

FREE

ISSUE 12
March
2004

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Welcome

STRATHARD NEWS

THE VOICE OF YOUR COMMUNITY



Lesley Quirk Scoops Arts & Business National Award

The winners of the **Arts & Business National Awards**, the UK's most prestigious awards rewarding excellence in partnerships between business and the arts, were revealed at a gala concert at the Barbican in London on Wednesday 18 February. **Lesley Quirk**, of management consultancy Quirk & Co, has been awarded the Unilever UK Arts & Business Individual of the Year Award for her work with the **An Tuireann Art Centre**.

Lesley has been working as a mentor to contemporary arts and crafts centre An Tuireann to increase business and management skills and advise on future developments. Widely credited with helping to save the formerly struggling art centre, Lesley worked closely with An Tuireann's director Norah Campbell. Thanks to Lesley's advice, Norah has completed the second phase of developing long-term financial systems, which has given the organisation greater control, management and planning information to benefit the viability, stability



and performance of An Tuireann.

Lesley Quirk, of Quirk & Co, says:

'I am absolutely delighted on a personal level, particularly when I saw how strong the competition was, but I am pleased that it was mentoring that won the award. Mentoring can make such a difference to individuals and to their organisations. I want to recognise my mentee Norah Campbell – she is an exceptional person and everyone should go to Portree and visit An Tuireann. It is a fabulous arts centre.'

All Change at Forest Prints

Many in the village were sorry to see the popular Forest Prints shop close its doors for business in January this year. This had been successfully run by Richard and Glynis Haughton for the past twelve years. They will be much missed. Richard, though, is to continue with his professional framing business in his new purpose-built workshop at his home, Stoneypark, Lochard Road, Aberfoyle. We were delighted to hear that their premises in Aberfoyle are to be reopened in April this year by Mr Andrew Carter who often looked after the shop for the Haughtons.

The new business is to be known as "The Wee Market", which will be much welcomed by those who remember the old market which used to be sited at the rear of The Forth Inn. Mr Carter informs us that there will be approximately seven six-foot tables for rental on a daily

basis, the cost being: Mon - Thurs inclusive - £10 per table Fri, Sat, Sun - £15 per table.

He is hoping to attract those wishing to sell antiques and curiosities and has already received much interest in this venture. For those with an interest, Mr Carter can be contacted on 01877 382400 or mobile - 0781 4405975

T4 Festival

Tramping Through The Trossachs (T4), a two week festival of outdoor events centred in and around Aberfoyle, Kinlochard and the Trossachs area, gets under way on Sunday 4th April through until Sunday 18th April. Programmes will soon be available at the usual outlets from mid March throughout the aforementioned areas.

T4 Festival Family Ceilidh

Easter Sunday 11th April
2004 Memorial Hall,
Aberfoyle
8pm till late – BYOB

Dancing to
The Kinlochard Ceilidh Band

Tickets: Adults £5
Children (under 15) & Senior
Citizens £3

Tickets from Aberfoyle Post Office, Kinlochard Village Shop, Tourist Office, Forest Hills Marina

Further information: Tel 01877
387 219

The Dogs of the North are coming to Aberfoyle

And for one weekend only!

Come and see them run: the swift *Siberian Huskies*, the massive *Alaskan Malamutes* and the furry *Samoyeds*.

They will all be in Aberfoyle on the weekend of 13 and 14 March for the last great sled dog race in Scotland to end this winter season of races. And they will be here in their hundreds, from as far afield as The English Midlands to the north of Scotland, on the lookout for snow. If there is no snow, and let's face it-its hardly likely-then the dog teams will compete by pulling rigs, three-wheeled contraptions on which the dog handlers, the mushers, stand and control the team as they gallop around the trail.

There are different classes depending on the number of dogs in a team. The largest is the 6 dog team and some such Husky teams can reach speeds of over 20 mph, pulling rig and musher. Not for the faint hearted-stupid maybe, but definitely not faint hearted!

The big teams usually go out first. They normally have the longer distance to do and go out when the temperature is at its lowest. The sled dog cannot run comfortably in warm or even mild weather. The colder the better!

The race starts at 9am both days. The venue is on a 5 mile loop in the Queen Elizabeth Forest which the Aberfoyle Forestry have kindly let us use for the weekend.

To get to the race site follow the



directional arrows from Manse Road, through Balleich and 2 miles into the forest. All spectators are most welcome. Come and watch the dogs race and meet the canine athletes. Despite appearances, they are a friendly bunch-the dogs, that is. Okay, the mushers are pretty friendly too.

“Please Sir, I want Some More”

And more you shall have, more that is from the Forest Theatre Company which is busily rehearsing for its third musical – OLIVER!

“OLIVER! is a new challenge for us, as we have more than 50 children performing in the show,” explains Suzanne Teed, co-founder of the Company and Director of the latest show; “despite our worries at the outset about getting this number of children to sing and perform, the rehearsals are going great. It just shows how much young talent there is in the local communities.”

Jacquie Speirs, Musical Director and the fiddler in the Company’s previous performance of Fiddler on the Roof, is similarly upbeat about the performance. “The show is going to be fantastic fun with all these kids performing. They are so enthusiastic, and are learning so quickly. My only complaint is that I am starting to loose my voice trying to keep them quiet during rehearsals.”

