

issue 27
jan/feb
2006
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STRATHARD NEWS

The Voice of Your Community

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Storm On Loch Lomond

A sudden storm caused near tragedy last month on Loch Lomond which was only averted by a rapid rescue operation. This accident occurred on Wednesday 11th January. Three men travelling by a small, 20 foot ferry from Inveruglas to Inversnaid were engulfed in a sudden storm, high winds and a hailstorm, only one mile from their destination. Their boat was capsized by a huge wave throwing all three men into the water. One of the men, Neil Wells, Managing Director of Lochs and Glens Holidays of which the Inversnaid Hotel is a part, had managed to contact the emergency services on his mobile before the boat went down. The other two men, skipper Michael Reaney and William Gauslin from Alexandria, managed to grab onto the boat's life raft. The accident happened at 10.30am, it was reckoned, as Mr Gauslin's watch had stopped at that time. The men were in the icy cold water for half an hour before assistance arrived in the shape of a Royal Sea King Navy helicopter. The crew had been en route to a training exercise in Loch Katrine when they received the call from the Coast Guard.



All three men, suffering from hypothermia, were air-lifted to the Royal Alexandria Hospital in Paisley where they made full recovery. They agreed that they had been very lucky. Another half hour in the water and they could have been in grave danger. It was extremely fortunate that the helicopter was in the vicinity at the time.

Clyde Coast Guard stated that the men could have easily died had not the helicopter been so close. Apparently, at this time of year the temperature in the loch is between 1c and 3c. At this temperature 50% of people would be expected to die after 20 minutes. Had the helicopter not been on an exercise nearby, it could have been a sadder ending. On this occasion, thankfully, all ended well.

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'HEART START'

Emergency First Aid/Resuscitation Course

Emergency first aid training for younger members of the community, aged 13 – 18, has now been arranged by Friends of Aberfoyle and Buchlyvie Medical Centres. This short 2 ½ hour course will be on



**MONDAY 27TH FEBRUARY at 7pm
IN GARTMORE VILLAGE HALL**

Professional trainers will come from The Trossachs Search and Rescue Team but it is essential for us to know the numbers of those wishing to attend, so that there are sufficient Trainers, and dummies. If you would like to participate in the course please **either** e-mail: friendsabmc@googlemail.com **or** leave a message with June Naidoo on 01877 382224 by **20th February**.

Advance Information: The next ADULT Heart Start course will be Thursday 23 March at 7.00 p.m. in Buchlyvie Village Hall. Please contact Liz Fuller on 01360 850246 if you would like to attend.

**“Trossachs Praise”
Sunday 5th February
Gartmore House at 7.00pm.**

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The Dance Connection

On Sunday 11 December 2005, pupils from the Dance Connection entertained family, friends and visitors at the Woollen Mill in Aberfoyle. They performed a selection of tap, ballet and jazz dances, some performed to festive tunes. The sum of £150.00 was raised for the Aberfoyle Memorial Hall and Santa hats were sold to raise funds for the Aberfoyle PTA.

Carla Dugan, of the Dance Connection was pleased to announce that six of her pupils passed their Primary Tap exam. All passed with merit or distinction. The six pupils are pictured celebrating at their Christmas party – Stephanie Boyd, Bridget Chocholek, Anastarsia and Amarillia Moffat, Poppy Smith and Natasha Wilson.

Dance classes start again on Tuesday 10 January 2006 in the Memorial Hall. Classes are for children age 3+ and also an adult tap class. For more information on classes available contact Carla on tel: 07815 146462.



Mary, Ruaridh, Catriona and Mairi at Forth House wish all our friends in Strathard peace, contentment and prosperity throughout 2006.

On your behalf, instead of sending cards we have bought, through www.oxfamunwrapped.com, 6 month's worth of essential medicines for a community in need in Africa, to help in the fight to 'Make Poverty History'.

Thank you

I would like to thank the community of Aberfoyle for their kindness and generosity on my retirement and for making it so special. A big thank you to the staff and children of Aberfoyle Primary School for the gifts and cards they gave me. And a special thanks to Ros for helping to make it such a memorable day.

Thanks again. Stewart

Editor's Footnote: This should have been included in the last edition. Sorry, Stewart.

One of the British national daily newspapers is asking readers "what it means to be British?". This one is from a chap in Switzerland ..

"Being British is about driving in a German car to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, then travelling home, grabbing an Indian curry or a Turkish kebab on the way, to sit on Swedish furniture and watch American shows on a Japanese TV. And the most British thing of all...? Suspicion of anything foreign"

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Valentine Dance

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or from Jimmy Ferguson (382266)



Aberfoyle Parish Church Guild

A very Good New Year to all our members and friends. We hope you are all keeping well and looking forward to our first meeting of 2006 which is on Monday, 20th February at 2 pm in Church House when children from the Primary School will entertain with Scots music and poems.

The World Day of Prayer service is being held in Aberfoyle Church on Friday, 3rd March at 7 pm. This is a joint service for all six carse churches and we hope our friends from St. Mary's will join us as well. Men are also welcome at this service and we hope to see some of you there.

A Great Christmas – in Aberfoyle!

By Dougie MacPherson

Aberfoyle had a new attraction this Christmas past, to tempt both locals and visitors alike. On Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th December the Green Gallery, situated in Main Street, Aberfoyle, hosted a Christmas Fayre within a marquee set up at the entrance to the Gallery. The Fayre comprised various stalls offering

things both unusual and quirky as gifts.

Stallholders included

Inverawe

Smokehouse from Taynult, *Wood 'n' Tots* from Doune,

Catherine's

Country Kitchen from Falkirk and

Mes Amies

Chocolatiers from Kippen and

much, much more.

If that was not enough, whisky and mince pie tasting were also available. What more could a body ask for at that time of year?

Over and above all this, a generous donation was made by the stallholders to the Scottish Society for Autism.

It is to be hoped that the fayre might become a regular event in Aberfoyle's Christmas calendar.

A propos to the above (See - we're also fluent French speakers on this newsletter!) mention

must surely be made of Anne Johnstone of the Green Gallery. For many years that talented lady ran painting classes both at the village hall and later at the Green Gallery for many budding amateur artists, many of them local. That Anne was a talented and wonderful teacher of art has since been proven by not a

few of her students who have gone on to greater things.

Her enthusiasm and love of the medium

lives on in those she taught. Having sadly

given up the classes several years ago, the women and men she

taught decided to stay together and

continue to paint as a group. Thus was

formed the *Byre*

Group, now based in Killearn, its personnel

all original Green Gallery students to a man(?).

The group now consists of about 25 people

meeting regularly, painting and displaying

their works from as far afield as London and

Edinburgh to Aberfoyle and Kinlochard.

The members are varied in their talents but there are some who are making names for

themselves. Perhaps, the *Byre* Group will be a name to conjure with in years to come. If so, it surely must be down to the hard work and devotion to the arts of Anne Johnstone.



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Trossachs Wins Top Accolade

TROSSACHS Community Council has been Highly Commended in the Older People category of the Calor Scottish Community of the Year Awards 2005.

Representatives from the community received the accolade at an awards ceremony held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) and presented by Communities Minister, Malcolm Chisholm MSP.

In total twenty-six short-listed communities attended the annual event, which this year attracted more than one hundred entries from communities spanning the length and breadth of Scotland.

Also celebrating on the night were representatives from Cornton Community Council who won the overall title of Calor Scottish Community of the Year 2005.

Congratulating the two community Councils on their accolades at the Awards ceremony, Stirling Provost Colin O'Brien said: "What a marvelous achievement for two of Stirling's Community Councils. I'm delighted their hard work and commitment to their communities has been acknowledged with such high profile awards."

Commenting on Trossach's success, Hamish Husband, Calor Scottish Community of the Year Manager said, "The Trossachs community demonstrates great neighbourliness and interest in ensuring the needs of its older people are met. It is refreshing to see that in today's busy and frenetic world the culture of popping in on elderly residents has not been lost.

"The number and range of support services catering for the needs of the community's older people, such as village wide oil delivery, prescription collections and chimney sweeps equally benefits the community as a whole.



National Park Authority Volunteering Opportunity

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Volunteer Programme is looking for volunteers to help with a special event in February. Working with volunteers from the Callander Woodland Link, National Park Rangers and current volunteers, it will be a very sociable event. The aim of the day is to clear away litter and gorse as well as cleaning the drains and ditches along the path to Bracklinn Falls in Callander.

The project starts at 10.15am on Sunday 5 February. If you require a lift to the starting point, meet at the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway, Balloch at 9am or meet at Bracklinn Falls car park at 10.15am. Please bring waterproofs, wellies or boots and a packed lunch. There will be refreshments provided and this is a great opportunity to get involved in the work of the National Park and find out more about volunteering with the National Park Volunteer Programme.

