



STIR

ISSUE EIGHT

www.stirmagazine.org

WINNING ARTWORKS

WRITTEN

Adele Cornton Vale Poster

Adele's poem was fantastically written as she describes the life of a poster from beginning to end through great use of personification. It was an interesting insight into a perspective we could never have imagined.

VISUAL ART

John Low Moss Craftsman

John's artwork is a thought provoking, sensitive painting. It is accurately rendered with skillful use of the selected medium.



The editorial team was extremely impressed by the high standard of submissions and it was a delight to read through your work and see the passion jump from the pages. It just shows that despite being in prison and denied a vote that we still care what happens in our country: an important message conveyed within these pages, that we hope those on the outside will see and appreciate.

COMMENT CARDS



Well all the art work and poems for STIR are good everytime I read it. Really good. Keep it up lads!



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Nope, it's the STIR magazine again!



It gives purpose and meaning to inmates with their art, reading and writing etc. And it's Scottish. Well done.



A needed outlet for prisoners and dreamers alike.



2



EIGHT

ISSUE EIGHT



3

On that note it might interest you to hear what John Mason (SNP MSP) and Michael McMahon (Labour MSP) had to say about the up and coming referendum when they visited Shotts – this interview can be found on pages 9 and 10. It was a pleasure to see people interpreting the theme of independence on a personal level and be able to identify with changing points in their life, in particular Andrew from Glenochil wrote a wonderful and humorous piece called *Single Cell Overcrowding* on page 4. This has been an exciting issue to design, for those of you who are STIR fanatics, you will notice that we have inverted our trademark STIR 'slash' on pages 5 and 6 to reflect the opposing views of the Scottish Independence debate: it's okay to go against the grain! The content published on the theme of independence reflects the readership and not the views of the STIR editorial group.

Also on pages 9 and 10 this issue, we are featuring *Create and Curate* an art project delivered in Corton Vale led by poet Evlynn Sharp, artist Brigid Collins and curator Sarah Bromage alongside staff in the Learning Centre. The works produced by the women were showcased in an exhibition with accompanying catalogue, check out your Learning Centre for extra copies! The editorial team thought the work was inspiringly beautiful. It was especially nice to see the fusion of visual art and poetry, something which we would like to see more of in STIR!

By the time this issue is published we will be looking for submissions for our international issue – ten issues of STIR, can you believe it? We're looking for each Learning Centre to explore artistic practices within a country of their choosing and, if possible, to utilise existing forms of prison art as inspiration. However, as always, you don't need to do the same task as everyone else. You could undertake the theme yourself – what does international mean to you? Remember, you can send in visual art and writing NOT relating to the theme. Send everything and anything...as always, we want to see work that creates a STIR! The closing date for our international issue submissions will be the 3rd of October – get it on your calendar!

Lastly, you will remember in our last issue we showed you some of the paintings made for the Robertson Trust (page 10). We credited one of the works, *Heart and Fire* by Peter. However, it was actually called *Night and Day* by Jim from Dumfries. Unfortunately, these mistakes do happen, so our sincerest apologies to you Jim!

The next issue of STIR, our music theme, will be out at the beginning of October.

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

The only arts magazine by prisoners, for prisoners in Scotland

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

THE SACRED ART OF STEALING >

Stealing is bad and we shouldn't do it. Wow, this rehabilitation stuff really works doesn't it; quick someone tell the judge that I can go home!

1 SKATER GIRL

Paul Barlinnie
Pastel on Paper

2 WHEN CATAWAY, DANGER MOUSE WILL PLAY

Kris Shotts
Oil on Canvas

3 CABBAGE HEID

David Dumfries
Acrylic on Canvas

The subject of appropriation in art can be applied to a great many artists working today, and I include some of us in the statement. The concept is fairly simple on the surface; an artist using pre-existing images, objects and source material to create their own, new, artwork. However the more you look at this approach to making art, the muddier the waters become. When is it appropriation art and when is it simply a copy of another person's work, perhaps even ending up at forgery (back to jail again - boo hiss)?

The central tenet of appropriation in art is the re-contextualisation of the source material, which is essentially arty speak for applying a new meaning to the work. Think of a DJ sampling a pre-existing song; you can recognize the original elements but they are combined with new ones to create a piece of music that is original in its own right. The success, or failure, of this depends on the DJ's ability to mesh the disparate elements into a work that engages with us and says what the DJ wants to say.

Although this deconstruction of the original elements and subsequent reconstruction with new meaning is essential in the creation of the artwork, the methods employed vary dramatically, veering from brash and obvious to extremely minimal and subtle.

In fact some work, such as Marcel Duchamp's ready-made sculpture 'Fountain' (a factory manufactured Urinal) is exactly as you'd buy it in a hardware store, save a signature R. Mutt painted on it. This is an extreme and controversial example of re-contextualisation but shows what can be done.

I'm going to pick out a couple of examples by contemporary artists who employ appropriation methods in the construction of their work, and by sheer coincidence they happen to be some of my favourites; Glenn Brown, and the Chapman Brothers.

It is definitely wrong to take something that doesn't belong to us. No ifs, no buts; in our modern society we just don't tolerate theft ... unless of course you're an artist in which case it's ok. You can dust off your foil-lined shopping bag and merrily skip off to the High Street and appropriate.

Brown is a Turner Prize nominated painter based in London. He is a prolific and blatant borrower of imagery whose work starts from reproductions of other artist's paintings. No one is safe from his light fingers; Rembrandt, Delacroix, Dali, Velazquez or even science fiction illustrators such as Chris Foss or Tony Roberts. Brown, distorting colour, size or position to alter the original composition, subtly manipulates the image. Never working from the actual painting, rather using bad reproductions. Brown further transforms the work by cleverly mimicking the photographic surface of a reproduction. This use of Trompe L'oeil is painstaking and fastidious and shows Brown's perverse delight in paint as a medium to work with.

It's not difficult to see why Brown has been accused of plagiarism, even being confronted by Tony Roberts at the Turner Prize in 2000. However, when you realise the subtle changes that he creates coupled with the method of painting employed you understand that Brown's conceptual process ruptures the appropriation to create something truly original that blurs the line of our understanding of ownership.

This line is less ruptured and more blown to hell by the work of the bad boys of British art, Jake and Dinos Chapman. Their oeuvre is large and varied, always shocking and pushing the boundaries of acceptability. It's also very funny.

In a piece called 'Insult to injury' (2003), the brothers purchased a rare set of 80 etchings by the old master Francisco de Goya called 'The Disasters of War'. Then they set about 'improving' them by drawing and painting over them, adding cartoon faces, creepy clown heads or other crass imagery.

The outcry this caused in the public, and art world was immense and I dare say a lot of you will think it was nothing but mindless vandalism. I bet the Chapmans loved the bile spouted about them. However, the brothers were making serious art; they re-contextualised the etchings, turning the meaning from being about the horrors of war and the destruction of human life to commenting on iconoclasm and ownership. Art has, after all, been the subject of attack and destruction for centuries due to the religious ideals. The debate about the destruction of another artist's work carries on though, and it's interesting to note, that the monetary value of the work increased due to their additions.

