

TOGETHER

**A Poetic Celebration of
Community Strength
and Diversity**

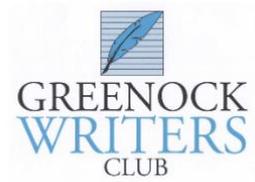
**By
Greenock
Writers
Club**

Cover art by John Moody

TOGETHER

**A POETIC CELEBRATION OF
COMMUNITY STRENGTH AND
DIVERSITY**

GREENOCK WRITERS' CLUB



TOGETHER

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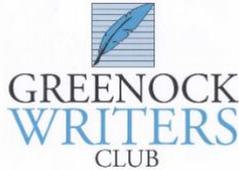
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Afterword - Inverclyde Libraries & Inverclyde Culture Collective



Greenock Writers' Club is delighted to work in partnership with Inverclyde Culture Collective to bring you this poetry pamphlet on the theme of 'Together'. 'Together' can mean so many things to each of us as we reflect on our communities and life experiences, and the strength we draw from each other. This collection of poems touches on the past, sits with us in the present, and inspires us to step into the future. We hope that you enjoy these uplifting poems which celebrate the diversity and spirit of our communities within Inverclyde.

Anne Pettigrew
President, Greenock Writers' Club

About Greenock Writers'

Greenock Writers' Club provides a friendly forum promoting the love of writing within Inverclyde. Believing in equality and inclusion - and that diversity drives creativity - we welcome new members over eighteen of any ability and from any background.

If you are interested in joining, or would like to hear more about the Club, please visit our website www.greenockwriters.co.uk or contact Margaret Grant, Club Secretary, at margaretg5554@gmail.com

SECTION ONE - TOGETHERNESS

Together We Are Scotland

Who is a Scot
and who is not?
In the ancient times
There were Picts and Gaels,
Angles, Britons and Hibernians.
Then came the Roman army
from climes much more balmy.
The Norse Vikings were wilder,
they settled and became milder.
Normans came across the sea
and decided it was the place to be.
Europeans came from all over and Rome
and made Scotland their happy home.
Indians and Asians came from further away
they spiced up life and are here to stay.
Now Afghanis, Somalis, and Syrians
are welcomed here to safety.
We all came from somewhere
and together we are Scotland.

Helen Heffernan

Together

Talking all night, drinking our wine.
Choosing a path, walking the line.
Messing things up then making amends.
Shifting a sofa with arguing friends.
Together.

Bridging the gap, dancing real slow.
Planting a tree, watching it grow.
Telling our stories, singing the blues.
Shuffling about in each other's shoes.
Together.

Standing up tall, speaking out strong.
Taking a knee, minding our tongue.
Breaking thru ceilings, dismantling walls.
Picking ourselves up after we fall.
Together.

Recycling plastic, saving the world.
Helping an old man, cross the road.
Finding our feet, finding our voice.
Raising our kids up, better than us.
Together.

Cal Hutton

Recipe

Time To make: From one second to Infinity
Serves: Humanity

Ingredients

From Pranesh, Chole Bhature
And Atin adds Satay
Camille makes bouillabaisse
Wonton brought by Genji

Ahika from Tasmania
Has Kawakawa Fruit
Some Guinness from Alana
Flavours bamboo shoots

Grey Wolf's salted char
fits Chin's Furano Wine
Moin Moin from the Niger
Suits Babacar right fine

Preparation:

In a hall, lay out this dish
And let the world reflect
There's taste, and room here for us, If
We season with respect.

Anthony Watt

Come away in...

Not being together
is being apart
Not feeling alien
is maybe a start

A hand held in friendship
is welcome and more
You're one of us now
Come away in the door

There's strength in together
in turbulent weather
defences and power
United to flower

Difference? No matter
Minds open to chatter
Learn ideas, opinion
From every dominion

Together we're strong,
Supported, belong.
Come in, laugh, create,
It's never too late.

Anne Pettigrew

Together is When the Door Opens

Together is when the door opens
and you walk through.
Together is a hand
held in mine.

Together is a journey
through the rocky
and the smooth,
lifts us up as we stumble
carries our burden
through the pain.

Together has no age or colour
no prejudice or hate.
Together wraps us in compassion
our differences, in quiet respect.

Together can be short or long
blow freely like the wind,
together tells us
everything is possible
one of many
we are as one.