The adult cast includes many budding actors who performed in Fiddler on the Roof, and the Company’s first performance Annie. “The good thing about being established is that our cast is becoming more experienced, they need less basic direction and come better prepared. It is making my job easier and will lead to a better show.” Being established also means that the important backstage activities - that is lighting, wardrobe, sound, and staging - are all coming together earlier than before.

It all bodes well for three cracking performances to be held at Gartmore Village Hall on 6,7, & 8th May. Doors open with a pre-theatre bar at 6.45 pm. The show starts at 7.30 pm. Tickets will be available for purchase from Gartmore Village Shop or Aberfoyle Post Office from 1st April - £7.00/adult and £5.00/child. We suggest you buy your ticket early as the performances are expected to be popular.

Music for Tourism

- an exciting new Initiative Hot on the heels of our success at the Burns Supper on 20th January and three years of the Aberfoyle Mushroom Festival, Strathard are again taking the lead with another exciting Tourism Initiative, this time to bring live traditional music to the ears of our seasonal visitors - with the aim to make the medium term trend less seasonal. The process to win some funding from Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley has already been started, so could anyone with a musical talent, real or latent but with an interest in entertaining people please contact either Lesley Quirk on 387210 or John Epps on 382276, or simply call at Aberfoyle Holidays on the Main Street as you pass.

The Musical Smash

Book, Music and
Lyrics by
LIONEL BART

OLIVER!



FOREST THEATRE COMPANY

Presents

OLIVER!

6, 7, 8th May - Gartmore Village Hall

Doors open 6.45 pm, Show Starts 7.30 pm

For sale at Gartmore Village Shop
and Aberfoyle Post Office

Pre-Theatre Bar
Adults £7, Children £5

MANSE ROAD BRIDGE SURVEY

Thank you to all those who replied to the questionnaire in last month's edition. We had 52 responses this time, a great response for such a small area. However responses showed that opinion on the best option for pedestrian safety is totally split: 10 for Option 1 - to do nothing, 11 for Option 2 - traffic lights, 3 for Option 3 - an upstream bridge, 14 for Option 4 - a downstream bridge, 6 for Option 5 - a new pedestrian stone bridge, 8 for Option 6 - a new road bridge. Obviously there is a majority for some type of new bridge. Unfortunately there is not enough of a consensus to convince funders to back any of these projects.

Therefore, the meeting in the Memorial Hall agreed that, in the meantime, the only option is to work with the police and Council on driver and pedestrian education, as well as appropriate signage. The best thing that came from the meeting was from a very young gentleman, so young that he is still at Primary School. He suggested that the children should get involved to explain to drivers the reasons that they should slow down. The first results of that suggestion are shown here. I hope that everyone will read, remember and respect the children's appeal. As for the future - well we've started people thinking. I believe our bridges are not totally burnt yet!



by Stewart Wallace

Forthvale



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Aberfoyle Rob Roy Football Club

For those of you who may not be aware, Aberfoyle has a football team which plays within the Forth and Endrick welfare league. The league runs from April through to the end of September each year, with games being played on a Tuesday and a Saturday evening.

The club is currently on the look out for new players who would be interested in playing for the club this season. The club had difficulty in fielding a team, at times, last season and all interested in turning out for the club will be made most welcome. For further details, please contact Gary Campbell on Tel No. 01877382250.

Forth and Endrick league rules have in recent years changed, anyone who works within the local area but

does not reside here are now also entitled to play, so if you are or you know of anyone who meets this criteria and who would be interested, we would like to hear from you.

The players and committee would also appreciate the support of the local community to come out and cheer the team during the forthcoming season! There is a free bus service from Aberfoyle. Fixture lists will be available from local shops in April, match fixtures also appear in the Stirling Observer, every Friday, within the Forth and Endrick football section of the paper,

The Rob Roy Football Club has been a big part of the local community for the past 90 years; we need your support to ensure it continues to be.

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Community Council Report

With February being such a short month we've managed to fit in two meetings since the last edition, one in Kinlochard and one in Inversnaid. At Kinlochard we were joined by PC Kevin Chase, to discuss a local action plan for community policing. We were asked to agree between us, up to four areas of concern that we felt should be addressed by the local police, who will then report back to us at a later date. We get quite frequent comments on the need for more police presence in the area which is why we were concerned that there are rumours going about that we are likely to find local policemen working more centrally in future. Various letters have been sent to try and clarify these rumours and the Inversnaid meeting heard the contents of a letter received from Superintendent Barker explaining that whilst a review of policing is currently taking place, there are no plans to close local offices. Changes in the car park took up a fair amount of discussion time, especially at the Inversnaid meeting. To answer one worry - I can't say that the Council will never again raise the question of charges in the car park, but they have no plans at the moment. Also brought

up were questions about the narrowing of the entrance to the car park and the amount of space for buses to manoeuvre. All problems are being passed on to the project manager. It is to be hoped that the finished project will meet with everyone's approval.

