst cheek and black eyes.
I hear all the crowd cheering, "come on" they all cry.
I crawl to my corner and sit on my stool
What are you doing you silly old fool?

A sip of the water. A rinse and a spit
No blood well that's promising, "he gave a right hit"
Should I surrender or should I just go?
"Come on" said the ref
GET ON WITH THE SHOW.

Jackie Corton Vale

FOOTBALL IS ME

Football is me. Football is you.
Really what does the sport mean for you?
It means so so much to me.
Fitness, energy, the means to be free like
the birds in the sky, the leaves in the tree.

The ball is kicked and finds the net, the crowd
goes wild with respect. In and out, training day
today, get signed up for the team so I play! The
gaffer's ready he gives his talk, out of the tunnel
we shall walk. The music's playing biggest game
of our lives black and white jerseys this is our
lives. The whistle blows we've won the game
what a feeling it was just to be playing. We hit
the showers cheering and shouting my team's
victorious we've climbed the mountain.
Showered, ready to leave, home for my tea,
my gran's cooking a roast. Football is me.

Kyle Barlinnie



GOING FOR GLASGOW
Charlie Low Moss
Colour ink

CYCLIST HAIKU

A bike has two wheels
Unless it's a tricycle
Or unicycle

Andrew Low Moss

THE AULD ENEMY
David Dumfries
Acrylic



THE FISHERMAN

A pipe smoking fella of fisherman ilk
Rough cotton shirt, definitely not silk
Short sleeved, wide-open, chest all bare
Sporting a covering of candy-floss hair
Ear lobes stretched where rings used to be
Weathered face from years on the sea
With a net for a hat
The odd angle it sat
Shorts worn for comfort, showing his knees
Keeping him cool in the gentle sea breeze
Day-dreaming of nets full o fish
His family waiting for a succulent dish
Of Plaice, Haddock or possibly Cod
Enough for all and maybe the dog
Pipe smoking fella with net for a hat
Down on the jetty, that's where he sat

Geoff Dumfries

TARTAN BOXERS

Nicky Greenock
Acrylic



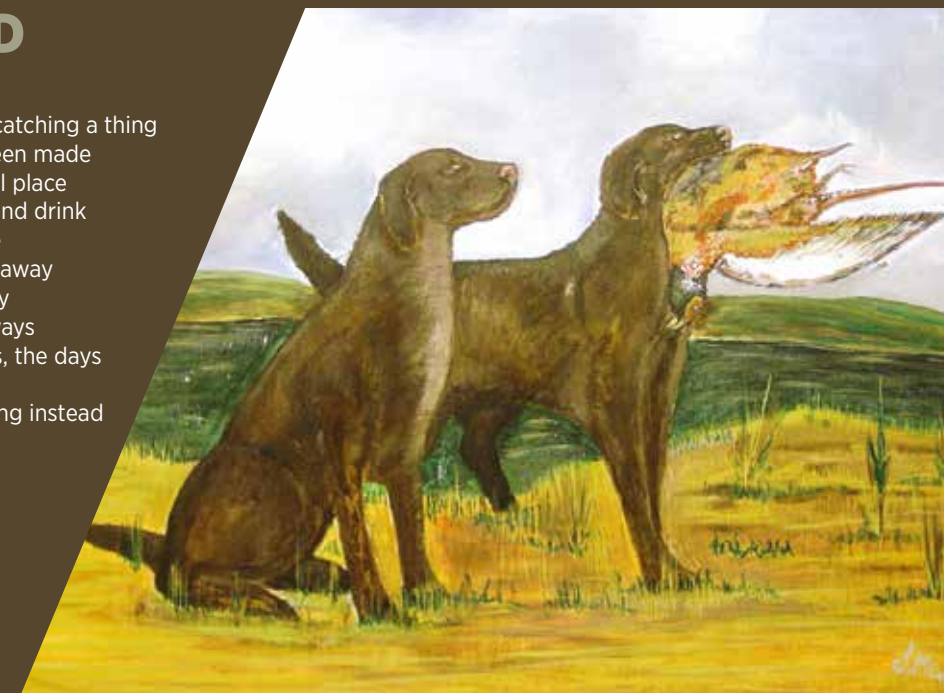
HOOKED

Fishing is complex
Casting a rod and not catching a thing
A prison promise has been made
There's a river in a special place
If I stay away from drugs and drink
It could be my saving grace
That special place seems far away
A debt to society I have to pay
Learning to think in different ways
As I count the years, the months, the days
With determination in my head
Prison's not for me, I'm going fishing instead

Martin Glenochil

CASTING

Stephen Glenochil
Watercolour



FROM A FOOTBALL'S PERSPECTIVE

Circular and rubber I can go up and down
Stay in the air that makes you see round
Leathered blootered kicked and thumped
Deflated from the air where it's dumped
Air hissing from too much action
Just burst rubber with no protraction
I'm just a football, an object of fun
Soon as I'm burst, it's over and done.

Sean Barlinnie

DOGS HUNTING

Jim Dumfries
Acrylic



1



2



3



4



5

WHAT INSPIRED ME...

I drew my boot because it's part of my individuality
as everyone in the same route has different shoes,
it's one of those things we have control over.

Annemarie Greenock

1 THE CREW SHOE

Craig Greenock
Posca pens on paper

2 TRY WALKING IN MY SHOES

Karen Greenock
Pencil on paper

3 MY TRAINER

Alex Greenock
Pencil on paper

4 I LOVE MY SHOES

Carmen Greenock
Pen on paper

5 DO THE ROUTE IN MA BOOT

Anne Marie Greenock
Pen on paper

My favourite hobby is sailing, more specifically yachting and dinghy-sailing. My Grandfather got me interested in this sport when I was a child because of his love of marine archaeology and history. I have a fascination with all boats but in particular catamarans and trimarans because they are so unusual. The reason I like this sport in particular is because you can escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

You could be in the middle of the sea or ocean and all around you is the dark blue of the water and the light blue of the sky and nothing else. But you are at the mercy of the weather and you always have to have eyes on the back of your head because it can change faster than the flick of a switch. I love sailing at night because it presents a different challenge to sailing during the day. I took it up when I was a child; Mum put me into dinghy-sailing classes in parks around Glasgow. I have been doing it since I was at Primary School. I took it up because I love the freedom, the slower pace of life, the travelling.

You can join a sailing organisation or just be a free-agent, which is what I prefer as I hate being tied-down. There are many organisations in the UK dedicated to sailing – Ocean Youth Trust, Jubilee Sailing Trust, Trinity Sailing Trust are just a few out there. In regards to OYT, there is a branch in Scotland, one in Northern Ireland and a couple in England. A private school has also set up its own branch. Another group comes from Glasgow and is for disadvantaged adults and also people who have been in trouble with the law. This sport does help you to meet people, very much so; there are many walks of life represented on a yacht you also meet people in the places you visit.

The sport also allows you to travel all over the world, which I have done many a time. I have been to France, North-East England, Ireland (both), Sweden, Finland and the Åland Islands. For maintenance work I have travelled to Edinburgh for one and Glasgow for another.

I would have to be a bit biased and say that it is the best sport due to the fact that I travel to places I may never venture on my own, but most of all I have found who I am as a person – what makes me tick.

