

LINDA



*The Earth in Crisis' by Linda at LHM 360.*

# VELOCITY

Artist in Communities Programme April 2024 - April 2025





*"My writing class that I attend means the world to me, it helps my mental health tremendously. Everyone in the class is so supportive and when John comes along to help out the class always has a project to aim towards and everyone is excited about it." - Eleanor, NHS Restart.*



**Above left:** Pupils at Riverbank Primary rehearsing *Extra Twelve Degrees*. **Above right:** A creative writing and art session at LHM 360.  
**Below left:** The Cassiltoun Writers. **Below right:** Members of the cast of *'Winter Tales'* in performance at Riverbank Primary.





## VELOCITY

This booklet celebrates and highlights some of the visual arts pieces, creative writing and performances that have been produced by the many participants who have been involved with the Velocity Arts Programme and artists over the last year. Velocity is a cultural initiative originally created as part of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games strategy and the programme was initially led by Glasgow Life, Glasgow City Council, Creative Scotland, and Clyde Gateway. It continues to thrive to this day. In the past year, the Velocity Artist in Communities programme has delivered 169 workshops, 2545 engagements and 8 public performances.

From the time of the 2018 European Championships which Glasgow co-hosted with Berlin, and with initial funding from Festival 2018, Clyde Gateway and Creative Scotland, Velocity has been focused on creative community projects and engagement. These projects have aimed to provide East End communities with opportunities to experience and enjoy arts activities. In the lead up to and during the Championships, Velocity established an Artist in Residence programme to operate in the Calton area, with Karen McGrady Parker as the lead artist. Karen worked with a team of freelance artists to create access to activities including creative writing, acting, dance and music. The project also offered the chance to perform at the 'Go Live' event on Glasgow Green each day as part of the Championships. The Velocity programme continued after the event and still provides regular opportunities for local groups and schools to engage in high quality arts programmes. The annual programme is now funded by Clyde Gateway and managed by Glasgow Life.

One of the many projects to emerge from the Velocity programme is the Singing for Fun initiative which was set up in response to requests for more music and singing opportunities in the area. Singing for Fun is led by musician Karen MacIver. Other arts projects this year, led by writer and director John Binnie, have provided drama and performance opportunities to school groups and creative writing groups in the East End of the city. The artists mentioned have been supported by others, including but not restricted to singer and actor Màiri Morrison and designer and photographer Robin Mitchell. The projects are described in more detail in the following pages. The artists would like to acknowledge the debt owed to the staff and organisers at the schools and organisations who have enthusiastically welcomed them and whole-heartedly supported the projects.

"I love doing drama. It's going to be great doing more scenes about Cuningar Loop." - St. Anne's pupil.



## Cuningar Loop GEOHERMAL ENERGY

A project exploring the Glasgow park, its history and its potential contribution to combatting climate change.

In May and June 2024 we ran a series of drama and art workshops with Primary 6 children from St. Anne's Primary in Glasgow's North East. We took them to Cuningar Loop, a nearby park with a fascinating history. There we were met by scientists from the British Geological Survey who showed us the work they are doing to study the warm water stored in the abandoned mine tunnels below. They drew water from deep under the surface and demonstrated that this water was warmer than the water at ground level. The scientists are exploring how this difference in temperature can be turned to our advantage as a renewable energy source.

Over a number of sessions we worked with the children at St. Anne's and with members of the NHS Restart writing group to put together a short play based on themes relating to climate change and the history of the land at Cuningar Loop.



Performing the play to parents and pupils in the playground at St. Anne's Primary



Testing the temperature of a water sample from the disused mine tunnels at the British Geological Survey site in Cuningar Loop.



**Above left:** Improvising scenes at The Bothy, Cuningar Loop. **Above right and below right:** Improvising scenes in the playground at St. Anne's. **Below left:** John Binnie at St. Anne's, introducing the play on performance day.





In rehearsals at St. Anne's Primary we used drama to explore themes relating to the history of Cuningar Loop and the exciting potential uses of the heat from the underground water source. Màiri Morrison taught the children some Gaelic song to use in the final performance and the children created artwork to spell out the title of the project and hang as a backdrop. On the day of the performance the pupils were joined by some of the writers from NHS Restart who performed writing inspired by their visit to Cuningar Loop.



**Above Left** - Devising scenes in the playground at St. Anne's. **Above Right** - Màiri Morrison teaching a Gaelic song to the class at St. Anne's.  
**Below Left** - Working on the decorative lettering. **Below Right** - Lettering displayed to read 'Geothermal Energy'.



As part of the project, the pupils were each given a letter to decorate. The children were asked to make the letters bold and colourful so that they could be read from a distance. They were also encouraged to incorporate motifs relating to Cuningar Loop and its history. For example, some of the letters included maps, drawings of the park's Hope Statue, test tubes and heat and water illustrations. The letters were then displayed on the day of performance, spelling out the words 'Cuningar Loop' and 'Geothermal Energy'.



Naby from the NHS Restart Writers working on her poem (right) during a visit to Cuningar Loop. She recited the poem as part of the performance at St. Anne's.

*We'll take the heat, the energy  
And move it on to somewhere else  
Collect the natural electricity  
And hold onto its wealth.  
We'll make new fire and we'll see  
A world that's nourished by itself.  
We'll use the warmth below the street  
Re-use the temperature to help  
Restore the power that we need  
Relieve the hardship that we're dealt.*

**Naby**

Vanessa Starcher from the British Geological Survey spoke to the class about the history of Cuningar Loop. She explained how the old mine tunnels filled with water which is heated by the Earth's core and which is warmer than the water at the surface. She and her colleagues are looking into ways to take advantage of this clean and renewable heat source.



*"This project has been so powerful for the young people. We had touched on thermal energy in class, but this has brought it to life in a dramatic, interesting way. They have learned skills to actually perform a play and to work as a group and communicate with an audience."*

**Mrs Davidson, Class Teacher**



## NHS Restart Writers Visit Cuningar Loop

NHS Restart is a support group that works with people living with long-term mental health issues. John worked with the peer-support writing group on Friday afternoons. They have written and performed their writing all over the city - including at the Euros at Glasgow Green, Merchant City Festival, the Bridgeton Umbrella and in St Anne's Primary and Riverbank Primary schools. As role models and ambassadors for people living with mental health issues, their writing has grown in confidence and power. In the following pages we reproduce examples of writing by many of the regular group participants.