Appropriation art is a massive subject and I can only scratch the surface of it here, however, I can't overstate how important a concept it is in contemporary art practice and it even has a bearing on our own work produced in prison. I've seen countless reproductions of famous artworks that are technically brilliant but would be made into something special by employing the concept of re-contextualisation. The way we utilize pre-existing images or objects is limitless: projecting images over one another, distorting, collaging, juxtaposing random objects, altering scale, application of medium or working on top of different objects. The important thing is to use these elements to say something different and something that you want to say. There are some fantastic examples of appropriation art in this issue of STIR and I hope they inspire you to start begging, borrowing and stealing your way to create some original art.

Sorry Mr Judge, guess you can't teach an old dog...

Benno Shotts



1

PERSONAL FREEDOM

Give me freedom
The freedom to be me
Not what others want me to be

Give me freedom
To do what I want
When I want to do it

Give me freedom
To wear what I want
And not follow fashion

Give me freedom
To say what I mean
Be it PC or not

Give me freedom
The freedom of independence

David Dumfries

INDEPENDENCE DAY

“It’s your bed, you make it, and you lie on it!” Those words were said to me five days after my 15th birthday by my father. Standing on the front doorstep of our two up two down mid-terraced house, with a brown paper carrier bag in my hand, containing all my belongings, I was ready to leave home to start a new life.

On the 13th April, 1961, exactly 15 years after I had been delivered into this ever-changing world, I took the royal oath, and declared my allegiance to the Queen and her successors.

Now on the Thursday morning, at eight, I was ready to go away to the army, for initially 12 years. I had rather hoped someone would have come to the station with me, but no joy on that front, so I was heading away on my own.

POETIC PEAKS (AND TROUGHS)

Who could weave an earthly heaven
tear from its enigmatic bonds
free us from ourselves
from pain bought from repression,
from the gut wrenching ache
of inappropriate expression?

In a world evolved from words
how we can be left stunned
when a hand is raised
in emphatic punctuation,
were we ever young
without knowledge of proper emotion?

As if born to be fierce, felonious
and left to forever curse
innocence scattered in the dust,
with the Book of Excuses
never lending itself
to forgiveness, to peace.

And how complex the mind
rattling delusions around
like pebbles in a tin can,
and it weeps for everything
which NO crime can bring-
like freedom without being blind!

Paul Greenock

WHAT INSPIRED ME...

Inspired by a poor print-out
image that had been
enlarged too much but
looked interesting,
I decided to experiment.



2

TRENCH TRAUMA

Leaving home for the first time
Tidal wave of opposition
Long arm of the Kaiser approaching
Snow still on their beards
Volunteers in abundance
Sturdy minors ready
Caps for helmets
Broom handles for bayonets
Dressed for victory
Arriving on the beach
Passing bodies
Some not whole
Enduring the ground
Entering the trenches
Marching dreaming
Waiting your turn.

Brian Low Moss



3

1 GONE FISHING

Raymond Barlinnie

Watercolour on Paper

2 BRIAN COX

Keith Barlinnie

Oil on Canvas

3 CHIM EN

Duong Barlinnie

Acrylic on Paper

4 NEW TOWN

Gordon Shotts

Acrylic on Canvas

5 FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

James Dumfries

Pencil on Paper

6 ALL THAT'S LEFT

Colin Dumfries

Acrylic on Canvas

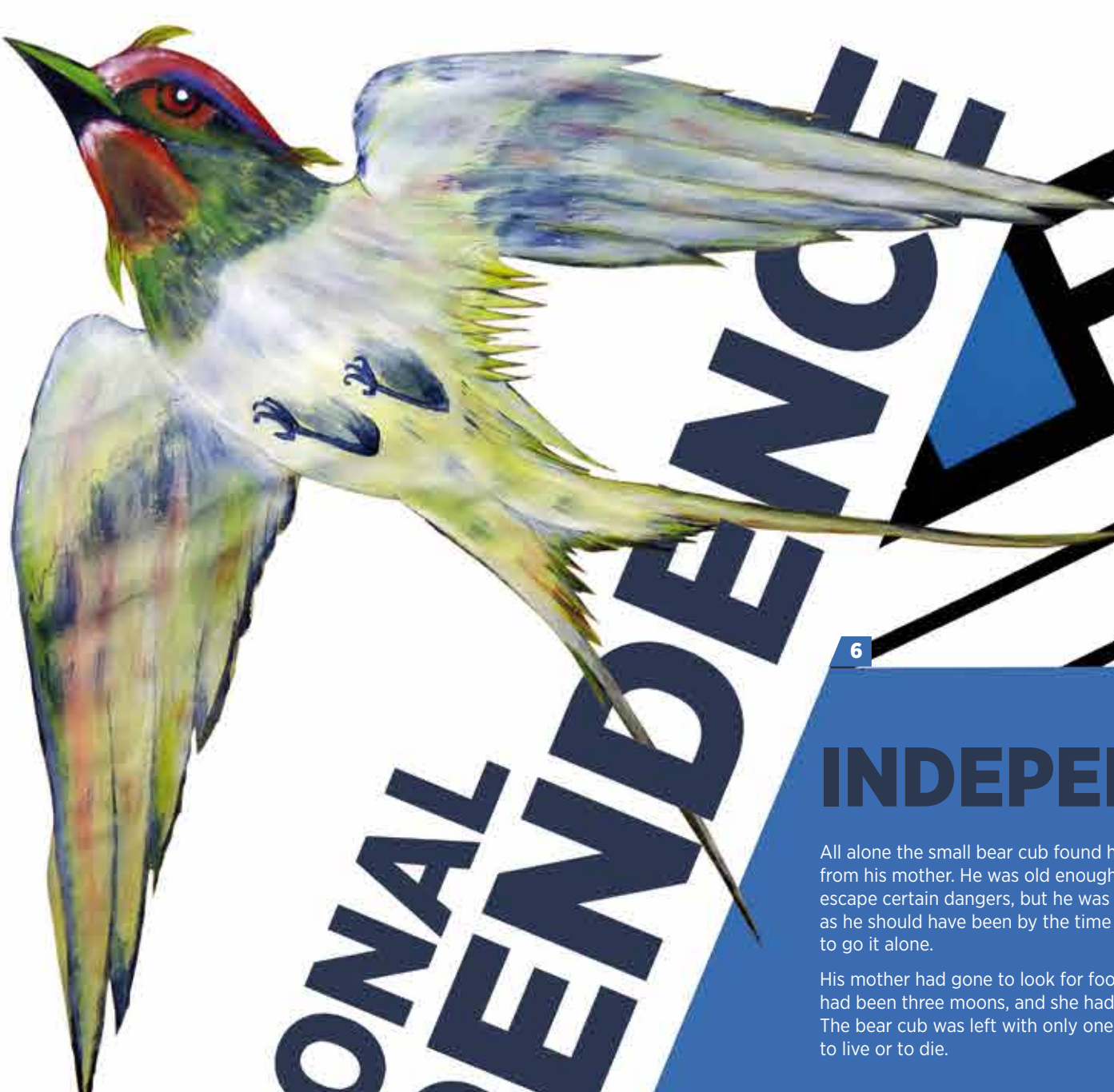
7 THE PLOUGH

Derik Shotts

Acrylic on Canvas

WHAT INSPIRED ME...

I've always enjoyed abstract art and when the idea behind Mondrian's art was explained, I decided to take that idea and use scottish cities for my designs. This is Edinburgh.



