

STRATHARD NEWS

Serving the communities of
Aberfoyle, Kinlochard, Stronachlachar & Inversnaid

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2011

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www.strathardnews.com

Community Council



Now that spring has finally sprung, we have started to look forward to the projects that are usually carried out in the summer months, in addition to other ongoing matters that the community council deals with all year round.

We will be continuing efforts of the past two years to help Strathard look more welcoming and, with the help of the trainees at Gartmore Green Routes, aiming to ensure our planters from Aberfoyle to Inversnaid are ready for the better weather. It looks like most of the bulbs put in last year have survived the hard winter, although we did lose some plants. Another project to help people with mobility problems or wheelchairs to use the riverside picnic area in Aberfoyle is underway, and so far has been awarded Stirling Council Community Pride funding of £951. Also, together with the Community Trust, we successfully bid for National Park funding of £1165 to produce a leaflet aimed primarily at helping visitors to locate Strathard attractions and use more local businesses.

Stirling Council

Our continuing thanks to those who are helping with the campaign to improve roads problems – please keep up this pressure on the Council and report / claim all car or tyre damage incidents and roadworks needed, such as potholes. See previous Strathard News articles or our website for advice on reporting faults.

We were concerned by inaccuracies in the Council's recent case to close Inversnaid School, when the winter travelling issues experienced by residents from beyond Kinlochard (where priority gritting ends) were severely understated. After two difficult winters and many road incidents, driving conditions to this part of Strathard in wintry weather remain a safety concern and we will continue to press for future action.

Access to online river monitoring gauges, for which we have been campaigning for some time, is now available on the Stirling Council website. Water levels can be seen for Aberfoyle i.e. Lochard Road and also Duchray Water. Loch Ard may also get a gauge in the coming year. The readings are updated very regularly and mean that rising water can be monitored online either from home or work and, for example, journeys planned before the level rises too far. A link is on our website.

New Community Councillor

We welcomed Alex Murray-Brown as a Kinlochard community councillor in March, and can still co-opt members where vacancies remain. Do contact me at any time if you might be interested in volunteering.

Community Information

- The community council website www.strathard.org.uk continues to be developed.
- We also 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.
- As before information is placed on our 4 community noticeboards.

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

Strathard Community Council meets on the first Thursday of every month, alternating between Aberfoyle Memorial Hall, Kinlochard and Inversnaid Primary School. The next meetings will be held in **Aberfoyle on 7th April and Kinlochard on 5th May**. Note due to the election the Kinlochard meeting will be held in McGregor's Barn at Ledard Farm and not the village hall. Half an hour prior to our meetings a local Stirling Councillor (Tony Ffinch, 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

John Clow
Ros Dingwall
Jimmy Quinn
Geraint Short

Inversnaid

Andre Goulancourt
Ralph Wolfe
1 vacancy

Kinlochard

Maureen Campbell
Fiona McEwan
Alex Murray-Brown
1 vacancy

Contact details:

Tel 01877 387200

cc@strathard.org.uk

www.strathard.org.uk

Braeval Antiques



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Mob 07989 746617

Ask for Andrew

Braeval Old Mill, Braeval
Nr Aberfoyle, Stirling. FK8 3UY

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- Old coins and banknotes
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- Old swords, knives, pistols and rifles
- Old musical boxes
- Old toys
- General antiques

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Benview Garden Centre

**All you need for the garden,
plus pet supplies and orchids.**

Benview Garden Centre at the Ward Toll is a small, friendly garden centre that aims to supply the real gardener with everything he or she needs throughout the year. There has been a nursery on the site for many years supplying the gardeners of the area with home-raised bedding and hardy plants. However, over the last few years we have greatly expanded the range of products in stock and transformed it into a vibrant garden centre with several distinctive features while still maintaining the friendly atmosphere of the traditional nursery.

So what do we do that is so different?

Firstly most of the plants are produced by us; Wendy oversees the sowing and raising of our vegetables in our glasshouses and raises all the bedding plants either from seed or plugs. Graham produces most of the hardy shrubs and herbaceous perennials at his nursery in Pleau focusing on less common shrubs not often found in garden centres and many woodland perennials including *Trilliums* and *Epimediums*. We don't have the space to stock a huge range of plants but what is not in stock can very often be brought over to order.

Secondly we pride ourselves on our hanging baskets, many of them made to order. In May you'll find the glasshouses bursting with baskets and planted containers longing to get out into the summer air!

Our pet supplies section caters for many of the area's dogs, cats, small animals and birds. Although we are constantly expanding the range we can't stock every food all the time but aim to satisfy customers' requests within a week.

And then there is the orchid house, the only purpose-built room for displaying orchids for sale to the public in the area, maybe even in the whole of Scotland. We created this three years ago and we keep it stocked with as many different varieties of orchid as we can get our hands on, and while we can't compete on price with some other outlets, we will always offer friendly advice on how and where to grow them, and we offer a repotting service.



Carol, Anne, Anna and Graham

We also do all the usual garden supplies – composts, ornamental pots, fertilizers and pesticides, and a selection of garden furniture which we are about to increase.

This year we are hosting a special event at least once a month during the growing season. In March we held a well attended orchid workshop, in April there will be an Easter Egg hunt on Easter Day, and there will be a Craft Fair on 25th June. We'll be adding more events as the year goes on and you can keep up to date by going on to our website or receiving our popular Newsletter; This gets mailed out at the start of every month, full of gardening tips, what's going on at Benview and the monthly Special Offer exclusive to subscribers.

With the Benview Coffee Shop and Junktion Antiques next door to the Garden Centre, there's plenty to see at Benview and our friendly team will look forward to welcoming you.

Benview Garden Centre
Tel: 01360 850525
www.benviewgardencentre.co.uk

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ABERFOYLE POST OFFICE

Eggciting news!

Bouncing Bunnies and Leaping Lambs!

Yes, Spring has sprung once again

Lots of Easter Eggs, Easter cards

& spring treats in store! Prices to suit all pockets

(Moshi Monster cards back in stock)



Shop OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK: Mon-Sat. 8.00 - 5.30; Sun. 11.00 - 5.30.
P.O. OPEN: 9.00am, Mon-Sat; Close 5.30pm, (Wed-4pm; Sat-1pm)

Registrar

When I last wrote I said that we were still waiting to find out whose would be the first Birth Registration in this office of 2011. I now know, and would like to offer a big welcome to baby boy Kodi Stewart Flett born at the end of January, to the delight of parents Jillian and Graham. A lovely start to the year.



Congratulations, too, to Glasgow couple David Fennessy and Sonia Cromarty, who were married at Aberfoyle Registration Office in February. The only wedding so far this year, we hope that we will be able to report on many more as the year progresses.

Unhappily, again our news has not all been good, and the community was greatly saddened to learn of the death of Effie Ferguson. There cannot have been many people in the area whose lives have not regularly been cheered by a few words from Effie. She will be sorely missed and we would very much like to join with so many in offering our condolences to Jimmy and Christine and family. Already this year, our community has lost so much.

I was recently asked how one would know which area to register an event in, for example should it be the area you normally lived in or the area the event occurred in, or if not, then where? It can be confusing, so I thought I would take the opportunity to clarify things in this issue. The most important part of the legislation that would effect your choice is this. If an event occurs in Scotland then it must be registered in Scotland. Beyond that it rather depends on the type of event.

A Marriage or Civil Partnership should be arranged and registered in the district in which it is taking place, as should a Naming Ceremony, although there can be exceptions to this rule about which we would be happy to advise. Aberfoyle Registration Office covers a huge geographical area, from beyond Inversnaid and Stronachlachar across the Dukes Pass, Gartmore to Ruskie and across the Callander Road. As well as it's own lochs and mountains it also includes parts of Loch Lomond, Loch Katrine and others and parts of Ben Lomond and many hills. We will be glad to help if you are unsure or if you have a particular request.

Other events, for example Births and Deaths, can be registered anywhere in Scotland. In practice most people will chose to register a Birth in the area in which they reside or in the case of a Death, in the area the deceased resides or the informant registering resides. This is often the most convenient and the most meaningful choice for people, but many will also often base their choice on other criteria and this too is perfectly acceptable. For example, in some cases an informant may choose to register in Aberfoyle as their loved one previously lived here or still had family connections here. A parent may choose to register a birth here as the new baby's siblings were all registered here or, as in one case, a couple decided to register their child in this area as they had been married here. Again, if you are unsure we would be glad to help.

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

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 - March 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.

Over £11,000 worth of fuel stolen

Tuesday, 22nd March 2011

Police are warning those who live in rural areas or who own large vehicles to be aware of fuel being stolen.

Since the start of the year there have been 25 thefts of fuel in the Stirling and Falkirk areas amounting to over £11,000.

There have been two attempts to steal diesel fuel from vehicles parked in a haulage yard at Blairdrummond and a garage in the Doune area. The last attempt being overnight between Sunday March 20 and Tuesday March 21 from a unit at Murchieson Park, Doune. This follows a theft of fuel reported from a tank at a house in Balquhider between Thursday March 17 and Friday March 18. The most recent theft occurred between Sunday March 13 and Monday March 14 when more than 3000 litres of red diesel was stolen from storage tanks from agricultural premises in the Kippen area. Sergeant Paul Barr, from Balfour police office, said, "A large vehicle would have been required to transport the fuel, which was a mixture of white diesel and red diesel. We are keen to hear from anybody who may have seen any suspicious activity in or around Kippen Station Roundabout on the A811 around the time of the theft. We would also like to hear from anyone who may have been offered diesel for sale."

He added: "Red diesel is a rebated duty fuel which contains a red marker dye. It is not for use on road going vehicles and leaves a stain on engines which can be detected by HM Revenue and Customs staff. If anybody is found to be using red diesel in a road going vehicle they can be reported for the offence, be subjected to payment of back-duty and have their vehicle impounded."

Other particular areas which have been targeted include the Craigforth weighbridge at Stirling and Bankside Industrial Estate in Grangemouth.

Sergeant Kevin Chase, of the Force Intelligence and Interventions Bureau, said: "The fuel stolen is either direct from vehicles or fuel containers within buildings."

"Simple steps can be taken to prevent fuel being stolen. Our advice for road hauliers is when resting overnight in their vehicle to fill the vehicle the following morning and not to have a full tank overnight. Anti-siphoning devices and alarms for fuel tanks could also be used. Park vehicles in areas that are well lit in order that they can be observed easily. Where possible use secure parking areas or compounds when vehicles are parked overnight."

"If you have a large container within a building where fuel is stored we recommend a fuel alarm is used. Other simple measures include improve lighting and focus on vulnerable areas; consider installing or ensure existing CCTV is fit for purpose; install cages and improve security that surrounds fuel storage tanks; make sure any switch gear for the pump is secured within a building; ensure that there is no vehicle access near to any storage tanks without permission; consider the deployment of fuel dyes and advertise the fact that they are in use; use defensive parking techniques and remove portable storage containers such as barrels or drums from the site or make them secure."

Don't fall foul of fraud - advice on Olympic ticket sales

Thursday, 10th March 2011

With less than one week to go until the ticketing process for the Olympic Games opens, new advice has been launched to make sure it's the criminals who miss out.

The rise in the use of the internet to purchase tickets and accommodation packages online, coupled with the huge expected demand, gives criminals new opportunities to sell non-existent tickets and steal personal and credit card details to use in other crimes.

Over eight million tickets will be made available for the Olympic Games and a further two million for the Paralympics. The ticket process for the Olympic Games opens on Tuesday 15 March and runs until Tuesday 26 April.

