

issue 37  
apr/may  
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# STRATHARD NEWS

The Voice of Your Community

www.strathardnews.com

## McLaren Master The Art Of Debate

McLaren High School has triumphed at the Scottish Regional Final of the Institute of Ideas and Pfizer Debating Matters Competition, held at the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 16 March. They will be travelling to London for the National Final of 'the toughest debating competition in the country' to represent Scotland at the end of June. The competition is sponsored by the Medical Research Council in Scotland. Describing her team's excitement at their victory teacher Gail Cunningham said 'The team is absolutely thrilled to have won.

We're very excited about our trip down to the "big smoke" in June and I know they'll work hard in preparation.' McLaren team member Chris Emslie agreed with his teacher, adding: 'It was a tough day; the standard of debate was extremely high and we were always unsure of whether or not we'd won the debates, but overall the experience was extremely rewarding.'

Despite the fact that McLaren have, until this year, never had a school debating society, the McLaren team proved to be naturals, with one debater, Naomi Todd winning the 'Best Individual' award and her team mate, Tobias Paul, received an 'honourable mention'. One of the McLaren supporters, fourteen year old Angus Waite, so impressed the judges that they awarded him the second individual prize for his 'continued and passionate involvement in the debates from the floor'.



*l to r: Faye Graham, Chris Emslie, Gail Cunningham (teacher), Tobias Paul, Naomi Todd*

Famed for its emphasis on substance before style, the McLaren team has had to do a huge amount of work to get to this stage of the competition. The motions for the day included the complex issues of whether 'Britain should apologise for its role in the slave trade', if 'Books should remain the essence of public libraries' and whether 'Attempts to extend radically the human lifespan should be welcomed not feared'. One of the judges, Seonag Mackinnon, Education Correspondent at BBC Scotland, was particularly impressed by the students. 'One of the charges most often levied against young people is that, in comparison with older generations, their general knowledge is abysmal. I saw no evidence of that today and was amazed by the students' ability to draw on their wider knowledge to strengthen their argument.'

Representing the Medical Research Council, communication manager in Scotland, Pauline Mullin, laid out the MRC's support for the competition. 'The Medical Research Council is proud to sponsor the Debating Matters Competition. Watching all of the students today I was struck by how similar debating is to the scientific endeavour. Just as science begins with inquisitiveness about the world and a desire to understand how it works, Debating Matters encourage students to engage with and change the world around them.' The team members also won some great prizes: each received a year's subscription to Encyclopaedia

Britannica online, kindly donated by Britannica UK and a quality webcam and credit from Skype. The rest of the school has also benefited hugely from the victory, as the educational publisher Hodder Gibson is giving them £1000 worth of books and resources.

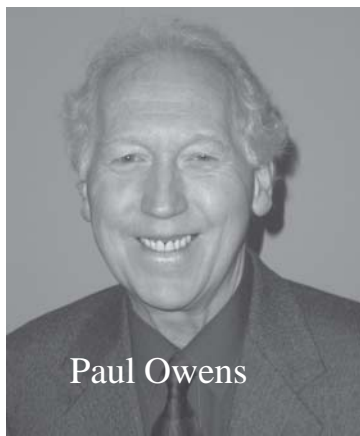
The Debating Matters Competition has a well-earned reputation for injecting new life into schools debating. A unique feature is the grilling that the debaters face from a panel of expert judges who question them on their arguments, challenge them to defend their research and thinking and then give them feedback - all in front of an audience. In this competition, substance comes before style and ideas and young people are taken seriously. The debaters at the Scottish Regional Final proved that young people can indeed rise to a challenge when it's put to them!

## The Boar War

The above title is intended to be flippant, a way of attracting the reader's attention, but the subject matter is far from being so. On the first weekend of April, in Strathard, a wild boar sadly had to be shot to safeguard the public, an action which should have been otherwise quite unnecessary. The circumstances surrounding this incident were that on the weekend in question, 'person or persons unknown', to coin a phrase, had cut through the deer fencing on the Drumlean Estate. It was reckoned that wire cutters had actually been used which does seem to show prior intent of purpose. The end result was that a herd of wild goats and a wild boar escaped their secure compound area along with some Highland cattle. The goat herd are still at large. The unfortunate boar, having been on the loose for some time, and having marched through the Forest Hills complex and several gardens in the area, proved to be elusive to capture and it was decided, by persons at the scene, that the safest way to resolve the situation was to shoot the poor beast which is what happened. The saddest thing about the whole affair is that the individuals who cut the wire, although they *may* have thought that they did it for the purest of altruistic reasons, did not really think the whole thing through. The wire cutting was, quite simply, a criminal act, a result of which a poor animal died quite unnecessarily. Obviously, anyone with information is urged to contact the police. It is only to be hoped that incidents such as the above will not happen again.



## Strathard Community Councillor Selected as Candidate for Stirling Council elections



Paul Owens

**Paul Owens of Aberfoyle was selected by the Labour party to stand as the Labour Party candidate for the Trossachs and Teith Ward in the upcoming elections.**

*Paul, tell us a bit about yourself.*

Well, I'm married with three children and two delightful grandchildren. A social worker by profession, I've lived in West Stirlingshire for the past thirty years and have been a community activist throughout.

*In the run up to the election what concerns you?*

My number one concern is that there will be a good turnout on May 3<sup>rd</sup>; that people will actually use this opportunity to vote. We need to remember that in the UK initially only landowners and their first son over 21 could vote. By 1911 most men could vote but it was not until 1928 that all women could vote. We need to exercise that right. Many people in Aberfoyle, Kinlochard and Inversnaid know me for the work I've done on the Aberfoyle Village Hall Committee and the Strathard Community Council. Obviously I would like them to recognise Sylvia Jackson's hard work for the area over recent years and vote for her as MSP, for myself for Stirling Council and for the Labour Party list candidate.

If I am elected, I'm committed to representing all sectors of the community. I hear residents who do not want affordable housing built in the rural areas. Then I hear others bemoaning the lack of housing for their children and grandchildren. This is a debate that needs to be held. In the Strathard area the key issues for me are also the condition of the roads and flooding. I will be fighting for the provision of the dial-a-bus service to replace the cancelled postal buses. Talks are already underway.

I was delighted to hear of the recent decisions about the play park in Aberfoyle. This development is thanks to a hard working Strathard Community Trust with the advice and participation of the young people themselves. Indeed, I would love to see young voters turning out to exercise their democratic privilege and to take a more active part in the running of the community.

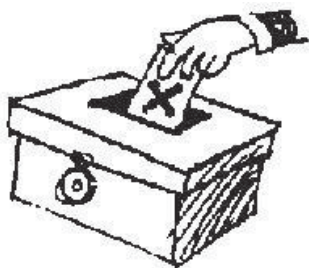
Whatever happens on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, I'm glad to be living in the area and serving the Strathard Community now!

Visit my blog on <http://paulowens.blog.com>

*Paul, a number of people are not clear about the new voting procedures, can you explain please.*

The instructions for voting for the Scottish Parliament and for the Stirling Council with the new single transferable vote system are in a leaflet being delivered to every home and are available at <http://www.stirling.gov.uk/elections> (remember there is internet access at the Post Office in Aberfoyle!) In summary, you will receive two ballot papers, one for the Scottish Parliament election and another for Stirling Council. On the ballot paper for the Scottish Parliament place an X against the name of your preferred constituency candidate as MSP e.g. Sylvia Jackson. Place another X against the party list of your choice for the regional vote. You do not have to vote for the same party for both the constituency and the regional vote.

For the council election, there are 6 candidates. Simply number the candidates in order of your preference. If you have a party loyalty, you will want to place 1 next to that candidate. Because the SNP and the Labour Party is each fielding only one candidate, Strathard residents have the opportunity to vote for both Fergus Wood and myself, they could therefore have the benefit of one councillor from each of the three main parties. You can number as many or as few candidates as you like. Always remember, that on the day you can ask the Information Officer at the polling station for assistance with the process.



**Polling Day  
Thursday 3rd May**

## MARY KENYON CAMPAIGNS FOR A NEW DIRECTION FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY



Mary Kenyon

**Mary Kenyon leads the Conservative team for the new ward of Teith and Trossachs.**

Originally from Comrie, Mary's love of the countryside means she understands the rural issues in Teith and Trossachs. She retired from nursing and health services management recently and is an expert in Continuous Quality Improvement. Mary is driven by the constant need to raise standards and improve services. She is known in the area for her voluntary work with The Lillias Graham Trust, Forth Valley Advocacy Services, and Save the Children as well as being Chairman of the Royal College of Nursing Quality Improvement Network. Mary and her husband Neil have three grown up children, and now live near Thornhill.