6

INDEPENDENT BEAR CUB

All alone the small bear cub found himself separated from his mother. He was old enough to fish, hunt and escape certain dangers, but he was not as experienced as he should have been by the time he was meant to go it alone.

His mother had gone to look for food, but it had been three moons, and she had not yet returned. The bear cub was left with only one choice - to live or to die.

Alone and scared, he set out to find some food. He was hungry; it had been some time since his last meal.

He went to where the water was slow to try and catch the small fish. He would need to catch a large number to satisfy his hunger, where only a few large catches would do the same. But he knew he had less chance in the fast flowing water where all the big bears went.

He spent many hours catching and eating his small fish, and by the time the moon had returned to the sky that night, he no longer felt the hunger. It was a challenge to survive, but he had survived for one more day.

The next morning as the little cub rolled over and stretched in his den, he felt sad by the disappearance of his mother, but amongst those feelings, he was confident and proud that he had managed to eat for himself, not having to rely on something else for his survival.

Just then his mother walked into the den. She looked wet and tired, she had food. The bear cub ran to greet his mother; she nuzzled at him, fed him and then lay down to rest. The cub was glad she was back, but he had enjoyed his challenge of independence - even if he didn't quite need it yet.

David Glenochil

6



SINGLE CELL OVERCROWDING

So there I was swimming about, not quite sure how I got where I was to be honest, but anyway there I was when suddenly blam! Or more precisely a squidgety splat, accompanied by a rather strange sort of tearing sensation. At first I thought it was something in my back pocket, before remembering that I didn't have back pockets, but it just grew and grew until there he was, a rather familiar looking little amoeba dawdling about as if he owned the place. Then it dawned on me, he was me, or to be more correct, a copy that had sprouted off while I was going about my business and doing amoeba things like trying to grow a foot to move about with. Frankly if I'd been successful I'd have kicked this new arrival right in his plasma membrane but then I realised he was looking at me and thinking the same thing. He was me and if I was planning to kick him, then he was planning the same thing. That's the problem with being a wee single celled thing, just when you're getting settled in life you give a wriggle, split down the middle and before you know it there's two of you, then four, then sixteen and then it starts to get crowded. Before long you're surrounded by millions of you all trying to be independent of yourself. Amoebas; we must be the only life forms to have evolved existentialism before feet.

5

Andrew Glenochil

7



WE'RE ON THE MARCH WI' SALMOND'S ARMY

We're on the march wi' Salmond's army
We're going to the ballot box
Will we break away for good?
Well for one I think we should
I hope an independent Scotland's on the books.

We're bolting for the bright horizon, now's our time
To leave the neighbours well behind
I know we will be fine, it's been a long time
Since our future was ours to design.

The English won't convince us that without them we are doomed
For without us they will lose out and we will surely boom
They want to scare us into staying but the figures are plain to see
In an independent Scotland the richer we will be.

We're on the march wi' Salmond's army
We're going to the ballot box
Will we break away for good?
Well for one I think we should.
I hope an independent Scotland's on the books.

The arguments they're making don't interest me at all
About money, missiles, memberships or whether the pound will fall
Scotland should be independent our hearts and souls as one
The best wee country in the world, the freedom's just begun.

In Scotland we have all our own sick and poor to feed
Sick of being slaves to Westminster's greed
We can go on now to spend all our hard-earned dough
And leave all the problems to our historic foe.

We're on the march with Salmond's army
We're going to the ballot box
Will we break away for good?
Well for one I think we should
I hope an independent Scotland's on the books.

WHAT INSPIRED US...
This song has been inspired by the song 'We're on the March with Ally's Army'.

WE'RE ON THE MARCH WI' DARLING'S ARMY

We're on the march wi' Darling's army
We're going to the ballot box
We need to keep the union strong
Separation will be wrong
Together we are better on this rock.

We need to keep the union going, don't break up the sovereignty
Within it we'll be stronger, it's plain for all to see
We've had fights and then made up, from a chalice we have supped
And we'll stay together strongly for ever more.

Upon us lies decision we need to get it right
Ne'er have we had such a chance we really shouldn't fight
In the union is a must, over time we've built up trust
No's the best decision you'll see I'm right.

We're on the march wi' Darling's army
We're going to the ballot box
We need to keep the union strong
Separation will be wrong
Together we are better on this rock.

I really like the monarchy I think it feels just right
I don't trust politicians they argue and they fight
All I really know is the Union's strong
So why would we want to break it up, the whinger's are all wrong.

Scotland wants to break away but I don't think that's right
We're told we will be better off but that's a load of sh'te
All the talk about the pound has Salmond pulling his hair
But what about the many of us who think the Union's fair?

We're on the march wi' Darling's army
We're going to the ballot box
We need to keep the union strong
Separation will be wrong
Together we are better on this rock.

WE WON'T MARCH WI' ANY ARMY

We won't march wi' any army
We might go to the ballot box
Please don't get us wrong
We care about what's going on
We're sick of all the toffs prattling on.

Both sides keep talking but seem to get nowhere
And in the end how many of us Scots will really care?
I'm sure we'll learn to roll with whoever's in control
Whatever we choose, a side'll lose and Scotland bears the bruise.

The politicians argue about money all the time
But all I want to know is will we be truly fine?
They say we'll have more power but I don't really know
When all the fighting's over what will we have to show?

We won't march with any army
We might go to the ballot box
Please don't get us wrong
We care about what's going on
We're sick of all the toffs prattling on.

Barlinnie Creative Writing Group

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

It's like being fourteen years old all over again,
life a seemingly endless bolt of parental rows.
Staying with mum, the obvious safe option,
after all hasn't she always been there?
Yet there's a bitterness inside somewhere deep
that someone believes life would be better without her.
Still, life with dad opens so many new possibilities;
a chance for a brand new beginning.
Therein lies the very heart of the matter,
With mum I know just what I'll get: rules, restrictions.
Then with dad, all will be a wonderful adventure
that could end up being catastrophic,
but it's not some bizarre competition,
simply a question of what's best for my future.
To stay firmly upon the path long known
or to take the road less travelled?
Although my mum has shaped who I am
it seems perhaps it's time for a change.
In the matter of who gets custody of my nationality
I feel that dad comes out slightly ahead.
So when I'm asked who to choose come September 18th,
I wish to begin a new chapter in life.

Robert Barlinnie



UHURU

A dream that once was
For our forefathers and foremothers.
Bloodshed and teardrops
For self-determination and home rule.

A dream that is
For our brothers and sisters,
Independent self-made men and women.
Freedom to be what we want to be.

A dream that is to be for our children.
The future is bright, the future is gloom.
Uhuru! Uhuru! Uhuru!
Free at last! Free at last! Free at last!

Mugo Dumfries

1 I ONLY WANT WHAT I CAN'T HAVE

Benno Shotts
Acrylic on Canvas

2 DISBELIEF

Allan Barlinnie
Pencil on Paper

3 SIR WILLIAM WALLACE

Chris Glenochil
Acrylic on Canvas

A POEM ON SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

Scotland the Brave, this is our year
Vote 'Yes' in September, and hear Salmond cheer
I think it is time to go our own way
So get to the stations and have your say.

If Wallace was here he'd vote 'Yes' for sure
His blood it runs blue, his Scottish heart pure
He died for his land, the hills and the lochs
He used every resource, he even threw rocks.