If you would like to book a lift, please contact Linda Winskill on 01567 830430 or 07734484135 or Callum Ritchie on 07740073285.

For more information about the National Park Volunteer Programme, contact Zoe Morris on 01389 722001 or email zoe.morris@lochlomond-trossachs.org

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7. I purchase complete estate or house contents

Every contact is made with total discretion, confidentiality and courtesy, at a time to suit the client. Properties cleared will be left secure, swept and tidy.

by Owen McKee

In late January I attended a couple of meetings for businesses operating around the West Highland Way which traverses the Park. One was in Drymen and the other in Tyndrum. The theme was how to ensure that the WHW could be maintained as Scotland's premier long distance walk. There were some enlightening presentations and of course the usual indigestible statistics. Annually some 50,000 (or was it 15000?) walkers doing the full 92 miles with another 90,000 doing a section: a lot of feet and a lot of wear and tear. Add to that our rather destructive weather and you soon see why there is an annual maintenance bill of £400,000: a lot of money but the source of a lot enjoyment for the owners of all those weary feet. The local economy is estimated to benefit to the tune of £3million plus but I personally think that is a gross underestimation. That benefit to the economy and the health benefit to the walkers is why the local authorities, The National Park Authority and SNH combine to meet the maintenance bill. But with ever increasing demands on their budgets the authorities are searching for new ways to fund the WHW. That took me back to an article by Bill Jamieson in the Scotsman



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

at the end of December when he explored the budgets of various National Organisations and how relatively underfunded is our National Park. That article by a highly regarded economist gave me a certain comfort for my regular defence of lack of available funding for tackling the various problems which beset us within the Park but the plight of the WHW merely highlights the need for us all to realise that with the occasional small effort we could make a very big difference. The owner of one business on the WHW takes a bag with him as he takes his dog for his daily walk and picks up any litter he encounters. With wardens and rangers knowing that section is relatively litter free they can use their efforts elsewhere. I recall that Sustrans had the benefit of a lot of volunteer help when constructing the cycle track up Glen Ogle. The Community Councils have all arranged end of the season litter clearing days. All little things perhaps but they all make a big difference. And something else which will make a big difference is the new HQ at Balloch. Last week I attended a presentation by the design consultants and I must confess that I was excited by the proposed design.

Since the decision was made some two years ago to have a new HQ I have been a bit apprehensive. I have always been in favour of the HQ being in Balloch because of the need to regenerate the area from Haldane to the Renton. My worry was that the lack of funds would result in an unsuitable functional building of concrete and glass. Thankfully I could not have been more wrong. It will be a delightful building to work in (the staff have and are being consulted all the way) and will be in stark contrast to the Portacabins in which the staff labour at present. The structure will be predominately built with local wood with some element of stone cladding and will incorporate as many energy saving devices as possible. It will be heated with a wood chip system fed from our local woodlands. I am confident it will be an exemplar for other developments not only in the Park but across Scotland as a whole. Yes I feel that 2006 is going to be a very good year.

As always I can be contacted as follows:

Post: Taigh Na Bhuth,
Lochearnhead.
FK19 8PR

Phone: 01567 830214

owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk

Calling all Hillwalkers

Hill walkers in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park are being asked to be on the look-out next year for the Ptarmigan. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is appealing for people in the Park to help spot these mountainous birds. All information received will be fed into Project Ptarmigan, BTO Scotland's monitoring study aimed at gathering information on this charismatic bird.

The Ptarmigan is quite literally an Arctic relic, confined to mountainous islands of wintry weather. As Britain's only truly montane bird, it is cleverly adapted to a mountain habitat. In common with the Mountain Hare, this bird turns white in winter as camouflage in its snow covered habitat - the only British bird to do so. The Ptarmigan's feather-clad legs are a further adaptation, protecting it against biting winds. When the ground is covered in snow, the hardy bird will dig underneath in order to reach the shoots and leaves of food plants below.

The Ptarmigan is sensitive to a variety of changes including grazing use, human disturbance and an increase in predators such as crows along with changing climate.

Despite the important ecological work that has been carried out on this species at a number of sites in Scotland, changes to the overall Scottish population and its distribution are not well understood.

You do not need to be a birdwatcher to take part in Project Ptarmigan as BTO will issue straightforward guidelines. Simply record where you see the birds and even where you don't see them.

The BTO will use the results to develop a strategy for long-term monitoring of Ptarmigan and other suitable montane species.

If you would like to get involved in the project or would like more information, please contact Jacqui Kaye, Development and Fieldwork Co-ordinator, BTO Office, Stirling. Tel 01786 466560 or email Jacqui.Kaye@bto.org

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Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith Parish Church

After all the excitement of the Christmas frenzy it is back to normal service. In fact Sunday Services at the Port begin at 10a.m. and 11.15 a.m. at Aberfoyle.

“Six Together” Evening Praise Services are Sunday 29th January at 7p.m in Kippen Church.

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper at Port of Menteith on Sunday 26th February and Sunday 5th March at Aberfoyle.

During Lent there will be a series of “Six Together” Services each Sunday night beginning at 7p.m.

- 5th March Buchlyvie,
- 12th March Kippen,
- 19th March Port of Menteith,
- 26th March Gartmore,
- 2nd April Norrieston,
- 9th April Aberfoyle,
- Easter Sunday 16th April David Marshall Lodge at 8a.m followed by breakfast.

The Sunday Club still meets on a Sunday at 11.15 am during Service times. Some parents forget that Baptismal vows means bringing your child up in the Christian faith. It was not an option but a condition of your promise.

We welcome every one to both our churches some new, some worn, some retreads but we are never so *tyred* to have you with us.

With every Blessing Rev Danny Gibb.

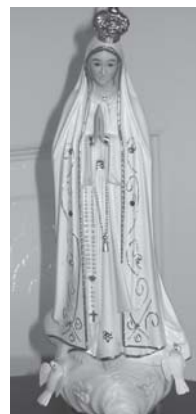


St. Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church In The Trossachs and Strathendrick

THE WONDERS OF ST MARY’S

The Church of St Mary in Aberfoyle has one of the most interesting histories of any Church Building in the country and now it is preparing itself for a major refurbishment. It will be the first since it was built in 1893. When the slate quarrymen built the church there was a huge period of industrial expansion and the quarrymen were highly paid for the time. They installed slate floors as they were the best form of church flooring and it was given by the owners of the Aberfoyle Slate Quarry. After the Boer War there was a severe depression and many of the quarrymen moved away or found other work and the church was supported by the wealthy landowning families with estates in the county who had made their fortunes from the industrial days of the late 19th century. They were very generous and in 1911 the Fanshaw family from Forest Hills paid for wooden floors and panelling to be installed and the old wicker chairs were replaced by the best quality pews in Scotland gifted by members and fixed to the walls for all time. Other families gifted the Pulpit and Font and the Crawford family of whisky fame gifted ancient pre-reformation panelling to the Sanctuary from their private chapel at Aucintrive. Fifty years ago the top quality Willis organ was donated by Mr Stuart Black the shipping line owner in 1957 and is now due for its first proper service. The floors are causing problems and will have to be uplifted and re-laid. Much more work will have to be carried out and the present families and new incomer members will no doubt follow the example of the forbears and the funds will be found so the work can be done.

The aim is to create a most wonderful and historic church that will become a major visitor attraction in the National Park and attract both Christian believers of all denominations as well as enquiring visitors who want to see the best display of icons, pictures and statues of Our Lady and the Child Jesus that has been acquired by the church, as well as it being the world centre for the inter denominational Christian world prayer group for children named the Order of the Child Jesus. It is hoped that conferences will be held in the area and services held in the church that will be transformed during the renovations into one of the most “ancient and modern” churches in Scotland.



Please visit the church web site: <http://www.stmarychurchaberfoyle.org.uk/>

The most important event is the visit of The Rt Rev David Chillingworth, the Bishop of St Andrews Dunkeld and Dunblane, who will take the 11.15 service on Sunday 26th February and it will be followed by lunch and all are welcome to attend. He is a great preacher.

On Thursdays in Lent meetings will be held in Margie Stephen’s home in Croftamie at 4.00pm

The picture is the latest addition to the collection of Our Lady of Fatima where she appeared to three children several times and gave them messages, the last being that a Pope would be the subject of an assassination attempt.

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Black Ice – The Killer On Our Roads!

Driving in the winter in Scotland can be a hazardous affair at the best of times, with the varying conditions that can occur. The most dangerous and unpredictable, surely, must be the threat of black ice on the roads. Unseen, unexpected, it can be a nightmare even for the most experienced of drivers. This fact was brought home with a vengeance, alas, only recently on the A81 Glasgow to Aberfoyle road. On Sunday 18 December, a man who travels to Aberfoyle regularly in the winter to run his huskies travelled up this road at 8am, in his van and with his dogs. There was no problem at this time.