Mary's Challenge: "I feel that for far too long Stirling's Labour Council has been oblivious to the views and wishes of rural Stirling. Primary school education and the lack of support given for growing the local economy immediately come to mind. We must therefore ensure that the needs of the countryside are understood by lobbying vigorously at Council and National level so that policy does not penalise those who work hard to manage our services, environment, and natural resources. As I speak to individuals and communities the more I am aware of the work that needs to be done to ensure that your views are represented and that Council Services give you value for money. People must feel safe and secure. I will therefore work hard to influence council colleagues to introduce sensible long term plans for: road repairs, traffic management, speedy access to health care sustainable flood management and more police on the beat. In parallel we must work together with The National Park Authority to support the development of local communities and to care for this wonderful part of Scotland. The new electoral system, complex though it is, offers an opportunity for your elected representatives to have real influence. I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to campaign with Tony Finch for the Conservatives in Teith and Trossachs. Throughout my career as a health care professional, I have enjoyed a high level of achievement. In short, I believe I can get things done."



# Kinlochard Village Hall

Some of you may be wondering how the Committee is getting on with plans to improve the Village hall, it certainly seems to us like a long time since we started and everybody was involved with meetings questionnaires, drawings etc!

The withdrawal of crucial central funding and changes in local funding for village halls have meant that we have had to go back to the starting line from a financial point of view.

We have some funds pledged from Charitable trusts and currently have an application in for Investing in Ideas. This is part of the Big Lottery which gives funds to enable work to be done to progress project ideas and to assess feasibility.

We should know the outcome by June. If we are successful, we hope to progress through an outline application on to a main application for Lottery Funding. This is a big job requiring a lot of time, effort and input and then a wait of four months before you know if you are granted funding. Even if successful we still have a way to go to get sufficient funds.

On a more positive note, planning permission has been granted by the National Park and we are making good progress towards obtaining the building warrant from Stirling Council and permissions from SEPA. Please feel free to come along to the Committee meetings. The hall is for the community and your involvement would be most welcome.

The date of the next meeting is dependant on Investing in Ideas, but advance notice will be posted on the Community notice board and at the Village Shop – look forward to seeing you there.

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## Golf Club Update

72 people attended our Open Day at Aberfoyle Golf Club on the 25th March. Of those, we managed to convert 18 into members - a fantastic 25% hit rate. Included in the 18 adults were 7 parents who got a free child membership also! A big success - thanks to Glengoyne Distillery and the Aberfoyle Deli for their sponsorship!

*Ernest Barnard  
Secretary*



## Aberfoyle Memorial Hall 100 Club Winners

The March winner, drawn by John, the manager of the Co-op was Margaret Johnson. The April winner, drawn by Caroline Carranza, was Ricky Govan.

To join please contact Janet Stewart on 382736 or Ros in the Post Office.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT

## Police Community Website

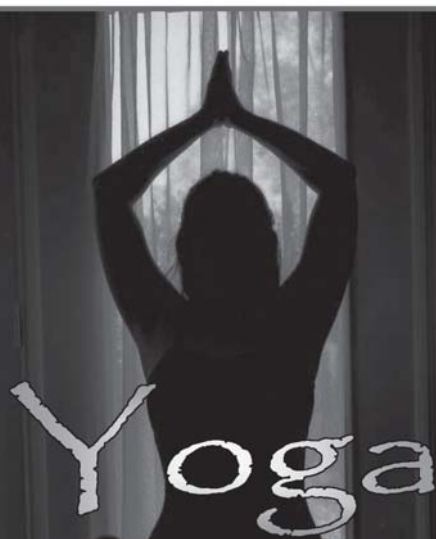
Constables Jo McDowall and Ricky Govan are the two locally based Police Officers covering the village of Aberfoyle and the surrounding communities. They carry out community liason duties in Aberfoyle and can be contacted at Aberfoyle Police Office. Tel 01877 382 222. They can also be contacted by email through the Central Scotland Police website [www.centralscotland.police.uk](http://www.centralscotland.police.uk). There is a community page for Aberfoyle on the website which can be accessed by going to MY AREA, DUNBLANE SAC, ABERFOYLE. There you will find community news regarding crime updates and proposed police surgery dates.



## GARTARTAN FARM SHOP WE'RE MOVING BACK HOME

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at the  
**David Marshall Lodge**  
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Tel: 07791 385240

## Our Village

On Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of March I went to the open afternoon at Aberfoyle Primary School to see the p 6/7 project about our village. There were lovely displays on the walls and some had made models of their part of the project. The project was split into various different subjects. For example:

Shanochill Farm, farming, Parish Church, the railway, Bailie Nicol Jarvie, the first tourists, Kinlochard, the slate quarry, legends, buildings and Aberfoyle Primary School.

The pupils mentioned facts such as the Reverend Kirk who wrote books about the fairies and they mentioned about the workers at the slate quarry and about all the animals that live in Aberfoyle. My favourite bit of information was about the parrot that sat in the Bailie Nicol Jarvie garden who would shout bad words to the kids when they were walking to school.

Miss Bond and her pupils worked very hard to gather all their information from books, friends and family to put together such a magnificent project. Many people went to see the project and it looked like they really enjoyed themselves and liked the lovely biscuits and tea. Well done p 6/7

*By Lochard Smithy*

## Aberfoyle Primary And Nursery PTA

*Dates For Your Diary*

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May:** Proposed date for Bags2School. Get rid of your unwanted clothes, shoes, belts and curtains, and benefit the school. The more we collect, the more we raise.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June:** Summer Fair – All the usual stalls including Cake and Candy, Tombola, Toy Tombola, Jumble Jars, Children's Games, Beat The Goalie, Teas and Coffees, Burgers, Plants, Books, Videos and DVDs, Raffle etc. Donations for any of these stalls would be much appreciated. Tables are available to businesses and individuals at £10 each. Please come along and join us – All Welcome!

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June:** End of Term Family Disco in Aberfoyle Memorial Hall 7-9pm. Bring your own drinks and nibbles. No unaccompanied children please.

For more information on any of the above please contact Janet Stewart 382736, Cara Wilson 382289 or Aileen More 382952

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## Heart to Heart

Heart to Heart have spent the last few months expanding their services, continuing the monthly support meeting held in Dunblane in addition to the 6-week support course, and working with a new group in Bo'ness. This group recognised the benefits that Heart to Heart can bring to individuals affected by divorce and/or separation and are looking to run their own support courses in the future.

Due to an article which appeared in a national publication last summer interest has been shown by other communities as to how they can set up and organise their own local Heart to Heart support service. Much work has gone into developing the materials required to enable them to do this, along with the continuous support offered from the Callander office. The Bo'ness group kindly agreed to pilot this development. With all the extra work that this has generated in addition to the increase in the ongoing local service, Lloyds TSB recognised that a part-time Development Coordinator couldn't achieve this on her own, and have provided additional funding to enable Heart to Heart to recruit an Office Administrator for 10 hours per week to assist with the administration and publicity side of the support service. If you know of anyone who would be interested in this position please contact the number below and speak to Lynne.

Support continues to be given locally by Callander Kirk and this year Heart to Heart also benefited with grants from Lloyds TSB (standard and capacity building), the Scottish Community Foundation, Callander Round Table and the Co-Op Community Fund. Local volunteers from across the Stirling rural area and in Stirling town itself, also contribute much time and energy in a variety of ways, without which we would not be able to provide this level of support service. The 6-week support course – Recovering from Divorce or Separation continues on a regular basis. It deals with: The Effects of the Past: Communication & resolving Conflict: Forgiveness: Moral & Legal issues: Relationships Boundaries: Moving On.

If you require further information about the course or other areas of support provided by Heart to Heart please contact us at the address below. Leaflets are available in Health Centres, Doctors surgeries and Libraries across the Stirling Council area. Please help yourself and pass onto anyone you feel would benefit from this support.

**CONTACT DETAILS:** Heart to Heart, Room 3, Callander Kirk Hall, South Church Street, Callander FK17 8BN.

**Opening hours will be 9am – 12.30pm most weekdays.**

**Tel/fax: 01877 339966, mobile 07790437713 or email [info@hearttoheart.org.uk](mailto:info@hearttoheart.org.uk). [www.hearttoheart.org.uk](http://www.hearttoheart.org.uk).**

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## Real Nappy Project

Forth Environment Link have recently appointed Claire Jack as project officer to work on the Forth Valley Real Nappy Network project which receives INCREASE funding from the Scottish Executive. Switching to real nappies is a much more environmentally friendly option to using disposables - it is estimated that almost three billion nappies are thrown away each year in the UK and that, in a one baby household, disposables make up about half that household's waste. There's more good news though. Using real nappies can save parents hundreds of pounds.

Claire Jack, who used real nappies on her own son, says, 'Not only are parents making a positive environmental choice when they use real nappies, but they can save up to about £500 on a first baby and even more if they reuse the nappies on subsequent babies.'

Claire is on hand to answer any queries you might have and says, 'The choice of nappies is amazing these days - from cute to funky - and shaped ones are as easy as using disposables with no pins or complicated folds. There's even a nappy laundry if people don't want to wash their own.'

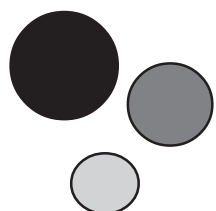
Claire is on hand to offer advice and demonstrate how to use real nappies. She has a supply of sample nappy packs with the latest designs which you can borrow and try in the comfort of your own home before making a final decision on whether to go real.

Forth Environment Link are looking for volunteers to help with the project, giving advice to parents and promoting the use of real nappies. If you want to get involved, or have any queries about real nappies, contact [claire@forthenvironmentlink.org](mailto:claire@forthenvironmentlink.org) or call 01786 449215.



