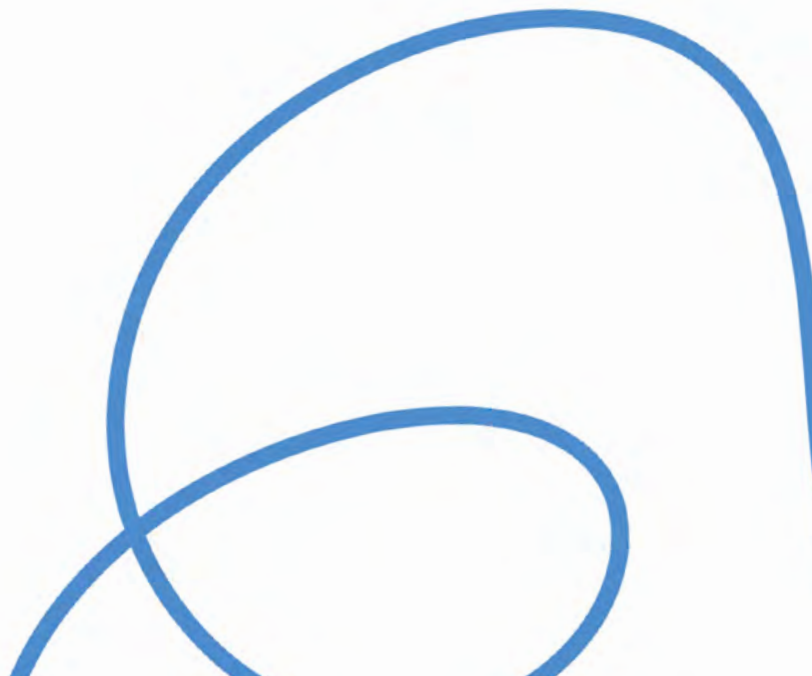
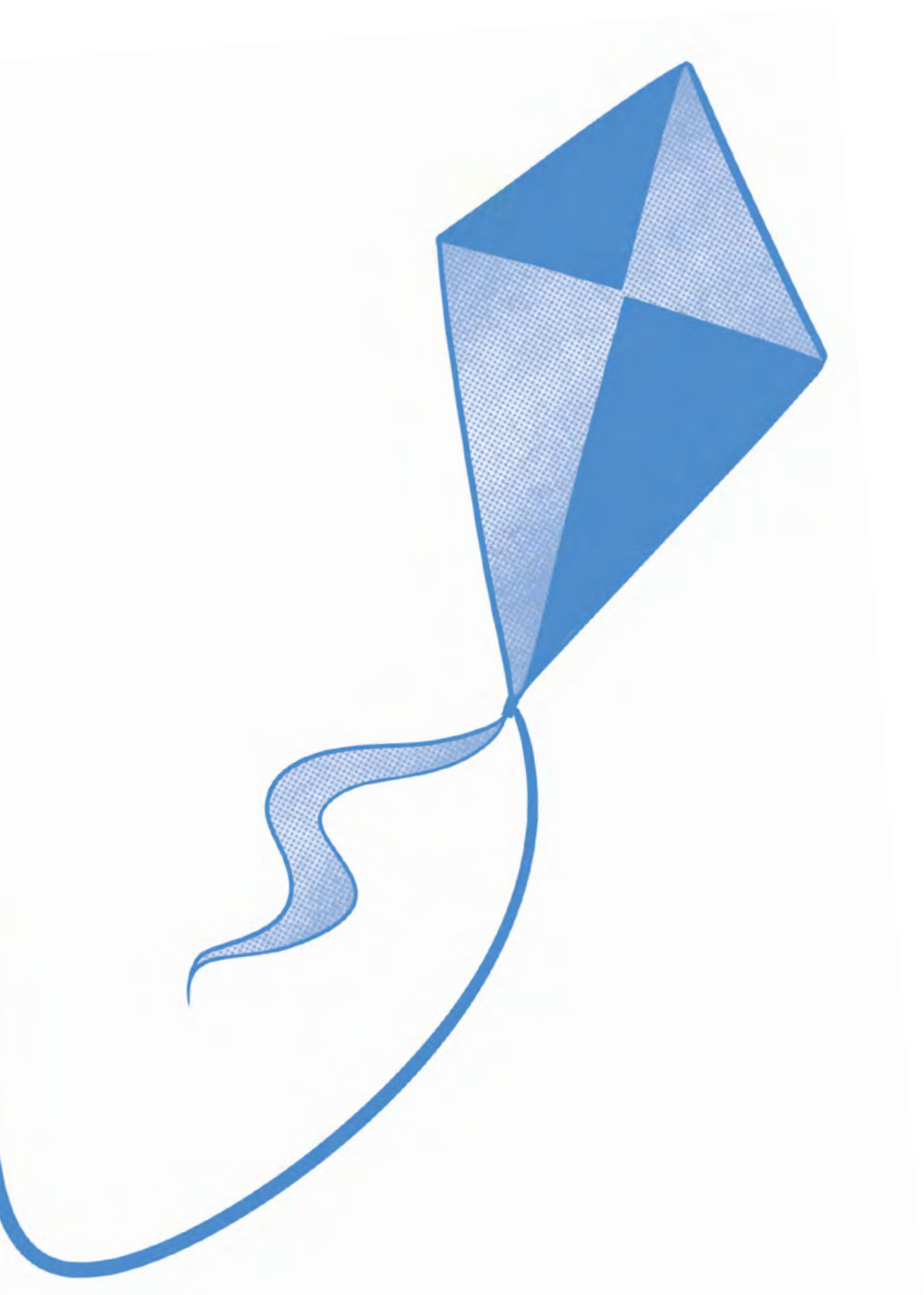


CONNECTING POLLOK PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

A collection of stories gathered by
the Citizen Storytellers





WELCOME

Connecting Pollok: Past, Present & Future is a community-led project supporting inclusion, connection and resilience throughout Greater Pollok. The project focused on connecting greenspaces and community assets, breaking down barriers, widening access to participation and developing community ownership.

This book is a celebration of the amazing work achieved by the Citizen Storytellers - an intergenerational cohort of local people recruited in early 2024 to gather, shape, collate and share local stories in collaboration with The Village Storytelling Centre and key partners. The book features over 25 stories by community members of all ages, exploring the history of activism in the community and fond memories of Pollok's past, celebrating people and places across the community as it is now and imagining the future story of Pollok as a thriving, creative community. Some stories are real, others are imaginative responses to the area - we

hope you enjoy reading the stories as much as we enjoyed collecting and presenting them.

This project was made possible with thanks to the generous support and funding from Inspiring Scotland. For more information about the project and for access to additional resources, materials, artwork and an even wider catalogue of stories, please visit – www.villagestorytelling.org.uk/community-stories/connecting-pollok

You can also continue following our story by connecting with us on Instagram and Facebook –

Instagram @villagestories

Facebook @TheVillageStorytellingCentre

CITIZEN STORYTELLERS

Debbie Warner

Irene Russell

Evie Rich

Margaret Patterson

Helen McNicoll

Thom Foley

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

WHAT A START!

Story by HELEN McNICOLL

Going to Craigbank Secondary School in Damshot Road, Pollok

It was with great excitement that I left my home to start my first day at secondary school. I was going with my friends from primary school. Our excited voices rising as we walked along the street. What was it going to be like? New things to learn, new sports to learn and take part in. In our school we had a swimming pool where I was taught to swim, a hockey pitch which doubled as a tennis court in summer and a big gym hall.

It was such a big surprise when our P.E. teacher turned out to be my old primary school teacher Miss McCracken, now Mrs McClynn. She remembered me. Also to my surprise when my geography teacher Miss Begg was an old school friend of my sister's. She recognised me as I looked very like my sister.

What a start to my secondary school life.

CAMPING IN!

by IRENE RUSSELL

Mum wasn't worth a button. She was up to high doe. There hadn't been a good drying day for over a week. The pulley was sagging with washing, the coal fire had to be lit, an expense she could do without. School shirts hung over the guard to be ready for the next morning. We were under her feet as we couldn't go out to play so we kept out of the way. With our baby brother settled for the night, bed was brought forward so she could "Get on."

All was quiet.