NHS Restart writers took a trip to Cuningar Loop for a creative writing session in the park with John and Robin. They discussed the history of the area and how it had changed and they each wrote pieces inspired by the place. Some of this writing was performed at St. Anne's Primary alongside the children's play about geothermal energy on 21st June 2024.

### A Statue of Hope

In Cuningar Loop there's a statue of hope  
The kids keep it clean with an old bar of soap  
It spreads its message for miles around  
It's built on an old mine under the ground.

An icon of peace is so good to see  
So good to be hopeful, so good to be free  
A message of hope to a new generation  
A message of peace to a potential nation

So much has changed there over the years  
So much joy, and so much tears  
Hope for the future, hope from the past  
Make the world peaceful, make it last.

Graham



*"It's amazing. You feel the history underneath our feet. If you dug deep, what would you discover? All these past lives. Where are the rabbits?"*

Eleanor

## Cuningar Loop Walk

- David It's really nice Mrs Cowan, you'll love what they've done with it. Just over this bridge Mrs Cowan and we'll be there.
- Lizzie Look how manky that water looks David, is that people rowing?
- David Yeah, you see them in the Clyde all the time. Would you like a wee seat at the benches just now?
- Lizzie Ahm auld David son, but no that auld. We'll go a wee wonder the noo. Oh my, is that a statue of Benny Lynch up there?
- David No, that's the Statue of Hope, Mrs Cowan.
- Lizzie Statue of wit?
- David Hope. Hope for the future.
- Lizzie Fur aw of us, ah hope. See the last time a wiz up this way aw this wiz a big load of rubble, a pure mess - ya used tae see people gawn through it aw tae see if they could find any goodies fae the Gorbals.
- David Gorbals?
- Lizzie Aye, yuv heard of the Gorbals slums surely?
- David Yes of course.
- Lizzie Well, when they wur bulldozing aw them doon, aw day long it wiz lorry efter lorry cumin up here an dumping aw the rubble. Then at night you'd get aw the nuggets that would come up and try an see if they could find anything worth selling. Mind you, ah wouldnae hiv minded finding an auld street sign fae the Gorbals maself - probably worth a fortune nooadays.
- David How about we sit down under this tree, I've got a blanket, flask and some sandwiches.
- They sit in silence while they eat and enjoy their sandwiches.
- David Are you alright Mrs Cowan?
- Lizzie Aye David son, ah wiz jist wunderin where aw the rabbits wur.
- David Rabbits?
- Lizzie David son, don't get me started. 'Cuningar' means 'rabbit warren!'

Eleanor

## Seeing Love in My Daughter's Eyes

The day you were born, I first saw true love.  
I couldn't believe you were mine, my special gift from above.  
A lot happened throughout our lives. Your sister was born two years after you. I love you both with all my heart. The day you gave birth to your son, I wasn't there and I wasn't sure what was happening. Six years after Josh was born you had your daughter Lily. I saw love in your eyes. You gave all you had. The love between you and your children is unconditional. They mean the world to you, and also to myself. The love I saw in my daughter's eyes, the eyes of a mother - a strong, loving one at that.

Annemarie



# NHS RESTART



## Accommodation Takes Years

I was told a flat had been identified 10 weeks ago. They're having meetings upon meetings. I'm supposed to go see it in 2 weeks. As you can imagine, I'm counting the days. It's supported accommodation, which is good because I suffer panic attacks and anxiety so the support is needed. I just hope they're nice and accommodating. The flat position is 3/3 so I don't know how I'm going to get my shopping up the stairs. I think I'll become fitter with the exercise!

Carol



In the early part of 2025, Naby from NHS Restart (above) worked with John Binnie as a mentee, supporting the delivery of sessions with the artists. She hopes to become an advocate for neuro-divergent participants and people of colour.

## Secret Meeting of 2 suffragettes

Something shifted, felt uncertain  
2 shadows moving behind curtains  
2 women, whispering and listening  
With suspicion, high alert.  
The suffragettes had met with purpose  
They were speaking with intention  
Making plans to bring to action  
To act fast, no apprehension  
So far they had used their words  
Their careful nature to demand  
They requested their provisions  
Tried to find some understanding  
But the parliament ignored them  
They were laughed at, they were shunned  
And no changes were made for them  
They were thrown, shot down, and gunned  
Now the state of things were tense  
They locked and tied themselves to fences  
They threw themselves down into trenches  
They shouted loud in their defence  
They were beaten by the police  
They were hassled by their men  
They were banished from the courts  
And put down time and time again  
Now the two dark figures whispered  
Talked of all the blood they'd shed  
And conspired that militancy  
Was the only way ahead.

Naby

*"This kind of community engagement is so good for me... Mixing with different communities, sharing my writing, so helps with my mental health and recovery."*

NHS Restart Writer



## CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

### Love Goddess

The love goddess  
Reaches over the hills  
Dappling the forest with lights  
Rays on the leaves through the trees  
She travels along streams, rivers to the ocean  
North, South, East, West, her compass sets  
When we lay down, she'll have you float on a  
cotton candy cloud  
When standing, she balances feet on the ground.  
When you use your intuition, she will guide you  
to find what resonates with kind  
She will kiss your eyelashes and cheeks,  
hold your hand  
Filter through like warm sand.  
She will give you water when you need rain  
Her love will ease some pain.

Susan

### Soil That Cannot Absorb

It's been dry, so very dry. The sun beats down  
endlessly on my expanse. My plants have  
withered, my grass has browned, its moisture  
extracted by the overbearing heat from the fire  
that is the sun, hanging so high in a wide blue sky.  
Respite from the morning dew is quickly taken  
away as heat explodes. I am sure I can see some  
dark clouds wandering their way towards me.  
All Earth holds its breath as a few drops appear  
on my dry, barren and cracked façade. I just can't  
draw the water down into my depth, my soil  
hardened by the heat. My top soil hardened like  
clay in a kiln, small rivulets form taking the water  
to other parts, away from my needs. I will wait. I  
will persevere. I know that as Mother Earth I will  
always endure - new beginnings and new joy will  
once again sprout.

Craig

### Path of Least Resistance

Another morning, much like the last and the one before the one before.  
No wonder I think life is becoming a bore. I wish I could go outside. Maybe go for a ride. Buses,  
trains and friends' and relatives' cars. I took all those things for granted.