By taking some simple steps anyone buying a ticket can keep help prevent them becoming a victim, as Chief Superintendent Davie Flynn of Central Scotland Police explains: "The 2012 Games will be one of the biggest sporting events the UK has ever

hosted, with nearly 11 million tickets available for events right across the country.

"Criminals will be looking for ways to con and steal, either through selling fake tickets or setting up professional looking sites which may look honest, but could result in you falling foul to fraud."

"There is some easy-to-follow advice when buying tickets, which will help keep your information safe and ensure you can enjoy the Games next year."

If you're buying a ticket for the Games:

- The London 2012 ticket application process opens on the 15 March and you have until 26 April to apply for tickets through LOCOC as tickets are not allocated on a first come first served basis.
- The only way to apply for a ticket in the UK is at www.tickets.london2012.com. This is London 2012's official site. You can also get a postal application from any Lloyds TSB branch, or from any public library in Northern Ireland. Don't buy a ticket from an unauthorised website or tout - you risk being scammed, and not getting the ticket you wanted and paid for.
- If you get a ticket for an event you can't attend, you can return your ticket to get a refund through the London 2012 official ticket exchange. Your ticket will then be officially resold. Details of this will be announced in due course.
- There are only three official providers for Games Breaks and Hospitality Packages in the UK - these are:

Thomas Cook - www.thomascokelondon2012.com
Prestige Travel - www.prestigeticketing.london2012.com
Jet Set Travel - www.jetsetsports.com
Other websites or companies will not be authorised to sell you a ticket as part of a package in the UK. Always check the terms and conditions to see exactly what you are being sold; Outside of the UK London 2012 tickets are sold through the country's National Olympic Committee, or their authorised retailer.

If you find tickets for sale before the 15th March 2011 or available from any unauthorised source at anytime, don't buy them. They are not genuine. Report it to your local police, or London 2012 via brandprotection@london2012.com

Continued Rural Thefts

18th, February 2011

Overnight between Thursday 17th February and Friday 18th February 2011, a container at the Scottish Water depot at Stronachlachar was forced open and a Husqvarna chainsaw stolen from within. This is the latest in a series of rural thefts in the Stronachlachar and Inversnaid area.

Local police have increased patrols along the B829, but with the area being so remote, save for police being in the right place at the right time, it is very unlikely that the perpetrators will be caught. It is for this reason that police require the assistance of the communities of Inversnaid and Stronachlachar to report any suspicious activity in the area in a bid to detect and stop these rural thefts.

Attempted Break In at Aberfoyle Golf Club

18th, February 2011

Between 2100 and 2200 on Wednesday 16th February 2011, an attempt was made to break into the clubhouse at Aberfoyle Golf Club. Albeit nothing was taken from within, a number of windows were damaged at the premises.

A small, light coloured hatchback car was seen near the golf club at the time. The car had a distinctively loud exhaust note.

Stronachlachar Thefts

8th, February 2011

Overnight between 28 and 29 January, two, four-pane wooden doors were stolen from a property being renovated in Stronachlachar. Living rurally, it is important that we all remain vigilant as regards unusual or suspicious vehicles in the area. Members of the public - particularly those living in Stronachlachar and Inversnaid - are encouraged to contact police with any information regarding this offence.

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

Trossachs Area Community Transport Community garage buyout – March update

TACT successfully managed to buy the Aberfoyle garage site on 28 February, after a difficult legal process. The site and equipment were bought at Lottery-approved valuations for a price of £377,000, which was 95% funded by the Big Lottery Fund and 5% by the local community. Further funding has been awarded to make improvements at the site and help TACT run its new business and services for community benefit.

Due to the shutdown of the garage nearly 6 months ago however, it is not possible to re-open the fuel services immediately, since we now cannot sell fuel from any of the tanks without an expensive cleaning process. This is currently underway and the two oldest diesel tanks (which were always scheduled for cleaning and re-lining) are now fit for use, with the first petrol tank cleaning to be started shortly.

In 2011/12 TACT will be following its business plan, which was based on local input and approved by the Big Lottery Fund, including:

- Selling fuel at a competitive price with an aim of increasing sales.
- Refurbishing the shop and introducing additional services.
- Improving the condition of the site and buildings as required by the Big Lottery Fund.

It is hoped, barring any unexpected problems, that a limited fuel and shop service will be available by Easter. Development of the new business will be phased, and take place when cash flow from grants and trading allows. By the summer our upgraded community shop should be up and running too.

As at present, our tenant, Aberfoyle Coaches, will continue to operate its coach business and MOT garage from the site, but separately to the shop and forecourt. The 'Aberfoyle Motors' name is no longer in use at the garage, since we did not take over that business.

The 364 members of our community charity have all been contacted directly by post with a full update. To join as a member, renew your subscription or make a contribution to our funding appeal, please see the website www.ta-ct.org.uk or call into Aberfoyle PO.



Anne McGuire MP

It's business as usual at Westminster. During the debate on Welfare Reform I have defended the concerns of those constituents who may lose their right to the mobility element of their Disability Living Allowance in the next couple of years – concerns which have reached my postbag on many occasions in the past while.



I have also spoken out to retain overnight counting of the ballot box for the Scottish Parliament elections in the Scotland Bill but this appears to be still a matter for discussion in Stirling.

Since my last column the price of fuel continues to rise apace. I and my colleagues in Westminster continue to call the government to task over its failure to reverse the VAT rise on fuel. The hike in VAT to 20 per cent in January has added nearly 3p to the price of a litre of petrol but could be reversed using an extra £800m from the bank levy. With the recent turmoil in Libya these prices could increase further.

This week in Westminster I secured a debate on the wood panel industry in order to encourage a review of policies that affect our forests and associated industries, especially as the recently announced Renewable Heat Incentive did not include the wood panel industry, an industry that plays a valuable if understated role in carbon capture. The industry employs many people in the constituency, from forestry workers working for the Forestry Commission to factory workers at Norbord in Cowie in the east of the constituency.

With the excitement of the Olympics continuing apace, I visited the vast Olympic Stadium, affectionately known as the "cupcake" in my capacity as a member of the powerful Public Accounts Committee which is about to scrutinise how public money has been spent in delivering the facilities for the Games in 2012. The developing facilities are certainly impressive, especially the velodrome but it is important that the Committee see that this money is providing the best value for the tax payer.

Port of Menteith

The annual **SANDY STEWART PLANT SALE** takes place on the 14th May, 2011 in the Port of Menteith Village Hall from 10am to 1pm.

Admission is £2 which includes coffee or tea. Soup will be served from 11am and costs £1.50. A large variety of plants will be for sale and there will also be a Sales Table. Contributions to the plant and sales tables will be much appreciated and can be handed into the hall on Friday 13th May from 3-4pm or from 9-9.30am on the morning of the sale.

Garden Hampers are to be raffled.
Miss E. Martin, Thistledome, will open the sale.

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Protect Your Local Gp Services

The Scottish Government aims to increase the number of community pharmacists across Scotland's rural communities. This will lead to rural practices losing their rights to dispense. A direct consequence of this would be that rural practices may well be forced to cut their current services. We feel that any change to the regulations should reflect the special nature of rural communities and their needs. At present although patients have the right to make their wishes known, there is no statutory obligation for health boards to adopt the views of the local community. We feel this is unacceptable.

PATIENT POWER DOES MATTER
Please make your voice heard by

Contacting your MSP
Contacting your community council
Writing to the local newspaper

Further advice on the key issues and contact addresses is available at the medical centre.

Dr Pollok's retirement

In July, after more than 35 years with the practice, Dr Pollok will finally hang up his stethoscope and look forward to a well-earned retirement.

Many patients have approached us with questions and suggestions as to how the community can say "Thank You" for the many years he has looked after them.

Following discussion with the Patient Participation Group it has been decided that there will be a variety of ways for patients to say thank you and to wish him well in his retirement.

From 1st June a farewell card will be available to sign at The Medical Centre.

At the same time a box will be placed in the waiting room for anyone who wishes to make a donation towards a retirement gift.

Finally, we hope we can come together as a community, to present Dr Pollok with his card at a Cheese and Wine Party sometime in July. **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

Medical Centre PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Good Friday	Friday 22nd April 2011
Easter Monday	Monday 25th April 2011
Royal Wedding	Friday 29th April 2011
May	Monday 30th May 2011
June	Monday 27th June 2011
September	Monday 5th September 2011
October	Monday 17th October 2011
Christmas	Monday 26th December 2011
	Tuesday 27th December 2011
New Year	Monday 2nd January 2012
	Tuesday 3rd January 2012

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TROSSACHS BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP (TBP)



Some of you may have seen our recruitment advertisement in the previous edition of Strathard News. We have managed to recruit a new Secretary, but disappointingly no-one came forward for the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair.

The TBP is a group of around twenty businesses from all sectors in the Strathard area which collaborate with the aim of improving the economy of the local area. TBP has been responsible for the organization and running of successful events such as the Trossachs Mushroom Festival and Tramping through the Trossachs. These events raise the profile of our area and as a result bring visitors and expand customer spending in ALL sectors of the local economy. TBP is not just for the benefit of businesses but also an opportunity for local residents to participate in order to support activities and events that contribute to the local economy in general.

Due to the lack of response to our previous ad, TBP has reluctantly taken the decision that it is unable to run the Trossachs Mushroom Festival this year. However, should individual businesses or groups still wish to organize an event around this theme, then TBP are happy to advertise these on the Trossachs Mushroom Festival website. Caroline Carranza, one of TBP's members, also said she would be happy to put together marketing emails as required. No applications will be made for funding and there will be no ticketing facility as there was last year.

The TBP remains committed to its aim of fostering and promoting local businesses in order to improve the local economy for the benefit of all. But we cannot achieve this without a wider and enthusiastic membership. So we are asking all readers: please send us your views and suggestions as to:

1) what you think the nature and function of a business partnership in the Strathard area should be; and
2) what you feel you might be able to offer to such an organization.

Finally, we still wish to recruit a new Chair and Vice-Chair for TBP. If you wish to apply for either of these positions, then please contact Catherine Love on 01877 387 743, or email catherineelove@btinternet.com to discuss.



Aberfoyle and Gartmore Running Group

Meeting every Tuesday at 7pm
All abilities welcome from beginner to experience.

If interested call Angela on
01877 382632 or email
aberfoylerrunninggroup@live.co.uk

The running group started on 1st March and is meeting outside the Forth Inn each Tuesday night at 7pm. We already have a group of enthusiastic runners with a range of abilities who run around the local forest trails for a few miles. Angela is a qualified athletics coach, is happy to offer advice and would like to get more people involved in running in the area. It doesn't matter how much running you have done in the last few years just come along. When we have larger numbers we will be able to split into groups and plan routes to suit people's abilities.

The group is free to all who wish to attend; no club fees just a get together for a run. If you're interested then we look forward to running with you.

Alastair Wilson

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Letters to the Editor

Post to Editor, Schoolhouse, Inversnaid FKS 3TU. Or email editor@strathardnews.com or hand in to Aberfoyle Post Office



What a great article Isabel McGuire wrote about the Station Buildings and its residents. I have

always wondered about this fine building and the people who lived in it. Isabel has described life as Jim knew it growing up in the village. I always thought it a posh place full of a better cut o' gentry than we. Och! And they only had one toilet per dozen or so. But they had electricity and tap water. While living in the wooden house in the slate quarry village up on the Duke's Pass, we at least had the luxury of our own outhouse (i.e., bog) as on the architectural drawings for the Inversnaid Fort - dated 1718; or, if you prefer the more sanitized definition, the "Privy". Kerosene lamps substituted for light, peat and coal for heat and cooking, and weak, whistling crystal radio for getting the results of the football pool. What Isabel did well was to describe the characters and life as she knew it.