I would definitely encourage anyone to take it up, even though it has its negatives like any other sport but the negatives are highlighted because of media coverage usually. But you can turn those negatives into something positive after some hard work and determination and maybe even some elbow grease! I say that sailing is like algebra because there is a technical side to it, which some people might master overnight; others may take a few weeks or longer. It doesn't matter how long you take because sailing is a sport you are always learning about every time you do it, as everything changes to keep up with the latest fads and technologies. But at the end of the day, once you succeed you never look back. I haven't and I'm still striving forward.

Lisa Cornton Vale

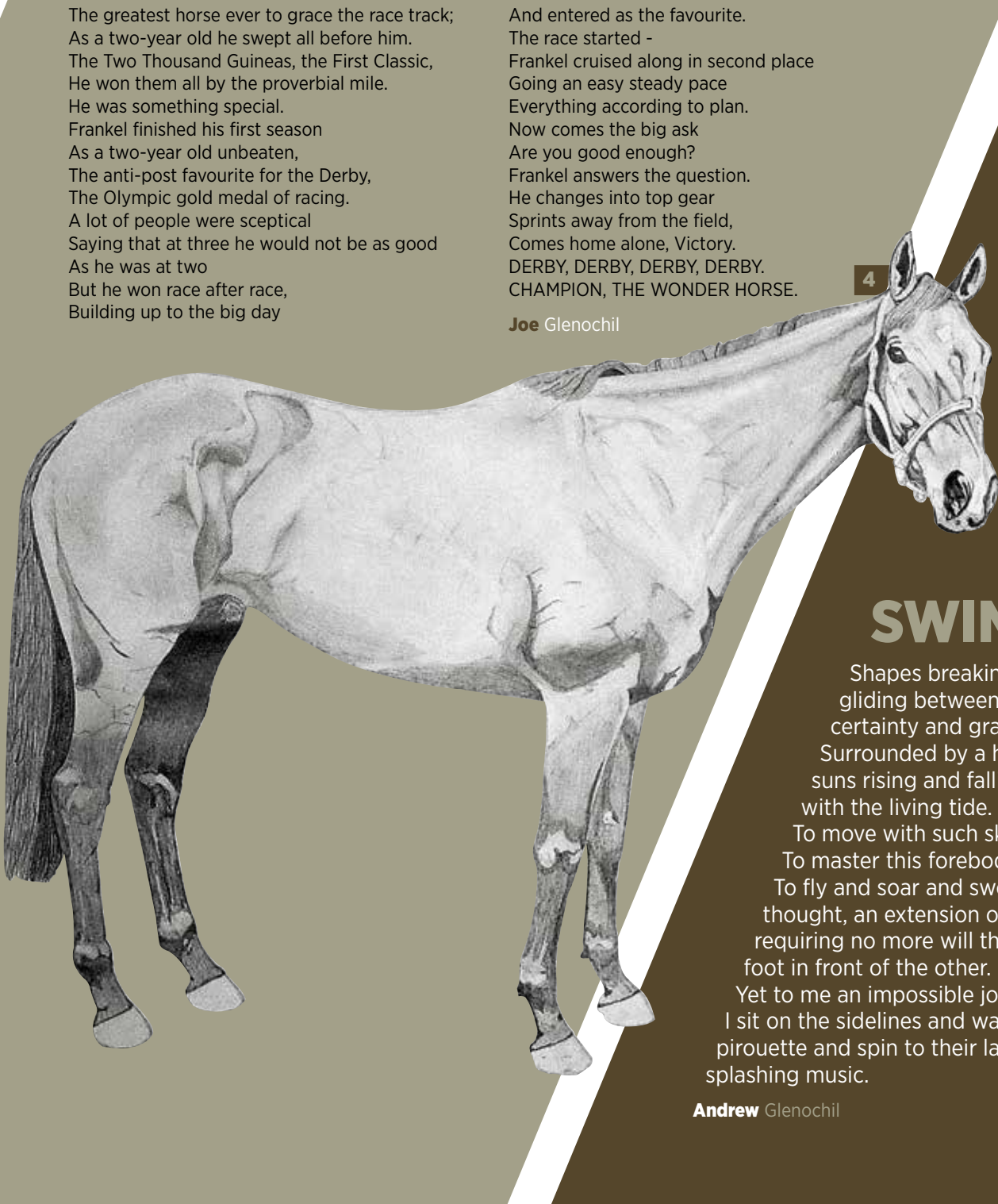
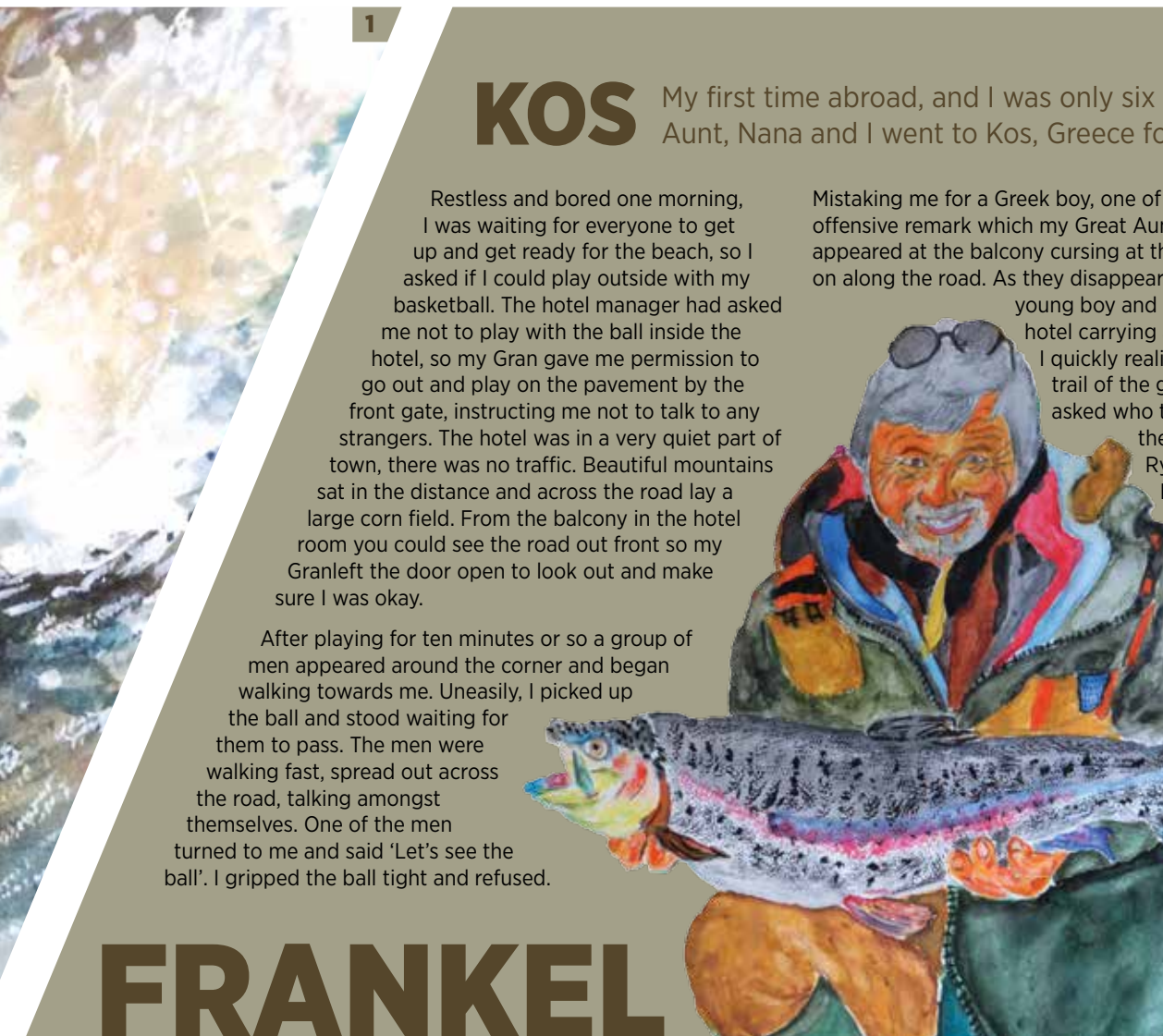
SAILING