From my window I could see the daffodils sprouting. I miss the fresh air blowing past my face,  
especially when the spring is just around the corner. I miss meeting my friend for a cup of tea.  
Now I'm in here there's nothing new I can see. I'm trapped, like a hamster on a wheel going  
round and round, not being able to feel. At 80 I'm probably in my last decade, trapped by my  
wonky legs. I still feel young inside. I guess it's your body that changes. Still young at heart.

What would I be doing, if I could restart? Go jogging more, not sitting about. Walking even.  
Does it make a difference? I chose the path of least resistance. Is it just your luck how you end  
up?

Catriona

## Getting Out

I love to socialise with people, it's been too long since Alfred died, I've become a bit of a hermit. My daughter, who visits daily, says I have to get out again and meet people my own age. Today's the day I get up and have a bath and get dressed, as I'm going to the local church women's guild. I used to be a pillar of the church when Alfred was living but through time I've withdrawn from the church and all the groups.

I've arrived at the church hall and am a bit reluctant to go in. The minister sees this and comes over to welcome me to the group. I go with him, and there are about 40 women in the guild. Some are serving coffee and tea and some have baking. Lovely. The group are quite active in the community and they do a whole range of things, from the cinema, walking groups and they go to shows. Everybody made me feel welcome and I learn that a lot of them are widows like me who force themselves to come to the group instead of languishing at home on their own. The group finished and I promised myself that I would be back. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

**Brian**

*"This class is a safe space. Everyone can write. Some are better than others, but that doesn't matter. It's about giving everyone a chance, a chance to express themselves. They may write two lines, or two pages. We treat it all with respect, and we see people grow."* - **Brian**

## We are the One

*82 year old headmistress who is a climate change activist glues herself to the pavement.*

If the things that continue to ravage our earth are going to be an unstoppable force, then I will be an immovable object.

"What do you expect to achieve?" people ask. "You're just one person".

Perhaps an understandable question, but one with many answers!

One is a larger number than zero.

It's a number that can grow, and multiply.

One can be a catalyst.

One loose item stuck in the cog of even the biggest machine can grind the whole operation to a halt.

One spark can start a wildfire.

One voice can begin a chorus.

One marks the beginning, but it need not mark the end.

I've been lucky enough to live to the ripe old age of 82, that's one multiplied 82 times - and I'm far from done!

My life - and everyone else's for that matter - has been a series of 'ones.' And I would be remiss if I didn't use those - one life, one voice, one body - to try and preserve the one Earth we all have.

**Helen**

## A Memory Forgotten, That's Why

Dead. Lying face-down in dirt, you're shaken. You've tried, but it won't, your body is refusing to move, whatever you try. Try. Twitch. Try harder, dead weight. Limbs are about, you're too stunned to care. Kinda hurts, feels clamped. Kinda. Could be in shock. Maybe you broke something somewhere, bones, maybe some more, dunno. Couldn't care to. Body could be uh great in shock. And what? Doesn't help the situation. Couldn't care. Broken. Maybe, maybe not. With or without. Without. Dead weight upon dead weight. Dead weight. Limp, puppet. Can't move, puppet. Need some strings just to move, dammit, c'mon, puppet!

Inspecting your body with your, erm, eyes, the only bit you seem able to move, remarkably. Wait, was that sarcasm? It was, wasn't it? Like you can tell, like you care, didn't you, were you, ah, got it! Looking down, your right leg is bent inward, practically split in half with jagged bone sticking out in the centre, and your left leg... wait, wait, wait, where the—oh. Found it. Seems to be fine, considering. Remarkable. Huh.

Going up, an arm - can't tell, where it's - it's pinned underneath your body, chest, torso, stomach, a place, a time, it's like that, and you're feeling, it's sharp, so you guess a bone be somewhere too... Your other arm... Your other arm... Holy hell, where the HELL is your other arm? Could have been a, there you go, turn a little, all sorted... Yeah, nope. Can't see it. Cannot see it. A moment and... PANIC!

You're wriggling, burning, struggling to move your leg - the working one, that is - oh, crap, didn't see that but, now looming above, it's under, you're under a very, very hot, very heat, heat, burn, burn, burning! Trapped, pinned. Framed. Take a photo... ahhhhh! Nobody about, you have no clue where you're at either. Woke up suddenly, a massive blank, you're beneath what you can only assume is a semi-vertical, sure? Probably smoking, presumably imploded, definitely crashed, very heavy, very weighted, very hot!... Dammit. Truck! Big thing at least. Yea, okay. Nice. Sarcasm again? Ugh! What a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon, especially for you. The day, the week, the time, come to you in a flash.

Lucien



*Brian, Naby and Eleanor from NHS Restart Writers reading their work as part of the 'Geothermal Energy' performance at St. Anne's Primary.*

*"I am really glad I came today. It allows me to forget all the stress of my personal life. I can be creative, and take time to myself. I feel listened to here."*

Christopher

**Top Image:** Graham wrote the poem 'Hand in Hand' during an outdoor writing session at Cuningar Loop. It was included in the community play 'In Our Hands' which was performed by a large cast including members of NHS Restart Writers, Cassiltoun Writers, Singing for Fun and schoolchildren from St. Anne's Primary and Riverbank Primary working with two professional actors. The performance took place at Riverbank Primary in 2024 as the celebratory, final event for the Glasgow Life Artist in Communities Green Economy Programme.

**Middle and bottom images:** Some of the writers from NHS Restart took part in a celebration to mark the restoration of the Bridgeton Umbrella as part of a Culture Junction-led arts programme. The wrought iron landmark at Bridgeton Cross had been dismantled and taken away for repair, then reconstructed. At the relaunch, the writers read work inspired by the area and the significance of the Umbrella to the local community.



## Hand in Hand

Boy: The young boy reaches up and takes the old woman by the hand.

Woman: It creates a chain for the future, back through the past.

Boy: The old woman smiles and their eyes meet.

Woman: Hand in hand

Boy: Love to last

Woman: Make a chain

Boy: From the future to the past.

Woman: Step by step

Boy: Toe to toe

Woman: Dream a dream

Boy: Then off we go

Woman: Smile to smile

Boy: Eye to eye

Woman: Let's make a love

Boy: That cannot die.

