

STRATHARD NEWS

ISSUE 72
June 2012

For the community - by the community
Aberfoyle, Kinlochard, Stronachlachar & Inversnaid

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**Stirling Council
Youth Services**

Stirling Youth Partnership



Balfron & Callander Recycling Centres Opening Times:

Monday - Friday: 5pm-8pm

Saturday: 10am-2pm

Sunday: Closed

A wide variety of household recyclables (including garden waste) can be taken directly to the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) at Balfron and Callander. Excess waste and bulky household items, including fridges and freezers and furniture, can also be disposed of at the HWRCs.

Kinlochard Gala Day

Sunday 15th July 2012

Grand Parade starts 11.30am

FREE shuttle bus from Aberfoyle

inside

p2	registrar
p4	police
p5	letters to the editor
p6	medical centre
p7	anne mcguire MP
p10	owen mckee
p12	school news
P15	simon says
p16	rangers ramblings
P19	junior journal
P21	church news
P25	rolo tomassi
P26	scribes apprentice
P29	consult constance

Osprey update - p28



www.strathardnews.com



**Saving Scotland's
Red Squirrels - p14**

Photo courtesy of Neil McIntyre

Registrar

I would like to say that the wonderfully warm weather has brought 'the Brides' out in force, however it has continued to be a remarkably quiet year on the wedding front so far. Recent weeks have seen some increase with weddings both in the Registration Office and out and about. These have included the Altskeith wedding of Barry Higgins and Stephanie Swartz, whose guests were able to cool off in the loch during a weekend of celebrations, and the marriage of local couple Craig Macfarlane and Susan Brownlie, who chose to have their ceremony here in the Marriage Room before celebrating with family and friends. Congratulations to everyone who has been married in the area.



It is not just in times of joy we see family and friends come together. In this last month we have seen an entire community come together, as the village has mourned the loss of three of its number. In April we were all shocked and saddened to the very core by the sudden loss of Michael Jennings and I know that his wife and children continue to be everyone's thoughts. Just a few short weeks later, and within days of each other, we heard of the deaths of Isabella McKerracher and of Annie Stevenson, both of whom will be remembered and missed by so many people throughout the community. I would like to join with that community in offering my condolences to the families and friends of all three of these much loved villagers.

It has not all been sad news though and it has been my great pleasure to register the birth of three babies born since I last wrote. The first of these a son, Coll Tiernan McLoughlin arrived in April, to the delight of Aberfoyle parents Cindy and Edna; followed in early May by baby girl Alexandra Hart bringing joy to parents Laura and Stephen from Gartmore. The third baby to be registered was born to Nicola and Alexander from Aberfoyle.

I will hope now for both continuing good weather and much busier times to come. 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, when I will look forward to helping you in any way that I can.



Sharon Johnston Registrar
Stirling Council's
Aberfoyle Local Office

Sad loss

Sadly, **Jane Watson** from Aberfoyle passed away on Thursday evening 17th May after a long illness. Even whilst fighting her illness, her thoughts were for others. Jane said she wanted to thank all her friends and neighbours from Kinlochard and Aberfoyle for their love, care, kindness and support during that time. Her first thoughts were always for her family and grandchildren and we think of them all in their loss and grief. Jane will be sorely missed by us all and she will remain in our thoughts and hearts. She will be remembered always for her passion for cycling and for her friendship.

Quilt Show

Thistle Threads are inviting you to a Charity Quilt Show in the Kirk Hall in Callander on the 7th July between 10.30 and 4pm.

The exhibits are all provided by local quilters of all levels from beginners to experts.

There is a sale of quilts and patchwork items-lovely for presents, home baking, a grand raffle with many prizes plus the chance to win a fabulous Schoolhouse Block Quilt made by members of the group.

Adults £3, children (over 5) 50p which includes tea/coffee/juice and delicious home baking.

All proceeds go to Strathcarron Hospice.

Please ring Clare on 01877-382924 for more information or email clare@thistle-threads.co.uk

ABERFOYLE MEMORIAL HALL MEETING

Wednesday 20th June at 8PM

In the Small Hall. All Welcome

Hall fees will be on the agenda. The hall belongs to the village and the committee need help and support so why not come along and give your input?

Sport Relief Car Wash!

On Friday 23rd March Kaitlyn, Anna, Claire, Courtney, Molly, Grace and Sinead decided to do a car wash for sport relief. We raised lots of money in 2hrs. This event took place in Aberfoyle car park and we would like to thank The Forth Inn and Guyana for a supply of water. Our total raised was a whopping £120.00! All this money will help lots of children around the world.

ROB ROY MINI HIGHLAND GAMES

Sunday 15th July 2012 Kinlochard Village Hall

**Grand Pipe Band Parade
11.30am from Forest Hills**



**Free Shuttle Bus from
Aberfoyle**



**Traditional Heavy Events Highland Dancers
Giant Sack Race Kids Events
Fun on the Loch Duck Race
Adult and Junior Tug O War
Teas Coffee Home Baking
Licensed Bar Barbeque
Family Ceilidh in the evening**



**Free Entry
to games**

Birds Of Prey Display



Nearby Parking

Search and Rescue Demonstrations



**In Aid of Kinlochard Village Hall
www.kinlochard.org**

Summer Holidays will never be Boring again...

Every summer Stirling Youth Partnership provide a programme of learning and development opportunities for young people aged 10-25 across the Stirling Council area during the Summer Holidays. *Create* events aim to enable local young people to try new activities, learn new skills, meet new people, develop positive peer relationships and to build confidence and self esteem through fun, informal learning activities.

Create: Callander will leap into action on Wednesday 1st August at CYP Bridge End from 1pm with a topical Olympic theme to promote healthy living. Workshops will include a mini Olympics challenge, Boxercise and Song writing, followed by a feast fit for an athlete to end the day with some ceremony.

Create: Balfron runs on July 11th from McIntock Hall with workshops run by Active Stirling, The Police, Libraries, Youth Services and more. Young people can take part in a CSI Balfron investigation, try out some art activities or learn how to build a Yurt. Young Scot are also on hand to promote National Entitlement Cards and their exciting new Rewards scheme.

We can't guarantee good weather but young people can certainly expect to have a full on fun learning experience on the days, the chance to meet new people, show off their skills and learn something new. Each event will provide refreshments and allow young people the chance to feed back their opinions of the day.

Participants each need to bring a signed consent form to take part in Create events with parent's consent for under 16s.

For more information on events or for a Create consent form, please get in touch with Stirling Council Youth Services on one of these contacts:

Create Callander:

Sandi Sagoo 01786 442719 sagoos@stirling.gov.uk

Lisa Holland 01786 442719 hollandl@stirling.gov.uk

Create: Balfron

Kelvin Martin 01786 442719 martink@stirling.gov.uk

Katie Carmichael 01786 442719 carmichaelk@stirling.gov.uk

Up to date info and Participant Consent forms are also available on Balfron Ning website.

We look forward to seeing you there!



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Tuesday 9am – 5pm

Thursday 9am – 5pm

Saturday 9am – 5pm



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Single Vision lenses from £49

Bifocals lenses from £79

Varifocal lenses from £129

Complete pairs from £49

Thank you to everyone who has expressed their best wishes and all of our patients for their support.

Police Business

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



Central Scotland Police
Together for safer communities

PC 487 Liam Ward can be contacted via Aberfoyle or Callander Police Offices. Tel. 01877 330222.
You can also follow Central Scotland Police on Twitter and Facebook. Emergency Calls only dial 999

PACT Priorities

1. Operation Ironworks – Tackling antisocial behaviour within the National Park
2. Speeding and Indiscriminate Parking
3. Targeting the dealers – working with the community to gather intelligence to keep drugs off the street.

What have we been doing for you?

1. You Said: Littering by those wild camping was polluting the areas near to the B829, particularly at Loch Ard and Loch Chon.

We Did: High visibility Ironworks patrols commenced at the beginning of March. Those found wild camping in the effected areas have been advised regarding their responsibilities. To date, there has been no requirement for formal action against any individual.

Result: The camping areas along the B829 remain litter free, and those visiting our community to enjoy its beauty have been left with a positive impression of the police after interaction with local officers.

2. You Said: The Strathard Community Council raised concerns regarding speeding through the village. Furthermore, concerns were raised regarding illegal parking on Main Street, Aberfoyle.

We Did: Hand held radar activity has been conducted at various places in the village, with appropriate action being taken against motorists when required. Foot patrol has been conducted in the village regarding the parking complaints, with no offences being detected during these patrols. An article detailing the parking restrictions on Main Street was published on the community webpage and in the Stirling Observer.

Result: Complaints of speeding in the village have reduced, and more motorists are aware of the parking restrictions on the Main Street.

3. You Said: There is believed to be a low level of drugs activity in the village.

We Did: Foot patrol has been conducted in the village in order to speak with members of the community in a bid to garner information relating to drugs activity. Visits have been made to licensed premises in the village.

Result: To date, there is no new intelligence relating to drugs activity in the village. Visits to licensed premises have revealed no evidence of drugs use within.

Getting Involved

Should you feel that there are community issues requiring police attention, please contact me directly. Alternatively, Strathard Community Council meets every month, and Gartmore and Port of Menteith community councils meet once every two months. Dates, times and venues are advertised locally. Feel free to contact me there.

Counterfeit Banknotes

On Sunday 6 May 2012, two shops in Aberfoyle fell foul of criminals using counterfeit banknotes. In total, three banknotes were used – two purporting to be Royal Bank of Scotland £5 notes, the other purporting to be a Clydesdale Bank £5 note. The culprits were not known to the staff at either shop. It follows that these individuals – a male and female – may be in the area yet, and that there may be counterfeit banknotes circulating. A common technique in such scams is to peruse items prior to making a very low value purchase, thus maximising the return of legitimate currency in the form of change.

Anyone with any information relating to these offences is encouraged to contact the police.

Fish Poaching

Three men from Bishopbriggs were arrested and taken into police custody after they were caught fish poaching on the river Forth near to the village of Dykehead, between Arnprior and Port of Menteith. The Forth District Salmon Fisheries Board Water Bailiffs were carrying out checks on the river bank when they came across the three accused fishing without permits or legal right. Officers from the Central Scotland police wildlife crime unit attended the scene, arrested the males and seized all their equipment. A report will be submitted to the wildlife specialist Procurator Fiscal.

Fish poaching can have major implications for the sensitive ecology of our river systems. It also has a major impact on our local economy. The Forth river system is recognised by many as one of the top Salmon and Sea trout rivers. Membership to fish from its banks is increasing year on year due to the quality of the fishing to be had. It is for these reasons that the effective partnership working between landowners, police and Water Bailiffs will continue and intensify in a joint effort to target anyone taking fish illegally.

Sheep Worrying

Communities are most likely aware how it was local farmers who came to our aid during recent storms when Stirling Council was overwhelmed by the number of fallen trees; farmers quickly volunteered and came to all of our assistance and by clearing blocked roads they made sure that emergency vehicles could get through as well as other vital and local services. There is now an opportunity to return that favour as we have seen several instances of sheep being attacked by pet dogs running loose or not under control. The latest incident in the Gartmore area resulted in two sheep being killed in the attack and another injured and there is the possibility that this same dog was responsible for a previous attack. At all times of the year, but especially just now when sheep are lambing, it is very important that dogs are

kept under close control when near any livestock and though it would be far better that dog walkers do not enter fields with livestock where this cannot be avoided then the dog should be kept on a lead. We can all return the favour farmers provided to communities by following this advice and by reporting to the police any instance where dogs are spotted running loose with livestock.

Seven People Rescued from Drifting Boat

A boat with seven people on board was rescued during the early hours of Thursday morning on Loch Lomond. The incident occurred around 1am after the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and police were notified of a boat drifting on the water close to Balmaha Peir. The boat, a 23 foot Cleopatra Class motor cruiser, had no power and was drifting dangerously close to the rocky shore. Those on board were under the influence of alcohol. Luss Rescue Boat was called out and drafted in help from National Park Rangers on their patrol boat who towed the stricken vessel to shore where police checked the condition of those on board.

Balfour Sergeant Davie Hannah said: "This could have had a very different ending. It is only through good fortune and the skill and dedication of the volunteer rescue service that this boat did not run aground and people did not end up in the water.

"Those on board were under the influence of alcohol and there were not enough life jackets for everyone. "Despite the recent hot spell the water temperature of Loch Lomond is still cold and is only around 10C.

We are not trying to stop people from having fun but they should do so without risking lives and in accordance with the published bye-laws. Every boat owner has the responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient life jackets for all passengers."

A 41-year-old man has been arrested and charged in connection with being under the influence of alcohol while in charge of a boat and for failing to carry sufficient life-jackets.

Olympic Torch Relay to travel through the Forth Valley

With less than a month to the Olympic Torch Relay passing through the Forth Valley, plans are progressing well to help ensure it travels through the area on Saturday June 9 and Wednesday June 13 without delay. Central Scotland Police and the local authorities in Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire have been working behind the scenes to ensure the safety of the public and the smooth passage of the Olympic Torch during this two-day event.

The 70-day Olympic Torch Relay will start at Land's End in Cornwall on Saturday May 19. On leaving Land's End the Olympic Flame will travel an estimated 8,000 miles around the UK giving thousands of communities and

individuals the opportunity to participate as the Olympic Flame comes to a place near them.

The Olympic flame will travel through Crianlarich and Tyndrum on Saturday June 9 and then on Wednesday June 13 it will travel through Clackmannanshire, Stirling and Falkirk.

Residents and visitors to the area will have a chance to see the torch as it passes along the route and further details of the route can be obtained from www.london2012.com/torch-relay/

Given the nature of the event and planning arrangements surrounding the Olympic Torch and the accompanying convoy, there is likely to be significant traffic disruption during its time in the area. Details of road closures and best vantage points will be issued nearer the time. However we advise you to start making plans of how this may affect your day including any travel or business functions. Further information will be released nearer the time.

Scam phonecalls warning

Police are urging the public to be on their guard when receiving phonecalls from people claiming they must pay money up front in order to receive large sums of cash.

The warning comes after 61-year-old woman in Finty was conned out of a three-figure-sum after she received a phone call from a company claiming that she had to pay this money in order to receive payment from a PPI scheme. She was contacted again the same day and told that the first transaction had not worked and she was to pay a further three-figure-sum. The woman became suspicious and refused and reported it to the police on Wednesday May 2.

On the same day, an attempt was made on an 83-year-old woman in Stirling to get her to pay a three-figure-sum for an outstanding loan via a transfer system. She was told that a four-figure-sum had already been paid into her account in exchange for the money.

A Central Scotland Police spokeswoman said: "We are asking the public to be very wary of people contacting them and demanding money to be paid in return for a larger sum of money. People often get put on the spot and feel pressured into paying money. If any phone number is retained on Caller ID Display or 1471 system, then please note this and contact police on 01786 456000 immediately. Do not use any phone numbers which the caller provides.