SDAMH – Rural Access Service

Not coping with life in your rural community? Do you have feelings of isolation or depression? Then Stirling and District Association for Mental Health Rural Access Service may be of some assistance to you. The Rural Access Service provides practical, emotional and social support for people living in the rural areas of Stirling District, who are experiencing mental health issues and aged between 18 and 65 years. If you or someone you know could benefit from this Service, then please contact the Rural Access Worker at **SDAMH** on 01786 451203".



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Loch Lomond  
& The Trossachs  
National Park

by Owen McKee

# National Park News

Thankfully the Easter Holiday came with what

can best be described as unseasonably good weather and businesses all around gave a sigh of relief as the influx of tourists helped to eat into the overdrafts built up over the bleak winter months.

But yet again, with the crowds came the complaints. I may not have yet seen the arrival of the swallow but I sure have seen the return of the litter lout. What is it about people who can't seem to understand that there is little that is more destructive to our beautiful area than the thoughtless tossing of litter? I've often wondered if it would be useful to meet visitors as they arrive and take them to a selected area where the litter has been allowed to accumulate (I'm sure there would be no difficulty in finding a number of such areas) and asking them if that is what they have come to enjoy. I know it is only a minority of visitors - and I might add locals - who are guilty of creating the mess but maybe, just maybe, it would shock some of the culprits into mending their ways. It would be disturbing for the innocent but at least they would see that it is a major concern for us. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the litterbugs could be identified when they arrive? Unfortunately they come in all shapes and sizes and are not confined to any one age group. We are working with the local council to try

clear up the mess and we are gathering volunteers to do some selective litter picks - I will be among the volunteers who will be tackling Balquhider Glen on 19th May. But it is Spring and there are some hopeful signs. At long last the Minister has given approval to the National Park Plan and so now when any public agency, especially the Park Authority, is contemplating doing anything within the Park they MUST have regard to the Park Plan. No ifs and no buts. We now have the foundation to build a Park worthy of the name.

And building has started. The timber frame is in place for the new HQ at Balloch. Locally sourced materials are being used and the heating system is wood chip. Every care is being taken to ensure environmental sustainability. Not only will the building be stunning to behold but care was taken to encourage the employees to put forward their ideas of what would constitute a first class working environment. I am looking forward to its completion early next year.

A little nearer to home, the Callander Area Office will officially open on 30th May but some staff will be in place there some weeks before that. In addition to the Ranger service there will be an Access Officer, a Planning Officer (by appointment) and an Officer dealing with Land Grant Schemes. And most importantly there will be a receptionist to make sure that it all runs

smoothly. In addition it is hoped that some local groups will make use of the meeting room.

The new Patrol Boat which the Scottish Executive is providing to help police the Byelaws on Loch Lomond is going through its trials and although there have been one or two teething problems it looks set to be in place in May.

As mentioned in the last issue the Local Development Plan started its Strathard journey in Aberfoyle Hall on 17th March. There were no major surprises. Affordable Housing, Public Transport and business opportunities held sway. Knowing that Litter and Road Maintenance are a constant local worry we had invited a representative from Stirling Council to the event. The information he collected will help the Council in planning for these services.

As always I can be contacted as follows:

Post: Taigh Na Bhuth,  
Lochearnhead,  
FK19 8PR

Phone: 01567 830214


owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk

## Out & About



Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority has published the new Out & About guide for 2007 The events programme caters for everyone, from guided walks and talks to traditional craft workshops and nature activities for children.



The programme covers all events right through until March 2008 and includes a wide range of activities including guided bike rides, canoeing trips, badger talks, history tours and bat nights.



The booklets will be available from all National Park Visitor Centres, Tourist Information Centres and local libraries. To download a copy visit <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/media/publications.asp>







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# King Of The Road

**John MacGregor, late of the parishes of his country.**

*Abridged by Alistair Ferrie.*

I last saw him near a glen-foot that lies on the wise man's side of Schiehallion, but I was taigled at the time with respectable company and could not therefore approach him for a bit blether. I noted his direction however, and the extraordinary slowness of his progress, so I was able the next day to overhaul him within a mile or so of Auchinleck's Farm. In all my stravaigins, never had I met such a worthy soul.

What was he like? A lost Lairdie or a King of men gone astray? In his youth he might have been six feet six or seven. But now, he was eighty years old and had travelled a weary way since he put love above the lass that turned her back on him. A big burly man still, he wore a guid blue Kilmarnock bonnet cocked jauntily on a head of, once red, autumn hued silvery hair. His face was handsome but ordinary, weather-beaten to a dull peat-brown with an eagle nose and a white moustache that covered a mouth that had a weariness to it, a middling chin with steel blue eyes with a faraway look in them that gave the appearance of a man who has inner visions: visions and imaginings were his only sight, this gentleman of the road being fully blind.

His apparel comprised a red tartan kilt of the clan that needs no apology in Lochaber, black and red marled hose and great boots like shoes of fortune with a heavenward tilt about the toes. Overall, he wore an aged highland cloak that retained the hint of a fine gentleman about the cut. Slung across his shoulders on a leathered strap were two pokes, which doubtless contained the treasures of the humble, with a fiddle-case dangling from his chest. In spite of his blind eyes he carried his head high. In his left hand he carried the leash of a dour, ill-tempered collie dog that led him. In his right, a stout stick with which he kept tap-tapping the ground before him. A second collie dog trotted by his side or ranged ahead like a nervous scout - defiant.

Here was indeed a gentleman gan-about boddie of the olden times. Was he a vagrant or mendicant? No. Plainly an honest decent man of the road.

A growl from the scout collie dog made my first advance dangerous - but soon we together got into step and the traveller's blethers began. My own apparel was a little better than his although the long tiring day ascending the high crags had seen the wear of them. Yet, blind as he was, he jaloused by my voice what I was.

"Dominie or Meenister ye are?" he inquired. "I am Sir, the first, but how did you guess?" quoth I.

"Because ye speak like ane wha explains." In admiration I commented favourably on his wayfarer's wisdom. He knew Scotland from southern border to northern extremity and shared much of his knowledge with me. He had something to say, I remember, of the old Kirk at Linlithgow where James IV saw the freit of a blue-cowled bogle that warned him

not to take the field of Flodden. With that, we came upon the Auld Smiddy.

"Come in and eat," I cordially invited.

"No Sir, I never enter a hoose."

So we sat outside, side by side, a pair of Dusty-Dan's and the wisest of us (he) brewed the tea. It was an odd meal. He produced a wooden coggie from some secret place beneath his great cloak and drank his tea from it, taking sip-about with the collie dogs. When he partook of the bread the collies ate from it at the same time, so that the three mouths nibbled at it together. The slightest attempt by me to pat or touch the dogs or any of their mester's belongings brought a snarl and a snap.

"Dinna meddle wi' the Doggies or they'll let fly at ye."

They were his only friends, and his jealous keepers. He lived with them, ate with them, slept with them - inseparable.

There came more blethers of the hills, the mist, the silence and self-inflicted loneliness. He was a dab-hand at the ancient prophecies in the great book and talked like one weel-kent in the mysteries. He put the truth in this never-to-be-forgotten word -

"Ye can never be close to God till ye climb high up into the mists, alone, where there is never another by your side."

He told me of times past, honourable deeds done, great battles fought and the fall of kings while seated there among the great hills about us and the river Tay whispering by to her tryst with the sea. Even this wise one conceded his uncanny knowledge passed down by word of mouth from generations of MacGregors before him - I was sweir to let him away, but before he took to the road again I ettled after his domicile - and his parting words to me were:

"When ye think o' me for'by, think o' me as the man wha wore the MacGregor wi' pride."

With that we parted at the keystone of Caputh Bridge where it spans the Tay - and to this day I can hear the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick on the camber of the hollow arch as he moved slowly away with the collie dogs trotting by his side.

If only we could learn each another's story there would be little need for novels. But the patient one will always unravel the tangled skein. I never saw the blind fiddler again; but years anon, when he was in final repose, I learned of his whole story on a stormy winter's night in a highland bothy nearby Glenshee.

It began with a heartless public notice in the Perthshire Advertiser:

"Notice is hereby given that the estate of John Macgregor, known as the blind fiddler, a vagrant of the shires of Perth and Forfar, who died in Kirriemuir Poorhouse on 27th day of December 1916, said estates and all goods there accounted for - has fallen to His Majesty Treasury, ultimus hoeres."

John Shaw  
Town Clerk  
Forfar



Gleaned now from the bothy night: there was nothing of the usual tramp about John MacGregor, who for fifty years had travelled the highways and byways of his beloved Scotland. Rather was he the last of the old wandering minstrels. Born somewhere nearby Cairnwell, he was a kenspeckle man about the Parishes of Bal'whidder and West Perthshire and of Royal Deeside and Braemar, a teller of many tales of his proud but downtrodden MacGregor Clan. He knew the good book from end to end. His inward eye saw all the more because his blindness threw him back on the secrets of the soul.

What took a guidman such as he to the life of a wandering shenachie and fiddler?

