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## Rob Roy Returns

The Loch Ard Local History Group will be showing the 1953 film version of 'Rob Roy'. There are a number of versions of Rob Roy, this one stars Richard Todd and was largely filmed locally. A related exhibition concerning Rob Roy is also planned. This double event of exhibition and film will

take place in Kinlochard. The exhibition will be in the Old School and the film shown in the Village Hall. The event is on Saturday 17 May and starts at 1900 hrs. There will be a short film (possibly a Laurel and Hardy) shown before 'Rob Roy'. It is also possible that some 'extras' from the film that live locally will be in attendance.

The cost of the event (film and exhibition) will be £3.00 for adults and £1.50 for children. There will also be a raffle on the evening to help raise funds for the Loch Ard Local History Group to progress projects of interest to the Community. After the film, it is intended to go through to the Old



School to view the exhibition where there will be tea and coffee. We are grateful to Stirling Council for giving us a grant to help fund this event.

*\*photographs courtesy of Ian Morrison*

## Action Plan Launch Transport and Access Group Report

The Transport and Access Group display generated a healthy interest and plenty of feedback, with a steady flow of people around the stand and 12 people making written comments and suggestions.

Of these, the most numerous were on the subject of road and pedestrian safety. Two people emphasised the need for a pedestrian bridge over the river to Manse Road, while two others suggested traffic calming measures for Manse Road itself. Excessive traffic speed along the section of road between the Rob Roy and the doctors' surgery was also mentioned. There was a mixed reception to new traffic calming measures along Lochard Road, however, although at that stage the work had not been completed and road markings and new signs were still to be put in place. While many people were pleased to see action taken at last, others doubted the effectiveness of the new scheme. Written comments were received from one person who felt the siting of the narrowing by the church is too close to the crest of the road, while another thought flashing lights would have been better. The Traffic Management Team at Stirling Council have been made aware of these and other criticisms, and they are to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme once it is complete.

There were several comments on road and footpath maintenance. Concerns included the perennial problem of dog fouling and the poor condition of the footpaths. Persistent flooding was noted

## T4 Success



Jake Neufeld holding aloft his winning catch. Jake's rainbow trout was caught on 12<sup>th</sup> April at the Forest Hills pond and measured 39cm. The judge, Ivor Campbell, estimated its weight at 3lbs. (Discrepancy in units of measurement reflects the discrepancy in ages!). The prize was a voucher for £20 for water sports from Mike and Jamie at Go Forth at Forest Hills Watersports Centre.

*(More T4 photographs inside).*



.....cont'd on page 12

# Sylvia Jackson

As I write this column it is the day after the Aberfoyle election hustings and there is now less than a week before the Scottish Parliamentary and Council elections on May 1.

You may not immediately see the connection, but elections are a bit like Christmas, a time for reflection – in this case over the last 4 years as MSP for the Stirling Constituency. It has been a very eventful time with the opening of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, the fight to have Killin included within the Park boundaries and the on-going consultations connected with the Forth Valley acute services review. Like the Scottish Parliament, the National Park is still a very new body and will need time to find its feet, but the initial signs are good, with much public involvement in community action plans, these will ultimately form the National Park Plan. Of course the National Park Plan will have at its core the enhancing of rural development, be it tourism or agriculture, and of course the on-going need to improve the infrastructure of local roads and public transport. Hopefully the nationwide SCOTS



Paul Owens from Aberfoyle, Sylvia Jackson and Janet Robertson, Marketing Officer for Strathclyde and Central Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, at the Strathard Community Environment Day.

survey will soon report and be the basis for Government money being invested into the local roads system. Discussions have taken place between Stirling Council and a developer in the Stirling New Growth area around Pirnhall in order to bring forward a proposal for releasing land for a possible new Acute Hospital site outside Stirling. This is presently being worked on and after submission to the Council for planning approval could be available by autumn. Letters are also now out asking communities to be involved in designing the future community health service provision within Stirling constituency. I hope as many people as possible will be involved. A few days ago saw Strathard

Community Council's Community Environment Day'. As you will see from the photograph I came along with ordinary light bulbs to get them exchanged for long life energy efficient bulbs. I am pleased to say the bulbs are now in full use in my house, along with the composting bin that I received a year ago. If only I had time to use the compost on my garden – possibly after the election? David Riddle attended the Community Environment Day to show off the small brown wheelie bins, a possible prototype for anyone who might have difficulty lifting the green boxes to dispose of waste paper, tins and bottles. There was a lot of information available, including solar heating, composting, the warm homes/central heating schemes and carbon monoxide detectors (also available free). A very interesting afternoon and thanks to Strathard Community Council for thinking up the idea and hosting the event, including teas and food. As ever, a pleasure to visit Aberfoyle, particularly on a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon.

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



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## Local Business Uses Video Conferencing Technology to Break The Distance Barrier

Locally based mapmaking and publishing company, Stirling Surveys, has been making good use of technology to compete globally and conduct business with international clients.

More than ever businesses need to expand their market and seek clients outwith their own area. With e-mail, fax and the telephone this is made possible, but not quite ideal. Face-to-face contact with important clients is often essential, necessitating the need to travel.

Stirling Surveys, who have clients in countries such as Denmark, Canada and the US, have found one cost effective solution for this problem. Situated within Stirling Enterprise Park, they have easy access to the Video Conferencing

facility at STEP.

Video Conferencing facilitates live, face-to-face communication and is a more viable option to spending long unnecessary hours, sometimes days, of travel to participate in meetings that may only last for 1 – 2 hours.

David Barbour from Stirling Surveys uses this technology to communicate with clients when more interactivity is required than is achievable using the telephone:

"We are engaged in a major project for Wales Tourist Board and instead of facing a long journey to Wales for meetings, we have used the video conferencing facility to discuss the development of products with our customer. E-mail, post and telephone still have their place in business communication, but using video



*David Barbour from Stirling Surveys with Graham Lambie from STEP*

conferencing means we can interact with them as if we were meeting in the same room".

"I'm sure that a lot of people driving up and down motorways on their way to business meetings could save considerable time and effort by using a video conferencing facility".