Graham

## Isolation

Charlene is a five-year-old girl. She has two older sisters, Jennifer and Elaine. They are identical twins. Her parents both work for a living to pay their mortgage and bills and other necessities in life. Charlene is left alone in her bedroom all the time. In her room she lives in an imaginary world of her own, making friends with her dolls. She has names for them. She creates a fantasy world where she is a princess and they are her friends and subjects. It's only at meal times she can engage her family in speech, but even then it's a rush to get it over with so they can all get back to their internet, computers and phones. Charlene has created her own world in her bedroom where she manages to live and succeed in her imaginary world of dolls and toys, happily playing fantasy games.

Chris

## Hondin' Oor the Mop.

Lizzie It's no the same tho it wiz always part ae ma routine. Ah loved daein it, noo it's a bit too much - it knackers me oot.

David It still gets done though, the housing does it.

Lizzie The housing! Don't make me laugh! Where dae they get their water fae?

David Water? I don't know.

Lizzie Exactly! The water they use is probably freezing an boggin.

David I could always take a turn of doing them too, and you could supervise me - make sure I'm doing it properly and to your liking.

Lizzie Well there's mair tae it than jist a mop 'n' bucket ya know.

David Like what?

Lizzie Well, polish, wet wipes an' air freshener.

David Eh, now you've got me lost!

Lizzie Well ah don't want tae lose ya David, ah want tae educate ya about the right wae tae dae it.

David So what is the correct way?

Lizzie Well first ah get oot wae the wet wipes an get any black marks aff the close wall, then ahm oot wae the polish an cloth an' gie the railings a good wipe doon, makin sure ah get intae aw the nooks an crannies. Then ah gie the full close a good swoosh of air freshener, preferably lavender. Then ahm oot wae ma mop an' bucket full of boiling water an' lavender flora - ahm never stingy wae it so don't you be. Ah usually put hoff the bottle in.

David That's quite a lot to remember!

Lizzie The first few times ah'll be supervising ya, so don't ya worry an', jist so ya know David son, this is me officially hondin' the mop oor tae ya. Noo it's you that's responsible fur keeping oor wee close spit an span fur the next 50 years. Ah've done ma time. It's time fur me tae hing up ma mop.

David I hope I can live up to your expectations Mrs Cowan!

Lizzie Oh ya will David son, ah've goat every faith in ya son!

Eleanor

## My First Pram

As far back as I can remember - I was around 3 or 4 years old - I got my first pram off Santa. It was a white pram with a red hood. I remember being out playing with this and my Tiny Tears doll. It was nice playing outside with friends, but one day my mum came down and took me on a journey with my pram. I remember going on a bus with my mum. She was upset, I remember, a lot. I didn't know why my baby brother at the time wasn't with us, or why my dad wasn't there either. When I was older I was told the reason. My mum was leaving my dad and she was lucky I was out playing with my beautiful doll and pram or my dad would have had me too. My mum didn't get my brother back for weeks. When we eventually got to my aunt and uncle's house they took my mum in for a while, till she got on her feet. I went to a nursery over there in Mount Florida. The family helped my mum loads. When we eventually got another house in Arden I was bought another pram, a blue one.

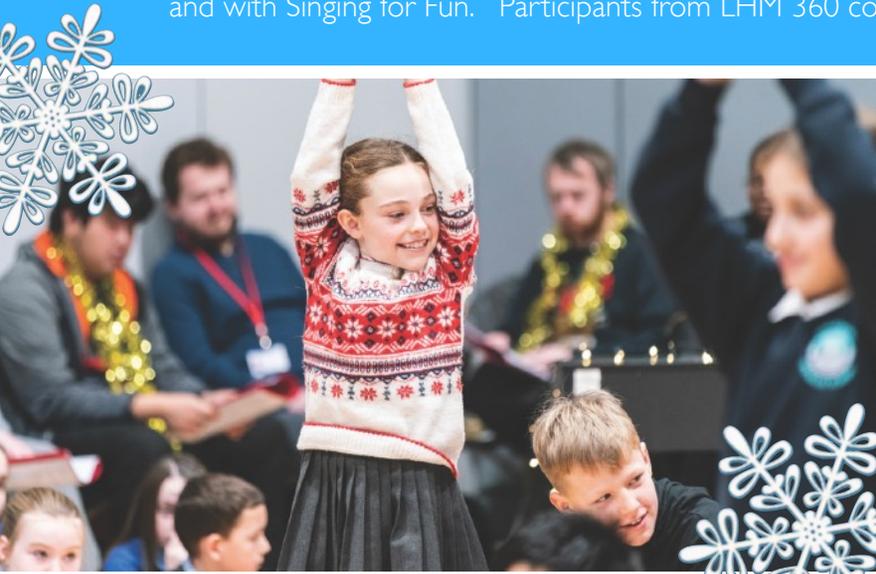
As I have got older I knew a lot, did a lot and have got my own children and grandchildren. I pushed the prams too, but my health is not so good. Now I have a walking stick to help me walk, not the zimmer frame yet. This upsets me because I know eventually it will happen, sooner rather than later. I just need to come to terms with this and get on with the life I have at the moment. It might not be the best of life but it is my life and I have had an adventurous one - hard, sad, fun, loving and emotional. Here's to the next chapter!

Annemarie



# WINTER TALES

After completing the Glasgow Life Artist in Communities Green Economy Programme in spring 2024 with the intergenerational performance *In Our Hands*, we wanted to continue this model of good practice as we began work on the *Velocity* arts programme. In the autumn of 2024, John Binnie directed an entertaining new play called *Winter Tales*, created for and by the people of Glasgow. John worked with Màiri Morrison and Robin Mitchell and several community groups. Writers from NHS Restart and Cassiltoun Writers researched and wrote sections of the play and performed in some of the scenes they had written. Other scenes were devised by Primary 6 children from St. Anne's Primary and Riverbank Primary and they worked with professional actors Màiri Morrison and Izzi Joss and with Singing for Fun. Participants from LHM 360 contributed stories and artwork.



**Winter Tales** was a fun and informal, inter-generational show with a cast of almost 90 people. The play explored themes relating to the climate crisis and consumerism through creative writing, song and art in a light-hearted and fast-paced presentation. The photographs on these pages were taken in rehearsals and on the performance day at Riverbank Primary when all the groups came together. As part of the project, adults from LHM 360 and the two school classes created beautiful, colourful bird-themed friezes and other artwork. These were displayed as part of the event.