The story goes that when he was an upstanding lad of great strength and handsome looks with a sweetheart all of his own, he was working in a great granite quarry in Aberdeenshire when a blast went off and blinded the young giant for life. To a sweetheart true, her blind man is a man held doubly dear - but to his Aberdeenshire quine her man, now blinded, was a spoiled man.

So she turned her back on his sorrow and consoled herself in the arms of an orraman from Inverbervie way. But the blinded man in MacGregor pride suffered in silence, and said nothing. Then, when his wounds healed, slipped away and took the old road to nowhere.

After that he fiddled his way through life, as many other tainted folk have done. Often in a barn he made the rafters dirl with the clamour of the Reel, when the country lads and lasses kept the Hairst Kirm going to the skreish of the new day. Yet, his tunes were not all happy: oft times his fiddle would wail out some low broken-hearted melody that came from the depths of his own soul - the slow, sad memories crowding on each another like tears from a lover's eyes. When he played to himself it was as if he was eternally seeking some comfort which he could never find. None could get John MacGregor's story by simply plucking his sleeve.

*to be continued in next issue....*





## RSPB Inversnaid

Black grouse continue to lek at Garrison but positive changes within the immediate area are happening. These changes are due to the habitat improvement through decreased grazing on the

vegetation, both on the reserve and around Loch Arklet. Preliminary survey work has shown an increase of lekking black grouse of 100% within a two-kilometre radius of Garrison farm. From the one lek of three males at Garrison farm last year, we now have our single male leks and one large lek of five males. Three greyhen (female black grouse) were also recorded in the survey. Given time and continued lower grazing, conditions are looking very favourable for a long-term increase for this Red Data Listed species in the local area. This is a designation for a bird species that has undergone more than 50% decline in numbers in the UK over the last 20 years.

The spring passage is fully underway now with departing whooper swan resting on Loch Arklet (15) before heading north to their breeding grounds. Also skeins of pink foot goose, greylag and white fronted geese have all been recorded heading north up Loch Lomond. The sightings of fieldfare have stopped now as they are returning to Scandinavia. Luckily, the spring migrants are replacing them with swallows, willow warbler and wheatears already here. Resident bird species, which winter on the coast and lowlands, are returning with a pair of oystercatchers and curlew at Garrison. Snipe and even a lapwing have been recorded. Pairs of reed bunting,

twite, buzzard, raven, mallard, chaffinch, stonechat, pied wagtail, robin, blackbird and song thrush along with an abundance of meadow pipit on the hill show that the breeding season is about to start.

Short-eared owls have been recorded in the immediate area and indications are that we may be in for a good vole year.

A pair of grey wagtail was present at Garrison with the male performing his courtship display. If you have never seen this display it is well worth watching out for, and pied wagtail perform similarly. The male circles the female whilst fanning out his tail feathers and lowers his wings and tail till they drag on the ground, he then walks quickly around the female in a close circle showing his worth. Unfortunately, the pair took off out of sight but I think she was very impressed with him!

A feral goat count was undertaken with help from a PhD student from Glasgow University and thirty-seven adult goats were counted. An emperor moth was also found during this count and the plucking post of a peregrine falcon with a prey item of a common gull. Finally, after seven years at the reserve I have seen a rabbit at the Garrison! The tracks have been there in previous winters when it has snowed; Andre and Ian (our graziers) have seen them but not me and to actually see one was a pleasant surprise. Clandestine bunnies indeed!

*Duncan Cameron  
Conservation Assistant*

## Good Green Fun Makes Sense

Stirling's newest Eco-friendly shop moved into its new premises in Springkerse on Saturday 3 March opened by Provost O'Brien.

Good Green Fun aims to make good use of second hand children's items such as toys, clothes, books, buggies and cots. These items will be sold at affordable prices through their shop in Central Stirling, which will allow lower income families the opportunity to better support their children's development and also enabling other families to help the environment by reducing wastage of resources. The outlet will promote reuse and recycling as it is estimated over 17,000 toys are going to landfill in the Stirling area alone each year, many of which are still in good condition. The shop aims to use this potential resource and provide an outlet for good quality affordable second hand toys and clothes which will also promote and raise awareness of the environmental benefits.

Some Stirling schools are already driving the project forward by holding collections, which count towards the Eco Schools scheme, where children donate toys and clothes they no longer need on special collection days. It is hoped that as well as Schools, other community groups may want to become involved by organising their own collection days – toddler groups, churches, brownies, guides, cubs and scout groups. Donations from the public are also welcome.

Good Green Fun is a Community Interest Company – not for profit organisation – with surplus being donated to children's charities chosen by the schools and other groups involved. The organisation has received grants from the Scottish Executive INCREASE Programme, SEPA and Business Gateway. They rely on volunteers to help with their work, and anyone interested in volunteering can visit their website for more information – [www.goodgreenfun.co.uk](http://www.goodgreenfun.co.uk), or phone Helen at Good Green Fun on 01786 849216.



## Easter football at Forthbank

ACTIVE Stirling in conjunction with the SFA have been delivering football coaching courses to children between the ages of 5 to 16 years during the Easter Holidays.

SFA certified and disclosure coaches have been delivering structured sessions at Forthbank stadium, with the main emphasis on fun and participation.

Scott Kinross, SFA Football Development Officer said, "The numbers for both weeks has been extremely high, with approximately 140 children attending. The coaches follow a timetable of content, which includes skill practices on moving with the ball, passing and shooting drills as well as small-sided games. The main emphasis is on fun and taking part and it is great to see so many children enjoying themselves while playing football."

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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)

## OSPREYS v DOGGIES v APES

There is a "wild sense of anticipation and excitement around The Lodge these days, as several contenders strive for top billing in the month ahead. Taking an early lead is our osprey family, settling, finally, into their nest, despite the occasional intruder or erstwhile suitor. Our feathered friends, however, face stiff competition in the shape of "Go Ape", galloping towards the first hurdle at great speed. This eagerly-awaited and highly innovative high-wire adventure course is due to open in early May, and arrives on the back of huge success achieved throughout several forest districts in England in recent years. Full report to follow in the next issue. You might want to consider, though, as an outside bet, our immensely popular annual dog event on the 6th of May.

Will the canines have their say?

Or will the ospreys win the day?

Or will the "apes" keep them both at bay?

Let the battle commence!

## EASTER BONANZAI

There were many smiling faces to be found over the weekend as the good weather brought over five thousand visitors to The Lodge. The main focus of events took place on the Sunday and began at 8.00 a.m. with our third annual church service held, as usual, on the outside decking area. Despite the early start, the light-hearted approach of the organisers and the enthusiasm of the hundred plus gathering contributed jointly to a warm occasion. On completion of the service, Liz and her staff laid on teas, coffees and 'bacon butties' for the multitude. Brenda's yoga class was then followed by the traditional children's activities, which started around mid-day. From that moment on there would be no let up for the hard-working staff. From egg decorating to the osprey watch; from Chill Out to the scavenger hunt; from the Easter bunny to the forest crafts shop; from the duck races to the prize raffle; from the bird feeding station to the nest box building; from the waterfall trail to the cycle routes; from fishing permits to orienteering; from the squirrel hide to the geology trail; from campsite bookings to picking up litter; from administering first aid to cleaning the toilets; from lost property enquiries to function room enquiries; from memorial tree enquiries to telephone enquiries; from the owner of a lost dog to mending a broken car park machine; from stocking the shelves to dealing with reps; from promoting events to giving directions: *Do you have any mountain bike routes? Where are the toilets? I'm on a forest road somewhere and someone has locked a gate behind me, can you get me out? Do you have baby changing facilities? I'd like to report a fire, who can I talk to? Can I book a wedding here? Who was David Marshall, anyway?* Meanwhile, we also dealt with a sale, on average, every two minutes in the forest crafts shop. All in a day's work.





## DARK SKY SCOTLAND

On the evening of the 22nd of March, almost forty schoolchildren descended on The David Marshall Lodge for an assortment of space-related events. Coaches brought primary 6 and 7 pupils from four Alloa schools to take advantage of the dark skies and superb views from the site. As they arrived, over half a dozen members from the Society were outside setting up an array of telescopes ready for the evening's viewing. Indoor activities included rocket-making, two demonstrators from the Glasgow Science Centre making comets using a supply of dry ice and other materials, and the good weather allowed the children to launch the rockets built in the workshop outside the Lodge. The highlight was undoubtedly a visit from Nic Patrick, NASA astronaut and space station veteran, who was in Scotland returning the Saltire flag to the Parliament following its trip into space. Nic gave a very illuminating talk and afterwards stayed for photographs and informal chat with the schoolchildren. Dark Sky Scotland is a public outreach initiative sponsored by the



Scottish Executive, Careers Scotland, and a number of other organisations. Partners include the Royal Observatory Edinburgh, Glasgow Science Centre, the Forestry Commission and local astronomical societies. The intention is to involve the public and promote interest in astronomy and science in general. Family events are being organised with Forestry Commission Scotland - the national forest estate and the Commission's accessible visitor facilities being ideal locations from which to explore the skies. Careers Scotland is coordinating workshops for teachers to help open the eyes of pupils

and parents to the night sky and the wider world of science and technology. This was our first event under the Dark Sky umbrella. As darkness fell, the outdoor began and the youngsters were treated to views of Venus, Saturn, and a young crescent Moon through clearing skies. This was also the first outing for some of our new equipment including two new telescopes purchased as a result of our recent successful Lottery Grant application, which were

specifically intended for events like this. The whole evening was a real feather in the cap for The Society, and we are hoping to build on this success by putting on similar events later in the year. Many thanks to all those helped on the evening and in particular to the Forestry Commission for the use of their splendid facility. More details of The Dark Sky programme can be found at - [www.darksksotland.org.uk](http://www.darksksotland.org.uk)  
Alan Cayless  
Stirling Astronomical Society  
27 March 2007

*I would just like to add my personal thanks to Alan for taking the time to contribute this article, to the other society members for the admirable patience shown toward a very excitable group of children, to Lynsey Davidson from Careers Scotland for sending a similar article, and to all the other organisations mentioned, whose collective input fashioned an extraordinary evening's entertainment.*



## DML Notice Board

Having only just recovered from our Easter weekend 'warm-up', I can scarcely believe we will soon be preparing ourselves for the bluebells. Here we go then.