However, at 9.30am, travelling on the *same* road and returning from his training run, he hit black ice, without warning. This occurred on the A81 on Flanders Moss, between the Trossachs Caravan Park and Ward Toll. He lost control of his van, went

off the road and into a ditch. Other than his dogs, he was on his own. He sometimes travels to Aberfoyle with his two young boys. On this occasion he didn't. It was probably a mercy. The van was a write-off. He ended up with a broken nose and severe bruising to his head and body. Two of his dogs died in the crash. A third subsequently died of its injuries.

Whilst he was still trying to come to grips with what happened, two other vehicles came off the road, one with a mother and two children. Thankfully, there were no injuries involved with the other vehicles.

The message here is surely to take nothing for granted when driving in winter. Road conditions, as happened here, can change for the worse within only a short period of time. Black ice can be one of the worst conditions you can meet, both dangerous and unseen.

editorial

The committee of the Strathard News would like to thank you for the support you have given us over the last year. As a new year begins we hope you will continue that support.

As you know, the committee members give their time on a voluntary basis which we are very happy to do, and the costs associated with producing the newsletter are covered by revenue received from advertising and donations. It is important for the future of the newsletter that we continue to generate income from these sources.

It is also important that the newsletter follows its remit, i.e. as a communication tool for the Strathard communities: informing people of local news and issues, publicising local events, clubs and associations' news, advertising local businesses, providing a platform to air views and opinions on local matters, celebrating success and publishing local writing talent.

The Strathard News is only as good as the contributions we receive. The committee, (and perhaps you, too) have noticed a subtle shift in emphasis over the last few publications, with local input conspicuous by its absence. *This is where you come in!* We would like to get the newsletter back on track, and urge you to send us your news. The worst thing for us is to see notice boards plastered with forthcoming events that could also have been published in the Strathard News. We start to question what/who we are doing it for. Look forward to hearing from you.

Margaret

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2006 Deadline Dates for your Diary	
Issue 28	5th March
Issue 29	9th April
Issue 30	21st May
Issue 31	2nd July
Issue 32	20th August
Issue 33	1st October
Issue 34	12 November (xmas issue)

Strathard Community Trust

The Trust has taken a keen interest in the Playpark since taking over from the Youth Group. A meeting was held in Stirling with the Playgroup section of Stirling Council at which time the plans for the Playpark were taken apart and gathered up together again to try to please every section of the local young people from toddler to youth.

A questionnaire was handed out to all the young people on the School Coaches that leave the village every morning and the response from these young people was nothing short of amazing. Their input was quite incredible and a lot of important information was gathered from the questionnaires. The Trust would like to thank all those who filled in the questionnaires for the time and effort they have put in.

It was decided that a skate-board park would be the best option to go with at present for the youth of the village and for better equipment to be installed for the toddler-up group. Funds have been applied for in order to facilitate purchasing the equipment etc. needed for the playpark. Following pressure from the Trust, Stirling Council have commenced work on the drainage problem at the Railway Cottage corner of the park and this is ongoing.

Membership Cards are currently being printed for Members of the Trust, together with a Newsletter. I personally would like to apologise to Members for the delay in sending out Cards and a Newsletter and these will be sent out to all shortly.

The ongoing problem of an Amenity site is still being looked into with a lot of hard work, travelling and effort being put in to try to alleviate a very bad situation at present. Two sites have been ear-marked for a possible Amenity area, however, agreement with the powers that be over a site is far from being reached at present and regular updates on this situation will be given via the Strathard News.

If anyone in the area is not yet a Member but would like to become one, or if anyone would like to provide input into the Playpark, Amenity Site or any other area covered by the Trust, then the views of the community are more than welcome. Membership forms can be obtained in the PO or Garage, the Kinlochard shop, or CO-OP

*Brenda Barclay
Administrator*

Historic Route

Throughout the late spring, summer and autumn of 2005 a feasibility study was under way to look in detail at the proposal to establish a traffic-free route from Aberfoyle to Inversnaid and Stronachlachar. The first part of this would be on existing forestry roads and tracks, but from a point just north of Loch Chon would use the old statute labour road that runs roughly parallel to the B829, and then join the even older military road that runs parallel to the C68 between Inversnaid and Stronachlachar. The remains of these roads are gradually becoming lost as time goes on, so as well as providing a safe route for walkers and cyclists, the project will rescue the roads from oblivion.

The archaeological dig that took place in April certainly caught many people's imagination. In the end there were more volunteers than we could accommodate, and we had some excellent press coverage. The operation even aroused the interest of a former resident of Glen Arklet now living in Newfoundland, and we have sent him a copy of the archaeological report. If anyone else would like a copy of the report on disc, please contact me.

The subsequent feasibility study was carried out by Andrea Partridge of P4 Projects together with a landscape architect colleague. She surveyed the route in minute detail along the sections of old road, and identified new links where the original road has been lost or where it was necessary to deviate from it. The result is a section by section analysis of the condition of the route and a detailed specification of the work needed to make it fit for purpose, showing the types of path construction, culverts, ditches, gates, signage etc. Andrea presented her draft report to the steering group in December, and the final version will be produced very shortly when a few remaining minor details are ironed out.

During the summer the steering group conducted a survey to gauge interest in the project. Questionnaires were placed at several locations around Strathard for locals and visitors to fill in. The results were most encouraging, with 118 responses, almost entirely positive. The demand for more traffic-free routes for walkers and cyclists was a consistent factor to emerge, and 81% of the respondents said they would use the route. The results of this survey and of a National Park visitor survey are summarised in the consultant's report.

Once the report is finalised, we then have the small matter of getting the route constructed, which will require a good deal of external funding. However, the Forestry Commission have been represented on the steering team from the outset and we are now in discussion with them as to how we can integrate this project into their wider plans for the Loch Katrine/Loch Arklet catchment which they now manage. The restoration of these old roads has been talked about for years, but with so many more opportunities opening up for people to enjoy the heritage of this area, we reckon this is a good time to be doing something about it.

The work so far has been funded by Lomond & Rural Stirling Leader +, Stirling Council Local Community Development Fund, Awards for All and Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority.

Paths Group

Following the departure of Jimmy Connolly in August, Kenny Auld took over as Area Access Officer for the National Park in the autumn. Kenny had been a ranger elsewhere in the Park, and once he had got his feet under his desk the Paths Group resumed its monthly meetings which had temporarily been put on hold. The National Park is funding walks leaflets for various villages within its boundary - the first one to be produced was for Killin. Aberfoyle is next in line, and the leaflet will give half a dozen walks from the main car park. Discussions with landowners are still in progress but we hope to be able to produce the leaflet by the summer with some improvements to paths and signage undertaken in readiness.

We have also received a commitment from Stirling Council to "look favourably at carrying out maintenance works" to the Milton and Rob Roy sections of roadside footway in the next financial year. The Area Inspector has been out to look at these paths and has seen their appalling condition - particularly the Milton one.

Members of the group are to be involved in volunteer maintenance work in a couple of places. One of these is the footbridge at Lochend near Milton, which has become very slippery. A small working party will apply some kind of non-slip surface, led by Scott Ashworth, our Park ranger, who attends the paths group meetings. Scott will also supervise a small group of us to do some pruning back of overhanging conifer branches on the path up to the Craig of Monievreckie, with the consent of the Forestry Commission.

The group has been working closely with the Forestry Commission whose own access improvement programme is now virtually complete. Andy Malcolm, the Projects Officer, also attends our meetings and we have liaised with him over the content of the many information boards that have recently been installed throughout the area. These each give a handful of colour-coded walks which take advantage of the miles of new path and the strategically placed footbridges that the Strathard News has already noted!

John Digney (Tel: 382636)



STRATHARD
Community Council

As it's been a quiet spell on the meeting front over the festive season, I was sitting wondering what there was to report to you this month. It's too late for New Year resolutions (or they've already been broken!). Then I thought of a 'wish list' to take us into 2006, such as:

- Roads with tarmac right to the verges; drains that do (drain!); holes that aren't (especially in the middle of the road); grey bins like the Tardis (that are bigger inside than they appear on the outside).
- Officials who return your calls; time to phone again when they don't.
- Community Council meetings full of new faces; the same meetings full of old friends!
- Less consultation on things not important; more action on matters most important.
- Reasons for roundabouts springing up all over; plans for potholes on the B829. Which brings me back to the beginning and road maintenance! Again. Last wish? To have a different wish list next year.

Ros

Birds Of Prey To Boost Trossachs Tourism

New 'Bird of Prey Trail' could increase visitor spend in the National Park

A new project to boost green tourism and wildlife conservation in Central Scotland and the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park will be launched this weekend (Sunday 15) by some of Scotland's top conservation organisations.