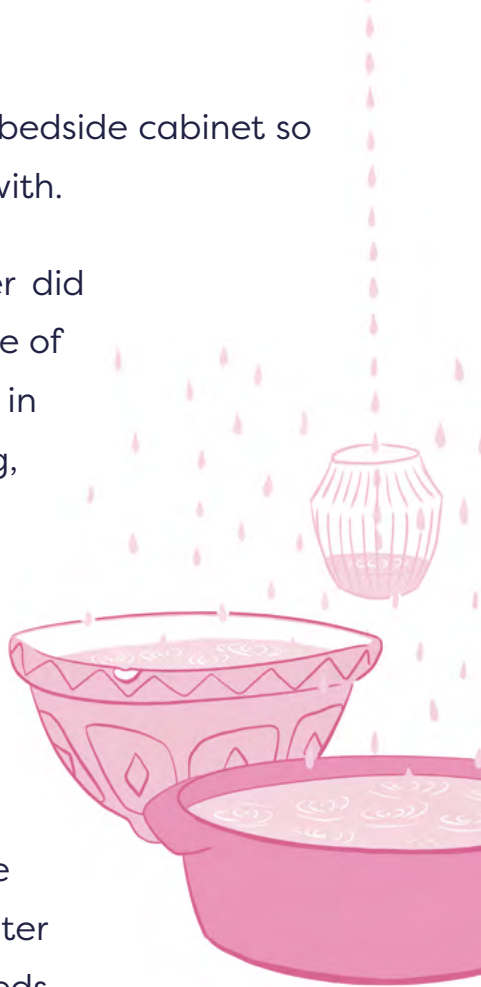
In warmer climates, flat roofs could be a thing of joy, a space to entertain visitors or somewhere to sleep on balmy summer nights. However in Glasgow not so much.

In the postwar building trade the consensus was there were two types of flat roof, one that leaked and one that will.

The drip, drip started slowly in time with the tick,

tick of the alarm clock on the bedside cabinet so we didn't fully wake to begin with.

The cries from my older sister did stir me. I looked over to her side of the room. She was sitting up in bed looking up to the ceiling, the drops of rainwater hitting her forehead and running down to drip off the end of her nose. Her crying soon brought my mum and oldest sister to the door, just in time to see the wet patch on the ceiling start to sag and the water start to pour down onto the beds.



Mum went into panic mode. Her drookit weans weren't the cause of her concern. No, this was another laundry nightmare. How would she dry out blankets and bedcovers in this weather? This would take a trip to the steamie for sure, more money! Through tears she called out to our dad, "Donald, Donald, quick!"

In his usual calm way he quickly went into action. The mattresses were pulled from the beds and dragged into the living room. We were sent to collect buckets and pots and pans, anything that would catch the water. Mum gathered herself together and stoked up the fire, found dry blankets and put on the kettle.

After the various utensils were doing their job we were sent into the living room. Mum would walk down to the factor's the next day and speak to the man from the council to come fix the roof.

With mattresses on the floor, the curtains drawn, the only light coming from the roaring fire, our campsite was complete. And even although it was late a feast was served of hot sweet milky tea and 'birds' nests', a dad speciality, morning rolls cut in half, buttered and filled with baked beans.

As we all cooied in together even mum seemed to relax and enjoy our first and only family glamping experience. I wondered, would they believe me in school tomorrow?

A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

by HELEN McNICOLL



I have fond memories of the Pollok Community Centre and the music competitions that once were held there. The first one was with my school Craigbank Secondary (now St Paul's in Damshot Road).

Our school choir had entered the schools choir competition. I still remember going out on the stage. It was nerve-racking and exciting at the same time. We had to sing two songs. We came in first and we were all so thrilled.

The second was a folk song competition which I entered with my two friends and we sang Scarborough Fair. We came in third which we thought was a great accomplishment as this was our first competition we had entered. It was also wonderful to listen to all the other folk songs sung by the other competitors.

It was a good time in my life.

TEN MUGS OF TEA AND A PACKET OF BISCUITS

by JIM STEVENS

Fire fighter at Pollok Fire Station for over 20 years

Medals? Keep them. Commendations? Don't need them. Ten cups of tea and a packet of biscuits from a wee wife in Pollok for the crew is the greatest honour of all!

It's six o'clock at night and the shift has just begun. What to expect, who knows? Checks all done, equipment all good, tonight's training begins.

Bobby's on canteen duty tonight, he's making a curry. Hope it's better than the last one, cause it gives us all a dicky tummy.

Training was good tonight, covering all aspects from cats up trees to towering infernos. First priority: three cans of tuna and a tin opener - also handy if the curry is rotten again. Extra hoses in case it is a towering inferno.

9.15pm: It's been relatively quiet, couple of bin fires and a false alarm at the Pollok Centre. Back to base again, almost time for supper. Fire kit off, wash up, just about to go upstairs, bells go again. This time it's a house fire.



Two minutes up the road, turn the corner and the flames are coming out of the window. The crew are ready and geared up on arrival, with breathing apparatus, and everyone bursts into action. We all know our role.

Four firemen go in with hoses. People are out in the street and the message comes through, thankfully no one is home. The fire is extinguished within minutes and the crew has worked really hard.

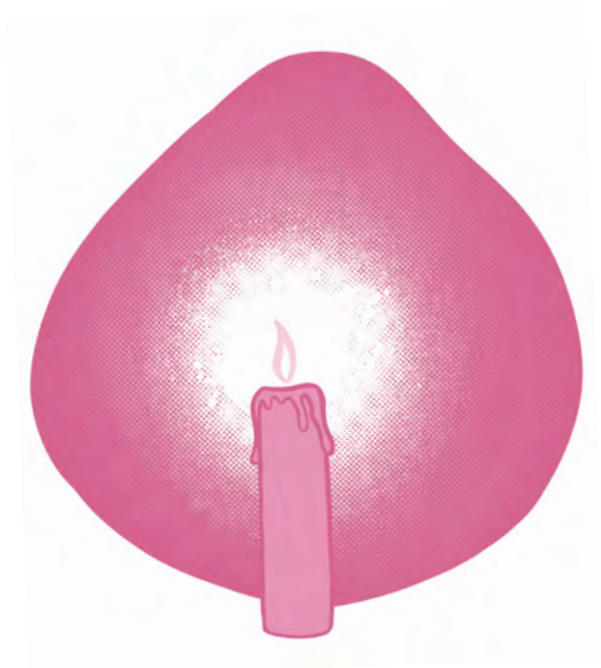
The smoke settles and neighbours are relieved no one was at home. But still the crew has to attend for an hour or so more to make sure all is well.

And then from an adjacent house comes a wee wife with ten mugs of tea and a packet of biscuits.

THE STORM

by DARCY REID

I woke to the sound of the storm swish swash and smash, broken glass, bins toppled fences down puddles gathering, trees falling, chimney parts blowing in the wind even a trampoline flying over one garden to another turning and twisting, damage happening all around me. Light's flickering, roof tiles falling. Red alert, candles out in case power lines down, life is dark and grey. The Storm.



A SPECIAL DAY

by **JULIE FERGUSON**

My husband and I made the decision to foster almost 15 years ago. We have 3 sons all grown up and many of their friends keep in touch and have told us they loved coming to our home and often going on outings with us. Kids always enjoyed playing in our large garden through the years. I had a friend who fostered when our kids were growing and I admired her, but we had a full house then - it wasn't our time to foster.

But as my kids moved on to become adults I decided to apply to foster as the time felt right. I gave up my job at a printers and was excited to do some respite for other carers, followed by short term placements.

Fostering is not a job, it's a lifestyle. Your life changes. There's good and bad days ahead. It's a journey of helping young people through difficult times but our story became unique when Darcy came along.

She started her little life here and made her way into our hearts, growing with confidence as every day we watched her grow. Months passed, years passed, and on 3rd April 2024 we adopted Darcy.

You may hear the saying “it takes a village to raise a child” and I believe this is true. From nurseries, baby clubs, school, dancing, swimming lessons, the library and of course The Village Story Club, I have taken Darcy to all above since she was weeks old and still do. She has a full diary! Many of her wonderful friends come here to her home to play. Recently she was a bit upset as her best friend from school left to start a new chapter in London. She soon cheered up as FaceTime is wonderful, allowing their friendship to continue.

Darcy has achieved many goals in her 8 years to date. She can swim unaided, dance fantastic. Last year, she danced on her own in front of many in our community centre. She won star reader at the library in 2023. In November 2024, she helped plant an apple tree in the community centre.

Adoption day was so special. We were all nervous meeting a sheriff in a court. As we left to go to the car park, which was quite empty, you would not believe what was there near our car if I hadn't got a photo taken - a van with Darcy's name written across it! I really think this was a sign of our miracle.



A Special Day!