### **SATURDAY APRIL 28 - SUNDAY MAY 6 OUTDOOR ACCESS FESTIVAL**

Interpretation boards will be on display throughout, detailing new access rights, with emphasis on the responsibilities of dog-owners, cyclists, and horse-owners when in the countryside.

### **SUNDAY MAY 6**

### **DOG DAY AFTERNOON 2 12.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.**

This is the second of our proposed annual dog events and, judging by the success of the first one last September, we expect a huge turn-out. For details, please refer to attached advert. No cats allowed!

### **SATURDAY MAY 12 - SUNDAY JUNE 10**

### **BLUEBELL FESTIVAL**

Guided walks will be available through the forest, to celebrate and enjoy the arrival of this unique flower. Details to be confirmed.

### **SUNDAY MAY 20**

### **HEELSTER GOWDIE 2.30 p.m.**

This is the third season for our resident band, which will be performing on the third Sunday of every month during the summer. These concerts are free, though donations to the band's chosen charities will be very welcome on the day.



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**Saturday 25th August**  
**11 am til 4 pm**

**Contacts**

<b>David Wilkie</b>	<b>01877 382 868</b>
<b>Jackie Bell</b>	<b>01877 382 142</b>
<b>Julie Glen</b>	<b>01877 382 296</b>

'A GATHERING' is termed as a coming together of people, based on age-old clan meetings which celebrated our heritage and culture. If you wish to be involved or contribute in any way to this special event, as a sponsor, volunteer or stall-holder, NOW is the time to make the call. This is not just ABOUT Aberfoyle - this is FOR Aberfoyle.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. To increase awareness of community spirit
2. To raise funds for vital community services
3. To support local traders, businesses, clubs and organisations
4. To broaden the profile of Aberfoyle as a visitor attraction
5. To have a FUN DAY out!

### PORT OF MENTEITH

The **Sandy Stewart Memorial Committee for Cancer Research** welcomes everyone to the annual plant sale to be held in Port of Menteith village hall on Saturday 12th May 10am - 2pm. As well as a variety of plants for sale there will be a sales table and hamper raffle. Coffees will be available till noon. Soup (£1.50) will be served from noon onwards. Admission £1 (includes coffee and biscuits)  
Contribution of Plants - Please bring to hall on Friday 11th May 3pm - 4pm.

### 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.

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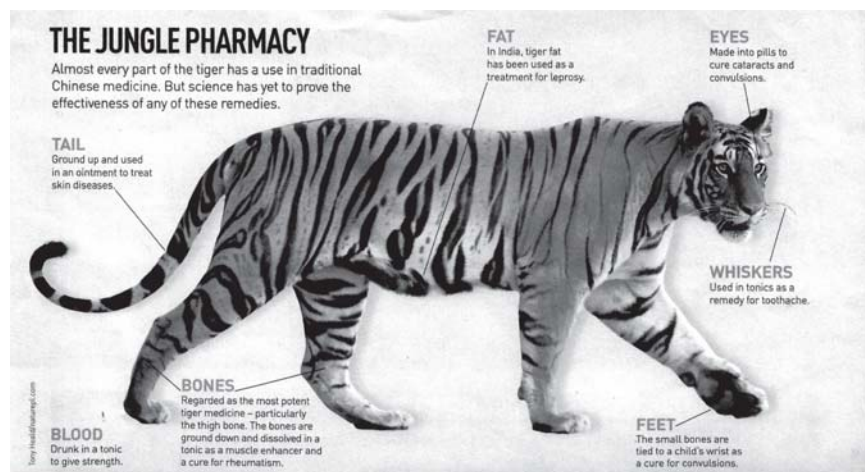
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## Rangers Corner



The Chinese, it would now appear, are a major power  
Their economy growing, literally, with each passing hour  
But as capitalism takes hold, consumerism will create ever more need  
Inevitably, the pursuit of wealth will establish a nation of greed.  
Of course, the Western World has already arrived at this particular station,  
Well-versed in the art of manipulation.  
As banks and insurance companies play a game of chance with the conscience of the Nation  
With every conceivable "feel-better" deal in creation  
Advertising and marketing policies are clearly designed to smother  
For example, no sooner have we bought one celebratory card, we have to deal with another.  
Christmas is over, but there are 'holidays' to be planned  
And for pity's sake, don't dismiss Easter out of hand  
On your new business venture, wishing you all the best  
And congratulations on your driving test  
Birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, Valentines Day  
Of course we would all like to say something in our own special way  
And celebrations are all very nice  
But each and every single one of them comes at a price  
Need a new car, kitchen, conservatory, perhaps? - I can put you in touch  
'I promise it won't cost you too much'  
In fact, you don't have to pay now - give us a call in a couple of years.  
Naturally, this scenario will likely end in tears  
As you discover you cannot afford the blasted thing after all  
Having blown the money set aside on trips to the shopping mall  
Where temptation draws you like a magnet toward the discount signs  
And those seemingly permanent 'end of season lines'  
As you drown in self-satisfaction with all the money you've 'saved'  
On all those sale items (which until you bought, you didn't know you craved)  
Getting back to the point of the story  
The Chinese are not exactly covering themselves in glory  
For, with their particular, and ever-increasing, 'must-have' needs  
They are sowing some very dangerous seeds  
As they continue to be blinded in each corner they turn  
To some very real issues which would make your stomach churn  
From breeding bears in cages for no less than their bile  
And skinning cats and dogs for their fur, to create a 'new style'  
They are not only anxious to promote such as mobile phones  
They also have a detestable and illegal interest in tiger bones  
Supplied by mercenaries and poachers throughout India and Tibet  
Whose minimalist thinking is based on how much of a reward they will get  
From health stores and any number of 'exotic buyers'  
Who, in essence, are no more than a bunch of cut-throat thieves and liars  
There is nothing that fills me more with rage  
Than these sublimely ignorant advances of 'the modern age'  
And, currently, China displays no sign of distinction  
Between the acquisition of wealth and the tiger's extinction  
For to them, it would seem, the less of the number in size  
Means a higher value, and therefore, the greater the prize  
Think about this the next time you order a Chinese take-away

**FACTS:** *There are fewer than 3,500 tigers left in the wild. This unhealthy balance of numbers will soon become irretrievable, as disturbance by loggers intent on deforestation and the planned production of new oil pipelines through the traditional breeding habitats of the tiger in Asia takes hold, and it is only a matter of time before this human encroachment forces the inevitable demise of this majestic, and truly beautiful creature.*





## Launch of Fostering Recruitment DVD

STIRLING Councils Children Services launched a new DVD, which is designed to assist in recruiting future foster carers. The event on Monday 19 March in the Municipal Chambers to launch the DVD, acknowledged the contribution of carers, the valuable work that they do, and stress the importance of the fostering task and the need for more carers.

The Scottish executive made additional funding available to local authorities to assist them in recruiting additional foster carers. Each authority had to submit an action plan to the Executive detailing the purpose of the spend and a six monthly progress report has to be submitted.

One of the areas that were identified in Stirling was the improvement of recruitment material. David Cameron, Director of Children's Services said, "We wanted to develop a DVD, which would give potential carers a better feel for the task of caring for children in public care, information on the recruitment process and how to become a carer. The DVD was seen as an innovative way of engaging with potential applicants by using existing carers, staff and young people who had been cared for to tell the story of fostering."

The DVD explains what fostering involves, the different kinds of care that can be provided (short term/ long term/respite care), how we assess and approve carers, the rewards that are involved and the range of support offered to carers.

Councillor Margaret Brisley said, "Stirling Council realises the wonderful and dedicated job that carers already do, and the DVD will help reinforce our commitment to young people."

The intention is to have the DVD clips on the Council website so that it can be viewed online, to make it available in public libraries and when people make enquiries to send it out as part of the initial information pack where people cannot access the Council website.