Planning applications always take up a fair bit of the meeting. The Park planners usually do not send out details of an application when it is for straightforward minor works on a house, such as a conservatory or small extension, providing there are no objections. The meeting agreed that this was sensible, but we do urge anyone concerned by notification of intended work on a neighbouring property, to let us know so that we can ask for the detailed information. At the meeting in Inversnaid we had a discussion on an application for outline planning permission for a house to be built at Inversnaid Lodge. This application is contrary to the local plan, since it is development in the countryside. However it is being asked for in order to house someone who works at the lodge and has done for several years. Following the current de-population of the area due to Scottish Water's current

policies, it was felt that such a building might be justified if it enabled someone to continue living and working in the community, and for that reason the Community Council voted to approve. We are all too well aware of the fact that local needs restrictions being attached to new housing are frequently over-ridden at a later date, but felt that we should ask nevertheless for such a restriction to be imposed, in the hope that the National Park planners will honour it.

Now for one last appeal. This is to Kinlochard residents. We are still two councillors short for your ward. Stirling Council are running 'mop-up' elections to fill any vacancies left on community councils, so now is the time for you to stand up and, well --- stand! Be warned, if you don't volunteer we will co-opt you. Your community needs you. Contact Ros on 382231 or Community Services, Stirling Council on 0845 277 7000 for an application form; and please do it *before 19th March!*

See you next month in Aberfoyle on April Fools Day. Appropriate?

Ros Dingwall, Chairperson

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With the weather seeming to favour us somewhat over the last month in the Park area, visitor numbers for this time of the year have been up. For the sake of our businesses I hope the trend continues. But are we ready for the onslaught when the season starts! I always dread the menace of litter but, being an optimist, I also hope that with the general education that is ongoing, the start of recycling in the area and with a year's experience under our Litter Squads' belt the situation will be better this year.

One element which has been under review is the recreational management of the lochs. Under the auspices of the Leisure and Recreational Committee of the Park Authority our Water Resources officer has been working with communities to establish codes of conduct appropriate for the protection of the popular lochs. A Code of Conduct has now been agreed for three lochs viz Loch Ard, Loch Eck and Loch Earn. The official launch of the code for Loch Ard will take place on 31st March. Watch for the details nearer the date.

Another committee of the Authority which has an onerous and often underestimated function is the Audit Committee. All too often people tend to think of audit as something which takes place after the event and relates solely to the accounts. Not so. The Audit Committee - in conjunction with the Internal Auditors - has been busy verifying systems to ensure that best value for money is achieved and that the risks to staff, public assets and the public are kept to the minimum. The Audit Committee has a duty to keep under review the existing systems and adjust, where necessary, for any changes in the evolving Park.

February saw the Park's Planning Committee tackling the thorny question of advertisements. Unfortunately it is an area where much confusion exists. Yet again, because the Park lies in four Council areas there were four sets of rules operating. The Planning Committee decided to regularise the situation and have adopted for the whole of the Park the principles of The Stirling Council Advice Note - Shop Fronts and Advertisements. Additionally we agreed to the making of an Area of Special Control of Advertisements Order under

the provisions of Regulation 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(Scotland) Regulations 1984, covering the whole of the National Park.

Whilst realising that the public need to know - and businesses need to convey - what is on offer, it is recognised that considerable environmental damage can result from a proliferation of signage. There is often confusion about what is allowable. One serious misconception is that a movable advertisement does not need permission. You know the type of thing - a cart in a field advertising a restaurant or such like. Such an advertisement DOES need permission. What is allowed under the regulations is signage on the side of a vehicle which is being used as its manufacturer intended e.g. the lettering on the side of a butcher's van. There are certain things which will not be allowed in the Park and top of that list is the Advertisement Hoarding. Another thing which will be frowned upon is the 'A' Board on a public footpath. And how will we bring all this under control? That is where the Planning Enforcement team comes in. In recognition of the extra workload an additional assistant has been recruited for the team.

I am glad to say that the Park Authority is not working in isolation. When the Park Plan (I know it sounds as if it is forever in the making) gets the blessing of the Scottish Executive later this year, it will embrace the need for the other agencies working within the Park e.g. The Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Enterprise, The Councils, Scottish Water and others to join with the Park Authority in achieving its aims. Positive vibes are coming from most of the agencies and hopefully where difficulties are being experienced pressure will be brought to bear to improve things. Did I hear anyone mention roads!

As always I can be contacted as follows;
Email - owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk
Phone - 01567 830214
Post - Taigh Na Bhuth, Lochearnhead, FK19 8PR

**Braeval
Antiques
Aberfoyle**



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FRIENDS OF ABERFOYLE AND BUCHLYVIE MEDICAL CENTRES

Dear All,

I am sorry you have had to wait for this letter of thanks for your most generous donation. (I have had to wait the receipt of some official headed paper to use!)

The doctors, staff and committee members have all been surprised and delighted at the tremendous response to assist us in our efforts to raise money for emergency equipment.

Thanks to people like yourselves, we have already been able to furnish both Aberfoyle and Buchlyvie surgeries with defibrillators and ECG machines are on their way. Please pass on our best wishes to "Strathard News". We are truly grateful.