CHANGE AND ACTIVISM

THE 'FIELDS'

by JANETTE STEVEN

Growing up in Priesthill 1950s/60s

Summer holidays. Freedom from the restriction of school. The sunniest, warmest of days, as they always seemed in retrospect.

The melting tar at the edges of the roads and pavements, enticing, and pulling with magnetic force the prodding with an old ice-lolly stick. Though woe betide if any got on clothing. The slow reluctant journey home, the oppression casting gloom and despondency, the 'fright' of a right bawling out from an irate 'Ma'.

But more, so much more so, was the excitement and allure of the fields.

Armed with chicken paste sandwiches, wrapped carefully in the greaseproof wrapper of a plain loaf, a bottle of orange Cremola foam, all tied together in a string bag, we, the weans, under the

questionable supervision of the older kids, set forth for adventure to the 'Fields'.

Up through the housing estate, right to the outer limits where the houses suddenly stopped and a vast green paradise opened up before us.

Not only (to us) a vast green landscape of freedom and adventure, but a wee burn where many happy hours were spent with a net and jam jar catching 'Baggy Minnows'. There was even a stone bridge so one could run back and forth across the bridge choosing the choosiest catching grounds.



Though we were only out of our poor mother's hair for an hour or two, we felt we were away on an odyssey, gone for aeons.

It was not always bliss, however. I remember one day my wee sister threw her jacket onto the

ground, intent on pursuing the pleasures offered by our green and pleasant retreat. Unfortunately she had thrown it atop a hornets' nest. OMG we were so 'FOR IT' when we got home minus Irene's anorak.

Fortunately a 'Knight' came to our rescue, and with his sword retrieved said jacket. That is, an older gent passing by hooked Irene's jacket with his walking stick and threw it off the hornets' nest. All was well and Mum would never know!

But now, alas, our fields of green are gone, built upon by probably much need housing.

But wouldn't it be wonderful if some of those who now sleep and slumber within that brick and mortar could catch, within their dreams, the laughter, love, adventure, and innocent freedom we felt and experienced in those days of summer.

Simple values but profound.

ROLLING GREEN FIELDS

by IRENE RUSSELL

I remember playing in the rolling green fields

I am grateful for these memories

I hear the children's excited voices, the trickle of the burn, the buzzing of the insects

I see the sun shining (did it always shine then?!), the boys bravely jumping the burn

I want to be brave like them and leap across to the other side

I remember playing in the rolling green fields

I pretend to be a princess and build a castle from the wood and stones

I feel safe in my den

I touch the grass as I lie on my back and look up at the clouds

I worry that the day will be over too soon, that my Mum will be angry at my dirty hands and knees

I remember my Mum pretending to be annoyed at how dirty we all were as she scrubbed us in the sink

I remember playing in the rolling green fields

I understand that progress can be a good thing

I say 'but at what cost?'

I dream about bygone days and making new memories

I try to embrace the changes that have been made

I hope that the next generation remember Pollok is theirs

I remember playing in the rolling green fields



WHAT EVERYONE WANTED

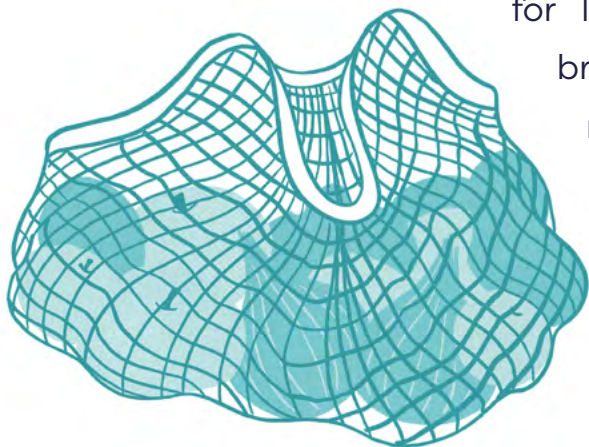
by MARY BENNETT

There was once a vast, open space, filled with everything that everyone wanted. A market in the heart of Pollok, that could be found in the old Pollok Shopping Centre. A space that felt it was for the people of Pollok.

I would get the bus there, the 57, back when you would pay the conductor – “Fares, please!” Back when the buses were frequent, they came all the time, not like now.

You would come equipped with your tartan trolley, and sometimes a string bag – that was our ‘bag

for life’. There were also brown paper bags if you needed them. There was a butcher, with the good meat, a fruit shop, fresh fish, there was everything – really



everything. Nothing wrapped in plastic, you could feel things, it was a tactile experience. You would just pour the fresh potatoes into your bag - still covered in dirt - but those taste the best!

The old clock was loud, but the design was detailed and impressive. People would meet each other underneath it. You would always see someone you knew - “How’s your Granny keeping?!” - and you would exchange information about what you could find in the shops. Most of the staff were local people, sometimes local families all working in the same place. It wasn’t your designer clothes and shoes, it was wearing shoes. Things that you wanted, things you actually needed.

There is now an even more vast and open space, that is filled with everything that people don’t really need and, unfortunately, a sense that these shops aren’t really for the people of Pollok. But there’s always hope, hope that in the future there will be a place to shop, to come together and to chat, that sparks joy for future generations, like the way it did for us.

FREE STATE

by the PUPILS OF ST PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL

A group of friends in their early teens jump the fence leading into Damshot Woods. Characters 1-2 have been here before. Characters 3-6 are new to the woods. They approach a clearing...

THREE: Guys! Wait up...

FOUR: How much further?

ONE: Calm down. We're nearly there.

FIVE: Where are you taking us?

TWO: All will be revealed, my friend!

They clamber onto the stage area, scattered with props and costume pieces.

ONE: We're here.

SIX: Are we even allowed to be here?

ONE: "The said lands should remain forever as open spaces of woodland for the beauty of the neighbourhood and for the benefit of the citizens of Glasgow."

SIX: (confused) Eh... OK?

THREE: (laughing) Is he alright?

TWO: Sir John Maxwell...

FOUR: Never met him...

TWO: His words when he gifted his estate—

ONE: Pollok Park and the surrounding woods—

TWO: To the people of Glasgow back in 1936.

ONE: So, in answer to your question, yes – we're allowed to be here.

FIVE: (impressed) Someone's been paying attention in history class.

TWO: 'Poverty Safari' actually. By Loki. He grew up here. There's yer homework! (*Throws a copy of the book at FIVE*)

TWO and FIVE squabble for a bit, ONE interrupts.

ONE: SSSHHHHH! Listen...

THREE: What are we listening to? I can only hear motors.

ONE: Exactly. (*points towards the M77*)

TWO: In 1976 the rules were changed, so that a motorway could be built right through the woods, cutting off our access from here to the park.

FOUR: (*sarcastically*) Good job... more noise and air pollution... perfect.

TWO: Totally.

SIX: I'd be ragin'. Why didn't folk kick up more of a fuss?

ONE: They did. For more than 30 years local people made sure their voices were heard
–

THREE assumes the role of a local resident, picks up mic, and addresses the audience.

THREE: I am worried but hopeful
I wonder who thought this was a good idea?
I hear they'll sever our access to vital greenspaces
I see activists, they're on our side
I want my children to play, laugh, breathe

fresh air

I am worried but hopeful

I understand this will bring more money to
the area

I say “no amount of money is worth losing
our natural resources”.

I dream of running free, of picnics and long
walks

I hope they’ll change their minds

I am worried but hopeful

*THREE lowers mic and stays downstage, TWO picks
up mic and addresses the audience, assuming the
role of ‘the authority’.*



TWO: I am the authority, but I'm uncertain
I see activists kicking up a fuss, they are
not on our side
I understand our plans will bring more
money to the area – surely that can only
be a good thing?
I wonder how I would feel about all these
changes, if they were happening right on
my doorstep?
I dream of people coming to Pollok from
further afield, like the city centre and
Newton Mearns, to shop, eat and spend
money
I hope local people can change their minds
I am the authority, and now I'm certain –
Our plans will still go ahead.

FIVE: So the local people weren't listened to.
That's awful.

FOUR: The residents were basically ignored and
had much less access to Pollok Park – so
unfair.

TWO: I know. Don't worry. All was not lost...

ONE: In 1994 a local man, Colin MacLeod, spent 9 days in a beech tree to stop it from being cut down by the construction company who were building the motorway.

SIX: *(in disbelief)* What?! No way.

FOUR: Wait... I've heard of him! Was he not 'The Pollok Birdman'?

FOUR picks up placard and assumes the role of Colin McLeod.

FOUR: "Save our Dear Green Place!"

