

Local In *Ken Loach Blockbuster*

Gregor Wood of Ledard Farm, Kinlochard, is just back from London, from the premiere of the new Ken Loach movie, "The Wind that Shakes the Barley", which won the top award, the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this summer.

Playing an "Auxiliary" policemen in the movie, which covers the period of the Black-and-Tan War and the Irish Civil War in the early twenties, Gregor features in one of the most violent scenes in the movie in which he gets shot! Gregor has a talking part in the scene, which lasts for several minutes - his last word being, "Ouch!"

The shooting took place in County Cork where Gregor was on location for four days.

No stranger to the camera, Gregor has had parts in "River City", "Sea of Souls" (both BBC TV) and several films including "Summer Solstice" (German movie) and "On a Clear Day" with Peter Mullen. Gregor also presents a farm history tour every Tuesday afternoon at Ledard Farm.



KINLOCHARD GALA DAY

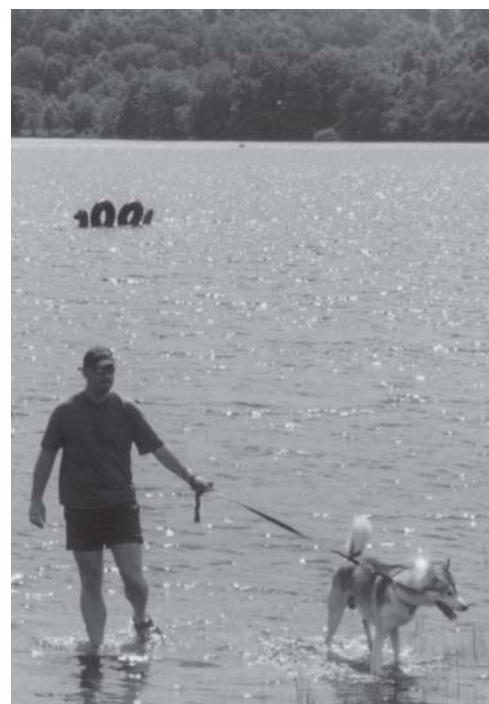
The second Kinlochard Gala Day on Sunday 16th July raised £3,400 for the Village Hall project. The success was due to the many hotels, shops, businesses and individuals who donated prizes, sponsorship, and their time.

The Kinlochard Village Hall Committee would like to thank the following: The Wee Blether Tearoom, Shona and Ricky Baston and all their staff for their support and donations; Rikke and John from the Village Shop for their support and donations; the managements of the Inversnaid Hotel, Rob Roy Motel, Clachan Hotel, Coop, Forth Inn, The But and Ben Restaurant, The Wool Centre, Scott and Marion at Inversnaid

Bunkhouse, Jill at Boxwood, Chill Out for their generous donations, John Buchanan and Aberfoyle Motors for the shuttle bus, Mike and Maria Facenna for the Shuttle Taxi to and from the sailing club, Lochard Sailing Club and the owners of the steam boats; Capt. Dave West of Loch Lomond Seaplanes for his generous donation of flight trips, Jimmy Ferguson and his many helpers on the burger stall for their outstanding contribution, Doreen and Colin Hutton for the banners, Gerald and Gwyneth Fleming for sponsoring the duck race, Gregor and Fergus Wood and Kenny Dickson; Central Scotland Fire & Rescue; the ladies who contributed the home

baking stalls and Bridget and Jan for successfully making sure that nothing was left at the end of the day, also to everyone who donated prizes for the raffle; the many helpers the day before and on the day itself. I mustn't forget the splendid job done by our very own Paddy McGettigan at the car park.

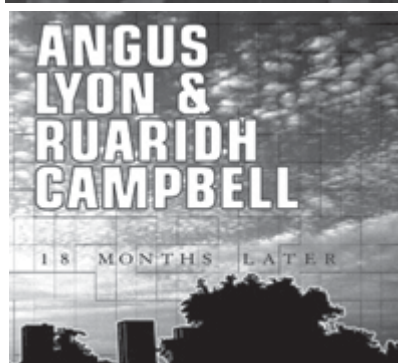
Archie Holmes



CELTIC MUSIC AND THE ABERFOYLE CONNECTION

The popularity of celtic music has never been greater than it is today, undoubtedly due to the individuals and the bands playing in Scotland today. Ruaridh Campbell, a member of one such group, is from Aberfoyle. He has formed a duo with Angus Lyon from Biggar who plays accordion and piano whilst Ruaridh plays the fiddle. Both are extremely accomplished musicians and both have impressive CVs. Ruaridh, who started playing the violin at the age of 9 in primary school, has subsequently gone on to win the 2002 Oban Highlands and Islands Invitational 'Fiddle Master' competition. He was also a finalist at the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician and winner of the Glenfiddich Fiddle Championship. Angus Lyon, the other half of the duo, has travelled and recorded with Cat Stevens and Paul McCartney to name but a few and is 6 times 'British Accordion Champion'. So right away, as traditional musicians they are definitely a cut above the rest.

Together, their music draws on the traditional as well as the modern and is lively and energetic. The first CD they made together was called 'Simple Tricks'. Now, with their growing popularity and with their music gaining air space on radio, they have brought out a second, arguably even better CD, entitled '18 Months Later'. Well worth a listen! Well done, Ruaridh and Angus.



Upcoming Shows

Oct 26 2006: 8am The Piping Centre
Dec 10 2006: 2:30pm House for an Art
Lover, Glasgow.

Macmillan Nurses Cancer Relief

The annual Coffee Morning in aid of the above will be held in the Aberfoyle Medical Centre on Friday, 29th September from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Entry, including refreshments, will be £1.

Gifts for the baking table will be much appreciated and can be handed in to the Medical Centre on the day of the Coffee Morning.

As in previous years, there will also be a raffle and gifts for this, which raises a large sum of money due to the generosity of all who support this worthy cause, may be given to the Surgery ladies. They will be selling raffle tickets a week before and a week after the date of the Coffee Morning.

The sum raised last year was £625.00. Could we perhaps exceed that amount this year? We look forward to your generous support.

*Margaret McKeand
for the Medical Garden Committee*

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THE ABERFOYLE MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

19th – 22nd OCTOBER 2006

Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Now in its sixth year, The Aberfoyle Mushroom Festival, sponsored by Stirling Mushrooms, Callander, is a celebration of the humble mushroom, which is found in abundance in the adjacent Queen Elisabeth Forest Park.

This four-day event includes cookery demonstrations, special meals, music – at concerts and ceilidhs - as well as fungus forays, fishing and golf competitions, and dog shows.

Every year the Festival has an international "flavour" – thus far India, Ireland, Italy, the Czech Republic, and last year, Finland. This year, the flavour is New Zealand with a NZ Wine Festival, NZ Steinlager beer, and a Maori concert party, with musicians, dancers and craftsmen. The Maoris will be setting up a "marae" (Maori camp) for children in the Memorial Hall, Aberfoyle and the Trossachs Discovery Centre – the Tourist Information Office in Aberfoyle will become **New Zealand House** for the duration of the Festival. We are extremely honoured to have H.E. the New Zealand High Commissioner to the UK, the Rt. Hon Jonathan Hunt to open the Festival this year.

The Aberfoyle Mushroom Festival is run by the Aberfoyle Traders' Association. Local farmer and tourist operator, Fergus Wood is the Chairman of the Festival Committee.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE FESTIVAL, CONTACT:

Fergus Wood tel: 01877 387 219

Tourist Information: tel: 01877 382 35

Or click: www.VisitAberfoyle.com

The final programme will be available from all retail and catering establishments in Aberfoyle and Gartmore in Mid September.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS (abbreviated)

Thursday 20 October

OFFICIAL OPENING.

Scottish Wool Centre at 7.30 p.m.

Friday 20 October

COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS.

FUNGUS FORAYS.

NZ WINE FESTIVAL.

IRISH-SCOTTISH FAMILY CEILIDH DANCE.

THE MAORI MARAE.

Saturday 21 October

THE MFS DOG SHOW.

AFRO - LATINA BARBEQUE .

NEW ZEALAND HOUSE. (*Meet the Kiwis, sample their food and drink, and enjoy their music and crafts*)

COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS.

FUNGUS FORAYS.

