

issue 39
august
2007
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STRATHARD NEWS

The Voice of Your Community

www.strathardnews.com

Jennifer Jets off to Italy



Congratulations to Aberfoyle textile designer, Caroline Carranza, who is about to jet off to Italy for a three-month placement with top Italian Company Forza Giovane.

Jennifer, a former pupil of McLaren High, recently graduated with a BA(Hons) in design and craft, textiles and surface design from Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. Along with other students she exhibited her work at the New Designers' Exhibition in London where her work caught the eye of a representative from Forza Giovane who went on to offer her the three-month placement at their base in Italy. She sees it as the opportunity of a lifetime and we wish her every success. More information on Jennifer's designs can be found on her website www.jennifercarranza.com

Community Survey

Remember those surveys many of you filled out at the end of May? Well, there was a great response, reflecting how strongly people feel about the area.

The results are being collated and a workshop has been arranged where people can have their say, discuss the issues raised by the survey AND have a bite to eat! The workshop will be in the Memorial Hall, Aberfoyle, on Saturday 22nd September from 11.00am to 3.00pm.

It is important that as many people as possible attend and make their views known to ensure that the new Action Plan contains a fair representation of people's aspirations for their community.

Guild Sale

The Annual Sale will be held on Saturday 18th August at 2pm in Church House. Stalls will include baking, produce, bric-a-brac, plants, books and toys, rainbow and teas with home baking. Church House will be open on Friday 17th from 7-9pm and on Saturday morning from 10-12 noon. Please come along and give us your support.

Aberfoyle Post Office

Back To School Items Now In Stock

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as is – Travel Insurance - as are

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all the usual Post Office Services



stamps, postal orders, top-ups, bill payments, etc.

Shop OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Mon-Sat. 7.00 -5.30; Sun,11.00 - 5.30.

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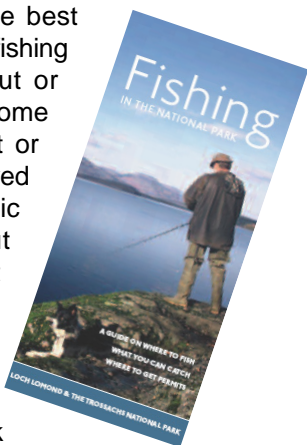
Competitive Rates

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New Fishing Leaflet

A new fishing leaflet is available from the National Park Fish and Fisheries Forum. The guide to fishing in the National Park includes advice about buying permits, fishery rules, when the seasons are and a map outlining some of the best places to fish. Game fishing for salmon, sea trout or brown trout and in some places rainbow trout or grayling, can be enjoyed at a number of scenic locations throughout the Park. The leaflet has a map which can be used to identify the main locations. The National Park Fisheries Forum is an advisory committee for the National Park Authority and includes representatives of the various clubs and statutory bodies concerned with fish and the natural environment. The leaflet is available from visitor centres, the National Park Authority and fishing outlets or as a download from www.lochlomond-trossachs.org



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Aberfoyle Motors Community Purchase Update

An outline application has now been sent in to the BIG Lottery Fund and we are waiting for their response, which we hope to get by the end of August. If it is approved in principle we then have to complete a full application, feasibility study, options appraisal and business plan.

Fundraising

We also have to raise other funds as the most the lottery will give us is 85%. We are getting lots of support from the Lottery and the National Park and other potential funders are keen to help. We are therefore applying to various agencies for 10% of the funds we need **BUT the remaining 5% must come from the local community. This means raising £40,000 ourselves and we are well on the way to doing this. However, we still need more so if anyone is interested in making a small loan to get the business set up please get in touch. Your loan would be fully repaid within 5 years. If we can't raise this 5% from the community the project will not be able to go ahead.**

The people who are doing all this work on behalf of the Strathard Community Trust are volunteers, doing it in their own time for no reward. We are happy to do this as we know from the response to the Community Survey, when half the households in Strathard replied, that there is great demand to save the garage for the community.

Please think about how you can help to raise the final money we need. All ideas are welcome and we are determined to make this work if at all possible but we can't do it on our own.