Yours sincerely
Marilyn Dorrall
Practice Manager

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Aberfoyle Parish Church

Aberfoyle Guild It was a pleasure to welcome the schoolchildren with their Head teacher Mrs. Oman on the 23rd February when they entertained us with Scots poems and music. Our next meeting is on Monday 29th March at 2pm., which is a guest afternoon with friends from Drymen, Kippen, and Buchlyvie. Musical entertainment will be provided by Callander Kirk Choir conducted by Ian Milligan, you will be made very welcome to join us.

The Aberfoyle Kirk Annual General Meeting will take place immediately after morning Worship on Sunday 28th March. Please support us to continue Worship and service in the Community, we need your skills and experience for a variety of tasks and the rewards are tremendous.

Easter Week Services beginning on Monday 5th April until Friday 9th April, the Church will be open between 2p.m. and 3p.m. for meditation and prayer. Every one is welcome to come and share with us at this time.

Easter Day Service is Sunday 11th April at 11.15 a.m.

You have celebrated Christmas now is the time to celebrate the greatest story ever told.

Port of Menteith Parish Church Annual General Meeting will take place on Sunday 14th March after a Praise Service in the Church at 6.30p.m. We look forward to your support in continuing the work of the Church in the Community we need your skills and experience.

Easter week Services beginning Monday 5th April until Friday 9th April. The Church will be open for meditation and prayer between 3.30p.m and 4.30p.m each day. Every one is welcome to come and share with us at this time.

Easter Day Service is Sunday 11th April at 10a.m. come and join us before going elsewhere.

New Members classes begins from Monday 5th March for both Churches, please contact Reverend Danny Gibb to arrange suitable times and days. **Telephone 01877 382 391.**

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Letters to the *Editor*have your say!

What do you think? If you have something on your mind, let's hear it. There's no better way to reach all the residents of Strathard than through the Strathard News. Send your comments to The Editor, Strathard News, Schoolhouse, Inversnaid FK8 3TU or email: editor@strathardnews.com

Tearing the Heart out of Aberfoyle

Dear Editor,

It remains to be seen whether or not the new car park in Aberfoyle is an asset or a liability -it will certainly be the latter if the coach spaces are too small! But our wee village has another blot on the landscape which, while we may not notice it because we have got used to it, the visitor must certainly be aware of as he drives up the main street. Yes, I am talking about Dukes Court!

Thanks to its lack of paint, there is nothing noble about Dukes Court -it is quite simply an eyesore, a disgrace that detracts from the assets of the heart of the village. I don't know what the politics are behind this ghastly apparition, but everyone is the loser. The house-proud occupants of Dukes Court cannot be happy about the situation, the Council are surely dissatisfied with no apparent solution to the problem, and the many businesses in the village that depend on tourism must be appalled that the ugliness has continued for so long. So before we get into the main part of the tourist season, can we hope that goodwill and common sense will prevail?

Fergus Wood,
Ledard Farm

Dear Editor

Footbridge, Manse Road, Aberfoyle.

I am writing with some concern as to what is going to happen with regard to the beautiful bridge on Manse Road.

I have been a resident in Aberfoyle for almost 15 years now and have seen quite a few changes in my time here. One of which being Kirkton Estate off the Manse Road.

I was never opposed to the estate being built but find it very strange after being in the planning stages for almost 10 years that not a sole had thought about how people and vehicles were going to get across the river!! But left a vast amount of money for the safety of the children and installation of a swing park!!

The old bridge was I am sure not built for heavy lorries, coaches and many, many cars. I am all in favour of putting something up for traffic calming and peoples safety - but why does Aberfoyle as always have to put up and shut up.

I feel Aberfoyle should get what it deserves the BEST and not have to make do with eyesores, like a lot of the buildings in the Main Street including

mine! Anything built close to the existing bridge would take away from its beauty (I feel it is one of the best features of Aberfoyle).

We only need to go as far as Gartmore to find a beautiful bridge like ours bypassed by a new tarmacadamed road and on into Stirling to find more!!

The council spent a small fortune to build an extension onto its castle for the Millennium to be in keeping with the existing castle, all we want is safety for all and traditional beauty like the bridge to be conserved for the future.

I realise that building a new road system to leave the existing bridge for foot traffic only, would be an expensive way to go, but I feel that it is the only way to go and would be only too keen to see where the costings and time scales for the options on the front of the Strathard News issue 11 have come from.

Yours in anticipation
Tristan Crowder
The Forth Inn

Manse Road Bridge

I attended the recent meeting in the Memorial Hall to discuss the various options regarding the problems experienced by pedestrians crossing the bridge over the river from Manse Road.

The opinions of both those at the meeting and the people who responded to the recent questionnaire in the Strathard News were divided among the various options: i.e. install traffic lights; put in new traffic signs; build a new road bridge; build a "cheap" footbridge; leave things as they are. There was no clear consensus of opinion on what should be done and the whole process seems to have ground to a halt. Without this agreement we cannot go forward to apply for grants etc. **The community must decide what exactly it wants.**

I believe that a footbridge is essential to ensure the safety of our children. There are problems with the other options:

Traffic Lights

The Traffic Department has stated that there would have to be a significant waiting period for vehicles when the lights were at red, given the time taken for people to walk across the bridge. They believe many motorists would become frustrated at the delay and would "jump" the lights.