PIKE FISHING COMPETITION.

THE MAORI MARAE.

CANDLELIT WALK, MUSIC AND MORE.

THE KIWI FEAST, Forth Inn.



Sunday 22 October

THE MFS DOG SHOWS.

CHARITY GOLF MATCH.

PIKE FISHING COMPETITION.

NEW ZEALAND HOUSE. (*Meet the Kiwis, sample their food and drink, and enjoy their music and crafts*)

COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS.

FUNGUS FORAYS.

NZ WINE FESTIVAL.

THE MAORI MARAE.

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The Scholarship has been funded by contributions from partner organisations exhibiting at learningexpostirling

Scholarship draw open to over 16s resident in a Stirling postcode area only. For full rules, contact the Adult Learning Team on 01786 432 360, adultlearning@stirling.gov.uk or visit our website at www.stirling.gov.uk/adultlearning. Entry coupons for the Scholarship draw will be available in the Stirling Observer. No purchase necessary - contact the Adult Learning Team for a free coupon. Puzzle answers not necessary for the Scholarship draw.

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KINLOCHARD GALA DAY July 16 2006

It was obvious from the outset, as I arrived at the site of the hugely popular annual Kinlochard annual gathering, that there was one particular competition that would run longer than the day's activities: that of 'best tan'. Early doors, the baking sun seemed to suggest the beer and drinks tent run by the hall and the bottle stall set up by Lochard Curling Club, along with the ice-cream stall, glamorously manned by Rikke, would be shown to be the most popular stalls, and so it would prove, as the multitudes swarmed to these areas like bees to honey. In a superb setting, Archie Holmes, MC for the day and funding researcher for the Kinlochard village hall committee, was in full flow and he began proceedings with the presentation of an acer tree to Kate Joynson, who opened the ceremony. Many of our readers will be familiar with the Joynson name, but perhaps not aware that the adjoining field is owned by the family and leased by the hall, which is placed in trust for the use of the community. Clearly then, this was a fitting tribute to recognise their contribution to the day. Shortly thereafter, bang on twelve o'clock, the Callander Pipe Band welcomed in the first group of visitors arriving from the free shuttle service kindly supplied by Aberfoyle Motors, and the day just grew and grew. The Argyll Regiment were there with a paintball shooting gallery

and a massive inflatable assault course, which I think was originally intended for youngsters, but somewhere down the line became fair game for the Budweiser-fuelled members of the audience. It was unfortunate that despite their enthusiasm for the occasion, the team lost out 'big time' in the tug 'o' war, faced against some local strong-arms and members of the Fire Service, who were clearly press-ganged into taking part. I think Ricky Govan was in there somewhere too. The Forestry Commission and the RSPB had got together and come up with a free 'race against the clock' forest code game. A traditional coconut shy stall, provided by Drew Keir also attracted a lot of interest. The Wood family were, of course, almost duty bound to have an influence on proceedings, and Gregor was certainly putting himself about with a kilt dressing demonstration and weaponry talks and displays on the main stage, which were admirably performed despite a few problems with the P.A. system. Late in the day, Gregor and Kenny would have the crowd on their feet with an interactive dog display. Archie had recruited a Siberian husky team as part of the show, but this proved to be prohibitive, as the dogs were clearly suffering from the heat. Two displays took place, nonetheless, on a down-sized scale, and were greeted with

warm applause. It would be hard to estimate figures, but one thing's for sure: they all came with an appetite. The home baking stalls were doing a roaring trade and Jimmy Ferguson's burger counter actually ran out of stock at one point. Later on, Archie gave a special announcement that another twenty burgers had been found. I did not witness the clamour for these scraps personally, but I'm sure their consumption took but a matter of minutes. The Williamsons were there, organising the duck race and selling scones, Ann Duke was spinning her wheel, Shona Baston had a permanent queue for the face-painting and Lianne Garven's ceramic painting created a stir. Guyana had a large stall, alongside the bric-a-brac and raffle tables, and Walter Stirling & Sons, out of Glasgow, went to great lengths to provide a merry-go-round for the kids. One of the more unusual attractions of the day came in the shape of a belly dancer. Lorraine McAuley bravely took the stage twice to perform her routine in traditional garb. I did note the abundance of cameras in action during her act held mostly by males I might add. Lorraine managed to convince a few children up on stage for her second slot, much to the delight of the crowd. I think it is safe to say a fine day was had by all.

David Wilkie



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Phone 01877 387 775 Email foresthills@goforth.co.uk

GALA DAY GALLERY



Local Government Reform and Community Councils

In May 2007, local government elections will be held, for the first time, using the Single Transferable Vote system rather than the usual "first past the post". For the Stirling Council area it is likely that this will mean that no single political party will have a majority. As a result, there will be significant changes to the relationships between political party representatives on the Council as well as to the relationships these Elected Members will have with communities.

In preparation for the May 2007 elections the Local Boundary Commission for Scotland has now reviewed the electoral wards for the Stirling Constituency - these came into force on 14 July 2006.

Instead of the current 22 wards each with one Elected Member making up Stirling Council, there will be 7 Multi-member wards - 6 of which will have 3 members each and 1 with 4 members, as follows:

Bannockburn (3)

Castle (3)

Dunblane & Bridge of Allan (4)

Forth & Endrick (3)

Stirling East (3)

Stirling West (3)

Trossachs & Teith (3)

In several areas these Multi-member wards differ from established Community Council boundaries, resulting in some crossing over more than one of the new Electoral Wards. This could mean that Community Councils would have 6 or 7 Local Authority Councillors with representative responsibility for that Community Council.

As a result of this being raised by Community Councils as a potential area for concern, Stirling Council is currently consulting with Community Councils, Community and Voluntary organisations and the general public on whether or not Community Council boundaries should be altered to make them fit within only one Multi-member ward. At the same time, the Consultation also asks for views on subdivision of Community Council boundaries where appropriate, investigation into the benefits of Corporate Body Status for Community Councils and a Code of Conduct. The final question on which views are being sought is whether the Area Community Planning Forum boundaries recently established across the Stirling Council area, should also be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the Multi-member wards and proposed changes to Community Councils wards.

The closing date for comments is Thursday, 7 September 2006. Any changes will come into effect in time for the Community Council three yearly elections which are scheduled for October/November 2006.

For further information on boundary changes, the other questions raised in the Consultation document or indeed about the Community Council elections contact Keith Brown, Strategy & Governance, Stirling Council, Rm 55 Old Viewforth, Stirling FK8 2ET telephone 01786 443306 or email brownk@stirling.gov.uk



Strathard Community Council meets on the 1st Thursday of the month, alternating between Aberfoyle Memorial Hall, Kinlochard Village Hall and Inversnaid Primary School.

The next meeting is at 7.30 pm on Thursday 1st September in Inversnaid Primary School

Heart to Heart

A support group for those affected by Divorce or Separation

Are you, or someone you know, going through or suffering from the effects of a broken relationship? Feeling overwhelmed, lonely, depressed, hurt, lacking confidence and self-esteem, bitter and angry? We provide a range of support including: monthly meetings, telephone support, signposting to websites and other services, social events, books to borrow.

Register now for the next series of meetings - looking at the effects of the past, communication & resolving conflict, forgiveness, legal & moral issues, relationships & boundaries and moving on.

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Topics covered will include:

- How to understand the key elements of Management Accounts.
- The importance of Key (Financial) Performance Information.
- How to cost the products / services your business provides
- How to understand the link between profitability and cash flow and how to improve both profits and cash flow.
- How to forecast accurately and timeously
- Communication with your Bank Manager - What do they require?
- Ratio analysis - key ratios to measure the performance of your business.

Who should attend:

Suitable for all Managers who are interested in /have accountability for the financial performance of their business.

Dates: Tuesday 19th September & Tuesday 26th September

Time: 9.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Stirling Enterprise, Stirling

Delegate Cost: £185.00 + (VAT)

Trainer: Colin Clark





Loch Lomond
& The Trossachs
National Park

Oh how I love to
see people
e n j o y i n g

themselves. And I wish I could without the inevitable influx of that small band of mindless morons who delight in spoiling everybody else's enjoyment.