"Should any money be transferred or paid out, then the matter should be reported to your bank or building society as a matter of urgency to stop all activity on the account."



Letters to the Editor....

Post to Editor, Schoolhouse, Inversnaid FK8 3TU. Or email editor@strathardnews.com or hand in to Aberfoyle Post Office



I have climbed Ben Venue many times both for leisure and wearing my mountain rescue cap. The latter has typically involved forays from the Loch Katrine side but for leisure I usually start from Ledard. On every occasion in the past 35 years I have noticed the metal bars which cross the Ledard Burn.

They form a kind of bridge where the path crosses the burn (GR NN457045). On some occasions there is just a single bar and at other times several. They look to be short lengths of rail track, but I cannot fathom why this should be. The tracks have been a feature for as long as I can recall and have remained in place despite the passing of seasons, inclement weather, spate

conditions and the passing of many 1000's of walkers.

I wonder if any reader can shed light on this oddity?



Bob Sharp PhD FRGS
31 Craigfern Drive
Blanefield
Glasgow G63 9DP
Lomondbob@gmail.com
01360 770431 (H)
07710 524484 (M)



Community Website

The Communities Team has been working on creating a section of the Stirling Council's new website which brings together all the information which communities may need to access. The intention is to pilot this site with a group of community representatives to ensure it meets our aims, and your needs, through their ideas and input work on its further development. All correspondence will be done by email and all information gathered will be anonymous.

If you would be interested in being part of this group, email Pauline Roberts on robertsp@stirling.gov.uk

Pauline Roberts

Community Publicity and Development Officer

01786 432159

mob 07825 978347

Dear Editor,

I would like to introduce myself as one of the new Councillors for the Trossachs and Teith ward. Should you wish to raise an issue or problem relating to Stirling Council and the services it provides you can contact me as follows:-

earlm@stirling.gov.uk

01786 443497

07881 310922

Yours sincerely

Martin Earl



How Aberfoyle Became One Village

I have so enjoyed the old stories and memories of days gone by in Aberfoyle. They remind me of the days when I used to work for Mr Ferguson (Big John) in the paper shop. When trade was slow in the winter, he often told stories of by-gone days in Aberfoyle. This is one I would like to share with you as I have done with many children over the years.

Aberfoyle (Aberfoil) was once two villages separated by the River Forth. Where the Main Street is today was actually the village of Craighuchty. Aberfoyle was on the south side of the river where Manse Road now is.

Both villages were troubled by the flooding of the Pow Burn. Many crops and animals were lost each year. A huge rock, left most probably from The Ice Age, was the cause of the problem. If the rock was not there the water would be able to flow within its banks except in extreme cases.

The people of Aberfoyle decided they would have to blow up this rock as it was far too large to be removed by any other means. They collected together all the gunpowder they had in the village but it was not enough to do the job. They came across the river and had a meeting with the people in Craighuchty as their crops were affected by the flooding too. It was decided to collect all the gunpowder from Craighuchty and add it to that of Aberfoyle.

A hole was chipped out of the rock and the gunpowder was inserted. A fuse was prepared, ready just to light. For some unknown reason the fuse was not lit immediately but left until the next day. Unfortunately it rained heavily during the night and the gunpowder was soaked. There was no more in either village or no money to buy any more so the rock remained and the flooding continued.

The people from both villages had learnt a valuable lesson from this, not only the old saying of "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today", but more importantly that they could help each other in difficult times. They came to rely on each other and gradually became one village.

Janette Bond

My Big Adventure – JOGLE 2012

Some of you may have seen a lot of me out and about over the last few months on my road bike. This is because on July 20th, my friend Liam and I will be setting off from John O'Groats, passing through Gartmore on the 25th, on our way south to Lands End. We are doing this 950 mile cycle in aid of the **ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE** charity. This charity aids the children of migrant Burmese workers who cross the Thai-Burmese border. It provides Educational and Nutritional help to these people. It is based in Mae Sot, Thailand. This education in Mae Sot, through locally run organizations, helps to ensure that Burmese migrant children will have the knowledge and skills to move towards a better, brighter future. The schools deliver an international standard of education based on its own unique educational concepts. Please visit the website for more information on **www.allyouneedislovedoc.com**

I believe that this is a fantastic charity and hope that you will help me by sponsoring me to raise funds for it. I will be at the GARTMORE GALA on the 16th June running a stall with some fun activities and I will also be putting a sponsor form in the Gartmore Village Shop and the Aberfoyle Post Office with some additional information on the charity. Please track our progress in training and during the event on **www.JOGLE-2012.blogspot.com** and on facebook - search 'JOGLE 2012' On 25th of July as we ride through Gartmore (times updated on the blog) please give us a wave or even better join us for a stint of the journey!

Many thanks,

Daniel Speirs

Tel: 01877 382 247

JOGLE 2012
Liam and Daniels Adventure





Patient Participation Group

We currently have an active group of approximately 7 patients.

The group is looking for new members, particularly those with young families or patients of working age.

The group aims include:

- Exchange of ideas to improve the patient experience
- Discussions regarding new patient services
- To act as a forum to feedback to the practice suggestions for improvement to services provided to us (patient services, the organization and to the building and premises).

Patient Reference Group

We are aiming to set up a new group with whom we can gather information and exchange ideas via e-mail. The group would not meet in person but could consist of patients making up a "virtual" group.

This group would be called upon to assist the Patient Participation Group when creating and conducting surveys or when the Practice requires patient input for new services and developments.

The Practice would set up and manage this e-mail group and contact patients from time to time, giving patients in the Reference Group an opportunity to have a say.

We are looking for patients in any age group, but particularly those with young children or teenagers, carers, patients with a disability, as well as those with long term conditions who may regularly use the services of the practice.

Application To Become A Member

I would like to help shape the future of patient services at Aberfoyle and Buchlyvie Medical Centres please include me in the following groups:-

- ☐ Patient Participation Group
☐ Patient Reference Group
☐ Both Groups

Name _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

E-mail _____

Signature _____

By signing this form I give consent to be contacted by the surgery.

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Press the home button
 Choose interactive
 Select News & info.
 Select Looking Local



Medications Amnesty

Friends of

Aberfoyle & Buchlyvie Medical Centre

Please bring along any medication which is out of date, or is no longer required to the Friends of Aberfoyle & Buchlyvie A.G.M.

VENUE: ABERFOYLE MEDICAL CENTRE

DATE: TUESDAY 3RD JULY 2012

TIME: 7.30PM

Also at the meeting – we need to know your experiences and views on Forth Valley Royal Hospital. Everybody Welcome



The Princess Royal Trust
 for Carers

Good news, Rural Communities get closer access to Stirling Carers Centre provisions. Stirling Carers Centre has developed a new post for Rural Communities.

Katy White Unpaid Carer Rural Support Officer will be in the rural communities to support, advocate and give advice. If you look after someone or someone looks after you, she could be of help.

She will be in Rural Stirling and will be available at Callander Medical Practice or in your home (depending on your circumstances and needs). Katy's services are free, confidential and impartial, available to all Unpaid Carers within the rural communities of Stirling, irrespective of the condition of the person who is cared for. Providing information, advice, benefit form filling, access to community services and general support; enabling you to make informed choices about your situation and to help you in your caring role. Ensuring all Unpaid Adult Carers are supported, emotionally, physically and financially included. If you want to access the service, do not hesitate to call, email or ask at your Health Centre:

Tel: 01786 477003

Mob: 07546245719

Email: info@stirlingcarers.co.uk or
 katy@stirlingcarers.co.uk

A carer is someone of any age who, without payment, looks after or provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour who could not manage without their help due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability.

SAMARITANS

Samaritan volunteers listen in confidence to anyone in emotional distress. We believe that given the time and space to work problems or difficulties through in confidence, people can find an inner strength and perspective which helps them find their own way forward. If you are worried about something, you can contact Samaritans by phone on 08457 90 90 90, by email jo@samaritans.org or letter to Chris, P.O. Box 9090, Stirling, FK8 2SA

With another training class about to start soon, Samaritans would welcome new volunteers from the Port of Menteith area – the nearest office is in Falkirk. We already have volunteers from west of Stirling as far away as Gartmore and although being a Samaritan can be demanding, the training is superb and it is a very worthwhile thing to do for the community.

To find out more about volunteering, please call our administration line on 01324 671266. If you leave your name and contact details, someone from Samaritans will get back to you and let you know the date of the next information evening.

Chest, Heart and Stroke Club

Do you have a chest or heart condition or have you had a stroke?

Would you like to meet socially with others in a friendly and supportive meeting place?

If so, Callander chest, heart and stroke club would like to hear from you.

The new Club (affiliated to Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland) is having its first meeting on

Wednesday 13th June 2012 at 2.00pm
Callander Medical Centre
Geisher Road, Callander FK17 8LX

For further information, please contact:
 Carol Anderson on 07760 760765

We look forward to welcoming you to the group.

Friends, partners and carers are also welcome.

We would also welcome volunteers to help out with refreshments and to help with activities.

Medical Centre Opening Hours

Aberfoyle 01877 382421

Monday	8.15am-11.00am	By Appointment
	4.00pm-5.30pm	By Appointment
Tuesday	8.20am-10.15am	By Appointment
	2.00pm-3.00pm	By Appointment
Wed	8.20am-10.15am	By Appointment
	4.00pm-5.30pm	By Appointment
Thurs	7.00am-8.00am	By Appointment
	8.15am or 9.30am	(Alternate Thursdays)
		By Appointment
		(Alternate Thursdays)
Friday	8.20am-10.15am	By Appointment
	2.00pm-3.00pm	By Appointment

Buchlyvie 01360 850237

Monday	7.00am-8.00am	By Appointment
		(Alternate Mondays)
	8.15am-9.30am	Open Surgery
Tuesday	10.30am-11.30am	Open Surgery
	4.00pm-5.30pm	By Appointment
Wed	8.15am-9.30am	Open Surgery
Thur	8.15am-9.30am	Open Surgery
Friday	10.30am-11.30am	Open Surgery
	3.30pm-5.00pm	By Appointment

**REMEMBER YOU CAN BOOK ON LINE
 PLEASE ASK AT RECEPTION**

Anne McGuire MP



As MP for Stirling I would like to welcome all those new councillors, and especially the five women councillors, to Stirling Council and to explain why Labour is now supported by the Conservative group. The voting system that we have for local government makes it almost inevitable that parties cannot get a majority, indeed this was why the previous SNP Council administration was also supported by the Conservatives. As the SNP could not reach

agreement with either the Tories or Labour, Labour councillors reached an agreement with local Conservative councillors to form a stable administration thus ensuring that policies such as the introduction of a living wage and investment in the local economy will be implemented.

Stirling has many local pubs and earlier this year I supported a call for the Chancellor to freeze the beer tax and scrap the beer duty escalator in order to project jobs, sustain our local pubs and the communities they serve.

This particular sector sustains 1224 jobs throughout Stirling and the rural areas. It provides 409 jobs for 16-24 year olds who have been hardest hit of all by the economic downturn and it adds £23.9 million to the local economy, contributing over £11 million in taxes to the Exchequer.

Another asset to local communities are charity shops which raise over £200m per year for UK charities and support both paid jobs and volunteering opportunities. They re-use whatever they can and already help reduce net CO2 emissions by 3.7m tonnes each year. However, they do not survive without the good will of those who donate stock and I would encourage you to make a contribution to your local charity shop. I recently donated a number of books to the local Sue Ryder shop in Dunblane to help raise awareness of the Choose Charity Shops campaign, calling for extra donations to our charity shops.



Another charity in the constituency is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and I was delighted to show my support for their work for local dementia charity, Town Break. The charity runs day groups based in both Stirling and Callander for those in the early stages of dementia and also offers a one to one support through their befriending service. For more information please contact them at www.townbreakstirling.com

As ever I can be contacted at the Parliamentary Advice Office, 22 Viewfield Street, Stirling, FK8 1UA. T: 01786 446515 F: 01786 446513 or by email at anne.mcguire.mp@parliament.uk or via my website www.annemcguiremp.org.uk or follow me on Twitter @AnneMcGuireMP

Community Council

Strathard Community Council meets at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month, alternating between Aberfoyle Memorial Hall, Kinlochard Village Hall and Inversnaid Hotel. The next meetings will be held in Kinlochard on 7th June and Aberfoyle on 5th July. Note that for 2012 we have changed the months when we visit Inversnaid and Kinlochard. Half an hour prior to our meetings a local Stirling Councillor 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

Kinlochard

Maureen Campbell
Fiona McEwan
2 vacancies

Inversnaid

Andre Goulancourt
Ralph Wolfe
1 vacancy

Contact details:

Tel 01877 387200
cc@strathard.org.uk
www.strathard.org.uk

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'Save the Children' in Strathard

Aberfoyle resident, Dorothy Parker recently visited Bangladesh with Save the Children volunteers, visiting remote villages in the Habiganj District. Life is perilous for children in Bangladesh: every hour of every day 11 babies die. One in 19 children do not live to see their fifth birthday. Only 30% of women receive antenatal care.

In one village she visited one village, Paliakandi, Dorothy met Lubla Aktar who is 4 months pregnant but has had two miscarriages. Lubla has never seen a health worker. It's 6 hours to the nearest clinic and she cannot afford the travel or medical costs.

She also met Jarina Aktar, whose son died after 4 days.

'It was a long labour and the baby got tired,' she said, 'it was too small.'

And Husna Begum, who is 8 months pregnant and worried about giving birth without medical care: 'If there are any complications I will die and maybe the baby too,' she said.

'I was shocked to find so many women living like this: 9 out of 10 women in some villages have lost babies and many pregnant women starve themselves so that their babies will be small. The women of Paliakandi are proud and resigned to their situation - they are used to having to cope with the deaths of their babies. "It's such a waste, and so unnecessary," said Dorothy.

At another village, Shibpasha, the group visited a new clinic. The difference was amazing. Women were giving birth in clean, safe facilities, and delighted that they now had access to contraception. There had been no baby deaths in the village since the clinic opened.

Save the Children's Build it for Babies appeal is hoping to raise £1million to build, equip, and staff 7 clinics. Save the Children is providing a 'jump start' to get these clinics up and running, then handing them over to the Government and the local community to run.

Pailakandi, the village Dorothy visited, would be one of the first to have a clinic build. It would make a huge difference in reducing child and maternal mortality there.