Video Conferencing is available at competitive rates at STEP and can be booked on 01786 463416.



## Acknowledgement

Katherine MacLean

John Clow and family wish to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for the many cards and expressions of sympathy received during their recent bereavement; and to all who paid their respects at the church and cemetery.

Collections for Highland Heartbeat, Heart Foundation, Stirling Royal Infirmary ICU and Paramedics raised £1195.

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As spring slowly gives way to summer, lambing is well advanced, cattle are being turned out, Strathard is coming alive! Tourists, cyclists and hill walkers all eager to soak in the beauty of our lochs and glens are now beginning to venture out in substantial numbers. With this in mind, and other considerations to be taken into account, I can understand why it was felt necessary that some form of traffic calming measure was required on Lochard road. The measure introduced consists of three narrowings marked with bollards intended to slow road traffic driving past Aberfoyle Primary School. Road safety on this section of road has for a very long time been of great concern to parents and teachers alike, and it is with some relief that something has finally been put in place. Whether this is the most appropriate measure is open to debate, we would like to know your views on this subject.

Pedestrian safety should always be the top priority. Bearing this in mind there are still a number of motorists parking their cars and vans on the pavement marked with double yellow lines opposite the Co-op and Post Office, obscuring pedestrian visibility and making it very difficult for people to cross the busy Main Street safely. Pedestrian safety generally, in and around Aberfoyle leaves a lot to be desired, where pedestrian systems don't always join up safely. Manse Road to Aberfoyle Main Street being one very good example.

Finally I'd like to thank all our friends who came to visit us at our stand in the Memorial Hall Aberfoyle during The Community Futures Steering Groups Launch on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March. Your support for The Strathard News is greatly appreciated. Should anyone would like to add their name to our list of subscribers and supporter's then please fill in the subscription form and forward on to us.



Jimmy Campbell  
Editor

## Community Futures Action Plan Launch Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March in Memorial Hall Aberfoyle



**Left:** Strathard News Committee: (From L/R) John Clow, Norman Quirk, Jimmy Campbell, Marion Back, Ian Marshall, Stuart Davies  
**Below Left:** Lesley Quirk & Margaret Neufeld.  
**Below Right:** Pam Abrahams mans the Community Council Stand.



Ros Dingwall talks with local residents, while Nigel Brooks has a chat with Paddy Nixon over future plans for the Youth Group.

### Field of Dreams

It is possible that Aberfoyle might have another visitor attraction in the foreseeable future, albeit more 'low key' than most. There is a suggestion afoot to turn McGregor's Field, the land across the river from the village car park, into a picnic area. At present, it is utilised for the grazing of horses and young boys playing football, using the tried-and-tested method of folded jackets as goalposts. As a picnic area, it would surely be of benefit to the village. Imagine, an unspoilt area for people to have a picnic within a stone's throw of Aberfoyle village, its shops and its facilities. There is a plus in that, with the possibility of a footbridge being built to serve Manse Road, it would give easier access to McGregor's Field. And, as an added attraction, it could remain unspoilt. With toilets and shops close to hand, there would be no need to build on it. All that might be required would be a few picnic benches and a father or two prepared to fold their jackets and allow their children to use them as goalposts. What more could a village want? **DM**

# TEAMWORK'S THE THING for Trossachs Search and Rescue

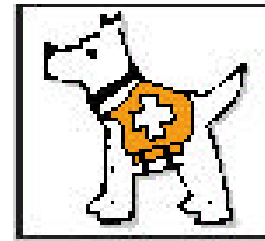
As the main tourist season approaches so too does the chance of the emergency services getting callouts to people in need. To be fair, these services operate not only during the busy summer months. In reality they operate 52 weeks a year and they are liable to be called on all through the year. Now that this area is part of the designated National Park, the likelihood is that there will be even greater demand on these services.

One such organization, which is geared up and ready, is the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team. The members of this team are, in the main, local to the Trossachs area, which allows for a fast response time to any incident which they may be called on the attend. The team's Convener, Neil Campbell and his wife Maureen, live in the very heart of the Trossachs and their farm at Comer, Kinlochard.

The Trossachs Search and Rescue Team, was started up on the premise that there was a need for such an organization in this area. It is not specifically a *Mountain Rescue* team, but *Search and Rescue*. This means that they are more broad based and capable of meeting wider challenges. Although they do train in mountain rescue, they also have experience of working in other environments. They work and train, for example,

in the searching of lowland areas, of deserted buildings and in rubble, the latter scenario unfortunately all too relevant in the light of recent developments.

The organization is a registered charity. They have 30 team members who are trained to national standards and have, in their number, four fully qualified search and rescue dogs and their handlers, with another three dogs in the process of being fully trained. The way in which these dogs work has to be seen to be believed. I, myself, acted as a 'victim' to one of these wonderful dogs and her handler some years ago. Unlike police dogs for example, which work from ground scent, a trained search and rescue dog goes by air scent, quartering the chosen ground, whatever the terrain, and can be some distance from its master, responding only to voice command until it finds the 'body' at which time it moves between its master and the 'body', finally bringing the rescuer to the victim. As with any working dog which is doing its work well, it is a joy to watch. A Search and Rescue dog can be any breed, so long as it has the aptitude. So there are Flat Coated Retrievers and Border Collies, to name but two. Obviously, one major factor with the dog is that it must be able to



ignore livestock on the hills! The Trossachs Team's experience has extended from Dumfries and Galloway to Aviemore in the Highland Region.

Its members have, on a lighter note perhaps, also assisted closer to home. There has been more than one occasion when Maureen has had to offer succour to lost walkers and cyclists at Comer Farm. On one occasion, on Maureen returning home, she found two elderly lady walkers in her kitchen telephoning the police for assistance. On being asked their whereabouts, the ladies responded by stating that they were at a farm house, 'surrounded by hills' – which did pin it down a little!

Joking aside, there is a bottom line. The Trossachs Search and Rescue Team members are part of our community, doing a professional often in difficult circumstances. They deserve our support.