Warning/Speed Signs

These would only work with "reasonable" motorists. We all know that there are many unreasonable "speed merchants" who race along Manse Road at ridiculous speeds!

New Road Bridge

This would take years to organize, involve lengthy consultations and would be extremely expensive.

Given these problems I believe a footbridge is the best way forward.

Gillian Wallace
(concerned parent)

Community Futures Action Plan Annual Review: The Community Futures Action Plan is the agenda for change in our community, based on the results from the Community Survey carried out 2 years ago. It is due for its annual review in March. The message for everyone is that unless specific needs are included in the Community Futures Action Plan by democratic means, nothing is likely to be done. Funders are interested to know that the needs of the majority of the community are being supported by the initiatives, not simply the few who complain. If you want to change things for yourself, young and old, and future generations, you (that means you personally) have to become involved in the changes now. The Community Futures Steering Group will help you get a result, but the work will be yours to be proud of.

Community Futures Steering Group

The **Annual Review** of Community Futures will be held in The Memorial Hall on Tuesday 30th March from 7 until 9PM - if you can't make it along on the night, please contact any of the team to discuss your topics and issues; we will represent your views at discussions before making decisions. The current action groups will be on hand to discuss progress made, problems yet to overcome and future projects - anyone who has been watching the village receive a facelift in recent weeks will know that Community Futures is completely unlike watching paint dry - by applying just a little of your spare time, you really can be a part of all the changes happening around our homes. It's been quite an exciting first year and there is still much to do... so please come along - there will be free refreshments available - it is only by the community making their needs known that we can amend our Community Action Plan - our agenda for change on behalf of every man, woman and child - to not be heard at an annual review is similar to not voting at an election, except the effect is likely to be far more local and involve you personally. Particular issues for discussion include whether the village should buy McGregor's field and for what purpose (we must be sure that our community speaks with one voice if such a project is to proceed)... then we still have the village bridge to bring to a point where potential funders can be convinced we finally know what we want done, and there is an exciting tourism project which we hope to be able to discuss by that time. Whether you enjoy rambling, cycling, horse-riding in the hills (or whatever),

we want to find all the old paths and trails, and (quite literally) have them put on the map.

There are opportunities for youth music projects, some involving overseas travel, and countless community projects aimed at improving our quality of life. Remember the Strathard News you hold right now is the Phoenix which arose under a Community Futures initiative from the ashes of the past.

Whatever your interest is in Strathard, there is something in Community Futures for you.

The Steering Group has applied for funding awards for two new projects. The first involves holding more Festivals in Strathard - the funding application covers a pilot scheme of six Festivals in a year though the aim will be to have a rolling "Highland Festival" event every month - along the lines of the now famous Mushroom Festival, or Tramping Through The Trossachs (T4) but for focussed interest groups, be it a Steamboat Festival on Loch Ard, Equestrian eventing in the Forest, Motor rallying, Pike Fishing... anything practicable can and will be considered. More of this anon - but we know the funders have many applications to consider (six from Strathard alone of around 30 from Scotland in total) and their limited money means we may have to find other ways of doing business. The idea is to enhance Strathard's image as the place where people with interests have fun... and return time and again for short break holidays (folk are known to spend more per day on short breaks than their main holiday). Projects like this often take up to five years to bear fruit so the current funding application *might* allow us to make a start, and from this we shall know enough to prepare a costed proposal for a five year project. Anyone with a good idea

to discuss for a Festival theme? - it's never too early to start discussing your ideas - talk to anyone involved with CF.

The second, a Paths and Trails funding award application covers two phases of work to put highly detailed maps on the village website www.aberfoyle.co.uk so that anyone, locals and visitors alike can see what progress is being made, as it is made and bang up to date, whether on the National Park core paths network initiative or the very considerable programme of forest access work now underway by Forestry Commission Scotland. The potential for this project is really exciting - at the very least it will bring work to the area and could revolutionise Scottish Tourism development.

Local Economic Development Contact: John Epps Tel: 01877 382276

The Arts and Crafts initiative: SN readers will recall that the Action Group were speaking with The National Park Gateway Centre at Lomond Shores. We have concluded a deal whereby our local arts and crafts producers can use the demonstration area of the Gateway Centre without charge on any one of a number of dates this year when Lomond Shores has its regular markets. The idea is that local people who are already "approved" (for example by supplying goods for sale at the Trossachs Discovery Centre or exhibiting at Strathard Country Pursuits) can demonstrate their skills and sell their produce directly to the public at retail prices, take commissions for special orders etc... whilst also promoting the tourism opportunities of their local

Action Groups Update

area - in our case Strathard. If the events go really well and business within the Gateway Centre also does well, we may even be rewarded by the centre with a small contribution towards CF projects - things like our new Playpark. We shall need a group of at least four or five people to collaborate in order to mount a proper showcase event, so please contact any of the team to discuss your views, products and availability. If you have already spoken with me on this project, I will get back to you when we have more people interested.