Maureen Campbell, Lesley Quirk, Sue Russell, Peter Sunderland, Norman Quirk

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We are 13 Balfon pupils who are taking the once in a lifetime opportunity in 2008 to venture to Mongolia where we will:

- Face economic, social and physical challenges.
- Gain new skills and have new experiences.
- Contribute to a local Mongolian Community project.
- Gain an appreciation of the Mongolian Culture.

For our trip we need to raise over £40,000 plus :

Promotional Materials	Sleeping liners	First Aid Kits
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To check out the companies who have already Sponsored us, or if you want information on how to Sponsor us please visit our website.

www.Balfon2Mongolia.co.uk

All donations are gratefully received.

Kinlochard Village Shop

Open 8 am – 8 pm all week

Tel: 01877 387 284

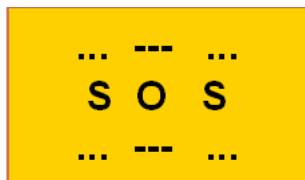
Some of our selection of ethical, organic and fair trade products:

Baked giant beans in extra virgin olive oil; organic artichokes in cold-pressed sunflower oil; garlic stuffed olives; organic kalamata olives; aubergine meze in extra virgin olive oil; sun-dried tomato tapenade; sweet red pepper tapenade; kalamata olive tapenade; canned braised tofu; organic tomato and apple chutney; organic pea soup; organic tomato soup; organic unsalted peanut butter; organic sunflower butter; organic pumpkin seed butter; organic marzipan bar; organic baby food; nutty 9 bar with hemp; hemp power bar; organic chocolate truffles (Booja Booja); fair trade chewy sun-dried banana chips; fair trade chewy sun-dried pineapple slices; unsulphured organic dried apricots; fairly traded fruit salad; organic halva; fair trade coffee; organic and fair trade green tea ...



Are you interested in ordering ethical, organic and fair trade foods in bulk? If so, we guarantee to offer these items at below their recommended retail price (subject to a minimum order). Our supplier can provide over 3000 products. Please contact us for details.

SAVE OUR SURGERY



SAVE OUR SERVICES

The magnificent turn out for the public meeting at the Memorial Hall was testament to the interest of the local community in the consequences of the opening of a Pharmacy in Aberfoyle. It was an opportunity to explain the regulations pertaining to the granting of an application and to highlight the fact that these regulations are heavily weighted on the side of the Pharmacist and to point out that once again the needs of rural and remote communities were disadvantaged by a set of rules, which were only appropriate for large towns and cities.

Patients will have to take their prescription to the Pharmacy in order to collect their medication, which will be inconvenient. In addition the loss of income associated with the withdrawal of dispensing rights will put in doubt the future viability of medical services in this area. The New Pharmacy Contract was intended to improve Health Care in Communities. In this case it can only have a negative impact.

A lively question and answer session followed. Many pertinent points and important issues were raised, not least the issue of patient choice and public consultation. We constantly hear that this is a vital element when considering health care provision. There has been no consultation so far. The voice of this community must be heard.

Following the meeting there was interest from several patients in forming a Focus Group to help coordinate a campaign to preserve our current comprehensive medical and dispensing services. Time is short with the first hearing scheduled for August. The campaign now has a name and logo (see top of page)

Be assured of our ongoing commitment to preserve the medical services for this community. We know that patients would prefer to retain medical services. They have made their views clear. The staff at the medical centre will support the efforts of this community to retain their current services in every way we can.

If you feel you have any expertise to offer or would like to help in any way please contact the surgery or telephone Bill Mclean on 01877 387285.

If a Pharmacy opens in Aberfoyle you should know that:

1) The surgery will no longer be allowed to dispense drugs.

This would mean the loss of the dispensing income and that services would cease or be severely curtailed - for example:

- Nurses
- Physiotherapy
- Chiropody
- Ability of doctors to have access to drugs outwith normal working hours.

2) The surgery itself would be under threat.

