

Strathard News

Serving the communities of Aberfoyle, Kinlochard, Stronachlachar & Inversnaid

www.strathardnews.com

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Front page photo courtesy of Marion Back ©



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KIRKTON STUDIOS LTD

inside

- p2 xmas dinner
- p4 community council
- p6 registrar
- p9 owen mckee
- p10 glendrick roost
- p12 rangers ramblings
- p15 church news
- p16 the garden
- p18 school news
- p20 letters
- p21 milton

Senior Citizens' Christmas (New Year!) Dinner

After a last-minute cancellation due to heavy snow that morning in December, with the helpful co-operation of all sponsors the Community Council was pleased to be able to run this event in January. While the new date unfortunately did not allow all the original guests to come, this was the only evening possible and a great relief when the promised thaw arrived on schedule to allow the dinner finally to go ahead. Those who made it along had a great time, and we were pleased to welcome some new faces this year as well as many previous attendees. The Community Council relies on the support of many sponsors to run this event, all of which we gratefully thank, and special mentions for their valuable contributions are due to:

- **Forest Hills Hotel** for hosting the event and providing an excellent meal
- **Aberfoyle Coaches** for transport
- **Forthvale Contractors** for donating all the wine and spirits for the evening
- **The Kinlochard Ceilidh Band** for providing music for dancing
- The young members of **Callander & District Pipe Band** for entertainment.

Also our thanks to the many local businesses and people who made contributions of prizes for our raffle, which is one of the highlights of the evening.

For more details there is information about the dinner on the Community Council website, including a slideshow produced by Acer Photography, our 'official photographer' for the evening.



Duncan McCrone and the Tron Band

Gartmore Village Hall
Saturday 5 February 7.30pm

Tickets £10 from Gartmore shop • 01877 382214 • www.wegottickets.com/event/101797

Forest Theatre Company

Forest Theatre Company will celebrate their 10th anniversary with 3 nights of show-stopping performances of the popular musical,

My Fair Lady.

The show will be performed on Thursday 10th, Friday 11th and Saturday 12th March 2011 at 7.30pm. There is a bar at the show for pre-theatre and interval drinks. Tickets are priced at £8.00 for adults and £6 for children and will soon be available from Aberfoyle

Post Office and Gartmore Village Shop. We welcome any previous cast members from our shows over the last 10 years to come to the after show party on Saturday 12th March in the Village Hall to celebrate with us. Helen Webster, Chairperson



AM - AZ - iNG!

Missing Camera found

When the snow thawed in the playground of Aberfoyle Primary School we found a digital camera. The card has a large number of photos on it which look like a family gathering at Christmas. This is one of the photos. If you recognise the men and have lost your camera please contact Aberfoyle School on 01877 382278



Missing Lens found

In the middle of December when the snow fell in earnest I decided to walk along Lochard Road to the village to get my papers. There was a severe blizzard and I had to walk on the road. My glasses soon were coated in snow and I could not see where I was going so I took them off. When I got to Rainbows End (the paper shop) looking like the abominable snowman I noticed that one of the lenses was missing and was nowhere to be seen. I thought that was it and I would have to fork out for another pair of glasses - an expense I could do without just before Christmas. This week, approximately 8 weeks later, my daughter Seonaid, who was on her way home in the pitch dark after visiting us, noticed the lens just outside Craigmore Guest House. It was embedded in the thick dirty ice on the road covered in grit. It had survived a snow plough, a mini digger and a JCB not to mention the number of cars and lorries on the road. It also survived two feet of water in the flood on Lochard Road. Bearing in mind the lens is thin highly polished plastic it had survived the ordeal completely without any damage and is now back in my glasses. Thank goodness for my eagle-eyed daughter.

Ian Marshall

KIRKTON STUDIOS - strong & resiliant hand-made furniture

Kirkton Studios is a small woodworking firm based at Kirkton Farm in Aberfoyle. The company specialises in decorative hand-routed signs, seats and wall mountings, with bespoke designs provided to customers' individual requests, and in the construction of a range of robust seats and tables for outdoor use, including specially adapted picnic tables for both wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, and miniature picnic tables for children. The more specialised decorated seats, hand routed on the premises, have proved very popular as memorial benches, and also as presents for birthdays and anniversaries. The frames of all the products are constructed using round wood, giving them a chunky, rustic appearance suited to an outdoor location, and as the wood is still in its original form rather than sliced into rectangular timber, it is less inclined to take up moisture, making it very resistant to our weather conditions. It has to be said that working with lengths of round wood, essentially just pared-down tree-trunks, is neither easy nor straightforward. There is always a slight bend or a knotty bump exactly where the bolt should go, and every joint must be individually checked and adjusted to compensate for this. The finished product however, makes the time

and effort well worthwhile, resulting in a piece of furniture which is attractive to look at, and strong and resilient enough to last for years.

Running the business was something of a baptism by fire for mother-of-three Toto McLellan, the director of the company.

"I was obliged to take over the company when my late husband died, as his principal business in Glasgow hadn't survived his last illness and went into liquidation leaving us with no income, and I learned very quickly that it's amazing what you're capable of when you have no option. Having mastered the furniture construction with the guidance and advice of my husband's dear friend David McColl, to whom I owe a huge debt of thanks, I then started looking for ways of developing the business and discovered that I had a talent for routing hand-drawn designs on to wood. It's a very satisfying feeling to take a block of wood and watch a design appear from it under your hands, and I'm pleased to say that my work has been well received. I count myself fortunate that I can earn a

living doing something I enjoy, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people locally who supported the business in its early days and at present."

Local supplier to the Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust, and the National Park, Toto has also supplied products as far afield as Sussex and Wales, her designs having caught the attention of people travelling through our beautiful Trossachs area on holiday.

You can see examples of her work in the benches, planters and noticeboards between Aberfoyle and Inversnaid, and customers are always welcome at the workshop to see examples of her decorative seats and signage.

(Please see full page advert on back cover)



TROSSACHS BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP (TBP)



Recruiting new committee!

The TBP is a group of twenty businesses from all sectors in the Strathard area that collaborate with purpose to better the economy of the local area. TBP is responsible for the organization and running of successful events such as the Trossachs Mushroom Festival and Tramping through the Trossachs. These events bring visitors to our area and expand customer spending in all sectors of the economy.

TBP is not just for the benefit of businesses but also an opportunity for local residents to participate with the aim of supporting activities and events that contribute to bettering the local economy across the board.

We are currently looking to recruit a new committee to take TBP forward, with the following positions available:

Chairman / Vice Chairman / Secretary

If you wish to be involved or apply for any of these positions then please contact Gregor Wood on 01877 387 754, email info@greattimescotland.co.uk to discuss.

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Keep it local!

Community Council Report

The last two months has been exceptionally busy for community councillors, with not only our normal seasonal activities to organise, but the impact of the dreadful weather. My personal thanks to Geraint, Jimmy, John and Ros in Aberfoyle who had to bear the brunt of the extra work when others were affected by the snow and ice.

There is a separate report on our senior citizens' Christmas Dinner, which finally ran in mid-January. Thanks are also due to those who helped us organise and erect the community Christmas trees and lights – Colin and Ann Boyd in Kinlochard, Inversnaid Primary School, Allan Fail and others in Stronachlachar, and FCS which again generously donated the trees. All lights including those in Aberfoyle were upgraded this year, although carrier delays because of the weather affected the arrival of our new council-funded 'Community Pride' solar lights making these rather a rush job. We also organised food and flower gifts to older housebound residents.

Roads

We welcomed Les Goodfellow, the senior Council officer responsible for Roads, to our Community Council meeting in December for a long session on issues of concern to our area. Various matters and queries were raised and these will continue to be pursued. Our thanks to the folk who attended and those who continue to help with trying to improve roads problems. Lobbying your Stirling Councillors at every opportunity on matters like this about which you feel strongly is helpful, since it adds weight to Community Council complaints.

On problems such as potholes and blocked gullies, please help to get these fixed as soon as possible by reporting new faults directly, and do make sure that where there is a possibility of damage being caused to cars this is mentioned. To report problems to the Council for roads or any other service, either phone the call centre on 0845 277 7000 or go into 'Do it Online' on website www.stirling.gov.uk. The speed of response will vary, for example if there are health, safety or insurance claim implications it should receive higher priority. But if nothing seems to be happening in a reasonable timeframe after you have reported it yourself, then get in touch with a community councillor, since we can pick up any issues that have not been resolved and have these investigated. While we are happy to help when the

Council's performance is not up to an acceptable standard, do please remember that the Community Council has no responsibility or power to instruct Council repairs and in the first instance you should report problems with Council services directly as described above.

'Winter Weather Arrangements' Council Review

Stirling Council is seeking community views on recent Council performance. To help us respond, during February please let us know any input you may have for the below questions. You can e-mail, phone, use the website contact form or speak to any community councillor.

- What did Stirling Council do well during the severe winter weather?
- What was particularly difficult during the severe weather?
- What do you think Stirling Council could do better in future times of severe winter weather?

Community Council Elections

Since the last edition of the Strathard News, interim vacancy elections have been advertised by Stirling Council for Kinlochard and Inversnaid / Stronachlachar. Kinlochard community councillor Mike Campbell left the area recently and we thank him for his period of service. We hope people will come forward to fill the 3 empty places, since currently due to the loss of community councillors we are under-resourced. Do contact me at any time if you might be interested, since we can also co-opt members between elections where vacancies remain.

Website and e-mailings

We continue to transfer useful information onto the community council website www.strathard.org.uk, and to send out regular e-mailings on matters of general community interest. You can sign up for these e-mailings by contacting us via the website. Information of course is still put onto our 4 noticeboards, but we have found that e-mail contact has proved very popular and allows us to reach many local households. If you don't have internet access, you can currently view our website in Aberfoyle PO free of charge.

Finally, the names of your Community Councillors are shown below – please do get in touch with them on any relevant matter if you would like our help.

Fiona

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Electoral Register



The new Register of Electors published on 1st December shows an increase in the number of voters eligible to vote in future elections from the last register published in 1st December 2009 Register Brian Byrne, Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) when contacted advised that the increase was welcome but may only be temporary as notices of deletion have still to be posted to electors in households who had not responded to the annual voter registration forms sent this year and last year.

When no return is made and the ERO cannot verify who is eligible to remain registered to vote he requires to remove the names from his Register of Electors. An early estimate is that over 4000 electors in the Forth Valley Area may have to be removed for not returning their forms in 2010. Anyone who is not registered or receives a deletion notice and is still eligible to register needs to apply to register as soon as possible as not being registered can cause credit difficulties in the future as well as preventing you from voting.