## KIRK NEWS

Services:

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May**

11.15 a.m. Morning Worship

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May**

10.00 a.m. Joint Communion Service at Port of Menteith Kirk

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May**

11.15 a.m. Morning Worship conducted by the Rev June Cloggie

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May**

11.15 a.m. Morning Worship

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

11.15 a.m. Morning Worship

*Jim Brown, Locum Minister.*



## St Mary's Episcopal Church

The fact is that Christ did not choose the best or wisest men to be his disciples. Judas betrayed his master for a pittance, and James and John joined Christ only in the hope of promotion to greater things. Peter's loyalty couldn't be relied upon at a time of crisis. On the eve of Christ's crucifixion, Peter, in answer to a harmless servant girl, denied that he had ever known Christ. Alas, the catalogue of inept disciples has not yet ended, for Thomas also has to be mentioned. Thomas with the other disciples would have heard from Christ's own lips during his time on earth that he would die, and yet rise from death. On the first Easter Day Christ fulfilled his promise, and later appeared to his disciples. Thomas though was not present to see Christ on this occasion. In spite of their best endeavours to convince him that they had seen their master, Thomas refused to accept it as true. Instead he declared that he couldn't believe unless Christ appeared to him in person. For that, Thomas earned the sobriquet doubting Thomas. And surely doubting in a believer is the greatest sin of all?

The fifteen service personnel recently held captive in Iran have captured the news headlines of late. On the day when intelligence of their release and journey home was confirmed, a mother of one of the personnel was interviewed for her reaction to the news. 'Aren't you glad your son is safe?' asked the journalist. But the mother obviously doubted what she had been told. 'I don't think that I will be able to believe that my son is safe until he is standing before us in flesh and blood and I can hug him.'

Perhaps in hindsight, Thomas was not so much a weak man, but a very human one. After all, it is hard to believe vital matters of life and death simply by hearsay. Mercifully Christ understood Thomas's misgivings, and in accordance with his wishes came before him as proof of his rising.

So is it right to doubt in matters of faith? Probably there are two sorts of doubt. There is the doubt of those whose minds are already firmly closed. As the proverb says 'There are none so blind as those who won't see.' The other doubt is the doubt of those who nevertheless have kept the door of their minds ajar. Thomas doubted like this, and Christ was able to enter it. As a Polish proverb says 'to begin with certainty, we must begin with doubting'



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# The Great And The Good Of Strathard

## The Rock Star's Tale

There are more than a few persons living in Strathard who have made their mark in the world, whatever their field. Over the coming months it is the intention of the Strathard News to gain access to these individuals, to interview them in an endeavour to discover how they came to achieve success in their chosen careers. A daunting task, I'm sure you will agree, but it was felt that it might make interesting, even enjoyable, reading and at the same time make the interviewee feel more a part of our community.

One such personality who we recently managed to meet up with and interview was that rock icon of the 70s, **Jan Oyah Wyzinsky**, the accredited king of Glam Rock, known in Britain as 'Jan the Man', or 'Jock the Rocker' Stateside. Originally from the fair kingdom of Fife, Jan made the big time as lead singer with Steel Lady but really came to the fore heading his own band in '75, the San Ferian. Although the name is French and he admits to not speaking the language, he still felt that it would reflect the group's growing international status although he thought that the meaning of the group's name, although made up, was of little importance. The name, he confesses, was in tribute to that great Belgian band of the mid 70s, Plastic Bertrand, which he admired greatly. Coincidentally, he pointed out that the Belgian group's greatest hit, 'Sang Plank Poor Ma', apparently a song about a woman in the building trade, still endures as background music in the British TV advert for Renault. A funny old world, as Jan would say.

I managed to meet up with Jan at his small farmhouse out beyond Kinlochard where he lives with his wife Mary Dancer and their son, Oyah. Jan is a big man, a sort of Meatloaf but with a slice or two taken off and is a very jovial person. He began by showing me around his place which I confess to finding a tad run down, but his state of the art studio was something to behold demonstrating, if there was any need, his continuing love for composing music. We talked of his first great single, reprised from the Buddy Holly book, entitled, 'Peggy Sue Got Married' which featured on the front side and 'Who's Kissing Her Now?' on the reverse. The first album from San Ferian, a complete

contrast to their former glam rock image was the renowned and record-breaking 'Sad Songs For Simple Lovers'. From that album, who can ever forget the haunting chorus from the ballad, 'Lady In Plaid', where Jan sings:

*Oh, how we danced on the night we were wed, I wanted a wife Like a hole in the head.'*

Such is true talent demonstrated. A stunning song and a world-breaking album that sold platinum. Jan and his group played to packed houses, even in the States, where they performed at the Shea Stadium in New York and Houston Astrodome to name but two. Also the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, but that would be three.

Since moving to the Trossachs some years ago, he says his former riotous lifestyle has quietened down. 'I play my music, ken? That and growing our own food, it's all that matters.' His son, a quiet spoken man in his twenties, who sits in on our interview, does admit it is a 'wee bit' quiet but they do enjoy the countryside of Strathard. He confesses to one regret that his father, wishing to acknowledge his Polish ancestry (Jan's father settled in Fife after the war), christened him with the family name 'Oyah' whilst retaining his mother's maiden name. 'Living in the west of Scotland you can understand the problems I have had with my name!' he groans.

'It's hard having to live up to a name like Oyah Dancer.' But he says it with a smile. Jan chortles but then brings up the problem that is topmost in everybody's mind in this neck of the woods, that of the midgie. 'Where we're staying, its full o' the midgies, ken? Up to we moved here the only midgie I heard of was Midge Ure!' He has spent a lot of money on what he considers to be a personal crusade, the eradication of the midgies in Strathard. 'Today Strathard, tomorrow Scotland!' he cries. Other than the obvious buying of several midgie machines, he also brought in a "scientist" ('Well, that's what he said

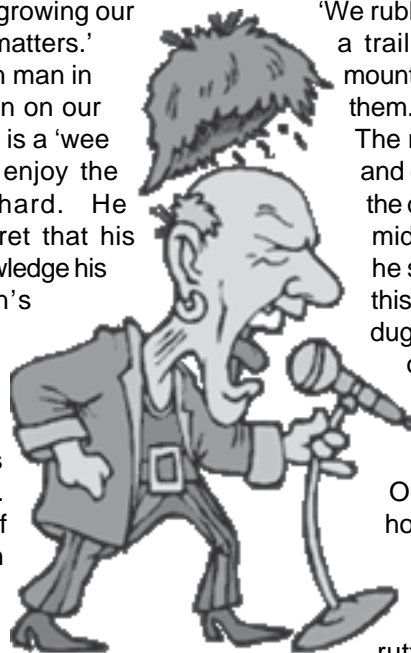
he was!' growled Jan) from Prague who had apparently invented a screen which was totally midgie proof but which you could still see through. What Jan finally got were some sheets of toughened glass. He agrees he was conned but with his droll humour he shrugged it off. 'It was "painful". We thought we had a "window" of opportunity opening, ken. Still,' he added, 'I paid the guy off with a dud cheque. A bittie ironic, eh?'

Not one to give up easily, he has now brought in a pack of Fell hounds, 'And they're still standing' he jokes. He feels this could solve the midgie problem. Fell Hounds, from the Lake District, are trained to run up and over mountains following a scent and then race back to the start. They have such races in Cumbria. Jan thought this might be of use in Strathard and, if properly trained, might suit his aims.

'We rubbed goose fat on them, laid a trail and let them run up the mountains taking the midgies with them. Ach man, but it didn't work. The midgies got stuck to the fat and came back down again with the dugs. And they brought mair midgies with them! Fear not,' he said, 'we're not giving up on this and will continue to use the dugs to sort the midgie problem out. We're now following several new leads.'

Finally we had to say goodbye and left Jan and Oyah with their many fell hounds, dribbling but content with their lot (we're talking about the dogs here!).

As we drove down the rutted farm track away from their delightful farm and on towards Kinlochard, we could hear the gentle wail of Jan's Fender Stratocaster echo through the woods in the sunset. 'Hells' bells!' my colleague cried out, 'He's starting on the bagpipes! Now *that* might see off the midgies!' Sometimes, alas, you have to work with Philistines.





Award Winning Tearoom



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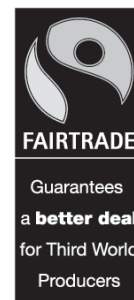
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# Local Names in the Parish of Aberfoyle

by Louis Stott

...continued from issue 36

## Water Features

In any given district words for stretches of water are often the oldest names and, for this reason, their meanings are, at times, obscure. The Forth, Watson says, is mentioned in Tacitus. He notes that in the twelfth century the Forth had three names *Froch* in Gaelic *Gwerid* in Welsh or British and *Scottwattre* in English. In a Latin poem of the twelfth century the name 'Forth' is used; and a prose account of the same period refers to 'magnum flumen Forthi,' river of Forth. Watson states that it is an extremely curious fact that the name is unknown in modern Gaelic, either in common speech or in literature. In Old Gaelic there is an important instance of it in a poem, composed before 1100, about Aedán mac Gabrain, who was king of Dal Riata in Columba's time. The narrative goes back to Aedán's birth, at a time when his father, Gabran, was engaged in a foray beyond his own lands, apparently 'at Foirthe' Further on, Aedán is styled 'Prince of Forth,' a title which is appropriate in view of these campaigns... Watson states that 'Foirthe' is an *-ia* stem, representing *Vorrit-ia*, from the root seen in the Irish *rith*, the act of running, *relhim*, I run, 'the slow-running one.'