ONE: Yeah, that's him. And from this the Pollok Free State emerged. A camp made up amazing activists, artists, scaffolders...

TWO: Surgeons, carpenters, musicians, cooks... local people!

ONE: They shared meals, learned new skills, shared stories and most importantly, physically stopped the construction of the motorway.

TWO: They even inspired a member of the construction company to down his tools

and join the movement!

FIVE assumes the role of the worker and stamps on his work uniform – all cheer!

FOUR: “There’s going to be an outrage and we’re going to start it!”

Movement section

ONE: Here, look at this journal entry from activist Paul Routledge the night before the diggers arrived –

FIVE: “People dance in the firelight, their shadows casting arabesques of celebration upon the road: we dance fire, we become fire, our movements are those of flames...”

ONE: Despite all their efforts, the plans to build the motorway still went ahead. But there’s so much good that came from all this. Community spirit...

TWO: Local people coming together

FOUR: Taking a stand

FIVE: Using their voices.

SIX: Fighting for what's right.

Beat

THREE: So what now?

TWO: Now, there will be food, music, storytelling, art, people gathering together, just like the Pollok Free State!

ONE: To honour the Birdman! To keep this story alive...

Music restarts, the young people run into the woods as the music swells, audience are free to enjoy the rest of the event!



COME TOGETHER
ALL WHO CARE

TREE PEOPLE

by MARGARET PATTERSON

The air was loud with talk about the new road coming our way. In the Café, at the bus stop, sitting on the bus, waiting for the children from school... This was talked about all over Pollok.

It was a strong fight for all the protesters. So, when I heard they needed help with food, I had a think about how to help in a small way. That was something I could manage.

I had a small function coming up in 1994. As the party came to an end, guests helped me wrap up all the food that was left over. John and I were happy to deliver this food to the 'tree people' as we named them. The delivery was to Barrhead Road end of Pollok House Park.

We did this at the end of most functions when we were on the way home. Come to think of it... I never got my pots back! I wonder where they are?!



YOU CAN BANK ON THAT

by ANONYMOUS

“How can I help?” A sentence I would use countless times throughout the day greeting customers as they approached the counter. I liked helping people and feeling that I’d done a good job.

From 1988 to 1996 I worked in the Bank of Scotland in Cowglen, within the National Savings Bank Building. Back when people carried and spent cash, and would usually only use their card to get money out of the auto teller. A wee bit different from how things are now, now that cards are king and contactless will likely put an end to that.



“How can I help?” I would say as the environmentalists approached the counter, smelling like fire and with fire in their hearts. They would come in to exchange small coin for something more usable in the shops and we’d hear that across the road something was happening in the Barrhead Woods, something impactful. An eco camp had formed to protest against the construction of the M77.

I was all for them! Unfortunately some were less welcoming, coining them as ‘hippies holding back progress’. In my mind the activists were just trying to save a green space to benefit the local community. My children at that point were aged 3 and 7, so I could empathise. Who wouldn’t want cleaner air and less pollution? Who wouldn’t want to avoid damaging woodland and impacting wildlife?

It’s no wonder they were advocating for alternative approaches and different ways of living, after all, mortgage rates were through the roof, one of the main reasons I had to return to work so quickly after having my kids. The activists became part of the landscape and I got used to them being there.

One day I was travelling to work, but something had changed. The road leading to the bank was closed. The full road, from the Pollok roundabout all the way to the Round Toll roundabout. I knew the activists were being evicted. But this time, I couldn't help, it made me feel really sad.

Looking back, I admire their resilience and humanity. I think of them and I thank them even now, as we watch news stories about the changing climate and the cost of living crisis. But I think it's true to say, that community spirit and people coming together always wins. You can bank on that.

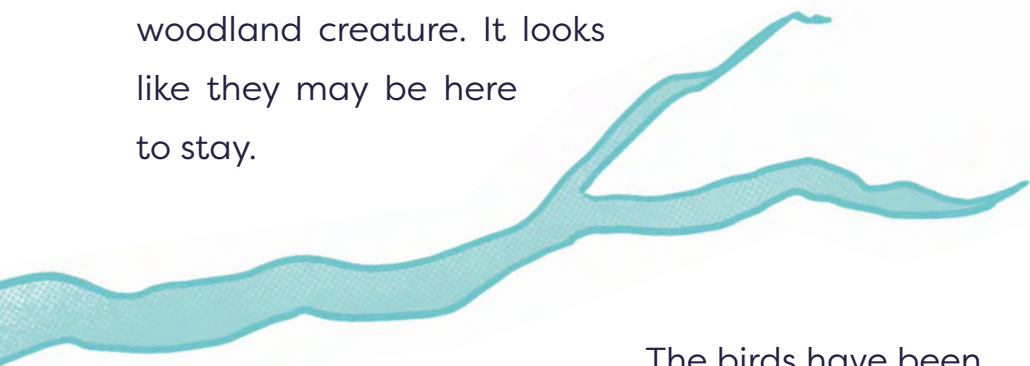
THE DAY THE TREES FELL SILENT

by EVIE RICH

Today started like any other, rooted here in the Estate. It's been a still, quiet day with only the odd robin stopping by for a chat. There was brief excitement among the trees, over some rustling leaves, but it turned out just to be a deer. A very welcome friend, but not out of the ordinary for a chilly afternoon. But then something very unusual happened.

As I stood here shivering in the icy breeze, I was interrupted by a strange human climbing through my branches as if he were a squirrel. The sun had come all the way over the woodland and was beginning to fade in the distance. The day passed quickly and I expected the human to leave but it didn't. In fact, would you believe that over the next few rises and falls of the sun, more humans have begun to arrive and join the squirrel human. In fact, the more I watch the way he flits from branch to branch, I think he may be more of a Bird-man! In

all the many cycles of the moon and passing of the seasons that I have witnessed, only the occasional human has passed through here, but these humans seem as at home as any other woodland creature. It looks like they may be here to stay.



The birds have been very curious about what the humans are getting up to. They hop around in my upper branches in an agitated chorus asking what is going on. But I can't say because I don't even know myself. We watch them together for hours. The humans have made themselves at home; they have even built nests for themselves. Some high up in my fellow's branches and some down on the ground, with little covers over them to shelter them from the wintery weather. Over the past few days, the humans have been working hard banging and sawing and building. I am home to a human nest myself now! They seem very pleased with it. All sorts

of humans have come to the woods to see it! I feel quite proud to see them gathered at the base of my trunk looking up at me. I have never had this much attention from humans before.

My once tranquil woodland has come alive with laughter and music. It isn't the same calm, peaceful place it was, but the humans have their own way of being calm and peaceful. They sit together around the fire, long into the dark hours, singing and chattering and sharing food. The humans seem to know a lot about wildlife, maybe even more than me. They seem to understand us here in the woods and we are starting to understand them. We call them our Tree People. I think I'm getting used to them being here. I used to observe each season go by and welcome the next, but no two days have been the same since the Birdman appeared and brought his Tree People with him.



This morning felt different. There was a cold chill in the air and the clouds covered the sun making sure no beams of sunshine were allowed through. The sky is gray and the woods feel gray too. The mood of the Tree People has changed. Their joyful energy is now silent and still on this cold, dreich day. The only explanation I can guess is that new humans have arrived. These humans are not the same as our Tree People that have been sharing our woods. They have bright yellow bodies and hard, shiny white heads. The nosy birds have been here all day, asking what's going on. We can all sense that something is not right. The Tree People seem restless.