RSPB Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland, Woodland Trust Scotland and the National Park have formed a partnership with local projects and businesses including Argaty Red Kites project near Doune to create the Trossachs Bird of Prey Trail.

The new trail links two RSPB viewing projects at Argaty Red

Kites and at Forestry Commission Scotland's David Marshall Lodge Osprey Viewing centre at Aberfoyle.

Following the Trossachs Trail tourist route created nearly 10 years ago, it is hoped that the new trail which passes stunning locations such as Lake of Menteith, Loch Venachar and the Woodland Trust's site at Glen Finglas will significantly boost the amount of time tourists spend in the Trossachs.

A number of local business

situated along the Trail have become 'green business' partners, after undertaking environmental audits from VisitScotland, including the Winnock Hotel who have attained Gold status for their environmentally friendly operations.

As more visitors pass along the route, the partners in the trail hope that an increasing

number of businesses will be encouraged to join the trail creating a truly 'green' tourist experience for those looking to enjoy Scotland's spectacular wildlife - whilst minimising impact on the environment.



With the two key viewing projects jointly attracting around 50,000 visitors a year, and a host of birds of prey including peregrines, buzzards and even golden eagles all possible along the route, the project partners believe that the new trail will offer something for both the

more experienced wildlife-lover, tourists and families.

Year-round opportunities are provided by the latest CCTV camera technology which brings the daily lives of rare ospreys to the David Marshall Lodge from April to September, whilst at Argaty Red Kites, the



stunning spectacle of wild kites wheeling above the purpose-built viewing hide is an almost guaranteed year-round treat.

Unique interpretation has been produced to accompany the trail including large trail maps at key sites, a

website packed with information on birds of prey and a leaflet featuring an A3 poster-guide with an easy to follow identification chart so you can tell your buzzard from your kestrel.

You can find out more about the Trossachs Bird of Prey Trail at www.birdofpreytrail.com or call RSPB Scotland on 0141 331 0993.

New Year, New Opportunity

Local community groups and charities who need new equipment are being encouraged to apply NOW to the CFSLA Payroll Lottery for help.

The lottery is run by employees and former employees of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk & Stirling councils as well as Police, Fire & Assessors services.

Funds are available from the profits of a monthly lottery and the committee prefers to buy equipment for the community group or charity.

More information and forms are available to download from www.cfsla.org.uk or by telephoning or faxing 01259-211052.

Ranger's Ramblings

A View from the Lodge!



Contributions welcome: Contact David Wilkie on 01877 382258 or email david.wilkie@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



Meet The Farquhars

On Friday, December 3rd, Stuart and Brenda of 'Chill Out' fame decided to choose an exotic location in deepest Lanarkshire to finally tie the knot, after a whirlwind romance. The small group of family and friends who gathered at the Blantyre registry office were treated (subjected?) to an emotional ceremony as our aromatherapy cousins attempted to deliver their lines on cue with, it must be noted, not too much success on Stuart's part! This, however, all added to the occasion, and the assembled company moved on to Amigos restaurant in

Christmas At The Lodge

After the dangerous lull of November, following on from a hectic season, the staff found an extra ounce of energy to arrange a variety of events throughout December. Merit awards are due to the recreation team of Shirley Leek, Charlie Stewart, Peter Mitchell and Katy Freeman, along with Jim Malcolm and the E.T.F. squad, for their back-breaking efforts, in all weathers, to set up the Christmas trees for sale. A number of favourable comments were received by those visitors who make an annual pilgrimage to The Lodge to choose a tree, as to the vast improvement in this area of operations in the last couple of years. More so to their credit, then, that the team still found time to come up with what would eventually prove to be a hugely popular concept in the shape of a dry sledging slope, which was constructed on the ground leading off the south-facing picnic veranda. Local craft stalls were also on show during the month, including a two-day visit from The Lomond Craft Association, and our wildwatch officer, Joanna McFarlane set up a superb

Hamilton for a slap-up Mexican meal before 'retiring' to a local alehouse to chew the fat over a few beers. I think it safe to say that Brenda and Stuart have firmly established themselves this past season as part of the David Marshall Lodge 'family' and all the staff wish them every happiness as a couple and every success in their business in the coming years.

Rangers Corner



No point in anticipating our January salaries,
No point in resolutions for reducing our calories,
Year after year there's no way we can win
As the media hype puts us all in a spin.
Admit it, one and all, the banks have won the bet
As we flounder in a sea of debt
And the supermarkets that sold us all the pies
They are the ones, not us, that are wise.
And the more we worry, the harder we try,
Like writing cards to people who will never reply.
This annual brainwashing has to be brought to an end
As we blissfully continue to spend, spend, spend.
The one time of year that we seek to pretend
There are unlimited funds through our plastic friend,
To live for a day as queens and kings
Basking in new-found material things.
Receiving an MP-3 is all very nice
As we gorge ourselves on that tenth turkey slice
But for the Pakistan earthquake victims....
a different roll of the dice
Many of whom would have sacrificed a limb for a bowl of rice.
How many of us gave this a second thought
As we casually ignored the price of the presents we bought?
I think it's time we got a sense of reality....
Don't you?



exhibition detailing the rights and wrongs when it comes to providing food for our garden birds through the winter months. For the kids, there was a treasure hunt, and a chance to make their own reindeer or snowman puppet in Donna Owens' workshop or to make their own bird feeder with Katy. An opportunity was also available to take ownership of a stunning

chainsaw carving of an owl. The sculpture was part of a raffle in aid of funds for The Lomond Mountain Rescue Team, who made their traditional appearance on the second weekend, complete with tombola, mulled wine, mince pies and fine conversation. For me, though, the highlight was the carol singing on the last weekend. The tone was set on the Saturday with 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' ensemble from Milngavie which consisted of our resident band, Heelster Gowdie and family and friends. Sunday, however, proved to be a sheer delight, as children from Aberfoyle, Port of Menteith and Gartmore Primary schools, along with teachers and parents, took over The Lodge and treated everyone to a fantastic afternoon's singing. Many thanks to all those involved for their time and effort in helping to make the day possible. Lastly, thanks again to Liz and her staff who, as usual, had many mouths to feed over the busy month.



Aberfoyle Primary School



Dry Sledging Slope



Gartmore Primary School



Port of Menteith Primary School



The Twelve Days of Christmas

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School Report



Aberfoyle Primary

P3/4 did a topic based around Charlie and the Chocolate factory. This involved looking at marketing, product design, fair trade, packaging and so on. The topic culminated in them making and selling their products at a 'Chocolate Extravaganza'. They then used the profits to buy goods to make into parcels to then send to the recent earthquake appeal. Their idea. Determined to Succeed, Values and Citizenship, global aspects ... what more could you ask!



Inversnaid Primary

We're already deep into our new topic up here at Inversnaid and December seems so far in the past. It doesn't take much, though, to remember how hard everyone worked in the last few weeks of term. Our Performances of Christingle Rock at the Inversnaid Hotel and the Wool Centre, Aberfoyle, were resounding successes. The audiences were delighted at how well the four children performed, especially as there were only four of them singing and narrating. They were fantastic.

Our Calendar project was such a success that we were unable to keep up with all the orders. We experienced just about every problem that we could have encountered! The software argued with the printer, the printer was temperamental with the card, the card supplier had a problem with his supply of card but we still managed to print around fifty calendars. We apologise to anyone who hasn't yet had an opportunity to buy a calendar.

We are researching more appropriate suppliers at the moment and hope to have the calendars on sale again soon.

We have resumed our log making now that Christmas is over. As we currently have a surplus of waste paper we have increased the number of logs per bundle at the moment. The 'Loggies' now sell at 6 for £1 and the 'Briquettes' at 4 for a £1. We are also busy remaking envelopes for selling. As always, we are very grateful to Shona at Kinlochard Shop for helping us to sell the logs, envelopes and calendars.

Happy New Year to everyone
from Mathew, Ross, Eilidh, Jamie and
the staff of Inversnaid Primary School.