Dougie MacPherson

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I'd like to start this month by thanking all those who came to the launch of Strathard's Community Action Plan. We were delighted to see so many of you and pleased to get a lot of feedback about the plans on display. All the groups represented will be taking your comments into account.

At the time of the last meeting the traffic calming work on Lochard Road was still unfinished and concerns were expressed about the fact that some drivers were still ignoring the speed limit and racing to be first to the narrowings. I sincerely hope that now that the work is complete it will prove to be an effective reminder to those in a hurry. The work has been done to protect the safety of our children when walking along this stretch of road and it is to be hoped that all drivers will exercise courtesy in allowing others to pass at the narrowings. Several householders along this stretch of road have mentioned that they find it easier now to get out of their driveways, thanks to lower speeds being observed!

Those of you who attended the Action Plan Launch will be aware that the opportunity has arisen to buy the field on Manse Road opposite to the Kirkton. It has been suggested that it could be bought by the community, to be used as a community resource. This might be possible if, a) we can show there is enough

support in the community and, b) we have a good enough project in mind. What do you think? Posters asking for your opinion on the possibility of going ahead will be put up in some of the local shops. Please take the time to give us some feedback.

May I take this opportunity to offer a vote of thanks to our Treasurer, Pamela Abraham, who has relinquished her post after many years of excellent work. Norman Quirk has agreed to take over as treasurer in her stead and we wish him well. Happily Pamela is staying on as a member of the Community Council which is great news since it is she who has arranged such events as our recent Light Bulb Exchange, making all the contacts and booking the exhibitors. The afternoon was very successful with lots of useful information available, as well as free light bulbs! If you missed it and would like any more information on services available within the area, please contact any Community Councillor.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the next meeting in Kinlochard Primary School on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May, Election Day. The meeting following will be at Inversnaid Primary School on June 5th.

*Ros Dingwall*  
Chairperson

## Aberfoyle Medical Centre

### Missed Appointments:

We would very much appreciate, if you can't attend an appointment at the surgery, that you phone and cancel it. This means someone else can use the appointment slot and it saves precious time just waiting around for the doctor or nurse involved.

### Travel Vaccinations:

Holiday season is fast approaching! If you are going abroad and you think you

may need vaccinations, please contact the surgery as soon as possible prior to your departure. Some courses of vaccine require a month to complete. You should pick up a Travel Questionnaire from the surgery, fill it in and hand in promptly. You should then make an appointment with the Practice Nurse to discuss your travel plans, and then an appointment will be made for any vaccinations required.

Happy Holidays!!!

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# Letters to the *Editor*

.....*have your say!*

Dear Jimmy,

My name is Ian Bates and recently a dear email friend from Largs sent me a copy of your Strathard News.

I have been researching my family history for some years and have learned that one of my ancestors resided at the Tea Pot and, as Issue 4 contained a photo of Tea Pot circa 1900 my friend new I would be interested.

I notice the submitters name is Ian Morrison and wonder if you might be able to put me in contact with him as I would like to ask if he has any further information regarding the Tea Pot that he might like to share with me. I do already have a few photocopied pages from a small booklet, also sent to me, that provide a few details but would of course like to learn more if I can.

My ancestor was John WATSON b 1875 and gave his usual place of residence as Tea Pot at his marriage to Agnes Robertson GIBSON in Glasgow 1895. His occupation was that of "Hammerman"

I haven't as yet finished reading your newsletter. Your Editorial and photo of the Tea Pot have pulled me up.

I particularly enjoyed the former, as it is not too different from what we here in Oz have to endure from our local Governments. It seems the same all over and nothing much changes, except of course in the name of progress which the polities in my humble opinion spend far too much time banging their hands on the table over. The small communities with their everyday grievances, health, education, aged care etc. are simply overlooked. Fortunate that Stirling Council has the foresight to see the importance of your Newsletter and I hope you can continue the publication which is so important to a small community such as your own

Jimmy I would be very grateful if you could put Ian Morrison and myself in touch, but realise of course this may not be possible and quite understand if that is the case.

Thank you for your time and Best Wishes for Easter.

Ian Bates (better known as Batesy)

## **Consultation???**

Why are we, the community, not being consulted or even informed on measures which affect us all e.g. "traffic calming"? Would it not have been sensible to put more visible signs up stating there was a school ahead, or the money spent on putting a pedestrian crossing at the play park, instead of the traffic calming on Lochard Road. Any time I have been going up or coming down Lochard Road cars coming in the opposite direction think it's a race to get through the traffic calming points first.

Has anybody taken into consideration the cyclist going up or down the road, especially the children who cycle to and from school? Will the motorist think, "Will I make it before the cyclist as they are going more slowly than me?"

Also, would it be possible for the Community Action Groups to notify members of the community about where and when the meetings are taking place so that the public can put their ideas forward to the relevant committees. All meetings seem to be held behind closed doors at the moment. Details of meetings could be listed in our community newspaper, The Strathard News.

**John Clow**

## **Traffic Calming**

### **Lochard Road**

I read with interest, the letter from Strathard Community Futures Transport and Access Group in the March Edition of the Strathard News. I would now like to explain the facts:

1. No Lochard Road residents were consulted prior to the proposal from Stirling Council dated 29 January 2003, which arrived on 1 February 2003.

2. I sent a letter to Stirling Council on 3 February with the following concerns – mainly flooding, congestion, noise and safety. There were also letters from other residents with similar concerns. These concerns were also raised with the representative from Strathard Community Futures – Transport and Access Group (SCFTAG) prior to the community council meeting of 6 February.

3. There has been various correspondence with Stirling Council, Community Council and SCFTAG on the initial concerns. The result being that the work undertaken prior to the end of the financial year is the same as the original proposal, with one exception, that they have moved the structure outside my property a few metres towards the school and into the middle of the area that regularly floods. Recently, the Council have moved a warning sign as it was obscuring visibility of a local business's sign, they were told of this problem before they erected the sign in it's original position.

4. At present, my family are being disturbed by the noise of cars constantly decelerating and accelerating outside my property as they navigate the structure. This was highlighted in my initial letter of 3 February and correspondence was sent to Stirling Council on 27 March, I did not receive a 'holding reply' until a reminder was sent on 17 April 2003.