*"It was great meeting the young people. They are so excited about doing a play, us being in their school, and us acting together. It is such a powerful inter-generational project. I can't believe how it is coming together."*

Jill, NHS Restart



*"What a lovely afternoon. A beautiful blend of music and writing. It is so meditative. It makes me feel good. Singing For Fun sound better than they ever have. I loved the power and truth of the writing. I am so lucky to be part of the sharing."*

Audience Member

*"I am so impressed how good they acted out the story. They did so well. They had such confidence and command. It makes me realise I can do it also."*

Peter, NHS Restart





*Rehearsing a scene with children from St. Anne's Primary.*



*Màiri Morrison rehearsing with pupils from St Anne's.*



*John Binnie introducing the show Winter Tales at Riverbank Primary.*



*Màiri Morrison with NHS Restart writers and Izzi Joss performing in Winter Tales at Riverbank Primary.*



*Children from St. Anne's Primary at final rehearsals for Winter Tales at Riverbank Primary.*



Sections of the frieze created by participants at LHM 360

## Abandoned Christmas Gifts

A hundred unwrapped, disowned presents  
 Piled up and left to gather dust.  
 A mound of niceties and pleasantries  
 Did not survive the Christmas rush.  
 Paper discarded, ribbons bunched up  
 Unread cards which sit untouched,  
 Pieces of art  
 And last year's smart phones  
 Picked up, put down, and not discussed.  
 The knitted socks and scarves and jumpers  
 Create a fumbled, woolly clump,  
 Remote control cars with shiny bumpers  
 And wind-up, tiny toys that jump.  
 Unopened books, uneaten chocolate,  
 A wasted effort, time, and fuss.  
 A lonely clump of things forgotten  
 No one's belongings  
 All just stuff.  
 Radios and red pyjamas,  
 Fluffy elephants and llamas,  
 Old computer games from Grandma,  
 Just not relevant enough.  
 Babies' prams and bedside lamps  
 And homemade jams with fruity lumps,  
 Boxes crammed full and expanding,  
 Bin bags landing with a thump.  
 All these gifts we've left abandoned  
 Wait for hands to grab them up,  
 They'll soon be scooped up from the gardens,  
 Stuffed into different vans and dumped.

Naby

*"The play makes a lot of sense. It flows naturally. You can see where lots of the scenes have developed from... and it asks lots of questions about climate change."*

Brian



The class at St. Anne's Primary working on their frieze.



Izzi Joss performing at Riverbank Primary.



Working on the frieze at LHM 360.



# Singing for Fun

## Velocity's Singing for Fun

Singing for Fun in Calton was initiated as part of the Velocity Creative Programme in June 2022. It was set up in direct response to feedback from local participants asking for more opportunities for music and singing. It coincided with Glasgow Life's Live Well Community Referral Programme pilot that began at this time and which allowed participants to be referred to a free, drop-in singing activity. Velocity's Singing for Fun has been fortunate to have the support of the local Live Well co-ordinators throughout this time. Artists Tina Freeland and Karen MacIver began the project with the knowledge that singing just for the fun of it helps to strengthen the voice and support wellbeing. The group is now made up of people who want to have fun singing in a safe environment, including local people from Calton, participants that have been referred to the programme and those attending support organisations such as CrossReach.

## The 2024-2025 Programme

Over the year of the Velocity Artist in Communities programme, Singing for Fun performances took place at the Calton Christmas light switch-on at St Luke's and within Calton Heritage and Learning Centre, where the group meet. During the recent Velocity Artist in Communities programme, the Singing for Fun group has been facilitated by Karen MacIver and has also involved the musicians Alan Penman, Màiri Morrison, Tina Freeland and Shelly Coyne. The group has also worked with John Binnie and Robin Mitchell for the intergenerational drama and music production Winter Tales.

## Singing for Fun Pilot With Anyiso

During the Autumn of 2024, and with additional support from Unesco City of Music, Singing for Fun took part in an 8-week pilot project working with Anyiso. Anyiso is an organisation in the north west of the city offering support and opportunities to Black and minority ethnic women and their families. This project was facilitated by Tina Freeland and Màiri Morrison. They ran 6 sessions with 26 engagements and the sessions were intergenerational, creating an opportunity for parents and their young children to sing together; build songs and explore rhythms from other languages. This aspect was supported by native Gaelic speaker and singer Màiri Morrison. The project generated enthusiasm for the programme to be carried on, encouraging parents and their young children to come together and sing once a month.



# Singing for Fun

## Going Down a Path

Going down a path  
 Headed for destruction  
 Till I heard that sound  
 That turned me around  
 The words in that song  
 Kept lingering on  
 In my head  
 Running away served no purpose  
 They just brought me back  
 Nowhere to run to  
 They just brought me back  
 No one heard my cry for help  
 They just brought me back  
 Golden Oldies was all  
 I used to hear  
 I was OK for them  
 It's not in this gen  
 The new sound was Rock  
 And it made me just stop  
 And listen  
 I realised  
 Each song told their own story.  
 One I could relate to  
 I was in my glory  
 To find the help  
 I was crying just for the last time  
 They brought me back  
 They just brought me back.

**Maggie, Singing for Fun**

## Can We Make a Difference?

Can we make a difference?  
 Can we make a difference?  
 Does anybody care?  
 The world in which we live is near beyond repair.  
 Can we make a difference?  
 Does anybody mind?  
 If we take the fossil fuels and leave them all behind.  
 And can we make a difference?  
 If we take the fossil fuels and leave them all behind.  
 I really think we should  
 Swap out plastic toothbrushes for ones  
 that's made of wood!  
 Can we make a difference?  
 Can we make a difference?  
 I think we should, with haste,  
 Make sure that we reduce, re-use,  
 recycle plastic waste  
 And make it last forever.  
 Only if we concentrate  
 And make the change together  
 Can we?

A song by **Graham (NHS Restart)**  
and **Karen MacIver.**

*Photographs. Previous page: Singing for Fun with Celine Donoghue and band at Calton Heritage and Learning Centre 2025.*

*This page: Karen MacIver leads a Singing for Fun session at Calton Heritage and Learning Centre.*

***“I love coming here. We are a group. We support each other and care for each other. We get the chance to sing and be creative. How lucky we are.”***

**Singing For Fun participant**

## The Importance of Music

“We all share our lives through connections made in many ways, but the strongest and most lasting are through music and through food. Even if we are in another country and cannot speak the language, music is at the centre of communication and sharing food together is the barrier-breaker for anyone joining a community of people.