With the launch of the poster campaign on litter there was some concern that the wording on some of the posters was a little impolite. After viewing some of the mess caused by the highly destructive band who care not where they void their bodies of the excesses of fish and chips and Buckfast I can only say that even the most profane of terms would be complimentary to such as those. What can we do about it.? Obviously if we could catch the culprits on the job so to speak we could report them for affronting common decency but somehow I don't think the Procurator Fiscal's off ice could cope. Nor would I particularly like to be the one to challenge the offender in full flow. I don't doubt that the provision of more public toilets would help but from what I have recently witnessed they would have to be installed every hundred yards. So I come back to education, education, education. It is a long term solution but it is the only one with any hope of success. And thankfully the process has started with the Anti-Litter

campaign. We can all help because the best method of educating others is by example. Make a show of leaving nothing behind. If Rangers or Wardens are clearing litter they can ensure that those near to the litter are made aware that more time could be spent with visitors explaining the delights of our National Park and the wonderful fauna and flora that inhabits it if only people took there rubbish home. Why oh why is it possible to bring in the car full cans , packages etc but there is no room to take the empties home!!!

What else can the Park Authority do. We must ensure that our own sites are themselves exemplary and where there are exceptional pressures we must be there to help. We are establishing very good relations with the Police and Forestry Commission and there are signs here and there where the benefits are beginning to show. The campaign has started and we will with your help win in the end.

It's not all doom and gloom. You will no doubt have noticed in the Local and National Press that Callander is joining the effort to cut carbon emissions by investigating community projects that could benefit from the use of biomass for heating and electricity production. The Park Authority ensured that for our own new HQ at Balloch a woodchip heating

system would be installed . We are also looking at the practicality of using woodchip to heat the proposed Callander Office. In addition to the obvious benefits in the battle against carbon emissions there is the possible benefits to the local economy. Local wood is plentiful and with a demand for woodchip to fuel the new systems there is the opportunity for local employment to harvest the wood and supply the woodchip. Compressed wood pellets are potentially more efficient but as yet there are no local suppliers. It is a bit of a chicken and egg situation there as the production costs are higher so a potential producer would want a good number of customers to get the price competitive and customers will want a competitive price to go for the pellets. The Park Authority is working with Forest Enterprise to try to find a solution. Park wide wise it may prove an attractive challenge for someone. Here's hoping.

Owen McKee

As always I can be contacted as follows:

Post: Taigh Na Bhuth,
Lochearnhead,
FK19 8PR

Phone: 01567 830214

owen@thevillaageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is conducting a "pilot" exercise throughout August and September with visitors to trial the use of new types of technology to access interpretation outdoors.

This is part of a European funded project called Mopark (Mobility in National Parks). The Authority is inviting groups of up to 12 people at a time to come and experience one of the "Mopark Interpretive Journeys" and give feedback on the experience. This will involve a visit to the enchanting National Nature Reserve of Inchcailloch, a small island on Loch Lomond, close to Balmaha. National Park officers will meet groups at the visitor centre in Balmaha. A short briefing will be provided on the use of the equipment (either an audio guide or audio visual "palm top" device). Visitors will then be invited to take a ferry trip to Inchcailloch from Balmaha Boat Yard. The ferry will be paid for by the project.

Visitors will have the chance to explore Inchcailloch following paths on the map and will be able to access interpretation from the mobile devices at points located on the island. There is no charge to this; all we ask for is some feedback about the technology used and the experience.

If you would like to take part in this unique project, contact Allyson Blue on 01389 722 002.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is to open an office in Callander, the largest settlement in the park, after a long search for suitable premises. The recently refurbished premises at 52-54 Main Street, formerly a bookshop, are set to become a satellite administrative base for National Park staff, where people from the Trossachs and Breadalbane areas of the park will be able to find out about the Authority and its activities, view current planning applications and make appointments to meet with members, planners or other officers. It's also hoped that partner organisations and local groups will use the facilities for meetings, surgeries or as an administrative base.

Mike Luti, member of the National Park Authority elected by the community of Callander, is delighted that there will now be a base in his home-town; "This is really good news for Callander and surrounding areas. No longer will people need to travel to Balloch when seeking planning advice and other officers will be much more visible in this part of the park."

The full papers for the board meeting are at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/authority/meetings.asp

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The Clachan, Aberfoyle

The Clachan Hotel in Aberfoyle is a hotel of two halves. The public bar and guest bedrooms, with function room on the first floor date from 1886, when it was built as the Clachan Temperance Hotel. With its high roofs and original fine features, a trademark of the Victorian era, it justly deserves being recognised by Historic Scotland as a building of significant interest. During the day bar meals are served both inside and out, with access from the bar directly out to a new beer garden.

The other half that completes the hotel is the restaurant built at the same time as the hotel. This part of the building will be remembered by our most senior residents as

D & J McEwen a traditional delicatessen, it then changed through a series of owners trading as gift shops.

Recently this part of the building was incorporated into the hotel as its restaurant and still features the ornate wooden shelving and panelling. The restaurant provides old fashioned high teas during the day and can cater for large parties and

coach groups. At night however the restaurant comes into its own with crisp white tablecloths and varied menu of freshly prepared local produce and wine from the extensive wine list.

The hotel was acquired by the current owners Steven and Nancy Bates some two years ago and acquired the restaurant last year. Incidentally Steven and Nancy have recently purchased the Wolsley Park hotel in Calander and renamed it the Clachan also.

The hotel is managed by Patrick Devaney who has travelled the World practicing his trade as a chef. Ian Henderson a local lad and a trained chef is assistant manager. The head chef is Mathew Madden who is also well travelled and has recently returned from a two year spell as chef in the heart of Italy.

The restaurant has children's menu, disabled access and high chair availability. There is also a free luxury mini bus pick up and drop off service for those further a field who would like to enjoy their meal and a glass of wine.

third age of life

The **U3a** is a worldwide movement encouraging and enabling older people in the "third age of life" to help each other by sharing their knowledge, skills and experiences and by continuing to learn and take part in leisure and cultural pursuits.

We are not about qualifications. Members learn from each other. The subjects are only limited by your imagination.

Forth Valley has had active groups now for 4 years and we are anxious to expand both the geographical area covered and the number of activities undertaken.

If you feel you have some skill or special knowledge that you would like to share, or if there is an activity you would like to undertake in an informal situation please come along to our Open Meeting. You will be able to browse the current activities and speak to group leaders about them and give us suggestions for new activities. You will also be able to enrol and subscribe for the new season. The current subscription is £15.00 per annum.

Meetings will be on Friday 15th September 06 in St. Andrews Hall, Callander at 10 a.m. and in the Community Centre, Cambusbarron at 2 p.m. Tea will be served.



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16th Sept

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Trossachs Crimescene

by I.M. Watching



In the early hours of the morning about 3 weeks ago, thieves stole 3 sun umbrellas from outside The Forth Inn. One of the brollies could seat 10 - 12 folk under it and would have taken more than one burly MAN to steal it!!!! We talk about the 'Busy Bees' in this village. This must have been a swarm of HORNETS!!!

The Forth Inn has spent lots of time and effort to make the place look attractive to locals and tourists alike. It is shocking that this sort of thing could happen in a small community such as ours and NO-ONE has seen a thing???



RSPB Inversnaid

The badgers have been very active on the reserve; along the West

Highland Way and the nature trail, their scats (droppings) are evident, even out on the moorland I am finding badger scats. The scats are easily identified being black and large (similar to a medium sized dog) and currently are showing the remnants of dor beetle shells; possibly the prolonged dry spell has made finding earth worms very difficult in the hard ground. Foxes are also being seen regularly with three recorded on one day. On another day, I observed a fox watching me from high up on Stob an Fhainne.