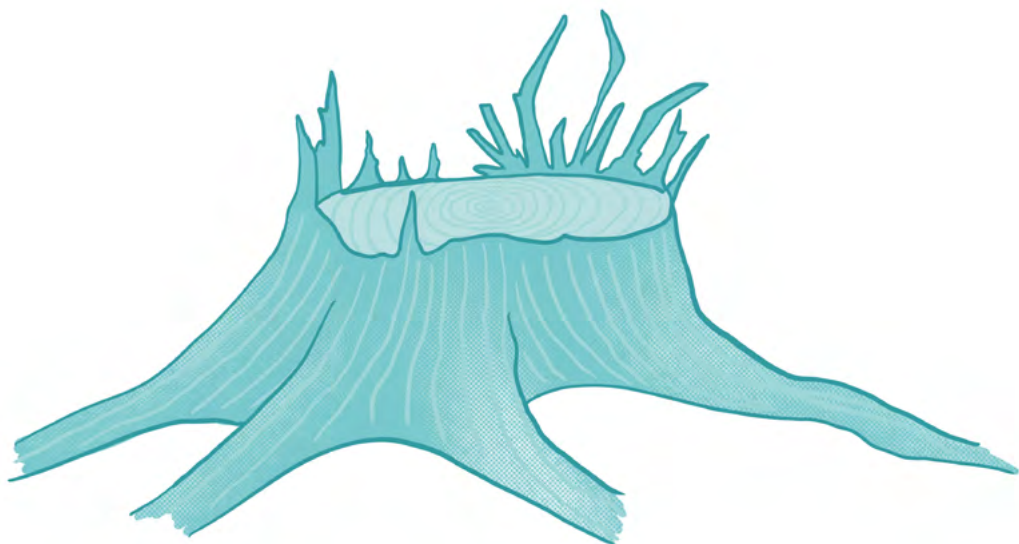
The next thing was, the yellow-bodied humans made barricades with metal fences to block our Tree People. They're not happy and are becoming loud and angry. I have never seen humans behave this way before. The woods suddenly erupted! I can't understand why the humans are fighting. Our Tree People have made even the duller days in the woods a lively community for all of us; birds, trees, squirrels, deer and humans too. Now there is chaos.

The ground rumbles beneath us. Huge metal beasts with humans inside stampede into our woods. They are noisy and spew awful fumes into the air.

We hold onto the Tree People and they hold onto us.

There is shouting
all around me.

Roaring, buzzing,
splitting pain.



السلام علیکم

اسلامو علیکم، میرا نام بسرا ہے اور میں پولوک پارک کے قریب رہتی ہوں۔ پولوک پارک شہر میں دیکھنے کے لیے میری پسندیدہ جگہ ہے۔ جب میں پہلی بار اس ملک میں آئی تو سب کچھ نیا تھا۔ سب سے بڑی تبدیلی موسم کی تھی، پاکستان میں ہم نے تمام موسموں کا تجربہ کیا لیکن گلاسگو میں ہمارے پاس صرف موسم گرما اور سردیاں ہوتی ہیں۔ مجھے گلاسگو میں رہنے میں واقعی لطف آتا ہے مجھے یہ پرامن اور بہت صاف نظر آتا ہے۔ مجھے شہر کے اندر فن تعمیر اور عمارتیں پسند ہیں۔ جب مجھے اپنی حوصلہ افزائی کے لیے کچھ کرنے کا خیال آتا ہے تو میں پولوک پارک جاتی ہوں اور۔ یہاں اور پاکستان کے درمیان بہت سے فرق ہیں جن کی مجھے کمی محسوس ہوتی ہے اور مجھے اپنے خاندان کی کمی محسوس ہوتی ہے لیکن میں نے بہت اچھے دوست بنائے ہیں جو میرے لیے ایک خاندان کی طرح ہیں۔ مجھے امید ہے کہ آپ کو میری بات پسند آئے گی۔

ASSALAMUALAIKUM

by **BASRA**

My name is Basra and I live close to Pollok Park. Pollok Park is my favourite place in the city to visit. When I first came to this country everything was new. The biggest change was the weather. In Pakistan, we experienced all the seasons but in Glasgow we have only summer and winter. I really enjoy living in Glasgow, I find it peaceful and very clean. I like the architecture and buildings within the city. When I feel like doing something to cheer me up, I visit Pollok Park and I like the museums. There are many differences between here and Pakistan which I do miss and I miss my family but I have made great friends who are like a family for me.



اسلاموا لیکم

میں راجیلہ ہوں، میں پاکستان سے ہوں، بالخصوص ملتان سے۔ میں شادی کے بعد گلاسگو آئی، جب میں پہلی بار یہاں آئی تو میں بہت چھوٹی تھی۔ پاکستان میں ہمارا خاندان بہت بڑا تھا، میرے 8 بہن بھائی ہیں اور جب میں یہاں آئی تو خاندان بہت چھوٹا تھا۔ اپنے خاندان سے دوری میرا سب سے بڑا چیلنج تھا، اس کے ساتھ ساتھ ایک نئی جگہ پر آنا جس کی نئی زبان تھی۔ مجھے واقعی اپنے والدین اور اپنے بھائیوں اور بہنوں کی کمی محسوس ہوئی۔ ایک بار ایسا موقع آیا جب میں پہلی بار اس ملک میں آئی تھی اور مجھے جی پی کے پاس جانا پڑا۔ میں قطار کے نظام کو نہیں سمجھ سکی کیونکہ یہ اس سے بہت مختلف تھا جو میں نے پہلے تجربہ کیا تھا۔

میں نے سیکھا کہ گلاسگو میں بہت نظم و ضبط ہے اور ہمیں کسی بھی چیز اور ہر چیز کے لیے قطار میں انتظار کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ آپ اپنی خریداری کرتے ہیں آپ کو لائن میں انتظار کرنا پڑتا ہے، بس لینے کے لیے آپ کو

قطار میں انتظار کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ مجھے یہ بہت مشکل لگا کیونکہ یہ ایک نیا تجربہ تھا۔ میں اس ملک میں 40 سال سے ہوں، جب میں پہلی بار پہنچی تو شدید سردی تھی اور مجھے گھر سے نکلنے کے لیے جدوجہد کرنی پڑتی تھی۔ یہ بہت سے اختلافات تھے جن پر ہمیں قابو پانا تھا اور ان لوگوں سے دوستی کرنی تھی جو ہمارے لیے خاندان کی طرح بن گئے تھے۔ یہ دیکھ کر خوشی ہوتی ہے کہ ہم سب اجتماعی طور پر ایک کمیونٹی کے طور پر اس خلا کو پر کرنے کے لیے اکٹھے ہوئے ہیں جو ہمارے خاندان نے چھوڑا ہے۔ سکاٹس لوگ بہت خوبصورت ہیں اور ان کی روحیں خوبصورت ہیں۔ میں اب پاکستان کا دورہ کرنے کے باوجود گلاسگو میں زیادہ خوش اور آرام محسوس کرتی ہوں۔ جب میں نے انگریزی بولنا سیکھا تھا تو مجھے بہت شرم آتی تھی کیونکہ میں شرمندہ ہونے سے ڈرتی تھی، لیکن سب لوگ بہت حوصلہ افزا اور مددگار تھے اور انہوں نے میرے لیے اتنے اعتماد کے ساتھ بولنا آسان بنا دیا، اور میں اس کے لیے بہت شکر گزار ہوں۔ یہ اب میرا گھر ہے میرے شوہر اور بچے سب یہاں میرے ساتھ ہیں اور میں گلاسگو کا

حصہ بن کر بہت خوش ہوں۔ میں اس گروپ اور اس کے مواقع اور اسکاٹ لینڈ کے لوگوں کی بہت شکر گزار ہوں جن کی کمیونٹیز سے اتنا شاندار تعلق ہے اور ایک دوسرے کی دیکھ بھال کرتے ہیں۔ میں واقعی اس ملک کے فراہم کردہ حمایتی قوانین اور ضوابط کی قدر کرتی ہوں اور مجھے گلاسگو میں رہنا بہت پسند ہے، یہ رہنے کے لیے ایک خوبصورت جگہ ہے

Assalamualaikum

I am Raheela. I am from Pakistan, specifically Multan. I came to Glasgow after getting married. I was very young. In Pakistan, we had a very big family, I have 8 siblings and when I came here the family was very small. Missing my family was my biggest challenge, along with coming to a new place which had a new language. I really missed my parents and my brothers and sisters.

There was once an instant when I first came to this country, and I had to visit the GP. I couldn't

understand the queue system as this was very different from what I had experienced before. I learned that Glasgow had a lot of discipline and we had to wait in line for anything and everything. When you did your shopping you had to wait in a line, to get the bus you had to wait in line. I found this to be very challenging as it was such a new experience.

I have been in this country for 40 years, when I first arrived the bitter cold was not something I was used to and I would struggle to leave the house. There were many differences that we had to overcome and to make friends with people who became like family for us. It's heartwarming to see that we have all collectively come together as a community to fill the gap that our family has left. The Scottish people are very beautiful and have beautiful souls. I am now more happy and comfortable in Glasgow despite visiting Pakistan. I used to be shy when I first learned to speak English as I was scared of being embarrassed, but everyone was so encouraging and supportive and made it easy for me to speak so confidently and I am so grateful for that. This

is now my home. My husband and children are all here with me and I am so happy to be a part of Glasgow. I am so thankful to this group (Paratha in the Park, Pollok) and its opportunities and to the people of Scotland who have such a wonderful connection to communities and caring for one another. I really appreciate the support, rules and regulations that this country has to offer and I truly love living in Glasgow and it's a beautiful place to live.