Indeed, her article contrasts with that of many writers, as in the Scot's Magazine and tourist websites for example, who tend to paint an idyllic picture of a sleepy and genteel village - which Aberfoyle appears to be on the surface; but here is a picture of a village full of rambunctious youngsters - a little mischievous perhaps, but never cruel. And much of the civility, as Isabel pointed out so well, was due to that long departed master of decorum, Chuckles Robertson, the village policeman. This is a dedicated soul who, as darkness descended, had the patience of Job, to park himself behind the big oak tree opposite the entrance to the latter day David Marshall Lodge, to catch quarry lads helter-skeltering down the Duke's Pass on a bicycle without lamps fore-n-aft. Ironically, we always expected the big black shadow of the law to loom out from behind the tree. Then the dreaded bellow, "Come here laddie!" On one occasion I was much too fast for him and got away 'Scot Free' - literally. A couple of days later he grabbed me in the street and bawled, "Why did ye no stop when I told ye?"

"Stop where?" says I.
"Up the pass on yer bike the ither nicht," he says.

"I wisnae oan ma bike that nicht. It was broken, so it must hae been wan o' them other dirty faces." Obviously, on a right dark night, Chuckles looked perplexed because he couldn't possibly distinguish one dirty from another. As Isabel pointed out so well, the venerable and decent Chuckles had his own unique way of breeding good manners. In this case, he gave me a few whacks around my arse and legs (we wore short trousers then) with his heavy-duty leather motorcycle gloves with the admonishment, "Dinnae let me catch ye

without a light oan yer bike or I'll gie ye another guid skelpin." He might not have been able to sort out dirty faces in the dark; but certainly had the measure of your character and made considerable use of it without the aid of billy clubs, tasers and/or armaments.

Isabel's article also notes that the Station Building lads helped the local merchants deliver the groceries and newspapers, etc. I was among the very few village children that used to do the same and have fond memories of delivering milk for Davy King's dairy, pedalling up Loch Ard Road as far as Altskeith delivering the newspapers and doing other little chores for Ferguson's Newsagent, and also puffin' and blawin' pedalling the heavy weight of the butcher's bike loaded with meat for the big mansions along Loch Ard Road.

There were only about three of us village youngsters who helped out the merchants - mostly for the satisfaction alone.

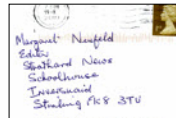
One of my best memories was occasionally volunteering my time with Jimmy Campbell around the farm harvesting the hay in his fields over by the Fairy Knowe. But the most beautiful job of all was on a hot sunny day stooking the barley in his fields along the Forth below and a little west of the Covenanters Inn. As if the heavenly surroundings were not enough, the highlight was seeing Mrs. Campbell strolling towards us among the golden fields of stooks carrying a large can of tea in one hand, and in the other a basket full of sandwiches and pastries worth dying for. Now there was a lovely family, the Campbells o' Kirkton. When I think of happier times, I think of Kirkton and that beautiful song that begins with the words

"Fu yellow lie the corn-rigs.
Far doon the braid hillside;
It is the bravest hairst field.
Along the shores o' Clyde....".

What I learned from Jimmy Campbell and working under Ted ('Lofty' Fraser, head forester for Loch Ard forest) and other village stalwarts were valuable lessons on work ethic best summed up by that old Calvinistic admonition, "There's nae pleasure in life wihoout hard wark an' misery." Great family the Campbells of Kirkton.

PS: What a shame you got a few inches of snow. I live in the snowiest and windiest capital city in Canada and we regularly get battered by snow storms and measure our snow depth in metres. A few years ago we got a total of 19 ft of snow. Of course, we have the advantage of heavy duty snow clearing equipment and I have my own snow blower. We just grin and bear it.

Sincerely
Sandy Robertson



Dear Editor,

This is a letter to all the adults in the morning queue in the Co-op, who saw my little girl waiting in the long, long queue to buy an apple for her playpiece at 8.50 am. Did nobody think to let her go ahead of them with their bulging baskets so that she would not be late for school? Where is your community spirit?
Susie Davidson



Dear Editor

I always felt I had attended an elite 'public school' at Inversnaid, and your article confirms this. ("UK's most expensive school axed", The Herald February 12).

I do not wish to enter into the pros and cons of small pupil numbers and lack of social interaction, but recall my schooldays there with around eleven pupils in total, aged 5 to 12 years. I, with a few more from the clachan of Stronachlachar on Loch Katrine shore about 5 miles away, were chauffeured to and fro daily through Loch Arklet Glen by my mother under contract to Stirling Council. Our daily education commenced in this car, and was chaired by the chaffeuse - as the title was then. This covered diverse subjects such as wild life and "meanings" (vocabulary). The three "R's" were I suppose the backbone of our school teaching, but also a stable foundation for what lay ahead. It was a stimulating and happy time.

This single teacher school has enjoyed and benefited from long serving holders of this post, and tribute must be paid to their loyalty, dedication, and teaching skills over so many years.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Duncan Ferguson (former pupil 1937-44)
14 Cromarty Crescent
Bearsden
Glasgow



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National Park News

By Owen McKee

I had hardly said welcome to an early season tourist when he asked me when the ospreys would be back as watching them fish on Loch Earn had been the highlight of his visit last year. The conversation dwelt on these remarkable birds for a while and then developed into a general discussion on the wild life in the Park. It was quite clear why he had come to the area but often we have no idea why people choose to visit the Park and consequently we cannot be sure that we are always providing for their needs. With this in mind the Park Authority will be conducting a visitor survey during the summer season. We will in turn let the businesses in the Park know what the survey reveals.

This year's community grant scheme saw the Park Authority awarding grants totalling £21,500 to community trusts and councils throughout the Park to help them with schemes ranging from Heritage Route leaflets (Strathard CC) to benches and banners and assistance with the administrative costs of running their organisations. Another area where the Park Authority has been continuing with grant assistance is in the Conservation Area Grant Scheme. One beneficiary of this scheme is the Episcopal Church in Killin which is seeing a major refurbishment of this listed corrugated iron building. Sometimes the Park Authority gets a little assistance too and we were delighted to receive £24,000 from Scottish Natural Heritage to help fund two

seasonal Rangers posts to assist with the Capercaillie project on the Loch Lomond Islands. Forestry Commission, SNH and the Park Authority are jointly funding an officer to take forward the first rhododendron clearance project in the National Park under an SRDP scheme. So even in these cash constrained times we are managing to get some projects underway in the Park.

With those constraints in mind we have been looking at how best to use our assets and this lead us to lease out a number of sites to commercial concerns. Under these contracts the tenants are required to provide Park visitor information. Our premises at The Gateway Centre, Lomond Shores, Luss Visitor Centre and Tarbet and Inveruglas have all come under these arrangements.

The East Loch Lomond Camping Byelaws have now been given ministerial approval and will come into force on 1st June.

And finally to the Reporters review of the Finalised Local Draft Plan. The Callander sessions will be dealing with housing and the mid to long term development plans and will be held in the Kirk Hall, South Church Street, Callander on 11th and 13th of May.

As always I can be contacted as follows:

Post: Taigh Na Bhuth,
Lochearnhead.

Phone: 01567 830214
owen@thevillageshop.fsbusine
s.co.uk

BEWARE – Computer Related Scam

If you get an unsolicited phone call from "the Technical Support of the Internet" then take care. The caller typically, without even finding out whether you have a computer, as that is assumed, suggests that your computer is either sending out or downloading problems via your internet connection. They say that they are working in association with Microsoft on the issue and offer to guide you to explore your PC (not Mac) and show you the errors. After doing this, and showing you some innocuous messages and 'problems', they offer to take control of your computer via a website called LogMeln, and download some software to 'fix' the problems. They may avoid the cost question until later when they ask for your credit card details and a payment of £60 for their support service. Though you may indeed have some small issues with your computer, the ones they typically show you are essentially harmless and will not cause the internet problems initially described. The software they load is available free, and once they have control of your computer it is also possible to upload private data without your knowledge should they wish to. It is advisable to be cautious regarding any cold-calling of this type.

Doug Ashworth, Ashworth Computing Services, Killearn

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Community Joy as Camping Byelaw Approved

New laws aimed at helping to protect the landscape in East Loch Lomond will come into effect on 1 June 2011 following approval from Environment Minister, Roseanna Cunningham. Under the seasonal camping byelaws, it will be an offence to camp overnight on the east side of the Loch in an area covering 9 miles between Drymen and Rowardennan, from the 1st March to the end of October every year outside designated camping sites.

Camping restrictions are just one of a number of solutions being introduced by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and partners to improve the quality of the area for the millions of people who visit and for the communities living on the east side of the Loch.

In order to maintain the opportunity to enjoy this unique setting, work has started on the creation of a new informal campsite, complete with composting toilets at Sallochay. The project is funded by partners on the East Loch Lomond Management Group which includes the National Park and Forestry Commission Scotland whose staff will manage the site, where visitors will be able to book pitches in advance of their stay in this beautiful area.

Improvements are also being made to Rowardennan car park at the foot of Ben Lomond, and at Balmaha pier, the local hub for water bus and ferry services. The National Park visitor centre at Balmaha will be refurbished this winter and clearer public information for road users will be put in place. This builds on existing successes in the area, such as, increased patrolling through Operation Ironworks, a multi-agency policing initiative and better traffic management.

Roseanna Cunningham said:

"East Loch Lomond has come under increasing pressure from litter, campfires and anti-social behaviour over recent years which has threatened to spoil the visitor experience for the many thousands who travel to the area each year.

"Camping will still be permitted at designated caravan and camping sites and a new semi-formal

camping site is being made available at Sallochay Bay, near Rowardennan.

"These measures are designed to protect and preserve the beauty of the area whilst still providing access for responsible campers."

The Minister also praised the partnership approach adopted by the organisations involved in introducing this initiative.

Welcoming the announcement Fiona Logan, National Park CEO said:

"Providing a first class experience to all visitors who come to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs is a top priority for the National Park. We want to make sure that this is a family friendly visitor destination that matches other areas of outstanding beauty across the world. We are tasked with looking after this most precious and well loved Scottish asset and as a result of the popularity of East Loch Lomond and the ill-treatment of the area from a minority of people, we have had to take this action.

"By placing informal camping restrictions in certain areas and investing heavily in the most popular visitor destinations of Rowardennan, Sallochay, Milarrochy Bay and Balmaha, we hope to achieve a balance so our visitors can enjoy their stay whilst the landscape and communities around the Loch remain protected.

"We are grateful to have the support from our Environment Minister and all our partners and look forward to the season ahead welcoming all our visitors to the National Park."

Gordon Donaldson, Forestry Commission Scotland's district manager in Cowal & Trossachs added:

"For a number of years we have been working in partnership with a range of organisations to try and protect and conserve this beautiful area of Loch Lomond.

"There is increasing pressure from visitor numbers and new infrastructure developments will help manage this better. However, whilst the majority of visitors act responsibly, there are others who don't and this continued problem has to be tackled."