The Forth is one of Scotland's three or four most important rivers but, in its upper reaches, it is not a very impressive stream. Sir William Alexander (1567-1640), first Earl of Stirling, was right when in his *Paraenesis, or Exhortation to Government*, he wrote: -

"Forth, when she first doth from Benlowmond rinne,

Is poore of waters, naked of renowne;  
But Carron, Allan, Teath, and Devon in,  
Doth grow the greater still the further downe;

Till that abounding both in power and fame,

She long doth strive to give the sea her name."

At that time the Forth was rather a mystery to mapmakers. They could not accept that the Lake of Menteith and Loch Ard, not to mention various other smaller lochs were, in effect, situated on tributaries of the Forth rather than on the main stream itself. One account has the Forth rising in the Lake of Menteith. Sir William Alexander may have asserted that the Forth rose on Ben Lomond, but Timothy Pont considered that it rose in Lochan Mhaim nan Carn above Frenich. In the middle of the nineteenth century Rev Robert Graham suggested in the

*New Statistical Account* that it rose at Sgiath an Iubhair, the yew-tree spur, near Loch Arklet. Both of these sources are situated on the upper reaches of the Avondhu, the river that drains Loch Ard. Indeed, Robert Graham held (probably wrongly) that the Avondhu carried more water than the Duchray. The *Ordnance Gazetteer* notes that the Duchray, the water of the dark sheiling, rises at 3000 ft on Ben Lomond and flows 13.75 miles to its confluence with the Avondhu, whereas the Avondhu, which drains Loch Chon, Loch Dhu and Loch Ard, is but nine miles in length. Inspection of the map suggests that the Forth's remotest source may well be in Gleann Gaoithe; the windy glen. It is of interest that it is the Abhainn Gaoithe that drains this glen whereas another headwater at Comer bears the lesser name Abhainn Beag, the little river.

On Pont's manuscript map of Loch Lomond the whole of the loch is shown and the map extends as far west as Loch Aird (Loch Ard) and shows the headwaters of the River Forth. In the north, the western end of *Loch Ketterin* (Loch Katrine) is shown. Of the names of our major lochs Loch Katrine is the most puzzling. The old *Forest Park Handbook* (1973) has it as the highly unlikely 'Loch Catriona'. Watson suggests Loch Ceiteirein, 'the loch of the furies or fiends'. Johnston, often wrong, but always interesting, begins by asserting that Loch Katrine was not in Pont (as, perhaps, to his knowledge, it was not) and then gives both 'Kittern' and 'Catherine' before plumping for 'the battle of hell' which he then rejects in favour of 'the battle of Earn'.

Loch Chon is a plural, although it frequently appears on old maps as Loch Ko, which is singular. Loch Chon means 'loch of the dogs'. In his book *The Trossachs* Campbell Nairne, discussing the perils of map-making, refers to "a blunder made by the seventeenth century antiquary and geographer Sir Robert Sibbald at the time when he was correcting and revising the district maps of Timothy Pont". He goes on "Pont had correctly drawn a waterfall on his map of Loch Chon. Sibbald visiting the spot fifty years later could find no waterfall and crossed out Pont's sketch. The original map was among the Sibbald papers acquired by the Advocates' Library in 1723, and the unfortunate erasure can still be seen". However, recent inquiries suggest that no such Pont map exists.

...to be continued in the next issue

## Alphabetical Listing of Local Names

<u>Place Name</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
Dail Malio	St Molios' haugh
<i>Dail</i> often indicates land gifted to the Church	
Daisher	[?] south [farm]
<i>An old farmstead was situated at Daisher</i>	
Dalavie ‡	river or gloomy field
<i>Dalavie NN 481 001 - deserted settlement</i>	
Dalchone ‡‡	the dogs' field
Daldannet ‡	old church field
<i>Annat means "the parent church"</i>	
Daldrishaig	bramble haugh
Dalveagh	[?] little field
<i>see "Dail Malio"; compare "Dalavie"</i>	
David Marshall Lodge	self-evident
<i>From a former chairman of the Carnegie Trust</i>	
Deer Craig	self evident
Doon Hill	evident
Dounans [Camp]	little castle
<i>sometimes Downance; site of castle</i>	
Dow of Chon	dark house of Chon
Druim Buidhe	yellow ridge
Druim Leathann	broad ridge
Druim nan Carn	ridge of the cairns
Druim nan Sasunnach	stranger's ridge
Drum Ardrey	[?] high ridge
Drum nan Mial	ridge of the tick
Drumbeg	little ridge
Drumlean	broad ridge
Drumlean Bothy °	<i>see Drumlean</i>
Drunkie Burn	<i>see Drunkie</i>
Duke Murdoch's Castle	self-evident
<i>From Murdoch, Duke of Albany (c1362-1425)</i>	
Duke's Pass	self-evident
<i>Constructed by the Duke of Montrose</i>	
Dun Dubh	black hillock
Dun Mor	big dun
Dun nam Muc	pigs' dun
Dunardry	steep little hill
Dundarroch	oak hillock
Dundochil	inhospitable island
Dungarrow	rough hill
Dunrivach	brindled hillock
Dunvarig ‡‡	[?] brushwood knoll
Eas Chagill ‡‡	<i>meaning unexplained</i>
Eas Chaimbeulach	crooked pass waterfall
Eas Dearg	red fall
Eas Mor	big fall
Easan Gruamach	gloomy waterfalls
Easan na Glashart °	Glashart falls
Easter Park	self evident
Eilean Ghorm	green island
Eilean na Ceille	joined island
Ellrick	deer trap
Faery Knoll	self-evident
Fairy Knowe	self-evident
Feilbarachan	St Berach's fair [field]
Forest Hills Hotel	self-evident
Frenich	place of the bracken
Fuaran na Cullaich °	the boar's well
Garbeg Hill	rough little hill
Gartloaning	the enclosed part of the little meadow
<i>Earl of Lennox's camp before the Battle of Tullymoss in 1489</i>	
Gartnerichnich	[?] bracken enclosure
Glac nan Sealg	hollow of the hunt
Glasahoile or Glassel	green wood
Glean Fearnna	alder glen
Glen Riabhach	brindled glen
Glencleland	[?] personal name



## FEIS

A fèis is being held on the weekend of 23rd and 24th of June in McLaren High School. Fèis is Gaelic for festival or feast but has become synonymous with the movement which offers young people aged 8 to 18 expert tuition in traditional music, song, dance and drama. The tutors who teach at these events are some of the leading practitioners of their art form.

Fèis sa Mheadhan has already organized one fèis in Callander and several in other areas of Central Scotland. The main thrust of participation at these events has come from the Callander area.

Following the fundamental principles of the umbrella group Fèisean nan Gaidheal, the committee of Fèis sa Mheadhan wish to see future fèisan being driven from the communities where support is strongest. Callander is one such community. Historically, community led fèisean have always been the most successful. This would mean our community organizing our own fèis with support from Fèisean nan Gaidheal and Fèis sa Mheadhan.

The Callander fèis will offer weekend long tuition in two subjects.

Instruments will be provided for complete beginners. The weekend is open to any young person between the ages of 8 to 18 and will cater for all ability levels. Fèisan are an opportunity for young people to learn about their country's rich musical heritage but are also an opportunity to make music together and form musical contacts.

If our fèis is a success one spin off could be tutors coming on a regular basis to run workshops for local kids thus providing ongoing tuition.

A group of interested parties from the Callander area has started the ball rolling. If you are interested in supporting this team or have any skills you feel may be of use, please contact Fiona Allen on 01877 331098. We especially need people to help out on the two days of the fèis itself. This will involve having a police check carried out by Disclosure Scotland. This takes some time to process so the sooner we get a team of volunteers together, the better.

*Fiona Allen*

## STRANGE BUT....

**There!** We're back! Just when you thought it was safe to leave the house, 'Strange But....' returns – and, as always, with a small but eclectic selection of human foibles and misbehaviour to pass on to you, the discerning reader.

**Take,** for our first example, the local chap who ordered a camera through the Internet. No problem there, I hear you say. Alas, you ain't heard *nothin'* yet! After a few days he made a 'phone call to check up on delivery date. He was given the name and telephone number of the delivery company which he contacted on the Monday evening. (Please note: the day in question is important to the story if you reside in the Aberfoyle area).

The delivery company (the name has been withheld to protect the gormless) said that delivery had been made that day but, as no one had been at home, they had left said camera in the wheelie bin. Pretty neat, you might think: no petty thief would think of looking in a wheelie bin. Unfortunately, nor would the rightful owner. And, as everyone hereabout knows, the bin collection is on a Tuesday morning! Happily, our man with a camera managed to retrieve his brand spanking new purchase before it went to the tip.

.....

Our second tale involves a member of the older generation who, due to the following incident in the fair town of Stirling (sorry, *city*), now realizes he is probably the oldest swinger in town, alas.