، ہیلو

میرا نام غزالہ ظفر ہے اور میں یہ اپنے گروپ کے لیے ریکارڈ کر رہی ہوں ، تاکہ آپ کو اپنی زندگی کی کہانی کے بارے میں تھوڑا سا بتاؤں۔ میں اس گروپ میں شامل ہوں، جو عطیہ اور نصیم کا انتظام ہے۔ میں اب 20 سال سے برطانیہ میں رہ رہی ہوں، اس سے پہلے میں پاکستان میں رہتی تھی، جس میں میں نے گریجویشن کیا اور 2 سال تک تدریس بھی کی۔ میں نے مونٹیسوری کورس مکمل کیا اور مونٹیسوری کے بچوں کو بھی پڑھایا۔ بچپن میں میں اپنے خاندان کے ساتھ ایک فارم ہاوس میں رہتی تھی۔ میرے خاندان کے پاس کھیت تھے جن میں ہم نے بہت سارے پھل اگائے۔ میرے والد، ماں، بہن بھائی اور میں وہاں رہتے تھے۔

جیسے جیسے وقت گزرتا گیا، ہم اپنی تعلیم میں مصروف ہوتے گئے، اور پھر اسلام آباد میں میری شادی ہو گئی۔ شادی کے بعد، میں اپنے شوہر اور بچوں کے ساتھ اسلام آباد میں تقریباً 5-6 سال رہی، اس کے بعد ہم نے

برطانیہ جانے کا فیصلہ کیا۔ برطانیہ آنے کے بعد مجھے تھوڑا سا زبان کا مسئلہ پیش آیا۔، کیونکہ سکاٹش لہجے کو سمجھنا کافی مشکل ہے، اس لیے شروع میں ہم نے جدوجہد کی۔ لیکن آہستہ آہستہ ہم نے سیکھا، اس لیے اب ہم پوری طرح سمجھ سکتے ہیں، لیکن اسکاٹش لہجہ ابھی بھی تھوڑا مشکل ہو سکتا ہے۔ گلاسگو کا موسم میرے اصل وطن سے بہت مختلف تھا۔

میرے ملک میں سردیاں قابل برداشت ہوتی ہیں لیکن گرمیوں میں گرمی بہت شدید ہوتی ہے۔ اس لیے میں نے یہاں کے موسم میں فرق محسوس کیا۔

میں اپنے خاندان کو بہت یاد کرتی تھی کیونکہ میرا سارا خاندان پاکستان میں تھا۔ پاکستان میں گلاسگو میں ہمارا کوئی رشتہ دار نہیں تھا۔ لیکن آہستہ آہستہ میں اور میرے شوہر نے کچھ ایسے خاندانی دوست بنائے جن کے ساتھ ہم قریب ہو گئے۔ اور اب ماشا اللہ ہم یہاں آباد ہو چکے ہیں۔

میرے بچوں نے ماشاء اللہ یہاں تعلیم حاصل کی اور اب پیشہ ورانہ ملازمتیں کرتے ہیں۔

یہاں کی تعلیم بہت اچھی ہے اور فراہم کی جانے والی طبی دیکھ بھال بھی بہت اچھی ہے۔ میں واقعی مساوات کی قدر کرتی ہوں، یہاں لوگ برابر ہیں، کسی کو بھی دوسروں سے اونچا نہیں سمجھا جاتا۔ ہم نے خود کو یہاں کی ثقافت کے مطابق ڈھال لیا ہے۔ جیسے جیسے ہم یہاں رہ رہے ہیں، ہم یہاں کی زبان، طرز زندگی اور اقدار کو سمجھنے لگے ہیں۔ میں یہاں سے لطف اندوز ہوتی ہوں، ہم نے یہاں کے اصولوں پر عمل کیا ہے، یہاں کا طرز زندگی اچھا ہے

میں نے اس گروپ میں شمولیت اختیار کی ہے، جس کا انتظام عطیہ اور نصیم ہر ہفتے تقریبات منعقد کرتے ہیں جن میں میں شرکت کرتی ہوں۔ ہم سب خواتین ملتے ہیں اور بہت سی مختلف چیزیں سیکھتے ہیں، ہم ایک ساتھ باہر جاتے ہیں اور چھوٹے کورسز بھی مکمل کیے ہیں جن میں ہم نے مختلف مہارتیں سیکھی ہیں۔ یہ تناؤ کو کم کرنے میں مدد کرتا ہے اور ہم سب کو اپنے جذبات کے بارے میں بات کرنے میں مدد کرتی ہے تاکہ ہم اپنے دل اور دماغ کو آرام دے سکیں، میں واقعی اس سے لطف

اندوز ہوتی ہوں۔ اور اب میں الوداع کہوں گی، یہ وہ یادیں ہیں جو مجھے
ابھی اپنی زندگی کے بارے میں یاد ہیں۔ یادیں زندگی بھر کبھی ختم نہیں
ہوتیں، لیکن کتنی چھوٹی چھوٹی چیزیں مجھے یاد ہیں جن کا میں نے ذکر کیا ہے
- آپ کا بہت بہت شکریہ

My name is Ghazala Zafar, I have lived in the UK now for 20 years. Before that I lived in Pakistan, where I graduated and completed the Montessori course and taught the Montessori children.

In my childhood, I lived on a farm alongside my family. My family owned farms in which we grew lots of fruit. My father, mother, siblings and I stayed there. As time went on, we got busy with our education, and then I got married in Islamabad. After marriage, I stayed with my husband and children in Islamabad for around 5-6 years before we decided to move to the UK.

After coming to the UK, I had a bit of a language

barrier, as the Scottish accent is quite difficult to understand, so in the beginning we struggled. But slowly we learned, so now we are able to completely understand, although the strong accent can still be a bit tricky.

In Glasgow the weather was very different from where I am originally from. In my country, winter is bearable but during summer the heat is very intense. So I did feel a difference in weather here. We have adapted ourselves to the culture here. As we have lived here, we began to understand the language, the lifestyle and the values. I enjoy it here, we have followed the rules here, the way of living is nice here.

I missed my family a lot as all my family was in Pakistan. In Glasgow we had no relatives. But slowly me and my husband made family friends which we became close with.

Now MashAllah we have settled here. My children MashAllah have studied here and now work professional jobs. The education here is very good

and the medical care provided is also great. I really appreciate the equality. Here people are equal, no one is thought of as higher than others.

This group I have joined, which is managed by Atiya and Naseem, hold events every week (in Pollok) which I attend. All of us ladies meet and learn many different things, we go out together and have also completed small courses in which we have learned various skills. This helps with de-stressing and helps all of us to talk about our feelings so we can relax our heart and mind. I really enjoy it.

VOICES OF PEACE

by **NORDAAN ZANGANA**

When I arrived to Glasgow, the dark and rainy night left a bad impression on me.

However, the sunrise the next morning made me see things differently. The warm and welcoming people I met changed my initial negative thoughts about the cold weather, and I began to appreciate my new surroundings.

Moving to another country and raising a neuro-divergent child has been a challenging journey, but I have always seen my child as a blessing. I decided to step back my career as a cyber security specialist in my home country to care for him, and it has shifted my perspective on life in a positive way. I am proud of the decision I made and grateful for the opportunity to prioritise what truly matters.

VOICES OF PEACE

by **FATHIMA SHIHAMA RAZICK**

The UK is one of my favourite countries. But I never thought that I will come here. I am happy that it happened.

I am lucky to be here. Glasgow gave me a big hope. It gave me confidence and happiness.

My first flat in Glasgow was in Kinning Park. I felt amazing there as my children started to go to school.

Ibrox Library helped me a lot. People of the library guided me to everything. They helped me make connection with college and different women groups in Glasgow.

After a few years we moved to Drumchapel to a new flat. This place gave me comfort and happiness. My son did his master's, my daughter and my youngest son started their university and apprenticeship.

During their study the whole world went under

lockdown including the UK. During that time careers and dreams, everything had to be stopped.

Couple of years passed and we had moved to Cardonald apartment. This made my family happy and relaxed as it was closer to their school and work.

This is when I found out about the Village Storytelling Centre in neighbouring Pollok where I regained confidence by sharing stories, ideas and listening to other people's life stories that inspired me well.

Glasgow is a place that makes me happy, relaxed and confident as Glasgow has beautiful parks. Lochs and beaches are not far away, there is lots of interesting places to explore. My plan is to live happy life with my family and friends in Glasgow. Weather here is unpredictable as it gets cold, warm, rainy and sunny – all at once, but this is something different too which is nice.