Chief Inspector Kevin Findlater, Central Scotland Police said: "We welcome the introduction of the new byelaw. Over the last few years we have worked closely with Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and other partner agencies and, through Operation Ironworks, have targeted and dealt with anti-social behaviour caused by a minority of informal campers and visitors to the park who do not behave in a responsible manner.

"This work will continue and will be enhanced by the introduction of the new byelaw which will provide additional powers which will ensure visitors to this area will have an enjoyable experience."

Kevin Lilburn, Director of the Buchanan Community Partnership and local resident, gave his support to the announcement:

"The local community fully supports and welcomes the new camping byelaws after many years of campaigning and having to tackle innumerable incidents and issues resulting directly from informal camping. We're delighted that the National Park has supported us in driving through a number of measures to improve the management of visitors to this area. By introducing a new, managed campsite at Sallochay Car Park, we are confident that visitors will actually enjoy a significantly enhanced informal camping experience, residents will be able to sleep peacefully in their homes, and the environment will gradually recover from past abuses."

The National Park Ranger service will continue patrols along the east side of the Loch and will work with Central Scotland Police to monitor camping activity. Penalties for breaching these restrictions could reach a maximum of £500.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority held an extensive public consultation in 2010, which resulted in 60% of respondents supporting the new camping byelaw proposals. The proposals were then submitted to Scottish Government for consideration.



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New Rural Housing Post for National Park

A new service to help rural communities in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park take action on local housing problems is being established by the National Park Authority and the Rural Housing Service with support from Argyll and the Islands LEADER and Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) will help communities identify and develop solutions to address the issue of affordable and local needs housing in the National Park. The post is currently being advertised by The Rural Housing Service.

Derek Logie, Chief Executive of the Rural Housing Service, the national charity running the new service said: "We are delighted to be able to establish a Rural Housing Enabler in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Our experience in other areas is that Enablers help communities and housing providers work creatively together to overcome problems and to build new housing solutions".

Iain Nicolson, Head of Planning at the National Park Authority, said:

"Over the next two years, the RHE will work on pilot projects with a number of communities around Loch Lomond and the Trossachs to tackle housing needs and help Community Councils and Development Trusts explore all the housing options available. Working in partnership with local authorities, housing associations, estates and the National Park Authority as well as delivering housing solutions, we hope to produce a toolkit which will enable other communities to take forward their own housing initiatives."

It is anticipated the service will be up and running by April 2011. For more information on the service or to apply for the post visit <http://www.ruralhousingScotland.org/> or contact the Rural Housing Service on 01875341771 email derek@ruralhousingScotland.org or the National Park Authority (Forward Planning Team) on 01389 722600 email localplan@lochlomond-trossachs.org

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Share your favourite woods online, and be part of something big...

Woods are fantastic places to spend time and experience nature, whatever the season, but many people don't know where to go and how to get the most from their visit. VisitWoods aims to encourage more people to get out and enjoy all that our woodland has to offer.

At the heart of the project is www.VisitWoods.org.uk, a new interactive website showcasing all the woods you can visit in Scotland and across the UK. Part of a unique collaboration between all the major woodland owning organisations in Scotland, the project will give people living in Scotland the opportunity to discover the woods on their doorstep and enjoy the outdoors more often. The website is packed with everything you need to plan a great day out, including searchable maps, inspiring ideas and free activities plus there's space for visitors to share their photos and tips.

But we need your help. This exciting project needs enthusiastic people to share their stories, comments, photographs, ideas and even rate their favourite woods on the website.

"Sharing personal experiences of the woods we love to visit and what they have to offer will make a real difference to people who have never been before. Personal content will hopefully encourage more people to get outside and enjoy the wonders of Scotland's woodland through the seasons," said Carol Evans, Woodland Trust Scotland Director.

Be part of something big! Uploading your photos and comments is really simple. Just go to www.VisitWoods.org.uk, find your favourite wood and add your reviews and images to our blog or photo gallery. Who knows – you may even discover a new wood yourself!

Aberfoyle Golf Club

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or e-mail secretary@aberfoylegolf.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you!



Forest Theatre Company – 10th Anniversary Show

“My Fair Lady”

This production which took place at Gartmore Village Hall on the 10th, 11th & 12th March, was a sell out on all three nights and was a resounding success. Based on Shaw's Pygmalion, Eliza Doolittle was played by Rachel Speirs on the 10th & 12th and Emma Webster on the 11th, while Professor Higgins was played on all three nights by Anthony Weld-Forrester. The supporting cast was as usual first class, the scenery was very imaginative and the costumes both for the market scenes and the Ascot scenes were delightful. All in all a very entertaining evening.



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Instead of admiring,
They may just swoon.
Visit Scotland?
They'll think it's the moon!

Janette Bond



The Aberfoyle Osprey Project

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

Artificial Osprey Nests

Ospreys have been breeding in the Trossachs since the 1970s. Since then numbers have steady grown, and one of the main reasons is that artificial nests (eyries) have been built in trees near suitable habitat.

During the winter Forestry Commission Scotland has been putting up some of these artificial osprey nests in suitable locations. The first task is to cut off the top of the tree at the set of strong side branches. Then three or four strong branches are added to form the shape of the nest. At least four to six bundles of dead sticks about a foot thick follow this. The next step is to fit the long branches into the square to form the main support. Next bundles of sticks are built into a circle at least 4 feet in diameter and this is built up until it is an at least 2 feet high. Then a mix of dead grass, moss and leaf litter is pushed deep into the base of the nest. Finally, sticks are arranged around the side of the nest before the nest layer of leaf litter is added.

Hopefully these nests will prove popular with some of the younger ospreys that may be returning to the Trossachs for the first time since they were born.

2010 Osprey Chick Spotted

While we were all battling with snow and ice in January we received a picture of a very familiar looking osprey chick. Blue HV was spotted in Senegal, West Africa and by the looks of the picture they are having a better winter than we were. This picture just shows the usefulness of the ringing that takes place when the osprey chicks are about 4 weeks old. Blue HV will now spend the next few summers in West Africa before it starts to make its journey back to Scotland.



Image: Crown Copyright

The 2011 Season

The David Marshall Lodge reopened for the season on 1 March and we are hoping to have a very busy season. With Ospreys, Buzzards, Barn Owls, Red Squirrels, Water Voles and hopefully even Golden Eagles you are going to be spoilt for choice with wildlife viewing at the lodge. We are starting the season with a bang with the Ospreys Return event on the 16 April 12-4pm. This event will include osprey themed games and crafts as well as the chance to pop into Wildlife Watch to see how the ospreys are doing.

With lots planned for this coming season, hopefully we will see you soon! For more information about the project, volunteering opportunities, group or school talks contact:

Robert Fraser-Binns

Information and Education Officer

Robert.fraser-binns@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or 01786 229252

Heartstart Training

Trossachs Search and Rescue Team has been delivering Heartstart classes in partnership with the British Heart Foundation for almost ten years. At these 2 hr classes people learn how to perform basic emergency life support skills which are of use to them in their home, at work and out in the community.

We have trained over 800 people but want to extend the delivery of these classes throughout Strathard, the Trossachs and Strathendrick this year. By learning how to carry out chest compressions and give rescue breaths, people will buy time for the casualty and give them the best possible chance prior to the arrival of the team's First Responder Unit and Scottish Ambulance Service personnel.

We will be hiring local halls throughout the summer and advertising our classes, which are free of charge. Additionally, if any voluntary or community group would like us to deliver a Heartstart class we would be pleased to do so.

We can be contacted at trossachs.sar@btinternet.com or 07796 240 023.

Stuart Ballantyne
Chairman
Trossachs Search and Rescue

Inversnaid Reserve



It is a period of preparation at the reserve right now as we reach two important times of the year: financial year end and the return of our migrants. As it is much more interesting to talk about the latter, let us put thoughts of budgets, reports and projections far, far from our minds.

April is a great time to take in the woods around Inversnaid to watch for the return of species such as Redstart and Pied Flycatcher. These small birds have flown all the way from their wintering spots in Africa to bring colour and song back to the reserve, so it seems churlish not to drive a few miles to hold out the 'welcome home' banner (even with the potholes!).

Last year we put out more boxes out than ever before for the Pied Flycatcher. The boxes are made from a special 'woodcrete' material. This hard substance prevents the newly hatched birds becoming a snack box for pine marten. Pied Flycatchers also have to contend with other birds, such as the great tits, settling into the boxes before they have even reached the country. It is very much a case of squatter rights, which does not suit this late arriving migrant.

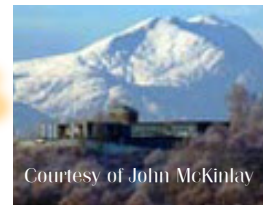
By the end of April, Pied Flycatcher can usually be seen around our nature trail, while you may have to travel a little further up the West Highland Way to see some Redstart. Before going, improve your chances of spotting them by brushing up on your call and ID skills by visiting the RSPB website. Our excellent bird guide can be found at www.rspb.org.uk, and will give good examples of pictures and songs.

Keep your ears to the trees and I'll see you there!

Fraser Lamont
RSPB Inversnaid, Assistant Warden.

Ranger's Ramblings

A View from the Lodge!



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

At your service

After the debilitating harshness of the winter period, which had a detrimental effect on our Christmas programme during December, the sense of anticipation for the coming season at the Lodge has almost certainly been heightened, as a result. There is much to look forward to, as the Forestry Commission is about to embark on a major redevelopment plan, which will increase its profile, and create a wider range of options for our visitors.

It is probably safe to say that most of us take many things in life for granted – the water that ‘magically’ pours from our taps, the light and heat we can generate with the casual flick of a finger, the ability to talk to a loved one several thousand miles away simply by pressing a few buttons. None of this, of course, transpires by accident.

Everything we do in our homes, everything we aspire to in our professional lives, and every pursuit we seek in our free time, is achievable only through the efforts of others.

The David Marshall Lodge is no different in this respect, whereby a small, but dedicated, group strives to uphold long-standing traditions by way of producing a high quality standard of service for the tens of thousands of people who regularly visit the Centre.

In order to do this great attention is paid in detail behind the scenes in focussing on health, safety and maintenance issues, amongst other things, which although not immediately apparent to the casual observer, are vital components in creating the time-honoured, and very special, atmosphere our customers have come to expect.

What remains intrinsically remarkable about the Lodge, though, is that whilst this particular work ethic is both time-consuming and demanding, at the core lies not only a strong desire to deliver, but an underlying and collective passion for the place, which we are only too happy to share.

On a personal level, I consider it an absolute privilege to be working in such an environment, and there is no doubting my feelings of contentment over the years have been accomplished, in no small part, as a result of the unique working relationships developed with my colleagues. Their exceptional range of talents and skills, and commitment to the cause, continues to be an inspiration to me.

By way of this column, I thought to ‘introduce’ you now, if you do not already know them. I make no apologies in presenting their images in Halloween garb, as it is entirely indicative of the lengths they go to promote our events. In all cases, the costumes are either hand-made or purchased at personal expense.

No titles are offered. We are a team, and stand as such.



Margaret Moffat

David Cowan

Susan Nash

Anne Gilchrist

Charlie Stewart

David Wilkie

Robert Fraser-Binns



The Go Ape staff strike a fine pose with new mascot Rab, front and centre



Some images from the brand new look given to the foyer recently.

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Saturdays 10.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m. (not every week, please check).

We are delighted to report, despite Brenda and Stuart 'moving house' to Aberfoyle Main Street, the yoga sessions will continue throughout the coming year in the Exhibition Wing.