- The provision of the present up-to-date building as well as outstanding services would no longer be viable.
- When present doctors retire, the practice would no longer attract an incoming doctor. This could mean travelling further for medical attention.

3) Time is short and continued support is VITAL to make the authorities aware of our feelings on this very important matter which will affect ALL OF US.

You can help by:

- Signing the petition – at the Post Offices or the Surgery.
- Writing to as many as possible of the addresses overleaf

If you want any further information, feel you have any expertise to offer or would like to help in any way, please contact the surgery or telephone Bill Mclean on 01877 387285 or a member of the Focus Group.

Aberfoyle Memorial Hall

Please could I ask you to consider signing the SCVO's petition at the following website. It is to highlight the importance of village halls in a community and to urge the Scottish executive to help fund them as costs rise via a grants scheme. I know Aberfoyle Hall struggles to survive and I'm sure this is the case for many others.

http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/sign_petition.asp

(On the web page you need to go into "list e-petitions" and then select the Village Hall one) We are still anxiously seeking new members for the 100 CLUB to keep this valuable local asset afloat. Stirling Council has indicated that Grants will be sparse this year and we depend on these funds for the running of this non-profit making hall.

If you would like to help this local charity and have the chance of winning a cash sum at a cost of £2 per month, please contact Janet Stewart on 382736.

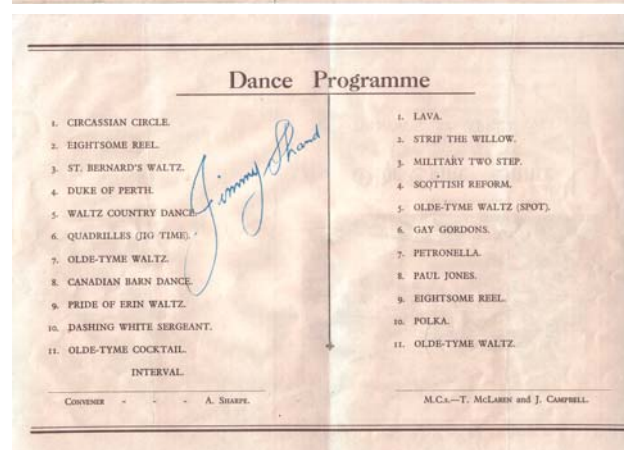
The committee is also seeking items of memorabilia with a view to presenting a permanent display of the hall's history. Do you have any old photographs or memories you would like to share with us? If so, please contact:

Janet Stewart 01877 382736

Jackie Bell 01877 382142

Julie Glen 01877 382296

David Wilkie 01877 382868



Rob Roy Highland Games



Kinlochard Hall Field 15 July 2007

Nearly 1000 spectators enjoyed a wonderful day out at the Kinlochard Rob Roy Highland Games on Sunday, 15th July. Over £3000 was raised for the village hall extension fund at the Games and the ceilidh at night. The Games started with a Grand March from the Forest Hills Hotel - the hotel generously sponsored the Games - led by the Callander Pipe Band under Pipe Major Tom Dingwall.

Leading the Heavy Events (shot, weight-over-height, hammer and caber) were veteran international athlete Hamish Davidson (Nairn) and Peter Whitehead (Fort William) who had just won at the Morven Games in Argyll.

A full range of children's games took place, as well as a knock-out Tug of War and the Giant Sack Race (three in a sack) - both of which were won by a team from Belgium. Two hundred plastic ducks were raced down the River Chon while attractions including the coconut shy, guess the number of logs, and face painting attracted a lot of custom. Kenny's Burger Bar and Peter's Pub did a roaring trade, while Bridget's Raffle and Lucky Dip took over £700.

The Bonniest Sheepdog in Scotland Competition attracted a good entry, the winner of the Bonny Blue Bonnet - specially knitted for the occasion - was won by Rose of Kinlochard from Ledard Farm, selected by Welsh judge, Gwynneth. Two extremely active paparazzi were on the field taking some very intimate photographs - publication dates and magazines will be advised later! The Committee would like to thank the Big Man in the Sky for blessing the day with the best of sunshine!