Forms are available in all local libraries and can be downloaded from www.saa.gov.uk/central

Strathard Community Council meets at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month, alternating between Aberfoyle Memorial Hall, Kinlochard and Inversnaid Primary School. The next meetings will be held in **Inversnaid on 3rd March** and **Aberfoyle on 7th April**. Half an hour prior to our meetings a local Stirling Councillor (Tony Finch, Paul Owens or Fergus Wood) normally will hold a surgery for residents who wish to raise issues or concerns. If you are planning to come to one of these surgeries we suggest you check noticeboards or our website in advance, since there are sometimes dates when Councillors cannot attend.

Community Councillors by Ward

Aberfoyle	Inversnaid	Kinlochard
John Clow	Andre Goulancourt	Maureen Campbell
Ros Dingwall	Ralph Wolfe	Fiona McEwan
Jimmy Quinn	1 vacancy	2 vacancies
Geraint Short		

Contact details:

Tel 01877 387200

cc@strathard.org.uk

www.strathard.org.uk



THANK YOU FROM THE SURGERY

Everybody at the surgery would like to thank all those who have helped the practice and patients over this period of bad weather. Especially thank you to Archie Billet for clearing the first lot of snow: without that the car park would have been even worse; also to the Forestry for gritting the car park and also offering to deliver medication to those patients who were unable to get down to the surgery.

Also another thank you to Aberfoyle Motors for offering to deliver medication and also to Ros. at Aberfoyle Post Office for allowing the practice to use the Post Office as a collection point.

We were overwhelmed by kind offers by neighbours offering to take up medication to those patients who were house bound due to the snow and ice.

So a big thank to everybody from a very appreciative medical centre.

CONSULTING TIMES

ABERFOYLE – TEL – 01877 382421

Monday:	10.30am – 11.30am 4.00pm – 5.30pm	Open Surgery By Appointment
Tuesday:	8.15am – 9.30am 2.00pm – 3.00pm	Open Surgery By Appointment
Wed:	10.30am – 11.30am 4.00pm – 5.30pm	Open Surgery By Appointment
Thursday:	10.30am – 11.30am	Open Surgery
Friday:	7.00am – 8.00am 8.15am – 9.30am 2.00pm – 3.00pm	By Appointment (Alternate Fridays) Open Surgery By Appointment

BUCHLYVIE – TEL – 01360 850237

Monday:	7.00am – 8.00am 8.15am – 9.30am	By Appointment (Alternate Mondays) Open Surgery
Tuesday	10.30am – 11.30am 4.30pm – 5.30pm	Open Surgery By Appointment
Wed:	8.15am – 9.30am	Open Surgery
Thursday:	8.15am – 9.30am	Open Surgery
Friday:	10.30am – 11.30am 4.00pm – 5.00pm	Open Surgery By Appointment

STRATHCARRON HOSPICE RAFFLE

A big thank you to everybody who contributed to the Strathcarron Hospice Raffle which raised £331.61. This year Strathcarron Christmas Cards were sold and this raised an extra £282.30. making a grand total of £613.91.

TRAINING SESSIONS

The practice closes 7 sessions a year to participate in a protected learning programme for staff training and continuing professional education.

Dates of the closures are as follows:

Tuesday 8th February
Wednesday 23rd March
Thursday 12th May
Tuesday 14th June
Wednesday 14th September
Thursday 27th October
Tuesday 22nd November

Please note that the surgery will close at 12.30pm on the above dates. During this closure the Out-of-Hours service is operational.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.aberfoyle-buchlyviesurgeries.co.uk

You can now book or cancel your appointments on-line or order your repeat prescriptions. Whether you are at home or work, you can quickly log on to view, book and cancel appointments.

Available 24 hours a day, it's especially useful when the practice is closed or telephone lines are busy. Please ask at reception for a registration form.

Trossachs Area Community Transport Community garage buyout – January update

As was expected, we recently contacted the 364 people who are members of our community charity or who had contributed funds. A company AGM was then held on 25th January and, in addition to the routine agenda, several special resolutions were passed to allow various legal aspects of the community buyout of the garage to proceed.

We will re-contact everybody again when the purchase is concluded. After we take ownership a short re-commissioning period will then be necessary to make sure all is in order and to carry out some planned upgrades. However we are very conscious of how much the fuel supply is missed, and keen to see the pumps up and running again at the earliest possible date.



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Police Business

Anyone with information can contact Central Scotland Police on 01786 456000 or information can be given anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111

PACT Priorities January 2011

1. Travelling Housebreakers and seasonal thefts from rural properties.
2. Road Safety.
3. Targetting the dealers. Targetting the misuse of drugs and the dealers, working with locals to get drugs off the streets.

Crimes of Dishonesty

6th January 2011

Two incidents of dishonesty have occurred in the Aberfoyle area in the past week.

Between 29 and 30 December 2010, a distinctive pair of pink Hunter wellington boots were stolen from outside domestic premises in Aberfoyle, as were the Hunter socks within the boots.

Between 4 and 6 January 2011, a shed at the Aberfoyle Golf Course at Braeval had the padlock and chain removed. Although it appears nothing has been stolen, the matter is being treated as an attempted theft.

It is important that we all work together as a community and stay vigilant to help detect and deter such crimes of dishonesty. Anyone with any information regarding these incidents, or with information of any suspicious activity, is encouraged to contact the local police.

Strategic Plan Consultation

29th December 2010

Central Scotland Police is preparing its next strategic plan, covering the period 2011 to 2015. The plan will outline the Force priorities, how they will be achieved and how their progress will be measured.

Consultation is key in the development of the plan, and, as such, members of the public are invited to take part in a survey which will help shape the plan's priorities. The survey is available at www.centralscotland.police.uk or alternatively, a questionnaire can be requested by calling 01786 456317. (Ed. The closing date for the survey is Monday 31 January 2011)

Pesticides Disposal Scheme launched

29th December 2010

Project SOE (Security in the Operational Environment) is launching a Biocides and Pesticides Disposal Scheme from 3rd January to 14th March 2011, across the UK.

The scheme will make it possible to dispose of any unwanted, out of date or revoked biocides and pesticides, for a one off cost of £20.00. Any farmers, growers, gamekeepers and pest controllers who believe that they may be in possession of such chemicals are encouraged to take advantage of this unique opportunity to dispose of dangerous chemicals.

Registration for the scheme will open on Friday 17th December. Please check the definitions and rules before you apply.

A PAW Scotland spokesperson said; "PAW Scotland welcomes this scheme and hopes that it will contribute to removing some of the chemicals that we all too frequently find involved in the poisoning of our wildlife."

This scheme is operating on a first come first served basis, while funding



Central Scotland Police
Together for safer communities

lasts. I'd encourage all our partners to make their membership aware of it." Project SOE is an initiative which focuses on security issues within the agricultural environment. Their website outlines the rules of the scheme and provides application forms.

Police to hold internet safety seminars

Friday, 14th January 2011

Central Scotland Police, in association with Stirling Community Planning Partnership, are hosting a day of free internet safety seminars.

Three events are being held in one day in Stirling outlining the risks of the internet and how to make using it safe. Constable Anton Stevenson, of the Force Intelligence Information and Intervention Bureau, who is organizing the event, said: "Many people wrongly assume that the internet is a safe place because there is no direct personal contact. That is wrong. Teenagers and young children can be fooled into either giving out too much personal information or posting photos of themselves in various states of undress. There are people out there who have ulterior motives and can hide behind false identities."

"These seminars are aimed to anyone over 16 from the Forth Valley area including parents, professionals, voluntary workers, carers, teachers, social works and local authority officials.

"They will give an idea of what young people do online, the risks involved and what can be done to take control." Central Scotland Police, Federation Against Copyright Theft, the Women's Support Project and Stirling Council will give presentations on various aspects of the internet including Current Threats, the dangers of illegal downloading and file sharing, sexualized behaviour and how to take control.

Three free sessions are being held on Monday March 7. Two are being held in the Vue cinema in Stirling (9.30am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 4.30pm) and the third is being held in Wallace High School (6pm – 9pm).

Nobody under the age of 16 will be permitted entry.

To book your place please contact Central Scotland Police 01786 456993 or 01786 456407 or e-mail your name, phone number and preferred session to anton.stephenson@centralscotland.pnn.police.uk

Registrar

It's only January and already it's been a long cold winter. Only now, as the temperature rises just above those more commonly seen in the Arctic, are people managing to get out and about more freely.



January brought, for so very many, a devastating start to the year with the sad loss of Willie MacCallum of Renagour: a loss to his family, to innumerable friends, to a whole community and beyond. With those countless others, we too would like to offer our condolences to his family and friends.

On a happier note, I can tell you that the baby trend continued into the winter, with several more new babies arriving in the area. Among these, baby daughter Alixe Janet Anderson was born to the delight of Aberfoyle parents Katherine and David; while also in Aberfoyle parents Kirsty and Stephen welcomed the arrival of their baby son Ciaran Monaghan. Welcome babies.

Still we wait, however, for the first Birth Registration in Aberfoyle of 2011. I wonder who that will be.

Meantime John and I hope to be of help to you in any way we can. The office is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 am until 12 noon. Appointments can be made by telephone (01877 382 986), by email (regaberfoyle@stirling.gov.uk), or by dropping in to the office during opening hours.

Sharon Johnston

Registrar

Stirling Council's Aberfoyle Local Office



An opportunity to work with the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Community Partnership.

There are TWO NEW part time POSTS, very soon to be advertised. This is a chance to join the organisation at an exciting time - based at the National Park HQ Offices in Balloch, the Community Partnership will be seeking a part time Development Officer and Support Officer.

The Community Partnership is a community-led membership organisation for Community Development Trusts, Community Councils and other Community groups in and around the National Park. The mission of the Community Partnership is to inspire, encourage and enable communities in and around the National Park to be enterprising, and create together a vibrant National Park Community. The Community Partnership's activities are determined by the needs of communities and community futures action planning and fall within 3 key themes : Effective Networking, Information Sharing & Training and Project Facilitation.

Details of the appointments and application information will be posted on the website on 9th February.

www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk

The LLTNP Community Partnership

Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Headquarters
Carrochan Carrochan Road Balloch
G83 8EG

Tel: 01389 722601

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HETAS APPROVED

Station Buildings

by Isobel McGuire

Isobel Orr's special article in September's Strathard News certainly got two Aberfoyle "boys" talking. Both were brought up in Station Buildings, the original name for Forthview. Cecil Beaton and Jim McGuire swapped stories, memories and chuckles for over an hour.

The Station Buildings, a red sandstone city tenement in a village, seems a bit of a puzzle. What quarry produced the sandstone as there were no such sources in the vicinity? Marjory Brown (McLaren) provided the answer. The stone was brought to the area in large quantities and was used primarily to test the weight bearing capacity of the proposed route for the railway. This would have been necessary due to the low-lying peatland that the track would be crossing. Having served that purpose, the stone was then used for the building to provide housing. Macfarlanes, Browns, McKeichs, Orrs, McGuires, Telfers, Winstons, O'Sullivans, Macgregors and Beatons were all mentioned sharing the communal life afforded by living in such a building.