What the above highlights is a lack of consultation with the local residents by the Community Council, Stirling Council and Futures Group. This is then followed by the total disregard for any concerns raised by local residents as it is believed more important to spend £20,000 on a debacle called "traffic calming" before the end of the financial year.

There is a situation at present where one party is blaming the other and serious questions have arisen over local knowledge, experience and competence of the various parties involved in the implementation of this project.

As a taxpayer and Council tax payer I am greatly concerned at these various bodies operating on behalf of Strathard residents without proper thought to the consequences.

I am sure that there are similar situations elsewhere in the community, which require closer scrutiny and urge greater 'local' participation to avoid the debacle we have on Lochard Road. Meanwhile, I look forward to the problems being resolved as a matter of priority by Stirling Council and others.

Douglas Hyslop

Resident – Lochard Road

**What do you think? If you have something on your mind, let's hear it. There's no better way to reach all the residents of Strathard than through the Strathard News. Send your comments to The Editor, Strathard News, Kirkton House, Duchray Road, Aberfoyle FK8 3XB, or email: [editor@strathardnews.co.uk](mailto:editor@strathardnews.co.uk)**

# A swinging night in good old Aberfoyle!

The Memorial Hall was swinging to the Ceilidh Band, the floor was full with dancers, and it was the Reading Room's first Annual Valentines Ball.

It all started one evening at a Committee meeting. The Christmas draw was going well but funds were still in short supply for the roof repairs. "Let's have a New Year dance," someone proclaimed. No, time's too short, and we have the prize draw. Right then, Valentines Dance, great! No that's a Friday and I have to work on Saturday. Date settled then....Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February. "I'll get a band," said J the P. "Son and some of his friends." No problem, oh yeah! Advertise immediately, posters printed. Thanks to Forest Prints.

Now it's January; the draw is past; let's get tickets printed; posters up. There are eight Summer Ice players, each sell six tickets and we are in profit.

Disaster! Who told the band the dance was Friday night? Much shouting in certain household – disaster averted, band back in harness. Oh no, tickets are going slowly. Is this to be a disaster?

February comes and sales increase. I'm on my knees nightly praying. J the P is collecting raffle prizes. "Want your mail, how about a raffle prize?" Didn't he do well.

Only a week to go now. Another meeting. Looking good for a hundred. Who makes cheese sandwiches? Who makes tuna? All sorted, everyone is mucking in. Pizzæ, quiches, nibbles, all arranged.

A day to go – PANIC! Now 120 tickets sold. Tally ho to the hall to get the tables set out. 21 tables, where to put them? This way, that way, thon way? I don't care, I'm under the b\*\*\*\* stage getting chairs out. Tables for the buffet set up, covered, looks fine. Meanwhile Mrs. J the P has moved the tables again. Square, angled, even upside down. Don't ask me, I'm under the stage again – more chairs. All this time John, the Vital Spark, is putting up the lighting. Coloured lights, flashing lights, all looked great to me.

Now it's the DAY! Sandwiches to make, sausages to cook, more sausages to cook, even more sausages to cook! Right, let's get the decorations up. Helium balloons, ordinary balloons, balloons with streamers for each table. Cups, sweets, napkins, banners – it's all go. Thanks for the donation towards this, Big John.

Bang!! It's alright, only Q & C stapling balloons...BANG....and wishing he was at the football now. Anyone seen Sandra? Yes, she's under the table tying helium balloons before they float away. Meanwhile, big Trev the Deli and his oven are cooking. The Golf Club oven is cooking. Thanks. Sandwiches to collect, take the car home, might have a drink tonight.

7.30pm. Bodies start appearing, more bodies, thou shall not pass the door without buying a raffle ticket. Still they come....more tables needed.....where are they coming from? Anyone seen the band?

Now they appear and the music starts. What's this? People are up dancing already! Not another table....there isn't any more. That's it, everyone's here now.

Please eat all that food. Think we over estimated. Now it's raffle time, what a raffle. Did I win? No. Did J the P's family win? Yes! Let's auction this picture, great, what a price! Back to the dancing. Please eat more. Going home? Take some food with you. It's all over, home to bed, what's the time?

Now it's Sunday the big clean up begins. Gosh, some people look fragile today. Look at all that food left over, and buckets of half empty cans, glasses, bottles. What a waste! Guess where I am? Correct, under the stage. These chairs came out of here so they must go back. That's it, everything is tidy, cleared away.

Now to count the money. £1300 clear. Fantastic! Unbelievable! Out of this world! Thank you to everyone, whether individuals or local businesses, that made this possible, and you can be sure that February 2004 is pencilled in for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Room Valentines Dance.



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# Tattie Howkin at The Kirkton

By Gordon Bell  
(All Rights Reserved)

I stared down the field with dismay. "Surely they'll stop now!" It was late Saturday afternoon, and I was eager to get away. It was also pay day, and I had a considerable amount of money coming to me, two pounds ten shillings.

The tractor slowly turned into the drill and the digger was lowered for action. I bent numbly to the task, picking the remainder of the tatties into the basket.

"The trouble with adults, is that they don't know when to stop", I thought, little knowing, and little caring for their worries. A wet spell now could well mean the remainder of the crop rotting in the ground.

The stints had been marked out with clods, and stones, and we had stuck to them all day, more or less. The lad next to me had tried to reduce his stint at my expense a few times in a half-hearted sort of way, but that had been quickly sorted out. I was responsible for clearing my stint before the tractor returned along the next drill. The first drill had been magical, as the tractor approached the spinning arms of the digger destroyed the drill, scattering earth, stones and potatoes out as it passed. At the top of the field, where we were stationed, the soil was free and gravelly, and the potatoes emerged bright and shining into the warm October sunlight. The lower end, toward the river, was wetter, and the going looked a bit tougher there. I had decided to keep away from that area.