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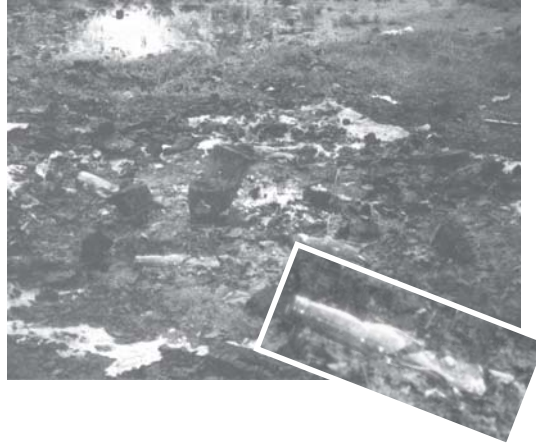
Trossachs Crimescene

by I.M. Watching



Bottle Circles

Most of us are familiar with the strange and sudden appearances of crop circles in farmland throughout the last few decades. In November, I was curious to discover a variation on the theme on our very doorstep. My first sighting of the ' Broken Bottle Circles' was on November 6th. It occurred opposite the benches on the river walkway, which in past times was fondly regarded as a beauty spot. What could this scorched patch mean, I wondered? Was it a sign from The Faeries of Doon Hill? Alien presence, perhaps? Or a newly commissioned National Park sculpture? On Monday, the 28th of November, however, the ' Broken Bottle Circles ' appeared throughout the entire length of the walkway, placed neatly, and quite deliberately. Not such a mystery, now. More likely, it was down to the ' busy little bees' who have made it their business to create havoc in our community of late. You are indeed fortunate, busy little bees, that my dog did not suffer permanent injury on this occasion, otherwise you would be named and shamed by now. I look forward to the day, though, when I eventually catch you in the act, busy little bees.



Like Ships In The Night

Little did we know that Andy planned to take the ' Take Away' concept literally by removing fixtures and fittings and absconding with the funds. It is a sad indictment of society, and human behaviour in general, that such an occurrence managed to take place in a community as small as ours, and mostly in broad daylight.



A ' Pane' ful Experience

Friday the thirteenth of January proved bad luck for the proprietors of Guyana as a not too wise individual residing in the village decided it was a good idea to pan in a window for reasons known only unto himself. I am reminded of a similar incident reported in The Daily Record of a break-in at Tomlins carpet shop in Linlithgow, whereby the owner erected a sign, to his eternal credit, suggesting " our prices are so good, some people can' t wait till we open. I wonder if Robert is considering something similar? I somehow doubt it.

Aberfoyle Memorial Hall

The Committee would like to thank Carla Duggan of the Dance Connection and Phil & Tris Crowder of the Forth Inn for their generous donations to Hall Funds.

These donations are very much appreciated particularly as there are now several repairs which are required to the hall as well as general redecoration issues.

If there is anyone else in the Community who would like to join our Committee or help in any way with the running of the hall it would be very much appreciated. We would particularly welcome help with fund raising to improve this village facility for all.

Please contact Janet Stewart - Secretary
01877 382736

Kinlochard Gala Day

A DVD has been compiled using photographs taken during the 2005 Kinlochard Gala day. A showing will take place in the village hall at 3 p.m. on SUNDAY 12th February 2006

Archie Holmes

Public Notice

Due to building work, car parking at Rowardennan on the east shore of Loch Lomond is restricted to about half of the car park (around 25 to 30 cars).

The work is expected to take 12 weeks and should be complete by early April.

Aberfoyle Primary School Lego Club

The school Lego Club is wondering if anyone has any lego they no longer want that they would be willing to donate to the club. They would particularly like wheels, roof tiles, windows and people.

Please contact Janet Stewart 01877 382736 for uplift or hand in to the school (Mrs Bancroft)

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How do you watch the wind? The topography of Loch Lomond creates wind patterns that are truly fascinating to watch

but create conditions where boats are at risk; thankfully, the three gentlemen whose boat capsized recently survived their terrifying experience. A few weeks prior to this capsizing; the reserve stalker and I were on the ridge overlooking Loch Lomond, high above Rob Roy's cave. The predominantly northern wind was drawing ripple and then wave patterns on the loch's surface. It was fascinating to watch a southern wind gust pushing back against the northern wind gust; the southern gust produced a shape like an advancing Zulu impi (army) with the "horns" of the impi trying to encircle the advancing waves of the northern gust. Much to our amazement, we then had waterspouts at the tips of the horns about two metres high where the waves met. Then a vertical gust came down Coire nan Each following the hydro pipes from Loch Sloy and blasted onto the surface of the loch sending a wave pattern in all four directions at the one time. It was fascinating to watch, and imagine what a superb artistic experience it would be if someone had different coloured smoke to

show the winds approach and entanglement with each other. With the recent snow, again the wind has been creating patterns and sculptures that only nature can create. A good time for tracking mammals and birds and trying to decipher which animal or bird it is and what they have been doing.

The cold weather has also brought the reserve ravens down to Garrison Farm, where I watched the pair mating on a stock fence post on the 17th January, before this the male had been displaying with barrel rolls and soaring and stooping to impress his partner. A small flock of seven twite landed on a birch tree about five metres away allowing excellent views and another flock of twenty twite has been recorded out at the sheep fank. Four blackcock (male black grouse) and three greyhen (female black grouse) have been observed on the reserve, the greyhen came flying down the west ridge from the plantation and landed in birch above the boathouse. A male hen harrier was hunting

over the woodland above eagle beach but below the ridgeline; it makes a nice change to view this bird from above instead of always looking up. A merlin has also been seen along the ridge but unfortunately, it was only a fleeting glance. The badgers continue to scrape alongside the West Highland Way and pine marten scats are evident. Roving flocks of mixed tits (long tailed, coal, blue and great tit) with a c c o m p a n y i n g treecreepers and goldcrests are flitting between trees next to the path. A single flock of 11 long tailed tits



were chattering as they searched a large birch for insects close to the boathouse. Woodcock are scattered throughout the reserve but I recently counted five between Kinlochard and Loch Arklet, feeding on the roadside verge before daylight. Finally, the cold weather has brought a song thrush into the workshop to roost alongside the dunnocks and house sparrows.

*Duncan Cameron
Conservation Assistant*

INVITATION TO SCOTS SCHOOLS IN FOREST EDUCATION DRIVE

Schools within one kilometre of Forestry Commission Scotland woodlands are to be invited to take part in an initiative aimed at increasing the use of forests in education.

Schools across Scotland will be encouraged to use their local woodlands as outdoor classrooms so that children can be taught in an environment which stimulates the senses. The move is just one of many measures contained within the new Woods For Learning strategy which has been developed by Forestry Commission Scotland. The strategy will act as a guide to driving forward work with primary and secondary schools to boost learning opportunities in the woods.

The strategy was launched today by Tim Rollinson, Director General of the Forestry Commission, at Falla Hill Primary School in West Lothian. Forest rangers have been working with teachers and pupils at the school to use their local woodland as an outdoor classroom.

Tim Rollinson said, "Our forests and woodlands are fantastic resources for learning. Young people have sharp senses and incredibly vivid imaginations, so you can see what fun and stimulation our youngsters get from having lessons in the forest. Woodlands are great places to learn about our

environment and how what we do affects the future.

It's our goal to offer young people a host of opportunities to discover the excitement of being in a wood, to develop and grow, to explore their strengths and aptitudes, to work on their own and with others, and to study subjects from art to zoology."

Key priorities within Woods for Learning include:

- a programme to link schools with local Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) woodlands that are situated within walking distance - one kilometre away. It is hoped that this approach will eventually spread to other woodlands owned by private landlords or other organisations. Local woodlands will be used by the school as an outdoor classroom to study various subjects.

- work will continue with primary schools but more attention will be given to children starting secondary schools as woodland learning can help boost confidence and self-esteem. Work will also concentrate on developing links with social workers to help children who need additional support for learning. Links with secondary schools will be strengthened to promote the forestry industry as a career opportunity for young people.

- a 'forest school' network will be expanded across Scotland. Forest schools are an inspirational process that involves children visiting the same woodland over an extended period. Children learn all about the environment and woodlands in a hands-on way. Evidence shows that forest schools help deliver on a wide range of curriculum areas. Positive changes in children's attitudes and behaviour have been noted by teachers and parents.

- continued support for the Forest Education Initiative partnership which has set up 'cluster groups' across Scotland. The groups, made up of the education sector and people from the forestry industry, offer teachers activity based programmes for schoolchildren based on trees, forests and wood products.

- existing links with the education sector will be built on to ensure all the forest education work dovetails with what teachers and pupils need. Work will continue with the Scottish Executive and other partners in supporting sustainable development in the curriculum. For full details of the Woods for Learning strategy log on to www.forestry.gov.uk/woodsforlearning

A Christmas Tale

By Dougie MacPherson

I have a friend. This friend of mine required a heart-bypass operation. He waited many months for the op. then, one day, he got the word: "They've just contacted me to say they can take me in tomorrow. But I have to 'phone them again tomorrow morning to make sure there is a free bed."

This was ten days before Christmas. There was a free bed. He went in on the Thursday and was operated on the next day, Friday. The operation was successful although there were complications which meant that it was the following Tuesday morning before he had the feeding tube removed from his throat. By the same afternoon, they had started walking him around the ward. I visited him on the Tuesday evening along with his sister. He was rather weak, but he could still talk for Scotland.

"That guy over there," he indicated an older man dressed in street clothes sitting by the ward table, "That guy has been waiting since 10 this morning for his lift home. This is 5 at night. I'll be damned if I'll wait!"