There are people who say we can't do it alone
Just leave it to the Scots, we'll decide on our own
'Better Together' you don't stand a chance
From over the border Tories can watch as we dance.

Stirling, Bannockburn, Glasgow to Perth
Nowhere nicer any place on this earth
700 years ago The Bruce sent them home
Nowhere in history was bravery better shown.

Mark Low Moss

INDEPENDENCE

I don't know if you can see,
The changes that have
Happened since 1603?
Over the years from the
Groat to the pound,
Being part of the union
Wiz pure sound.
So I've been reciting Robert Burns,
Drinking whisky and Irn Bru,
Those made me think
About where I came from,
Deacon Brodie, Tunnocks Wafer, Caramel
Logs, Teacakes, The Dandy,
The Beano, Pa Broon, Oor Wullie and
Deacon Blue too.
Oh but let me tell you about my country,
I'll tell you in ma ain time,
Scotland's daen just fine.
The Highlands are calling me,
So it's time fir a holiday.
If I become a foreigner,
That'll no make me sad,
Scotland you're everything,
That David Cameron he's just bad,
Now I'm sitting here with no coal for the fire,
A cold room, a disbanded shipyard choir,
Flames courtesy of Christopher Brookmyre.
Industrial nation ripped apart,
Passion burning in my heart.
The way is clear,
Vote in the SNP,
Oil and gas, deep fried Mars, Arbroath Smokie,
Forfar Bridie, tattie scone, tourist hunts for the haggis,
Kissing the stone of destiny,
An independent future doesn't need to be a mystery.

Maurice Glenochil

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Scotland's Free! A hear them sing
As they take a chug fae their can a Carlin'.

The sound eh the march it lifts ma heart,
As I try tae envision this brand new start.

Independent Scotland! Somethin' tae behold,
The sky's the limit- or so we've been told.

Oil, resources and economic growth,
Fact or fiction? It's puzzlin' you and I both!

Whit it aw means still sounds a bit barmy,
But a watch oan in wonder eh the Tartan Army.

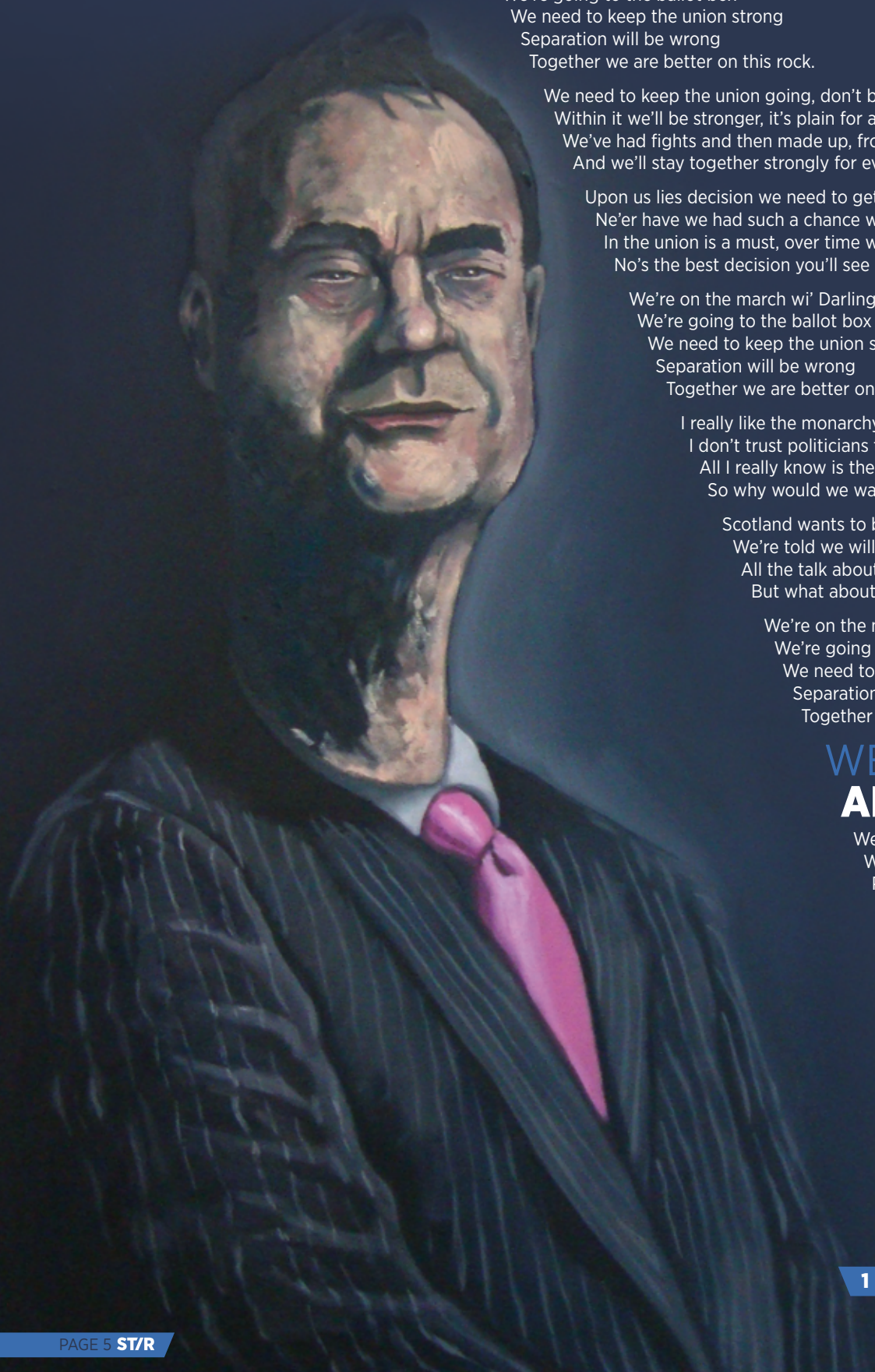
Where will it lead us? This brave new world,
As I watch the St. Andrews flag becoming unfurled.

David Dumfries

IN DEFENCE OF THE UNION

Tartan Army
Saltires flying
Jimmy Bunnets jumpin'
half-time pies
am in disguise
wash it down
wae Irn-Bru
your letter's in the post
that's a good invention
that wee crown on the right
at Govan shipyard
you hear the blasts of the horns
all the wee welders' bunnets
they 're headed for the greasy spoon
working for a big industry
that'll soon be shut doon.

John Barlinnie





WHAT INSPIRED ME...

This collage shows some of my favourite landmarks and why I'm proud to be Scottish. These are my surroundings and why I love where I live. The music from Scotland, when I hear it - even the bagpipes - reminds me of my family, my grandparents and how I miss them. All the parts to this artwork are good memories to me and in particular things that I like.

OUR WORLD

Andrea Greenock
Collage

INTERVIEW WITH

JOHN MASON SNP MSP

In Dundee we were world leaders at one time in gaming, with Grand Theft Auto and in 3D animation, but the industry has been allowed to decline. Would an independent Scotland encourage this industry?

J: One of the advantages of a smaller country is that it can adapt more quickly. The Games industry you mentioned was a good example, eventually the UK Government were persuaded to give some tax breaks to the Games industry, but by that time it had already suffered quite a lot, because it couldn't compete with the other countries that were doing that. If we had been independent, for us that would have been quite a big thing, but for the UK government it was quite a small thing.