For three years, Singing for Fun has been the centre of our connection for so many of us coming through the doors of the Calton Heritage and Learning Centre. The idea is simple and it never fails to work. We sing songs together that we love, and share stories about why these songs mean so much in our lives. We laugh and we drink tea together too. However, behind the scenes are top class musicians who are proud to be part of the artistic landscape of Glasgow. We are able to produce music of the highest quality because of a long-learned knowledge of our art. The idea of the classical musician-come-busker is vital to this success. Although we have rigorous training in our instruments and voices, we are able to be flexible with the way we present music. We arrange music ‘on the spot’ and never leave any part of the session with one group of people waiting while others learn. We learn together. And that means I am learning too. However, the artists are not just making up what happens when we meet. Each session is carefully prepared so that we know what we are delivering and what expectations to have.

Some tricks of the trade - for each session I make the song just that little bit higher in key and that last note is held just that little bit longer. And perhaps a printed chorus is removed from the lyric sheet so that we remember longer word sequences as the weeks pass. These techniques feed into a philosophy of music for health where we are all testing our musical strengths each week. And it pays off with a lot of laughter!”

**Karen MacIver**

*Karen MacIver with the Singing for Fun singers performing in Winter Tales.*



## Thank You to Singing For Fun

I'm from Sri Lanka. DOB 18/07/1969. I came to Scotland in 2002. I came with my three year old son. I now have four children – two boys, two girls. When I came I couldn't speak one word of English. My language is Tamil. I went to Langside College. I learn English there. After five years I got a care assistant job in Hector Home, an elder home in Shawlands. I worked for 10 years. Suddenly one day I had double vision. I went for a check up. They sent me to the Queen Elizabeth hospital. I had cancer. They did a biopsy. Took a small bit of my back. It proved I had cancer.

I got treatment. Chemo. At the Beatson hospital. The cancer grew. Next treatment was an operation in 2017. Full surgery. At the Golden Jubilee hospital. Radiotherapy. For a couple of years the cancer was stable. My stats were good. I was well. In the hospital the staff look after you. They are so friendly.

During Covid the check-ups stop. In 2021 they discovered the tumour had spread. I had an operation on my back, the curve of my back. I had the same doctor as the first time. Dr Alan Clark. He removed my tumour. The second time July 2021. He is very friendly. Helpful. I'm 53. He called me "young lady." "Young lady, if you trust me, we can try and do something." Of course I trust Dr Alan Clark.

I believe. In Jesus. People are praying for me in church. That helps me. My daughter is a physio. She looks after me. My son is training at university to be an engineer. I wrote this to say "Don't be afraid of the journey." I am a survivor of cancer.

Rosie told me about the singing class. I came to the group instead of being alone in my kitchen. I listened to the songs. Met new friends. I heard new talent. I just want to say thank you to the singing group for all their help.

**Krishana**

**Krishana 18/07/1969 - 17/01/2025.**



*Singing for Fun performing at Calton Heritage and Learning Centre in 2025.*



## EXTRA TWELVE DEGREES

### St. Anne's Primary 2025

Following on from the Geothermal Energy drama that we worked on in 2024 with St. Anne's Primary and the British Geological Survey (see page 4) we wanted to explore the themes of that project further. In early 2025 we arranged to work with two schools who were familiar to us and who had a connection with the earlier project - St. Anne's Primary who had visited Cuningar Loop, and Riverbank Primary whose school is a stone's throw from where the British Geological Survey are working.

In each school, John and Màiri worked with Primary 6 children and explored what they would do with an extra 12 degrees of energy. They developed scenes and songs around the children's responses. These included the potential uses of the energy stored in the water within the underground tunnels, the development of driverless vehicles and the dangers faced by families forced to flee their homeland and travelling in search of a new and better life.

We called these short projects 'Extra Twelve Degrees,' named for the higher temperature of the water deep under Cuningar Loop.





*“I don’t know how you and Màiri do it. You achieved so much in an hour. I couldn’t do it. Drama is a real skill. The children are having a blast.”*  
Teacher, St. Anne’s Primary

John and Màiri worked in each school for four sessions. They asked the children to think about ways that the extra heat from underground might be used to our advantage in the future and they devised short scenes. They also explored the plight of people fleeing their own land and making the extremely dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean sea in small boats and acted out various scenarios. On the last day the children performed their scenes for teachers, parents and fellow pupils.

*“I am a Syrian refugee. I know what it’s like to travel to Scotland. I’d like to act in the boat scene, and show it how it was.”*  
Pupil, St. Anne’s Primary





## EXTRA TWELVE DEGREES Riverbank Primary 2025

*“Wow, the show’s amazing! I can’t believe what you have achieved in four rehearsals. The children are so strong. Well done.”*

*Teacher, Riverbank Primary*





*“That Gaelic song will be going round in my head all day. I didn’t know what language you were singing in. Amazing.”*  
Pupil, Riverbank Primary





# LHM 360

## Lodging House Mission

LHM 360, known to many as Lodging House Mission, is a Glasgow-based charity committed to caring for and supporting homeless, vulnerable, and socially excluded individuals. At the centre in East Campbell Street the staff and volunteers work with hundreds of people every week, providing free meals, haircuts, shower facilities and emergency clothing and supplies. In addition, they work with freelance workers and volunteers to provide a wide range of activities, including sports, outings, visits from theatre companies and entertainers and practical arts sessions.

Early in 2025, as part of the Velocity Artist in Communities programme, John, Màiri and Robin held weekly sessions with service users, exploring ideas relating to climate change and how it affects the lives of Glaswegians. Through creative writing and art we considered the risks to human and animal populations posed by rising global temperatures and related threats to the environment. We also set up a temporary photography 'studio' to make some photographic portraits. Some of the rich and varied work resulting from these sessions is reproduced here.



*"I was having a bad day today. I wasn't going to come, but I changed my mind. You and Robin are both so kind. I have really enjoyed doing art with you. How lovely to get my portrait taken."*

**Linda, LHM 360**

## Storm

The calm before the storm  
Blown from left to right  
Back and forward  
Trees falling, smashing  
From windows.  
Bins blown all over the street.  
Make sure you check the weather  
cause Scotland - four seasons in one day!  
So storm whatever you are called  
please go away - or keep at bay.