Letters to the *Editor*...have your say!

Get it off your chest with a letter to the editor. Send to Editor, Schoolhouse, Inversnaid FK8 3TU or email editor@strathardnews.com or hand in to Aberfoyle Post Office.

Thank you for publishing the tribute to Sigrid in your last edition. I am not sure what she might have thought of it!

On behalf of her family, I would like to thank her neighbours, friends, and the kind people of Aberfoyle who contributed so much to Sigrid's love of Aberfoyle and her happiness there. It was a privilege to meet many of you at the service in the Forest Hills hotel, and we are pleased to have forwarded your kind donations of £250 to the Forth Valley Therapeutic Care Service of the Red Cross.

We are indebted to Kathleen and Ian, Anne and Jimmy, Sheila Smith and Margaret Taylor for their care of Sigrid when her health suddenly deteriorated. Grateful thanks to you all. We miss her so much.

Gillian Lindsay
16 Lodge Road
Knowle, Solihull, B93 0HE

Dear Editor,

Being a local resident, I always enjoy reading the Strathard News, which I think is an excellent publication. It's therefore with great regret that I feel it necessary to write to you to complain about something that was published in the June 2007 edition.

The item which I am concerned about is the poem "Rangers Corner", in terms of both its content and tone, and which can only be described as an anti-American rant. As individuals we all hold political viewpoints; nevertheless, I think it is entirely inappropriate that the Strathard News should be used as a platform for individuals to peddle their personal opinions (or in this particular case, their prejudices), under the guise of poetry, especially on issues that are not directly related to local affairs.

My fear is the effect that this particular poem will have (or already has had) on the local tourist industry. I would think it very likely that any American visitor or tourist reading this poem would find it extremely offensive and insulting. It doesn't exactly convey a very friendly and welcoming image of the Strathard area - what American would want to recommend a holiday here after reading this "poem"?

If you could refrain from publishing similar material in future, that would be appreciated, for the sake of our local tourist trade, if nothing else.

Yours sincerely,
Graham Russell
6 Lomond Court
Aberfoyle FK8 3XN

I read with much pleasure (albeit tinged with sadness) the beautiful tribute you wrote to Sigrid Armitage who died on 28th May.

I met Sigrid in her later years when she moved to *Creag Dhu* and became my next door neighbour. I experienced over and over again her unfailing kindness. She looked after our house when we weren't there; she had delicious soup served with home made croutons waiting for us every time we returned. When my old mother in her 90s came to stay, Sigrid was a welcome visitor. She was the only person my mother would allow to manicure her nails; such was her gentle and kindly way.

Aberfoyle will not be the same without her but what wonderful memories she leaves behind. I feel privileged to have known her.

Yours sincerely,
Margery Jennings

Thanks to Wallace Home Services

The Committee of Kinlochard Village Hall would like to thank Bruce for the great work he has done to brighten up the toilets in the hall. Until structural improvements are made, the toilets are never going to be the Ritz, but they have been transformed from somewhere you were embarrassed to direct people to, into fresh and bright loos. Bruce used his skills for small repairs in plaster, tile, plumbing and electrical and then finished off with a great decorating job.

Wallace Home Services donated all labour for the job to the Village Hall. We would like to acknowledge this kind donation and to say that we would have no reservations in recommending Wallace Home services. Thanks again Bruce from Kinlochard Village Hall

Strathard Community Council meets on the 1st Thursday of the month, alternating between Aberfoyle Memorial Hall, Kinlochard Village Hall and Inversnaid Primary School.

The next meeting is at 7.30 pm on Thursday 7th September in Inversnaid.

Community Councillors

Ward 1 Aberfoyle

Ros Dingwall
John Clow
John Fraser
(1 vacancy)

Ward 2 Kinlochard

Fiona McEwan
Maureen Campbell
Sue Russell
Mike Campbell

Ward 3 Inversnaid

Scott Provan
Andre Goulancourt
Ralph Wolfe



STRATHARD
Community Council

This may be a bit of a long shot, but here goes anyway !