**Roads, Transport, Safety,
Paths & Trails**
Contact: John Digney
Tel: 01877 382636

Paths and Trails

As reported in the last Strathard News, a path group has been established consisting of those who expressed an interest in joining at the public consultation sessions in December. Two meetings have been held so far, attended by a dozen people, and work is well under way to analyse the data from the maps and questionnaires on which members of the community had indicated their desired routes and noted their comments.

When all the information has been collated, the next stage of the consultation process will be to arrange a public exhibition later in the year in order to confirm the community's priorities before the start of any work to improve paths, signage etc.

Historic Route to Inversnaid

Considerable local interest has been expressed in the proposal to re-open the old road to Inversnaid as a walking/cycling route. A small group of us walked a section of the route and found it to be quite easily discernible for most of the way. A series of archaeological cuts across the road will now be made to establish what lies beneath the surface before any further action is taken.

Football Night ON THE BALL

BLACK BULL HOTEL Gartmore

Saturday 20th March
7:30 for 8:00 pm (Late Licence)

A Question and answer night involving footballers from the past

Just to Mention a Few

David McParlane (ex Partick Thistle) & *Derek Ferguson (ex Glasgow Rangers)*

Ex SFA Referee

Tickets £20
From the Black Bull
price inc. meal & welcome glass of wine.

This event was organised for 'Strathard Futures for Recreation' Registered Charity SC034936 Profits Will go Towards Improving Aberfoyle Playpark.

Dress Code - Shirt & Tie

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With Strathard starting to defrost and spring in the air the youngsters at Aberfoyle playgroup are continuing to bloom just like the bulbs are. Already this year playgroup have celebrated Sam's (the large stuffed monkey) birthday, Chinese New Year, delved into the interesting worlds of patterns and rhyming and also brought fairy tales to life. Some of the older ones have even managed to compose their very own books, drawing pictures whilst playgroup leaders Lesley and Ginny do the scribing. With Easter drawing closer a trip to the David Marshall lodge for an egg hunt and barbecue has also been planned for Friday 2nd April the last day of term.

The Xmas raffle went well with lots of prizes donated locally a substantial sum of money was raised for playgroup, thanks to all the local businesses for their continued support. The joint care commission and H.M.I. inspection went extremely well, playgroup passed the inspection and the inspectors were very complimentary. As usual playgroup has taken the positive from the experience and continues to strive for further improvements to enhance the service which is provided.

And finally the last piece of news from

playgroup is that we are now participating in the **2004 Tesco Computers for Schools**. From now until Sunday 2nd May vouchers will be available for every £10 spent in a single transaction at any Tesco store or associated Tesco petrol filling station. If you would like to pass on your vouchers to playgroup there are several ways in which to do so. A box is available in the Horsa hut to put all collected vouchers, if you're not passing yourself they can also be handed into Aberfoyle Post Office, failing this post them directly to Aberfoyle playgroup at The Horsa hut, Kinlochard Rd., Aberfoyle. With pre-school enthusiasm we are saving for a computer and need to collect 23,730 vouchers, thank-you in advance.

We are some of the children that live over the bridge. Me and my friends feel that one day one of us will get run over and I think we need a foot bridge to go over on our way to school. Sometimes cars zoom past me I get scared when they will hit us. So please can we have a safe bridge?

David Wallace (age 8)

Name	Age
Jordan Campbell	6
Dylan Campbell	7
Laura and Lynsley Mackenzie	8
Rachel Patrick	10
Megan Patrick	6
Ellie Fenwick	5
Ryan Fenwick	8
Aaron Johnstone	4
23 OLD KIRK LOAN	
Aberfoyle	
FK8 3SL	
Jordan Craig	10
Stephanie	7
Stacy Boyd	11
Stewart Wallace	6
Scott Tawse	10 years old.

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For details and registration please contact

Yasmin Fraser

Tel: 07789 486 086 Email: musicalminors@aol.com

Aberfoyle Medical Centre - Men's Health

Many men only come to the Doctors Surgery when they have a problem. There is no tradition of regular health checks for men, while women are seen at least twice a year for blood pressure checks 'if they are on the pill', every 3 years for cervical smears from 20 to 60 years old and then mammograms for 50 to 65+ years. It is important for men to look after their own health too, and regular attendance at our Well Man Clinic can help to highlight or prevent problems, so prompt action can be taken where needed.

The clinic visit involves a chat about any past or present health problems, a general discussion about healthy diet, exercise, alcohol intake, smoking, blood pressure and urine check. It is a chance to air any worries e.g. if there is a strong history of health problems in the family, a cholesterol check can be arranged or if having possible prostate symptoms, advice can be given. If you want to lose weight we have diet and exercise leaflets, if you want to give up smoking we can offer support PLUS nicotine replacement on prescription. Most

of all it gives us a chance to meet the 'invisible men' in our practice and hopefully establish a healthy relationship.

We would like to invite all men in the practice, aged over 20 years to make an appointment to see the Practice Nurse at least once every five years. Stop the 'fire fighting approach' to your health – only dealing with problems when they crop up. Take the long-term view and ensure you take control of your future.