"The Therapist has started today to get me walking," he continued, "They reckon if they can get me to walk for 15 minutes then I'm fit to go home. I told them I only live a half mile from here, so if I keep walking I can make it home on my own!"

His sister had brought him some new pyjamas. A hospital ward must surely be like any other social grouping in that in it one identifies with one's peers, no matter for how short a duration. In the case of my friend, his peer group, albeit temporary, was the other patients. "See that guy over there? He's wearing state of the art pyjamas and a matching dressing

gown. And what do I have? Pyjamas from Primark! I mean to say! And only two pairs as well."

"How many pairs to you need? You can only wear one pair at a time!"

My friend, admittedly, was a bit low. He had been through a lot, but still kept his sense of humour.

"The food leaves a lot to be desired," he said, "It comes from Wales they tell me."

"Blubber?"

"No, I'm better now."

"Not that. Whale blubber."

"No, no. The food's from Welsh-Wales. It's always lukewarm when you get it. Maybe they cook it in Wales before they send it up." he mused.

"That guy in the next bed." He continued, "He had the heart bypass last week but they had to readmit him as his stitches burst. I wouldn't like that."

He wanted out, desperate to get home, but apprehensive as well. He wanted out as soon as possible but was afraid they would release him too early, before he was fit enough.

They did release him on the Friday before Christmas, 7 days after his operation and only 3 days after removing his feeding tube. He did not wait for an ambulance home but left, with his sister, and finally got a taxi home, after waiting outside the hospital for an hour. He is doing well and admits he is now possibly fitter than he has been for a while. He has nothing but admiration for the hospital staff, the nurses and doctors, but feels that the organization itself, the hospital management, leaves an awful lot to be desired.

The Garden

by Wellie Boot



We are now well into winter and have had quite a bit of everything: frost, ice, snow, fog and, of course, rain. Hey ho!! "Not gardening weather," I hear you say, and I did wonder what to write about. It is, however, amazing how one can still find interest in the garden even in mid-winter.

This is the time of year when you see the shape and structure of your layout and planting, when you see the contrast in heights of your shrubs and small trees, and the contrast of textures of the large-leaved plants with the tiny rock plants.

Texture and shape are all important in the winter as your eye is not diverted by colour. It is now that you plan the contrast of height and shape of your shrubs. Grow hebes: not for their flowers but for their foliage. They clip beautifully and grow much quicker than box, so you don't have to wait all those years for your plant to grow big enough to shape. The dark green of a hebe, clipped into a ball, contrasts beautifully with a yellow dwarf conifer, such as Taxus baccata (yew) "Aurea". Do, however, make sure that if you buy a dwarf conifer it is dwarf and not just young. Dwarf conifers are expensive but well worth the extra as they don't need clipping and they genuinely don't grow large. I have a Taxus baccata which is over ten years old and only about two feet tall. Another contrast in shape is the columnar tree. One good specimen of this type is the Columnar Golden Yew. It doesn't grow too quickly and will reach about ten feet in as many years. It forms a real column: tall, slender and erect.

A group of such shrubs and trees, planted together, makes an architectural feature in any garden large or small. Be careful not to be tempted to grow them too close together when they are small – they will grow. Leave too much space rather than too little. Plant bulbs and low-growing herbaceous plants, such as Bergenia with its shiny evergreen elephant ear leaves, amongst your trees. To contrast with these, the long iris-type leaves of Schizostylis (Kaffir Lily) makes a wonderful foil. This is also very good value for a winter garden as it produces its wands of pale pink or red, dainty, lily-like flowers in November

You are maybe now being inspired to have a winter garden – I do hope so – as it makes a great backdrop for the birdhouse or table near a window. This provides endless pleasure to watch and a great benefit to the birds in frosty, freezing weather. Wrap up warmly; happy gardening.

Wellie Boot



Road Blocked at Inversnaid...by the Snowplough!!

One of our ace freelance reporters recently captured this image as he battled to get through to collect his copy of the Strathard New! Why was the snowplough trying to clear the ditches anyway? And the people carrier...well that's another story, but thanks to the combination of the two a minor two and a half hours delay was encountered while the offending vehicles were removed.

Do you have a funny comment to put to this picture? Please let's have them. The winner will be published in the next issue.



STRANGE BUT....

Ah, but, does not our Council work in mysterious ways, its wonders to perform? A recent example of such a miracle occurred in our very own Aberfoyle when representatives of the Roads Department of this great Shire, finally arrived at the junction outside the Baillie Nichol to paint in the road markings. The fact that this junction can be a bit of a problem and the fact that it has taken many months for the 'Roads' to act, was immediately forgotten in an upsurge of joy and relief. The imminent arrival of Christmas Day might also have been a factor! Nevertheless, joy was unbound! We now had gleaming white markings on the road for all to see!

Sadly, we have to relate, this euphoria did not last. Only a day or two later, a second expedition from our 'Roads' arrived at the very same junction and tarmac-sprayed the potholes at the junction with the purpose of filling in the potholes. In doing so, they obliterated the gleaming white dotted lines! See forward planning? See the Roads Department?

Have you ever had problems whilst holidaying abroad, making yourself understood to the locals and being understood by them? It can be difficult. Imagine then, what foreigners must make of our vernacular, our quick turns of phrase - often spoken in the local patois. We are reminded of this by one conversational encounter in a shop in Aberfoyle recently.

A local, a customer was walking into the shop when a delivery man, in some great haste, barged in and began setting his wares out on display.

The shopkeeper said, as an aside to the customer: "Man with a mission."

To which the customer replied: "He's taking no prisoners."

You have to wonder what foreign visitors would have made of that exchange, had they been listening.

Watching quiz programmes on television, you have to wonder at some of the answers the competitors come away with. One such programme, hosted by a certain irascible lady, had this particular question on offer: "The Royal Highland Regiment is also known as the Black What?"

To which the competitor replied "The Black Kilts!" This reminded us of another such quiz programme where the competitor gave an answer to which the quiz master replied: "That's a good answer. But it's not the correct one!" Eh?

We also suffer for our place names. One Strathard local, wishing to have an item repaired, telephoned the head office down south. The girl, a very nice person on the telephone, to be sure, replied that there was a repair agent within striking distance of Aberfoyle. When asked the name of the town, the girl replied, "I cannot pronounce it. Can I spell it out? It's K.I.R.K.I.N.T.I.L.L.O.C.H." Right. A difficult call, that one.

Mugdock Makers Exciting New Opportunity!!

A place to be for interaction with other artists and the buying public.

To introduce the project: the Makers are proposing to bring together an active group of practising artists and artisans/craftspeople from the area surrounding Mugdock Country Park (approximately a 50 mile radius of Milngavie, Glasgow). Further to initial meetings held at the Park last spring regarding the rental of a sizeable retail space at the visitor centre for the purpose of displaying, demonstrating and selling high quality art and craft work, a steering group consisting of Alison Borthwick, Eric Lewis, Peter Pollock and John Epps has been set up to take over the promotion and the formation of the "Mugdock Makers".

Regular selling events will be staged at the park throughout next year in order to establish a cohesive association and build up recognition. The project will lead to the opening of a gallery/showroom within the visitor centre (aimed at spring 2007) selling exclusively members' work. There is the added intention of creating a visitor trail leading from the *Coach House* in Great Western Road, Glasgow via Mugdock Park and ending at the David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle.

The initial group will be asked for a subscription of £50. Thereafter, an annual charge of £100 will be charged when the unit is made available. This will enable us to get the ball rolling with marketing and securing a full-time manager who will be responsible for running the shop/gallery professionally.

The salary and nominal rent and costs for the unit will be paid for from the commission of 33% on sales. £15,000 has been allocated from the Park Trust Fund to help refit the unit. We are hoping to match that amount with a grant from the local authority.

This is a unique opportunity as there is no association like this in the Greater Glasgow area; especially one that offers such a fabulous outlet and base in such a beautiful setting.

If you are interested in being part of the Makers at Mugdock, please respond before 20th February to Alison Borthwick: tel. 01360 850405; email: alisonborthwick@btinternet.com

"Fix - it" Fairs

Come along on a Sunday afternoon and consult our resident repair experts at a location near you!

Inversnaid	5 th March
Kinlochard	12 th March
Aberfoyle	19 th March
Gartmore	26 th March

- PC hardware and software
- Clothing alterations
- Miscellaneous repairs
- Ornaments / lamps
- Internet connections
- Soft furnishings
- Vacuums / small appliances
- Bikes and toys

Bring your items or discuss a later appointment

Tea / coffee served

Free Estimates

**For more information telephone
Gillian Wallace on 01877 382098
Further details in the next Strathard News**



**WALLACE
Home Services**



Trading Standards Warn Of Rip-off Traders Operating In The Stirling Council Area

Stirling Council Trading Standards Service has received an increase in the number of reports of rogue itinerant traders operating within the Stirling Council area this year. These traders are not providing cancellation rights and charging greatly inflated prices for work, which is often unnecessary or not completed. Brian Wilson Trading Standards Officer asks householders to always ask to see written copies of cancellation rights before entering into a contract. If the trader can't show you a copy they are probably "dodgy" and will commit an offence by not supplying the written cancellation rights when you enter into a contract with them.