**Alisha**



## Bringing Thomas into the World

I am 20  
He will be a boy  
I know that from my scan  
Thomas is my first.  
In the Queen Mother's hospital  
I'm on my own  
I'm doing it myself.  
I need a C section  
I've got the drugs.  
A long birth  
Hours  
I'm knocked out  
My baby is in my arms  
He's going to be called Thomas  
It's okay. I'm fine.  
Thomas is his dad's name.  
Wrapped in a wee shawl  
Thomas, I wish you happiness.  
Thomas, I wish you good health.  
Thomas, I wish you to be kind  
- to me, and the world.  
Thomas, I wish the world you're coming into  
Is kinder, better, happier.

**Margaret**

## Father and Son Remember

Santa had been, and things went OK. John did his best to make Billy have a nice Christmas dinner and, with the small drop of money he had left, he got Santa to leave Billy a new jumper and a lovely blue bike. That was one of the things on Billy's Santa list.

In the summertime John had an idea to cheer Billy up, as he could not afford to take him on holiday. So when Billy stopped school for summer break, John got Billy up early on Saturday morning and took him to Luss. They had some lunch then John said to Billy, "I've got a couple of flower seeds for you to plant here - your mum and I would come here before you were born. This is, was, your mum's favourite place to come. What do you think?" Billy thought about it and said, "When we come back daddy, mummy will be here too." John tried to hold back a tear and said "Yes son, but mummy will always be in our hearts too."

Tony

*"I am 86. My dad taught me how to mend and make things last. You cut off a shirt collar when it's old and frayed, turn it inside out and sew it on again. Looks like I have a new shirt! Those life lessons have really helped me. Young folk nowadays can't sew on a button. They throw away the dress and buy a new one, instead of repairing. I make do, mend and save."*

Tommie, LHM 360



## No Electricity Needed

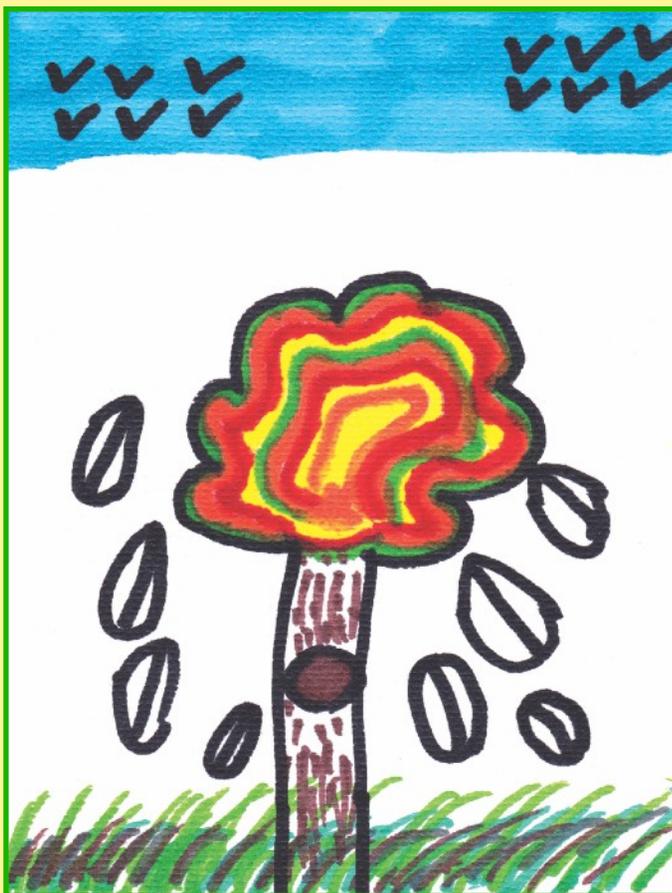
When I was very young, one of my earliest childhood memories was messing around with an antique Singer sewing machine in my gran's summerhouse, in her back garden. This machine had a wooden work surface and drawers, with a wrought iron stand and treadle (no electricity needed for these machines!) My gran was born around 1910 and when she was young a huge number of people made and repaired their own clothes.

Many years later when I left school I did voluntary work in a local Salvation Army shop. This would be the first of countless charity shops and vintage shops that I set foot in. My boss Yasmin was a very creative and imaginative lady and one day she showed me how to pin a clothes pattern onto fabric and cut it accurately. This proved to be a very prophetic moment as I sensed how powerful and transformative making clothes and being creative in any way can be. Soon after I gained a place in a fashion studies course at college. I did well and went into the 'rag trade' as a sewing machinist. I have also worked in many other industries.

People are often 'products of their environment.' I have been fortunate enough to have been surrounded by books, music and creativity all my life. Learning creative skills at a young age, or even any age, is important. It can be life changing. Very soon I am going to be setting up my own fashion label, trading in several different cities. Fortune favours the bold, and the stylish!

Andrew





Climate change means...  
Making the world a better and healthier place  
There's scope and there's hope  
They've been trying to do it for years  
Recycling bins  
Cardboard cutlery instead of plastic  
Electric cars  
Walk, run, cycle.  
I did that during Covid and still do  
Try not to take buses  
I only use public transport if I really need to  
I worked in the Travelodge on Paisley Road West  
during the pandemic  
– 75 homeless women were housed there!  
There's a stigma about being homeless, people  
associate it with addiction.  
It's actually rarely about addiction, it's about wanting  
the company of folk.  
On the streets you are constantly seeing folk.  
When you are behind doors, in your own house,  
you are only you  
Unless you have family to visit you  
And most of your families don't, if you live on the  
streets.  
For women, homelessness  
Is a chaotic way of life.  
They don't know any better.  
Its chaotic – they go round and round in this cycle,

They don't know there's anything different.  
I was homeless for 12 years  
It's hard to break the cycle you are in  
You can't get out of the trap  
Unless someone helps you and points you  
in the right direction  
These women can talk.  
I want to help them walk.

**Charlene**

Every day, there's terrible rain  
Ma jackets no' waterproof  
I walk every day to Lodging House Mission,  
from the East End, Dennistoun.  
I'm on ma own. I hate the rain.  
It's wetter nowadays than when we were wee.  
When I was a kid, summers were longer  
and sunnier, now it's much rainier.  
We canny understand the weather. It just is.  
I used to go to Blackpool.  
We went as a family.  
There's hundreds in my family, a big, big family -  
Cousins, brothers, sisters, 2 daughters.  
When ma daughters were wee I took them to  
Ayr, Troon, Ben Nevis. We had such fun.  
The kids love the rain, jumping in puddles,  
Getting wet, sailing wee boats.  
That's when they were 9 or 10 years old.