If you would like to help mothers and babies in Bangladesh you can donate to the Build it for Babies appeal through Dorothy's just giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/Dorothy-Parker>

Or at www.savethechildren.org.uk/build-it-for-babies

- £5 can buy a brick
- £14 can buy a set of scales for weighing babies
- £29 can buy a baby resuscitation kit
- £75 can buy a delivery bed
- £150 could pay for a health worker for a month
- £2,500 can help build a well to provide clean water for the clinic

Dorothy would be happy to talk to groups about her visit. Kinlochard resident, Catherine Love is also available to give talks about Save the Children's work. They would love to recruit more volunteers to Save the Children in Strathard – so please get in touch!

d.parker@savethechildren.org.uk or call 01877 389078



Save the Children



HUSNA



JARINA



LUBLA



Dorothy with the children

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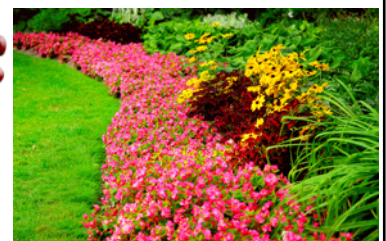
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Bike Trossachs Powering Ahead

A Bike Skills Area for Aberfoyle to give children an off-road playground is just one of the projects Bike Trossachs is currently busy on. The area will also give bikers of all ages a place to learn new skills. The new voluntary organisation focused on promoting mountain biking in the Trossachs has invited a trail designer to the village to have a look at possibilities and give some options that will be presented to a public consultation event. The Bike Skills Area would not only provide a place for children and families to have fun, it would provide an off-road facility that will enable young people to enjoy their bikes without having to play on the road, pavements and car parks! It will also provide a facility to introduce skill development programmes such as the Go MTB Mountain Bike Proficiency Scheme.

The project is at an early stage with important details such as location and funding still to be teased out, and the preliminary look at possibilities will allow a community discussion to commence. Bike Trossachs has been awarded a Paths For All grant to produce a prototype trails

map which will provide detail on some of the informal mountain bike trails in the forest around Aberfoyle. It is hoped this will give more options to the many mountain bikers that come into the village weekly to cycle on the forestry roads. The trail map will also be used to gather feedback on what kind of trails information local people and visitors want so that a series of trail maps can be produced.

A website is in development (www.biketrossachs.org.uk) and the intention will be that maps of local trails will be downloadable from this. Bike Trossachs wants to promote the area as bike-friendly and would be happy to promote details of all bike-friendly businesses. If you come into that category and want your business included, email the Secretary, Sandy Slater, with your contact details and a brief description of what you can offer bikers and their families.

Sandy Slater, Secretary, Bike Trossachs,
sandy@wildbikingscotland.com

Irish-Scottish Concert & Ceilidh

Saturday, 9th June 2012, 8 p.m.

At Kinlochard Village Hall

As part of the Galway-Stirling Celtic Sessions Festival, you can see the best of Scottish and Irish musicians in full flight at Kinlochard Village Hall at 8 p.m. on Saturday, 9th June. Bring your dancing shoes!

From Ireland:

Johnny Connolly: Single-row Melodeon from Inis Bearachain
Johnny Og Connolly: two-row button accordion
Mearli Jo Sheamus O'Fatharta: Sean-nos singer from Spiddal
Breannain & Cormac Begley: guitar and concertina
The F.U.M. trio: fiddle, banjo, and guitar (Anna Falkenau, Lena Ullman and Ivan Murray)
Sean Ryan: King of the whistle players
Paul Moran: Step dancer and sean-nos singer
Mick Crehan: Whistle player member of the Crehan musical family

From Scotland:

John Burns: Accordion
Derek Rae: Accordion
Neil Ferguson: Fiddle
Ali Turner: Guitar and Pipes
Fergus Wood: Drums and Harmonica

Tickets, price £10 (concessions for children) are available from

Fergus Wood at Ledard Farm,
Kinlochard FK8 3TL, tel: 01877 387219.

Bring your own bottle!

Slainte Mhath!

Green Toilets for Sallochry

Forestry Commission's Scotland's East Loch Lomond developments have been completed - with the installation of composting toilets at Sallochry Bay.

This loch side car park, with easy access to the beach and West Highland Way - and breathtaking views - was recently subject to abuse from unauthorised campers and people who showed no respect for our precious woodland here.

But this has all changed now thanks to the introduction of camping and alcohol byelaws and the opening in June 2011 of the Sallochry woodland campsite. Sallochry welcomes both pre-booked campers and day visitors and with the natural regeneration of new and damaged trees, the site is flourishing.

The recent addition of new toilet facilities is also proving to be a big hit - but it's been quite a challenge to provide toilets within an area of outstanding scenic value, not to mention SSSI and SAC conservation designations!

The toilets themselves require no water and use natural processes to break down

waste, and convert it into compost. By using a wetland to treat grey water from the campers' sink, the environmental impact of the new toilet block has been kept to a minimum. We can keep them open all year round too.

Of course Sallochry's success relies heavily on the work of our enthusiastic wardens. This year's team is headed up by Alison Clark, who has returned unfazed by our fluctuating "summer" weather and rampant midgies. Alison has also been known to bolster the odd desperate West Highland Way walker or two, requiring some TLC! She is ably joined by Tom Gold and Janice Arthur this year, who happily welcome visitors and encourage them to explore the wild beauty of the surrounding Rowardennan Woodlands.

Thanks should go to Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and SNH who part funded this project, and Central Scotland Police, Stirling Council and the



local community. All have been instrumental in helping to plan and deliver the new improved facilities at Sallochry.

So, when summer eventually arrives, and it's always sunny at Sallochry, why not head over to the "bonny banks", stop a while and reflect on what must surely be one of the most special places in Scotland, four million visitors can't be wrong.

Susan Nash

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National Park News

By Owen McKee

At long last it looks as if we may just might have a summer this year and consequently we will perhaps have the opportunity to judge more clearly what effect, if any, the actions taken for East Loch Lomond are having there and whether any improvement is merely at the expense of other parts of the Park i.e. the displacement fear. The poor weather during last summer may have given a false impression but it is true to say that the surveys carried out did show considerable improvement in behaviour in East Loch Lomond without any discernable increase in unsociable behaviour in other areas. The Park Authority has made it clear that the lessons learned from East Loch Lomond will be used for the benefit of the rest of the Park. Next in line is Loch Lubnaig and the east and work is well advanced on that project. Nonetheless we must not assume that everyone will be well behaved and in anticipation that the forecast of a warm and sunny weekend will see an upsurge in visitor numbers arrangements are in place for increased patrols by both the Police and Park Rangers. I sincerely hope that there will be no unsavoury incidents but should you be troubled by any such please do not hesitate to phone the police at 01786 456000.

Another particular challenge facing the Park Authority is that of affordable housing. Of the 21 communities in the Park only one does not have affordable housing as a priority. As a consequence we included in the Local Plan a policy that all developments of four or more units must include an element of affordable housing. Traditionally that

was in the form of social rent accommodation built for or by local authorities or housing associations. However in the current economic climate those organisations are finding it more and more difficult to fund social rent properties and the Scottish Government is looking for solutions to the problem. We have made it clear that for policy purposes other forms of affordable houses include shared equity, mid market rent and self build where restrictions apply. Additionally, where a developer is unable to provide affordable housing on site, consideration may be given to the provision being switched to another site or for money in lieu to be accepted for the specific provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the Park.

No doubt you will have seen in the Local Press that planning permission has been granted for a supermarket at the eastern end of Callander. As the site had been designated for housing in the Local Plan, the Planning Gain negotiated included a sum of £200,000 which is to be used for the provision of affordable housing in Callander.

The Visitor Centre at Balmaha has re-opened after refurbishment to provide more practical space for educational purposes.

As always I can be contacted as follows:
Owen McKee;

Post Taigh Na Bhuth,
Lochearnhead,
FK19 8PR

Phone: 01567 830214

email:

owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk

Sky's the limit for National Park tourism

Millions of people visit Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park every year and now the Park Authority is hoping to attract a rising number of stargazing tourists by bidding to be the first International Dark Sky Reserve in Scotland. The National Park has some of the highest quality dark skies in the UK and receiving Dark Sky status would help protect the quality of the night sky for people to enjoy. The Park has asked local residents living in the The Trossachs to help with a lighting survey to determine the level of light pollution in order to help find ways to reduce it. The quality of the dark skies has been measured and the Trossachs scored highly with 20 out of a possible 25 marks being awarded.

People of all ages and backgrounds have found a new found love for astronomy partly due to the enthusiasm of TV's Professor Brian Cox who has successfully managed to explain the wonders of the universe to a broad audience. Over 3.8 million people tuned into the last Stargazing live programme.

National Park Landscapes Manager, Lisa Duggan explains: "Looking at the night sky in the National Park is a truly amazing experience due to the lack of street lights and other household lighting. Unfortunately over 80 per cent of the UK population will never actually experience a totally dark sky. We're extremely lucky to have such high quality skies and are keen to share this with the millions of visitors coming to the National Park each year.

Our bid to become the first International Dark Sky Reserve in Scotland is a huge opportunity for people to visit Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and enjoy the stunning night sky. With over eight million people in the UK who look at the stars and another five million who say they would like to look at them, there are obvious benefits to having this status including welcome boosts to the local economy.

Our visitors are always amazed at how clear the night sky is here and we're really keen to protect this.

This is a great opportunity for everyone to make the most of the night sky and to learn more about what you can see up above the National Park.

We're asking local residents to help by letting us know what sort of lighting they have at home. There may be ways we can help improve lighting, reduce energy bills and lower the level of light pollution. Simple small changes can help improve the quality of the night sky. Simply by reducing the light escaping from homes by switching off lights when they are not needed or changing light bulbs to energy efficient ones can make a big difference. Exterior lights could be operated by motion detectors, timers or solar power. By taking small steps, we can all benefit and enjoy a spot of star gazing in the National Park."

Galloway Forest Park was granted Dark Sky Reserve status in November 2009. Over 84 per cent of businesses who were surveyed agreed that Dark Sky Protection status was an important feature in attracting tourists to the area. If you would like more details about the survey or the dark skies in the Park project, contact 01389 722625 or 01389 722127 or email darks skies@lochlomond-trossachs.org

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New mirrored figures at David Marshall Lodge offer otherworldly experience

A new art installation at Aberfoyle's David Marshall Lodge in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park is helping to reinvigorate the forest and board walks at the visitor centre.

Part of Forestry Commission Scotland's ongoing re-development programme to refresh and improve the visitor experience at the centre, the six eerily beautiful male and female figures – Vestige – were created by artist, Rob Mullholland

The piece represents the faint traces of the people and communities that once occupied and lived in this space.

Rob said:

"Before the First World War, this area was open hillside that was worked by crofters. With the desperate need for timber during and after the war, the crofters were moved to other land so that the hills could be planted with fast growing conifer trees.

"I have always been intrigued about the human desire to leave a trace of one's-self for future generations and although there are traces of the crofters' presence – like the faint outlines of some of the crofts within the forest – I wanted to create a visual form that would represent the people themselves.

"The reflective figures ask us to look again and consider the symbiotic relationship we have with our natural and man-made environment. They might also ask us to reconsider what sort of trace we want to leave for future generations."

The robust galvanised steel and mirror polished stainless steel figures, which blend well and are in harmony with the natural surroundings, will remain in good condition for several decades.

The figures explore the idea of relationships - with other people, with the landscape and with the past - absorbing their environment, reflecting on their surface the daily changes of life in the forest. One minute the figures are there – a solid part of our world – but the next minute they seem to fade into the forest and become nothing more than an intangible outline.

Susan Nash, who is managing the overall project for the Commission, said:

"We wanted to add something artistic to the site but something that wasn't at all intrusive on the peace and serenity of the location.

"Rob's ethereal and otherworldly creation is a beautiful and thought-provoking addition to the site that I am sure will intrigue and delight everyone who visits the centre and tries the board walk."



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School News



Aberfoyle Primary and Nursery

Nursery

Thank you to all parent/carers, grans, granddads and children for helping at our garden dig on Saturday: what a transformation! The children are now planting flower and vegetable seeds and are very enthusiastic to follow the process of watching them growing.

We have been extending our learning all about wild animals and now have a new member to our nursery team. You may have seen her in the window. She has four legs, an extra long neck, a large blue tongue and answers to the name of Emily the giraffe! The children have been very keen to follow the whole process of consultation, researching and planning the construction of our 3d model giraffe. We are entering Emily into the Drymen Show as part of a whole nursery context of learning.

The nursery had a very successful visit from Zoo Lab where the children were hands on to investigate the creatures.

Transition has begun for the children going into P1 in which we have been extending our sessions with the class to enhance learning within literacy and numeracy.

STOP PRESS

Emily won 2nd prize at Drymen show.



Playground flowers

You may have noticed that the children have planted some lovely flowers in the pots and hanging troughs in the playground. They make the playground look much more colourful and the children really enjoy planting and taking care of their class "flower bed."

Sadly someone else must have thought they were lovely too because when we returned to school on the Tuesday after the May holiday 10 pansies and 4 sweet pea plants had gone. Not pulled up and tossed into the field but carefully dug out with a trowel!

The children were very upset and angry and I am afraid I was at a loss for an answer to the question, "Why would anyone do that?"

We are very grateful to Guyana who, on hearing of our loss, kindly donated replacement plants.

Tesco and Sainsbury Vouchers

Thank you to everyone who handed in vouchers we have placed an order which should be delivered in August.

P4/5 News

In topic we have been learning all about Olympic emblems and motto. We made our own mottos up. We learned about the rings and printed our own. We designed our own torches and sketched some of the sports. We made mascots and we are learning all about the Olympic medals.

We wrote a story about the Olympic torch relay and how we would feel if we were running in a real Olympic race. We are looking forward to the Aberfoyle Olympics. In maths we have been learning about measuring, areas fractions and percentages. In French we are learning to say all the people and pets in our families.

By Katie Bell and Eilidh Jackson

P2/3 News

We wrote to an author-

Miss Brown and Primary 2/3 were delighted when they received a special delivery from Mr David Walliams for the letters they sent to him about his novel 'Gangsta Granny'. He wrote us a note to say thank you for our letters and to remind us to keep reading AND he even sent us a signed photograph of himself. The experience of writing and sending the letters was certainly a meaningful and purposeful activity which the children will not forget!

P6/7 News

This year P6/7's topic is the Olympics. We have been learning about the Paralympics as well as the Olympics. P6s have been concentrating on the Olympics and the P7s have been concentrating on the Paralympics. Each year group has been concentrating on the sports in each of the famous events and building up from the History to the Modern Day events. We have been split into groups and have each been given something to concentrate on in the Olympics or Paralympics (for example Ancient Olympics or Disability Categories and Values) which we did one or two posters on, for the wall.

P7s have been very busy in the last couple of weeks going in and out of the classroom and also going on visits to the High School on Induction Days and a Sports Day. They have also been very busy with their Autobiographies and Pupil Profiles. P6 meanwhile have usually been doing writing with either Mr Fielden or Mrs Nicolson.

McLaren High

Pupil Success in Creative Writing

Congratulations to Danilo Falzon S6 for his outstanding achievement in the National Galleries of Scotland creative writing competition, *Inspired? Get Writing!* Danilo's piece was placed in the top ten of over 1200 entries and was read aloud by representatives of the Scottish Poetry Library at the prestigious Award Ceremony in the National Gallery of Scotland on Thursday 19 April. Images of the work that inspired Danilo's writing were also shown whilst his work was read.