The Macgregors and Beatons, ground floor tenants, had each a toilet which they shared with the shops on either side of them: the Blairs with the Macgregors, the Glens with the Beatons.

If you were on the first and second floors there was one toilet to two households. These were situated on a half landing. Jim can remember little problem with this although up to ten people in the households would use the one WC.

He would often use it as a refuge from Chuckles after some misdemeanour. Chuckles, the village policeman, ensured that the youth of the village never reached juvenile courts. His frequent presence around the village meant that escapades never became vandalism.

But back to The Building: drying greens and wash-houses were shared, with certain days

being allocated to each household. In the wash-house was a big boiler heated below by a fire which had to be lit early on in the day. Rinsing was done in deep sinks with wringers attached.

Life in Aberfoyle was observed from the front windows – a great viewing place, especially of the railway yard. Buses from Glasgow and Stirling were also an entertainment especially on a Sunday night when the hikers queued up waiting for their journey home. Cecil remembers when one of the Misses Blair accused him of misbehaving and, although innocent of the crime, she stopped his weekly supply of the *Beano*, *Dandy*, and *Hotspur*. "I'd to wait and get a read of someone else's," he complained. It obviously still rankles.

Both McKeich brothers (top floor) were trick cyclists and were known to come down The Duke's Pass with feet on handlebars. Eric, for whatever reason, used rone pipes and window sills to gain entry to his home on one occasion.

Fellow occupants of the tenements formed close bonds and the memories of those days evoke happy times when money was scarce but boredom was an unknown state.

The main gathering place for The Building's "gang" was outside Johnny Benedetti's; the favourite drinks were hot orange and Tizer. Chuckles was always around and he would move them on. That took them to Manse Road and the Auld Brig where often a fag would be passed around. The turntable in the railway yard would be their next move. Depending on the weather and season, different activities kept the youngsters occupied. The site of the David Marshall Lodge was ideal for *Cowboys and Indians* and where the Memorial Hall now stands was a good bit for football.

Food for free was always tempting and forays to the apple trees of the Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Purves's and Chuckles' were fair

game in the autumn. Gulls' eggs on Flanders Moss were collected and sold to the soldiers billeted in the village or taken back home to be used for baking pancakes.

Andrew Sinclair (not of The Building) was a great inventor of games and also a dab hand at creating a den. Lime Craig was the setting for these re-enactments of the latest movie seen by the lads. A hideout was necessary for such goings-on and Andrew would make a den either sideways into the hillside or just by digging a hole in the ground. He would source corrugated sheeting, perhaps from the coup, which became the roof and cover it with sods of turf – a perfect hideout.

The material for the dramas acted out were got from the films viewed in Gartmore Village Hall put on by the soldiers. If you didn't have a bike, you walked there and back using the railway track.

The Picture House in Callander was a more expensive outing – bus fare as well as cinema ticket, with lemonade and chips if you were flush.

The boys from The Building matured into teenagers and became paper boys, milk boys and message boys. Davy King's dairy, next to the present manse, was where the bottles were filled. On frosty mornings that was a finger-numbing job. Jim got his books for dropping a bottle but was employed later on that day by the Co-op as a message boy. The bike supplied was difficult to manage as the weight of the goods carried varied so much, but the Co-op's wages were good. Not only that, the tips were generous especially from those who could least afford it.

For far flung places like Kinlochard and Inversnaid, the message boy became the van boy and that was an adventure all of its own.

No doubt there are lots of stories still to be told around The Building and, hopefully, Isobel's article will trigger many more recorded memories.

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Mob 07989 746617

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 - Old war medals
 - Old coins and banknotes
 - Old silver and plated items, including old cutlery
 - Old bagpipes, Dirks and skean dhus
 - Old swords, knives, pistols and rifles
 - Old musical boxes
 - Old toys
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Whether planning on shifting the festive love-handles, making ready for the sporting challenge you signed up for after a few too many glasses of mulled wine, or pushing your footie team up that league table, from January 2011 those in the Strathendrick and Trossachs area can utilise the services of an expert to help. Derek Rae's background is as a professional footballer, having played with Rangers FC and the Scotland Under 18s team (Capped 10 times), among many others. He then went on to gain SFA coaching qualifications and is experienced in organising and coaching kids/youth football teams as well as football and fitness camps. He is happy to discuss any specific requirements with local teams, clubs or schools wanting coaching input.

A qualified and experienced personal trainer, Derek is also bringing a challenging new fitness program to the area, with his Outdoor Fun Bootcamp starting on Tuesday 18th January. Come rain or shine in Killearn, 10am on a Tuesday mornings will bring with it a bracing challenge for those wanting to boost their fitness! Incorporating a bit of everything, and making the most of the varied terrain and natural obstacles in and around the Killearn area, Derek will ensure the group enjoy the muddy experience and get results. Everyone goes at their own pace, so it is suitable for all levels of fitness.

Anyone interested in any of the above should contact Derek directly:
www.derekrae.wordpress.com
derekraept@hotmail.com
Phone 07886 322 054

Lochside Yoga Update



The yoga class at Kinlochard continues to meet on a Tuesday evening at Forest Hills Hotel whilst the village hall is being renovated. We meet in the Achray Suite and class starts at 7.30pm. All welcome. New weekly drop-in classes are now running at St Andrew's Church Hall, Callander on Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings. From 21 February 2011, there will be a series of classes for 8 weeks at the Hayloft at West Moss-side Farm, Thornhill. Booking is required for these classes and spaces are still available. A pick-up service is available, please enquire.

All classes are suitable for any ability, but particularly good for beginners or if you haven't done yoga for a while. Think of it as "Keep Fit for the Soul!"

Yoga can help you become fitter, feel more relaxed and help you cope with the stresses and strains of everyday life. To learn more about any of the yoga sessions detailed above or to book a place at the Hayloft, please contact me or visit my website www.lochsideyoga.com.

Gillian Lester 01877 387201, 07738 225996. email gillian@lochsideyoga.com

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Mondays 10am - 11:30am



Contact Gillian
01877 387201 07738 225996
gillian@lochsideyoga.com
www.lochsideyoga.com



National Park News

By Owen McKee

For a number of years now I have had the habit of chasing away the winter gloom with a visit to Celtic Connections at the Royal Concert Hall and this year I had the added pleasure of knowing that my visit there would be a little special in that the National Park Authority had a hand in the concert I would be attending. As part of the ScottsLand festival commemorating the bicentenary of the publication of Sir Walter Scott's epic poem, The Lady of the Lake, the Park Authority commissioned a composition by Phil Cunningham with the aim of promoting The Trossachs to a worldwide audience. He has named it The Trossachs Suite. Backed by a very talented array of musicians including the Trossachs Strings, Phil launched his work to a crowd of over 1600 enthralled listeners. With a backdrop screen of the Trossachs and a narration of sections of the poem by the actor, Bill Paterson, introducing each piece of the suite a magical evening ensued.

In the second half of the concert Phil and the band were joined by Eddi Reader and Karen Mathieson who performed brilliantly a number of songs inspired by Scott's writings. It was a truly magnificent night and a wonderful ending for the ScottsLand Festival.

For some time now the Park Authority has been striving to get together some funding to tackle the Japanese Knotweed problem and at last some monies have come to hand. We are in the process of acquiring spraying equipment and training rangers

on eradication procedures. An up to date survey to identify areas of infestation will be undertaken in the spring and we will then be looking for volunteers to help with the project. Training will, of course, be given.

As most of you will know our Convener, Mike Cantley, has been appointed Chair of VisitScotland and as a consequence he will be leaving the Park Authority. As we had already lost our Vice Convener Mike agreed to stay on until we had appointed a new Convener and a special board meeting was arranged for 3rd February to elect both a new Convener and Vice Convener. At the same meeting we will be arranging the composition of the various committees and appointing the committee chairs and deputies.

As a new season beckons a meeting is planned to take place to discuss ways of tackling the anti-social behaviour which is all too common particularly around our lochs. Invitations have gone to our community councils, major lochside landowners and our partners in Operation Ironworks to come along to the National Park Offices in Callander. We are determined to continue to improve not only the experience for visitors to the Park but also that of our communities.

As always I can be contacted as follows:

Post: Taigh na Bhuth,
Lochearnhead.
Phone: 01367 830214
owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk

Anne McGuire MP

May I wish you all a Happy New Year although I'm afraid that the New Year has not brought good news to many of us, least of all local families. The Westminster Government's Vat increases are now in place and affecting just about all the goods and services we buy; from fuel and mobile phone charges to new shoes and washing machines, with the main exceptions being food, children's clothing and books and newspapers. My hopes that the Government would rethink this particular tax rise have unfortunately been dashed.

This increase means that poorer households will lose twice as much as a percentage of their income than the better off because what they spend represents a higher proportion of what they earn. This, coupled with the latest labour market statistics released for the Stirling Council area which show that the number of unemployed claimants in December 2010 was 1,960, an increase of 124 from December represent somewhat tough times ahead.

With the recent bad weather I have not been out and about as much as usual and even had to cancel my annual Christmas card prize-giving reception for primary schools. However, I did manage to make it to the MacRobert Film Theatre to watch the newly released "Made in Dagenham", a film recounting the fight that ordinary woman had to secure pay parity with their male colleagues at the Ford car factory in Dagenham. Their struggle commanded headlines, galvanising the political debate and indirectly led to the Equal Pay Act of 1970.

Recently, a number of my constituents especially those from more rural areas have approached me with their concerns about the ever rising cost of fuel. Subsequently, I have contacted the Chancellor and the Minister at the Department of Energy and Climate Change to ask that he look at the rate of price increases and advise to me what steps the Government is taking to control increases.

As ever, I can be contacted at the Parliamentary Advice Office, 22 Viewfield Street, Stirling, FK8 1UA; telephone 01786 446515 or by email at mcguirea@parliament.uk



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Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority submits its Finalised Draft Local Plan for examination

On 30 November Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority submitted to Scottish Ministers its Finalised Draft Local Plan for examination. The Scottish Ministers have appointed Miss Janet M McNair MA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI, Mr David Buyla BA(Hons) MRTPI and Mr Iain G Lumsden MA(Hons) MSc MRTPI to examine the unresolved representations to the Finalised Plan following the public consultation between February and April 2010.

The National Park has provided Reporters with a summary of the issues it considers should be assessed at the examination and a copy of all representations received during consultation. Additional Reporters may be appointed to support the speedy delivery of the examination report.