After a short period, it decided to come off the knoll, moved into high grass, and kept a wary eye on me from cover as I continued walking further up the reserve. Butterflies have been very active in the good

weather and the scotch argus is literally covering the moorland in large numbers; what I find surprising is the variety of shades in colouring for the same species of butterfly. They are ranging from light brown to black. Peacock, pearl border fritillary, small heath, green veined white are just some of the species being recorded



over the period. In the small plantation on the moorland, there were whitethroat, redstart (a male was very heavily in moult, so much so initial identification was difficult), a family of wrens with five young, and a family of whinchat with four young; greyhen (female black grouse) feathers loosely scattered along the fence line but well apart indicated that she had been preening herself close to the fence and losing the feathers as she too is in the moulting process. The call of a buzzard attracted my attention skywards and I had just located it when a male peregrine falcon stooped on the

buzzard causing the buzzard to take evasive action; then the buzzard dived on the peregrine. Well that started it! For the next few minutes the peregrine falcon continued to dive

on the buzzard, the buzzard defending itself by turning upside down and presenting its talons to fend off the peregrine falcon. Unfortunately, they drifted over the hill out of my vision but the vocal calling indicated that they had not finished with each other just yet! The reserve stalker has had the best observation for this period though: he was observing the ground

from high on Beinn a Choin when he heard wind whistling through feathers, he lowered his binoculars to spot a golden eagle flying below him less than 10 metres away. As he is now constantly reminding me (!) it is not every day that you get a superb view of a golden eagle that close. Soon the roaring of stags will be heard as they start their rut, it is worth the time to visit the reserve on a fine crisp sunny autumn day and listen to the roaring and spotting the stags ready to do battle. Finally, residents of Kinlochard may have spotted an unusual aerial visitor in their area, an adult red kite with wing tags red left /yellow right has been visiting the area. This kite was recovered injured from the roadside near Crieff as a juvenile two years ago, she had been hit by a car, once recovered she was fitted with tags and a radio transmitter and has spent four days on one visit and two or three days on the next visit. However, at the time of writing this I recorded the same kite over the Strathearn valley very briefly so it will be interesting to see if she decides to return and set up territory in the future.

Duncan Cameron

Conservation Assistant

Editor's footnote: Duncan can be contacted at - home: 01877384246, mobile: 07736477475.

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Ranger's Ramblings

A View from the Lodge!

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



(photo courtesy of John McKinley)

WHATS FORESTRY ALL ABOUT



For anyone who visited The Lodge during the week-long happenings, they would not have failed to be impressed by the superb interpretation display on forestry, in the foyer. The event, which also included two guided walks and a mini-bus tour of a harvesting sight in the forest, was devised almost single-handedly by our forest ranger, Peter Mitchell. Peter's knowledge of forestry is pretty comprehensive, and he has proved his value to the recreation team on countless occasions this season, as the requests for talks and walks by groups flooded in. His dedication to the cause includes the ability to hold osprey talks for the visitors, which he has performed often at short notice, many times this year. Having waxed lyrical of his all-round good-guy attitude, what a pity to learn of Peter's thoughts on how the game of football should be played. (He is an Aberdeen supporter!)

PAMELA'S TREE

On Monday, July 24th, around mid-day, a group consisting of family members and close friends in the community, gathered at The Lodge to honour Pamela Abraham's memory, by way of planting a tree. After long discussions over a period of three months, a site was chosen close to the entrance, a few metres north of the deer sculpture. Many of the group had travelled a great distance to take part in this humble, yet highly emotive ceremony. Prior to a dedication given by the Rev. Danny Gibb, Gordon Abraham thanked those who had attended, and spoke of the day being more of a celebration than anything else, and invited everyone to pay homage in the future as they saw fit. The staff of The Lodge had clubbed together to purchase a plaque, which was attached to a piece of local slate. It is hoped the Aspen planted will be not only a lasting and fitting tribute to this very special of individuals, but will be something future generations of visitors will come to enjoy.



DR. BOB SHARP

Last September, I reported on the creation of a purpose-built outpost in Drymen for The Lomond Mountain Rescue Team. Their group leader of twelve years, Bob Sharp, who has attended over 250 rescues in his 27 years with the team, has recently

announced his retirement from professional life. Bob will continue to work with the team, although he has now been succeeded by David Dodson as team leader. I have no doubt the long association that exists with L.M.R. and The David Marshall Lodge will continue to prosper, and the staff pass on their thanks and best wishes for the future to one of life's gentlemen. As a footnote, Bob, along with Judy Whiteside has written a book on his experiences. "Mountain Rescue" is available through Hayloft Publishing, telephone no. 017683 42300, or e-mail books@hayloft.org.uk



A NEW FACE AT THE LODGE

On the 9th August, Susan Mankey officially took up her duties in the newly created position of Visitor Services Ranger. Coming with a strong retail background and, more recently, a grounding within the National Park network, Susan will oversee the day-to-day running of The Lodge and will be heavily involved in the educational side of operations as well as increasing the profile of the centre through updated interpretation and signage. Susan has, in the short time she has been with us, already displayed an infectious enthusiasm toward the tasks which lie ahead, and the staff are all of the opinion that she will prove herself to be a valuable addition to The David Marshall Lodge 'family'

Rangers Corner

In a world of turmoil and constant strife
I am slightly confused as to how we quantify loss of life.
Many of us start the day with toasted bread
Accompanied by the 'Daily Spread',
A full English breakfast alongside Iraqi dead,
Packing school lunches as Baghdad pavements turn red.
Do as you're told, listen to your mother
Time enough tonight to watch more of 'Big Brother'
Unfathomable destruction, many lives gone
No Brits involved, however, so let's move along.
Got to get to work, for pity's sake
No time to dwell on the Indonesian earthquake.
What is wrong with our attitude toward a foreigner's plight
Is it truly because, they are, simply, not white?
Soaking up, with bread, the egg on our breakfast plate
We seem more concerned George Clooney has put on weight.
Meanwhile there are children dying;
Meanwhile there are people crying.
Of course we should be aware of terrorist attacks
But we should also be afraid of the presentation of facts
Manufactured through the Government by careful design
For no other reason than to keep us in line
Well... to cricket now... and England's Andrew Flintcroft has managed a superb
six runs in the third test against Accrington Stanley girl scouts second team,
before falling to a dubious l.b.w. decision. Following the news, there is a special
hour-long episode of Emmerdale Farm. Fingers are pointed, accusations are
made, as the community becomes aware of the fact the village shop has run out
of toothpaste.
Anyway, I hope you all get to work on time
And don't worry about all this death and grime
It's just me talking with my stupid views
And not supposing George Bush reads the Strathard News



To the Grumpy Old Men at Ranger's Corner

The Strathard News gave us indeed
An honest article to read;
On page eleven we recall
The Blair and Bush's rise and fall.
Yet events were overtaken
When the Middle East was shaken
By yet another deadly feud
Of quite enormous magnitude.
I beg your pardon – I digress
From Grumpy Old Men to address:
Though the road ahead is bumpy
Please don't be no longer grumpy,
And do recall with jolly rhymes
Some anecdotes of cheerful times.
With happy spirit fill your cup
Prove you can do it: cheer us up!

Sigrid

(Ed: How nice to hear from you again, Sigrid)

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HEALTH CHECK FOR ABERFOYLE OSPREY



Two osprey chicks nesting in Aberfoyle got a health MOT on Monday, July 10 at 12noon, as part of a monitoring programme.

Live pictures from the osprey nest site were beamed to the bird of prey viewing project at David Marshall Lodge and Joanna McFarlane, Osprey Information Officer for Forestry Commission Scotland and RSPB Scotland, was there to explain the process throughout.

The chicks were weighed and measured and checked for good health. Information coded on the leg rings will help wildlife experts keep track of the ospreys and their welfare throughout their lives, including winter migrations to Africa.

Joanna said: "The oldest chick was 34 days old and the other, 33 days. At this stage their legs are fully formed and they are not yet preparing to fly, so there is little risk of panic jumping or the ring getting tighter.

"The ringing is an important part of the conservation work carried out in Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. The information we gather from the leg rings is invaluable in gaining a better insight into the lives of our ospreys. Should our chicks return in three years to breed in Scotland, the rings will help us identify them and we will know that they have survived the hazardous migration south that they will undertake in about eight weeks time.



For an up-date, log onto www.forestry.gov.uk/aberfoyleospreys

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STRANGE BUT....

Our first tale, oh discerning reader, starts on a philosophical note, the connection between Logic and the Car Boot Sale. The 'test area' is that of a far off town south of the great river. Although our story is not of this area, the persons involved were moving to Strathard, hence their attendance at the car boot sale, for they decided, or the wife decided (same thing, one supposes) that many of their (his?) worldly goods had to be offloaded before their journey north.