Glasgow Science Centre

On Tuesday 24 April staff from the Glasgow Science Centre came to McLaren to give a workshop called "Who Wants To Be A Scientist" to S1 and S2. The workshop opened pupils' eyes to the huge variety of careers that can lead on from studying science at school, from designing protective equipment for use in contact sports to developing computer games.

Pupils were able to see and help out with a variety of experiments, which included hitting one of the instructors with a hammer, teachers lying on a bed of nails and a couple of explosions!

This visit launched the option section of the S2 Science course where pupils are taking part in two projects of their choice.

"I enjoyed the science show. It was funny and I would like to see it again." *James Graham 2B*

"It was fun. I liked the balloon popping and the giant flameball." *Ryan Welsh 2D*

"It was fun and I enjoyed it!" *Holly Smith 2C*

PTA Book Stall

The PTA would like to thank everyone who donated books for the recent Book Stall and all those who came along on the day and supported us by buying books. We raised over £350.00!

Senior Ski Course

On 30 March a group of 40 pupils and 6 members of staff set off to Neukirchen in Austria for the Senior Ski Course 2012. As ever, this was a special excursion, especially for those in S6 who perhaps had experienced ski courses in their earlier years at McLaren.

The weather was good for the week with a lot of sunshine and there was certainly plenty of snow. The instruction for all the groups was excellent and we were given exercises to try and improve our techniques. This was balanced with some free running. The slopes were reasonably quiet and everyone had a ball. The local instructors were able to take us into less well known areas, through trees and into gullies.

Appraisals for the week reflected a very successful experience for all:- "amazing!", "brilliant!", "best week ever!"



S1 Visit to the Scottish Parliament

14 pupils from S1 accepted a special invitation to champion their school's outdoor learning approaches in a meeting with their Mid Scotland and Fife Regional MSP Murdo Fraser at the Scottish Parliament last week.

After a tour of the Parliament pupils spent time with Mr Fraser discussing the benefits of timetabled learning outside of the classroom. They also spoke about their involvement with the John Muir Award, an environmental award scheme set up by the John Muir Trust. They explained the importance of contact with wild places in the school grounds, across Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park and further afield.

"It is great to welcome pupils from McLaren High School and hear how much they value spending time outdoors", explained Mr Fraser. "They have clearly found many benefits such as learning new skills, working with others, visiting new places, connecting with nature and enjoying their learning. Outdoor learning helps deliver the Curriculum for Excellence, and by participating in the John Muir Award pupils also gain recognition for their wider achievements. This is increasingly important for future employees or furthering education. Thank you and congratulations to the pupils and to McLaren High School for sharing their good practice."

Mr Fraser presented McLaren High School with a John Muir Award Provider certificate to mark the successful partnership between the school and the John Muir Trust. Mr Fraser also wished the pupils



good luck with completing their own individual John Muir Awards later this term.

Science teacher Chris Clark said "The pupils appreciate this opportunity to visit the Scottish Parliament and talk to their MSP about something they feel passionate about. The school is also delighted to be recognised as a John Muir Award Provider. The John Muir Award is an important part of what we do. It provides a simple structure that helps learning across different subject areas, yet provides a meaningful focus for staff and pupils."

Finally, when asked about his favourite wild place, Mr Fraser paused before settling on, "Highland Perthshire, and the bits around the Ben Lawers range. It is a very special place." This especially delighted pupils living in close by Killin!

Dynamic Earth

As part of their Geography course all of S2 went to Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh on 30 April.

'Our first activity was a film about Charles Darwin all about his life and how he studied all sorts of living things such as creatures from the depths of the oceans. He also looked at plants and how the world was made. Then we moved on to the first exhibit which was the time machine and this was followed by a video about the big bang. Next we saw a video about how the glaciers formed mountains and glens. Then we went in to a room with a large bit of ice in it and learned all about how animals adapted to live during the ice age. After that we had a talk on jungle life from one of the staff and we were able to ask them questions. Following this we had a briefing on the 4D cinema and were told where we were going to be 'flying' on our adventure. We took our seats and the film started. It lasted about 10 minutes and was very entertaining and educational. After lunch and a quick visit to the shop it was time to head home. We all enjoyed the day and learned a lot from the experience.'

Regan Dingwall S2



the ceiling. We then proceeded to a gallery with pictures, screens and a 'cool planet thing'. Then we went in to a time machine and watched how the earth was made. After that there was another gallery with a virtual man called Vasco on a screen who saw everything you did and heard everything you said and talked to us – he was very entertaining. This was followed by an exhibit which was an artificial iceberg that was cold and wet to touch. Next we watched a 4D movie about climates which lasted about 10 minutes and then took part in a question and answer session.'

Cameron Boyle S2

'The first activity we went to was a globe cinema where the screen was half of the inside of a ball on

The Sweetest Flower Poetry Collection

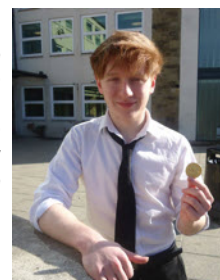
March saw the release of a poetry collection written by Bryony Clare Semple and the classmates of 1B, now 2B. Bryony was a gifted writer and much loved friend who tragically died in June 2011. All



proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to Bryony's charity 'The Malawi Education Project'. Anyone wishing to purchase a copy of the book, cost £5, should contact the school.

Pupil Achievement in Music

Graeme Platman was the winner of the Guitar section (level 3) at the recent Edinburgh Competition Festival Association. In addition to this, Graeme was credited with best solo guitarist performance of the day and was the recipient of 'The Norman Quinney Medal'. Well done to him for this outstanding achievement.



Under 16 Rugby

The Under 16 rugby squad were crowned Central Schools champions recently, after finishing the campaign with two excellent performances. McLaren then knew that they would have to overcome a strong Stirling High School to stand a chance of progressing to the final. The team started the game at an excellent tempo and continued to play excellent rugby in the wet conditions, and won the game comfortably 38-0. This allowed McLaren the chance to defend the trophy they had won last year. In what looked a tough game against a strong Balforn High team, McLaren yet again showed their class with an excellent all round performance. Tries from Andrew Howells, Hamish Innes and Conor Alexander gave McLaren a 15-3 lead. Balforn responded with an unconverted try to make the score 15-8, but this proved to be their last score of the match. Further tries throughout the game from Oliver Wesley (3), Andrew Howells (2), Andrew Nixon and Alastair Orr, and conversions from Oliver (3) and Hamish (1) secured a resounding 58-8 victory for the boys. Balforn High School were worthy of their place in the final, but when McLaren started to demonstrate the excellent standard of rugby we have seen throughout the season, gaps appeared in the Balforn defence for the boys to take advantage of. Well done on an excellent victory!

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Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

One of SWT's flagship projects tasked with protecting Scotland's still thriving populations of red squirrels has secured funding to continue its valuable conservation work in and around Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park (LL&TNP) for another two years.

Phase II of Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is now underway with an experienced project team, to develop the established network of land managers and volunteers involved in targeted grey squirrel control, species distribution monitoring, squirrelpox virus testing and awareness raising.

The work is spread across four project areas in Scotland and certainly not exclusive to LL&TNP, however the team is increasing in size and we are delighted to welcome Bob Jardine as our new Grey Squirrel Control Officer in the west. Bob has volunteered tirelessly across many conservation projects in the national park, has worked as a volunteer ranger and brings a wealth of experience from a varied background. This welcome addition to the team will help drive the project forward in the west as we will now cover much more ground with significantly increased control work and landowner recruitment. This will have a considerable benefit to local red squirrel populations and bring increased squirrel pox virus SQPV surveillance for the central lowlands population of greys in light of recent positive results appearing around Mauchline in Ayrshire.

We are now in the fortunate position of being able to offer a grey squirrel control service and would urge land managers and

residents to get in touch if they see grey squirrels in LL&TNP. We are specifically interested in the following areas; Arrochar, west and east Loch Lomond, Drymen, Balmaha, Callander, Aberfoyle and along the Teith and Forth river corridors.

Lewis Pate Project Officer for the LL&TNP said "A huge amount of work has already been completed and red squirrels are



Photo courtesy of Steve Gardener

slowly making a comeback in some areas where they have been outcompeted for food and resources by grey's for many years. The Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) has played a huge part in driving the project forward across the LL&TNP area, and we have now accessed over £444,000 of SRDP money with another £100,000 pending over the next 5 years. These funds contribute to the local economy in the west providing rural employment and an essential level of targeted grey squirrel control for the benefit of our indigenous reds. Our new GSCO will hopefully fill in the gaps between SRDP funded areas, so there is still a huge amount of work to complete.

I would urge people in and around the national park to report any squirrel sightings (red or grey) to our dedicated recording page on the link found at:

www.scottishsquirrels.org.uk

This information provides essential feedback to the team to help manage the project. While we are working hard to keep grey squirrels out of the Scottish highlands,

a stowaway managed to reach the island of Skye in 2011 and this highlights the continuing need for people to remain vigilant. The highlands will soon lose their red squirrel officer Juliet Robinson due to reduced funding and it is now more important than ever to keep the records coming in.

There are of course other ways of contributing and I am always looking for volunteers to assist with grey squirrel control, monitoring and manufacturing feeder boxes. Please get in touch if you are interested and can spare some time to help the project. You will learn some new skills and know that you are

contributing to a worthwhile practical conservation project."

We hope that the continuing work will safeguard this iconic Scottish species for years to come and look forward to another two years of rewarding conservation work protecting Scotland's red squirrels.

The essential funding secured from SNH, Forth Valley and Argyll Leader, and Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority has made the second phase of SSRS possible and we are very grateful to our funding partners for the opportunity to carry on with this essential work protecting an important aspect of our nation's biodiversity.

You can contact Lewis on lpate@swt.org.uk

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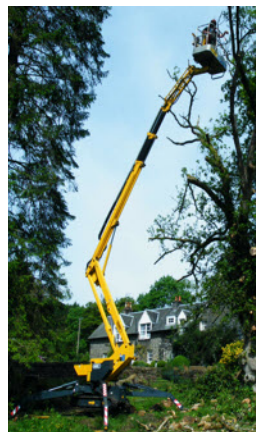
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Simon says.....

ATTENTION ALL GENTLEMEN! ARE NIGHT TIME DRIPS KEEPING YOU AWAKE?

By the way, I am not talking about a worn out tap washer either. I am talking about the prostate gland.

The prostate is a doughnut shaped gland about the size of a chestnut and is part of the male reproductive system. The gland surrounds the urethra which carries urine from the bladder. In older men, particularly those over 50, enlargement may occur. This is a condition known as benign prostatic hypertrophy and, to cut it short, BHP.

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SIMON ROBINSON is the main qualified working proprietor at NATURES CORNER in Callander.

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Trossachs Search and Rescue

Trossachs Search and Rescue Team provides a range of services in support of the local communities and the professional emergency services.

Our Community First Responder Unit operates on behalf of the Scottish Ambulance Service and for the last three years has worked from the Fire Station in Aberfoyle, courtesy of Central Scotland Fire & Rescue Service.



In a recent edition of Strathard News we appealed for volunteers to bolster the First Responder Unit. This proved to be a very good way to publicise our work as we had eight people come forward. Five of them went on to complete the recruitment process, undertake their IHCD First Person on Scene Basic Training and qualify as First Responders. Some of those have gone on to undertake the Intermediate course, enhancing their knowledge and skills. One of their training sessions was with Helimed 5 - the Scottish Ambulance Service helicopter based in Glasgow. So well done to Fiona McIntosh, Jackie Bell, Laura Nicolson, Amy Shaw and Sion Barrington.

In April our 22 First Responders provided 175 hours of cover - those were actual hours, not man hours. At times, especially at weekends, we had two double crewed vehicles on duty operating in Aberfoyle and the surrounding area. We provided cover on 24 of April's 30 days. Three incidents were attended - one in Callander, one in Aberfoyle and one on the West Highland Way at Rowardennan. June has seen us attend other incidents including one at Inversnaid.

A recent challenge for us was where to keep vehicle and kit when Aberfoyle Fire Station was being refurbished. Thankfully, the Scottish Ambulance Service came forward and offered us use of the training suite at Balfour Ambulance Station from which to operate the service. Now that the fire station is serviceable again we are now operating First Responder crews and vehicles from both locations - thus providing cover for a wider area.

Watch Manager Jonathan Honeyman from Aberfoyle has resigned his post on becoming a full-time firefighter. We thank him for all his assistance over the past three years and look forward to continuing to work closely with the crew at Aberfoyle.

Another challenge was the theft of the spare wheel from our rescue equipment trailer whilst parked in the rear yard of the fire station. Had we sustained a puncture whilst en route to a medical emergency we would have had to waste time transferring the necessary equipment into the vehicle. However, some of the stretchers won't fit inside the Renault Trekka 4x4 or Mitsubishi L200 4x4 and so this would have caused real problems for us. As a volunteer organisation we raise all funds ourselves. We could have done without spending £85 on a replacement wheel and tyre plus someone giving up half a day to go and buy them.

Of our thirty one members, some provide the Urban SAR dog service for four Scottish Fire & Rescue Services - available to respond to incidents such as building collapses. We were delighted that Strathclyde Fire & Rescue recently provided us with a donation covering the costs of operating this service for another year.

We also provide welfare support for Central Scotland Fire & Rescue utilising our 6.5 tonne mobile catering unit - the Women In The Trossachs group spent an evening with us recently - hiding for our search dogs in a midgie infested field - so well done ladies. Thankfully they were all found and then treated to tea, coffee and rolls n' burgers in our catering unit. We were grateful to them for a donation of £50 towards our team's services.

Our water rescue dog Aiyla and trainee dog Finn are proving to be great hits at water safety events in schools in the Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway areas in the lead up to the summer holidays. Taz - one of our USAR dogs has been starring in a water safety DVD which is being used by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Strathclyde Police and the NHS across the Greater Glasgow area. The film, taken at Lemahamish Pool near Gartmore features Taz swimming out for a ball thrown by its owner (an actor). When Taz gets into difficulty (simulated), an actor enters the water and gets into trouble (simulated) with the message of Reach and Throw given to the children as well as the message to phone 999 or 112 and ask for Fire & Rescue.

The team committee posts changed recently and, as one of these, the new Chairman is Joanne Reid from Balfour.

Elaine Bruce from Kinlochard continues as our Heartstart Co-ordinator. We recently delivered two Heartstart courses for Walking Group Leaders from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The team will be looking for new members post summer with a First Responder basic course in October.

Stuart Ballantyne, Secretary
07796 240 023
www.trossachsrescue.org.uk

Ranger's Ramblings

A View from the Lodge!



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

duck mania

On the 8th of April, the peace and serenity normally associated with the Waterfall of the Little Fawn was disturbed somewhat, as an excited throng descended upon its surrounds with a strong sense of anticipation.