The Finalised Draft Local Plan and the Authority's summary of issues can be viewed at:

- National Park HQ, Carrochan Road, Balloch. Opening hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm Tel 01389 722600
- National Park office, Callander, 52-54 Main Street, Callander. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1pm to 4.30pm; Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm Tel 01389 722600

All local libraries in the National Park, including mobile libraries:

- Alexandria Library, Gilmour Street, Alexandria
- Balloch & Haldane Library, Carrochan Road, Balloch
- Callander Library, South Church Street, Ben Ledi View, Callander
- Drymen Library, The Square, Drymen
- Dunoon Library, 248 Argyle Street, Dunoon
- Helensburgh Library, 51 John Street, Helensburgh
- The Headquarters of West Dunbartonshire, Stirling and Argyll & Bute Libraries
- Killin Community Library, Main Street, Killin

All relevant documents can also be viewed on the Local Plan Examination pages on the National Park website www.lochlomond-trossachs.org which will be updated regularly with information as the examination progresses.

Further guidance on the examination process is available from the website of the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/decisions-appeals/Apppeals/PlanInquiries or contact Brian Archibald at DPEA on 01324 696455 brian.archibald@scotland.gsi.gov.uk If you have any questions regarding the examination process please contact the National Park Forward Planning Team on 01389 722600 or by email, localplan@lochlomond-trossachs.org.

Welcome to the news from *Glendrick Roost*

Christmas is now a distant memory and the nights are stretching as the new year settles. The animals at Glendrick Roost are on the whole managing with the cold weather. We have unfortunately lost a few to old age and the cold combined. One of our Pot-bellied pigs, Tiggywinkle died at the age of ten. She had been slowing down and losing a bit of weight for a while but it is still upsetting when one of the animals die. Miss Piggy, her sister, is doing ok though needs a friend when we are next asked to take on small pigs. I went to see six beautiful 'rescued' micro x pigs all black and tan but as they were already bigger than Miss Piggy and they were still growing I had to say no. So much for "micro" pigs!!! Heidi our beautiful pygmy goat also died after suffering a stroke. I can't remember when we didn't have Heidi. We are very sorry to have her go and she is sorely missed.

Unfortunately we have lost our grazing and help at Ballat and have to find alternative accommodation for the mini Shetlands for the summer. I hope we can rearrange our other grazing and organise all the animals to be looked after. Once we have our own land even though rented we won't have this problem.

The tortoises, Shelley, Orion, Eros and Troy are all putting on weight thank goodness though not all at the same rate. Shelley is putting on the most and would eat constantly

if allowed. Like all animals a small amount at a time is best so he is restricted in the amount he gets. As they are under constant heat their year is forever summer at present. Once the summer arrives for us all they will be allowed outside for small portions of the day to enjoy 'proper' sun not the UVB lighting they are under now.

We have not taken on any extra animals over the winter so far though several wild animals have been taken to Hessilhead Wildlife Hospital. One, a tiny hedgehog, weighed only 265grams! He wasn't malnourished either, just small. How he had survived the horrendous -15°C temperatures I have no idea!!! To survive winter conditions Hessilhead recommends they should weigh 600grams! He was a very lucky chappy.

The weather prevented me from leaving the house in the car for a couple of weeks meaning I had to walk to do the ponies in the village. This meant we HAD to purchase a 4x4. We now have a wonderful workhorse that has allowed me to get out and about again even when the roads were bad. Thank you to all the helpful people who were able to feed our animals when I couldn't get.

Fundraising venues for the coming year are being worked out and some visits to Dobbies garden centres have already been booked. We are going to the Glasgow Vet School Rodeo in April for the first time. We have

never been able to get in before so are looking forward to a new event and a different set of people to approach for funds. Stands at the usual local shows and highland games are being applied for and a Ceilidh dance is being organised for September.

The Christmas Raffle supposedly to be drawn in December was postponed until February due to the bad weather preventing most of the tickets being sold. We still have a few tickets for sale and as this is one of our biggest single fundraisers of the year PLEASE get in touch to allow us to sell all the tickets: 07748 351287 . First prize is £100, second prize; a Valentine hamper, third prize; a bottle of malt and many other prizes. Thanks.

Though we have had the help of a few new volunteers we can always do with a few more. Several long term vols have left – Charlene has had a little girl, Abby, congratulations to her and Chris; another is also pregnant and Emma is going to Australia in May and is trying to make as much money as possible before she goes.

If you are interested in sponsoring an animal, fundraising for us, volunteering or just more information please contact me, Mione Morrison, on 07748 351287. Thank you



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Of Men and Mogs

By Fionix

On the 28th of November, 2010 the road conditions were treacherous. Heavy snowfall had caught most unawares. There were many drivers slipping and sliding away on the main street of Aberfoyle, when in rolled the Co-Op delivery truck, with similar problems, attempting to negotiate a way round dishevelled cars, people, animals and snow.

Upon finding no safe area in which to park near the Co-operative Supermarket, the driver decided to venture forth into the bottom of Manse Road in order to turn himself around and find a means of a way through. As the fair people of Aberfoyle know; when in doubt about ANY road conditions, do NOT enter Manse Road as this can only exacerbate things. I don't believe the driver of said truck was familiar with this law. He got himself and his truck horribly stuck; the wheels were moving, however nothing above wheel attachment thingies did likewise.

An obviously entertaining 'incident' was occurring right before our eyes. Who needs a television with such excitement right on our doorsteps was the general consensus.

The good folks all around began trying to clear the road, not thinking to watch their backs as the snow laughed (in that snowy kind of way that it has) at their feeble efforts to clear it away and just kept right on swirling and swishing down, not taking a minute off for the good behaviour and decent citizenship of a hard working, well meaning handful of the human species.

To give you more of an idea of the desperation and dedication of the grand folks; they were waiting for the delivery to bring their daily bread – now you're really catching a bit of the drama of it all!

In rolls our hero, James McBeath, from far off Blairdrummond (actually, I believe that he'd been at a party nearer to here than that, but that's not the point!) in his beloved Unimog. This, I am informed is some kind of an army vehicle, which laughs (in it's Unimog kind of a way) at treacherous road conditions and just trundles on through all terrain to wherever it (or it's driver) wishes to go. This, I had been told before, by a person who knows all there is to know about life, the universe, motor

vehicles and everything (16 years old, of course he does) but believed not a word of it until I witnessed the following with my own eyes:

James halted his vehicle and in a gentlemanly fashion, demogged, then, 'heel for heel and' ...oh, you know the rest! veered round to the passenger door and valiantly escorted his passenger, Mairi McLellan, out of the Mighty Mog and stepped her gaily (the sun always shines gaily from Mairis



smiling demeanour, no matter what the weather conditions may be) 'arm in arm', all the way to the pavement. Seeing that she was safe and out of the ravages of that swirling snow, under the canopy where the audience were waiting with baited breath for the next instalment, he proceeded to the spinning wheeled truck. Slowly and quietly he performed a fantastic feat, which to all around was quite miraculous: He rescued the truck, the man AND our foodstuffs from the deep clutches of the meddlesome Manse Road. His Magnificent Mog, far smaller in stature than the Terrific Truck, was towing all that metal and meal along the Main Street of Aberfoyle. I can't remember if we cheered or not, but there was definitely jubilation in the air.

Oh happy ending, you may think! However:

Seeing the distressed driver with his delivery managing to roll along with the top of the vehicle in tandem with the round bits at the bottom in constant, albeit slow and slightly laboured, movement, the Co-Op manager magnanimously waved him onward and awayward from snowbound danger. Far, far away, to pastures beyond the Main Street of Aberfoyle, where a safer world (we hope) lay in wait for a smoother, surer delivery of another's daily dish. I just hope that the recipients of our lost bread and butter had an inkling of the heroes who had helped make their dinner delicious and of the aggrieved Aberoylians, who dieted and dejectedly directed their thoughts Hubbardly home.

Oh, I don't know – The Young Folks o' Today eh?

I want one. No, not a Young Folk; A Unimog!



Our hero - James McBeath

There was a young man fae Blairdrummond
While driving through deep snow felt summoned
By the slippin and slidin antics sae frantic
O' the Co-op delivery (that wisnae fae Partick!)

So he in his Unimog richt guid 'n sturdy is
Saw the Aberfoyle folks doon oan their hurdies
Shuvin 'n huffin as they tried wi aw their might
Tae git that big lorry moved – they pit up a guid fight!

Just when they thocht aw wis hopelessly lost
James – that's his name – said 'Hang the cost'
Slow purposeful walk tae the man o' the van
James wis the wan wi the means an' the plan.

A very few words wuz exchanged in the snowfall
Next thing we kent wuz a mighty great big haul
Fae that sturdy wee Unimog right fit fir the jobby
It shifted aw right, that fu muckle great lorry.

Well the folks aw aroon were astounded
And efter sich effort, deeply confounded
Cos they looked oan and saw aw the dinner stuff
Skulk aff, then decided, 'We just huffnae enough!'

So to James we wid aw like tae thank ye
Fir takin the trouble wi thoan lorry.
E'en tho wi nivir goat wur dinner
We kent fine YOU wuznae the sinner.

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Ranger's Ramblings

A View from the Lodge!

Contributions welcome. Contact David Wilkie on 01877 382258 or email clubs@strathardnews.com



Courtesy of John McKinlay

The Times they are a changing

A Bob Dylan track, as most of our older readers, and discerning music lovers, will recall. The reason it strikes a 'chord' is by way of a departure from the Lodge foyer of the Chill Out retail shop in the forthcoming season.

When David Thornaby Brough decided to bring a thirteen year tenure as resident woodcarver to a close in the Easter period of 2005, it proved to be a highly emotional parting, and I remember doubts being expressed at the time that this hugely popular and influential figure would be a difficult act to follow.

Indeed, the workshop he predominately occupied looked a forlorn sight, as it lay empty for many weeks. That is, until a chance meeting in the Crafts Shop with a couple from Blantyre offered a possible solution- although I would be stretched to recall any modicum of detail from the ensuing practical discussions which eventually led to them renting the space.

What I do remember vividly, from the outset, was a natural enthusiasm and charisma in their characters, which offered great promise. Through the course of time, they would demonstrate these qualities, over and over again, winning the affections of the visitors almost at will. That Stuart Farquhar and Brenda Louw seemed to be perfectly matched was patently obvious, and, by December of that year, they decided to make it official, as Brenda became Mrs. Farquhar at an intimate ceremony in Lanarkshire.

Their slightly differing personalities never appeared to be a hindrance, as they worked together extremely well, not only for themselves, but for the greater benefit, displaying inordinate measures of humour, humility, understanding and kindness along the way.

There is no doubting the vast array of talents, skills and health inducing methods which they introduced brought a freshness and vitality hitherto unseen, and their exemplary work ethics established them as perfect ambassadors for the Forestry Commission - totally justifying a place in the annals of the history of the Lodge.

In closing, it should be stressed this scribe is not intended to be an 'obituary' as, for one thing, the Chill Out shop has simply moved to the village and Brenda will continue her yoga classes in the coming year. Unfortunately, I cannot report for certain, at time of writing, what the intentions are for the space vacated, as the area has been designated as part of a major long-term redevelopment plan for the Centre.