Thus they found themselves with books, blankets and beads, parked adjacent to many other vehicles, spreading out their wares for inspection. Pride of place was a Ewbank Carpet Sweeper (Ah, happy days! When Dyson was just a mere gleam in his grandfather's eye!). Price of said beater was put at £1, a mere snip I hear you say. Apparently, not everyone thought so. One local gentleman approached, admired said Sweeper, then added that he had one at home. Unfortunately, the home-based Ewbank was minus its distinctive long metal handle. Would the couple sell him just the handle? No, the sweeper came as one and, anyway, the whole machine was only £1. That was not what the gentleman wanted to hear and he walked off muttering about only needing the handle. Perhaps, he was just being careful with his money. Then again....

From slightly nearer home, from the fair village of Drymen, we are told of the following exchange where conversation descended (or ascended) to the downright surreal and which must surely rank with the best of Alan Bennett's dialogues. Quite recently, a formidable lady marched into the Tourist Information Office there and approached staff.

"What churches are there in this area?" she asked. On being informed that there were two in the immediate area she then asked, "What denomination are they?" On being told that they were both Presbyterian, she then said, "Is there a Catholic church nearby?"

"Yes," she was told, "There is a Catholic church in Balfron."

Still undeterred, she asked of any further churches in the district and was told that there were Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches in Aberfoyle.

"Good," she replied, "Now where can I get a potato masher?"

Continuing on the surreal note, we hear of two women, friends for many years but who have not seen each other for some time. Greeting each other effusively, one says, "But you look shorter than when I last saw you."

"Aye," the other replies, "I've been to Benidorm."

HAPPY CAMPING FOR SCOTS

Scots are set for a camping boost with £4 million being invested at five Scottish camping and caravan sites on national forest land.

The investment has been achieved through the transfer of the Forestry Commission's Forest Holidays business to a new joint public-private venture across Britain with the Camping and Caravanning Club.

The new partnership will continue to be known as Forest Holidays and in Scotland will use the funding for upgrading existing sites and exploring opportunities for new holiday locations.

There are four popular campsites on Forestry Commission Scotland land at Glenmore, Arrochar, Aberfoyle and Loch Lomond, and one fully modernised cabin site just outside Strathyre.

Welcoming the announcement, Scottish Forestry Minister Rhona Brankin said:

"This is an innovative partnership amongst the public and private sector which will directly benefit those who enjoy taking their holidays in the great outdoors. The extra investment generated from the joint venture will give the Scottish sites another boost, providing holidaymakers with an even better holiday in the natural forest environment." Gary Fletcher, Forest Holidays' chief executive officer, added:

"This is a partnership where everyone is a winner. It paves the way for better managed sites with better facilities. In turn, this will increase visitor numbers.

"It will enable us to provide all the wholesome, natural education and entertainment of a forest environment, together with the very best in cabin, camping and caravanning facilities."

Charity Accordion Concert

On Monday 14th August within St Mary's Church, Aberfoyle, over 70 of an audience thrilled to the virtuoso playing of Igor and Alexiythe, two 23 year-old Ukrainian young men graduates of their National Music Academy in Kiev, who held rapt attention for 90 minutes last Monday evening. Each in the audience would have their highlight but perhaps the Straus waltz and Russian pieces allowed the dexterity and musicianship to show best. Finishing with a beautiful account of Nimrod from Elgar's Enigma Variations, the sound was as if a full orchestra was playing. The audience roared their appreciation. Wine and cheese was enjoyed afterwards in a balmy evening. Proceeds of £840 were split between the Hippokrat Society supporting disabled children and their families in Chernigiv, near Chernobyl and St Mary's Church.

Philip Gaskell

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

"I love you."

How easy it is for those words to roll off our lips on some occasions, but yet on others so much more difficult.

We can put these words upon the lips of a handsome young man staring into the eyes of a beautiful girl at a cosy candlelit dinner for two. This sort of love the Greeks called Eros. It is a love of the heart and of passion. It takes no effort to summon as we well know.

But there is another love. This the Greeks called agape. Agape love is neither spontaneous nor natural. On the contrary, if it is there at all, it needs to be summoned. Imagine the following scene. Having just sat down to tea, there is a knock at the door. It is a dishevelled stranger, asking for coffee and a sandwich. What might you do? Close the door quickly, or produce what is required? If you give what is required you have shown agape love. But agape love is often partial. You might not wish to invite the stranger inside to partake of the refreshment on your white settee. Thus limits are often set to agape. But Christ taught that agape love should be as limitless as the care and concern we show for ourselves. Yes, yes, you will be saying impatiently, but no human loves unreservedly like that.

During August the church remembers the life of Maximillian Kolbe. Born in 1894, Kolbe became a Franciscan Monk who by 1939 was head of a Warsaw friary. At the outbreak of war the friary was besieged by refugees. Kolbe fed and clothed them. Then the friary fell under the suspicion of the Gestapo for harbouring Jewish refugees. It was closed and Kolbe interned in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Already Kolbe's love for others was proving personally expensive.

To discourage escape from Auschwitz, a rule was imposed that one prisoner escaping would mean the death of ten others. One day a prisoner became missing. Immediately, ten others were rounded up to be starved to death. One young man cried aloud having realised his fate. 'My poor wife, my poor children, what will they do?'

Upon hearing this, Kolbe stood before the Camp Commandant. 'I would like to take this man's place, as he has a wife and children' The commandant was happy with this offer. He had more use for a strong young man than an elderly friar.

So Kolbe took his place and in time gave his life that the man might again see his wife and children. Pope John Paul canonised Kolbe in 1981. We pray for strength to follow his almost impossible example.

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The Garden

by Wellie Boot



Hope you all had a good holiday, with not too much gardening. Hasn't it been a glorious summer; the growth has been fantastic. The spring and early summer produced quite the best show of flowers on everything. I suppose the long dry spells didn't do the herbaceous plants so much good but, if your annuals were well watered, they didn't suffer. If, however, they were neglected they really didn't like it as there was no other help!! Now, however, is the time for the start of the clearing.

The perennial geraniums are greatly in need of a tidy up and can take hard cutting back; it makes them neater and, if you do it now, you will certainly get a new crop of leaves if not some flowers.

This applies to a large number of herbaceous plants which flowered in the early summer. If the plant is large and full of energy, cutting it back will do it no harm but be gentler with small clumps of younger plants.

While you are up to your knees in the border, do look out for seed heads; cut them off carefully and put them immediately upside down into a bag (preferably paper) and LABEL THEM!! If you don't, it's like finding something in the freezer unlabelled and wondering what on earth it is, like my orange ice-cream in a Mackay's tub which turned out to be lentil soup!!

These seeds can be sown in late winter indoors and brought on for the following summer. It usually takes about two years, however, before they flower. Delphiniums are particularly successful.



This is also a good time to prune shrubs just to neaten them up and keep them under control. Don't be afraid to lop large branches off; it actually does the plant good.

Well, I think that's enough work to keep you busy for a while.

Happy gardening,
Wellie Boot



ROCK AND ROLL IS HERE TO STAY

By Dougie MacPherson

'Rock and Roll is here to stay, it will never die...' Aah, can't you just feel the tears of nostalgia well up in your eyes when this song is sung? No? Oh well, you must be of the younger generation. For many of us of well-matured years, the lyrics of this pop song first played in 1969 by a group called **Sha Na Na** – (now how did they arrive by that name? Who says crazy band names are the prerogative of current groups?) – bring back memories of a golden age of rock and roll yet, when it first hit the charts, R'n'R was already many years old, 15 years to be precise, since our parents first jived to *Bill Haley* and *Rock Around the Clock*. Please don't mock! Please! Believe me, *Bill Haley* was a breath of fresh air after the likes of the sedate – but tuneful – *Inkspots* and *Alma Cogan*.

But in early 1969, we thought that it would not last, that *Sha Na Na* was overly optimistic. Then, in the summer of '69, the **Rolling Stones** gave their free concert in Hyde Park. It was mind blowing! I took my now wife on our very first date to that concert, possibly confirming the reputation of Scots being mean. We have since seen the Stones at Hampden some years later but as the cost of tickets skyrocketed, I actually attempted to get free tickets (well, you've got to, haven't you?) by e-mailing the organizers of their latest concert, waffling on as to how it had been our first date and could they see their way....etc, etc. Yup, you guessed it. All I got was *The Sound Of Silence*.