Jimmy McKerracher was in charge of the pit which was up beside us on the higher ground above the flood level. The pit had been close enough for us to carry our tattie baskets to at the start, but we had moved away drill by drill, as the day progressed. Now the tatties were carted over to the pit from time to time on the tractor drawbar. Jimmy seemed to be very old. He worked quietly away at the pit, digging out the bottom, heaping the potatoes into a long pyramid, with the odd-looking tatty graip. As the pit grew he thatched it with rashes he had cut with his scythe from the edges of one of the dips left by the river. This was usually left till the tatties had dried out in the sun and wind.

At last the tractor stopped, and the digger was unhitched. We all stood up and watched. Then we started picking with renewed vigour, as we knew that

we wouldn't be loused till the last drill was cleared.

At the end of the day there was always extra work to do. All the bags had to be emptied into the pit. The pit had to be thatched, and lightly earthed to make it safe from wind, rain and frost. I tried to help, much to Jimmy McKerracher's dismay. He obviously had standards which I couldn't see, let alone match.

At the very last, the trailer was hitched to the tractor. The trailer looked enormous. It was like the back end of a lorry, with a wooden floor, low boards at the front, low guards along the sides, and straight out at the back.

It was nearly perfectly balanced on the two wheels at the middle, making it easy to hitch to the tractor's drawbar.

The low drawbar meant that the trailer was down at the front and up at the rear. The trailer was loaded with any tools needed at the farm, and twelve bags of tatties at the front. We clambered aboard at last, and claimed the prime seats on the bags of tatties at the front. Jimmy McKerracher neatly folded some bags into a cushion, hauled himself onto the trailer, and made himself comfortable at the rear with his back to the tractor, his feet dangling over the back. By the time the tractor pulled away he had his pipe well under way.

When the last drill had been picked, a feeling of relief swept through the ragged line of young workers. This quickly turned to elation with the realisation that we were about to be paid. The tractor run home became increasingly boisterous from the faraway haugh, through the middle haugh, and into the near haugh. Whenever the trailer passed trees, we grabbed at any twigs, and leaves we could reach, and held on until they broke away, or we were forced to let go through the forward motion of the tractor.

There were whoops of delight as a spurt of yellow flame burst into the darkness, from the exhaust, as the driver pulled back the throttle to climb the short hill opposite the school. The road here was wooded on one side with oak and alder, and the twig pulling became more frenzied, and competitive. At the foot of the brae



we all ducked under a stout oak branch, which someone grabbed. Immediately all ten hands were on it, holding it and pulling it along with us. The thickness of the branch, and the speed of the tractor meant that the struggle was short. We held onto that branch till it was pulled back tight like a bow. The realisation that we had reached a critical point spread instantly through the group, and by some strange unspoken signal, we all let go at the same time. At the instant of release, I suddenly remembered Jimmy McKerracher quietly enjoying his smoke. Time slowed, as the branch recoiled the length of the trailer. I saw Jimmy's hand reach to the back of his head, and he was off the trailer - we'd killed him!

Jimmy McKerracher was alive! He took three or four steps, bent down, picked up his bunnet, and ran back to the trailer, climbed aboard and lit his pipe. He didn't give us a row. He never said a word. He must be the calmest adult on the planet. The journey home continued in a more subdued manner.

In the following years, I got to know Jimmy McKerracher quite well. At times he was like an extra parent, or an uncle. At other times he was like a laddie, and I thought that he would have gone on whatever wild escapade we were about, if he could. The one thing I remember most about him was that he never gave us a row or scolded us, no matter what daft, antisocial or downright dangerous scheme we were engaged in. He would look, shake his head, and then have a quiet laugh to himself.

I still think of that night, how that branch would have killed Jimmy if it had been an inch lower, and how he could be so forgiving. There is no mystery to his forgiveness however, as I have convinced myself that he never knew what hit him.



Loch Lomond  
& The Trossachs  
National Park

# National Park News

Pàirc Nàiseanta Loch Laomainn is nan Tròisichean

The early summer weather has certainly got people moving round the Park and hopefully will have given local businesses a welcome boost. I wish I could claim that this has been the sole result of the establishment of the National Park but I think we would all agree that it has been occasioned by that rare phenomenon -the public holidays coinciding with abundant sunshine. I will claim though that awareness of the National Park helped just a little. But the early boost also helped to bring into sharp focus the problems that a heavy visitor load brings. Yes - LITTER and VANDALISM.

Stirling Council have been experimenting with a "Take Your Litter Home" policy and have removed litter bins from laybys and car parks. Whereas I believe that this policy can work, I feel that a steady and lengthy education period will be required before our British visitors will get into the habit of taking their rubbish home. It is not so much that we are slow learners, it is just that old habits die hard. Additionally we will still have to make some provision to cover those occasions where it is not practical to take your rubbish home. I do feel that the Parks Litter Squads will be essential for some time yet. It is an area, however, where we will need help. We are looking at ways to tap in to the natural fund of volunteers who could help transform our litter habits.

The Community Futures Programme has highlighted a number of useful initiatives. One very important one sprung up in Gartmore. This concerns the lack of apprenticeship training opportunities in the Park's communities. We all know the problem. You can't get a tradesman when you need one. One-man businesses can't afford to train apprentices (believe me it is an expensive undertaking) and so the problem is perpetuated. A conversation with Tony Finch convinced Ron Dalton of Gartmore that something could be done under the Communities Futures programme.

He paraded round the Park drumming up interest in the idea and as a result a Seminar was arranged at the

National Park Gateway Centre. Who came along? Scottish Enterprise - in varying hats, Forth Valley, Dumbarton and head office; The Construction Industry Training Board; The Scottish Electrical Trust; Scotland & N. Ireland Plumbers Employers Federation; McLaren High School; The Park Authority and the Community Futures Team with, of course, Ron Dalton; and a number of interested members of the Park communities. It transpired that the shortage of skilled tradesmen is not peculiar to the Park communities but is national. However it was felt that the problems within the park presented a challenge which could be the catalyst to overcome the national shortage. All the training agencies were keen to tackle the problem and a task force has been set up. Ron Dalton has been enrolled. One promising aspect is the possibility of mature apprenticeships. In my day you were too old for an apprenticeship at 18. Under this scheme it is hoped you won't be too old at 40. I wish them every success.