Whatever the future holds, it would be impossible to imagine, even for an instant, Stuart and Brenda, like David Brough, ever becoming strangers, as they can now safely be considered to be 'fully paid-up members' of the David Marshall Lodge Family.



Sugar & Spice & all things nice

The pre-planned programme of Christmas themed events and activities for December within the confines of the Lodge suffered countless setbacks, as the resultant atrocious weather conditions throughout the month proved to be the ultimate administrator, virtually precluding any reasonable notion to create an atmosphere worthy of the occasion. Despite the concentrated and

valiant efforts of a great number of Commission staff to ensure safe access to the car park areas and approach paths through an intense gritting programme during the first fortnight, it turned out to be a losing battle, as the facilities were forced to close for two three day periods.

Still, the Centre managed to open its doors during the weekend periods, which was clearly appreciated by the hardy souls who battled their way through to purchase a tree, simply on the strength of tradition. Sadly, and perhaps somewhat predictably, the visitors appeared on the whole to be generally distracted - many displaying a sense of urgency no doubt brought on as a result of 'lost time'. A further indication of this was to be realised by the distinct lack of 'family' presence over the period, with fathers seemingly being detailed solely to risk the journey for the tree on their behalf.

There were many bright points to be found, however...and none more so than the Lomond Mountain Rescue fundraising day on Sunday the 12th as the Team came together in time-honoured fashion to raise the spirits with admirable enthusiasm. As is their want, Anne and Robert were also on hand to cross some boundaries with outrageously related costume apparel, which, I suspect, is something we will all have to get accustomed to as time 'wears' on.



Rangers Corner

*Ode To Phil Spencer And Kirsty Allsop
(for their attempts at a Perfect Christmas)*



Although we may all wobble under the pressure
It is vital we get the exact measure
Because we all can't help but buy into the fantasy
Of celebrity nonentities telling us what should be
Shaking up a storm with recipes for tasty treats
While we all struggle to keep our feet on the streets
Here are a few things, which I stupidly neglected to consider...
Silk-screening new curtains
Making hand-made chocolates
Frosting deco pens for the cake
Buying a 'magic tablecloth' to repel the stains
Commissioning ice sculptures in the shape of champagne glasses
The Caribbean dishes with endangered species of fish
The simple metallic scheme on the tree
The visit to Lapland to seek out the perfect cheese
Goblets and wenches, which would have wrapped up the glamour
The creation of warm colours, a sophisticated space and a sparkling wonderland
A creaking table of martini cocktails and gingerbread biscuits
The importance of fragrance...
Well....although I did not manage any of these things, I was able to afford some lighter fuel to spark up a couple of candles, which provided a little heat through the cold snap. I must say though that I am already looking forward to next Christmas, on the back of their advice, in order that I can add a touch of deliciousness to my life through a heady transformation of indulgence and taste explosions.



My favourite picture of Stuart, taken in July 2009



My favourite picture of Brenda – the morning after Halloween, 2008



The Lomond Mountain Rescue Team. Their importance and influence cannot be stressed enough. If you are seeking Local Heroes, they are here, in abundance.



The Christmas pixies, Anne and Robert, are captured at the deer sculpture with past (Hugh Clayden) and present (Gordon Donaldson) Forest District Managers.

The Beauty & Massage Wedding Show



This is a NEW event supporting LOCAL businesses who all have one goal...to make your Wedding Day simply WONDERFUL!

The Wedding Show will be held annually on the first Sunday of March. This year its debut event will be on **Sunday 6th March 2011** at the Dreadnought Hotel, Station Road, Callander.

Local Exhibitors who have booked include: *Wedding Dresses, Hairdressers, Makeup Artists, Caterers, Florists, Wedding Cards & Invitations, Jewellery, Wedding Stationery, Photographers, Wedding Cars, Wedding Cakes & Favours and much much more...*

A Wedding Dress Catwalk Show courtesy of Point Nouveau, Doune (an Exclusive Wedding Boutique for all tastes and prices) will take part on the day showing YOU a stunning collection of dresses for Brides, Mother of the Bride & Bridesmaids Dresses to suit everyone!

All visitors on the day will receive a glass of bubbly as "a toast to the Bride & Groom..."

If you need any further information please contact Jules Watson on 07872 343 072.

Men's 10k launches on a high note

Singer Darius Campbell called on his fellow Scotsmen to put their best foot forward in 2011 by taking part in the Men's Health Forum Scotland 10k for Men event.

The unique men-only 10k takes place on Father's Day each year (19 June 2011) and is the focus of National Men's Health Week in Scotland which aims to raise awareness of men's health issues and encourage participation in healthy physical activity all year round.

Darius Campbell said "This is a fantastic event for guys, whatever your age or what shape you are in. Making the commitment to take part in the Men's 10k is a positive start to the new year. Getting fitter, having a laugh and maybe even raising funds for worthwhile charities, it's all good.

Darius added "There are plenty of female only 5k and 10k events out there so this really is one for the boys. For those celebrating Father's Day, what better way to mark the occasion than with a big hug and proud smile of your loved ones at the finish line?"

Tim Street, Chair of Men's Health Forum Scotland added "This is a 10k for every man, from first timers to experienced runners. Everyone takes part at their own pace and for their own personal reason. That might be to see how fast they can do it, or as the target for increasing their fitness levels through the year, to raise money for charity or just as a fun thing to do with their male relatives or mates. It doesn't matter what brings them to the event, once over that start line they become part of the movement along one route that will hopefully leave a lasting impact on men's health in Scotland long after the last person has crossed the finish line."

Event sponsors include 'see me'; Real Radio; Achilles Heel; Brooks Sports; Glasgow City Council; A G Barr; Cystic Fibrosis Trust; The Stroke Association; Yorkhill Children's Foundation and Breast Cancer Care, Breathing Space and jogscotland.



To register for the 2011 Men's Health Forum Scotland 10k for Men visit www.mens10k.com

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Vauxhall Corsa Club 1.4 Auto 5dr (07/07) 2 Owners, 20,000 Miles, FSH £5,750



Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi Zetec 109 BHP (10/10) Sat Nav, Bluetooth, Sport Pack, Various Metallics £12,750



Volkswagen Phaeton 3.0 TDi Four-Motion (07/07) FSH, 40,000 Miles, Black/Black Leather, Sat Nav, Electric Memory Seats, Stunning Car. £16,750



Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi Titanium (2010) Less than 5,000 Miles, Choice of Colours £13,450



Citroen C2 Auto (04/04) In Burgundy Metallic with 33,000 Miles, FSH £3,350

*Images for illustration purposes only.

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Richard Grosse, Rector of St Mary's



Climb onto my magic carpet and be carried away from the chill and snow of Aberfoyle to the place where The Big Vine grew.

The biggest and best vines grow in sundrenched France and California: you will be surprised and perhaps even disappointed when our magic carpet touches down only a dozen miles away from Aberfoyle at Cauldhame outside Kippen. It was there in the summer of 1889 that thirty-one year old Duncan Buchanan, having left his job as gardener at Culzean Castle, started his own market garden.

It was a propitious time for Buchanan to set himself up. Before the mass importation of food as we know it today, there was considerable demand for home-grown produce. The latter part of the nineteenth century also witnessed great strides in the production of glass, and in turn the construction of greenhouses. Buchanan already had experience of running greenhouses at Culzean. Running along a ridge of land at Cauldhame was a red sandstone wall. Against this wall, a south-east facing greenhouse was constructed together with provision for an anthracite boiler. From a viney at Galashiels, Buchanan purchased a dozen young vines of the Gros Colman variety, a species noted for producing large berried fruit with a superb bluish grey bloom. The fledgling vines were planted in the greenhouse at five foot intervals. All the vines flourished, but one in particular grew especially well. In fact this vine grew so prodigiously that one by one the others had to be removed to accommodate its growth. It became known as 'The Big Vine' and by 1910 was producing more than 600 bunches per year.

Other producers were amazed by the vine's productivity, for such plants are relatively difficult to cultivate under glass. Buchanan simply told enquirers that 'he was kind to the vine' By this he meant that he carefully regulated both its heat and ventilation, fed its roots and pruned as necessary.

Duncan Buchanan when not in his greenhouse was an amateur poet and man of letters. He took an active interest in local politics. He was captivated by the panoramic view from his home village over the Carse and commissioned a painting that was reproduced for sale locally. He curled to international standard, once notably on Loch Lomond. He also invented a method of preserving the vividly coloured autumn vine leaves for table decoration. Specimen arrangements were sent both to Queen Victoria and the Empress of Russia for which he was thanked by personal letter.

The vine continued to grow and its annual crop by the 1920s had increased to 2,000 bunches. Buchanan's son Selby had by that time joined the business, and it was he who first opened the vine to public viewing. Its size and productivity astonished all who saw it. A fiction circulated that the vine had roots all the way to the River Forth that flowed across the Carse. As the vine matured it grew hardy to freak frosts and the storm that blew away its protective greenhouse in 1927.

By the 1960s the vine had stretched 300 feet through four greenhouses, and the girth of its stem measured 55 inches. By this time though, Selby was in ill health. Although visitors continued to flock to the vine, the market for grapes had long since been undercut by foreign competition. Reluctantly Selby decided to sell the business: no buyer though could be found. So on a cold grey morning in October 1964 a saw was taken to the trunk of the Big Vine. One can only guess Selby Buchanan's emotion as the result of 73 years loving care was destroyed in less than a day. Not all was lost though; cuttings were taken and it is said that some have survived: does anyone know where? A part of the root was carved into a set of chess pieces.

I am indebted to Alan Edwards' booklet 'The Kippen Big Vine' (1991) as well as some local reminiscences.

As a footnote, may I please acknowledge another debt of gratitude; this time to the residents of the cottages in Kinlochard? On a snowy morning at the end of last year, I managed to get stuck with a school bus in The Square. A number of very kind people provided unstinting labour, shovels, coffee and other help which was much appreciated. Apology is of course due to the passengers on the bus, who were understandably angry and frustrated by the delay in reaching school.

Richard Grosse

From the Manse.....

Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith Parish Church



It is always with trepidation that I prepare to watch a film or dramatisation supposedly based on a book I know and love. When I unwrapped a DVD at Christmas, of the BBC series Sherlock, I was more than a little apprehensive.

I grew up with the Sherlock Holmes stories. They still form part of my comfort reading in tricky times. I love the wit, the humour, and wonder why other people don't find them funny too. It was with some foreboding that I loaded up the DVD player. To my great surprise, this purist was absolutely hooked.