Yet R 'n' R did Not Fade Away. It grew from strength to strength. This was brought to mind this summer when I saw a lady, how would one say, in her second flush of youth, in Aberfoyle Main Street, sporting a **Pogues** T shirt and I thought, well done you! Or as they say in Glasgow, go on yourself! Like denims, the older generation have held onto what was once cool when they (okay, we) were young. R 'n' R from being innovative so many years ago has now become mainstream and, like denims, acceptable to us old sweats. This was reinforced one day, again this summer coincidentally, when a gaggle of motorcyclists drew up in Drymen Square. One chap, grey of hair and beard but riding a Harley Davidson, parked his bike in the Square with his CD player (on a motorbike? Whatever next!) going full blast playing the **Kinks**' 'Waterloo Sunset'. In a way it seemed quite sad, yet apt and I thought, well why not? Go for it!

So we have caught up with our youth. Some of us, when we were young and, God forbid, more foolish, only took note of the current Top Twenty as it was so called. Only now are some of us discovering, or rediscovering, the joys of some great rock and roll songs – now that these groups have passed for the main into oblivion. And what groups! There were many enjoyable discoveries but some I remember with affection were **Hawkwind**, **Boston** (More Than A Feeling), **Rainbow** (Since You've Been Gone) and, of course, the **Pogues**. Lyrically and musically, the Pogues were a blast of fresh air, folk music blended with rock. Their lyrics were, it has to be said, at times questionable. Why, for instance, are they included in shopping mall compilations of musak at Christmas time with their rendition of 'Christmas in New York'? Have these people actually listened to the lyrics? '*You scumbag, you maggot, you two-timing faggot*' – and a merry Christmas to you, too!

Now the Times They Are Changing: new music, new bands, new classifications that us oldsters cannot keep abreast of such as *Heavy Metal* and *Garage*. I mean what is *Garage*? Does it define the music or the musicians? Would Mike and the Mechanics be *Garage* or the Corrs or Van Morrison? Sadly, now, the rock groups of yesteryear are growing old as is their fan base. The great Rolling Stones are now nicknamed the Strolling Bones. Ouch! Although that was one time the wife and I disagreed. She preferred the Beatles who I thought to be 'nice boys in suits' compared to the Stones. But now look upon their works and behold what age has done. Paul McCartney and Mick Jagger have now been knighted. So has Cliff Richard, but, come on, we're talking R 'n' R here, so he hardly counts!

The Who are still playing gigs, but must feel embarrassed at

having to sing 'Hope I Die Before I get Old'. Rick Wakeman makes regular appearances on 'Grumpy Old Men' and, alas, alas, Status Quo have been on Coronation Street.

Still, what the hell, why not go for it? After all, in the words of the bard, immortal but not forgotten:

'It's only rock and roll

But I like it, Like it, Yes I do.....'



Milton

It is back-to-school time already! Boy, how the holidays speed by when you are having fun and there are so many things to do. And it has hardly rained at all. We have been up at the David Marshall Lodge quite a lot. The twins, Duke and Katrine, were asked by Katy Freeman to help George make tracks for young people to find and follow. The ground was so dry that it was difficult to find any mud to leave their footprints in! Not usually a problem in the Trossachs. They also had to leave little piles of poo, known as spraints. You can tell if they have been made by an otter because of the shape of the spraint - and the smell of violets!

The whole otter family had a wonderful time at the Kinlochard Gala Day. Once again it was a tremendous success, thanks to the hard work of a great many people from the village and surrounding area. It was certainly well advertised. There seemed to be placards and banners for miles around. The whole world must have known it was on, and the weather played its part, too. There were so many things to see and do, and so many friends to meet. And then there was the ceilidh. Wow!

What a day! By Monday the field had been cleaned and all the litter removed. Well done to Archie and the team - they raised over £4,000.

Have you been to the top of Doon Hill recently? All the trees and bushes are festooned with ribbons and bits of material, and little prayers and wishes have been left there, too. Some people leave small gifts and other offerings. Grandpa Otter says that this is a very old Celtic custom, going right back into the mists of time. A long time ago, when people were much poorer, a person could make a gift of a piece of their own clothing to pay for a wish or prayer being made to the spirits. But it was not until the material began to rot and decompose that the wish could pass from this world into the Other World, and be answered by the spirits. The problem is, most of the rags and ribbons left on the Doon Hill have been made with synthetic fibre and will never decay. Unfortunately, these wishes can never be granted! So, chose your material carefully.

Well it is back to school for us all. The twins are quite excited about moving up a class. Braeval, my swatty sister, just can't wait for the new term. I don't mind going back, either; there will be many interesting things to learn from the teachers. And the evenings are still light enough for us to get out and play. The gloaming is a good time to watch the bats fluttering through the twilight, and to see the evening stars. The nights will soon draw in and, in no time at all, it will be Hallowe'en! Bye for now, Milton.



Schools programme reaches first milestone

The first key milestone in Stirling Schools PPP Project was reached this week with the completion of phase one of the refurbishment works at McLaren High School. The works have been completed, on schedule, to fit in with the return of pupils on 22nd August for the beginning of the autumn term.

The contractors A&L King and FES, part of the Stirling Gateway Ltd consortium, have worked throughout the school summer holiday delivering a programme of improvements that will give an immediate benefit to the school. These have included visible improvements to the school and the site, including construction of a new science lab, staff base and technicians base.

A brand new temporary teaching village has also been created to replace the previous huts until the refurbishment is finished in 2008. Also, less obvious, but equally important improvements have been made including the replacement of the old school boilers and improvements to the drainage of one of the grass sports pitches.

On his return to school at the beginning of term headteacher Peter Martin said, "the contractors had planned an ambitious programme of work for the summer

holidays and I am very pleased with the progress made. It is good for the school community to enjoy these physical improvements to our learning environment so early in the process."

Councillor Margaret Brisley, executive member with portfolio for economy noted the progress made and said, "I am pleased to see that so much work has been completed out during the school holidays and that the science students have such good accommodation. The standard of education in Stirling's schools is amongst the best in the country. By making this investment in McLaren High School we are now giving the young people at the school the educational facilities that they deserve." The works undertaken are the first phase of a programme of refurbishment and extension of McLaren High School that will be undertaken on a phased basis to August 2008. The contractor has programmed the work to make full use of the school holidays, minimising disruption to teaching. Phase two includes a new build classroom block containing science, technical and general classroom space and will be completed by Easter 2007.

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CALLANDER 2006

JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

29th 30th September 1st October

"JAZZ UP THE TROSSACHS"

This is the official slogan that will be used to promote Callander's first major Jazz & Blues Festival which will take place throughout the town on Friday 29th, Saturday 30th and Sunday October 1st 2006.

The official not-for-profit company Callander Jazz and Blues Festival Ltd has been incorporated to plan, organise and promote the first of many music festival events for the Trossachs Region.

The board has been encouraged by the overwhelming support from Visit Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Stirling Council, Stirling Enterprise, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, Callander Community Council, Callander Community Development Trust and many other official bodies.

Feverish activity has been seen amongst the five members of the festival board to originate business, marketing and logistical plans essential to the credibility of all the official funding applications that have been submitted to meet rigid February deadlines.

Funding has already been received from Stirling Council and this, linked with a number of early donations from Callander-based business owners has been very much appreciated.

There are now 18 participating venues across the town which will host the various musical events performed by specially invited bands and artists contracted in for the festival dates.

The next stage, once all of our funding efforts have paid off, will be the advertising and promotional campaign which will highlight the festival performers appearing at the jazz and blues festival with a detailed "what's on where" for each of the festival venues.

The festival internet website is www.callanderjazz.com and this site will be updated on a regular basis with all relevant information.

Please contact any of the following board members for current information: Graham Oliphant 01877-330556, Malcolm Bidwell 01877-331466, John Martin 01877-330329, Paul Roebuck 01877 339508.

Festival office: contact 07801 537760

2006 Deadline Dates

Issue 33	8th October
Issue 34	12 November (xmas issue)

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IMPORTANT

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

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contact

Ian Marshall on 01877 382211

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Moonwalk - A Man's Experience

It was 2 in the morning, I was in Edinburgh, in Princes Street, wearing only underwear, women's underwear and it wasn't a bad dream!