The occasion was, of course, the Easter Sunday Duck Races, our very own Grand National of events. The fun aspect, as always, was well to the fore, but there is also no denying a strong competitive edge existed throughout, particularly amongst the parents, who jockeyed for position with great purpose. Clearly they were keen to see their siblings end the day with a prize. Sadly, not everyone can be a winner, although they did get to take their ducks (and their memories) home.

For many of our regular visitors, this unremitting and mercurial festive happening remains a joyous experience, and it would be difficult to imagine a season at the Lodge without its inclusion in the calendar. Our Recreation Team Manager, Will Huckerby, summed the whole thing up perfectly, when stating it is often the most simple and uncomplicated of events which are easiest to digest, and hold the most appeal.

Nevertheless, the considered deployment of staff is an abiding component toward their eventual success, and it is often the case that volunteers and office staff are drafted in to cope with the influx. This 'extra deposit' is most welcome, but I do feel for them, as they are sometimes asked to perform roles unfamiliar to them. Without a doubt, a resolute temperament is an essential requirement when dealing with a high volume of people, especially if timing is an issue, as is the case with the races. Any advance preparation continues to be reliant on the participants adhering to this, otherwise, as has happened in the past, it can result in a loss of direction.

Thankfully everything ran smoothly this year, and with the added bonus of decent weather conditions, a fantastic time was had by all involved.

In closing, we are indebted to Robertson, the infrastructure, support services and construction group, main contractors for the first re-development phase of the Lodge, for very kindly offering to sponsor the event.



ain hughes is good news

The Lodge received a new addition to 'the crew' during April in the shape of Iain Hughes, 26, who recently graduated with honours from the University of Glasgow studying Geography.

Iain, out of East Kilbride, has initially been detailed to support the hard-pressed Recreation Team throughout the busy summer months ahead, with the possibility of a long-term contract with The Commission at stake.

Learning on this, a 'fast-track itinerary' has currently been put into place to indoctrinate him into 'The Forestry Ideal'. The wording of this phrase might suggest to some that we have intentions to strap him into a chair and inject mind-inducing drugs into his system in order that he eventually submits to our policies. Not so...it is simply a learning process...honest!

Meanwhile, the old timers amongst us are clearly happy with this youthful introduction, and are eagerly looking forward to passing on all the heavy duty tasks to him as the season wears on.

Welcome to The Lodge, Iain!



wild park parade



On Saturday March 31st, The Lodge played host to a spectacular occasion organised by The National Park and supported by the Forestry Commission.

Innovative in form, it was designed to offer a unique opportunity to learn at first hand of the widespread conservation projects currently being carried out by environmental organisations within the Park. The range of stalls was simply staggering, with mini-bus tours and guided walks also on the agenda.

The Wildlife Trust, The National Trust and The Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust were in attendance, along with the Wildlife Crime and Wildlife Watch teams, backed up by promotions on the Great

Trossachs Forest Project and Ben Lomond Memorial Park.

Topics on display included bats, bugs, bumblebees, barn owls, fungi, red squirrels, water voles, black grouse and the capercaillie. Quite apart from the obvious importance of each and every one of these subject matters, it was truly inspiring to witness so many learned individuals coming together for the common goal, many of whom committed their spare time for this free event.

Definitely, a 'David Marshall Lodge Day'!



On Sunday, 6th of May, Katy Freeman and David Anderson from our Conservation Team were married against the wonderful backdrop of Loch Venachar.

DML Gallery



BLUE RACE. Flynn Barnes, captured side by side with his brother Tom, edged out Lara Burns and Joseph Quinn with inches to spare!



GREEN RACE. Cameron Stuart beat off stiff opposition in the shape of Alfie McKean and Innes Huckerby before making his way to the 'podium'



The 'Staff Ducks' offer an intimidating pose prior to proceedings. Young Jack Jennings, currently working towards achieving a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, put us all to shame as he breezed first past the post with consummate ease.



RED RACE. Celeste Croome, a runner-up last season, amazingly took the top prize this time round. Celeste is pictured with Emily O'Donnell, who came a very close second.



'Coast To Coast' presenter, Neil Oliver, slid in almost announced in late April to film a slot for a Visit Scotland promotional video.



A fine image of David Erskine, upon being presented with a silver Swift badge by Robert, marking his five years of dedicated RSPB voluntary service towards the Osprey Project at the Lodge.



Tom Panton, from Go Ape, after winning the staff sweepstake for being closest to guessing the first sighting of our ospreys, is seen kindly donating his prize to Angela Ballard toward the Easter Weekend duck races.



Our very own Susan Nash has recently been promoted from her Ranger duties in order to take on the challenging position of Project Manager for the next stages of development at The Lodge. Susan, on the left, has succeeded Sylvi Aspden, on the right, who has been upgraded to Project and Programme Support Manager covering Scotland. Best of wishes to them both for the future!

Pet Profile



This is Jura, our 4 month old flat coated retriever puppy. She lives at home with us, her half -sister Rysa, who's almost two and our cat, Felix. Jura adores her sister and Felix is about the most fascinating thing she's come across in her short life. She struggles to understand why he's so aloof and doesn't respond to any of her invitations to play. She's just started puppy training classes and is learning to walk nicely on the lead and to sit on command, other than when she's getting dinner or a treat. Jura is happy to eat pretty much anything. So far we've managed to avoid anything valuable being munched, unlike when Rysa was younger and thought my Blackberry (the electronic kind!) would be worth a try (fortunately none of it was swallowed and it was insured!!). Generally flat coats are happy, relaxed, friendly dogs and we're looking forward to seeing Jura grow up and enjoy all the great outdoors here in the Trossachs.

Do you have you a pet with funny habits, or just something that makes you enjoy them? Please let us know and send your contribution in to us at editor@strathardnews.com or leave in Aberfoyle Post Office.



Do you need a new home in any of these areas?

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If so, Rural Stirling Housing Association may be able to help.

The Association's aim is to support rural communities by providing affordable good quality homes for people in housing need. We currently have over 500 rented homes and around 30 of these become available for re-let each year. We also build some new homes each year.

For more details and a housing application form please contact us at:

Rural Stirling Housing Association
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Telephone : 01786 841101
E-mail: Enquiries@rsha.demon.co.uk
Website : www.rsha.org.uk
Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849

Please note that we encourage all applicants to also apply to Stirling Council's housing list (Tel : 0845 277 7000). Being on both lists is the best way to maximise your chances of being rehoused.

Locals Urged to Cut Down on Their Summer Barbeque Waste and Save Money

Local volunteers working with Forth Environment Link and Zero Waste Scotland are calling on locals to make sure they are cutting down on their Barbeque Waste this summer.

We now spend around £35 on food and drink for a barbeque, up from £19 just five years ago. With an average nine barbeques each, that's a whopping £315 a year. However, how much of this food and drink is being wasted, and how much money are people losing?

Zero Waste Volunteers in Forth Valley are now encouraging local residents to find out more about how to reduce food waste and save money during the barbeque season. Here are just a few tips to help your money go further:

- Use up any ginger, garlic and lemongrass lingering in the fridge by making a simple marinade for king prawns, lamb, beef or chicken skewers. Chop and mix with olive oil.
- If you're inviting lots of guests and aren't sure how much to buy and cook, try Love Food Hate Waste's online perfect portion calculator at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/perfect_portions
- Any fish that needs using up can be wrapped in foil and barbequed
- If you've got veg which is past its best - such as courgettes, aubergines and peppers - brush them with olive oil and chargrill until soft. Or why not try a Roast Vegetable Lunch
- If salad is looking tired and wilted put it in a bowl of water with a couple of ice-cubes to get it nice and crisp again
- If raspberries, strawberries and blueberries look past their prime, cook gently in a saucepan until soft and then serve with crème fraiche or ice-cream for an easy pud.
- Use a cool box or cool bag to help keep food fresh and tasty

For more barbeque tips visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Zero Waste Volunteers will be present at many events over the next month to share tips with the general public and provide information.

Events include: Gardening Scotland, 1st-3rd June at the Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh; Menstrie Gala, 9th June from 12 noon at the Dumyat Centre; Kippen St Fayre, 9th June from 11am in Kippen; and Tillicoultry Gala and Environment Day, 17th June from 12 noon in Tillicoultry Public Park. For more information on events and any up and coming training workshops please visit www.forthenvironmentlink.org

Kelly Vincent, Zero Waste Communications Coordinator said: "Everyone loves a good barbeque, however in our current financial climate, it is so important to save every penny we can. Therefore cutting down on food waste is equally as important. This not only saves the environment, but puts more money in our pockets. Our volunteers want to spread this message as far as possible, and help everyone save a little."

Anyone can help promote these ideas within local communities. Contact Donna Rodgers on donna@forthenvironmentlink.org for more information on Forth Environment Links volunteering opportunities.

RangersCorner

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away
A pair of 'pixies' came our way
Young in years, yet bold in part
They exhibited free spirit from the very start
And with an exuberant energy impossible to disarm
They treated us all to their effervescent charm
The like of which I can only compare
To the very first breath of the fresh morning air
Catriona Bond and Mairi MacDonald were pearls of a type
Somehow removed from the usual hype
Able to turn a head perchance
By way of a smile or occasional glance
In contributing many a 'page'
To the David Marshall Lodge 'Golden Age'
They fully deserve their inch of space
In the history of this very special place
And now, upon learning the MacDonald is betrothed
I suddenly began to feel quite old
Still, I wish for Mairi the very best of times
From the moment her wedding bells chimed
For she is almost certainly one of a kind
Forever established in our hearts and minds.





Tales frae the *Squirrel Nut Family* Squirrel Birthdays with Hawthorn Nut

Guess whif?! It's me an' ma brother and sister's first ever birthday today!! And we're havin' oor very first birthday party too! Can ye believe it?! All the other bairns fae Ochenshoogle Forest are comin' tae it! The squirrels, the rabbits, the birds, the butterflies, the pine martins... the lot! How excitin'?!

This fantastic day started bright an' early: six am! We all woke up awfy early, so we ran through tae Ma and Pa's room, and woke them up. Once we finally got them up (Acorn had to do some serious toe-nibbling, and Rowan threatened tae get a bucket o' water on them if they didnae get up, which got them oota bed pretty sharp!), Ma went intae her wardrobe, and came oot wi' a big sack o' presents!! We all got a new pair o' summer shorts each: mine were blue, Acorn's were green, Rowan's were red, and Connie's were yellow. Then I got a Great Book o' Nuts (no' actually a book aboot nuts, it's a hollow book stuffed full o' nuts! A very tasty



midnight snack), an' Connie got Berries an' Branches (a game where ye bounce up berries, but ye slide doon branches), Rowan got a bonny pink jumper wi' a rowan berry sewn on it, an' Acorn got a new chair made frae nut (he ate his last one). Then we had a scrummy birthday breakfast o' strawberry juice, an' raspberries an' nuts! Delicious!

Then Ma and Pa sent us off tae put on oor new shorts an' oor best welly boots fur oor party! When we came oot, lots o' the guests had arrived: there's Robby the Robin, and Petunia the Pine Martin, an' Timmy and Tilly, the squirrels frae next door, just tae name a few. Then Ma and Pa started up the birthday games: pin the leaf on the berry, guess-the-type-of-nut, and charades! I pretended tae be a bird when it was ma turn, flyin' aboot, and nearly knocked Roberta the Rabbit's bonnet off! Of course, Ben, the blackbird, got it straight away.

Then, just as we were all gettin' exhausted, Ma and Pa produced the most yummy-scrummy-in-your-tummy birthday tea – mixed berry juice, blackberry pie, lots an' lots o' nuts, of course, an' then the best bit o' all: A SQUIRREL SHAPED BIRTHDAY CAKE! It was brilliant, all spongy and light, decorated with crystalized nuts and berries. The most exquisite cake ever!

Sadly, it was time for all the guests tae leave, after getting' a special party bag, complete wi' little party hats an' a mini game o' Berries and Branches.

Noo, we're a' sittin' on the branch outside our home in The Great Oak Tree, as the sun starts to set, lookin' around the forest, little lights flickering on in the other forest animal's hooses, the sun making dappling movements on the vivid green leaves.

I turn tae Ma and Pa and say, "Ta, Ma and Pa, fur the best first birthday party ever!"

New Community Action Grant scheme launched

Community groups across Scotland, who are running projects to do with managing and enjoying nature, can now apply for a new Community Action Grant.

Launched by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the new scheme is for grants of between £1k and £20k for short term projects of 12 months or less. The grants are focused on getting more people and communities involved in outdoor recreation, volunteering and outdoor learning. They are also targeted at action to improve, protect and manage habitats, species and landscapes. Projects that help record valuable information about local species and natural habitats can also benefit.

Andrew Bachell, director of operations at SNH, said they expect to make the first awards in early June. He added:

"The natural environment is Scotland's most valuable asset. We need to look after nature as

it can improve our health and quality of life, our enjoyment and even our economic prosperity.

"We're very keen to help community groups get more involved in nature and the outdoors, either through volunteering or educational projects, or projects that help manage natural habitats and species. That's what our Community Action Grants are all about.

"We're expecting a lot of interest in this scheme and we're looking forward to helping many community projects get off the ground."

The Community Action Grant application system is now open and Community groups can apply, and access grant information and advice, on SNH's website (www.snh.gov.uk).

SNH will start considering applications from 8 May and will make a decision within 20 working days of receiving applications. The scheme will be competitive as funds are limited.

DML Notice Board

It's Bug Time!

NATIONAL INSECT WEEK

MONDAY 25th JUNE - SUNDAY 1st JULY

A photographic competition is included in this weeklong event, and entries will be displayed at the Lodge for everyone to enjoy.

The 'Wild Bug Hunt' - a family fun activity where you can find out all about insects and their lives, will take place on Saturday 30th of June.

Sunday 1st of July will introduce a new feature in the shape of 'Wonder Wood Ants', which involves a guided walk into the forest looking for signs of these wonderful creatures.

Insect 'hunting kits' will be available throughout.

Booking is required for the Bug Hunt, and a small cost may apply to some activities.

You do NOT want to miss out on this!

KID'S SUMMER NATURE CLUB

**SATURDAY 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th of JULY
11.00 a.m.-1.00 p.m.**

This ever-popular happening is a must for all budding junior rangers, formulated to discover more about the natural environment, with a great deal of fun attached. Refreshments are included and outdoor weather clothing is required. Open to 7-12 year olds.

Cost: £ 3.50 per individual session. Booking is essential, as spaces are extremely limited.

As always, the contact number at the DML for further details is 01877 382 258, open seven days a week from 10.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

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Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith Parish Church

From the Manse.....



Hallelujah! Summer has arrived. Or at least it has as I write this, and I hope it is still here as you read this.