Booking is not required, as these are drop-in classes.

For further information, please contact:
www.chilloutscotland.com or 01877 389302 / 07791 385240.

GO APE

Saturday 2nd April – Sunday 30th October
Check for opening times.

Our tree-swinging cousins have been hard at work preparing the course, and there are fantastic offers to be found during April and May, with discount available to mark the start of the season. Pre-booking is advised.

Contact: 0845 643 1748, quoting reference number ABD349, or book online at www.goape.co.uk

OSPREYS RETURN

Saturday 16th April 12.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

In what is a hugely important happening for our enthusiastic Wildwatch Team, this is an exciting opportunity to celebrate the return of the Trossachs ospreys with a wide variety of themed events and activities.

Please contact:
robert.fraser-binns@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

EASTER FUN DAY

Sunday 24th April 11.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Although the main focus of activities fall on this day, including crafts and a treasure hunt, there is every excuse to enjoy the weekend as a whole, in what is traditionally regarded as the opening of the David Marshall Lodge season. Proceedings start with a church service beginning around 8.00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend, and 'bacon butties' will be served in the Bluebell Cafe afterwards.

With all due respect, though, the highlight comes in the shape of the iconic 'Duck Races', which will take place as usual at the Waterfall of the Little Fawn. There is no question this particular event has grown in stature over the years, and the clamour to take part is so intense that bookings are already being received. Races start at 12.00 p.m., 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m.

You DO NOT want to miss out on this.

Cost: £ 2.00. Prizes are available for the winners, and you get to keep your duck, regardless.

Contact: David Marshall Lodge on 01877 382 258.

Award-Winning Strathard News

On Friday 25th February at the Community Newspaper of the Year Awards event the Strathard News won the award for the Most Amusing Contribution of the Year which was written by Dougie MacPherson. The article, 'What Oh Sir Walter!' appeared in the Strathard News a few weeks after Dougie died; so, winning this award is ever more poignant for Bridget, his widow, and for us. Dougie's amazingly quirky sense of humour found its way into most of his writing. The article is reproduced here for your enjoyment. We were also runner-up for the Community Newspaper of the Year award which was won by the Ben Ledi View – congratulations to Callander! The photo shows Fiona, David, Margaret and Marion holding the prized awards.



What Oh, Sir Walter!

As if our readers were not already aware, this summer and early autumn will bring many visitors to this area in celebration of Sir Walter Scott and his works with a series of events in honour of the great man, the overall theme being entitled, 'ScottsLand', a novel conception – and also quite new. So, for those of you who might get asked questions about Scott from tourists as you go about your daily business, we offer you a soupçon of the man's life and career.

Sir Walter was born in the Borders (this was some time before it became a bookshop) way back in iniquity. In later life Edinburgh celebrated the great man in many ways, not least by erecting a statue in his memory. This was done initially to commemorate his efforts, if unsuccessful, to be the first man to reach the South Pole. To this day he is still remembered as Sir Walter of Antarctica.

One of the many tales of Scott from that period in his life was when he resided at his home, Abbotsford. On one occasion his cook had informed the assembled company that dinner would be a little late.

'I forgot the herbs,' he is alleged to have said; 'I may be gone for some thyme.'

But first and foremost, Scott was a writer. Edinburgh also named Waverley Station after the title of one of Scott's novels, 'Station'. Our researchers have endeavoured, to date unsuccessfully, to find traces of this novel, sadly to no avail. Initially, it was thought that the book, 'Ice Station Zebra, My Journey to Antarctica' was written by him but this has proved to be unfounded.

Scott did write many novels and some poems, itself a prodigious feat. (It has been reported that he did wear size twelve footwear). Perhaps his most famous was his short series (two – you cannot get shorter than that) of novels of a Chinese man living in Russia and who later moves to France, entitled 'Ivan Ho!' and its follow up, 'Westward Ho!'

What must not be ignored, especially in this year of ScottsLand was that he did compose beautiful poetry, The Lady Of the Lake being perhaps the most well known, based on Loch Katrine which is not really a lake but, hey, on this year of years, let's not nitpick! Truly a great man, a Scotsman, and one to be proud of. All aboard the ScottsLand!

* Dougie's article was first published in Issue 59 July 2010



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Thank You

Anna Utterson would like to thank all friends, neighbours and family, paramedics and doctors at the Medical Centre for all their help and good wishes while in hospital and at home.

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HETAS APPROVED



Story of Yesteryear

I pay a visit to Strony from time to time and feel sad to see the village going further down hill each time I go. The Glasgow Corporation Water Department was in charge in my early days at Strony. My memories of the place and the people who lived there are happy ones.

The staff consisted of: A Superintendent and his assistant, two painters, one joiner, plumber, electrician, stone mason, horse man, lorry driver, blacksmith, gamekeeper, a dairyman with his wife assisting, a caretaker with his wife assisting and a caretaker in the Hostel for workers who had to stay at Strony and go home at week-ends. On average there were six workmen in the Hostel; these were the odd job men. So, it was quite a community.

What had been one large house was divided into two; namely the Lodge and the House. After the War, the Glasgow Baillies and their friends and families came to these houses – one of the many perks bestowed on them for their services to Glasgow. We used to look forward to the Baillies' arrival come the summer; each family stayed for two weeks. We soon got to know whose finger was in which pie: some had dealings with the Fruit Market, some the Meat Market and so on. Food was still rationed but they always had plenty. Some of them were quite generous to the Local Yokels and would give a concert with tea and 'goodies' laid on afterwards. There were Bowling Competitions between them and us – serious stuff; Fishing Competitions, the sponsor providing the prizes which were food stuffs - for instance sugar, which was in short supply. The sponsor got the trout that were caught. He wisnae sleepin wis he?

Not many people knew that the Burrell Art Collection was stored and guarded at Strony during the war.

There was a dairy herd of cows which the dairyman and his wife attended to. Their milk was sold to the locals at a nominal charge.

The electrician maintained the sewage plant which was known as 'The Sludge', also 'The Power House'. The electricity was a direct current, which meant that an iron and vacuum sweeper were the only gadgets we were allowed. The sewage plant was cleaned out regularly; this is when Paddy the Horse and his minder came into play: the effluent was pumped into a barrel mounted on a cart which Paddy pulled to the midden where the barrel was emptied. The day this job was done was known as the 'Gold Standard Run'!

The painters maintained the properties which was like the painting of the Forth Bridge; come the last house, they would start all over again.

The plumber, when he wasn't plumbing, swept chimneys and cursed and swore the whole time he was at it. We disregarded his language since to have a chimney fire was a major crime. Mind you, we did have a fire engine of sorts and no, Paddy didn't pull it.

The lorry was used for everything and in the winter it was our lifeline on many an occasion when the vans couldn't get through because of snow. The joiner repaired the rowing boats during the winter, ready for the next year. In the summer, he repaired what needed doing on the properties. The caretaker's wife cleaned the afore-mentioned houses with an assistant. We had two days to do it, which was known as 'the change over'. It was hard work but we had many a laugh. The blacksmith made shoes for Paddy keeping his feet comfortable. He also dressed tools and blethered.

Once the summer was over we settled into winter activities which were few and far between. A weekly Whist Drive was the main thing; with Summer Ice for the men; the odd dance where tea was provided and everybody baked something. The gamekeeper's wife cooked and minced rabbits supplied by the gamekeeper. This filling was for the sandwiches and was known as 'Strony Chicken'. We had a Women's Rural Institute which in later years became known as Inversnaid and Stronachlachar W.R.I. We looked forward to the monthly meetings and learned a lot of useful things. The Corporation supplied a black and white television set which was installed in the Committee Room for the use of everyone. We thought we were in Heaven and went to the 'pictures' as we called it, to watch everything and anything. Whatever the weather threw at us never deterred us.

I wouldn't like to go back and stay at Strony now; I'm too used to street lights and people all around me, so it's true to say there's a time in your life for everything.

Effie Ferguson

Editor's Footnote: Effie wrote this for me many years ago as part of a local history project. Just recently, I asked her permission to publish it and, of course, being Effie, she was delighted by this. I didn't realise then that we would be doing it in her memory. How she will be missed.



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School News

Aberfoyle Primary and Nursery

P1 News

P1's topic is plants. They have been making mobiles and an enchanted forest that is absolutely brilliant! They have also been planting sunflowers and have been growing beans. On the 3rd of June P1 went to the Botanic Garden in Glasgow. There they saw the biggest bamboo tree in the world that was bigger than their classroom door! They also found out that the goo inside a tree forms into rings. P1 are really looking forward to seeing their sunflowers and beans grow.

P2/3 News

P2/3 have been learning all about light and sound. Here are some facts about light and sound:

- If some thing blocks light, it creates a shadow.
- The sun is 100 times bigger than the earth.
- It takes 365 days for the earth to orbit the sun.
- Light always travels in a straight line.

In maths P2/3 have been learning their 2.5 and 10 times tables mentally as well as symmetry, weight and making up board games to help them work out sums.

Primary 4/5 Big Day Out

On Wednesday 9th March, Primary 4/5 spent a day at the David Marshall Lodge, taking part in a variety of activities, together with Primary 5 children from Bannockburn Primary School. The children learned about Scottish birds of prey, trees native to Scotland, the wildlife associated with them and the interdependence of the wildlife a tree supports. They also learned about the different layers of a tree and their important functions, how to navigate without a compass, using only natural signs and clues, different types of wildlife crime and how to use natural materials to create a piece of art. The children all had a very enjoyable day and made lots of new friends. The classes from each school will now use some of the experiences and knowledge gained through this visit to help them to design and create a piece of art inspired by the 'Great Outdoors'.



Summer Fair

All Welcome at Aberfoyle School Summer Fair Aberfoyle School's Summer Fair will be held on Saturday 4 June, 1-3pm at the school, rain or shine. The fair will feature a tearoom with fresh home baking, a raffle and tombola, table-top sales and lots of games for children of all ages. All are welcome at this community event-come along and get your face painted, win a prize and enjoy a fresh scone. Organised by the Parent Council, the fair aims to raise money for educational class trips. Traders and members of the community are invited to take a stall for a small donation. To reserve a place, please contact the Parent Council on info@aberfoyleparents.org.uk

P4/5 News

This term P4/5 have been learning about electricity. They have been making electronic things from Lego such as motorbikes, elevators and monster trucks. P4/5 have also made many different kinds of circuits using buzzers, motors, light bulbs and wires. In addition they have also learned many types of electrical symbols that you would use when are drawing a circuit diagram. In other areas of curriculum they have been planting tomatoes and potatoes outside their classroom. They are looking forward to seeing how they develop over the summer.

P6/7 News

This term P6/7 have been very busy. At the moment P7 are away on their residential trip. P6 have also been out of school at the athletics and cricket festivals. They have also been studying the rainforest this term. They have learnt that there are four layers of the rainforest. These are the forest floor, the understory layer, the canopy layer and the emergent layer. The class have also been practising very hard for the end of term service where they will say goodbye to their P7 class mates.

McLaren High

Blood Transfusion Service – Talk to Senior Pupils

On 10 February, Julie Morley from the Blood Transfusion Service came to McLaren to talk to S5 and S6 pupils about giving blood. She talked about the benefits and reasons for giving blood, and discussed with us the details of what is involved and where to go to give blood. There are 3 places to go to give blood in Scotland with various mobile units operating throughout the country, including one which visits Callander at the Kirk Hall. We found out that if we give a pint of our blood we can potentially save 3 lives. Only 3 teaspoons of blood are needed to save a premature baby, however only 5% of the population give blood. It was an interesting and informative afternoon. Thanks to Julie for talking to us.