This was the Moonwalk, a long distance sponsored walk for women and a "few brave men". I was one of the few. The Moonwalk has been going for a number of years now, but this was the first time in Scotland. All the money raised goes to breast cancer charities. Eight thousand women participated, in their bras, and me, in a bra too. This was a rule rather than a personal preference, size 42B if you are asking. The distance was 26 ¼ miles, a marathon, the Full Moon, or 13 miles, the Half Moon. My wife and I had agreed to do the Full Moon. We were sure we could do it in 6 ½ hours or less, we were hoping we could do it in 6, though that was going to take a lot of training. We entered as a team; apparently that meant we could be sure of starting together and we called ourselves, Coin Dubh, Black Dogs, as our two black retrievers would be doing the training with us, although they wouldn't be allowed on the night itself. The training started in February, small walks getting faster and longer leading up to the big night. One time, we had nearly finished a good fast training walk; we were nearly home with only a few hundred metres to go. Our friendly neighbourhood goats (that's another story, don't ask) escaped from the field and joined us. One man, one woman, two dogs and four goats, power walking as fast as we could go - a sight unlikely to be repeated for many a year, and no one around to witness it.

The training programme was for 12 weeks; we completed it in 16 weeks, just Real Life kept interfering. We did not even know if our entry had been accepted until we had done 8 weeks. Our bras arrived in the post, provided as part of the entry, so I didn't

have to go into a shop to buy one. Now we had to decorate them, because, apparently, just wandering around Edinburgh in one is not enough, it has to be fancy as well. We decided to dye the bras black, decorate them with little silver stars and reflective material cut in the shape of crescent moons. They looked brilliant. Now all we had to do was walk 26 miles and it would be over. The event started at The Meadows in Edinburgh, the gates opening at 8:30 in the evening and we were there for them opening. Inside the compound there were lots of things going on, food was provided, a tent for leaving a bag, you could have a temporary tattoo, a massage. There was also a band, Salsa Celtica; a Scottish-salsa fusion group that we saw in Islay once; frankly I'd have gone for them alone. They did two sets, at the end of the first, one of them said that they were going to try and dress more like their audience for the second set. I thought, I'll lend them my bra, why should I be the only one? So the drummer wore it. Remember Animal from the Muppets? This guy made animal look like he was in a coma. Energetic, is the least you could say. Then he did a solo, stood at the front, slapping and stamping, before another band member came behind and took the bra off. My bra was famous! And sweaty, very sweaty. They say fame always has a price.

The start of the walk was midnight, we were nowhere near the front, and it took nearly ten minutes to get through the starting line. At the stroke of midnight, a few girls started singing happy birthday to one of their team. We all joined in, it was that kind of night. The route took us around the back of Arthur's Seat; on the way there we even had one of the bystanders do a streak. The sight of everyone streaming up the road, lit only by the Christmas lights adorning some of the bras was quite amazing. Then

back into town, past Holyrood, up the Royal Mile, Saturday night turning out time. There were loads of people out in the street, cheering us on; some even offered us a chip or two. The route then took us through the new town and on out to Cramond to the Forth. The crowds were starting to thin a bit now, the Half Mooners had already left us, and only a few very dedicated spectators. This was the back straight, all the way along the waterfront to Portobello, the cold light of dawn creeping up the sky. The first rays of the sun so welcome, the view, breathtaking. The training was definitely paying off, our feet were feeling fine, and after Portobello, only six miles to go. Our longest training walk had been 20 miles so everything is new from here, but our time so far was good. It felt good to be counting down the miles now, rather than counting up. Small hills seemed so much steeper and the city was starting to wake up. It was bin men cheering us on now.

Although it wasn't a race, the fastest person was in at 5 hours 16 minutes. We finished the walk in two minutes under six hours, which felt fantastic. We felt a little sore for a couple of days, our legs felt like we had done something unusual. Three days later, we felt quite keen to do a quick three-mile power walk, just to keep our hand in.

The night was full of the stories of brave women, many recovered from breast cancer, others walking in memory of those that never recovered. But the story that moved me most was from a friend of ours, a keen runner, moonwalking with her 14-year-old daughter. The daughter had blisters and at about 23 miles, these burst, and her feet started bleeding. She told her mother she was determined to finish. Although my feet hurt really really badly, she said to her mum, it doesn't hurt as much as breast cancer. I'm proud that I shared that night with people like that.

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Stamping Out Anti Social Behaviour At Loch Lomond T.A.G.S.

Forestry Commission Scotland, Central Scotland Police and the National Park Authority are warning they will get tough on anyone intending committing anti-social behaviour, in a bid to continue to make the area a safe and enjoyable place.

The news comes after the recent heat wave saw visitor numbers to Loch Lomond increase, and sadly, two incidents of anti-social behaviour on Forestry Commission Scotland land within the National Park.

One incident was a complaint that trees were being cut down at Salloch car park. Police attended the scene, and later traced two males who admitted to cutting down young trees and a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

Stuart Chalmers, for Forestry Commission Scotland in the Cowal and Trossachs area said: "Woods and natural spaces provide a huge range of benefits and people value them for a variety of reasons. We want people to enjoy themselves but unfortunately a small minority of people are committing anti-social behaviour which causes damage to the surrounding area. It is illegal to cut down trees without the landowner's permission. As well as being an act of vandalism, it also ruins the habitat. The East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Partnership between Forestry Commission Scotland, the police, National Park Authority and local community groups will continue to work to help stamp out crime altogether to help make our woods, cleaner, safer places for the public to enjoy."

The move follows successful campaigns as promoted by the East Loch Lomond Group

that welcomes visitors to the East Side of Loch Lomond and promotes responsible behaviour via a poster leaflet and wallet card campaign. Part of the campaign encourages people to report anti-social behaviour to the police. The group also has enabled joint patrols between the National Park Authority, Police and Forestry Commission staff by closing sites at night and via a coordinated litter collection. Chief Inspector Kevin Findlater commented: "Central Scotland Police is working hand in hand with partner agencies and residents to prevent anti-social behaviour in rural Stirlingshire."

"While the majority of the public are law-abiding and appreciate the scenic beauty of the area, there is a small minority who insist on causing a nuisance and carrying out unacceptable crimes."

"Anyone caught committing offences will face the tough penalties of their irresponsible actions."

Speaking about the joint initiative, Bob Elliot, Senior Operations Manager for the National Park Authority added:

"The East Loch Lomond Group has been vital in furthering the National Park's objectives in helping those that wish to enjoy Scotland's first National Park in a responsible manner. We are very supportive of the work the police are undertaking to reduce the incidents of crime in our countryside."

Anyone who witnesses anti-social behaviour on the east side of the loch is asked to contact the Police on 01786 456 000.

The Third Age Group Strathendrick's next day trip is to Largs and includes a visit to Dalgarven Mill museum of Costume and Country life, Dalgarven, Kilwinning, on Wednesday 6th. September. This coach trip costs £14 and includes entry to the Mill. The coach picks up in

Callander 8.50am,
Aberfoyle 9.15am,
Gartmore P.O. 9.40am,
Buchlyvie 9.55am,
Drymen 10.10am,
Balfron Cotton Street 10.25am,
Balfron Registrars 10.30am,
Killearn P.O. 10.40am,
Blanefield P.O. 10.55am.

Book at Balfron Library on 01360 440407, with Gena on 01360 850 437 or Joan pm only, on 01360 440095.

Following the trip set to go to Thurso, there has been a request to go to Lands End, so any member wanting to go there should contact Joan about just such a holiday on Saturday 14th October based at the Grand Palm Hotel Newquay D B&B, for 7 days only £199. Includes 3 free excursions including St Ives, Lands End, Penzance, Falmouth and Padstow.

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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.

NOT HERE.... BUT NEAR!

In nearby Loch Lomond things are afoot and the times they are a'changing. Firstly, we now have the Aquarium which has opened at Drumkinnon Tower at Loch Lomond Shores by Balloch. Although it has only recently opened, it is proving to be a popular attraction with visitors and it is to be hoped that all goes well for its continued prosperity.