Margaret Grant

Jumpers for Goalposts

Jumpers for goalposts twenty a side
play with your mates, you're playing for pride
twenty half time and forty the winner
take it in turns to go for your dinner
jumpers for goalposts you play for the team
be Messi, Ronaldo follow your dream

Jim Daisley

SECTION TWO – TOGETHER IN THIS WORLD

Five Thousand Pocketfuls of Light

See five thousand pocketfuls of light
Scattered lonely 'gainst the night
But beneath what naked eye can see
Lies the fabric of heavenly symmetry.

Hear the wind whispering thru the trees
Romantic murmurings, we like to believe
But unseen below the ground we walk upon
Lies a fungal network of communication.

Feel the buzz of furry bumbling workers
In chaotic sweet assault on flowers
Then watch the soft-shoe shuffle of the drones
And see a coordinated hive of pheromones.

Like the Stars
Like the Trees
Like the Bees
Perhaps Together we're all of these.

Cal Hutton

Four Haiku

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry consisting of three
lines of 5,7,5 syllables

I

The sun rises pink
Like spring blossom welcoming
Angels from their beds.

II

In this land of green
Clouds are waterfalls of joy
Clear waves brought you home.

III

The earth remembers
Your pain and suffering still
Its heart dressed in black.

IV

I didn't know your name
Your long branch of life before
Our roots of friendship.

Margaret Grant

Labels

Two million years, I came from Chad
And Kenya, going north
A single tribe, bright with hope
In new lands, peopled earth

The sack I carried, full of names,
these labels scattered wide.
Some brought us pride, and some caused shame
And some just made us to hide.

Proclaimed us Muslim, Arab, Jew
Shi'ite, Christian and Sikh,
The tribes we named ourselves were new,
But labels made us weak.

So, nation slaughtered nation,
And zealots, zealots killed
My bright hopes leaving Maasai land
Found nought but killing fields

Return to me the labels
Give me back the names
Without them we can make an earth
Where no-one hides from shame.

Anthony Watt

Timeline to togetherness

People of the world,
see this life for what it is
we are different
skin colour, language
religion and cultures,
perfectly different
that's the beauty of life
discovering those differences adds
intrigue, learning and
embracing the new,
we exist in this world together
linked by every breath,
every heartbeat, every song
in awe of this beautiful planet,
as humanity we are one
yet some create violence
they dislike our differences
they have not reached where we have
on this timeline
It's not their fault
fed prejudice from birth
but, they will get here
one day
and awaken from their ignorance

Grahame Anderson

Celebration

Colour is beautiful and
Equality can be achieved
Living with hope and
Enabling teamwork

By

Raising awareness and being
Active, not passive, so
Together we offer an
Invitation to celebrate
Our common humanity
Now

Isobel Watt

We Belong

We sit in the park, drinking the sun
on hard wooden benches
rugs of yarn
daffodils nod and smile as they pass
sparrows and blackbirds flutter and dash
Tall trees of age who've weathered the storm
gather round us, solid and strong
the breeze so gentle, ruffles our hair
letting us know
that it is there
The sky above, its tender wings, each new day
a blessing brings
each blade of grass a memory
sown in the fields of time.
Sit and remember
sing your life's song
look around
you're where you belong.

Margaret Grant

SECTION THREE – TOGETHER IN ACTION

People are People

People are fleeing, war, conflict and pain
Let's help them settle, feel safe again
Community matters and love conquers hate
So smile, say welcome it's never too late
People are people, that's what they say
'We're all Jock Tamson's bairns' at the end of the day.

Jim Daisley

Pairs

QUESTION:

*Why
do so many
parts of the human body
come in pairs?*

*Eyes to see
injustice
towards people of colour*

*Legs to support you
to clear away snow
for an elderly neighbour*

*Ears to hear
the voices
of the oppressed*

*Feet to lead you
to deposit groceries
in a food bank*

*Arms to hug
and console
the lonely or bereaved*

*Lips to speak up for
the bullied
and the helpless*

*Hands to clap
for frontline workers
in a pandemic*

*Lungs to breathe in
clean air
the birthright of all living
things*

ANSWER:

*To make their job
twice as easy.*

Isobel Watt

Scissors

The point about scissors
Is
You open them
As far apart as they will go
Two wide points, then wider, till
Fingers bring them in to make the cut.

But
Like people, they slice and tear
If we're not careful, where
We stick their points.
They only work if blades are near
Then nearer, till they meet.

Now
Keep those points
Real far apart:
They'll slice your veins
And stab your heart
Like people, when they're far apart.