Suddenly Lochard Road sounds like Silverstone as folk rev up their lawnmowers to gather the few grass cuttings amid the prevailing moss. Suddenly the Co-op is alive with chatter of holidaymakers newly arrived in Aberfoyle, and the chatter of locals as they talk of their own holiday plans.

Personally, I never much like going away in the summer. The beauty of the scenery here and the hope that the ever more capricious sun might shine, keep me here. It wasn't always so. When we lived in Kintyre and the children were little we would drive off to Europe on camping holidays. It was jolly hard work, really. I would insist on sprucing up my language skills, such as they were, in case one of the children was ill while we were away. I would even learn car language. Well, you never do know when you might need to know the French or Italian for solenoid, or big end, which I suspected does not quite translate as such.

Somehow we always seemed to leave Kintyre enjoying a heat wave, and arrive in a chilly rain-soaked Europe. Our dreams of holidays always exceeded our experiences. We would have frogs in the tent (Brittany), wake to discover we were camping virtually next door to some folk we didn't much like from Kintyre (Alsace-Lorraine) or have problems with the car such that we would have to drive round with the heater at full blast (Florence – that year languishing in an exceptionally hot summer). Needless to say the children fondly remember the frogs and the heater, not the impressive standing stones at Carnac or the splendour of Santa Croce.

Hard work, but good fun, and a lot better than the holiday of a lady I used to know who would go off somewhere abroad for a cheap bit of liposuction or a brow lift, and come back looking new but, frankly, a bit strange.

Port of Menteith Kirk has had a bit of a holiday from its usual purpose for the last ten months. Repairs and restoration works have been going on and the Kirk has had a facelift and bit of re-structuring and some liposuction in the sense of all the rotten wood that had to be extracted. And as the extensive and sometimes difficult works progressed, no doubt the air also rang with unfamiliar language not normally heard in a church. It looks wonderful now and we at the Port are very appreciative of the excellence of the skilled work of our amiable and helpful contractors, Fleming Masonry Contractors Limited. There is still work to be done, more funds to be raised, but we are so happy with what has been achieved. Goethe once commented on good architecture being music frozen in stone and though the Port Kirk is not quite Santa Croce, we love it, and it does sing to us.

The Port Kirk will be open on weekdays during the summer, so come and admire the specialist-cleaned Stephen Adam trefoil window. It glows with a rich new brilliance even though there is still specialist work to be done to it. And have a look at the external stonework which enables the church to rise above the Lake of Menteith in new stateliness. I said to someone I thought the church had gone from being Norma Jean to Marilyn. I got an odd look for the idea, but I stand by the analogy.

As I say, much yet to do. But that is the thing with holidays. You may come back to a thousand emails and a stack of bills, but you feel all glowing and fresh and set up for the rest of the year – until next time.

Happy holidays
Linda

St Mary's Episcopal Church

Richard Grosse, Rector of St Mary's

More of George McAlpine....

As has been customary, this column continues to trace local characters that featured in a BBC wireless broadcast during the spring of 1939.

The gamekeeper George McAlpine was one of the local men featured. George was in the employ of the Joynson family for nearly 34 years and I am indebted to Peter Joynson of Aberfoyle for providing a photograph of George in his best working clothes. Peter's book 'Local Past' provides detail of George's life, and again I am grateful to Peter for allowing me to reproduce the following information in this article.

George McAlpine was born at Gartmore House, his mother being the cook to the Cunningham Graham family, and his father its gamekeeper. Like many young men, George had a number of pipe dreams about his future. His original intention was to become proficient as a ploughman and then emigrate to the United States. Then he toyed with joining the Police Force before eventually choosing to follow his father's footsteps. 'You're kept busy all day as a keeper'

George told the programme 'I've got a kennel of spaniels, and I start the day by feeding them and cleaning out the kennels and taking the dogs out for a run. I've got to keep the vermin traps clean, and from now until the start of the shooting season it's my job to keep the vermin down and see that there are birds to be shot. In the season I'm out with the guns every day and after the grouse I start the deer stalking. That's a difficult job now. You've got to know the ground like a book and know every change of wind. It's more difficult in this district, because of the sheep and the hares. If you disturb them and they run, the deer will notice them even though they may be a quarter of a mile away. Still, thirty gentlemen have got their first stag with me, and the finest I've got was a thirteen-pointer – that's between a Royal and an Imperial. In the old days I used to start the deerstalking at eight in the morning and maybe did not get home until half past ten at night for the stags had to be carried down the hillside to Loch Katrine, rowed to the Trossachs Pier and then a brake sent for to Aberfoyle to bring them across. Now they can be brought much more quickly by the new road'. This was a reference to the Duke's Pass which had opened a few years earlier

George McAlpine at the time of the programme was seventy three years old having been born in 1866. He continued to work throughout the war years. This was common, as younger men were invariably called-up into the Forces or other work essential to the war effort. He retired at the end of the war to enjoy a further twelve years at Drumlean tending his bees. Such was the respect and affection of his former employers and his standing in the community that his death was announced by a notice in 'The Times'

In the course of his interview, George made wry comment about the burgeoning activity of the Forestry Commission in the area and its associated fencing of large areas. A representative of the Commission speaks next.



Midsummer Songs of Praise

Sunday, 24th June

6.30pm

Kinlochard Village Hall

(outside depending on weather – and midges)

This is a 30 minute or so service of favourite hymns organized by St Mary's Episcopal Church and Aberfoyle Parish Church.

All welcome



The Garden in June/July



I'm sure you'll agree that it's been a challenging year in the garden so far. That lovely spell of weather early on promoted plenty of lush, soft growth swiftly followed by a very wet and cold April, severely damaging even many plants that we all thought were as tough as old boots. However the frost damaged plants seem to be recovering with Pieris for instance putting on another flush of growth and Hydrangeas shooting from the base. And at last we've had a taste of summer if only for a few days so far.

The last frosts should be behind us so it's safe to put out all the tender annuals. Whether in the borders or in containers make sure they're well watered in. Hanging baskets too can be put in position if they have filled out sufficiently; if the liner is still a bit too obvious keep them undercover a while longer. Throughout the summer keep deadheading annual flowers to keep a succession of blooms.

In the ornamental garden:

- Keep on top of weeds now to save a lot of back-ache later.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as Philadelphus and Deutzia; if you leave it till later in the year you risk losing next year's flowers. Those that were hit badly by the frosts may need more severe trimming than normal to get back to live wood.
- Remove suckers from roses.
- Take a look at any variegated-leaved shrubs and prune out any shoots that have reverted to plain green.
- Perennials will be growing rapidly and hopefully putting on a great show; help the taller ones to look at their best by using canes or other forms of support – on a large scale letting them grow through netting is very effective. Then when the flowers are fading, dead-head to prevent energy being wasted on seed formation.
- Climbing plants may also need to be tied in and extra support wires put up for those that don't self-cling like clematis and honeysuckle.

When mowing the **lawn** the height of cut should now be down to the minimum you want for the year, and if you haven't done so already apply a granular feed/weed. If you want to get rid of moss scarifying the lawn to help drainage is a good starting point but only AFTER you've used a moss killer, otherwise you'll just spread the moss even further!

The **vegetable plot** is where there should be the most action over early summer, far too much to list everything here, with everything from sowing to harvesting to be done.

In general keep the vegetable beds well weeded, and the more developed the crops are ensure they get adequate water, particularly the potatoes and especially if you are growing in containers; lack of water reduces the crop and increases the potential for diseases.

Keep earthing up potatoes, plant out all the veg you've started in pots and sow salad crops little and often. When you're planting your tomatoes plant deeply enough to cover the stems up to the bottom leaves which will encourage more roots to develop; except for the bush varieties such as Tumbling Tom keep pinching out the side shoots. Water very regularly especially when the fruits start to grow as irregular watering leads to splitting of the fruit.

Spur fruiting **fruit trees** should be summer-pruned now to maintain the shape of the tree, pruning back to a pair of leaves above the spur. When fruits are developing do not be afraid to thin out the crop; leaving all the fruit on runs the risk of either breaking the branches and/or ending up with loads of fruit that are too small. And put up netting to stop the birds stealing your crop.

Watch out for mildew on currants and gooseberries and when you've finished harvesting prune the bushes to maximize air-flow through them.

Orchids: With the frosts over, now is the time to put any Cymbidiums outside for the summer. Place them out of the full sun and in July keep them completely dry; this should encourage flower spikes to be produced rather than just new leaves.

Bird care: Keep feeding the birds to encourage them into the garden; you may spend a bit on bird food but they'll repay you by eating plenty of unwanted bugs and beasties.

Whatever you do in the garden, make the most of the long

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The Great Trossachs Forest



Many of you will have heard of The Great Trossachs Forest project, but may not know very much more about it. So I thought I would write a quick summary about the main areas of our work and then in future editions of the Strathard News provide more detail about certain aspects of particular interest.

What is it?

Officially launched in 2009, The Great Trossachs Forest (TGTF) project links 16,650 hectares of land from Loch Lomond in the West to Kilmahog in the East and incorporates the whole Loch Katrine catchment and Glen Finglas Estate. The project is a partnership between RSPB Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland, Woodland Trust Scotland and BP under the umbrella of the Scottish Forest Alliance. Under this umbrella alliance there is a commitment to work together for 200 years.

What do we want to achieve?

The ultimate aim of the TGTF is to put into place the effective management of a landscape including woodland and open ground habitats to benefit people and wildlife today and into the future.

Our four main areas of work

Habitat Management: We want to increase and connect the amount of native woodland by planting trees and allowing natural regeneration. This ultimately will create an integrated woodland habitat network across the whole project area, containing a mix of tree densities. In total less than a third of the project area will be woodland, with the remainder being a mix of open areas of shrub, moor and grassland. This combination should give a natural balanced approach and replacing commercially grown Sitka spruce trees with native broadleaf will create a habitat capable of supporting a huge increase in wildlife.

People engagement: The Great Trossachs Forest offers something for everyone and we are keen to promote and support this. By improving the path network, celebrating our cultural heritage, hosting events, providing opportunities for volunteering we have made a start in achieving this. However there is much more we can do and we have exciting plans for the future (more to follow in future editions). We are also keen to hear your ideas about what you would like to see in the area, so

please don't be shy about getting in touch.

Life-long learning:

We want to provide opportunities for schools, academia, research institutes and community groups to use TGTF as a research base or a resource for learning. To date we have produced an education resource for secondary schools to use both in the classroom and to encourage outdoor learning. The James Hutton Institute has been conducting research in Glen Finglas for a number of years. The newly formed Trossachs Landscape History Network has been working with us to work up some fun projects for interested community members.

Partnership working: The Great Trossachs Forest is a unique approach to woodland and land management as it facilitates each of the landowners to pursue their own objectives while also working together to achieve common aims. This also enables us to draw on the wide range of expertise from each of the partner organisations. This is a model of working together at a landscape scale that can be adopted elsewhere.

How is it funded?

In 2000 BP made £10 million available to establish the Scottish Forest Alliance (the umbrella to TGTF). This money was spent across 14 sites in Scotland, three of which make up The Great Trossachs Forest (RSPB Inversnaid, FCS Loch Katrine and WTS Glen Finglas). Additionally Forestry Commission Scotland secured almost £1 million from Heritage Lottery Fund. In the long term the project will be part of the core work of the three land owning partner organisations who also contribute by providing the match funding, staff time and other valuable resources. And finally Woodland Trust Scotland is about to apply to Heritage Lottery Fund for additional funds, but more on this later....

If you have any questions or comments I can be contacted by email:

suemorris@scottishforestalliance.org.uk or at the Woodland Trust Office (01877 376340).

Sue Morris

Development Officer

The Great Trossachs Forest

Supported by BP through the Scottish Forest Alliance



Motorists warned of risk of deer on roads

Car accidents involving deer are at their highest at this time of year as young roe deer search for their own territories, warns Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Deer-vehicle collisions often peak in May, as juvenile deer are out on their own for the first time. Because of this, SNH, in conjunction with Transport Scotland, are placing warning messages on variable messaging signs on high-risk trunk roads across Scotland from Monday, 14 May to Friday, 1 June.

The signs are targeted on roads with higher rates of deer-vehicle collisions, covering areas of the Central Belt around Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as Stirling, Kinross, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness. Signs warn motorists of the high risk of deer on road.

Not only are accidents at their highest in May, but there has also been an increase in the number of car accidents involving deer in the lowlands and in and around towns. Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) preliminary 2011 figures show that live deer road casualties have more than doubled since 2006. The Scottish SPCA received reports of 200 casualties in 2006, but received over 450 reports in 2011. This increase is likely due to the increased number of roe deer, as more green spaces and woodlands are created in central Scotland.

Across Scotland, there are more than 7000 deer-related motor vehicle accidents every year, on average causing about 70 human injuries. The economic value of these accidents is £5 million. Across the UK, it's estimated there could be up to 74,000 deer-related motor vehicle accidents a year, resulting in 400 to 700 human injuries and about 20 deaths, with a cost of over £17m.

Jamie Hammond, SNH Deer Management Officer, said:

"In light of these figures, drivers should be more aware than ever of the risks of deer on our roads. Many people think most accidents with deer occur on remote Highland roads, but more and more this is something that happens around our cities and towns.

"At this time of the year, we'd ask motorists to slow down and watch for deer crossing in front of traffic. Be particularly alert if you're driving near to woodland where deer can suddenly appear before you have time to brake. If you do hit a deer, report it to the police, as the deer may be fatally injured and suffering."

Other tips include:

- Try not to suddenly swerve to avoid hitting a deer. A collision into oncoming traffic could be even worse.
- Only break sharply and stop if there is no danger of being hit by following traffic. Try to come to a stop as far away from the animals as possible to allow them to leave the roadside without panic, and use your hazard warning lights.
- After dark, use full-beams when there is no oncoming traffic, as this will illuminate the eyes of deer on or near a roadway and give you more time to react. But dim your headlights when you see a deer or other animal on the road so you don't startle it.
- Report any deer-vehicle collisions to the police, who will contact the local person who can best help with an injured deer at the roadside. Do not approach an injured deer yourself – it may be dangerous.

Scotland's network of Great Trails extended

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has announced that three new trails have been added to the national network of long distance routes, known as Scotland's Great Trails.

The recently-completed Rob Roy Way, Berwickshire Coastal Path and Great Glen Canoe Trail bring the total number of routes in the network up to 23, extending it to over 1500 miles.

Stretching from the Borders to the Highlands, the trails provide opportunities to explore some of the best of the country's landscapes and nature by foot, bike and horseback on well marked, high quality paths. The Rob Roy Way, which runs between Drymen and Pitlochry, follows the tracks and paths used by the notorious outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor in the 17th and 18th centuries. With the addition of the Great Glen Canoe Trail, people can now paddle from coast to coast between Fort William and Inverness, and see the Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness from a totally different perspective. And the most southerly of the three, the Berwickshire Coastal Path, is along one of the most spectacular coastlines in Britain. Linking Cockburnspath to Berwick-on-Tweed, it takes in dramatic cliff top scenery complete with arches, stacks and crumbling castles.