GET BACK ON THE HORSE

Uproar; shouts of delight, the finishing line gone, earthquake of applause in my ears: triumph.

Anon Shotts



KOS

My first time abroad, and I was only six years old. My Gran, Great Aunt, Nana and I went to Kos, Greece for two weeks.

Restless and bored one morning, I was waiting for everyone to get up and get ready for the beach, so I asked if I could play outside with my basketball. The hotel manager had asked me not to play with the ball inside the hotel, so my Gran gave me permission to go out and play on the pavement by the front gate, instructing me not to talk to any strangers. The hotel was in a very quiet part of town, there was no traffic. Beautiful mountains sat in the distance and across the road lay a large corn field. From the balcony in the hotel room you could see the road out front so my Gran left the door open to look out and make sure I was okay.

After playing for ten minutes or so a group of men appeared around the corner and began walking towards me. Uneasily, I picked up the ball and stood waiting for them to pass. The men were walking fast, spread out across the road, talking amongst themselves. One of the men turned to me and said 'Let's see the ball'. I gripped the ball tight and refused.

Mistaking me for a Greek boy, one of the men passed a rather offensive remark which my Great Aunt overheard. Suddenly she appeared at the balcony cursing at the men as they carried on along the road. As they disappeared around the corner a young boy and girl walked towards the hotel carrying a notepad and camera. I quickly realised they were on the trail of the group of men and I asked who they were, to which they replied 'That was Ryan Giggs and the Manchester United players!!'

Anon Low Moss

FRANKEL

The greatest horse ever to grace the race track; As a two-year old he swept all before him. The Two Thousand Guineas, the First Classic, He won them all by the proverbial mile. He was something special. Frankel finished his first season As a two-year old unbeaten, The anti-post favourite for the Derby, The Olympic gold medal of racing. A lot of people were sceptical Saying that at three he would not be as good As he was at two But he won race after race, Building up to the big day

And entered as the favourite. The race started - Frankel cruised along in second place Going an easy steady pace Everything according to plan. Now comes the big ask Are you good enough? Frankel answers the question. He changes into top gear Sprints away from the field, Comes home alone, Victory. DERBY, DERBY, DERBY, DERBY. CHAMPION, THE WONDER HORSE.

Joe Glenochil

SWIMMERS

Shapes breaking, gliding between worlds with certainty and grace. Surrounded by a halo of melting suns rising and falling back to dusk with the living tide. To move with such skill and grace. To master this foreboding realm. To fly and soar and swoop without thought, an extension of normality requiring no more will than to put one foot in front of the other. Yet to me an impossible journey. I sit on the sidelines and watch as they pirouette and spin to their lapping, splashing music.

Andrew Glenochil

SPACE SKI-ING

I see a galaxy
Space, stars
An inconnu skier, ski-ing through the stars
Doing the slalom through the Milky Way
All the way through to the finish line at the Winter Olympics
In Sochi 2014.

Kevin Glenochil

SONNET NO.6

Unassuming, likeable, Ulsterman
The likes of you, the sport has never seen
So many triumphs, throughout one lifespan
Doyen of his craft, the best there's ever been

Excessive workload is the impression
He always gives it one hundred per cent
This man's profession, is his obsession
His speech is pronounced by self-effacement

No better jockey sat in the saddle
Falls quite often, but he's not a moaner
Focused, and impossible to addle
Tries his heart out, no matter the owner

Superlatives fail, because he's so great
His life's achievements, you can't overstate

Andrew Low Moss





ST/R

WHAT INSPIRED ME

The title is Red L 50 which reflects Red, the colour we all wear in Barlinnie and L 50 represents a hall and cell number. It's an expression of how I feel, like I am livestock being herded and contained within a fence and I am identified by a number.

RED L 50

Keith Barlinnie

Oil on board

ALTERED BOOK WORKSHOP WITH ISABELL BUENZ

“THEY TOOK TO THE ART VERY QUICKLY. IT IS AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH PRISONERS AS AN ARTIST RATHER THAN IN A MORE FORMAL CAPACITY AS A DRUG COUNSELLOR.”

Isabell Buenz is a paper and book artist and also a photographer, based in Edinburgh. For three weeks she ran the “Altered Book Workshop” at Dumfries prison. The Workshop taught prisoners how to change an old book into a photo holder or beautiful sculpture, by learning some simple folding techniques.

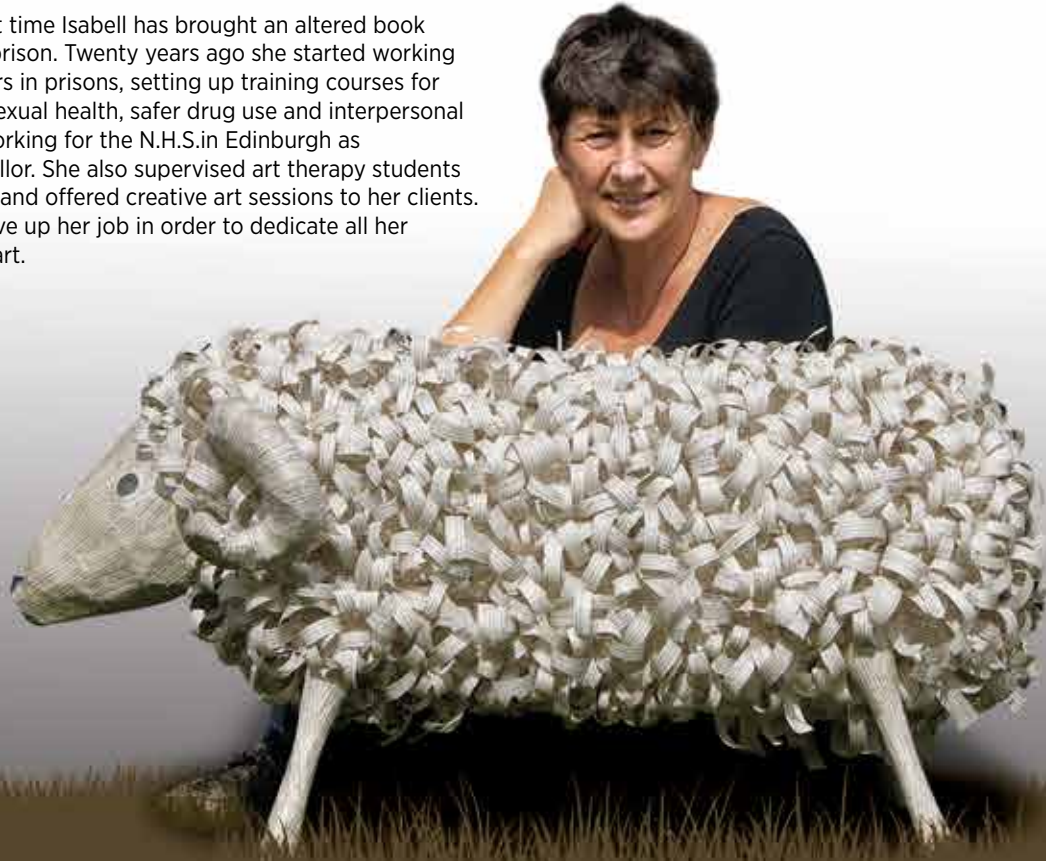
Isabell enjoyed working with the students and was amazed by the talent shown. “They took to the art very quickly. It is an amazing opportunity to work with prisoners as an artist rather than in a more formal capacity as a drug counsellor.”