These itinerant traders are highly mobile and whilst recent reports have centred in the west of the Council any area could be hit next. Any householder receiving promotional "flyers" through their letter box or unsolicited visits are asked to contact Trading Standards with descriptions of the individuals, their vehicles (with registration numbers where it is safe to obtain them) and the "flyers".

One report received was that itinerants were posing as Council workers who were going to check smoke detectors, and phoned a consumer the day before to check that the consumer "had received the letter from the Council" – no such letters have been issued. Council workers always carry photographic identification. Stirling Council can be contacted on 01786 443322 in order to check whether a person claiming to be a Council employee is genuine.

On another occasion itinerants were offering to do gardening work – but the fee claimed was tens of thousands more than that agreed. Consumers buying goods and services in their homes or on their doorstep are being reminded of their rights by Stirling Trading Standards Service.

Brian Wilson, Trading Standards Officer with Stirling Council Trading Standards Service, is reminding people; it's your doorstep, your decision.

Under current legislation consumers who are cold-called generally have a seven-day period in which to cancel a contract (see note 1). This protection does not usually apply to consumers who asked for the visit. Doorstep sellers are required to give consumers a notice confirming their cancellation rights and commit a criminal offence if they fail to do so. Brian Wilson advises consumers who buy from doorstep sellers:

- * to take control - you ask the questions
- * don't sign on the spot - take time to think and shop around
- * don't buy on impulse even if you're given a so-called 'once in a lifetime offer' - you won't know whether it's a good price unless you shop around

* don't get drawn into conversation about family or interests - this is a business transaction not a social call

* you don't owe the salesperson anything – if you don't want to buy, refuse firmly

* look for the OFT Approved code logo of the Direct Selling Association.

A wide range of products are bought at home, from cleaning products to energy supplies. Many businesses, such as members of the Direct Selling Association who claim to account for over 70 per cent of direct sales in the home, legitimately use cold-calling to reach potential customers who may not otherwise have access to their products. The DSA consumer code has achieved OFT Approved status after it was shown to safeguard and promote consumers' interests beyond the basic requirements of the law.

Other, unscrupulous traders, will use cold-calling to sell shoddy goods or services, or simply to get through the door to commit a crime. Bogus traders commonly offer property maintenance services, such as roofing, tarmacking or landscaping, which provide the greatest opportunity to obtain large amounts of money. They will often trick and pressurise consumers into making a purchase by creating a sense of urgency by claiming that property is in a dangerous condition, or is deteriorating. Brian Wilson said, "Buying in the home can be a convenient way to shop but it is not like shopping in a store. Don't forget it is your home and you have rights. Doorstep sellers can be very persuasive and if you feel at all uncomfortable just say no. One way of knowing you are dealing with a reputable trader is to look for the OFT Approved logo displayed by members of the Direct Selling Association."

Any consumer being threatened or bullied into paying for work should report the matter to Central Scotland Police as soon as possible. Any consumer driven to their bank by a trader to withdraw money should alert the bank staff and ask them for assistance.

Consumers looking for a reputable tradesman should ask neighbours, friends and family for recommendations, check with a trade organisation and seek written quotations from three traders.

Further information and advice assistance can be obtained from Stirling Council Trading Standards Service on 01786 443322 or 0845 277 7000, tradingstandards@stirling.gov.uk or by visiting Municipal Buildings, 8-10 Corn Exchange Road, Stirling, FK8 2HU 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday.



Take advantage of some fantastic February training offers at STEP ...

Daytime Classes:

Employment Law: Wed, 1st Feb, (from £10 +VAT) Full day.

Websites & The Law: Fri, 3rd Feb, (FREE) Half day.

PowerPoint: Tues 14th Feb, F/D (from £10 +VAT)

Intro To Photoshop: Wed, 15th Feb, F/D (from £10 +VAT)

Transforming Your Website: Fri 17th Feb, H/D (FREE)

Beg. Web Design: Thurs, 23rd Feb, H/D (from £10+VAT)

Beg. Web Marketing: Thurs, 23rd Feb, H/D (from £10+VAT)

On-line Marketing: Fri 24th Feb, H/D (FREE)

Evening & Weekend Classes:

Getting Noticed: Marketing & Promoting Your Business, Mon 21st Feb (6-9pm) £10+VAT

The Web: Getting Started: Thurs, 23rd Feb (6-9pm) £10 +VAT

Book-keeping For Beginners: Mon 27th & Tue 28th Feb (over 2 Evenings) £10 +VAT

Web Marketing Booster Session: Sat 25th Feb (09.30am - 12.30pm) £10 (+VAT)

Don't delay, reserve your place today by contacting Caroline Brown on 01786 463416 or e-mail cbrown@stirling-enterprise.co.uk

Milton

Hello Children,

Have you noticed how much lighter the evenings are getting? It is not so dark in the morning either. It is nice to wake up and hear the birds outside the holt singing their heads off. Spring is not very far away; soon the beautiful little snowdrops will be flowering all along Strathard. Grandpa Otter calls them "Fair Maids of February". Some of my friends have been finding it difficult to get a good winter sleep. The weather has been far too warm for their liking. Spike, the prickly hedgehog who is spending the winter at the bottom of our garden, has woken up a few times, had a grumble about it being much too early, and gone back to sleep again!

Spike turned up last October and asked if he could hibernate in the big pile of autumn leaves dad had swept up, at the foot of the old oak tree. During the day he would snooze in his snug little den. At night Spike would visit all the local gardens eating lots of slugs and harmful insects; oh, and the saucer of cat food Andrew Carter put out especially for him. Very soon he was quite a fat hedgehog. In fact he was a very fat hedgehog. One day Spike waddled into his den, just for a nap, and fell fast asleep. Sometimes we can hear him snoring but mostly you would not know he was there.

On Friday the thirteenth of January, a night when an enormous full moon hung in the sky, I went on a ghost walk around the grounds of Gartmore House. I think that the whole Youth Club was there, with several adult helpers and a very strange storyteller. We were told stories about the time Satan came to play cards with the laird of Gartartan Castle; the 67 phantom horses with fog on their saddles; and the ghost of the heartbroken servant girl, sometimes seen on Ladies Walk! Braeval, my younger sister, who is usually a noisy, bossy, know-it-all, was not saying much – I think she was a little bit scared!

The twins, Duke and Katrine, are really hoping for some clear nights with really hard frost. Water is fun to play in, swimming and splashing. But when it is frozen hard you can skate, slide and play curling. We'll just have to keep our fingers crossed!

Bye for now,
Milton



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■ Cheques for £10 made payable to *Strathard News*

■ Name: _____

■ Address: _____

■ Post Code: _____ TEL No: _____

■ Date: _____

Forth Inn Events Diary

30 Jan - 5 Feb

Scottish Island Week

All food this week has an accent of the Scottish Islands. If you take the menu you will be given a taste of Talisker or the Distillers Edition. *(This menu will be accompanied by our usual bar menu.)*

Friday 3rd Feb

We are hosting a 4 course meal with wine tasting - again menu will have an accent of the Scottish Islands - Booking Essential £25.00 per person.