Emma Buchanan S5

Following the recent talk, 9 pupils gave blood and their efforts were gratefully appreciated by the Blood Transfusion Team. Well done to those pupils involved.

McLaren U16 v Morrisons Academy

McLaren under 16s beat Morrisons Academy in the quarter finals of the Scottish Schools Bowl on Tuesday night (22 February). From the start Morrisons were the better organised team and a well drilled pack soon gave their backs the first try of the game which was converted. McLaren fought back and winger Cameron Reid was released down the wing to score in the corner. Morrisons scored again to lead 12-5 at half time but a determined McLaren side tackled well and started to apply pressure on Morrisons with captain Adam Wood getting our second try to cut the deficit to just 12-10. Morrisons had a penalty to go further ahead but missed. The last 10 minutes were all McLaren's and Adam scored again to give McLaren a 15-12 win to go into the Semi-Finals against Jedburgh Grammar.

U-14 Rugby

On 24 February McLaren U-14 played at Stirling High beating Wallace High 3 tries to 0, then



Tesco & Sainsbury vouchers.

We are once again collecting vouchers. There is a collection point in school or vouchers can be handed in to Aberfoyle Post Office. Thank you all for your support with these vouchers.

Remember your 'rags' on Polling Day!

Aberfoyle Primary School now has a permanent textile collection box in the school porch, where we can receive any old clothing, curtains, towels and paired footwear, during school hours. This is a great fund raiser for the school - please remember to bring your old 'rags' along with your polling card on the 5th May! All we ask is that you place the items in plastic bags! Many thanks.

Balforn High 8 tries to 0 and finally Stirling High 3 tries to 2.

Well done to the team who remain unbeaten this season with 8 wins and 1 draw.

West of Scotland Ski Championships Glencoe

On Wednesday 2 March two teams from McLaren took part in the West of Scotland Ski Championships at Glencoe. Jane Brisbane, Hannah Brisbane, Seona Glen and Sophie Parsons were the McLaren A team, and Robbie Dingwall, Regan Dingwall, Ailsa Halliday and James Ronald were the McLaren B team. The pupils did very well, scooping up several medals. Robbie Dingwall was the fastest boy overall and the McLaren B Team got 3rd place.

Scottish Schools Table Tennis Championships

On Sunday 27 February, the Scottish Schools Championships were held in Perth. Bethany Ross S6, from McLaren High School, was competing in the Under 18 Girl's event. Having won the Stirlingshire Schools regional qualifier, she went into the event as the top seed. In her last year in the event, Bethany had no trouble in taking the title. This means that she now goes on to compete at the British Schools Championships in Lilleshall, England on the 24 - 26 June as the top seed for Scotland. Congratulations Bethany and good luck in the British Championships!

Forth Valley Cross Country Championships

Six pupils in S1-3 recently participated in the Forth Valley Cross Country Championships in Alloa. They all performed really well and represented the school excellently with a great team ethos. Well done from Miss Stevenson.



Brewin Dolphin Scottish Girls U18s Rugby Cup

Three S4/5 girls represented McLaren High as part of the central schools rugby team last Saturday. They were unfortunately defeated by Plockton/Atholl but the girls enjoyed playing with other schools in the central area and had a great experience.

World Wise National Geography Quiz

After weeks of preparation six pupils from S3 Standard Grade Geography took part in the World Wise National Geography Quiz at Brae's High School on Friday 25 March. The pupils were competing against other schools and did exceptionally well. They were runners up missing out on a place in the final by one point! The pupils are determined that next year they will further improve and win their place in the final. Ms Mariani would like to thank Michael Rees, Roseanne Tye, Aimee Higginson, Finn Upton, Duncan Lloyd and Fiona Morgan for

competing in the quiz and representing McLaren High School at this event. She is very proud of them, well done!

Healthy Eating Rewards

Congratulations to the following pupils who received cinema tickets in February's Healthy Eating Rewards: Alexander Allison, Liam Burnett, Rebecca Edwards- Campbell, Kayleigh Glen, Rachel Johnston, Marianne Law, Carys MacLean, Grace Malloch, Emma McLaren, Erin McLean, Ryan Riddell, Chris Ryan, Mairi Whitehead, Jacob Whitehead and Rhiannon Wilson.

Young Writer of the Year 2010 Awards

Congratulations to Andrew King and Clinton Seipal (both S1) who received Young Writer of the Year 2010 awards from the Stirling Community Newspaper Forum for their article printed in the Ben Ledi View about their Induction Day at McLaren High School.



World Book Day 2011

Thursday 3 March was World Book Day, an international celebration of books and reading and McLaren High School pupils took part with a number of different activities. All week long pupils and staff brought books and magazines in to the Swap Shop in the library for the 'Big Book Swap' where they could exchange a book they had loved for a book someone else had enjoyed. There were a number of different competitions taking place including one to design a bookmark and a 'Guess the Book Character' competition. Pupil librarians who had dressed as famous book characters were spotted in the library by pupils and Rhiannon Stevenson from S2 was the winner after identifying them all correctly.

At lunch time on World Book Day pupils also attended a big screen viewing of an author session which was made available by the Scottish Book Trust. All pupils who took part in the various activities had a great time and the profile of World Book Day was raised throughout the school.

Tesco Vouchers for Schools and Sainsburys Active Kids Vouchers

The school is collecting Tesco and Sainsburys vouchers. If any of your friends or family shop there please encourage them to collect these vouchers which can be handed in to the Pupil Office at the school.

The more we collect the more equipment we can get for the school so start collecting today!

McLaren High PTA

The winners of the PTA draw for February are Mr Ferguson from Killin and Mr Mathie, former Headteacher. They each win £25.

Invershaid Primary

Cross Country Run

On 2nd February I took part in Stirling's Annual Cross Country Challenge. The weather was just plain horrible that day and it looked like it was going to get worse. My trainer was coming along as well to watch me do the best I could. When we eventually got there after the 1h journey, the weather was still horrible.

First all of the runners taking part were offered the chance to go and walk around the track to see what it would be like, so I went. The track was very muddy and it was difficult to walk around! At the start of the race it was quite cramped and then it got better as we all spread out. It got harder and harder as we all got round the muddy track. Coming round the last corner was the hardest because the rain hit my head like hailstones. I finished in a good time, for the conditions, of 10 minutes and 5 seconds, just 3 minutes behind the winner, which meant I came 63rd.

At the end I was extremely tired and I did a warm down on the car park. I had had a great day and I was really happy everything went fine. By Jamie Carter

Mary's Meals and the Backpack Project

On 21st February 2011 Wendy came to talk about Mary's Meals and the Backpack project. Another small school called Trossachs P.S. was also doing the same project so we decided to go there to listen to Wendy's talk.

Wendy began by talking about what 'Mary's Meals' is. Here is some information about it: Mary's Meals project started in 2002 when a man from Oban went to Malawi and asked a teenager,

"What would you wish for if you had two wishes?"

The teenager replied, "Food and an education."

So that is how Mary's Meals started off.

Children in continents like Africa and Asia get their morning breakfast of nutritional porridge at school. That increases the number of children going to school to get an education. Before Mary's Meals started some children and adults wouldn't have a meal for at least 3 days. Only £5.30 could feed a poor child for a year in countries like Malawi and Liberia. At the moment Mary's Meals give food to 500,000 children!!

The Backpack Project is a project where you put items such as books and pencils in an old backpack for a child. Thousands of poor children now have backpacks that we have put together in Britain. It is like Christmas when these children get their backpack.

We are working together with Trossachs Primary to send backpacks to those who need them. Members of the public can also bring filled backpacks to add to our collection. Here are the items you can put in a backpack: a rubber, pencils, a jotter, a tennis ball, shorts/skirt, t-shirt, a sharpener, soap (because some children have to clean themselves with sand), shoes/ flip flops, toothbrush, toothpaste, spoon, ruler, pencil case, pen, towel, hat and a letter if you want. Don't put in anything electronic and no food due to it rotting in the backpack.

By Jamie Carter

The Garden in Spring



Spring is with us at long last and the worst of the winter should finally be over. But don't be fooled by a few warm days – there's plenty of time for a damaging frost or two. The daffodils are in bloom, Rhododendrons and Magnolias are starting to show themselves off and the lawn is growing again. It's a great time to appreciate how nature gives us so much to admire after the gloomy days since autumn but in the garden that's only the result of last year's effort; so with all the new growth it's time for the gardener to really get busy again.

In the garden: I'm sure almost everyone will be finding shrubs that haven't survived the winter; not all are obviously dead at first and conversely some apparently lifeless plants may surprise you by putting up new growth – don't be too hasty to remove them. When replacing make sure that what you're buying is hardy enough for these harsh winters or at least be aware of possible problems and be prepared to give slightly less hardy plants some protection in their early years.

Finish any major pruning or removal of trees and hedges before bird nesting starts and finish all pruning of evergreens, except for topiary which you should leave until the frosts are over. Re-firm young trees if they've been moved by the wind. Prune summer flowering shrubs such as Buddleia, Lavatera, hardy Fuchsias.

With plenty of lush new growth on herbaceous plants beware of the slugs and snails looking for a good meal.

When planting new roses firstly make sure they are not in soil where roses have been before then plant with the graft point below soil level to reduce suckers being produced.

Bulbs: Lift and divide spring bulbs (snowdrops, winter aconites etc) now. Deadhead daffodils as the flowers fade but don't tie up the stalks – just let them die back naturally sending their energy back into the bulbs.

The Lawn: Apply a spring feed to the lawn now with weed and moss killer incorporated if necessary (as it usually is in this part of the world). When the moss has browned off consider dethatching the lawn with by raking manually or with a machine, and over-seed any bare patches afterwards.

Bedding/hanging baskets: If you haven't done so already it's time to organise your summer bedding, whether by sowing your own or buying or ordering it. Also a bit of forward planning for hanging baskets will pay benefits; at Benview we take orders for them as early as possible so that by the end of May when they can be put outside they make a real impact.

In the **greenhouse** in general be sure to open vents and doors on sunny days. If you're growing from seed remember to harden off the seedlings by moving them to a coldframe when they have developed good roots.

Vegetables and fruit: Chit your potatoes and plant them out now then earth them up as the foliage grows. Other vegetables to plant out now include onion sets, peas, carrots and beetroot. Many others can be sown indoors now, such as leeks, courgettes and all the indoor varieties – tomatoes, chilli, cucumber, melon etc.

Orchids: After many have finished flowering over the winter and should now be showing signs of new growth, now is the time to repot and/or divide them if necessary. Bring them into Benview if you'd like advice or for us to do this for you.



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Local Communities urged to get involved in Forest Renewables

Communities across Scotland are being urged to get involved in generating renewable energy through a unique opportunity with the Forestry Commission Scotland.

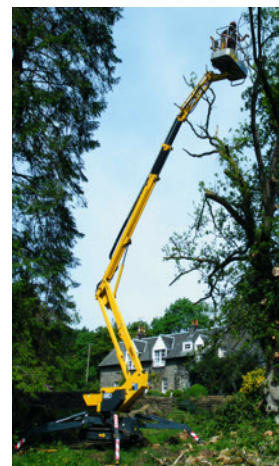
The Forestry Commission has given selected developers the right to develop wind and hydro sites on National Forest Estate Land. There may now be a chance for communities to set up their own renewable projects on forestry land or to 'buy in' to the developers' schemes.