This is the first time Isabell has brought an altered book workshop to prison. Twenty years ago she started working with drug users in prisons, setting up training courses for drugs, H.I.V., sexual health, safer drug use and interpersonal skills, while working for the N.H.S.in Edinburgh as a drug counsellor. She also supervised art therapy students on placement and offered creative art sessions to her clients. In 2011 she gave up her job in order to dedicate all her time to book art.

Isabell’s interest in working with paper was inspired by her father’s work as a child. Her father worked as a printer at the local newspaper in northern Germany. She shows her work nationally and internationally at exhibitions, workshops and open studio events.

Isabell would be very happy for another opportunity to bring altered book workshops to prison.

Mugo Dumfries



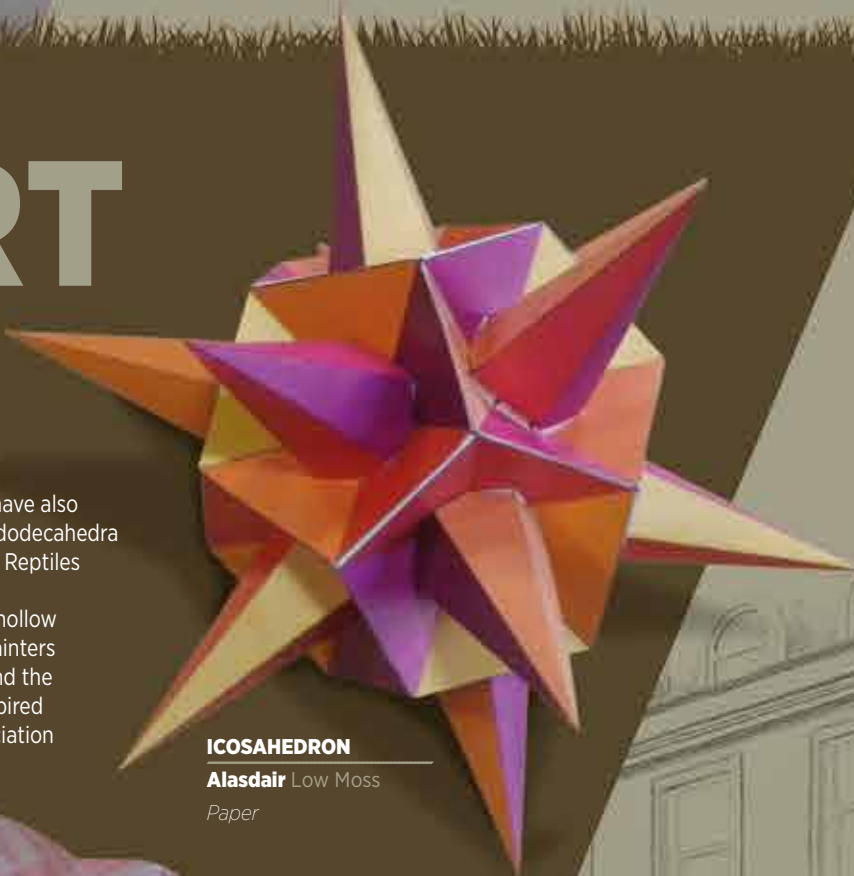
MATHS AND ART

There is much overlap between maths and art. In the maths class when we were discussing simple Venn diagrams, it struck me that a Venn diagram could be considered more pleasing than what is currently offered up as ‘modern art’.

Indeed, maths and art have a long historical relationship. The Golden Ratio, regarded as aesthetically pleasing and favoured by the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, is incorporated into the design of monuments including the Great Pyramids, The Parthenon and The Colosseum. Low Moss maths students, studying geometry, recently made The 6th Stellation of the Icosahedron and a Dodecahedron. Perhaps you have heard the phrase, ‘Nature Makes No Bad Art’? Did you know that many viruses such as the ones that give you the common cold, have icosahedral shells and viral structures that are built of repeated identical protein subunits known as capsomeres?

As well as practical applications, Dodecahedral objects have also played a role in art and philosophy. In 20th-century art, dodecahedra appear in the work of M.C. Escher, such as his lithograph Reptiles (1943), and in his Gravitation. In Salvador Dali’s painting The Sacrament of the Last Supper (1955), the room is a hollow dodecahedron. In accordance with many Renaissance painters who turned to mathematics for inspiration, it is maths and the exploration of numbers, shapes and pattern that has inspired me to consider art and provided me with a wider appreciation of what art is.