Last month I mentioned our plan to open a centre at Ben More Gardens, Argyll. This has had to be cancelled due to prohibitive building costs. Instead the Park Authority will open a Cowal office at Ballochyle nr Sandbank, Dunoon, in accommodation leased from Scottish National Heritage. That office is just outside the Park. A welcome departure which I hope shows that the Park Authority is willing to be flexible in its approach.

A private concern is hoping to establish a Seaplane Operation on Loch Lomond and I will be attending a presentation on the proposal next week. I am particularly interested because of the possible effect on Loch Ard, Loch Katrine etc. I hope to be able to let you know more in the next issue of the Strathard News.

**by Owen McKee**

I can be contacted as follows:

Post - Taigh Na Bhuth, Lochearnhead, FK19 8PR

Phone: 01567 830214

email : [owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk)

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# Views sought for Code at heart of new access rights



A cyclist, horserider, canoeist and walker met in Muiravonside Country Park on 26<sup>th</sup> March, to help launch a consultation on the draft Scottish Outdoor Access Code (Code). The draft Code, prepared by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), is part of a package of changes stemming from the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which establishes statutory access rights to land and water and is likely to come into force early next year. SNH is seeking comments on the draft Code, which is designed to promote responsible behaviour by both users and land managers.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 received Royal Assent on 25 February 2003 and Part 1 gives people statutory access rights to the outdoors. Before the right becomes law, Scottish Natural Heritage must first draw up and consult over a Scottish Outdoor Access Code which must then be approved by the Scottish Parliament. Once the Code is agreed, and provided people stick to their responsibilities as set out in the Code, they will have statutory access rights to the outdoors and more people will be encouraged to enjoy the outdoors than ever before.

**Michael Scott, deputy chairman of SNH said:** "The access reforms brought in under this new legislation are an historic achievement for the new democratic process in Scotland and are a suitable testimony to the efforts and debate of so many people over the past decade. The legislation will open up Scotland's outdoors to people who may never have thought about going for a

walk or cycle ride, simply because they weren't sure where they could go. However, to make this a success the public and land managers must be part of the process of developing a responsible attitude to access, which will be enshrined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. During this period of consultation we want people to tell us what they consider is or is not responsible behaviour and thereby help land owners and recreation users to work and enjoy the outdoors together."

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code will be similar, but not identical, to other codes of good practice embedded in law, such as the code of practice under the Disability Discrimination Act, the Highway Code and numerous Health and Safety Codes. The public, land managers and interested groups are invited to comment on how the code can influence responsible access to land and water in relation to recreation users or the activities of land managers. This includes advice on issues such as how dogs must be kept under control, liability, respecting people's privacy and peace, helping land managers to work safely, and caring for the environment.

The code will also cover the extent to which land managers are responsible for helping people to enjoy the outdoors, such as by not padlocking gates or by providing access for cyclists and horse-riders. The draft code will be put out to consultation until the end of June when SNH will compile and analyse the results and submit a revised Code to ministers together with copies of any objections or representations.

SNH also launched a consultation paper on 26<sup>th</sup> March on the type of Access Forum required to help implement the new access arrangements. The current Access Forum was set up in 1994 to promote debate between recreation and land managing interests and the main public bodies with a role in open-air recreation. Another Access Forum (Inland Water) was set up in 1996 to help bring freshwater-based interest groups together. In the last few years, advice from the two forums has been very important in drafting the new access legislation and the Code. Ministers are keen for SNH to convene a national Access Forum to help in reviewing the operation of the new Code.

**Professor Jeremy Rowan-Robinson, Chairman of the Access Forum and Access Forum (Inland Water) said:**

"The existing Access Forum and Access Forum (Inland Water) has a proven track record of delivering sound advice, helped by encouraging frank debate between the main interests involved in open-air recreation. However, given the new access rights and responsibilities established through the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, and the new work that flows from this, it is timely to look at what sort of national Access Forum is needed in the future. We are keen to hear the views of a wide range of recreation and land management bodies, public agencies and the general public on the best way forward."

**People can get copies of the draft Scottish Outdoor Access Code consultation paper from:**

**Bridget Dales on 01738 444177**

**email: [soac-consultation@snh.gov.uk](mailto:soac-consultation@snh.gov.uk) or look up: [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)**

**The Access Forum consultation paper can be obtained from: Dawn Anderson on 0131-447 4784**

**email: [dawn.anderson@snh.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.anderson@snh.gov.uk).**

## Aberfoyle and Gartmore Highland Games

The gentleman in the Balmoral is the late Major Cameron, at that time Proprietor of the Bailie Nicol Jarvie Hotel and donor of the Cameron Cup, which is still played for annually in the Forth and Endrick Welfare Football League. Up the Rob Roy! Old Doh built the house called Dowally at the Milton.



*\*picture courtesy of Duncan Ferguson*

## Aerobics

### Hi/Lo Aerobics Class

Suitable for all ages & fitness levels

Starts Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April in Memorial Hall,  
Aberfoyle. 7pm-8pm Cost £3  
Everyone welcome.

For more information contact Katrina on

**01877 382198**

(Qualified 'Fitness Scotland' Aerobics Instructor)

## Aberfoyle & Port of Menteith Kirk News

Firstly, congratulations to the Editor and publishing staff for the format of the Strathard News. It was certainly informative. We have just completed our Good Friday services of meditation, on the story of how one innocent man was willing to die to save others from themselves. He was brought before the authorities on a charge that he claimed to be the Son of God. Pilot demanded to know where he came from but he would not answer. When Pilot warned Jesus that he had the power to free him or have crucified, Jesus replied "You have authority over me only because it was given to you by God."

*Danny Gibb*

Colourful placards advertising the ambitions of many people for the 1st May elections, for local and national government positions, have festooned Lochard road and other parts of the area. In fact the area has a carnival atmosphere. The privilege of our Democratic freedom is that we need genuine and honest individuals to give of their time, energy and talents to serve our community. If you have the right to vote then exercise this democratic privilege on the day. Once the results of the elections are declared can the same ambitious people remove their placards as quickly as they were put up, so that we are not left thinking about the main entertainer in every circus. With every Blessing on the candidates and all in our Community who serve others.