It is set in modern day London, so no deerstalkers or hansom cabs. There is no cocaine - not even a seven per cent solution. There is no 'three pipe problem' but a 'three (nicotine) patch problem'. This Sherlock Holmes is fully up to date ('where would I be without my blogger?'). The lead characters are wonderfully played. It is an imaginative, witty and faithful update of Conan Doyle's stories: Sherlock Holmes as Conan Doyle's contemporaries would have seen him. (And how unnerving it is to realize that both the modern and the original Dr Watson return from an equally impossible war in Afghanistan) ...

Of course, Sherlock Holmes of 221B Baker Street did not actually exist, except in the mind of Arthur Conan Doyle, but when we read the stories, or watch an excellent dramatisation, he comes alive. Just as good reinterpretations bring alive Hamlet or King Lear, or Batman or Doctor Who for that matter.

Jesus of Nazareth did exist. Non-Christian historians from Josephus to Trajan to Pliny refer to him. The quest for the historical Jesus has gripped many a bible scholar, but really all we have is the gospels. They are not biographies of Jesus, nor are they simply pieces of literature. The gospels are the centre of the faith of millions. Their supposed message has caused many wars, much oppression and persecution, but they have also inspired some of the greatest art and music, and some of the finest human lives.

The gospels are strange, haunting writings giving voice to, and some evidence of, the mysterious figure of Jesus of Nazareth. And some might even ponder: 'How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?' (S.H., The Sign of Four).

But in truth each age must reinterpret Jesus. Albert Schweitzer, influential academic as well as missionary, wrote of him: 'He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lake-side... To those who obey him ... he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who he is'. And with that, perhaps, we must be content.

Linda

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The Garden in Early Spring



After the atrocious conditions we've endured this winter so far it would hardly be surprising if many of you had forgotten you ever had a garden with greenery in it; wasn't it a surprise when almost overnight everything changed from white to green?!

But now that the days are growing noticeably longer and signs of life from the early spring flowerers are appearing, it's time to wrap up warm and get out there again.

In The Garden

You could start by checking for damage done by the snow; prune back any broken branches, restake trees if necessary and, if hedges have been pushed over too far, think about renovation pruning. Of course, if we get more snow get out quickly and clear it off the already weakened plants.

While you've got the loppers or pruning saw to hand, carry out any work on apple and pear trees before they come into leaf (while you can still see the branch network); opening up the canopy will enhance air circulation and reduce the chance of fungal disease. But don't be tempted to tackle any of the *Prunus* species (plums and gages) until in leaf. All the fruit trees will benefit from a high potash feed; wood ash is excellent.

Autumn fruiting raspberries should be cut back to the ground now and new canes planted. Also plant other fruit bushes and trees – some may still be available as bare root plants. March is the time to prune rose bushes, lift, divide and replant *hostas*, trim the tops of winter flowering heathers and there is still time to lift and divide snowdrops "in the green". Start to control slugs and snails now even if you can't see them; starting now may save a lot of damage later on. If you use slug pellets, apply a scattering every few weeks.

The lawn should show signs of growth soon. If there is debris/leaves around clear it off, check that the mower is in good working order and when the weather turns milder be ready to apply a spring feed &/or moss killer.

Bird Care

Hopefully you've all been looking after the birds all winter so far, but although the snow has gone there is no let up in hardship for our feathered friends. Continue to make sure they have something to eat (with a world shortage of peanuts don't be surprised by big price rises) and unfrozen water to drink and bathe in. February 14th is the start of National Bird Nest Box week; obviously it is time for the birds to be thinking about nesting so cut back any deciduous hedges before they start and put up/clean out a bird box or two.

In the **greenhouse** or shed there is plenty to do. Firstly make sure everything is clean including the windows to maximize light levels early in the year. Then get busy with your seed sowing – sow sweetpeas and root crops in modules to avoid root disturbance on planting out; basil, tomatoes and others in a heated propagator. Plant up lily bulbs in containers for making a splash of colour wherever you fancy in the summer.

On warm days keep the greenhouse well ventilated. And keep a good eye-out for aphids – controlling them now will save a lot of effort later in the year.

Houseplants can be repotted now so they grow away well for the rest of the year. This includes many **orchids**; assuming they have finished flowering and before they put on new growth, if they have not been repotted for a couple of years think about doing it now. If you're not confident to tackle this job we're having a **free orchid repotting workshop/demonstration on 20th March at 2pm**.

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Inversnaid Reserve



There was only one word on everyone's lips this winter – 'snow', (well, that was the only word I can put in print). The reserve ground to a halt as four, and even eight, wheel drive access became impossible, never mind my trusty Rover 45 and its two inches of ground clearance.

A short break in the weather, during December, allowed me to check that, yes, the reserve was still there and, no, it had not disappeared into the Loch during my absence. Surely, the only animal enjoying this type of weather were our ptarmigan - a mountain grouse that turns white in winter, making them feel rather conspicuous in years when the snow refuses to fall.

On my way home, I was treated to some great views of the ptarmigan's near relative, black grouse, roosting in trees near Loch Arklet. It is a very odd sight to see these chunky little birds perched high up on seemingly inadequately sized branches. We will certainly be seeing more of them in the coming months as they return to their 'leks' - small open areas where the males gather to display their wares to females, who watch from the fringes. There are already a good number of males loitering around Arklet, and it will not be long before the early morning silence is replaced with their strange 'bubbling' call. We are keeping our fingers crossed that the hard work will also pay off on the reserve, and will lead to another increase in numbers. I might even go along and count a few! That is, as long as the snow keeps at bay...

Fraser Lamont
RSPB Inversnaid, Assistant Warden.

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Tory peer Lord Forsyth conquers Antarctic peak

The Conservative Peer Lord Forsyth has successfully climbed Antarctica's highest peak, Mount Vinson, raising more than £350,000 for charity.

The 56-year-old conquered the 16,000ft, ice-covered mountain after setting out with his team just after Christmas, braving temperatures of -30C.

The former Scottish Secretary undertook the expedition to support Marie Curie and Children in Need India.

His sponsors included David Cameron and former prime ministers.

"It's been a fantastic trip for me," said Lord Forsyth, in a message recorded for his website, which he used to document the trip.

"I confess when I set off on Boxing Day I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew and it was with a certain degree of apprehension."

He added: "I owe a huge amount to my family for letting me go."

Lord Forsyth, who was Scottish Secretary from 1995-1997, said he was "overwhelmed" with the level of donations he received, which came from political figures including Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Sir John Major. The peer, who was persuaded to tackle Mount Vinson by explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, is a keen climber who previously scaled Mount Kilimanjaro and Aconcagua, South America's highest mountain.

He reached the summit of Mount Vinson at 1700 local time, on 4 January.

Lord Forsyth said he was looking forward to getting home and spending time with his family.



Lest we forget!!



Beauty Is

Ice bound round bricks.
Confined in mind of tricks,
Working their ways north, south
Engaging a troublesome mouth

Silenced - into snowy submission
Meekly, then monthly, hushed listen
And look with quiet eyes
At the ley of the land as it lies

Under wonder of nature's gift.
All asking, "When will it lift?"
Yet, moonlight snow, bright as day
Brought stars to the land as she lay

Down in sweet sparkling reflection
Of above and within introspection
Discovered the landscape to be
Ah lightened heart with eyes to see

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School News

Mobile Phone Collection

Donate your old mobile phones and get new technology for the school!! The campaign, called 'Give Every Child a Voice', will exchange old mobile phones for the latest classroom response devices. All phones donated during the campaign will be recycled and converted into valuable funds for the NSPCC's Child's Voice Appeal.

Promethean will donate £500 to the charity for every 250 phones collected by a school. Schools that collect 250 mobile phones will also receive a FREE Promethean ActivExpression Learner Response System (a set of 33 handsets).

There is a cardboard collection point in the Pupil Office at the school. Hand your old mobiles in now - not only will Childline benefit but we will at McLaren too!

Caitlin Hall and Leah Murray are pictured depositing some old mobiles in the collection box.



Debating

Congratulations to William Vernon and Angus Waite (both S6) for an exhilarating performance in the first round of The National Law Society Debate. The McLaren team were opposing the motion "The internet does more harm than good". McLaren High will now progress to the next round.



Design a Healthy Sandwich

Certificates were awarded to S1 class winners and runners up in the "Design a Healthy Sandwich" project which ran in Home Economics classes for 2 weeks. Thanks to Mrs Leckie, Catering Manager for judging the competition.

The overall winner was Carys MacLean 1M with "The Chilli Chicken Sandwich".

The sandwich was sold in the cafeteria for over a week.



Congratulations to Harry Milligan 4L who has been invited to join the Junior Academy at the RSAMD.

Number Day

On 17 December, all pupils and staff participated in Number Day joining thousands of other schools to raise money for the NSPCC; whose aim is to protect vulnerable children. The National Day was 3 December, but due to adverse weather conditions this had to be postponed and activities amended. Regardless, the fun continued with all pupils in S1 taking part in an Inter-House Competition. The atmosphere was fantastic as Bracklinn, Leny and Dochart battled it out to compete against each other for House points. At the end of the day, Bracklinn won with an excellent 440 points. The two main activities; Celebrity Murder Mystery and Key Pad Challenge, took place during the pupils' planned maths lesson. The purpose of the activities was to show pupils the fun in numbers whilst testing their mathematical ability, stretch their problem solving skills and encourage pupils to work together as a team.

Every pupil and member of staff was also given the opportunity to participate in Teacher Sums. This involved answering maths questions linked to teachers who were wearing numbers for the day. After some serious competition, the first prize of a £15 i-tunes voucher went to Robert Fraser and 2nd prize of a £10 Game voucher went to Greg Cuthbert. In the staff draw, Mr Robertson won a bottle of something sparkling for his success. Congratulations to all our winners and thank you to everyone involved who helped to raise funds for such a good cause. The day's events were enjoyed by all and the benefits will no doubt be reflected throughout their future learning.



McLaren

Geography Field Trip

For our Higher Urban Geography unit we have been studying Edinburgh, so it seemed only right for Ms Mariani to take our class into Edinburgh to see living examples of what we have been learning. We started our observations on the outskirts of Edinburgh, or the 'greenbelt', where we saw evidence of new developments occurring away from the city centre, for example the Royal Bank of Scotland headquarters. We then drove through the inner city and saw old 19th century housing and noted the narrow streets which reflected a time when horse and cart was the main mode of transport. We then parked in central Edinburgh. We walked along Princes Street as Ms Mariani pointed out the vacant shops, pedestrianised streets and other changes which have happened in the Central Business District. We enjoyed hot chocolates, compliments of Mr Martin, at Costa Coffee.



Children in Need

On Friday 12 November the school embraced the spirit of Children in Need and raised £778. A highly successful Mufti Day, with S6 in fancy dress, contributed to this amount. The main event of the day was an obstacle course competition between the top team boys, won by Leny with Bracklinn coming a close second. Many thanks to all those who took part and contributed on the day.