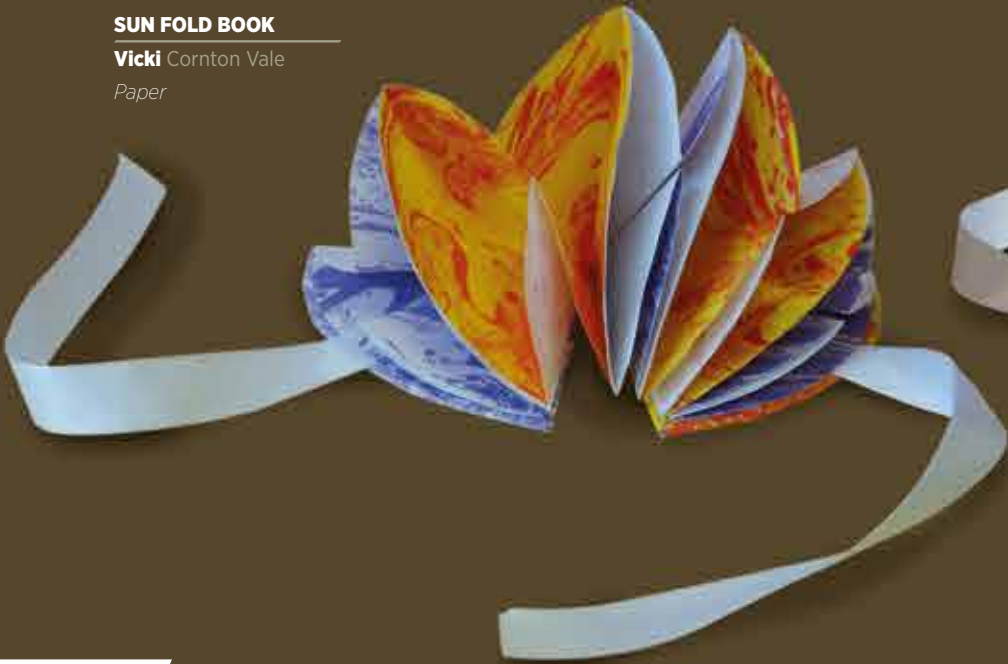
Alasdair Low Moss



ICOSAHEDRON
Alasdair Low Moss
Paper

SUN FOLD BOOK

Vicki Cornnton Vale
Paper



MARbled FLOWER BOOK

Carol Cornnton Vale
Paper



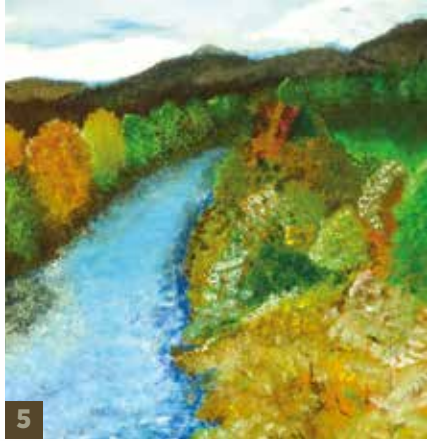
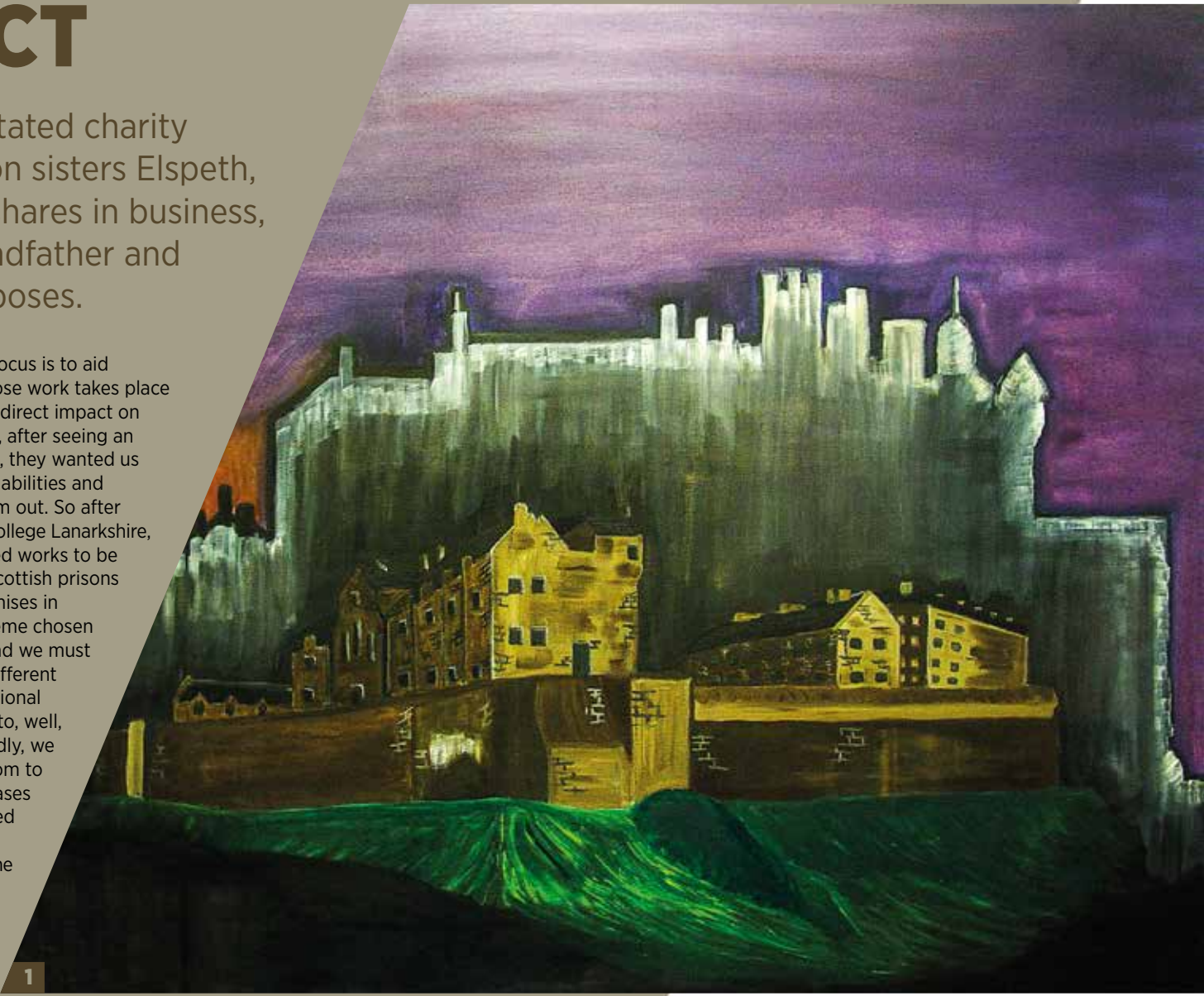
ROBERTSON TRUST PROJECT

The Robertson Trust is a family orientated charity that was established by the Robertson sisters Elspeth, Agnes and Ethel who donated their shares in business, founded and developed by their grandfather and father, to the trust for charitable purposes.

The origins of these businesses go all the way back to the 1850’s! Keen to ensure their on-going success, the sisters brought them together under the Edrington Group (which was named after a farm near their home) and henceforth, the Robertson Trust was established.

The goal of establishing the Trust was to ensure that their family business would remain active and independent and to continue and extend the past support they had given to charities. The sisters were among the first trustees, serving for a combined total of 71 years, guaranteeing that the Trust operated along the principles, which they, their father and grandfather had employed in the family business, namely: honesty, integrity and willingness to help people in trouble or need.

The Trust’s main focus is to aid organisations whose work takes place in, or which has a direct impact on Scotland. As such, after seeing an issue of your STIR, they wanted us to use our artistic abilities and talent to help them out. So after contacting New College Lanarkshire, they commissioned works to be made by all the Scottish prisons for their new premises in Glasgow – the theme chosen was “Scotland” and we must say it produced different results from traditional Scottish heritage to, well, Rab C Nesbitt. Sadly, we don’t have the room to show all the canvases that were produced so we’ve made a selection from some of the prisons to show you!