Sadly, entry to the 6th floor coffee shop at the tower is now restricted, as is the 7th floor viewing platform. Whilst admission to the coffee shop was always free in the past, with one of the best views over Loch Lomond for the price of a 'cuppa', entry will now only be by way of the Aquarium, which means the princely sum of £7.95 for your coffee and view. A shame, in a way....

News Flash..policy has just changed, and access to the coffee shop is now free! Glad to see common sense reigns

Another development in Loch Lomond this summer has been the introduction of a solar powered boat named the 'Bata Grein', Gaelic for boat of the sun. Its name resulted from a competition which 8 year old Lee Dickson from Balloch won. Already it has become not only a novel, but welcome, addition to the loch. This summer it has been running between the slipway at Balloch and the nature reserve at Inchailloch Island, off Balmaha.

As one Park Ranger said: "The solar boat is a great way for people of all ages and abilities to visit the island. People are pleased that the boat is so quiet as they don't have to compete with engine noise. There is plenty of space and people can move about quite freely."

It takes an hour to sail from Balloch to Inchailloch and the journey is a tranquil one. The boat is made from aluminium and is a twin-screw vessel with catamaran hulls. The boat's unusual flat roof consists of a bank of 24 solar panels which are constantly charging, even on overcast days. It has covered seating for 24 people, space for 2 wheelchairs and room enough to take on bikes.

The National Park Authority is running free trial runs on board the Bata Grein through the summer and conservation groups and school parties have been quick to take advantage of this great offer. Groups of up to 12 can book the Bata Grein free of charge. Individuals can also book, helping to make up the numbers for smaller groups. For further information, you can visit www.lochlomond-trossachs.org or call the NPA on 10389 722600.

Launch of 'Balfron Today'

An A to Z Guide to Rural Community Life 'Balfron Today' was launched on Saturday August 19, 2006 at Balfron's first Community Festival. It's hoped that the A-Z booklet will be rolled out to other communities in the future. 'Balfron Today' is distributed free to all Balfron residents.

Stirling Provost Colin O'Brien officially launched the community booklet at Balfron High School. The booklet launch and festival is being organised by Stirling Council's Community Service's Communities Team in association with the Rural Networking Partnership and funded by Lomond and Rural Stirling LEADER+.

The 'Balfron Today' booklet gives residents information on local community groups, voluntary and community organisations, Council Services', health and well-being services and local businesses. 'Balfron Today' is the brainchild of a community partnership group 'Rural Networking,' which is made up of Balfron community groups, local voluntary groups and Council and Health representatives.

The festival had a wide variety of fun activities, displays and information stalls from the Central Scotland Police, Stirling Council, the WRVS, the Super Bus and Countryside Ranger Activities for the whole family to enjoy. There was also refreshments, craft stalls, Glendrick Roost; health promotion displays and music provided by pipers.

The stalls gave local people the chance to meet representatives from a variety of Council services, health and community groups. The stall themes will be Housing/energy, Care, Learning/fun, Money and Transport. Stirling Provost and local Councillor Colin O'Brien said, "I'm delighted to be launching, what is a great information source for and about our community. Congratulations must go to Rural Networking, which has worked very hard to put the publication together."

Stirling to launch first book festival



STIRLING's first book festival, Off the Page, opens in September and features an exciting line-up of writers, poets and entertainers.

The Festival, organised by Stirling Council Libraries, packs in 55 events in five days from September 26 and features nationally and internationally-recognised authors.

Off the Page is sponsored by the Stirling Area Local Learning Partnership in conjunction with Central FM. Events will be held in communities throughout the Stirling area.

Stirling's Depute Provost, Councillor Margaret Brisley, who launched the festival programme, said: "We are in for an exciting five days. There's something for everyone, from toddlers to senior citizens. I'm thrilled that so many well-known authors are to take part. This is a first for Stirling and I would like to thank everyone in the Libraries service who has worked so hard to organise Off the Page."

Big names appearing at the festival include thriller writer Christopher Brookmyre and Nick Barratt, the man behind the BBC's family history series Who Do You Think You Are? Crime writer Alanna Knight, who penned the Inspector Faro series about the Victorian detective will also take part with a special murder mystery event.

Teenagers will have the chance to meet chiller writer Melvin Burgess, the godfather of young adult fiction. Younger readers can chat to Mairi Hedderwick, creator of the delightful Katie Morag books set on the magical, western isle of Struay.

Lin Anderson will host an adult learning event. Other authors taking part include Catherine MacPhail, a writer of gritty, urban stories, Karen McCombie, creator of the zany Ally's World series of books, local journalist and author Kirsty Scott and children's author Julie Bertagna. Poet Janet Paisley will also appear in a "Poem, Pie and Pint" evening at the Tolbooth in Stirling.

The Festival is not all chapter and verse. There will be cookery events, a fiddle talk, drama and cartoon workshops and a local history session. It concludes with two performances of the classic tale The Railway Children at the macrobert, performed by the Storytellers Theatre.

Details about Off the Page book festival events can be seen on www.stirling.gov.uk/offthepage

Tickets for events can be booked from the Albert Halls, macrobert or Tolbooth or through libraries.

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Women's Rural Institute

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We have talks and demonstrations on subjects as diverse as Holistic Health and Antiques.

We are a small, friendly group who meet on the **3rd Thursday of every month at 7.30pm in Aberfoyle Memorial Hall** and we'd love you to come and join us.

For more information or to arrange a "buddy" to meet you, please call **Margaret on 382463 or 382490.**



THE PAINTED BOXES OF ABERFOYLE

Has anyone noticed, by chance, the bright, painted collection boxes for the Strathard News which are scattered at shopping and leisure outlets throughout the length and breadth of Strathard? Well, okay, maybe just the length at the moment but these are early days. Who knows, in the not too far future we might see the boxes the width of the Strath as well.

And some of them really are works of art, with contributions by local residents, schoolchildren and the occasional foreign visitor. The good news is that there are still quite a few of these boxes to be decorated, so if you feel you have something to contribute, feel free to contact a committee member and you will get one sent out to you. And then you will be on the box!

for sale

Single pine bed with mattress; very good condition. £40 buyer to collect. Please phone 01877 382055

THANK YOU

Willie MacCallum expresses a big thank you to all those who helped make his retirement/60th birthday barn dance go with a swing. He also wishes to thank the people who sent cards, gifts and good wishes and to those who generously donated to the collection for Yorkhill Foundation. The final sum of £1,100 has been sent to them.

Would you like to meet similarly minded people ?

Walking * Golfing * Wine Clubs

The *Forth Inn* are actively trying to start the above groups/clubs. If you are interested and would like more information please e-mail Phil@forthinn.com or call into The *Forth Inn* and speak to Diane.

Feather Fowlie

Ingredients:
2oz Butter
2oz Flour
1pt Milk
1 Carrot
1 Red Onion
1 Chicken Breast



Method:

Cook the chicken in water, take chicken out and keep the liquid.

Melt the butter in a pan, add flour and mix to a roux

Keep stirring, add the stock a little at a time, (better if it's hot),

While stirring, slowly add the milk again a little at a time

Slice the onion and cut carrot into strips. Cut the chicken into strips and add the vegetables and chicken to pan.

Season with salt and white pepper, leave on a low heat to cook out for approximately 10 minutes.

sponsored by *Forth Inn*

Forth Inn Events Diary

September/October

8th Sep - Charity Race Night in Aid of Anthony Nolan Trust - Racing Starts 9pm

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9th Sep - Karaoke Night in the Wallace Bar Fun Starts 9pm

• • • • •

24th Sep - Pub Quiz Night starts 9pm

• • • • •

14th Oct - Karaoke Starts 9pm

• • • • •

21st Oct - The Kiwi Feast (3 course dinner & entertainment) In conjunction with the Aberfoyle Mushroom Festival, tickets £25.00 purchased from The Forth Inn

• • • • •

21st & 22nd Oct - Cooking and Butchery demonstrations 1pm & 3pm with Forth Inn Head Chef, Michael Clayton and Aberfoyle Butcher, Jonathan Honeyman, in conjunction with the Aberfoyle Mushroom Festival

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Forth Inn News

Congratulations to Mark Scott, our chef on passing his final examinations with the Hotel and Catering College. And to Megan Scott and Eilidh MacCallum for doing Soooooooooo well in their standard grades.

THE RETURN OF THE ABERFOYLE GALA DAY 2007



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