**Alex**

Governments of the world need to do more to help the environment and care for the Earth. Animals of the world are crying out for help and are under threat of extinction. We should all unite and fight for the earth and its animals. It is time for telling our governments 'Enough is Enough' - and they should start to implement measures to save the Earth, its people and its animals. We sit and do nothing. There will be more disasters and death will wipe everyone out completely.

Linda



*Gemma and Daniel with some of their artwork at LHM 360.*

Hi. I am Jamie Lee. I am 31, a mum of one wee girl called Savannah, who is 6. We live in Glasgow and we had a big storm. It was called Storm Eowyn. My daughter asked me, why was it so windy and cold? And, why she was not allowed out to play? So I had to explain to her that the tree was getting blown down and that the roof on some people's home came off because the storm got all bad. Some people were left without electricity and gas so they had to use candles for light. All big supermarkets even shut down.

Savannah felt sorry for people who had to be without electricity and heating. She said, "What if an old lady or man, how are they going to get food? How can they keep warm?" I explained that maybe housing would get them moved to somewhere temporary till the issue was sorted. That made her happy. She is afraid when we get bad weather, but I try telling her it will all be OK, and that I would keep her safe.

Jamie Lee

## Leaving Home

I was 23. I decided to leave my family home. I had had enough of my brother bullying me, my mum telling me I couldn't do anything right, my dad swearing at me because he was drunk.

I went into a hostel. It was difficult at the start but I soon got used to it. My room was burgled and quite a few things were stolen. On Sunday teatime my minister and his family arrived and gave me everything that was stolen and the family gave me a silver locket, which I thought was very kind of them. My mum wasn't happy when I told her what they gave me.

I'll prove her wrong.  
I gave up smoking - 60 fags a day.  
She said I couldn't, but I did.  
I got a flat in Govan -  
not a great area but a flat of my own.  
She put me down -  
She tried to suggest I couldn't do anything.  
Don't talk to me like that mum.  
I did what I wanted to do.  
She was always controlling me,  
Saying bad things about me,  
Called me Michelin Man.  
I was eating sweeties,  
I didn't want men near me,  
I would eat and eat and eat.  
Don't call me that -  
I'm not a tyre!  
I found a voice  
And I fought her back.  
She bought me stuff,  
Horrible stuff -  
Burgundy-coloured.  
I told her I'm not wearing them.  
I went to What Every Woman Wants,  
I bought pink jeans  
Two pairs.  
I knew she would hate them.  
I don't care if I look 2 tons  
I'm wearing pink -  
What do you think?  
Then I bought a pink and blue backpack.

Linda

## Two Greedy Seagulls

C'mon I'm hungry!  
Whit dae ye fancy?  
I fancy a bagel  
Can o' Coca Cola  
Oh do you know  
whit I love eating most?  
A wee bird  
Should I eat it?  
It's infected  
I don't care  
Eat it  
Dae you want a plastic lid?  
Dae ye like the taste o' plastic?  
Blue plastic or pink?  
As long as it's edible we'll eat it  
Ooh, a drain!  
All that waste  
Dae ye fancy a wee sook?  
Nae taste buds but we need filled up  
Gulps  
Swallows  
Down  
Defecate  
Bin Bag  
Ooh look they're overflowing  
Peck the bags  
Force them open  
Old fishing nets  
Peck, rip, eat, gulp  
Plastic!  
Rip, eat, gulp  
Chicken bones!  
Used teabags  
Hankies. Delicious. Snotters.  
Ooh yum.  
Greedy. Anything!  
We like the city now  
Fast food discarded fast  
Chips  
Polystyrene containers  
Potato peelings  
Carrots  
Rotten Food  
Delicious!

John

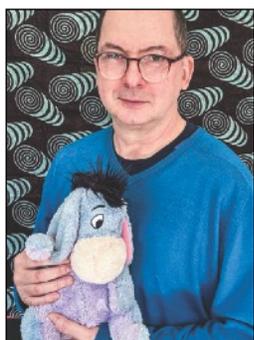
*“It follows you around, loneliness. It is why I like coming to Lodging House Mission - all the drama, writing and art we have done over the years. It helps me feel less lonely.”*

*John, LHM 360*



**John Binnie** is a playwright and director who has worked in theatre since the 1980s. He set up Glasgow's Clyde Unity Theatre with friends and wrote and directed over 30 productions that toured all over Scotland and beyond. He's been fortunate to make theatre in America, Germany, Africa, Singapore and India. His plays have won three Edinburgh Fringe Firsts, the Independent Theatre Award and been broadcast on BBC radio 4. All of his work is rooted in community engagement. He believes everyone has a story to tell, and his drama and writing classes encourage people to find their voice, develop their confidence and creativity, and contribute to community.

**Màiri Morrison** is an actress, playwright and singer from the Isle of Lewis who "carries her Gaelic upbringing in her heart and her voice". She has toured nationally and internationally with companies including the National Theatre of Scotland, RSC, Lyceum, Traverse, Theatre gu Leòr and Òran Mòr and she was nominated for a CATS award in 2022. Screen credits include the TV dramas 'Bannan' and 'Shetland' and Netflix film 'Outlaw King'. Màiri received the Gaelic New Playwrights Award in 2017 and her play, 'Bana-Ghaisgich' was published in 'A Century of Gaelic Drama'. Singing since childhood, she has been lucky enough to perform with fantastic musicians and at major ceremonies in Glasgow including the Summer Olympics and the UCI World Championships.



**Robin Mitchell** is a photographer and theatre designer based in Glasgow. Early in his career he worked as a freelance designer and taught on the theatre courses at the RSAMD (now Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) and at Queen Margaret University. He studied photography from 2007-2010 and since then he has often worked on projects which allow him to combine theatre and photography. He has photographed for Glasgow Life, Glasgow Museums, BBC Scotland, Queen Margaret University, Lammermuir Festival, Cumnock Tryst, Glasgow Restaurant Association, production company Media Co-op and the Glasgow gallery Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre as well as numerous theatre companies.

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All photographs, booklet design and layout by Robin Mitchell ([www.robinmitchellphotography](http://www.robinmitchellphotography))

## THANKS

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For more information about Velocity please visit the webpage <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/arts-music-and-culture/velocity>



*"Sometimes I find I don't come out the house. I need to stay in. Weeks pass. You almost forget how to interact, to function, to be. That's why coming to the writing group is so good for me. People are so supportive here. I can share unreservedly, without judgement."*

*Helen, NHS Restart*