Not having control of tax is a big disadvantage. Even if we remained part of the UK we have to get more control of tax so that we can help things like the Games industry in the way that it didn't get helped in the past.

Recently the Chief Executive of the SPS, Colin McConnell, has written an Organisational Review. We seem to be heading towards a more progressive prison system with a focus on humane treatment of prisoners and education in particular, and actually this magazine is part of that. It's a changing environment in prison. It appears that the SNP are leading these changes. Is that accurate and are Labour of that progressive mind-set?

J: I'm not sure I would see that as a party political issue actually. I think that across the parties there will be people who really are committed to the concept you are describing. Just because someone is in prison does not mean they should be totally cut off from the rest of the world. That's why we are both in here today to take part in this. However long people are in prison for, it's got to be about eventually coming out and reintegrating back into society.

There seems to be change coming. The American system is beyond belief, in my opinion, they are psychologically torturing people and then letting them out and look what happens, whereas the Scandinavian system is the complete opposite and they have a massively lower reoffending rate. So even though there are budget constraints in Scotland, just changing the culture from the top to the bottom of the Prison Service, to change the way prisoners are treated would make a massive difference.

J: Its taking time to educate the public on things like community service and so on. I think there are also things we can do with volunteers which don't have to cost a lot of money. I know there are volunteers who come in here and one of them said to me that his attitude to prisoners and prison had changed since being a volunteer. I know that takes time but that's a way to change societal attitudes.

A friend of mine is working for a group called Side Step, which is part of Action for Children. What they do is help young people who are offending, or at risk of offending. They are trying to step them to the side and give them mentoring, try to get them jobs and that kind of thing, so if there is any funding then that would be the most important place to put it.

J: On the Finance Committee we are doing a lot of work on this idea of investing for youngsters which applies to health and all sorts of things. In my area there is a group called Includem who work with teenagers.

A lot of it is resources and it's all very well saying that if you spend a million pounds here then in ten years time you will make savings because there will be less people in hospital or in prison or wherever, but you've still got to find the million pounds today and that is difficult.

Does it always come down to money though?

J: A lot of it does come back to money. If we were controlling our entire budget then we could allocate money where we think it should be.

I read recently that we are about forty-third on the world scale for education. China is way ahead of us, and Japan. How would an independent Scotland reverse that?

J: It's always difficult to measure these things and there is a general feeling that Scotland has slipped a bit but maybe not as much as people say we have. The Curriculum for Excellence had cross party agreement and trade union agreement and quite a lot of agreement about moving in that direction. There have been some practical issues with it, whether it's resourced well enough and things, but I think the general problem, we are trying to address it.

Even then, there is a mixed picture. Even within one school I hear the Maths department is doing really well and they are quite relaxed and are happy but the Art department isn't and its not working for them. I suppose inevitably when you change a system there are going to be hiccups.

Jok Shotts



CREATE & CURATE

“...A WAY TO UNLOCK ALL SORTS OF EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS WITHOUT JUDGEMENT; AN ARTISTIC BREATH OF FRESH AIR...” - RITA

Create & Curate, a poetry and visual art project was launched at Cornton Vale for International Women's Day 2014 in the form of an exhibition with accompanying publication. The women curated an exhibition of original artworks by female artists from the University of Stirling's extensive collection, which they then responded to through poetry in workshops led by poet Evlynn Sharp. The women also made their own 'Poem-Houses' with artist Brigid Collins all of which were included in the exhibition. The 'Poem-Houses' took a word or a line from the women's own poems as a starting point to consider their work in a three-dimensional format.

Create & Curate integrated visual art and literature into the fabric and culture of Cornton Vale and it is significant that renowned female artists were willing to lend their work as a source of inspiration for participants. This exhibition will travel to the University of Stirling to be viewed by the academic and local community in the autumn.

Sarah Bromage, Learning and Audience Development Curator, at the University of Stirling commented, "I did not know really what to expect when I started the project, never having worked within a prison before. However, I was really surprised how inspirational I found meeting the women, watching them work and seeing the wonderful product they created. I hope that they are as proud as I am of the project and the work that they have achieved."

REVIEW CREATE & CURATE

The Create and Curate arts and writing project has been a big hit with the participants. Speaking to these ladies they all feel that it has helped them grab such a great opportunity out of less fortunate circumstances. Create and Curate has helped build upon hidden talents Oand has empowered women to move forward with the skills and techniques that they have learned throughout the project.

It just seemed to spring up out of nowhere and the place looks great but I love going to galleries and there's a wee part of me that would like more information about the work and the purpose behind that work and the project as a whole.

That said, for those visiting the Central Block, the artwork and poetry is very creative and shares the women's stories. As someone not involved in the project, and in my opinion, Create and Curate is a credit to these women and will inspire many others in the future, myself included, to get involved.

Amie Corton Vale

ABOUT KINDER SCOUT

Reflections permanently etched
In the still glazed rippling waters,
The burden of the carrier.
Reflections dance in the cold moonlight
Haunted by the harsh sound of our souls,
The burden of the traveller.
Reflections giving air, wind to our journey,
Calming serenity mirrored back to the seas,
The burden of the bringer of time.
Reflections are echoes, memories of our lives.
Reflections are echoes,
Spiralling tides, moving through
Our oceans; ocean of our minds.

Margaret Corton Vale

TURNINGS

What I had was my whole self,
Feeling the pain of days
That have long gone,
The ups and downs,
The ins and outs of life.

What I had was my whole self
Turning ashes into beauty
Like a sunrise in the morning mist.

Seal Corton Vale



INTERVIEW WITH

MICHAEL MCMAHON LABOUR MSP

In Dundee we were world leaders at one time in gaming, with Grand Theft Auto and in 3D animation, but the industry has been allowed to decline. Would an independent Scotland encourage this industry?

M: As part of the UK those industries grew up, so being part of the UK didn't prevent the artistic element of those sectors. The problem is, how do you sustain it? You need the academic research and entrepreneurship to develop to allow them to grow. My argument would be that being part of the Universities structure across the UK, we benefit from being part of a bigger pool of money to support that type of research.

Recently the Chief Executive of the SPS, Colin McConnell, has written an Organisational Review. We seem to be heading towards a more progressive prison system with a focus on humane treatment of prisoners and education in particular, and actually this magazine is part of that. It's a changing environment in prison. It appears that the SNP are leading these changes. Is that accurate and are Labour of that progressive mind-set?

M: I think there is a general recognition that the balance has not been right and there hasn't been enough emphasis on rehabilitation and supporting people in the community when they come back out. These are all financial decisions as well, and to be honest with you, I think the harsh reality is that if you've got money to spend on issues, wider society will not welcome money being skewed towards prisoners coming back out. There is a general recognition that rehabilitation doesn't feature high enough on the agenda of the Prison Service.

There seems to be change coming. The American system is beyond belief, in my opinion, they are psychologically torturing people and then letting them out and look what happens, whereas the Scandinavian system is the complete opposite and they have a massively lower reoffending rate. So even though there are budget constraints in Scotland, just changing the culture from the top to the bottom of the Prison Service, to change the way prisoners are treated would make a massive difference.