So
Scissors work
When they come close
Like us, I think they are.
But it depends.
Are scissors lethal weapons
Or the very best friends?

Anthony Watt

Joined up thinking

One word can look lonely,
One word can be kind,
Hateful, encouraging,
Demoralising.

If one word can do all that,
What could a group of words do?

Speeches, stories, poems,
Can start wars or stop them.
Unite populations,
Or divide them

If groups of words do that
What can books do?

Books take words for use
Informing, teaching
Helping life, or hindering
Illuminating or concealing.

If words together do all that
What can we do together?

Christine Whitelaw

Sam – A Scottish Samaritan

*Samaria – a despised part of the middle east – possibly Cranhill

I fell down this hole, drunk mebbe
And this guy
Comes by.

‘Need a hand?’ asks he.
But this guy was wee
And smelled of pee.

‘I says, you need a hand?’

But this guy was fat
With a stupid hat
And a clatty cat.

‘Look, mister, do you want a hand?’

His supporter’s scarf
Made him a nyaff.
‘Don’t make us laugh.’

‘Do you want a hand or not?’

He’d a whiney voice
So I had no choice.

‘Where you frae?’
I asks the guy
As he turns away.

‘Frae Some Area.
Of Glasgow.’

Anthony Watt

Yesterday

Yesterday morning
the snow
began to
fall
great sheets of white petals
folding across the damp earth.
The wind caught some in its palm
tossed it this way and that
closed its eyes and spun in puffy cheeks of clouds.

All day long
TV channels streamed their bad news
torrents of war from grey clouds of winter
Men in suits dictating
And somewhere, not too far away
A people are preparing to flee.

All day long
the snow
fell
and still
we ask
Why?

Margaret Grant

Inverclyde Libraries

Inverclyde Libraries offer a wide range of services to anyone who visits, lives or works in Inverclyde. As well as the facility to borrow fiction, non-fiction, audiobooks, eBooks and eAudiobooks, children's literature and much more, we also offer internet access, lifelong learning courses, reading groups and free, fun events throughout the year. It's easy to join Inverclyde Libraries, simply visit your local branch or join online at <http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/libraries>.

Inverclyde Culture Collective

Inverclyde Culture Collective is part of a network of Creative Scotland funded projects across Scotland, all exploring community-rooted creative activity. The local delivery partners are Inverclyde Council, RIG Arts, The Beacon, Inverclyde Youth Theatre (Kayos) and CVS Inverclyde. You can find out more about upcoming events and activity here <https://www.inverclydeculturecollective.co.uk>.

As Inverclyde Culture Collective Writer in Residence over the past few months I have had the pleasure of working with new and established writers across Inverclyde. Greenock Writers' Club have welcomed me with open arms and consistently impressed with their enthusiasm and love of writing. Whether you are completely new to writing or are already published I can promise you'll find a warm welcome and lots of inspiration at <https://www.greenockwriters.co.uk>.

Together this group of writers are a joyous symphony of stories and so this final poem is for them.

Katharine Macfarlane,

Inverclyde Culture Collective Writer in Residence

Step Together

A single footstep
falls in an empty hall,
echoes up tenement stories
through skylights
and sashes
to the quiet street below.

Waits a beat.

When the response comes
it is a rush of reverberation,
a river of boots flowing
from stairwell and
open close mouths.
A ship-yard shift change
flood of humanity,
cacophony of forward marching,
arm-link solidarity,
a street-full of step-ball-change
echo of age-old diversity,
a town where no-one
dances
alone.

Katharine Macfarlane

About the Artist

John Moody is a 68 year old writer, artist and printmaker, who worked as an art teacher in local schools for a number of years.

Until recently he worked in the field of mental health recovery in Scotland. He creates images from lived experience of mental illness and addiction to support his own wellbeing.

Instagram at @johnhm2

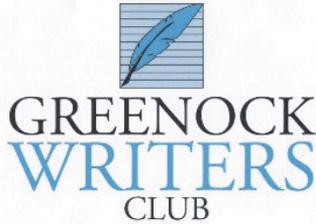
This semi-abstract collage of the Clyde perfectly encapsulates the theme of *Together*, blending a range of materials together to create a beautiful image. As writers we may all be cut from different cloth but when we come together as a Club something new and beautiful is formed.



INVERCLYDE
Community Fund

Inverclyde Windfarm Fund

The printing of this booklet was made possible by Inverclyde Windfarm Grant funding from the Inverclyde Community Fund.



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