Community Energy Scotland, the Community Woodlands Association, the Development Trusts Association Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations are all urging communities with an interest in developing their own renewable scheme to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) for their closest National Forest Estate area as soon as possible. This can be done by emailing the Forestry Commission at contactFoRe@forestry.gsi.gov.uk – EoI forms are available from Community Energy Scotland.

There are a number of deadlines for communities to get involved. However those groups in the north of Scotland who are looking to take part in hydro schemes only have until mid-April to submit an Expression of Interest. After these deadlines the opportunities for wholly owned community schemes will be very limited or at risk and the opportunities to 'buy in' to the developers schemes might be reduced.

Jamie Adam, CES Development Officer for Central Scotland said; "There is an exciting opportunity for community groups to get involved in developing wind and hydro on Forestry land, to generate an income for the community and to help reduce Scotland's carbon emissions. But the window of opportunity is very narrow, and there is a risk that if communities don't move quickly, all the best sites could be lost to the commercial developers. Communities can get free advice and a form to submit an Expression of Interest from their local Community Energy Scotland Development Officer."

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Stirlingshire Cancer Patients rely on Charity Handouts to Keep Warm

FREEZING cancer patients who can't afford to heat their homes due to colossal fuel bills are turning to charity handouts to keep warm.

Leading cancer charity Macmillan Cancer Support today announced it is spending twice as much on helping patients to heat their homes than it was five years ago.

The new statistics show that almost £14,000 was given out to cancer patients in Stirlingshire to help them meet the cost of home heating in 2010.

This is a rise of more than 80 per cent compared to 2005 when over £7,600 was awarded to people by the 100-year-old charity to help people with their fuel bills in Scotland.

Across Scotland, the new statistics show that almost £425,000 was given out to cancer patients to help them meet the cost of home heating in 2010.

This is almost double the amount spent in 2005 when £226,000 was awarded to people by the 100-year-old charity to help people with their fuel bills in Scotland.

Elsbeth Atkinson, Macmillan Cancer Support's director for Scotland, said: "Following the coldest winter in a century, patients will now be dreading their household fuel bills dropping through their letter boxes.

"It is absolutely unacceptable that, as well as attempting to cope with the consequences of a cancer diagnosis, patients are suffering the additional anxiety of how to make ends meet or are struggling through winter with no heating.

"When the charity was established 100 years ago, founder Douglas Macmillan comforted cancer patients by handing out sacks of coal so they could to heat their homes.

"It is shocking that a century on, people who are diagnosed with this devastating disease

are still being forced to live in freezing homes and in fuel poverty."

When someone is diagnosed with cancer, their income often drops because they are too ill to work. However, their bills rise because they spend more time at home and feel the chill more because of their treatment.

Despite only seven per cent of cancer patients in fuel poverty being on a social tariff, Westminster politicians recently rejected Macmillan's calls for terminally ill cancer patients to automatically receive a rebate as part of the new Warm Homes Discount scheme.

The new mandatory social price support scheme, will obligate energy companies to provide a rebate to certain groups of vulnerable customers from April this year.

Macmillan is urging the Government to reconsider their decision and take action to ensure the scheme helps the thousands of vulnerable cancer patients throughout the UK who are at home freezing but too scared to put the heating on because of rising energy bills.

Macmillan is urging Scots to sign up to its online Freeze Out Fuel Poverty knitted petition at www.infi-knit.org.uk. The Infi-knit knitting machine generates a real piece of woolly scarf every time someone adds their name and comment to the online petition.

People affected by cancer can find out more about the financial help available to them in Scotland by visiting www.macmillan.org.uk or calling free on 0808 808 0000, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.

**WE ARE
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**PRESS
RELEASE**

Milton

Hello Children,

April is always an exciting month, so much is going to happen. We start with April Fools Day, a time for playing carefully thought out tricks on the unwary. Good planning is essential. This year I have a cunning scheme. The twins will be going on a school visit to Bracklinn Falls, to see the new bridge, and will have some time in Callander during the morning of 1st April. I have asked Duke to pop into Screw It hardware shop for a tin of elbow grease. Isn't that a great wheeze? Remember, all practical jokes have to be done before 12 noon.

Sunday 3rd April is Mothering Sunday. As usual Braeval and Katrine will help Dad to prepare breakfast in bed for Mum. I hope they do better than last year, her boiled eggs were really hard, the toast was burnt and the tea had gone stone-cold. Ah well, as Mum says, it is the thought that counts. At least the little vase of freshly picked primroses will be as pretty as ever. Spring really has arrived, lovely flowers all around and the leaves on the trees opening up to the sun. The next day there will be a New Moon to look out for, a good time to make a wish.

This month the ospreys will return from Africa, in good time to repair and make good any winter damage to their nest site. All the local activity will be captured on camera and we shall be able to see what goes on in the comfort of the viewing room at David Marshall Lodge. Meanwhile, in a few of our clean, fast-flowing burns, the larval stage of freshwater mussels are released from female brood pouches, lots and lots of them. The adult mussels are pretty much fixed to the river bed; the youngsters swim about looking for passing brown trout and move in to live inside their gills. There they will develop into small but fully formed mussels. It's funny, but the fish don't seem to mind.

Above us, Orion, the great hunter, together with his faithful hound Sirius, will slip quietly over the western horizon and out of sight. Grandpa Otter will be hunting out his Union Jack flag, as he always does, to celebrate the Queen's birthday. This is Her Majesty's real birthday, she has another one on 11th June. It must be great being a queen and always having two birthdays. Braeval, my swotty sister, will be remembering William Shakespeare's birthday on the 23rd, even though he has been dead since 1616 – that's 395 years. I must say that he did write some good plays, there was even one about Scotland.

Towards the end of the month, and rather late this year, is Easter. This is the time for tucking into lots of chocolate eggs, and rolling painted, deliberately hard-boiled eggs down a steep hillside. A week later it will be magical Mayday. George the Hare wants us to go to Fairyland with him, to see if they will lift the spell that turns him white every winter. That, as they say, could be exciting!

Bye for now,





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Church News

From the Manse.....

Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith Parish Church

Unlike Christmas, Easter does not have a colourful cast of characters. There are no harassed innkeepers, no Angel Gabriel, no sweet baby in a manger attended by adoring shepherds and magi, no Heavenly Host, no bright and shiny star. We know that story as well as we know the birth of our own children. We have made a Cecil B de Mille major production of it, with the carols, the poor uprooted tree (adorned perhaps with the help of glossy magazine advice for creating the Christmas tree *du jour*), the presents, the meal, and always the pursuit of the 'perfect Christmas'.



Oh, we have tried with Easter. We have invented Easter bunnies, bonnets and baskets, chocolate egg hunts, and Simnel cake, but somehow Easter arrives as a minor production. Two of the gospel writers give Jesus a fairly spectacular birth, but when it comes to Easter, everything is fragmented and frankly peculiar in all the gospels.

Easter begins with an empty tomb. Well, you can't really depict emptiness. We can't make it into wise men with presents and trees and strings of light. Easter happened in the night, but no star gives any light on it at all. In one gospel there is an earthquake. In the tomb there are two mysterious beings clothed in white, or perhaps just one. In one story, Mary Magdalen gets there first and mistakes Jesus for the gardener. She has other women with her, and no one believes their story when they tell the others. Another account says Peter went there too with another disciple. Confusion is everywhere in the gospels. The narratives are as shadowy and incomplete as life itself. Perhaps that is why some of us find them so compelling.

It is known from sources outside the gospels that Jesus died, crucified. For Easter itself, all we have is the belief of those first followers that Jesus rose, and that a few saw him briefly and talked with him. For believers and unbelievers alike, life has never been the same again. Easter cannot be explained away. It cannot be rationalized. It is a matter of faith, which is a bit of a problem in our literal-minded, fact driven information overloaded times.

And speaking of Easter bunnies:

'Rabbit's clever', said Pooh thoughtfully.
'Yes', said Piglet. 'Rabbit's clever'.
'And he has Brain'.
'Yes', said Piglet, 'Rabbit has Brain'.
There was a long silence.
'I suppose', said Pooh, 'that's why he never understands anything'.

Do have a joyful Eastertide.
Linda

St Mary's Episcopal Church

Richard Grosse, Rector of St Mary's

Gordon's Garden.

'There is a Green Hill far way,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.'

Thus wrote the great nineteenth century hymn writer Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander. Her hymn recalls the events of the first Good Friday when Christ was taken outside Jerusalem to a place named Golgotha or Calvary to be crucified. It was widely believed that when Christ was taken from the cross, he was buried nearby. On the first Easter Sunday, the risen Christ appeared to his followers having defeated death. Later the historian Eusebius was to write that the Roman Emperor Hadrian so hated Christianity that he caused the supposed site of the cross and tomb to be levelled with earth before building a temple to Aphrodite atop. A successor, The Emperor Constantine who died circa 337, was though a champion of Christianity. He directed his mother Helena to demolish Hadrian's temple and excavate the site. There Helena is alleged to have found both the site of Christ's cross and tomb. Thus Constantine's Church came to be built as two connected churches over the sites. Thereafter the building suffered damage in 614, and total destruction in about 1000. Today the rebuilt structure is shared and controlled by a number of religious and secular organisations. It is naturally a famous place of pilgrimage.

Argument regarding the exact location of Calvary rumbled on down the ages, until in 1883, General Charles Gordon visited Jerusalem on furlough. Gordon by that time had already served with distinction at the

Crimea, in Egypt and in China. Gordon, a devout man, had always doubted Constantine's Church as the authentic site of Calvary. One morning Gordon noticed with delight a rocky escarpment which, he noted from several angles, resembled the face of a skull. In the Aramaic language 'Golgotha' means 'the place of the skull'. Reading St John's Gospel anew, Gordon followed the account of the burial of Christ. 'Now in the place where he was crucified there was a...new tomb'. During excavation of the escarpment in 1869, a number of tombs had been found. Scrambling up the escarpment to examine the tombs, Gordon found one with a stone groove running along the ground outside it. Gordon was to assert that the groove once housed a stone that covered the entrance to the tomb thus corresponding to the biblical account of the burial of Christ. Thus he believed the elusive spot of Christ's crucifixion and burial to have been found.

Alas Gordon was never at liberty to pursue the matter further. In the following year, he was sent to Khartoum. Shortly after his arrival the city was besieged for ten months by the Mahdi. On January 26th 1885, Gordon perished and on the 13th March a national day of mourning was declared throughout Britain. Although the authenticity of Gordon's discovery cannot, and will never be authenticated, it is known as Gordon's Garden and is too a popular destination for pilgrims.

Of course the point of Easter is not one so much of geographical nicety, but rather of belief and hope that Christ overcame death.



Thrill seeking picnic bench found safe and well at Lemahamish but unfortunately high and dry

Glendrick Roost



Christmas is now a distant memory and the nights are stretching fast. 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 needed a friend as I don't think it fair for any herd animal to be kept on its own. 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!! We have now however managed to help two adorable Kune Kune pigs. Dumbledore and Hufflepuff are lovely four month old cheeky boys. They are both tan with black patches and are without doubt 'cute'. Miss Piggy is still out on that! She is now fed behind sheep hurdles to prevent the little thieves stealing her food.

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.