M: You've hit the nail on the head, that's what's needed. You can make individual financial decisions from one day to the next, but in order to make the transformational change in the way that we treat prisoners, it is a cultural shift that's needed. We can move further and further away from systems like America and Turkey and places like that which have very harsh penal regimes and move towards the more enlightened regimes. I would prefer us to move in that direction. We've got one of the worst records in terms of per head of population locking people up. I don't think that has worked.

A friend of mine is working for a group called Side Step, which is part of Action for Children. What they do is help young people who are offending, or at risk of offending. They are trying to step them to the side and give them mentoring, try to get them jobs and that kind of thing, so if there is any funding then that would be the most important place to put it.

M: Prevention rather than cure. There is a lot of good work out there and good examples, but there probably isn't the overarching framework which is set in a direction of prevention rather than cure.

Does it always come down to money though?

M: At some point it does. There might be times when the Government will make those long-term types of decisions. It would be good to see much more long-term thinking on almost anything, be it health, education, you know whatever. You have to invest now to get the longer-term benefits. You might occasionally get that, but ultimately someone is sitting with an accountant and they are trying to balance the books and people are demanding immediate returns, investment in jobs, investment in road building and hospital building, to create jobs. They are focused more on the actual projects than they are on the longer-term benefits to the economy or society or whatever. They don't always get it right and short-termism is politics' biggest problem.

I read recently that we are about forty-third on the world scale for education. China is way ahead of us, and Japan. How would an independent Scotland reverse that?

M: Everyone did sign up to the concept of Curriculum for Excellence, the problem is that the money has not been there, people have been concerned that the resources to get from where we were to where we needed to be in the time-scale that was set, just weren't sufficient. The teaching unions were asking for the time-scale to be extended, because they don't believe that they are ready and that we could actually jeopardise some people's education. Now that is a long-term problem. At the moment there are alarm bells ringing and I think we need to stop and say, why is this not working.

Even head teachers need to manage it to individual budgets and if they are getting pressured to deliver on maths then they might put a bit of additional resource into what's required in that area at the expense of art, and that's not the way it was supposed to be. It was supposed to be a system that looked at each individual child and said well if you are more artistic than mathematically inclined then you should get the same support and assistance as the maths pupil. It was to be a system that said, its not all about academics, some people are good with their hands, some people are creative, some people are better at science. You've got to look at each individual child and cater for their needs, but it appears as though it's become too patchy as John said. Within schools, between schools and between local authorities there are different levels of preparedness. People are saying, we are not ready yet.

Jok Shotts



1 KING AND QUEEN ON THRONE
Jason Shotts
Stephen Low Moss
Goauche

5 MADAM BUTTERFLY
Thomas Glenochil
Thomas Glenochil
Acrylic on Canvas



3

THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

On a cold, fog enshrouded evening, on a hilltop to the east of the city stands the central graveyard. It's a large, Victorian monolithic place of rest, now filled to the brim and indeed bursting at the seams with angels, tombs and mausoleums of every size and description. Though there had been no burial for quite some time, it was still a popular place for people to come – some for peace and quiet and others to seek solace among the dead and decomposed. It was there that I had picked many a victim, much to my own satisfaction.

I was unusual in appearance – small, scruffy, with an ambling gait due to an injury to my right leg which I had picked up due to an accident in my youth. I could quite easily have been picked out from the crowd and as a result mine was a life lived in the shadows, not mixing with many men. Instead I preferred the softer, tender, pleasing tones of the many female victims I had sought out in the past and, god forgiving, I knew would do so again in the future.

I made my way to the ornate fountain in the centre of the graveyard where there was an array of benches, most of them bequeathed by dead spouses partners, and was a favourite haunt of mine as there was usually some bereaved widow sitting alone musing over her future. I saw her sitting there as I stood in the shadows and knew that she would be the one, my chosen victim for the night.



3 HOMAGE TO KLIMT
Tuan Barlinnie
Acrylic on Canvas

7 BEACH HUTS
Colin Dumfries
Colin Dumfries
Acrylic on Canvas

I approached her stealthily, hoping not to disturb her with any sound I may make or any slight movement that my awkward ambling walk may warn her of my approach. As I neared, being only 10ft from her back, my hearing senses (which I may add were in perfect working order and had saved my hide on many an occasion) alerted me to the sound of heavy footsteps, which I knew instinctively to be another male. I retreated back to the shadows and protection of the all encompassing branches of a large fir tree and silently waited.

Not more than 10 minutes had passed before the intruding gent, who had interrupted me, left and I waited a few minutes more, making sure that the coast was clear before I approached my victim for the final time. I crept ever nearer and was only about a foot away when, much to my surprise, she did not back away in disgust but beckoned me closer and closer. Then, as I stood before her, she opened her canvas bag which had been sitting in her lap, and withdrew a small bread roll which she broke in half. She offered me some along with the tempting words 'here you go little pigeon, you must be starving'.

As I said, the graveyard was always the best place for victims. Coo. Coo.

Eon Low Moss



2

VAMPIRE

Being a vampire for the past 200 years, you'd assume that I am used to the idea of leading a lonely existence by now. But no matter how much I try to convince myself, I feel constantly drawn to the idea of spending time in the company of young women. After watching all those advertisements, of dating websites like match.com in between episodes of *Vampire Diaries* (it's hilarious how they never seem to get their facts right in their storylines!), I finally managed to register myself on match.com. But no matter how long I waited it seemed nobody was interested in me, guess there really must be a shortage of pretty young women who like to hang out with vampires like me; the dates are meant for nights only, of course. In hindsight I guess putting down, 'Allergic to sunshine' and 'on liquid diet only' wasn't such a bright idea.

To avoid sinking further into my ever growing feeling of boredom, I decided to bite the bullet and attend the jamboree being thrown by the payday lenders next door (Wonga something). They can't be that bad, after all I must have received at least a dozen letters from them in the past week, offering to give me easy manageable loans. Call me a sceptic but I guess if people call the lenders fondly by the term 'bloodsuckers' they must be the closest alternative I'm going to find to vampires out there on the high street tonight. And if I end up going out with one of them what's the worst that can happen? I'll end up with a great 10% discount on the nominal 5000% APR that they charge and if the date doesn't end well, I won't have to worry about sorting out my dinner tonight! Result.

Dennis Shotts



4

FROST UPON A BLADE OF GRASS

Frost upon a blade of grass
Frozen in time,
Like a fast memory
Of high consequence
Leaving one as cold as ice.

In its white coat
As if rigid in fright,
With insight awakening
Tundra expanses,
Ever-expectant faces.

How does one thaw out
Persuade sap to rise
In chilled veins,
Help ground-locked eyes
Aspire to brighter skies?

Paul Greenock

WHAT I WAS THINKING...

I wanted to represent the duality of the human condition... the instinct, animal side and the softer, more thoughtful side

HERSTORY

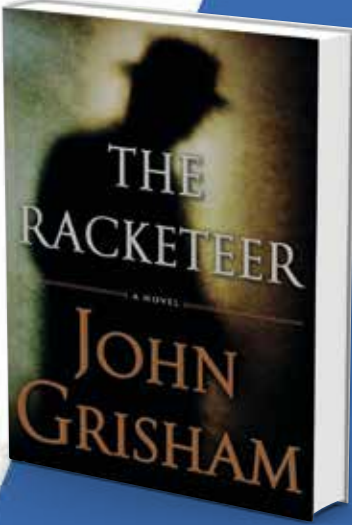
Lay down your tartan cloak.
Let Scotland bleed through.
Our hero woman of Scotland –
If not for you
No herstory.