Walking into one music store, he searches in vain for a particular CD. Needless to say, he is checking in the Rock 'N' Roll racks. Finally frustrated, he approaches a member of staff.

"Jerry Lee Lewis?" is the puzzled reply, "Is that the comedian?"

"No," our grizzled old rocker replies, "That's Jerry Lewis. Jerry Lee Lewis is what I'm looking for. The King of rock and roll."

"Ah," the young staff member replies, "If it's old rock and roll then that comes under 'Easy Listening'."

Jerry Lee under 'Easy Listening'? Sadly, it was true! Ah, how the times they are a changing!

## Balfron 10K Race

The very first Co-op Balfron 10K on Sunday 22nd April was a huge success with over 600 runners taking part in the road race. Hundreds of spectators were entertained as the athletes started from Balfron Campus and headed out through the village towards the Fintry Hills.

The organisers would like to thank the Co-op and all the sponsors, runners, Balfron Primary, helpers, and all spectators for making this such a memorable and fun day out. For full details of runners times, please check the website [www.balfron10k.org.uk](http://www.balfron10k.org.uk)



back row l-r: Robert Paterson, Paul Thompson, Alison Docherty, Stirling Provost Colin O'Brien, Alastair Morrison, Benny McLaughlin, Jorge Chacon-Clark

front row l-r: Michelle Hetherington, Morna Fleming, Melanie Douglas

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## Milton

Hello Children,

There was great excitement in Kinlochard when a wild boar was running loose in the village. It is not the sort of animal you want to bump into on a dark night. Even in broad daylight I would give a wild boar a very wide berth. Thankfully, wild boar are few and far between although, in days gone by, there would have been quite a lot of them in the forests of the Trossachs. The name Brig o'Turk means the bridge of the boar. One of the guests staying at Forest Hills saw the wild boar crossing the little wooden bridge over the burn running through the beautiful grounds. So, now Forest Hills



has its very own brig o'turk. The large, fierce creature was last seen heading off towards Ledard. I bet Fergus' sheep got a shock!

I had never seen a wild

boar, neither had any of the other kits. This looked like a good adventure for the gang. Mum made lots of sandwiches for us to take on the wild boar hunt. George the hare came with us as we caught John Buchanan's bus from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard. The twins, Duke and Katrine, were very excited. Braeval, on the other hand, was wondering what we would do with the wild boar — if we actually managed to catch it. We all got off the Aberfoyle Motor's orange bus at the Go Forth marina. The plan was to swim up the burn, under the new brig o'turk and past Forest Hills Hotel, and make our way onto the Drumlean Hill. George, who does not like water, had a few problems keeping up with us.

Once on the hill, with great views over Loch Ard, the boar hunt began in earnest. Braeval, who thinks she knows everything, said that wild boar always live in amongst the trees, so we headed off into the dark wood. After a while we came upon a strange wooden house, just like the one Hansel and Gretel lived in. There was nobody at home. We sat and ate our sandwiches, carrot and lettuce for the vegetarian hare and trout with frog spawn jelly for the otters. George suddenly thought that this weird house might belong to a witch. We quickly packed up what was left of the picnic and scarpered. It was then that we heard a peculiar rustling, right in front of us. Wild boar!!

Perhaps it would be safer to tiptoe away. But there was more rustling behind us. We were trapped. Do wild boar eat otters and hares? Probably.....

We seemed to be totally surrounded.....and the sounds were getting closer and closer and closer. Then we saw, through the trees, not wild boar but a herd of feral goats. There were billies and nannies and a whole lot of beautiful little kids. The goats were a bit surprised to see us but were very friendly, stopping for a chat. They were making their way down to graze on Val's lawns at Altskeith. We shared the rest of our sandwiches with our new friends, carrot and lettuce, trout and frog spawn jelly, the goats ate them all. Nobody can ever say that goats are fussy about what they eat. As the goats trekked off towards the flowers in Simon and Jane's garden, we headed back towards our own tea at Aberfoyle.

Primroses and bluebells were flowering beneath the trees around Drumlean Farm. The leaves on the oak trees had emerged from their winter sleep. The buds on the grey ash trees were still tightly shut.

Grandpa Otter has a little weather forecasting rhyme that always repeats at this time of year. "Oak before ash, you'll just get a splash. Ash before oak, you are in for a soak." We will get wet either way; it is only a matter of degree! As we squeezed under the farm gate, back onto the Aberfoyle road, George pointed out a yellow sign — "Beware of wild boar."

*Bye for now,*  
*Milton.*



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## lost & found

Are you missing a Boots Hedge Rose Plate and a Viners fork after Danny and Nancy Gibb's farewell at the Village Hall? Please contact Paul Owens on 01877 382389.

## Trossachs 10k Trail Race

in aid of the  
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Application forms are available at the Forth Inn or Aberfoyle Tourist Information Office. Fabulous route through the forest and all for a good cause too! Entry £10. Any further information available from Jillian McLean on 01877 382332.

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## Peanut-Chile Soup (South African Soup)

### Ingredients:

- 2 large leeks and tops; washed and cut into thin rings
- 4 cup Chicken Stock
- 1 large Onion; chopped
- 1 cup Cooked long-grain white rice
- 3 small Fresh hot chiles; seeds included and cut into rings
- 1 Red bell pepper; seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 cup Roasted salted peanuts; not dry roasted
- Salt; black pepper & cayenne pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup Finely chopped roasted salted peanuts; for garnish



### Method:

Reserve 1/2 cup leeks. In a heavy 2 to 3-quart saucepan over high heat, bring broth, onion, and the remaining leeks to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer until vegetables are tender (25 to 30 minutes). Remove from heat and puree in a blender.

Return soup to saucepan, reserving 1 cup.

Add rice, chiles, bell pepper, and reserved leeks and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook for about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a blender puree reserved soup and peanuts. Stir into soup on stove and continue cooking for the remainder of the 15 minutes.

Season to taste, using salt, pepper, and cayenne.

**NOTES:** To serve, ladle into a heated serving dish and lightly sprinkle top with chopped peanuts.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 cup.)

We recently used this recipe for our South African Food & Wine evening held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

If you are interested in good food and wine then look out later in the year, when we hope to run similar events from other countries.

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## Forth Inn Events Diary

**20 May** - Pub Quiz starts @ 9pm, prize for winning team!

.....

**2 June** - Karaoke, Fun starts 9pm in The Wallace Bar

.....

**10 June** - Pub Quiz starts @ 9pm, prize for winning team!

.....

**17 June** - Father's Day Menus

.....

**30 June** - Karaoke, Fun starts 9pm in The Wallace Bar

.....

Main Street, Aberfoyle FK8 3UQ

Tel: 01877 382 372

E-mail: [Phil@ForthInn.com](mailto:Phil@ForthInn.com)

## COMMITTEE & CONTACTS

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## Advertising Costs

40mm x 37mm	£5
40mm x 75mm	£10
75mm x 75mm	£20
152mm x 40mm	£20
190mm x 190mm	£30

## Deadline Dates 2007

3rd June  
22nd July  
2nd September  
21 October  
18th November



Jane field, Ruskie, Stirlingshire, FK8 3LG  
**Tel: 01786 850500 Fax: 01786 850555**  
**Email: directvehicleopt@aol.com**

We are pleased to announce that we now offer a full mechanical Service and Repair facility. If your vehicle is still within the manufacturer's warranty we can service it within the manufacturer's schedule using their parts whilst continuing their warranties for the full period. Of course we will offer this service at considerably less cost than the main dealer. We also offer an uplift and courtesy car service.

#### **INTERESTING!!!**

Motorists in the UK could save more than £100 million a year if they switch to independent garages for servicing, new Government figures show. But the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) says 86% per cent of business still goes to franchised dealers, despite new rules letting owners get work done outside the network without invalidating the warranty. A new OFT report says the average bill is 40 per cent cheaper at an independent garage but only 14% of owners took advantage of this. Those who left the dealer network in the two years after the warranty servicing rules were changed in 2003 collectively saved £30 million. But if every driver had followed suit, this could have been £214 million - or £107 million a year.

### **Vehicles for Sale**



05/05 TOYOTA LANDCRUISER LC5 AUTO, 5 DR IN DARK GREEN METALLIC WITH BEIGE LEATHER, FULL SPEC CAR WITH SAT NAV, DUAL CLIMATE, AIR SUSPENSION WITH A FULL SERVICE HISTORY, 80,000 MILES. **£19,750.00**



2006 SAAB 93 VECTOR. 23,000 MILES, METALLIC BLACK WITH GREY LEATHER, CLIMATE CONTROL, CRUISE CONTROL. BEAUTIFUL CAR. **£15,250.00**



04/54 HONDA CRV 2 LITRE SE SPORT. DARK METALLIC GREEN, HALF LEATHER, IMMACULATE CONDITION. **£9,950.00**



LANDROVER FREELANDER 1.8 GS 5 DR (02/02) 1 OWNER, 43,000 MILES **£5,250.00**



01/Y SAAB 9-3 CONVERTIBLE , SILVER WITH BLACK LEATHER, DONE 70,000 MILES WITH FSH. **£7,950.00**

**If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call Keni or Sheena**