10 - 14th Feb Valentines Weekend, Special Menu

20 - 26th Feb National Pub Week

Friday 24th Feb

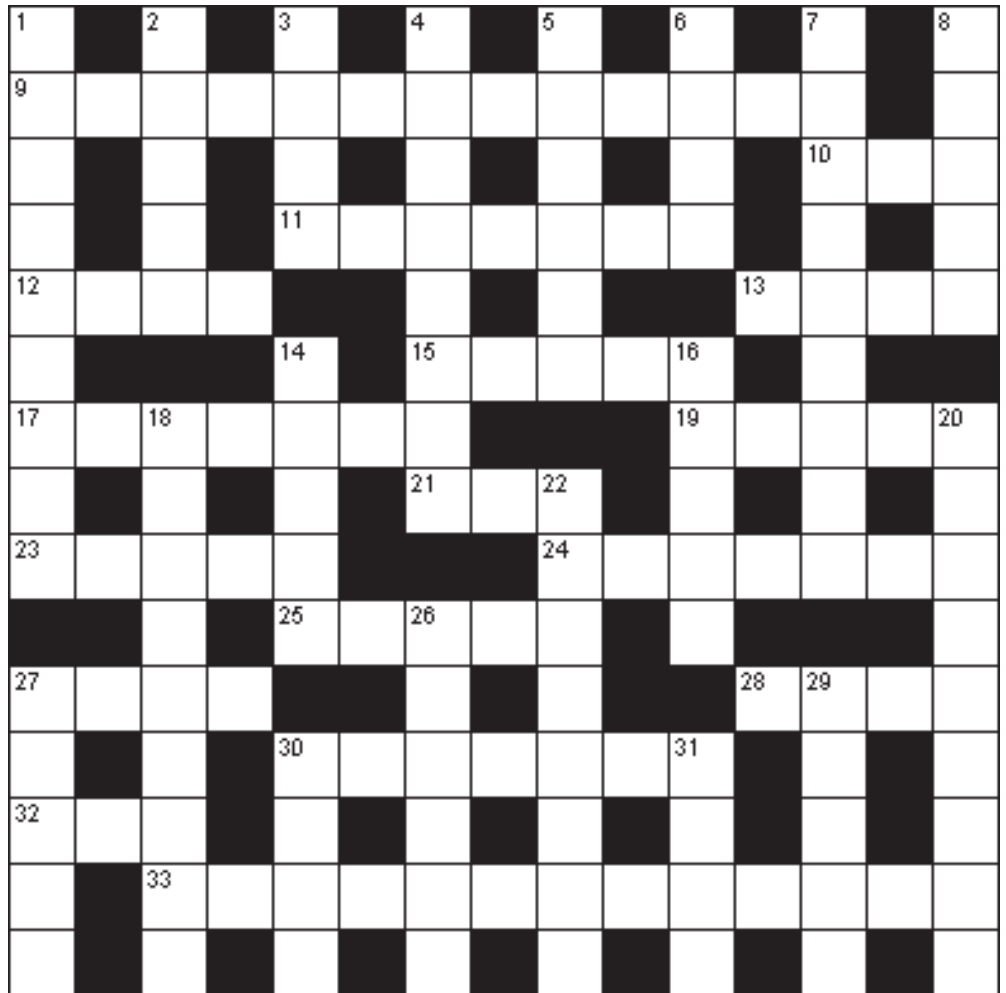
Karaoke in Wallace Bar starts at 9pm

Sunday 26th Feb

Games Night in Wallace Bar starts 8pm

Speed Pool, Cards & Dominos.

Main Street, Aberfoyle FK8 3UQ
Tel: 01877 382 372
E-mail: Phil@ForthInn.com



Smoked Salmon & Crab Timbale

- 2-3 Slices of Smoked Salmon
- 2oz Crab Meat (white)
- 2 tsp Mayonnaise
- Salt & Pepper (white)
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes



Dressing

- 2floc Olive Oil
- 1/4 floz Vinegar-Distilled Clear
- Juice of half a lemon
- Salt & Pepper
- Chives

Line a Ramekin with cling film, then add the smoked salmon make sure it is over hanging.

Mix the Crab Meat with Mayonnaise add the salt & pepper.

Fill the Ramekin with the crab mixture, fold over excess smoked salmon.

Make a salad and then turn the Ramekin over, gently pull the cling film to release the salmon.

Serve with the lemon and chive dressing.

sponsored by *Forth Inn*

Across

9. Powerful computer (13)
10. In favour of (3)
11. Garment worn by dancers (7)
12. Aromatic herb (4)
13. Donated (4)
15. Fertile area in a desert (5)
17. Person who rows (7)
19. Freedom from war (5)
21. Affirmative reply (3)
23. N Scottish coastal town (5)
24. Large ships (7)
25. Frighten (5)
27. Actively engaged (4)
28. Incandescent lamp (4)
30. Juror (7)
32. Fuss (3)
33. Rebirth of the soul in a new body (13)

Down

1. Psalter (5,4)
2. Kingdom in SW Europe (5)
3. Spoken (4)
4. Lack of variety (8)
5. Talks (6)
6. Collar fastener (4)
7. Institution for orphans (9)
8. Lying flat (5)
14. Wrong (5)
16. Slap (5)
18. Storm with heavy rain (9)
20. Headed east (9)
22. Steam-ships (8)
26. Continent (6)
27. Facial hair (5)
29. Undo (5)
30. Lockup (4)
31. Ark builder (4)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Please send completed crossword to Editor, Strathard News, Schoolhouse, Inversnaid, FK8 3TU or hand in to Aberfoyle Post Office. Solution and winning entry will be published in Issue 28

Get Out More

...and discover what's on your own doorstep! Now the summer has gone and we are moving swiftly towards winter (no midges), it is more important we get out and get some exercise. Daylight hours limit the time when we can get out and into the forest but by even doing part of the new way-marked routes you will achieve the recommended 30 minutes per day at least 5 times per week. This can be broken into 3, 10 minute sessions during weekdays with a much longer walk at the weekend. By getting started over the winter months you will have the advantage of having a quieter forest to enjoy, you will feel fitter come the summer months and even have lost some of that weight you will gain at Christmas. Getting out into the woods is good for the mind as well as the body. Did you know that by increasing your physical activity you could reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Start off gently and slowly build up your stamina. If you suffer from any illness it is recommended you consult your GP prior to starting a programme of exercise. Over the next few months we will give details on 25 trails around the Strathard area. Tick them off as you walk them.

We would like to set up a walking group for the Strathard area. If this is something you would be interested in please give us a shout at the Aberfoyle office. Suggestions to improve the trails will be gratefully received. Contact us at 01877 382383.

 Forestry Commission



IMPORTANT

Information for Advertisers

When you place an advert with the Strathard News we will continue to run it unless you tell us to stop or replace it.

**Pay for 7 adverts
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For assistance on design and layout,
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marionback@compuserve.com

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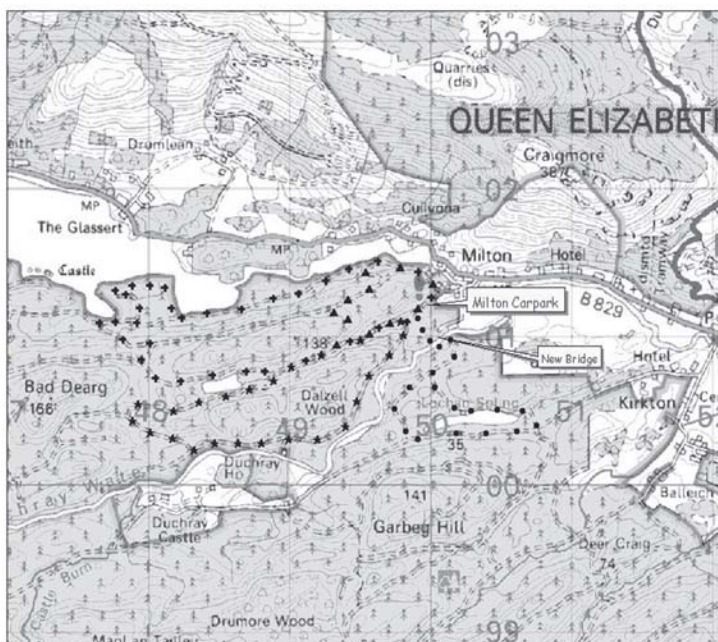
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Forestry Commission
Scotland

• The Lochan Sping Walk 2
4.2 Km (2.6 Miles)

★ The Dalzell walk
4.8 Km (3 Miles)

▲ Aberfoyle Viewpoint walk
2.8 Km (1.8 Miles)

✦ The Ghleannain Walk
8 Km (5 Miles)

Scale 1 : 25,000

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Forestry Commission, 00272001, 2001

Rangers Recommendation

Milton area of Loch Ard Forest has it all: good parking, great views of lochs, hills, rivers and peace and quiet to enjoy it all.

The Lochan Sping walk leads you down to the Duchray River where the new bridge takes you over to Lochan Sping. This is a short walk, which is a good starter as the gradients are fairly steady all the way. When you feel ready, try the additional loop up to the viewpoint.

The Dalzell walk is again a walk with gentle inclines but is that wee bit longer as it takes you up the Duchray River and swings around the back of Lochan Ghleannain.

The Ghleannain Loch route is the longest with some longer uphill to get the legs going. This walk takes you along the banks of Loch Ard, around by Rob Roy's cave and back up the hill to Lochan Ghleannain.

Aberfoyle viewpoint walk is the shortest of them all but has the steepest incline. This will definitely get the heart pumping. Once at the top the views down over Aberfoyle and Craigmore make the effort all worth while.

Why not get out and try one of these walks and think about setting yourself some goals. Time yourself each time and see how much quicker you get over a set period of time. Go technical and buy a pedometer (10,000 steps per day is the recommendation) to see how many steps you take on each walk. All but the Aberfoyle viewpoint walk is suitable to cycle, so "get on your bike".