1 NIGHT AND DAY
Jim Dumfries
Acrylic on canvas

2 TRANQUILITY
Gordon Dumfries
Acrylic on canvas

3 THE SQUINTY BRIDGE
Danny Greenock
Acrylic on canvas

4 STIRLING CASTLE
Colin Dumfries
Acrylic on canvas

5 RIVER GARRY AT KILLIEKRANKIE
Margaret Cornnton Vale
Acrylic on canvas

6 HEEBIE GEEBIES
Kris Shotts
Oil on canvas

ROBERTSON TRUST BUILDING

Nathan Dumfries
Pencil on paper



WHAT INSPIRED ME...

I enjoy drawing buildings and architecture. I also thought it would be good for the people inside the Robertson Trust building to remember what it’s like outside.



BOOK REVIEW

DORIAN - WILL SELF

Will Self's Dorian is a literary re-write of Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray'. However, unlike Wilde's oil painting in the original novel, protagonist Dorian is now captured in all his beauty within the tapes of a nine-monitor display titled 'Cathode Narcissus', the creation of video artist Baz Hallward.

The story begins with antagonist Henry Wolton a rabidly promiscuous, heavy-drinking, high-society pederastic drug addict who introduces Dorian to his warped, hedonistic world starting with a journey through London's excessively liberal, pretentious and debauched art-scene.

With the consumption of copious amounts of drugs, the depths of Henry's depravity takes on animalistic qualities as he waltzes through a minefield of filth in pursuit of pleasure. There is no shame for Henry as he seduces Dorian by being recklessly extravagant, snaking his way through a life devoted to vice in London's seedy underworld.

Henry corrupts Dorian to espouse life by pursuing whatever he desires saying, "before this jaded century is utterly exhausted at least one individual should've pleased it thoroughly." Upon this advice Dorian sells his soul, but it is not knowledge he seeks, rather he desires Hallward's video installation to age instead of himself in the pursuit of vanity.

1 BEAUTY AND YOUTH

Benno Shotts
Oil on canvas

2 GRAFTERS

Keith Barlinnie
Mixed media

3 DYSTOPIAN DRUNKNESS

Allan Low Moss
Acrylic

Initially, Dorian embraces the profusion of Henry's world with exuberant enjoyment, but ultimate satisfaction requires the arrogant but beautiful Adonis to keep pushing at the boundaries of morality by seeking out new experiences.

Dorian grows evermore sinister and irresponsible with each risqué and reckless act, embarking on a mission of destruction. In a society at the height of the AIDS epidemic he leaves nothing but pain and death in his wake as those around him succumb to illness and disease.

Furthermore, this causation has transmogrified 'Cathode Narcissus' from brilliant artwork into evil, vile imagery with diseased, open sores as desquamation of the skin, becoming a metaphor for Dorian's soul. All this derangement challenges Dorian's mental state and it's a case of: be careful what you wish for.

Oscar Wilde's original novel was highly controversial in 1890 and was banned in several U.S. sates for being morally corrupt. Will Self's version is vividly coarse and cutting as he takes the reader on a voyage through a cesspool of moral rancidity, although it's humorous at times as he describes the decadence and profligacy of the characters as they overindulge in drugs, debauchery and reckless behaviour. An old story retold in a new way, quite brilliant, a true page-turner – I loved it.

Iain Shotts

4 ISLE OF EIGE

Liam Low Moss
Gouache on paper



INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN AITKEN

How did you start writing?

I started with school essays and appreciated getting good marks for them. My first job in life was assistant tennis and funeral reporter for the East Anglia Daily Times, which taught me a great deal about accuracy. My next job was for the Glasgow Evening Citizen. I was a crime reporter and covered some rather grisly scenes in the Gorbals, which in the sixties was a pretty grim area. I then went to London and worked for the Evening Standard and other papers, so I started in journalism as a reporter. I always thought it would be a part-time job as I had trained to be a lawyer and had got my Law degree from Oxford. I then wrote a couple of books, one called 'A Short Walk On The Campus', about American Universities, and the other one was called, 'The Young Meteors', about swinging London. Those books made me more money than I could ever earn as a lawyer.

What motivates you to write?

Doctor Samuel Johnston once said and I quote, 'no man but a blockhead ever wrote but for money.' So I write to earn a living. I like the creativity and the variety of writing and still do some journalism. If you look at some of my recent book titles, they range from, 'Psalms For People Under Pressure', 'Prayers When Under Pressure', to biographies of President Nixon and Margaret Thatcher, so I have a wide span of writing and it certainly has made for an interesting life.

Who is your favourite author?

You can't beat the great classical writers, of course, I love Shakespeare, and I love some of the great story tellers like Trollope and Dickens. I've always been interested in history, and the greatest history books of all time is, Edward Gibbon's, 'The History Of The Decline Of The Roman Empire' and Thomas Macaulay's 'History of England'. In recent times Anthony Beaver wrote 'The Fall Of Berlin', and also 'Stalingrad'. I think very well of the books by Antonia Fraser. I'm a big reader and I also read poetry quite a lot and anthologies of poetry. My favourite one is 'Other Men's Flowers', compiled by Field Marshall Lord Wavell.

Do you have any advice for some one starting to write?

Get writing, write every day and stay writing, because writing is ninety-nine percent perspiration and one percent inspiration. Every writer is tempted to give up. There is a good story about Oscar Wilde, he said, 'I've had an exhausting day writing, all morning putting a comma in, and all afternoon taking it out'. You sometimes want to give up, especially in a long book, my Margaret Thatcher biography and my Richard Nixon biography both run to over 650 pages. There were times when I thought this is a bit too much for me and I want to give up. I find that prison is a great place to start writing. Many great books have been written in prison, Mandela was a classic example of this, but I myself kept a diary throughout my time in prison. I also wrote most of a book called, 'Pride And Perjury', and most of another book called 'Porridge And Passion'. The key to writing is to stay disciplined. I start at eight-thirty in the morning and don't get up until twelve-thirty. If I go back in the afternoon then it's a bonus.

Can I ask what made you visit Shotts prison today?

The Chaplain met me at a conference and asked me, would you come to Shotts sometime. I said probably not as it's a bit off my beaten track however, she kept persisting and I had an appointment in Edinburgh, so I decided to get off the train and come along. I like coming back into prison, part of my life was spent in prison and I have an empathy with prisoners. I find that prison officers are not as bad as their reputation, there are some bad apples of course, but there are a lot of diamond geezers among prison officers. As for prisoners, we all make mistakes, the question is how we recover from those mistakes. My talk today was about coming out of prison and starting again, which is not easy but it's not impossible.

Thank you so much Jonathan



POSTER

On the edge of a forest peaceful and still.
The birds sang and lifted my heart

Attacked in a flash, a chainsaw tore me apart.
Shipped to the mill
They moulded me to their will.

Adorned in colours, hung out in the cold
Covered in writing in black bold

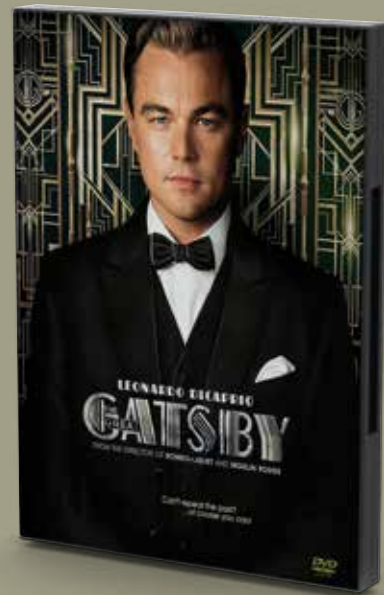
Stapled to a wall in the centre of town
People staring at me rolling their eyes
up and down

The sun beats on me till I fade
Not a hope of catching any shade

Fast as a whip I'm put in the bin
But I fulfilled my purpose,
I've committed no sin

The forest is empty, the life has gone
In the game of life I was just a pawn.