We rescued a beautiful entire jack donkey a couple of weeks ago as he was going to be shot for doing what jack donkeys do only to a gelding. When removed to a farm with another jack donkey he was attacked

understandably, and so he came to us. We have named him Muffin and he is now gelded to prevent any accidents with our jennies. Though not handled very much and very timid I know that with love and slow training he will become a much loved and valued member of our little donkey herd.

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 taken in seven beautiful guinea pigs to add to the number we have already and some of them will be used for talks and events. Several wild animals have been taken to Hesselhead Wildlife Hospital. One, a tiny hedgehog, weighed only 265 grams! He wasn't malnourished either just small. How he had survived the horrendous -15 deg temperatures I have no idea!!! To survive winter conditions Hesselhead recommends they should weigh 600 grams! He was a very lucky chappy.

Another sorry case was a beautiful buzzard found by two of our volunteers after being hit by a car. Unfortunately he didn't make it as on examination he had both wings broken at the shoulder meaning successful mending was unlikely.

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 4 x 4. 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 on Saturday September 17th. Please support us at any/all of these events. Thank you.

The Christmas Raffle supposedly to be drawn in December was postponed until February due to the bad weather. Thank you to all who managed to help us with raising much needed funds. The prizes will be distributed over the next few days.

Though we have had the help from a few new volunteers we can always do with a few more. Several long term voles have left - Charlene has had a little girl, Abby- congratulations to her and Chris; Carol 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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Women in the Trossachs

Jewellery-making and mending

Wednesday 20 April at 7.30pm

Kinlochard Village Hall

Make a piece of jewellery with professional guidance from member Julia of Trossachs Creations, all material supplied. One basic piece is included in the evening although you can 'upgrade' to something more special if you wish. You can also bring along your broken or old jewellery for an expert opinion on whether it can be adapted or repaired. The meeting is being held in the newly extended and refurbished hall in Kinlochard, and is open to non-members at a charge of £5.

Balquhiddar Magical & Spiritual Trail

Wednesday 18 May at 7.15pm

This new trail developed by local people last year brings together many strands of folklore and history in and around Balquhiddar. We'll meet at the village hall at 7.15pm (note slightly earlier start time) for the walk lasting about an hour and then finish off the evening with a short meeting at the Rob Roy bar at the Kingshouse Hotel. An additional loop climbing up to Creag an Tuirc for a view of the Glen is possible for those wishing to be more energetic and if the weather permits, with an earlier start time of 6pm. If you possibly wish to take this option please let us know and we'll keep you informed.

Come along and meet other women who live or work in and around the Trossachs. For more information and monthly meeting details see www.witt.org.uk, phone 01877 387200 or e-mail admin@witt.org.uk. All welcome.



Stirling's food waste will help power Scotland

Horizons Environment

The city of Stirling is being hailed as a leader in the effort to cut greenhouse gases and generate clean power for Scotland.

It follows a decision by Stirling Council to take food waste collected from more than 26,000 homes in the area for processing at Horizons Environment's anaerobic digestion plant at Deerdykes near Cumbernauld.

Stirling council representatives saw first-hand the process involved at the plant, in which food waste is digested by bacteria to create biogas which is converted into power. This power is then fed into the National Grid.

The process also creates a biofertiliser that can be used in agriculture as an alternative to chemical fertilisers.

Before Stirling Council began food waste collections, this waste was sent to landfill where it gives off methane, a greenhouse gas twenty times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

The arrangement between Horizons Environment, Scottish Water's commercial resource management business, and Stirling Council not only helps the environment – it saves the council money by avoiding increasing landfill charges.

Visiting the plant at Deerdykes were Kevin Robertson, Stirling Council's Head of Planning, Regulation and Waste and Councillor Jim Thomson, the deputy convener.

Welcoming them on site, Chris Banks, Scottish Water's Commercial Director and Chairman of Horizons said:

"We are delighted Stirling Council have chosen to send their food waste to us for recycling. They are playing an important part in our efforts to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and generate clean power for the country and Scottish Water, as part of our vision to become a low carbon water company.

Stirling Council has one of the highest recycling rates in Scotland (47.5%) and has plans to extend the food waste collection to over 39,500 homes to help it reach the Scottish Government target of 50% recycling by 2013.

Horizons Environment is exploring using the heat generated at its Deerdykes site for a district heating scheme for the local industrial estate in Cumbernauld and using surplus energy to produce bio-methane, a sustainable vehicle fuel. It also has plans to convert other redundant Scottish Water sites into anaerobic digestion plants.

Voting Time Again

Thursday May 5th is polling day for elections to the Scottish Parliament and for a Referendum on the voting system to be used at future UK Parliament elections.

Electors will receive three ballot papers for the May 5th elections except European Union citizens who will only receive the 2 ballot papers for the Scottish Parliament election.

More information on the election and referendum is available at www.stirling.gov.uk & www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Should anyone who isn't already a postal voter want to vote by post at these elections then they need to apply as soon as possible as the last possible date for receipt of any completed postal vote application is 5pm on 14th April.

Electors should note that ballot papers will not be posted until 19th April therefore if they will be away from home before 21st April they are advised to contact the Electoral Registration Office for advice on voting by proxy.

Each registered elector should receive their poll card for the elections by April 8th. Anyone who does not receive one should contact the ERO as soon as possible to check whether they are registered to vote stirling@centralscotland-vjb.gov.uk

Registration and postal vote forms are available in local libraries or from the Electoral Registration Office (ERO) www.saa.gov.uk/central Tel 01786 892289



New guide for farmers managing nature conservation sites

Farmers managing protected nature conservation areas can now access a new online guide to their responsibilities and funding sources.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) produced the guide, entitled 'Farming, SSSIs and Natura sites', in collaboration with the National Farmers' Union of Scotland (NFUS). It is now available on both the SNH and NFUS websites.

The guide is for farmers in Scotland who own, tenant or manage land that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It summarises the requirements of farmers in relation to protected areas as well as sources of funding for conservation management.

The new guide is available here www.snh.gov.uk/docs/C280938.pdf and www.nfus.org.uk/uploadedFiles/Campaigns/SNH.pdf



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Scotland gets the Fuel Good Factor

Homes and businesses across Scotland are being encouraged to get the 'Fuel Good Factor' and take advantage of the carbon and financial benefits of switching to woodfuel.

With the woodfuel economy expanding rapidly A new Usewoodfuel website offers the best advice available on all things woodfuel in Scotland.

Step by step guides make it easy for consumers and suppliers to access up to date advice and guidance on a range of woodfuel topics and issues. You can find out what type of boiler is right for your situation, find out who supplies boilers and woodfuel anywhere in Scotland - and even find out how to go about supplying yourself and others with woodfuel.

The site also offers options to join regional woodfuel forum meetings and provides case studies of successful schemes that you can arrange to visit to see woodfuel in action.

Usewoodfuel Scotland is a partnership between Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Government and Forest Research, Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, The Biomass Energy Centre, Scottish Enterprise and is part funded by the European Union.

For more information visit
www.usewoodfuel.co.uk

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

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



The Miracle of Spring A Flower Festival at Norrieston Kirk, Thornhill.

Saturday 23rd April 10.00-18.00
Sunday 24th April 12.00-18.00
Monday 25th April 10.00-18.00
Tea Coffee and home baking

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.

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For Strolls and Rambles - meet at 09.30 a.m

Come prepared with weatherproof clothing, stout footwear and packed lunch

Visitors welcome

April

8:30am Sat 2nd	Ramble	The Strathblane Pipeline	8 miles	01877-382522
9:30am Wed 6th	Stroll	Mystery Stroll	5 miles	01877-330444
8:30am Sat 16th	LDP	CtoC(1)Portavadie to Port Driseach	7.5 miles	01877-330032
9:30am Wed 20th	Ramble	Quarry Path & Tinkers' Loan	8 miles	01877-331864
8:30am Sat 30th	Hill	The Glen Sherup horseshoe	645m	01786-841240

May

9:30am Wed 4th	Ramble	North Third and Sauchie Crags	7 miles	01786-850235
8:30am Sat 7th	Hill	Beinn an Lochain	901m	01877-339080
8:30am Sat 14th	LDP	CtoC(2)Port Driseach to Ormidale	6 miles	01877-330032
8:30am Sat 21st	Ramble	Queen Elizabeth Forest	10 miles	01877-382803
8:30am Sat 28th	LDP	CtoC(3)Ormidale to Dunans	8 miles	01877-330032

McLaren R.F.C 1st XV

McLaren played host to Carrick on the 19th February. The game had to be moved at the last minute to Dunblane due to the McLaren field being water-logged. Both teams played a very strong defensive game. All points came from the boot of scrumhalf Ross Drummond
Final score: McLaren 9, Carrick 0.

On the 26th February McLaren travelled to Mull in chilly but glorious sunshine with a little hail but calm sea crossing. Mull were first to score but after a strong start they faded and McLaren took the lead before halftime and continued to dominate play in the second half. Tries came from Martin Fish, Graham Robertson, Jacob Barnes and two from Frazor Graham and 5 points from Ross Drummond's boot. Final score: Mull 17, McLaren 30.

Players over the last two games:

Callum Dykes, David Miller, Adam More, Andrew Drummond, Chris Crichton, Graham Robertson, Frazor Graham, Jacob Barnes, Scott Drummond, Robin More, Steven Black, Martin Fish, Gregor Harvie, Paul Campbell, Ross Drummond, Jamie Robertson, Donald Budge, Daniel Kirkbright, Ewan Cameron, James Buchanan and Stewart Burnett.

Thanks to the travelling supporters.

After a bye on the 5th March McLaren are sitting 3rd in West League 2
Match Fixtures for the rest of the season:

2nd April	McLaren	v	Jordanhill Phoenix	3pm kick off	McLaren Leisure Centre
9th April	Clydesdale	v	McLaren	3pm kick off	Stonehouse
16th April	McLaren	v	Paisley	3pm kick off	McLaren Leisure Centre
23rd April	McLaren	v	Strathclyde Police	3pm kick off	McLaren Leisure Centre

Training is on Wednesdays at McLaren Leisure Centre 6:30pm. All welcome

PS: We are holding a Bottle Stall in Ancaster Square on Saturday 30th April. All donations welcome; bottle donations to CCW or 14 North Church Street.

Our Annual Dinner Dance will be held at Blairdrummond on the 21st May - tickets £20, return bus travel from Callander. To book tickets contact Neil on 01877 331677.



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Saturday 23 to Monday 25 April 2011

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Ealain Gallery is delighted to be returning to Gleneagles Hotel for our 5th annual exhibition and sale. This charity event is open free to all the family over Easter Weekend.

23-24 April 10am - 6pm, 25 April 10am - 4pm

Opening preview Friday the 22nd of April, 6.30-8.30pm

Champagne and canapés – sponsored by Pol Roger

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Forth Inn Events Diary

April

4 to 10 April – Italian Food Week
(more than Just PASTA!)

3rd April – Mother's Day Menus
(booking advisable)

16th April – Karaoke in the Wallace
Bar start @ 9pm

24th April – Pub Quiz Free Entry with
Prizes!

May

14th May – Karaoke in the Wallace
Bar, Fun starts @ 9pm

29th May – Pub Quiz Free Entry with
Prizes!

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

Job opportunity

Aberfoyle Golf Club

are looking for someone to work with the
Greenkeepers on the course from April
through till September. This will be a 40
hour per week post.

Anyone interested in applying should
contact myself in writing or by calling the
Clubhouse on 01877 382493.

Ernest Barnard
Secretary
Aberfoyle Golf Club,
Braeval, Aberfoyle, FK8 3UY

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