Thank you, Glasgow!

I WILL SEE

by the VILLAGE STORYMAKERS (P4 – 7)

I see...

hotter days

Silverburn

More rain

Less insects

Less mammals

Climate change

I could see...

More trees before

Green everywhere

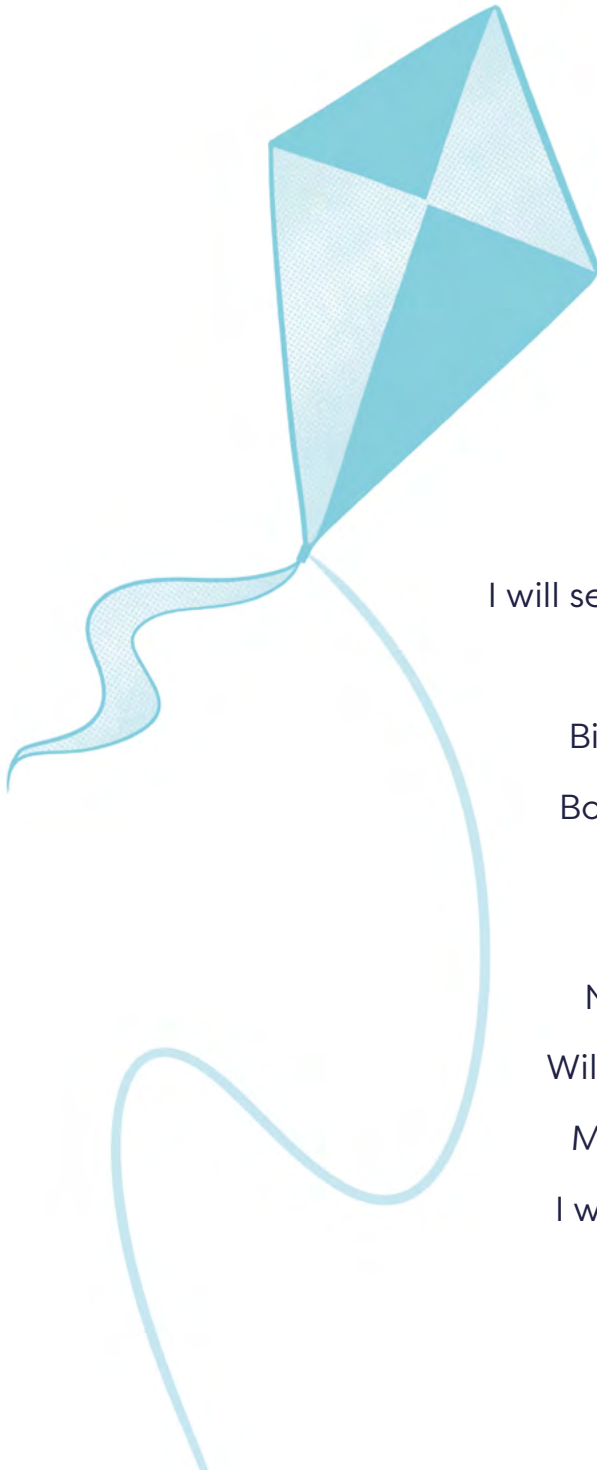
Flat grass for miles

Wilderness

Mountains and mines

Giants

Now I see shiny cars



I will see...

Inventions save
the planet

Climate superheroes

Flying cars

Giant robots
cleaning the air

I will see no more extinction

More parks

Birds singing in the city

Boats on the Brockburn

People growing food
on their roofs

New farms on the hills

Wild flowers everywhere

My garden full of foxes

I will see nature thriving

OUTDOOR SPACES

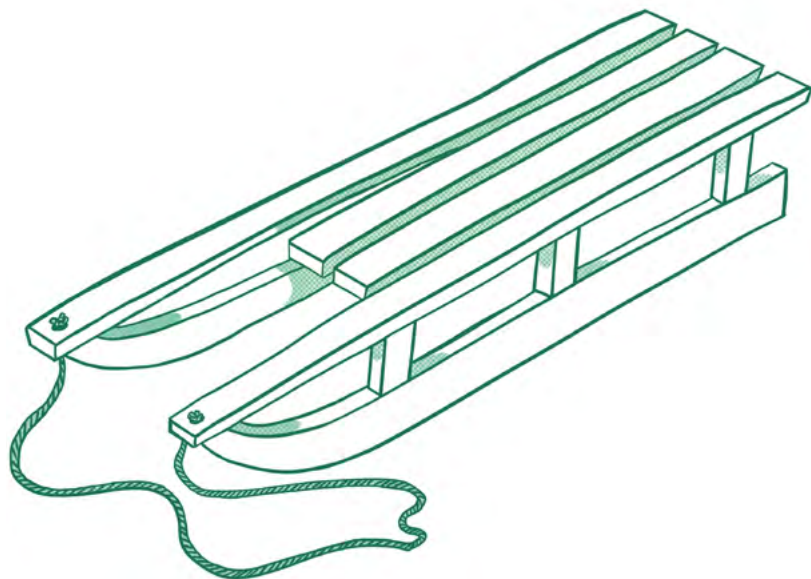
SLEDGING WITH SKINT KNEES

by ALICE MULHOLLAND

When we came to Pollok at first I was a year old and this was all farm land. When I was about 7 years old, in the winter when it was snowy, we used to take our sledges (or Toboggans if you want to call them that) and when you were wee you only went to this field behind the school. (*Alice points to the big grassy hill situated near St Marnock's Primary School*) But when you got bigger (and a bit braver) you went up the higher field. So, you would slide down and hope that your sledge would keep going, and you'd go bump bump bump across the road, but then slide down behind the school there.

I had a sledge that my brother made for me. Two of my brothers were joiners by trade, the eldest made me an ironing board, a wee clothes horse and I think he made me a school desk. My brother was 16 years older than me. When we went sledging there was quite a few of us. Most of the sledges would be shop bought or you would go down on a tray, but I

was lucky because I had one my brother made me – the best! The sledge was made of wood and the runners on it were made from copper piping. It was wee, big enough for me, but it was wee. As I got older, the boys had another sledge and it was great because it had a rope on it and you could guide it. Only the stupid and the brave went down the big hill, but we had great fun. We used to go sledging up the high field and come back with skint knees and your coat all soaked. It was nice living here, you knew all your neighbours. I still had that sledge when my own kids were born, I'm sure.



WINTER MEMORIES

by the **URBAN ROOTS GARDENING & CRAFT GROUP**



My memory of snow in Pollok was going down the steepy - the Kirkbrae - on a bit a wood. You used to go straight onto the road, but there were no motors back then.

My Dad gave away my bike that I got for Christmas to another family, because they had nothing.



My Dad died in January and that Christmas my ma asked us whatever we wanted for Christmas. I wanted a 'hacking jacket' and my brother wanted a snorkel (a big parka jacket). Christmas morning came and there I got a 'hat and a jacket' and my brother got a 'snorkel for the bath'!

I used to dress up as Santa at Christmas, and I remember one year I got locked out the house, so I just went round the neighbours' kids - dressed as Santa.



RED ASH

by HELEN McNICOLL

Across the road from my house were big mounds of red ash.

This was from a residue of the mining of red clay in a local mine which was used to make red bricks by a factory in the area known locally as 'The Red Hills'. It covered a big area of land. There was tons of these red mounds of ash.

As kids we would ride our bikes round about these mounds. Mine was a red bike which I loved. We would squeal and shout as we raced about seeing who could go the fastest. Our shoes and trousers would get covered in the red ash so we could not lie as to where we had been. If it was windy the ash would blow into our mouths and eyes. It tasted awful and stung your eyes. It was great fun playing in the red ash mounds.

I have fond memories of this carefree time of my childhood. I remember one day my mum sent me

and my cousin down to the local shops. We came back home through the red hills. When I got home I discovered I had lost a ten shilling note from my pocket. My mum sent us both out to look for it as it was a lot of money back then. A ten shilling note was a brownish colour and blended in with the red ash. As you can imagine, it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Thankfully, after a long search amongst these mounds, we found it.

Once a year, travelling people would come and park the caravans on a patch of land in the hills and used to go round the doors looking to do any odd jobs. We used to go and look at their colourful vans. They would fascinate us with their bright colours.

The mining stopped when there was a collapse in the mine and it was closed down. There was a legend that on a windy night, if there was a full moon, you could hear the miners working away with their picks and shovels.