Drop your vanity
Leave your dignity outside
Vanish yourself of superficial make-up
Pick up your voice
Slay warriors
Herstory.

Bite, kick, bitch.
Bear the scars.
Wounds of suppressors
Lie bleeding, breed
Herstory.

But rise we did.
Still do and always will.
Ferocious scorn of Scots woman.
Herstory.
Herstory.
Herstory.

Jackie Cornton Vale



he knows. He has been charged with racketeering and his innocence has been twisted and manipulated to suit the needs of the local prosecutor. At the same time a judge is found dead in his remote log cabin. He had been murdered. There are no clues, no reasons for the murder, and the investigating FBI team is stumped. They have no direction to take or lead to follow.

What Grisham weaves next is a masterful take of how Bannister uses the knowledge he has to manipulate the FBI, and the system, to ensure he is released. This is only the start of a twisting tale that leads down unexpected corridors and takes unseen angles.

BOOK REVIEW THE RACKETEER BY JOHN GRISHAM

Many different people have enjoyed John Grisham's style of legal drama, and *The Racketeer* exhibits more of the same twists and turns, but this time with a difference.

Malcolm Bannister is the hero of the story, a small town lawyer whose life, prior to this story, was tied up in small town America. However, when the story opens, we find Malcolm in prison, suffering from the loss of everything

Whilst the American prison system is not one the reader would recognise, there are features that would strike a chord for many people. The character of Bannister himself is a likeable one. The reader will find themselves rooting for Bannister in the various situations that he finds himself in and admiring his resourcefulness.

One charge that could be laid at *'The Racketeers'* door is that it is extremely far-fetched, and just wouldn't happen in 'real life'. Some of the steps that Bannister takes do seem unlikely, at best. However, as the story unfolds, new elements of the plot are introduced, which helps make sense of what has gone before. Whilst the plot Grisham has weaved is complicated, it still has a feel about it that it could happen.

The Dumfries Book Group also read *The Racketeer* a few months ago. This was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who read it. It was judged as being one of the best books that the group has read since its inception. Since then *The Racketeer* has been available for loan through the prison Learning Centre. Quite a few people have taken this out, and everyone, thus far, has enjoyed it.

Grisham has produced a book that is a true joy to read. There is nothing that doesn't keep the readers attention. It moves along at a good pace, and ultimately the reader doesn't feel as though they have been short-changed in the reading. Far-fetched in parts? Yes. An absolute blast that leaves the reader satisfied? Most definitely.

Alastair Dumfries

WAN O' THEY DAYS

Here it goes, yer in full swing, divin oota bed both legs awready in yer skirt.
Yer feet, they huvnae even skimmed the grun yet.
Ye've noo got yer toothbrush jammed way up in yer mooth,
Whilst tryin tae find a hairbrush sumwhere about the hoose.

Lookin in the mirror an askin WTF! Ye've got a birds nest o a hairdo.
Can sumfin no go right fur once?
Ye've dun it, yer ready, yer headin fur the door,
Yer runnin, no walkin, damnit yer feet ar gettin sore.
Doon the street yer beltin, an roon the corner ye go.
Red and white tape it's blockin the way ye wanna go.
They wurnae there yesterday, they've just shown up the day
The great British workman aw haggard n affray.
Ye know they're gonna shout sumfin, ye know they'll try an ruin yer day.

So ye dae a wee 'in yer heid pep talk'
– yer probably quite convincing!
Ye start on yer journey, fast walkin
– this is definitely nae time for mincing.

An loud as a foghorn cutting thro' the night,
A wolf whistle, a holler, it gies ye a helluva fright.
"Awrite darling, yer wit I've been missin, I like yer outfit,
But its yer rear end that the good wind is kissin"

He said it way a smirk an a wink an a nod,
Sumfin's no quite right, there's sumfin way off,
Ye pick up the pace a smidgin, in front ae a shop windae ye find yersel squintin.
Ye huv a guid look, the fronts no too bad,
It's when ye turn tae the rear that's the shock to be had.

For in yer haste and in yer hurry, that skirt you donned in such a hurry,
It's nowhere it should be, hanging roon about yer knees.
It's crept up a long ways
Wayward in its own way, it sure has become,
Cause aye yer right, it's stuck tae yer bum!

Margaret Corton Vale



6

OWN SPACE

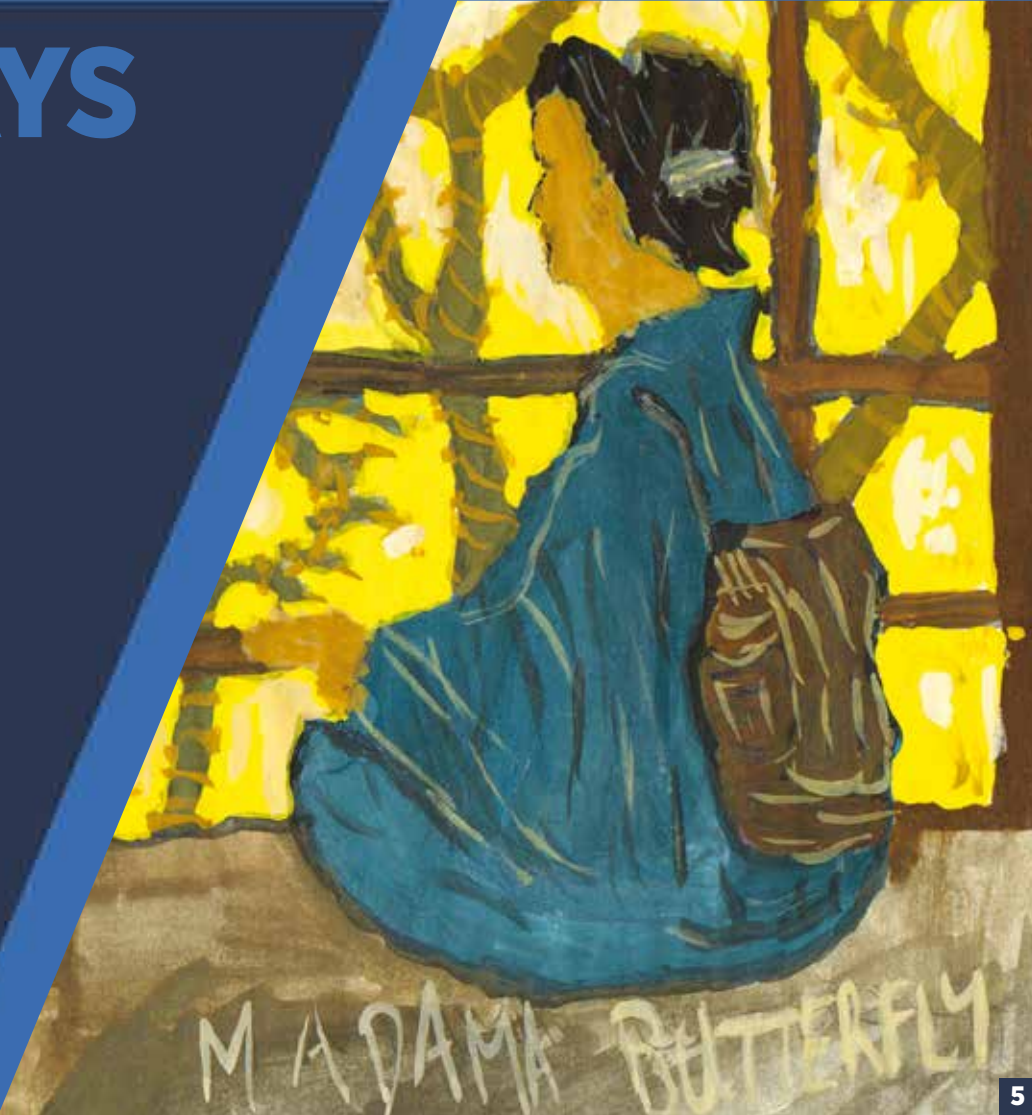
The shout I have been waiting on echoes around the hall, 'Sheds', and as my cellmate readies himself for work a smile spreads across my face, as a warm glow eases unwanted tensions in my mind and soul.