***Diary Date. There will be a joint Celebration of The Lord's Supper at The Port of Menteith on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 10am. There will be no Service at Aberfoyle on that day. Any one needing transport to Menteith should contact Your Elder or Reverend Danny Gibb.***



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..cont'd from page 1

between the Rob Roy and Aberfoyle, and one person complained of the way road repairs are carried out beside verges, building up the height of the tarmac and leaving a large drop from the edge of the road.

We are encouraging people to contact Stirling Council directly to report road and pavement defects (0845 277 7000), but if this fails to produce a satisfactory result, please contact Fiona Campbell (Community Futures) on 01877 382603.

Other comments included the need for maps showing the newly created Forestry Commission paths, and there was a request to distinguish between bridle paths and footpaths. A public meeting with the National Park Access Officer is to take place in June (date to be arranged), at which people will have the opportunity to express their views on paths and trails.

The need for a bus service between Aberfoyle and Callander was also mentioned, and although we already have several operators serving this route, we have noted the infrequency of the winter *Trundler* service and its inadequate publicity, and the fact that its summer service only runs anti-clockwise. A meeting has now taken place with David Brown, the Public Transport Project Officer for Stirling and Clackmannanshire. We presented him with the results of the public transport survey carried out in January, and we are pressing for various improvements to our bus services.

John Digney

## Gartmore House

### Conference & Activity Centre



What are you doing on Tuesdays?

#### Let us entice and enthuse with our Tuesday activity days

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- Computer aided gardening
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- Country crafts

Each Tuesday has a different theme and you are welcome to join us for coffee by the log fire and take part in two activities around a heart-warming two course lunch in our library – all for £9.50

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[www.gartmorehouse.com](http://www.gartmorehouse.com)





## Milton the Otter



Hello Children,

I hope you all enjoyed your Easter holidays. It is a great pity that we all have to go back to school so soon and get on with our lessons. Roll on the summer holidays and many great adventures to look forward to.

On Easter day I took my specially painted egg, the one given to me by the lovely Duck family at Loch Ard, to the Easter Egg Rolling competition. This year the contest was held at Aberfoyle Golf Course, on the steep ground between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> fairways. The idea is to see who can roll their decorated egg the furthest – without breaking it! That's the bit that is not so easy. My egg rolled on and on and on, almost reaching the stone dyke next to the road. I must have an excellent chance of winning now. George the hare rolled his egg into sand filled bunker. Rory, the stag's egg, stopped halfway down. The twins, Duke and Katrine, started their eggs off at the same time. They went rolling and bouncing down the steep slope, gathering speed and going faster and faster until.....disaster! The two eggs collided and smashed – just like a pair of humpty dumpties. My most annoying sister, Braeval, thought she was being especially clever by rolling a guillemot egg. Guillemot nests are quite unusual, no soft lining, just bare rock. So guillemot eggs have to be very hard. Her egg certainly did not break: it didn't even crack. It didn't go very far either. You see, guillemot eggs are very pointed at one end to stop them rolling off their rock-edge nests and into the sea far below. Braeval's egg simply went round and round. I was pretty sure that I was going to win. That was, until Pen the mute swan came for her turn, rolling one of her own big white eggs. Pen's egg rolled right down the hill to the stone wall where Cob was waiting to stop it getting scrambled! Pen had beaten me by a good ten metres. As well, there's always next year. We saw Grant Denholm teeing off in our direction, so we all went home to eat our chocolate Easter eggs.

Bye for now, Milton



Guillemot eggs

## Weird History

Next time you're washing your hands and the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500's.

- Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour.
- Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children -- last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."
- Houses had thatched roofs -- thick straw -- piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the dogs, cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof -- hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."
- There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could really mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.
- The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, hence the saying "dirt poor."

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## T4 Fishing Competition



**John Clow  
Winner of the Altskeith Cup**

## Announcements

**Trossachs Hash House Harriers:** Meet fortnightly on a Sunday at 12pm. Next run, 11<sup>th</sup> May. Check website for details.  
[www.trossachsh3.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/](http://www.trossachsh3.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/)

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Complete the form below and hand in, together with appropriate fee, at Aberfoyle Post Office in an envelope marked ***Strathard News Classified***

Advert:

## 1<sup>st</sup> Aberfoyle Brownies

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


Jackie Gerlach 01877 339942  
Trisha Roberts 01877 382705

### Aberfoyle Bowling Club:

The Green Season has started. All new members & visitors welcome. For more information contact Irene Finlayson on **01877 385278**

Please contact Margaret Brown on **01877 382463** if you have anything for submission to the Stirling Observer under *Aberfoyle News*



 Strathard Community Council  
meets at 7.30pm on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Thursday of every month.  
Next meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> June in  
Inversnaid Primary School.

## Clubs & Organisations

Does your club meet on a regular basis? It costs nothing to place an advert in the classified section to publicise your club or organisation. Ah go on, go on, go on, go on!!! Tel **01877 382508** or email **clubs@strathardnews.co.uk**

**Garden Opening  
Blairuskine Lodge  
Kinlochard**

David & Saffrey Miller are opening their garden, under the Scotland's Garden Scheme, on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm – 5pm. Admission £2. Children under 12yrs free. There will be a free minibus service from Kinlochard Village Hall, where parking is available. Teas, plant stall, cake stall, disabled parking at house. Hopefully the bluebell wood will be at its best! Do come – it would be lovely to see you.

## Plant Sale

The Annual plant sale held by the **Sandy Stewart Memorial Committee** for Cancer Research will take place on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May in Port of Menteith Village Hall. There will be coffee served from 10am till 12noon and Cream Teas served from 2pm till 4pm. Admission - £1 & 50p for children.

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Fee Included: *please tick below*

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## Inversnaid Primary School

### New term, new teacher

The children and staff were sad to see Miss Wilson go at the end of last term. Unfortunately, she had other teaching commitments pre-arranged for the summer term and could no longer come to Inversnaid. We are, however, pleased to welcome our new teacher, Mrs Lynda Bancroft from Kinlochard. Mrs Bancroft has settled in very quickly and we all look forward to working with her.