Central Schools Swimming Trials

11 pupils represented McLaren High School at the Central Schools Swimming Trials. The pupils represented the school very well and we are all very proud and impressed at their mature behaviour, their team spirit and their success! Out of the 14 swims entered, there were 13 new personal best times, a fantastic result as 8 of the pupils had never competed in a gala before. Rebecca Millar received a silver medal for 100m Backstroke and both Rebecca and Nicola Allan have qualified to represent McLaren at the Scottish Schools Swimming Finals in Glasgow in January 2011.



Calling all budding young photographers

Keep Scotland Beautiful and Rotary International are on the search for enthusiastic young photographers for the Rotary Young Photographer Competition 2011. With a chance to win some outstanding prizes, this is your opportunity to be part of what will become the best environmental photographic competition for young people in Scotland.



The theme for the 2011 competition is 'Have some pride – keep Scotland tidy', allowing a broad interpretation of subject matter, and judges will be looking for imagination and style, as well as technical merit, content and composition.

This exciting competition offers youngsters who live within Scotland the opportunity to enter their photographs in one of three age group categories – under 12 years, 12-15 years and 15-18 years. Photographs can be snapped with digital or film cameras in colour or monochrome but all entries must be submitted to local Rotary clubs as prints no larger than A4 size by the closing date of Friday 1st April 2011.

For the full competition rules and entry forms, use an on-line search engine to find "Rotary District 1020" and follow the Young Photographer 2011 link from the web site front page.

Local Rotary clubs will be responsible for the initial judging and they will select a winner from each age category to go through to the Scottish grand final.

Experienced judges for the grand final will be selected by The Scottish Photographic Federation and the judging panel will also include a representative from Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Trophies and certificates donated by Keep Scotland Beautiful will be presented to the winners at an award ceremony, Jessops will present gift vouchers and the overall winner will be taken on a professional photo shoot with Maverick Photo Agency.

Andy Bennetts, the photographic competition organiser from Rotary District 1020, commented, "The Rotary Young Photographer competition 2011 is the biggest and best yet. Youngsters throughout Scotland are invited to enter images through their local Rotary Club on the environmental theme 'Have some pride – keep Scotland tidy'. One of the main aims of the competition is to get young people out there translating their ideas into images and this certainly is a challenge but judging by the standard last time young photographers used great imagination and skill to produce some stunning pictures. Thanks to the support of our sponsors, trophies and some excellent prizes are up for grabs so we look forward to seeing those images."

Donna Hegarty, Programme Manager at Keep Scotland Beautiful, said, "Keep Scotland Beautiful is proud to be supporting the Rotary Young Photographer 2011 competition. This is the third year running we have been involved, and we were extremely impressed with the level of entrants in the past two competitions.

It is great that the theme focuses on our impact on the beautiful Scottish environment, and hope that this will encourage more people to take pride in, and ownership of, the areas they live in.

We very much look forward to seeing the entries for the 2011 competition – so, get out there and get snapping!!"



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Letters to the Editor.....

.....have your say!

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It's fairly obvious it will have not escaped anyone's attention that Strathard suffered horrendous winter conditions in December for the second year in succession. Whilst I am certain each and every one of us could relate a number of personal struggles and hardships, I feel it is worth recording the special community spirit which, once again, came to the fore during those difficult weeks. Time and again, I witnessed individuals willing to go out of their way to help out, and keep things moving.

Although reluctant to name names, special mentions are in order for the overworked Post Office staff who skated their way around the village to deliver the Christmas mail. Also, for the ridiculously hard pushed Co-Op employees, who had to contend not only with the nightmare scenario of lugging fully laden trolleys of groceries into the store over ice-laden pavements, but with the obligatory 'panic-buying' which ensues at times like these.

Sadly, within that context, there remains an issue which irks me to the point of distraction, and which we should not be proud of as a whole. It revolves around what I term 'lazy parkers'. This is my 'Sunday expression' for them, and I also retain a reasonable theory that they probably make up the majority of the panic buyers.

Despite the availability of a free car park offering several hundred spaces a matter of yards away, they insist on embarking within three metres of the doorstep to avoid inconvenience, in turn blocking the path for the delivery trucks. This was no more evident than during the first fortnight, when some of the trucks simply moved on, due to the number of vehicles (on the double yellow lines) incapacitated by the weather.

Get wise, lazy parkers...you are letting the village down!

David Wilkie, 25 BNJC.



Open letter to all the people who have known the "Campbell's" of Frenich Farm



Many of you we are sure are now aware that the Campbell's, of Frenich have "left the Building" or rather the Glen.

It was not our intention to leave without saying goodbye to our friends and neighbours however, the weather somewhat conspired to prevent us from doing so personally.

Many of you are aware of our scepticism of the process of selling a property in Scotland, given our previous experience, hence we did not make any announcements in advance of moving in case it didn't happen. Well as we write now we know it did happen although "Frenich" arranged a range of unique challenges to impede us from departing. The most difficult being the logistics of removing our belongings from the farm, which without the un-tireless support of George Stirling and Scott Provan would not have happened. In fact the video image of George driving the tractor, towing a Pickfords removal van up the drive at Frenich, whilst in turn being towed by Scott in his 4x4 is on "YouTube" we've been told. It took 3 hard days for us to complete this, so we are sure you can appreciate the relief we felt when this was finished. From reports we have heard since we left we understand that even more snow arrived immediately after our departure, talk about "timing".

Anyway we are now safely ensconced albeit in our temporary home here in freezing Herefordshire, in England near the Welsh border, having successfully moved ourselves, our belongings together with three cats and our dog Jack.

We would like to say, in no particular order, thank you to: Andre and Lynn from Inversnaid for their friendship over the years, Ian King for his cynically dry sense of humour, Rosie and Alan Fail who were instrumental in helping us leave, Maureen and Neil of the Comer for their advice and guidance on farming over the years, Kenny, Mae and Haley McNeill for their friendship, Fra and Fergus Wood for the many times we enjoyed their hospitality, Kate and Crawford Lamb for the wonderful New Years day gatherings, Donald Ross for his gardening advice and friendship, Ralph and Betty Wolfe for their help in improving Frenich, John and Bridget Lewis for their kind hospitality and advice over the years, Scott and Marion from the Old Manse at Inversnaid for their friendship and continued support, all the staff and management at the Inversnaid Hotel for the regular entertainment they provided to Mike and not to forget the wonderful Hogmanay parties that they kindly shared with us, Ros Dingwell and her team at the post office without whom the Glen would not survive, Shona and Ricky for being Shona and Ricky, Dr Ian Patterson of Broadleys Vets in Dunblane who our pets are on first name terms with, Trevor and his Staff at the Aberfoyle Deli for their wonderful service, all the Doctors, Nurses and staff at the Aberfoyle Medical Centre, if only the rest of the NHS was run like this! Elaine and Tony Bruce for the friendship and assistance over the years, Colin and Doreen Hutton for their humour and hospitality that they shared with us so freely, to George Stirling without whose help we could never have managed "The Gem of the Glen" and finally to all the other people who have touched our lives and Frenich in one way or while we lived there thank you, thank you so much.

Hopefully by the time you all read this letter in the Strathard News the weather will have improved and life in the Glen will have returned to relative normality. Lastly we hope you will extend the same degree of warmth, neighbourliness and friendship you have given to us over the years to the new owners of Frenich, Mark & Sylvia Hamilton. *Mike and Eleanor Campbell*

A Special Thank You

Elaine, Tony and Kaleidh Bruce along with Tim and Carol would like to thank all the people in Kinlochard who helped out during the particularly difficult circumstances of the tragic and untimely death of Shannon the horse on Saturday 8th January.

A very special thanks to John Hamilton, who helped out with his digger and Fra Woods, who stabled the remaining ponies at Ledard Farm, thereby removing them from harm's way, out of the dangerous, ice covered field. Heebee, who also fell, is recovering well.

Acknowledgement

MacCallum

Janet, Craig and Karen wish to thank most sincerely all relatives, friends, neighbours, colleagues and all those who have visited, sent cards and flowers or supported in any way during the sudden and very sad loss of William. Their thanks are also extended to the Rev Linda Stewart for her heartfelt service, to Archie Billet for his professionalism, the Scottish Ambulance Service and Central Scotland Police for their assistance and understanding, to the management and staff of the Forth Inn for their considerate and efficient service and to the hundreds who paid their respects at both Aberfoyle Church and cemetery. The collection to be divided between Aberfoyle Parish Church and the Yorkhill Foundation realised the sum of £2,380.

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The Aberfoyle Osprey Project



We are always looking for enthusiastic passionate people to volunteer for us at the David Marshall Lodge. Volunteering opportunities include engaging with the public, talking to them and answering their questions about the wildlife that we have in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, helping to run events and also working with schools to educate the conservationists of the future!

There are many advantages to volunteering at the David Marshall Lodge including the chance to meet new people and join our friendly team. You will also be the first to know about the happenings of the Aberfoyle ospreys throughout the season. There is also the bigger picture: you might think talking about ospreys doesn't achieve more than a happy visitor but you'd be wrong. It's essential we communicate these wonderful stories about our nature and wildlife. Not only will the people you meet go away with a new sense of pride and ownership of their natural world but also they'll tell friends and family and they'll become a voice for nature. Then there are the little things: you could brighten someone's day, start a child off on a journey of discovery, and even just allow someone to ask that burning question they have always wanted to know the answer to. There is never a dull moment and we are right on your doorstep.

Roger is one of our current volunteers and has been coming up to the David Marshall Lodge since 2004. "The main reason that I volunteer is I enjoy being involved with wildlife and the countryside and I learn a lot by speaking with other like-minded people. My main reason for wanting to volunteer at the David Marshall Lodge is that for four months I get superb views of the nesting ospreys. Also I really enjoy interacting with interested people, in particular the children."

For more information or any questions that you have please contact Robert Fraser-Binns on 01786 229252 or email robert.fraser-binns@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

The Aberfoyle Osprey Project is a partnership between RSPB Scotland and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Milton

Hello Children,

It is said that Inuit people have forty different words for snow. I do not know whether this is true or not, but we must have had about forty kinds of snow in Strathard. There were great big wet flakes, incredibly small dry flakes, and everything in between. And would you believe, no two flakes are ever the same shape or pattern? In places the snow fell in deep drifts, elsewhere it lay like an even carpet, only a few centimetres thick and perfect for leaving footprints. George the Hare put boxing gloves on his front paws and left a track that looked like elephant prints. That must have had a few people scratching their heads in disbelief! He was the only one of us with his paws warm and cosy.

The snow falling on road surfaces quickly turned into sheet ice, excellent for playing on but not so good for driving. Several motorists came to grief, thankfully with no serious injury. There was the silver car that ended up on its side, scrunched into the wall at Glenclelland Cottage. Even more spectacular was the mishap to a Stirling Council snow plough. This was also turned on its side, finishing up in the Forest Hills flower beds. Getting the snow plough out again was fun, the whole recovery operation taking almost four hours. A very big crane was required to do the job.