As the door closes behind the departing form, far from feeling smothered in my tiny space, I feel free and unconfined. My own space not constricted by another's unwanted and irritable boundaries.

A sweet bliss wraps and enthrals me as my music becomes my band and me a rock star, or when songs of old take me spiralling to points in time and space. Each chord a paint brush, each lyric the paint, sketching everescent pictures of my life so prominent and bold, I can smell the sweet honey dew of spring, the fresh cut grass and sticky tar of summer days and feel the fresh cold autumn breeze and the invigorating winter chill.

In my reflective peaceful bliss, old friends laugh and chat and soothe me still, and even when a new song shakes away my thoughts of old like an etchasketch, happiness and comfort is still found in the future and this own space of mine.

Davie Glenochil



5



7

YEARLY FESTIVAL SONNET

I wouldn't compare you to a summer's day,
I'd compare you to a cold July's night.
The warmth wouldn't be like a day in May,
The chill would be there with a deadly bite.

I treasured each one like it was our last,
We were so different from year to year.
There are so many things left in our past,
Looking back I could shed buckets of tears.

We awoken on the day, get up to leave,
It takes more than two hour's drive in the car,
Exhausted by dance, we struggle to breathe,
It seems to me that we have come so far.

Eight festivals later, we broke apart,
Hate to say, you kept your place in my heart.

Mark Low Moss



1

WOMAN IN THE STREET

She was a small woman, raggy and frail, and smelt stale,
the clothes that she wore, hung off her back,
her hair was dyed bleach blonde, matted and pale,
her legs were stubbly, battered blue and black.

She would walk to the ice cream van with her head held down, ashamed;
wearing sunglasses and make up to hide the marks on her face.
Like her man, she drank a lot, escapism,
herself she blamed,
at night he would be screaming and bawling,
wrecking the place.

As she passed in the street, teenagers laughed and spat,
other mothers would whisper and speak about her behind her back.
She was treated as an outcast at her own flat.
No one cared until she took her own life, now not even a remembrance plaque.

Jamie Low Moss



4

NEON DREAMS

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

A lot of people dream their name in neon, others just want to feel a part of what is going on.

The hustling bustling city created from my mind is where I have been, and I have enjoyed.

The smaller area that is not so 'well off' to frequent the city (left hand side of painting) are part of this society too, yet are forgotten about. This smaller area represents us prisoners, forgotten about by most due to our mistakes.

We are each of us a person, not a number, and we dream of only being able to see a neon again.

The reflection in the water shows that we have no reflection in society, only the 'free' have that.

My world changed at 4 minutes past 8, and when the time comes to be released from this 'forgotten area', I will dream of having a reflection once more. The small plane in the moonlight shows I will get over it, and I will hopefully be a part of the neons again, forgetting that the world forgets about us.

Andrew Shotts

2 MINUTES

Would I...
Have a kick about
With a shoal of rainbow trout
Or...
Play a game of baccarat
With my neighbour's tabby cat
Would I...
Go and fly a kite
With a bat during the night
Or...
Race around a track
With a hairy Tibetan yak
Would I...
Play 18 holes of golf
With a wild and woolly wolf
Or...
Swim five hundred metres
With bikini-wearing cheetahs
I would...
Try to do all of that
If it meant that I could be sat
At...
Home with my love on the settee
Snuggled up watching films on TV
Could it...
Be that my imagination
Ran away on this occasion
So...
With a fox, a goose, and a gibbon
I got 2 minutes out of this prison.

Nathan Dumfries

I, NATHAN

I, Nathan,
A boy, spiritual, adventurous, loving
Son of Mum,
Lover of animals, my soulmate and the universe,
Who feels excited and in wonder,
Who needs home, Alice, family,
Who fears black holes, bad news,
Who would like to see Kenji Ushiro,
Nova Scotia and Nessie,
Welcome you to my poem.

Nathan Dumfries

HILLS

When I look out to the hills
the snow caresses them like love
caresses your heart.

When I look out to the hills
I feel safe and at home and I know that
I will never be alone.

When I look out to the hills I can feel
what I want and I know in my head
we will never be apart.

Seal Cornton Vale

VENUS

The quiet waters of oblivion
Travel through my mind
The fragments of some sombre truth
All decay with time
The essence of this dream
Like a vision in endless disarray
Manufacture your vision
Forever and a day

Ian Greenock

TREACHEROUS TIDE

Sad as my life is, I know it
has taken me years of grief just to grow it.
Sentimental strides always guided the way
when the rough seem to carry the injustices away.
Fiery passion lit up the days
but I lost it in the dark and I strayed.
Lost and alone, fighting for reason,
I had no idea, my life I was cheating.
In the depth of the deepest ocean,
a whirlwind of my emotions
cast aside by my precious pride.
Washed away by the treacherous tide.
The treacherous tide.

Rita Cornton Vale

POETRY CORNER



2

LITTLE BROWN BEAR

Once upon a time,
a long time ago,
we played and slept together,
you'd hold me then.
Remember? My fluffy brown fur?

You were young then,
we had so much fun.
Then you got older and ...
one day you were gone.
That wasn't the star
I had wished upon.

The years have gone by
but my smile hasn't altered.

Alone in a box,
my home for years to come,
no one to play with
and even when I tried to cry,
there weren't any tears.

The years have gone by
but my smile hasn't altered.

Then one day,
a little girl, smiling
lifts me through the air
and squeezes me tightly,
and from across the room
a voice I remember says,

"That's mummy's first friend."

The years have gone by
but her smile hasn't altered.

"That's my Little Brown Bear"

Paul Shotts



3



MY DREAM

Paulo Shotts

Acrylic on Canvas

CREATE A STIR

*It took me four years to paint
like Raphael, but a lifetime to
paint like a child.*

PABLO PICASSO

THIS ISSUE'S COVER



**RIISING FROM THE
FLAMES**

David Greenock
Collage

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR ISSUE TEN

The submission deadline for our international issue is fast
approaching; let's make this the best issue yet!

The closing date for our international issue submissions will be the 3rd of October –
get it on your calendar! Check in with your Learning Centre for the latest updates
in the STIR newsletter.

The next issue of STIR, our music theme (Issue Nine), will be out at the beginning of October.

We are looking for any visual art, short stories, poetry and life writing.

£20 each will be awarded to the creator of the best visual art and the best 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

Submit 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

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