CROOKSTON CASTLE

by ERIN MCGHEE

One day in the heart of Pollok the town was thriving and right in the middle of the town stood Crookston Castle under the rule of King George I.

Although George was only a child he was a great king. He held great feasts for the whole town to attend and marvellous festivals to celebrate the town's cultures. But what George loved most was all the rules he didn't have to follow. He didn't have his mum and dad bossing him around and never had any homework. But there was a part of town who didn't like the idea of a child ruling over them so they made a plan to overthrow him. So they convinced the town to go to a vote for who they thought should rule but in the end King George won and all felt right again. The town continued to thrive. King George grew old and so did the town but his legacy continued to the ends of time.

I REMEMBER

by ANONYMOUS

I remember going to Pollok Park with
my dogs and grandchildren.

I am happy

I hear the birds

I see the highland cows

I want to stay here

I pretend I'm a child again, running
about

I feel tired, but happy

I cry as my dogs have now crossed
the rainbow bridge

I dream for long and happy life

I try to do as much as I can

I hope for peace



مجھے یاد ہے کہ میں خوش تھی جب میں پرندوں کو کھلاتی تھی۔
پرندوں کو کھلاتی تھی۔

مجھے یاد ہے پارک میں جانا
میں نے ایک شہد کا چھتہ دیکھا۔
مجھے ڈر لگا

میں کبھی بھی اسکو پکڑ نہیں سکتی میں بہت زیادہ گھبراگی
میرے آنسو نکل آئے

مجھے یاد ہے پارک میں جانا
مجھے معلوم تھا کہ مجھے ڈنک سے بچنا ہے۔

میرا خواب وہی پارک دوبارہ جانا ہے
امید ہے کہ پارک اب بھی وہی ہوگا

مجھے یاد ہے پارک میں جانا اور وہاں سیر کرنا

THE PARK

by SHAZIA JAVID

I remember I was very happy
feeding the birds

Feeding the birds

I remember going to the park

I saw a hive

I was scared

I could never catch it, I was very nervous

Tears came out

I remember going to the park

I knew I didn't want to get stung

My dream is to go back to the same
park

Hopefully the park will still be there

I remember going to the park and
strolling there.



Translated by LABABA NAQVI

FLY HIGH 6000

by THOM FOLEY

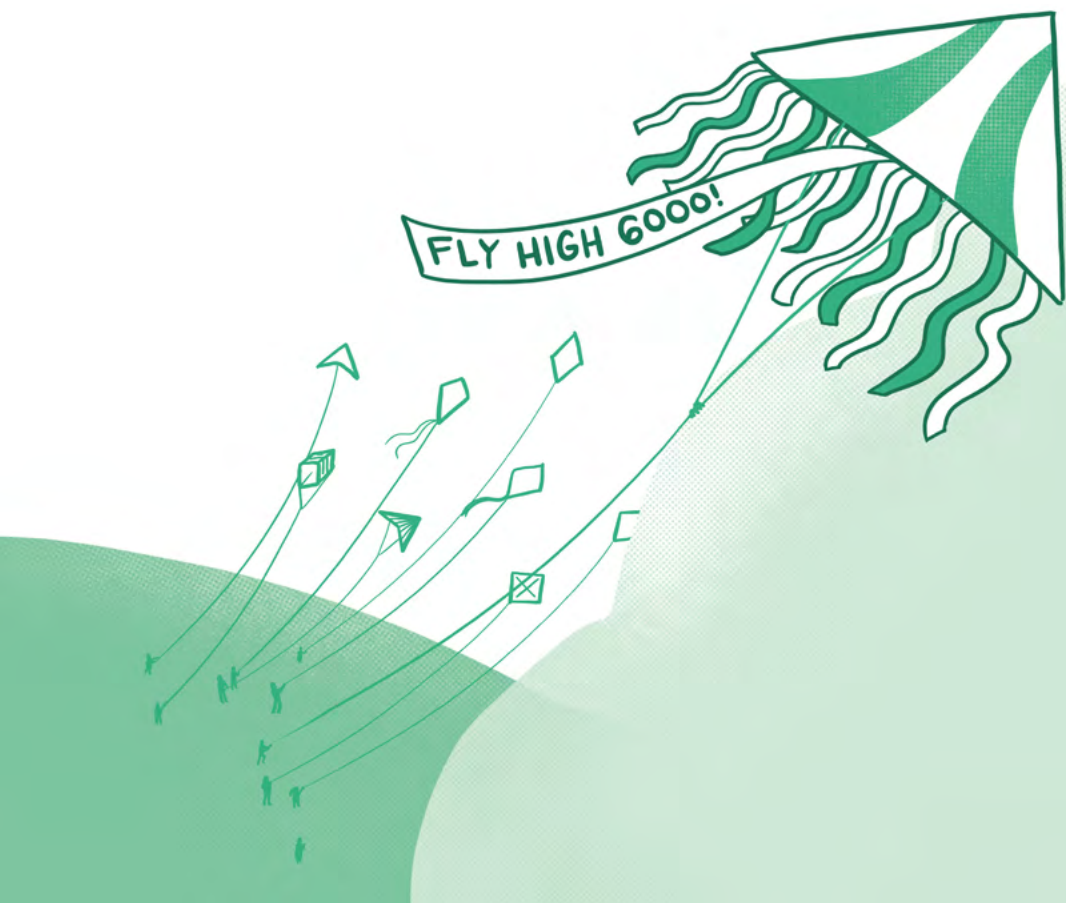
It's Sunday 12th May 2024. People are beginning to gather on Pollok Hill for the Kite Festival. I arrive with a big group of friends and we're looking forward to it. It's supposed to rain later but hopefully it'll stay dry during the festival. Even if it does rain there's always so much to do and the food made by the local caterers is amazing.

Confidently I choose a kite to fly, it's white with rainbow tails and I decide to name it 'Fly High 6000', because, well why not?! I'm flying my kite and jokingly my friends try to hit it down, but that won't stop me! The story yurt is full of people hearing exciting tales, told by the Village Storytellers, so busy in fact I couldn't get in. I notice that nobody at the fest is paying any attention to their phones, just enjoying the activities and chatting to each other. A welcome change.

In my mind I flash back a full year to the first ever Kite Festival - the first time I had ever flown a kite.

I have to say it felt good to finally master it. I felt accomplished! I've definitely come a long way since then.

Back to May 2024 and the sun still shines in the sky as a kaleidoscope of colourful kites dance in the warm air. When the day is over and everything is packed up we feel the first spots of rain, couldn't have worked out better. I hope there's another kite festival next year. Return of the 'Fly High 6000'!



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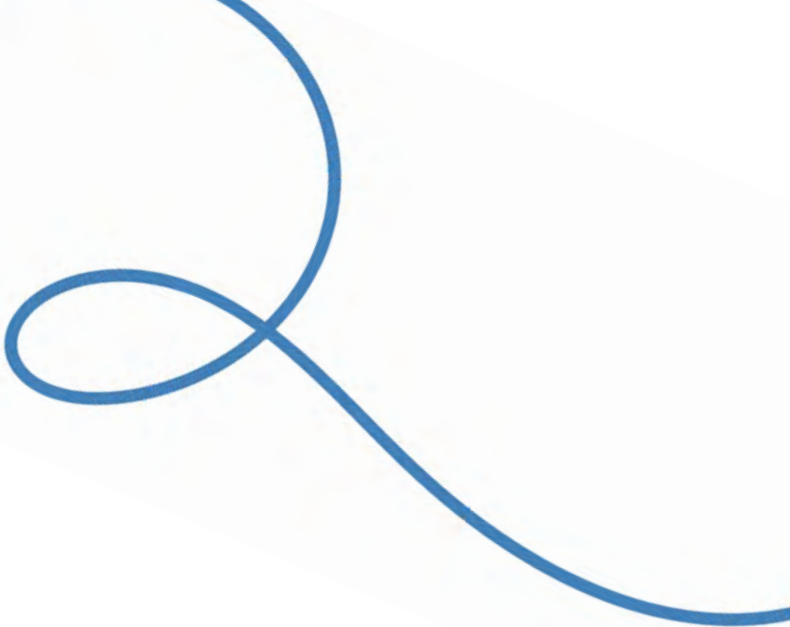
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Connecting Pollok: Past, Present & Future brings together over 25 stories by community members of all ages, exploring the history of activism in the community and fond memories of Pollok's past, celebrating people and places across the community as it is now and imagining the future story of Pollok as a thriving, creative community.

www.villagestorytelling.org.uk

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