John Henderson of Walking Support and Jacquetta Megarry of Rucksack Readers, who jointly developed the Rob Roy Way, said: "Over the last 10 years, growing walker numbers on the Rob Roy Way have proved its popularity. Now that the route is fully waymarked we expect it to go from strength to strength, with local communities and businesses reaping the benefits. Rob Roy, whose surname MacGregor was proscribed by the Government, would have smiled to see his name included officially among Scotland's Great Trails."

Information on each of Scotland's Great Trails is available from the Scottish Natural Heritage, VisitScotland and Walkhighlands websites, and via a dedicated website www.scotlandsgreattrails.org.uk



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CULINARY CAPERS

Researched and compiled by Margaret Leppard-Owens



Margaret Leppard-Owens writes, 'Shortly after offering to put Culinary Capers together I approached a number of people. So far you've seen the faces and heard their stories. I met one lady at the second hand book stall at a local fundraiser. She was looking at cookery books. I explained my idea for Strathard News, asked her if she was interested in giving me a contribution. Not long afterwards, she gave me this recipe on the understanding that it was to be included as from 'a local resident'. More recently my husband gifted me with a book entitled 'Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking'. The author Susan Cain, argues that extroversion has become the 'cultural ideal' and that this has led to the rise of the culture of personality. She asks, 'How did we go from Character to Personality without realizing we had sacrificed something meaningful along the way?' So here's a recipe from a truly characterful, quiet lady who is concerned that we all cook tasty and nutritious food. This makes a great dish that can be prepared in advance to the end of stage 2, frozen then defrosted and completed on the day. It's just the sort of dish to take along to a shared Big Jubilee lunch or freeze in individual portions in readiness for when you're just too tired to cook from scratch.'



BOLOGNESE BEEF HOTPOT

Lemon and fennel bring wonderfully fresh flavours to familiar braised minced beef in this simple, Italian-inspired dish. Serve with a crisp leafy salad plus plenty of bread or rolls to mop up the tangy tomato sauce.

INGREDIENTS:

Serves 4

340g extra lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
600g potatoes, scrubbed and finely diced
2 cans chopped tomatoes, about 400g each
150ml chicken stock,
bought chilled or made from a cube
Finely shredded zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
1 bulb fennel, thinly sliced
100g frozen green beans
Salt and pepper

METHOD:

1. Place the minced beef, onion and garlic in a large saucepan and cook over a moderate heat for 5 minutes until the mince is broken up and evenly browned.
2. Stir in the diced potatoes, tomatoes with their juice, half the lemon zest, the sugar and a little seasoning. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat and cover the pan. Simmer the mince and vegetable mixture for 10 minutes, stirring once or twice to ensure the potatoes cook evenly.
3. Stir in the fennel, frozen beans and lemon juice. Cover the pan again and simmer for a further 5 minutes or until the potatoes are tender and the fennel and beans are lightly cooked but still crisp.
4. Taste and adjust the seasoning, if necessary, then spoon the mixture into serving bowls. Garnish with the remaining lemon zest, fennel leaves and parsley.



A green salad tossed with thinly sliced red onion, a handful of basil, a few black olives and a lemon and olive oil dressing tastes excellent with this dish providing contrasting texture as well as flavour.

Each serving provides

Kcal 300, protein 26g, fat 5g (of which saturated fat 2g), carbohydrate 40g (of which sugars 14g), fibre 5g, Vitamins B1, B6, B12, C, folate, iron, niacin, potassium and selenium. Provided you use a heavy based or non-stick pan there is no need to add any fat when browning the mince. Tomatoes are a rich source of vitamin C. Scrubbing potatoes rather than peeling them retains vitamins and minerals found just beneath the skin. The skin also provides valuable fibre.

Frozen green beans are convenient and versatile for everyday dishes. They are a useful source of fibre and a good source of folate, which is essential for healthy pregnancy and may also contribute to protection against heart disease.

Other ideas

Use minced turkey, chicken, pork or lamb instead of beef. Instead of potatoes, add one 400g can of cannellini or black beans (drained and rinsed) and 250g finely diced carrots.

Source: Chadd, RW (Ed) (2007) *The Best of Healthy Cooking*. London: Readers Digest on behalf of the Co-operative Group

Margaret's hint: I found I needed to cook the mince mixture for about 17 minutes rather than 10. The mince was cooked at 10 minutes but, on poking the potatoes with a sharp knife, I could tell they needed longer than 5 minutes to become tender. I waited until the potatoes were almost tender before adding the fennel and beans for the last 5 minutes. This achieved the right balance of tender, tasty and crisp.

Phil Cunningham and Aly Bain



Dear Ticket Holder,

The Kinlochard Village Hall (KVH) Committee were approached by Celtic Connections to ask if they would consider postponing the Phil & Aly concert on Thursday the 27th September.

Moving the date would enable a special performance of Transatlantic Sessions to take place in Chicago to coincide with the Ryder Cup.

KVH was keen to facilitate this if at all possible as it would be a great chance to showcase excellent Scottish Traditional music to a huge global audience. We considered it possible when we were given the alternative date on the same night just 2 weeks later. We are thus writing to inform you that the date for the concert has been re-scheduled to Thursday 11th October 2012

We sincerely hope that this alternative date will be suitable for you and wish to give you a complimentary drink at the bar on production of your original ticket.

In the unfortunate event that prior commitments mean that you are not able to attend on the alternative date, please let Gregor our ticket agent know via email - enquiries@scottishmusicfestival.co.uk and he will arrange for a full refund of your £20 ticket money and the return of your ticket(s) to us.

I hope that you will be able to join us on the 11th and look forward to seeing you then. Please accept our sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Katy Lamb

For Kinlochard Village Hall Committee



Rolo Tomassi Movie Critic

Local Hero (1983)

To me, it is a sad indictment of society that many of us wish away the greater part of our working lives in anticipation of our holiday breaks.

Sadder still are the frequent television images of those very souls seeking the great adventure abroad, only to find themselves unwilling participants in some obscure airport traffic controllers' strike.

Airport terminals are perennially stark and unforgiving places, and it is almost a given that stress levels are heightened from the moment you enter the building.

Waiting in line. Watching the clock. Hauling the baggage. Checking in. Who's got the passports? The kids need the toilet. Have we time for a coffee? Have we enough currency? Did we remember to switch the heating off? Did we pack the diapers?

In the modern age, we practically have to disrobe in order to be 'scanned' before collecting our hand luggage. Also, don't even think about carrying a pair of nail-clippers, as the authorities may consider them a lethal weapon to be held against the throat of a member of the cabin crew in an attempt to ditch the plane into the sea.

Having encountered these particular nuances on numerous occasions in the past, I am now more inclined to avoid these scenarios at all costs.

My simple solution?. Stay at home.

By 'home', of course, I mean Scotland, which is capable of offering an astonishing variety of beautiful and peaceful places to visit, exempt of any hassle.

Pennan, on the Aberdeenshire coast, would be a typical example to consider.

Any enterprising holidaymaker who is willing to deviate from the standard tourist map will find a bounty of pleasure waiting in this most delightful of settings.

But this is almost certainly not your average village, for it has achieved a state of immortality of sorts by way, of all things, a red telephone box.

With a total population of less than a hundred souls, only a few of whom are permanent residents, it must have taken a fair amount of research to decide on this particular location to produce a comedy-drama which is held in

such high esteem, it is frequently mentioned in 'Best motion pictures of all time' lists by critics. A far thinking individual by the name of Bill Forsyth is the man ultimately responsible for this.

Mr. Forsyth, born and raised in Glasgow, 'cut his teeth' in film writing and directing through some marvellous low budget offerings such as 'That Sinking Feeling' (1980) and 'Gregory's Girl' (1981), each of which has duly achieved cult status.

The sleepy and unobtrusive style he developed through his intimate story telling in those early years was to reach a pinnacle with the magical 'Local Hero'.

On the back of increasing BAFTA nominations, Forsyth was afforded the opportunity to extend his casting options for the film to the very heart of Hollywood, with the inclusion of Burt Lancaster proving to be a particularly inspired choice.

Lancaster, as Felix Happer, the eccentric owner of the Knox Oil and Gas Company, is clearly perceived to be enjoying the freedom his character offered, in what essentially was the latter part of his career. His admirable input was complimented throughout by way of some treasured performances by the likes of Fulton MacKay, Denis Lawson and Peter Capaldi.

As the local Knox representative, Danny Oldsen (Capaldi) acts as a guide to the normally Houston based executive 'Mac' Macintyre (Peter Reigart), who has been sent to Scotland to 'acquire' the village of Ferness (Pennan) to make way for a refinery.

As the story unfolds, Macintyre (used to the trappings of a commercial and technological existence) gradually develops a leaning toward the slow-paced life of the residents, which places emotional demands on his remit. In time, he is seen to 'discard' his expensive suits in favour of walking barefoot on the beach in a battered old jumper, discussing the meaning of life with anyone who cares to listen.

The scene where he seeks out some seashells in the rock pools (losing his Rolex watch in the process) is particularly subtle, and something most of us can surely relate to from our youth.

Meanwhile the inhabitants, sensing the possibility of becoming millionaires by way of



the sale of the village, are distraught upon learning an old beachcomber living in a rundown shack actually owns the adjoining beach, casting doubts on the deal.

At this point of the film, Fulton Mackay, holding the key to the potential sale as the said beachcomber Ben Knox (yes, you've guessed the connection) milks his role to the full. The ensuing dialogue among the lesser character actors as the situation reaches an impasse is the stuff of legend, saturated with crafted humour, and utterly captivating.

Eventually, Happer, upon learning Ben has a common understanding, and love of the stars, decides to take control of the negotiations by way a personal meeting, and arrives at the scene by helicopter. Recognising a kindred spirit, he opts to locate the refinery offshore and set up an astronomical observatory instead.

As the movie draws to a close, Macintyre is seen returning to his Houston apartment in sombre mood, pulling his collection of seashells from his pocket, to the background noise of police sirens. It then cuts to the red telephone box in Ferness, which he had used to communicate with his company in Houston with the help of small coin contribution from the pub regulars. The phone goes unanswered, and the credits start to play, accompanied by the wistful and truly memorable soundtrack performed by Mark Knopfler.

In creating 'Local Hero', Forsyth allowed the audience to absorb both the beauty, and frailties of human personalities, and this genial approach can best be summed up as heart warming, which is perhaps the abiding reason for its universal appeal, despite the use of Scottish vernacular throughout.

Neil Stewart

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The Scribe's Apprentice!?

Hi there; or as they say in Aberdeen (*and lunatic asylums up and down the country*) "Fit like ma loon?"

If you're a regular reader of this, oor local rag, you will doubtless remember my wee tale from last edition of the perils attached to doing astronomy in the wilds of Kinlochard. Well, here's a wee bit more news from the local astronomy front.

I know this will be news to most of you, if only because the turn out at the Memorial Hall in Aberfoyle was so low when the reps from the LL&TNP were there to tell the world about their plans to seek what is known as "Dark Skies Reserve Status" for the National Park.

You should hae been there; you'd have learned something interesting about what the "Parkies" want to achieve and you'd have had the phenomenal pleasure of me doing my wee spiel about whitt's visible in the night sky the noo. There's mair there than ye think! See, ye missed yurself! Ha-Ha, serves ye right!

And before I forget; the term "Parkie" is my own pet name for anyone who works for the LL&TNP because its a lot less clumsy than LL&TNPer and there's no offence intended; so please don't take any. Thank you.

Therefore, just so's ye ken whit the "Parkies" are aw about I'm going to boil it down for you so that you'll have at least some idea of what's going on.

So, on the night there was the introduction, then Me, a video extolling the virtues of the Brecon Park as a dark skies site, a wee bit more about the Park's plans and a question and answer session with the Lighting Engineer who is doing the light survey.

The basic idea is that the Park has commissioned a survey of its "target" area to try and get some quantifiable data of the levels of ambient light. This will allow them to look at their maps, designate an area which falls into the category of being suitably dark and then apply to Whoever for "Reserve" status.

Even though the survey is not yet complete its obvious that there are places in and around the Aberfoyle and Strathard areas which come very close to being as good as the much vaunted Galloway Dark Skies Park. This should come as no surprise to the good folk of Kinlochard though it might surprise the Aberfoylans among us.

The "Parkies" were at pains to explain that no one was advocating turning off street lights or security lights in order to get to the low light

levels needed to qualify; though they did explain that if they managed to acquire "Reserve" status they hoped to be able to work with local people to advise on better, more environmentally sensitive lighting systems to help cut down on light pollution but in no way would they ever try to dictate what sort of lights people erected on their own property.

One of the people present at the meeting, one of the Ladies I believe, made the point that since we live in an area of outstanding natural beauty, (*and we do; we really, really do!*) which we try to keep beautiful shouldn't we extend that outstanding natural beauty to the sky over our heads? There was much nodding of heads in silent agreement and another chap remarked that pollution was pollution whether it was spilling oil in the sea or light onto the neighbour's garden or night sky.

Someone else, I think it was one of the Park Rangers, remarked that surely better designed lighting which made sure all the light produced was aimed at the ground would mean a smaller less energy hungry bulb could be used that would in turn save a lot of money for Councils, and anybody else for that matter. Even more silent nodding of Heads and, this time, muted murmurs of agreement!

For my own part I nailed my colours to the mast right at the start; anything that helps to make the night sky darker for amateur astronomers can't be a bad thing.

In fact it might even be a good thing for the local area if it meant that Aberfoyle or Kinlochard or Brig O'Turk or even, God Forbid, Callander, became a destination for amateur astronomers looking for some peace and quiet and lovely dark skies.

You know? It's just occurred to me; if I were to hire the Kinlochard Village Hall I could turn it into an astronomer's bunkhouse, then if I got the grass cut in the field in front of the Old School I'd be onto a winner; that's all amateur astronomers want really: somewhere to kip, somewhere to make tea and have a pee and somewhere to gather when it's tipping it down so they can project pretty pictures of stuff they've previously taken pictures of!

Please feel free to plagiarise my idea; I hereby give you permission.

But please keep the sodding Cows somewhere else!

See ya.



Sports News



Magnificent McLaren

McLaren RFC are assuredly marching to tunes of glory after capturing the championship of SRU Regional League West 3. And how appropriate it was that the title was secured in the shadow of Murrayfield Stadium when our boys trounced Mull by 28 points to 6.

This campaign allowed McLaren to show their mettle through a long and difficult winter. The team showed championship form throughout a long winter campaign by acquiring the knack of winning when some performances were under par and lacking spark and consistency. But when the team played well, boy how they showed off their attacking flair, regularly recording bonus points as they ran in four or more tries.