There was great excitement at Inversnaid during the Easter holidays when an adder was discovered on the road by the school. By the time an adult had been summoned the poor snake had been decapitated by a passing car. However, the remains were saved and when all the children returned to school they set about finding out all about adders. They wrote the following article.

On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, David McPheat found a dead Adder on the road. David showed the Adder to the rest of us. We all tried to measure the snake, but it was difficult because we couldn't get it straight. Then we tried to find out about Adders in our school library and on the internet. This is what we found out.

The Adder or Viper is Britain's only poisonous snake. It is easily recognised by the dark joined-up diamond pattern down its back. The body is usually grey or brown but there are several different colour types. Males grow to about 18 inches in length and females to 2 feet. They eat small animals, nesting birds, eggs, lizards, young frogs and toads. Mating takes place in April-early May and live young are born in August-September. Adders are reluctant to bite unless harmed and generally avoid humans. Adder bites are not fatal. The last reported fatality was in 1972. However, bites can be more serious in children than adults. If you see an Adder you should **leave it alone**.



## Climate Change in Strathard



I'm sure everyone thinks that it's getting wetter, and it is! In the last 15 years of monitoring the monthly rainfall at Comer, the rainfall has increased every year. Yes, I know that it's only been by a few millilitres per year but over the last 15 years it has risen by a substantial rate. In 1988 the rainfall averaged 100 inches (2500 millilitres). Last year, 2002, it totalled 128 inches (3200 mls).

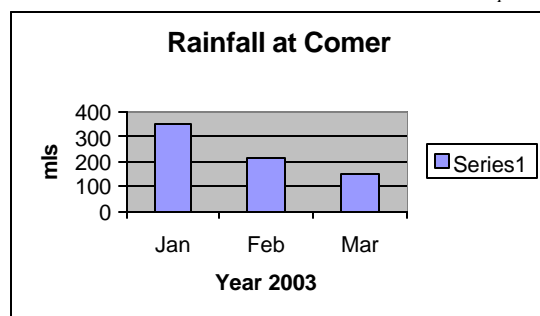
Rainfall so far this year:

January – 14 inches (350 mls)

February – 8 1/2 inches (212.5 mls)

March – 6 inches (150 mls) Spring is in the air!

*Maureen Campbell*



## T4 A Great Outdoor



Children (and adults) enjoying a beautiful afternoon at the Environment Event at Dounans Camp. After a very informative walk through the forest the children went on to do some dipping in the burn. A big thank you to the staff at Dounans who were so well organized and good with the children, and had all the necessary resources to hand.

## A RED NOSE RACE DAY

On 1 and 2 March this year, the Sled Dog Association of Scotland held their annual rally in Loch Ard Forest. The final in a series of winter husky races, over 60 teams attended from the north of Scotland and the English Midlands. Besides enjoying themselves competing with their dog teams, they participated in a raffle, in which they not only bought tickets, but contributed the prizes too, which culminated in £90 being collected and donated to the Red Nose Day Comic Relief. Well done, you doggy people!

## Environmental Day

Just a quick note to say thanks for all your efforts and support on the environmental day. The success of the day is very much down to the efforts of the Community Council in advertising and supporting the events. Without that these events cannot happen.

On the day we gave away over 500 energy efficient bulbs. That translates into a lifetime saving from the bulbs of £64,960.00 and a carbon saving of 64512 kg. In addition to that we gave away over 80 packets of wild flower seeds, enough to cover 40m<sup>2</sup>. It seems that we are only making small changes but this demonstrates clearly that these changes soon mount up and as a result of the environmental day Aberfoyle has had a significant positive impact on our global environment: an achievement to be proud of. Thanks again and I look forward to working with Aberfoyle Community Council again in the future.

*Letter received from Ron Mould, Home Energy Officer, Stirling Council*

# Aberfoyle Village Enhancement Initiative - *Update*

As a member of the project steering group, I want to bring you up to date with progress on the Aberfoyle Initiative. I know it feels as if it has been in the planning stage for ever but that's the way of these big publicly funded projects, they do take time, after all its our taxes that are being spent! Anyway, it's now at the stage where invitations have gone out to contractors to tender for the work required to upgrade the pavements on the south side of Main Street, the walkway between Main Street and the car park, the car park itself and the riverside walkway. The project steering group for this is made up of representatives of the funders, Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley, Stirling Council and the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, and the community is represented by Phil Crowder, Ros Dingwall, John Epps, Mary Phillips and Lesley Quirk. If you have any questions at this stage please feel free to contact any of us. Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley has already announced that it has allocated the budget for its part of the funding but we still have to wait until late May to learn if Stirling Council's application for European funding has been successful. The project will not go ahead

unless this European funding is provided. Once we know the funding is all in place, the contractor can be appointed and there will then be a period of public consultation on the proposed plans so that everyone can see the plans and have their say. It is hoped to start the work in early October so that it can be completed over the winter, ready for the Spring tourist season. IF, and please note it is still an IF, this project is successful in its bid for European funding, it will be one of the largest capital projects in our area and will make Aberfoyle a much more attractive village for locals and visitors alike. I'll give you another update in June, in the next issue of the Strathard News.

*Lesley Quirk*



## Committee Comments

The committee are delighted to welcome Dougie MacPherson on board as Roving Reporter. Dougie ~~was coerced~~ volunteered at the Community Futures Launch, (as he puts it-there's no such thing as a free lunch!) and has made an impressive start with his contributions to this issue. He is ready and willing to write your story. Subscriptions continue to grow. There are now 38 households receiving their copy by post. Why not subscribe, to ensure you receive your copy of the Strathard News, or consider a gift subscription for friends and relatives who have moved out of the area and still have an interest in what's going on in Strathard. We are very grateful for this support as it helps to secure the future of the Strathard News. We are also grateful to the businesses who continue to support us by advertising their goods and services. As you can see from the letters page the newsletter has reached the other side of the world, and who knows where else! This can only be good for business advertisers. The next committee meeting is on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7.30pm in Memorial Hall. Please feel free to join us.

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