Charlie Maclauchlan's Dog

When we moved to Ledard 24 years ago the village of Kinlochard had some wonderful characters-Charlie MacLauchlan was one of them.

He was of the 'old school' of shepherding - walking the hills with his dogs to check his sheep - no quad bikes for Charlie! He was great handler and trainer of Border Collies and it was a joy to watch him with his dogs. After his beloved Nannie died he moved from their cottage in Kinlochard to a small retirement house in Balfron taking his two remaining Collies with him, Nell and her daughter Culag. Just before Christmas 2003 his friend and next door neighbour Mary 'phoned me saying that Charlie was ill and had been taken to hospital. He was agitated and worried about Culag-she was all he had left, and would I take her.

We were only too happy to help and I went immediately to collect her. When I arrived Mary took me into Charlie's house where Culag was sitting quietly in the kitchen

looking straight at me-she knew I was coming. She came straight to my side, walked tight to my heel and then jumped into my jeep. At Ledard she went into the kitchen and lay down by the Aga - she has never put a foot (paw!) wrong; obedient, wise and adorable.

I visited Charlie in hospital just before he died and told him about Culag walking, playing and dreaming with the other dogs. He smiled and touched my hand and said he could rest in peace knowing his old friend was safe.

Everyday I walk over our hill with the dogs-21 of them now-and I stop at the high rocks and look down over the village and Loch Ard. Culag sits beside me and looks down over the cottage where she was born. Does she miss her old master? I'll never know, but when I look down at her and she looks up at me I reckon old Charlie must have told her "You're home again."

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New Chef

We are looking forward to working with our new chef Robert Kerr. Robert has many years experience in cooking and was recently head chef at a restaurant in Oxford which was awarded two AA Rosettes. We would like to welcome Robert and his young family to the Trossachs and wish him many years of happy cooking with us all at Altskeith.

New Opening Times

From Wednesday 17th March, we will be opening the restaurant at the following times:

On Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday evenings we will be open for dinner from 7.15 pm until 8.30 pm.

On Sundays we will be open for lunch between 12.30 pm and 2.00 pm.

Hope you are all remembering that the 21st of March is Mothering Sunday - treat that someone special to a lovely lunch.

We recommend booking in advance.

Tel: 01877 387 266.

The centre offers a multitude of activities to groups and individuals. All activities are under the supervision of qualified staff, and all necessary equipment can be provided for a safe and enjoyable day out.



open to everybody....with something for everyone!

EQUIPMENT HIRE

There is a wide range of equipment at the centre available for any activity which you may wish to pursue.

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The Garden

by Wellie Boot



Hasn't February been a strange month? Starting unseasonably warm lulling us all into a false sense of security, it caused the bulbs to grow and bud and the frogs to come out of hibernation and start to mate. Then, in the second week, bingo, the temperature dropped and everything ceased. The daffodils stopped growing and their pointed buds remained pointing skywards, the frogs returned to their winter hibernation and the ponds froze. Hopefully March will produce spring.

Despite all the bitter winds and freezing temperatures, the brave little snowdrops put on their pristine show. Have you ever examined the little white bells with their green tips? They vary greatly. The one that grows wild and blankets the woodlands is Galanthus nivalis (the common snowdrop) but there are dozens of others, all variations on a theme. Galanthus should not be confused with Leucojums. These are generally much taller; indeed some reach about 18 inches and flower into spring. The flowers are slightly bigger than snowdrops and the petals seem to join to form a sort of hood. They are known commonly as snowflakes and grow from a bulb.

This month is cutting back herbaceous border time. The dead leaves have housed many little friends but, sadly, it's clear up time. The leaves and stems are all so dry that they just snap off making the job quite easy (if backbreaking). All the debris is very burnable giving you lovely potash for your roses. Nothing in the garden should go to waste but be recycled. If you have a wood burning fire in the house, don't throw out the ashes, put them on the garden.

When clearing my rock garden and borders this year, I found a blanket of lovely green moss covering everywhere. This just peeled off, leaving the soil brown and clean. I've never had this before, moss yes, but never a "roll up blanket". Have any of you found the same thing in your gardens? Well this is the last month of relative relaxation for gardeners. Spring starts next month and hopefully some slightly warmer weather to kick start all that wonderful growth.

Happy gardening.

Inversnaid Reserve



Two highlights of wildlife watching in the last two months have been the skirmish between a peregrine falcon and a pair of ravens, the other has been watching a fox unsuccessfully 'vole hunting'.

The peregrine and the ravens were actually unaware of each other's presence to start with as the peregrine had landed on a large rock on top of a hill. The pair of ravens had landed on the rocky ledge below the peregrines observation rock a few minutes previously. However, I am not sure what alerted the birds to each other's presence but suddenly the ravens were calling profusely and the peregrine and the ravens had a mid air tussle with the peregrine actually trying to take one of the ravens as it flew past. Battle honours even, the peregrine flew off north whilst the ravens flew down to the Snaid burn.

I had come across the fox during one of my visits monitoring the mammal population on the reserve. This monitoring of the deer, goats and other mammals has been ongoing during the winter months since the reserve was first purchased in 1986. However, the fox was so intent on trying to catch voles that he was completely unaware of my presence.