This is not the time and place to highlight individual performances but to praise the collective commitment and will to win that the squad showed throughout the campaign. Hopefully, the next edition of the Strathard News will allow for a more thoughtful reflection on the season and the prospects for the next, when the writer pays more attention to copy deadlines.

Honourable mentions must go to coach Chris Rennie and manager Sivan Isaacs for keeping the team's focus singlehandedly on winning the title and securing promotion.

Scottish fortunes may be in the doldrums on the international scene, but don't mention that in these parts. Rugby is well and truly alive here. Our boys are the toast of the Trossachs in 2012!!

Rob 'the Voice of Rugby' Jones

Triumphant McLaren RFC with the league trophy.



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May 2012

WILDLIFE NEWSLETTER

Spring Flowers & Ancient Woodland Indicators

Slender St John's wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*) right, is widespread and can be found on roadsides, in dry woodland and scrub. Its yellow flowers, about 1cm in diameter, are out June to August. It is a delicate plant about 30cm high and can be easily overlooked. The 'wort' in a plant name often indicates that the plant had medicinal uses and this is the case here, though not this particular plant, but a larger species, Perforate St John's wort (*H. perforatum*) also found locally. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century medical herbalists in the UK prescribed this plant as a wound healer, for coughs and urinary conditions. In modern herbalism, the plant is still favoured as a healing agent for burns and wounds as well as a pain reliever for cramp. But the herb's main value in treating anxiety and depression has again come to the attention of orthodox medicine and it is now accepted as a treatment for mild and moderate depression.



Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), below left, is common in all parts of Scotland and is named after the eleventh century French Saint Robert. It is a sprawling plant with a strong smell, and hairy, often red tinged stems and hairy leaves. The plant has been known as 'Stinking Roger', its acrid smell repels insects and within living memory it was used in Orkney against midges. Herb Robert is found in abundance in hedgerows, at the edges of woods and on disturbed ground. In the past, it has also been known as 'Red Roger' and Bloodwort' which indicates the plant's main use was for staunching blood.



Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) above right, is a delicate looking plant with clusters of white flowers on branched heads and narrow divided leaves. As its name suggests, it has a small brown, edible tuber (right) at the base of the stem which was popular with foraging pigs in the past. After peeling off the brown skin, the pignut can be eaten raw or cooked. It is crunchy with a sharp, slightly nutty flavour. The pignuts or earthnuts as they are sometimes known have been roasted and made into bread and pollen records show this plant was available in prehistoric times. Pignut can be found in woodland, hedgerows and grassland and flowers in May and June



Any interesting sightings can be sent to
jane.jones@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Inversnaid Reserve



In keeping with the rest of the wildlife, I was a little tardy in getting this article in on time. Our wise and patient editor realises that RSPB wardens sometimes need a gentle nudge, just to get things moving. I felt very similar recently, waiting for the pied flycatcher to return from their African odyssey to our little slice of midge infested paradise. Unfortunately, the pied fly do not have email, so I was unable to ask them where on earth they were. By late April, with still no sign, I was becoming a little concerned to say the least. However, they did return eventually, and are now making up for lost time and getting down to the business of producing those all important eggs.

Initial numbers for the pied fly already look good, with more nests than last year, and still time for more to appear (at the time of writing). You will also be hard pushed to find a more accommodating feathered friend for a bit of casual bird watching. So, if you are enjoying spring watch at the moment, why not take a short trip down to the reserve for a bit of non-webcam nature. A short walk round our nature trail will probably provide two or three sightings of pied flycatcher, and you'll get tree pipit displaying, and wood warbler calling all thrown in for free. Anyone interested in the best spots can write to me at fraser.lamont@rspb.org.uk.

See you on the reserve!

Fraser

Fraser Lamont

Inversnaid Warden



Pied Flycatcher

The Aberfoyle Osprey Project

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

Ospreys Return

As reported in the last issue we were all ready and waiting for the arrival of this year's ospreys and holding our breath to see what dramas would unfold. Now this year we have a new nest site which is being beamed to the David Marshall Lodge in HD, the images that we are receiving look brilliant. We currently only have osprey using our nest 3 site which arrived back on the 4th April. We have so far watched them build the nest up, fight off intruders and prepare for the season.

As many of you know the last four years haven't been very good for our ospreys and eggs so fingers crossed by the time you read this we will have some new additions on the nest!

Eggs Galore!

So far this year there seems to have been a lot of talk about eggs! That's

because our osprey, buzzard and barn owl family have all successfully laid.

Our barn owl family are coming along nicely with 4 chicks hatched and we are just waiting a few weeks for them to get a bit bigger so that we can head out and ring them. Also the buzzard is sitting tightly incubating her eggs.

National Insect Week Photographic Competition

Are any of you keen photographers? Do you like taking pictures of insects? Then this is the competition for you! As part of the David Marshall Lodge's National Insect Week celebrations (25th June – 1st July) we are holding a photographic competition and the entries will be displayed at DML during the week. More information and how to enter can be found on the DML webpage www.forestry.gov.uk/dml.

For more information, volunteering opportunities, a school or group talk contact Robert Fraser-Binns on 01786 229252 or robert.fraser-binns@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



Scottish Wildlife Trust

Our programme of talks will re-start on 11 September, relocated to the Waverley Hotel, Callander, offering alternative beverages for those who enjoy something other than tea with their wildlife!

On 24 June John Snodin will lead a walk to look for orchids and other wildflowers, leaving Ancaster Square, Callander at 2pm and walking up through the woods to Bracklinn Road towards the crags. No charge but please let me know whether you plan to come (details below).

Several groups have been giving our insects a helping hand by sowing wildflowers along the path bordering the Primary School playing field and in Callander cemetery. Bird boxes made by the cubs have been put up in the cemetery with at least one of interest to blue-tits. Others have been put up in Little Leny Meadows where we hope to start more conservation work over the summer.

We have several volunteers for surveying and control of Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed under the Forth Invasive Non-Native Species (FINNS) programme, covering the Forth and all its tributaries. However, we could get a head start by recording where they are growing along our waterways. If you see any of these species, or skunk cabbage, please send a GPS reading, OS reference or just a description and I'll collate the information.

We are always keen to share any interesting wildlife sightings in the area. The May 'The

Villagers' magazine reported sightings of nuthatches in the Strathyre/Locheearnhead area, a species on the northern edge of its range but maybe responding to global warming. They are also seen in Stirling but have you seen them in other places? Also reported were 'some very interesting signs of beaver activities on the River Earn near Comrie', presumably animals from the uncontrolled release on the Tay, now thought to number around 50 from five generations. The geese are long gone, swallows are back, the hunt is on for the elusive pearl bordered fritillary at Loch Katrine, the water voles are waiting for better weather and there are more active black grouse leks. What have you seen?

The red squirrels are now more active and it is good news that the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project has received a further two years' funding and hopefully will include a local community group.

It is a disappointing fact that there are those who do not respect wildlife, even harming it. Please report any incidents to the Central Scotland Police Wildlife Liaison Officer, based in Callander (01877 330222).

Finally, if you want to get involved in any of the above activities or offer to lead an event please get in touch.

Lesley Hawkins, contact at mlhawkins@tiscali.co.uk or 01877 339080

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Consult *Constance*

Constance is our new agony aunt. She is ready to take your questions on affairs of the heart, etiquette and life in general. Her advice comes with a health warning! Be warned!! You can send your questions to her via editor@strathardnews.com Anonymity assured.

Dear Constance,

Q: I was so relieved when I heard there was a new agony aunt I could write to about my problem. It's so bad that I find it difficult to actually put my dilemma down in writing. But one look at your kindly, caring, face convinced me that this time I could confide my issues. So here goes...very often when I begin to...well it just starts and I can't stop... Sorry, no I just can't do it. It's too awful and I am so embarrassed. Maybe in a few weeks time. I know you will understand. Apologies for taking up your valuable time.

Anon

A: Please don't apologise! First I should say how flattered I am that you should choose to share your problem with me. You have come to the right person, I am known for my empathy and insight. Oh, how awful your problem must be, you poor dear. You are clearly incredibly sensitive about it. I imagine that you suffer terribly. Is it a personal hygiene matter of the worst order? Are you a bit whiffy? Or do you have an incurable phobia? Are you incredibly ugly and considering surgery? All of these things I can help you with. Next time you feel moved to write, take a deep breath and pretend you are someone else (as I am sure you wish to every waking hour). And then let your anguish flow through your pen -or pencil if you do not possess a pen. I assure you I will be there for you.

Q: I suppose my problem is not unusual. I hate my job. I used to love it but now I'm bored. So, often I throw a sickie. Unfortunately my employers seem to be getting quite suspicious. I wondered if you could give me some advice which will help me convince my employers that I am being genuine. Whilst I hate my job, in these harsh economic times I would not wish to lose it.

Jaded

A: I am shocked at your behaviour, as you seem to be nothing but a liar and a cheat. That said, I consider my role is to offer practical advice. I have found the following quite helpful in the past myself. Assuming that you have had others call in sick for you and this is wearing thin, can I suggest you construct an alibi recording of you coughing and sneezing when genuinely ill, combined with a few key phrases. Then when you wish to take a day off, call your office when you are sure no one will be in and leave a message using this recording. Your workmates will be full of sympathy. If you want to construct a real whopper of a story, make a recording in the A&E department of a hospital at its busiest time. This can prove very useful when played in the background of your call. Worked every time for me.

Milton

Hello Children,

I can tell you that everyone at the holt is really very excited. I have never known anything like it. No sooner than we get over celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, marking 60 years on the throne, we have the school holidays to look forward to. Cards are already being made for both Dad and Grandpa Otter, to be handed over on Fathers' Day, June 17th. Dad and Grandpa Otter are trying to pick the winner of the Derby, the greatest horse race in the world, which is being run at Epsom on June 9th. The first Derby was held in 1780 and in 1878 the village of Drymen produced a Derby winner, a horse called Sefton. I wonder if Toto McLellan or Fra Wood have a Strathard Derby winner galloping around one of their fields?

In no time at all we'll all be gathering at the lochside at Kinlochard for the Gala Day and Highland Games. The date is Sunday, 15th July. This year I am a good deal stronger and, hopefully, I'll do well in tossing the caber and putting the shot. A lot of people are feverishly waiting for the Olympic Games to begin, but it is worth noting that Highland Games are very much older, more than a thousand years older. Putting the stone was one of the contests in the earliest recorded games, held to celebrate the marriage of Queen Taitte, in 1829BC. Back at the Kinlochard Gala, I might have more chance winning a prize in Class 15 – design your own Olympic Medal. I hope this does not upset Lord Coe, who is claiming sole rights to the word Olympic. Not another soul is allowed to use that word. Even the Women's Rural got into trouble for an Olympic flower arrangement.

With this wonderful weather Mum organised a long swim and a special picnic. We would set off and explore the tunnels and aqueducts of Glasgow's first water supply from Loch Katrine, built between 1856 and 1859. This was when Queen Victoria reigned, and she sat on her throne for 63 years and 216 days, the only other British monarch to have had a Diamond Jubilee to celebrate. I know that after 153 years some wear-and-tear must be expected. However, the lack of maintenance over the last 20 years has left this wonderful piece of Victorian engineering in a perilous state. The splendid aqueduct, carrying the water over the forestry road from Kinlochard to Stronmacnair and Comer Farm, is in serious need of attention. Unless something is done soon, it will be as much of a ruin as Duke Murdoch's Castle, and that was built on a small island on Loch Ard, known as Dundochil, over six hundred years ago.

If you are looking for a good day out, at this time of year it is well worth taking a trip along the entire length of Strathard, to Stronachlachar and Inversnaid. The bluebells and rhododendrons are in full bloom, all along the B829, and you will be amazed by the improvements that have been made to the road! On top of that, there are goats, deer and highland cattle to look out for. If you time it right, you can enjoy refreshments in the café and watch the SS Sir Walter Scott come in to the pier. Bye for now,
Milton.



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GARTMORE VILLAGE HALL – WATCH THIS SPACE!

The Hall Development Group in Gartmore has been actively fundraising to refurbish the Village Hall and we are delighted to announce that the project will start this summer! Duncan's gig will be the last before the Hall is closed for several months.

We are all looking forward to the extensive improvements that we can fund already – external insulation, a new roof, new electrics, new heating system using efficient renewable energy sources, new windows...the list goes on! We await the outcome of other funding applications which will allow us to greatly improve the interior layout of the building. The changes will give the whole appearance of our village hall, and the square, a regenerated modern feel.

The new hall will prove highly attractive to current user groups and the new venue should also encourage new sports groups, businesses, arts events and health support networks to hire this warm, spacious and inviting facility.

We will work in tandem with the other businesses and public amenities in Gartmore providing a venue which will complement their existing facilities. Having such a venue will also encourage more people to see Gartmore as a self-sustaining, vibrant and sociable place to live.

So, watch this space as we update you with our progress! Anyone wishing to leave their contact details with us about future hall hire, should email John Pitts, Treasurer, j_n_pitts@hotmail.com

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Callander Ramblers' Diary

June

Sat 9th 8:30am Hill: Meall an t-Seallaigh (852m) *contact 01877 339080*

Wed 13th 9:30am Ramble: Gardens and Waterfalls of Rumbling Bridge (6½miles) *contact 01877 331691*

Sat 16th 8:30am Ramble: Duncolm and the Slacks (10miles) *contact 01786 841240*

Wed 20th 9:30am Stroll: Allan Water & Kippenrair Glen (4miles) *contact 01877 376200*

Sat 23rd 8:30am LDP: CtoC(7) Ardgartan to Loch Lomond (8miles) *contact 01877 330032*

July

Wed 4th 9:30am Ramble: Ardtalnaig to Invergeldie (11miles) *contact 01877 330102*

We meet in Ancaster Square, unless otherwise indicated. Please bring wet weather clothing, appropriate footwear and a packed lunch. Please let the walk leader know if you plan to join the walk via the contact number given.

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Clubs in the Memorial Hall

Mondays

Tuesdays 3.45pm-8.45pm **Tap, Ballet & Jazz For All ages** Contact Carla Duggan 07815146462

Wednesdays 10am-12pm **Toddler Group** Contact Alison Graham 382726

Evenings **Country Dance** Contact John Epps 382276

Thursdays Evenings **Karate For All ages** Contact Julie Glen 382296

Fridays 7pm-8.30pm **Youth Club (P6 & Up)** Contact Marie Wardrop 382568

Also available for meetings, parties etc call Janet Stewart on 01877 382736.

We need community spirited people to volunteer and join our existing Committee members to ensure the survival of this important village asset. If you cannot commit to being a Committee member, we need help with small repairs and maintenance, painting, gardening etc. We also need new members of our £100 club (you pay £2 per month £1 of which goes to hall funds with the other £1 going in to a prize draw with a member winning the "pot"). Any help is much appreciated. Contact: Andrea Khan, Chairperson 07717418087 or Janet Stewart, Treasurer 01877 382736

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Issue 73 15 July - sponsor needed

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