Adele Corton Vale



FILM REVIEW THE GREAT GATSBY (12)

Recently I watched the film 'The Great Gatsby' starring the suave Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey MacGuire and Carey Mulligan. Although I have never read the novel, made famous by F Scott Fitzgerald, I had a passing knowledge of the story's existence.

Initially I thought this film wouldn't be my cup of tea given that it's a quasi love story, but I must admit that I enjoyed it. The plot revolves around Nick Carraway (MacGuire) ruminating over his past, which he is recounting to his psychiatrist inside the sanitarium in which he finds himself.

His story revolved around the character of Gatsby (DiCaprio) and the garishly decadent parties that he held in his mansion. They live next door to one another and the initially curious Carraway finds himself invited to the enigmatic and mysterious Gatsby's home for one of these parties. At first, one would be forgiven for postulating that he is simply invited because they were neighbours, but I was correct in my silent assumption that Gatsby had a hidden agenda. Carraway's cousin Daisy (Mulligan) is the long-lost betrothed of Gatsby. However, she is married to another man, Tom Buchanan, an heir to a considerable fortune.

When Gatsby was a young man, he went off to Europe to fight in WWI and never got the chance to wed his beloved Daisy. A hidden dynamic of this relationship reveals that Gatsby, a destitute orphan, felt quit odd in relation to the fact that Daisy's family had some wealth and he decided to find fame and fortune before really committing to Daisy.

He returns five years later to find she is married. Many, many lavish parties later, they meet up and a love tug-of-war ensues between Gatsby and Tom over Daisy's heart. The drama that ensues becomes increasingly dramatic towards its climactic ending (which I won't spoil for you here).

I personally saw the film through the eyes of Gatsby and, to a lesser extent, Nick. The fact that Gatsby made his fortune from bootlegging and possibly other spheres of organised crime did not taint my opinion of him, as it does many of the characters in the film. The love triangle makes for an interesting central storyline, but it is really the extravagant depictions of life in New York in 'The Roaring Twenties' that makes this film so watchable. I think I would have loved life during that period! The soundtrack by Jay-Z was quite good but I found one or two of the songs a bit risqué when contrasting them with the film's era. Overall, Baz Luhrmann manages to put his uniquely modern spin on a classic American novel. Even if you haven't read the book itself, this film is well worth a watch.

Kris Low Moss

IN MY IMAGINATION

Bright red sun drops slowly off the horizon, back into trenches,
Birds of all types fly to nests, perched high on my branches.
Animals burrow amongst my roots, into fields freshly ploughed,
While the furtive moon plays hide and seek, behind a lone floating cloud.

Darkness descends; a blanket covers the world, as far as I can see,
My leaves are tickled, rustled by a cool breeze drifting from the sea.
I sway in rhythm but have no neighbours to wave their boughs back at me,
I long for cooling rain; to be drenched, for it to soothe me.

Tiny feet scamper all over me, slipping on moss that encompasses me,
They grip tightly to me with their tiny feet, their grip comforts me.
My branches are spread out like the manic rungs of a ladder,
Overlapping and expanding over one another.

Lying next to me are remnants of my friend, now just an old gnarly trunk,
Wedge deep into the earth, like a mighty ship which has long ago sunk.
Ages ago, he stood tall, majestic and proud,
All that remains now is nothing more than a shroud.

It's comforting to know that within me there are others still living,
But how long will I last in this changing world we live in?
My spirit is willing, but my body is now old,
It troubles me that I am now affected by approaching winter's cold.

My life has been fruitful; but is my memory still true?
Is this where I was sown, is this where I grew?
For all I know I could be a small stone stuck amongst a scree,
In my imagination I can be set free, but in reality I'm just a lone forest tree.

Anon Shotts



SPAN

THE SCOTTISH PRISON ARTS NETWORK

OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



EMERGING ARTISTS

FIRST TIME ARTISTS AND WRITERS

WIMBLEDON CHAMPION

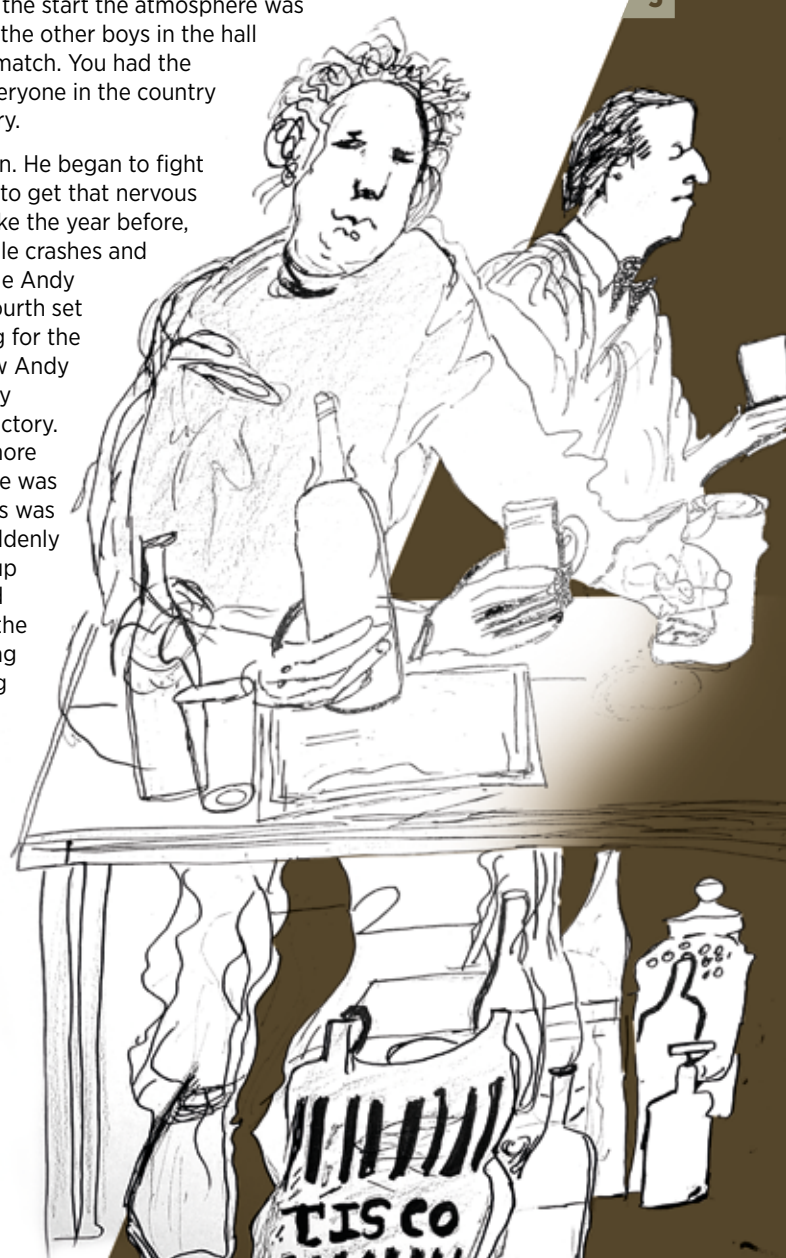
The 7th June 2013, there I was sitting in my cell watching the tennis Wimbledon final Andy Murray Vs Novak Djokovic. I had really been looking forward to this game. The build up was amazing but also very nerve wracking because this could finally be the day that Murray won his first Wimbledon title! I was very proud of the Scotsman the previous year when he managed to get to the final but was beaten by Rodger Federer. Ironically, Andy had just beaten him this year to reach the final.