With the extremely low temperatures throughout the country, there was ice everywhere. The roads were like glaciers, the lochs frozen over and even the trees were festooned with ice. When the sun shone, everything simply sparkled, a truly magnificent scene. After dark, pale moonlight cast an eerie sheen over the land, although the deep, dark shadows were rather scary. Curling beneath the moonbeams was a new and wonderful experience. Dad and Grandpa Otter marked out a curling rink on the lint pond, in the grounds of the Forestry Commission offices. With Mum and Braeval joining forces with them, the twins and George playing with me, an exciting session saw Grandpa's rink winning by two shots. I hope it will freeze again before the end of the winter.

Burns Night has been done and dusted. We had a proper Burns Supper at our school, with speeches, poems and songs. I had to recite the poem, "Out over the Forth". Braeval gave the reply to the "Toast to the Lasses". Duke and Katrine just tucked in to the haggis, neeps and tatties. Next will be St. Valentine's Day. Not only is this the time to send a special card to someone you really like, it is the day when birds are believed to get married. Already the thrushes are singing, first thing in the morning and again at last light. Soon other birds will be joining in the dawn chorus and we will all know that spring is on the way.

Bye for now,
Milton



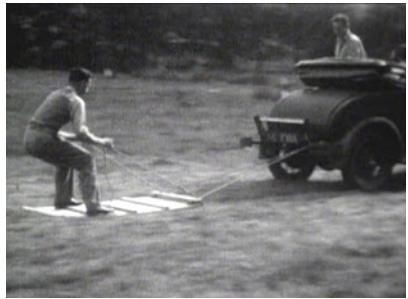
Strathard Community Trust



Charabancs passing Baillie Nicol Jarvie 1920's



Inversnaid coach c.1930



'Waterskiing' near Lochard Road 1933

Thanks to all who came along to see the Trossachs vintage short films from the Scottish Screen Archive in January. We had a full house for the afternoon matinee, which was rather unexpected, and for a short while there was standing room only! This certainly answered the question as to whether there is a broad-based interest in our local heritage and history. By the end of the day about 150 people had seen the films, and most stayed to view the entire two hours of footage. Please do still return the questionnaire about having a local heritage centre to the PO if you can – blank forms are available there too. Now that we have confirmed local people and others support the idea, the next step in investigating the possibility of having a local heritage centre will be to do some more work with funders to see what funds could be accessed and what their requirements are. This will set the stage for more detailed consideration and project planning.

In answer to the many queries about whether a copy of the films is available on DVD the answer is unfortunately 'no', since the Trust compiled the DVD shown from 18 different copyrighted clips, and had to hire all the source material just to show the local footage. We are investigating, and may be able to get permission, for further permanent use of the compiled clips for more local screenings but selling DVDs is unlikely to be possible.

Strathard Community Trust is a local charity that carries out useful projects for the benefit of local people. It is currently investigating two in particular – further development of our successful Playpark project in Aberfoyle and also the possibility of having a local heritage centre. If you wish to know more or to join us as a member, do please contact our chairman Ian Marshall on 382211.



Not here....but near!

Gartmore Women's Rural Institute



The President and Committee of the Gartmore WRI extend a warm welcome to all ladies in the area to come along and take part in the 2011 session. All meetings are held in the Village Hall, Gartmore at 7.30pm

2011

16th Feb Pilates Night with Amanda Reid
16th Mar Floral Art Demo – Margaret Donaldson
19th Mar Federation – Rurlympics
7th Apr Vale of Menteith Group Meeting
20th Apr Talk on Fire Safety – Margaret Thompson
30th Apr Federation Spring Meeting
18th May Pot Luck Supper – AGM
Talk on Family History by Elma Lindsay
President – Lesley Bond 382739
Secretary – Christine Hamilton 382327

Gartmore Church

Times of Worship

Morning worship is at 10am every Sunday. We have tea/coffee after the service on the first Sunday of each month. The Sunday Club meets most Sundays.

Forth Valley U3A (University of the Third Age) will hold an Open Meeting on Thursday 10th February at 2pm, in St Andrews Church Hall, Callander. Peter Ireland, a well-known and very popular local speaker, will speak about "Mosques, Madrasas and Mountains". This meeting is open to all U3A members and to anyone else who is interested in finding out about Forth Valley U3A, perhaps with a view to joining. Come along on Thursday 10th February at 2pm, find out about interest groups and enjoy meeting us socially over tea and coffee after this interesting talk. You will be made most welcome. For further information, please contact the Membership Secretary on 01786-842564, or the Interest Groups Coordinator on 01786-475554, or visit our website: www.forthvalleyu3a.org.uk

Callander Taekwondo Club

Taekwondo is a great sport and a great way to get/keep fit. Why don't you come along and give it a go? Contact Duncan on 07713 193841 or visit the club website for more information. www.callander-taekwondo.co.uk

CALLANDER RAMBLING CLUB

*invite you
to come with them for a*



Wednesday 9th February - Keltie Bridge & Bracklinn Falls (4miles) 09:30am

Contact: 01786 842081

Ramble

Saturday 19th February - The Strathblane Pipeline (8 miles) 09:30am

Contact: 01877 382522

Stroll

Saturday 26th February - Benarty Hill (356m) 08:30am

Contact: 01577 862799

Stroll

Wednesday 2nd March - Samson's Putting Stone (4½ miles) 09:30am

Contact: 01786 850626

Meeting Point - Ancaster Square.

For Hill Walks and Long Distance Paths - meet at 08:30 a.m.

For Strolls and Rambles - meet at 09.30 a.m.

Come prepared with weatherproof clothing, stout foot-wear and packed lunch

Visitors welcome

Sponsored by Caledonian Country Wear

Scottish Wildlife Trust Callander Member's Centre

Talks Programme Winter 2010/11

All meetings are open to members and non-members and are held on the first Tuesday of each month in St Andrew's Church Hall, Leny Road, Callander at 7:30pm. Cost £2 includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

Tuesday 1 March 2011 7:30pm

The Katrine Fold. Cattle and conservation in Harmony. Donald Hendry, Forestry commission Scotland's Livestock

Tuesday 5 April 2011 7:30pm

The uses and folklore of some local wild plants herbal remedies, fairies, witches.

Dr John Holland, SAC Hill & Mountain Research Centre, Kirkton

Do come along and join us in learning more about what is around us in this fabulous part of the world. More details on the organisation can be found at www.swt.org.uk.

The Strathendrick Singers' Musical Coffee Morning, Saturday 19th February, from 10 am to 12 noon.

This popular annual Coffee Morning will be held in Killearn Village Hall from 10 am to 12 noon on Saturday 19th February. As well as enjoying a selection of musical entertainment you can have a blether along with wonderful home baking and tea or coffee. There will be the ever popular bottle stall, raffle, book stall and cake stall. Admission £2.00 www.strathendricksingers.org.uk

The Strathendrick Singers' Spring Concert, in Killearn Kirk on Sunday 20th March at 7pm.

The programme will include John Rutter's "Feel the Spirit", a setting of seven spirituals, Bob Chilcott's "A Little Jazz Mass" and Poulenc's "Gloria".

Tickets £10 (children £5) including refreshments, from choir members, Killearn Pharmacy, Panik Gallery, and at the door on the night. Tickets may also be bought online from www.thebooth.co.uk

Visit the choir's web site at www.strathendricksingers.org.uk

Wandering

15 January 2011 – 13 March 2011

Prints and mixed media works by Clare Yarrington

This is an exhibition where art meets archaeology and geology, rock climbing, coasts, islands, mountains and other wild places in Scotland. Clare Yarrington's first chosen profession was that of archaeologist. She then went to Art College, followed by a decade as an Archaeology Illustrator with Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums.

In 2009, Clare won the John Duncan Fergusson Award, with a major exhibition in the Fergusson Gallery, Perth. The vibrant colours of her work echo the Colourism of Fergusson himself.

Clare writes:

I am interested in how our environment has been formed and how we interact with it. This relationship is dynamic and involves not only the elemental forces of nature but also our perception of time. In the same way as the past is imperfectly preserved, so we remember our own experiences in fragments. I am intrigued at how to visually express this.

Drawings done in situ convey the immediacy of being in the landscape or the actuality of a figure climbing. Paintings and prints allow a more considered study of form, colour and texture and interpretation of ideas. Multiple prints can also be the basis of sequences of images where a range of interpretations of one subject can be made. However it is in mixed-media collages that I can be more experimental and explore varying perspectives and juxtapose different ideas and images. Using scraps of my own superseded work as visual fragments I collage then draw, paint, scrape away and collage again if needed. The actual fragments of collage can correlate directly to fragments of memory, but in many ways it is more like virtual archaeological reconstruction. From the fragments of past work I 'reconstruct' the 'evidence' to make a new interpretation. The result is full of ambiguities, as the past and our memories always are, but the coming together of differing visual ideas can bring about new possibilities that would never have been made any other way. Many of the works are for sale.

Admission, parking and gardens are free. Open 10.30am – 5pm, Tuesday to Saturday and 2pm - 5pm on Sundays.

Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum
Dumbarton Road

Stirling
FK8 2RQ

Tel 01786 471 917

www.smithartgallery.demon.co.uk

www.clareyarrington.com



Forth Inn Events Diary

February

- 6 February – Pub Quiz (postponed from 30 January)
- 11 to 13 February – St Valentines Menus
- 12 February - St Valentines Karaoke starts 9pm till late!
- 14 to 20 February – Steak Week (more than just beef!)
- 27 February – Pub Quiz fun starts 9pm
- 28 to 6 March – Whisky with Food Week

March

- 13 March - Mother's Day (booking advisable)
- 14 to 20 March - Irish Food Week
- 19 March – St Patrick's Karaoke
- 27 March – Pub Quiz (as above)

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Issue 59 - 20 June
Issue 60 - 16 Aug
Issue 61 - 26 Sept
Issue 62 - 14 Nov (xmas)
Issue 63 - 23 Jan 11
Issue 64 - 20 March 11
Issue 65 - 15 May 11*
Issue 66 - 3 July 11*
Issue 67 - 28 August 11*
Issue 68 - 25 September 11*
Issue 69 - 20 Nov 11 (Xmas)*

*may be subject to change

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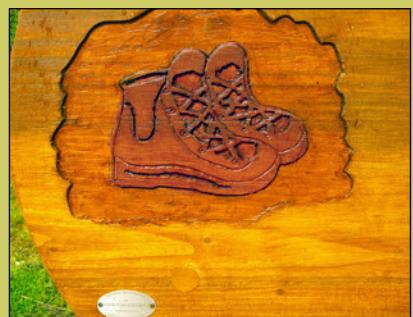
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