Now, if you have never seen a fox trying to catch a vole before it is ~~simply~~ⁱⁿ a case of the fox 'bouncing and springing' around what is usually rough grass. The easiest way to describe what happened is, I believe, the vole darted between the fox's legs just as the fox had sprung forward, however the fox, with split second reactions then brought it's head down and unfortunately appeared to bang it's head off a grass tussock. The dazed expression was quite comical, unfortunately, my laughing at this episode alerted the fox to my presence, and it scampered off down hill and into the wood. Other good records for this period have been 7 bullfinch feeding on heather seed at a height of 530 metres, 5 mistle thrush crossing Beinn a' Choin, 5 twite also on heather and just last week (1st March) 8 meadow pipit out on the hill indicating that spring is almost here. The summer migrants will be returning about the end of April, so if you wish to see pied flycatcher, redstart and tree pipit make a date in your diary to visit the woodland on the reserve in early May.

Duncan Cameron, Warden

John & Stuart Boyd

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Announcements



Strathard Community Council meets at 7.30pm on the 1st Thursday of every month. Next meeting 1st April in memorial Hall, Aberfoyle

Kinlochard Toddlers

Fridays in Kinlochard School Building
(or the Hall next-door)
10-30 a.m. till 12noon
PLAY, CHAT, LEARNING & TOAST
All welcome
(Bring a parent)

1st Aberfoyle Brownies



Meet every Wednesday 6pm till 7.45pm in Church House. If you wish to contact a Guider they are:

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Daily from 9.30am – 11.30am

Please call Marion on

01301 702970

for more information



St. Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church Aberfoyle Services

14th March: 11am

21st March (Mothering Sunday): 11am & Sunday School

9th April: Good Friday. To be arranged, see Church Board.

11th April: Easter Sunday. 11am
Rev. Ian Watt

If you wish to take out a subscription please complete the information slip and post it to:
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Milton the Otter

Hello children

Spring has sprung. There are pretty flowers everywhere, masses of golden daffodils from one end of Strathard to the other. Even the birds are singing their springtime songs. So it was a bit of a surprise to have a few nights with very bright stars and a heavy frost! By early morning the cars in Aberfoyle were all covered in a thick layer of sparkling ice. The lochs began to freeze and the young kits, Duke and Katrine, had great fun sliding on the frozen surface, seeing who could go the furthest. Next, they tried skimming stones across the ice, watching them bounce and skip until they plopped into the open water. This was great fun!

One morning, just after breakfast, Grandpa Otter said he had a special treat for us. There was no school that day, so the whole family went to Forest Hills to meet John Minaar. John has a wonderful job - he makes ice! This is very special ice, made for curling, a game of sliding large stones from one end of the ice to the other. The idea is to get your granite stones to stop in an area marked with blue, white and red circles. You are allowed to knock any stones belonging to your opponents and get them out of the way. You are not permitted to push any of the other team, not even your sister!

After a bit of practice, it was time for a proper game. Dad's team was Braeval and Katrine, my two sisters, and Grandpa Otter. Mum had me, Duke and John. First you play one way over the ice and then you play back again, for the second end. The team with the most stones nearest the centre of the coloured circles scores that number of points. Our team, called a rink, won - but only just. Grandpa Otter is very good at curling. Luckily, John Minaar was a little bit better!

The next day, very early, Braeval, the twins and George the Hare came with me to Loch Chon. There we met Rory the Stag and Bran the Sheepdog. We measured and marked out the ice, ready to start curling again. Our stones were a bit rough, not even and polished like the ones at Forest Hills. Still, we had an excellent time. Mum had made us plenty of fish sandwiches - lettuce and apple for George and Rory. I really like curling.

The children from Aberfoyle Primary have had curling lessons at Forest Hills. The Inversnaid children are having coaching. I hope my school will be next to go.

Bye for now,
Milton.



Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre Scottish Charity No. SC001180 Funded by Falkirk, Stirling & Clackmannanshire Councils

Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre exists to provide a free and confidential service of emotional support and practical information on legal and medical issues to survivors who have experienced Rape, Sexual Assault or Child Sexual Abuse, throughout Central Scotland. Our telephone Helpline is staffed by trained volunteers and offers long or short-term support by e-mail, letter, telephone or face to face counselling.

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Committee & Contacts

Website
www.strathardnews.com

An Environmental Day, similar to last year's event, will be held on
Wednesday, 14th April from 2.00pm to 7.00pm
Memorial Hall, Aberfoyle

*Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available throughout the day.
Entry is free.*

Exhibitors are as follows:

Ron Mould, Home Energy Officer

Andy Douglas, Care and Repair

Gwenda Diack, Community Environmental Services

Jacqui Smith, Social Security Officer

D. Riggle, Waste Evaluation Officer

Unmanned stall advertising Broadband from Aberfoyle Traders

**As well as this, the new Local Telephone Directory will be launched.
Copies will be on sale costing £1.**

*Further information can be obtained from Pamela Abraham, Ardarroch,
Lochard Road, Aberfoyle, tel. 01877 382295*

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