I was so excited to watch this match and I was desperately hoping that Murray would win. Once the match got started I sat comfy in my chair with a cup of tea and some biscuits as my match time snacks. As I watched them come out on to centre court my sympathy went out to the guy. How must it feel to have the whole nations dreams, as well as your own, heaped on your shoulders? How strong minded must you have to be to play your best game ever under that overwhelming pressure? I guess we were all about to find out... The match began... Right from the start the atmosphere was electric and nerve-wracking. When Andy won a point you could hear the other boys in the hall shouting and clapping! I was doing the same. It felt as if I was at the match. You had the overwhelming feeling that everyone in your surrounding area, and everyone in the country was willing him on, supporting him telepathically, willing him to victory.

Murray won the first 2 sets but Djokovic wasn't number 1 for no reason. He began to fight back and played well in the 3rd set to get back in the game. I started to get that nervous feeling again. I thought to myself 'oh no, Andy's done it again!' Just like the year before, he was getting our hopes up just to throw it away. Every final his bottle crashes and as this seemed to unfold, my disappointment grew. But out of the blue Andy hit back, so to speak, and began playing his best tennis ever! In the fourth set Murray had a good 5-3 lead and he before you knew it he was serving for the Wimbledon title! Here it was... Championship point!! Don't lose it now Andy I whispered at the TV, poised on the edge of my seat not daring to say anything louder. I felt if I did that even that might distract him from victory. All Murray needed to do was hold his nerve. All he needed was one more point and the title was his. But Djokovic wasn't going to give in and he was making Andy work for it. Back...forward...back...forward...watching this was becoming too much to bear. Back...forward...back...forward...then suddenly it happened...the ball went down on Djokovic's side and never came up again. Victory!!!! The halls went wild. All I could hear were shouts and cheers of support. I was jumping all over my cell, pumping my fist in the air. 'Yes Andy, yes big man, you did it!' I can only imagine how amazing it must have been to be in the crowd at centre court that day. Nothing again would match it. A Brit, no a Scot, as Wimbledon Champion! I never thought I would be lucky enough to see that happen.

I've never been a massive fan of tennis, in fact, I don't think most people that watched the final that day would claim to be either. What made it unforgettable was not just the fact that it was one of our countrymen that became the champion but also the inspiration it gave us all. To see someone so dedicated to their ambition finally have that dream realised is an amazing event to be witness to. For that moment he not only made his country proud but also gave a small amount of the drive and ambition to everyone that watched and supported him. Plus, it's nice for Scotland to be the winner for a change!

Anon Shotts



MY TREASURE

My best friend was a wee dog called Bingo. He would sit under my pram. He would not let anyone near my pram and I would sit on the doorstep sharing my ice cream with Bingo.

I went to my Nanna and she gave me a teddy that I loved so much I went everywhere with it. I went to the park with my mother and I would take teddy with me. When I went back home my mother gave me ice cream and Bingo came over. I would give Bingo some and we would sit on the doorstep all day until my mother put me to bed at 6pm, as I was just 3 years old. But one day Bingo stole my teddy.

My mother checked everywhere for my teddy but could not find it. I could not sleep that night as I did not have my teddy. Bingo's owner got me a new teddy but it was not the same. I did not see Bingo for a week after he stole my teddy. Then there he was, sitting on the doorstep. I said to him, "I'm not talking to you." He knew he was bad.

As the years went on Bingo and I became close friends again. Until I came home from school one day and my mother told me that we were moving. I was so upset that I would not see Bingo again.

My mother was checking that we did not forget anything the day we were moving so she went out to the washhouse and there was the teddy that Bingo stole. He must have been jealous of it.

That was the last time I saw Bingo, when I was 7 years old. We moved into our new house but it was not the same as my old friend was not there.

Now I am 50 years old and so I will tell my wee girl the story about Bingo.

John Low Moss

1 GLASGOW LIGHTS

Craig Shotts

Acrylic on canvas

2 SCOTTISH TERRIER

Thomas Shotts

Acrylic on canvas

3 INSIDE SCOPE

Steve Barlinnie

Mosaic/tissue paper

4 PHOENIX

Sean Dumfries

Pastel on paper

5 SHOPPING AT TISCO

Suhkdev Dumfries

Ink on paper

6 THE HILLS OF GOVAN

Anon Greenock

Watercolour on paper

Art has the power to do many things. It can help build self-esteem and confidence; it teaches self-reflection and other life-skills; it can change mood and alter perceptions; it can improve mental health and relationships. Art has the power to transform lives.

From looking at woodland through mirrors to focusing on the small details of nature, the human being's focus changes according to his or her will. The experience of painting and drawing abstract images; concentrating on words inspired by creativity and writing stories; acting out these stories allows for barriers in thought, mind and body to break free. Liberty is at the heart of these ideas. If you want to change your life - use art to effect this change.

The artist in a participatory setting takes responsibility to secure a safe place for these changes to occur. Artists forming peer-to-peer networks earlier in the year at the SPAN Skills Share Day at the Tramway gained an insight into each other's practices and the formation of their group's relationships.

SPAN (The Scottish Prison Arts Network) is a group of artists and organisations working in music, drama and visual art in prisons and in the community. SPAN allows creative practitioners access to a support network of artists, helps encourage the exchange of good practice and promotes access to the arts for all.

This collective energy amongst artists in Scotland is all good news for the Scottish Prison Arts Network. It has given the organisation time to reflect and think about the future.

A period of growth for SPAN is happening concurrently with changes in the criminal justice system. There is a continually evolving recognition that arts and creativity are a valuable tool in the drive towards supporting meaningful activity for prisoners, giving prominence to the arts as a means to change lives.

SPAN will work alongside the Scottish Prison Service in the development of a website. The Tools for Change Roadshow devised by SPAN will engage with artists who want to work in prisons. SPAN will also carry out a feasibility study into piloting a mentoring scheme to develop the arts as a constructive way of delivering meaningful activity.

SPAN's plan for the future will grow the visibility of the organisation and this regular column will keep you updated about their work. The sustainability of the organisation is key to upholding the voice of artists in the criminal justice sector. SPAN will continue to lobby for the arts so that initiatives such as STIR play a leading role in Scotland's cultural landscape.



NEVER TIRE OF A GOOD FIGHT

Benno Shotts

Oil on Canvas