I was given your website by a lady who lives at Craigenveoch House at Aberfoyle. I wrote to all the four flats there to see if anyone had heard of the MacDonnells, more specifically Neil MacDonnell, with whom I lived whilst at Bristol Polytechnic in the mid-seventies. His parents moved to Craigenveoch from Clarkston in Glasgow around 1976, and Neil would be about 50 just now, a bit younger than me. I have tried the Friends Reunited web site and all the online telephone books I could find, but to no avail. I am in touch with another couple of students from those days and we all contrived to lose touch with Neil at about the same time. Middle age seems to be a time when one starts to spend as much (if not more...) time looking backwards rather than forwards, and I think this is why we/I are making this quest right now.

I sincerely hope that you and / or the archives of the Strathard News can turn up some information about the MacDonnells of Craigenveoch, c 1976 onwards and look forward to hearing from you. Best wishes.

Bob Burnett
020 8871 3000 / 07801 364502 bob_burnett@lineone.net

2007 Deadline Dates for submissions

2nd September
21 October
18th November
(xmas issue)

St Mary's Episcopal Church



The area is teeming with people. Traffic is often bumper to bumper. It makes the heart glad to see, for it benefits local business and ensures the survival of our community. Long may it continue!

The influx of visitors is because we are in the midst of the holiday season. Conversely it is an opportunity for us to spread our wings as well. How though did our ancestors spend their holiday time? The answer is simple: most didn't. Workers of yesteryear received no entitlement to a holiday save perhaps on holy days and an odd day of national celebration such as a coronation, or victory in a battle. In 1871, the introduction of the Bank Holiday gave many the opportunity for the first time to leave their home surroundings albeit only a day. Clyde paddle steamers would be crammed to the point of listing with day-trippers off to a coastal resort perhaps in reality only ten miles away from home. Windsurfing and body-boarding at the seaside? Not a bit of it. Few had been taught to swim, and those who did had the expense of hiring a beach hut or a bathing machine for the sake of modesty. The sun was regarded as dangerous to health, and it would indeed be daring to remove shoes and socks on a beach, let alone a jacket or coat. It is little wonder the Punch and Judy show became a popular way of occupying bored children for the afternoon.

Many also took advantage of the growth of railways in the middle and late nineteenth centuries. Incidentally it was the arrival of the railway in the 1880s to this area that established it firmly as a tourist centre. The works of Sir Walter Scott had started interest earlier. But the network of railways on the continent was also developing, allowing the very adventurous and wealthy to venture abroad for the first time. One only has to marvel at the grandeur of Glasgow Central Station to realise how important the railways were at the turn of the twentieth century as a means of travel. This was not to last. The advent of the motorcar and the motor coach in time took the place of the railway. The opening of Aberfoyle's Duke's Pass in 1924 courtesy of the Duke of Montrose is just one monument to the increasing popularity of the internal combustion engine. Just five years before though, Alcock and Brown had flown the Atlantic

in a Vickers Vimy. Their achievement opened the possibility of air travel. Thus by the 1930s it was possible to fly to certain holiday destinations by aeroplane. Passengers would sit in unsecured wicker chairs, and in the absence of radar, navigation to the destination was achieved by a crewmember with a map on his knee peering from a window. Not a few of these flights came to grief when attempting to land. A more civilised means of travel especially on the continent in the inter war years was by limousine. Servants and paraphernalia would be sent ahead by shooting brake, and a leisurely journey broken by frequent stops for sumptuous picnics by day and grand hotel dinners by night. For those travelling to the United States, the ocean liner continued to assure every comfort. Some who live locally might still remember being taken to the launching from Brown's shipyard of such liners. There arose in the period intense competition between British and continental shipping lines for the smoothest and quickest ocean passage. All this of course would be beyond the reach of the average holidaymaker. Almost overnight in 1939 holidays came to an end for the duration of the war. A Glasgow liner bound for the United States was sunk on the first night of conflict. Beaches were often closed for defence purposes and fuel severely rationed. Those who did travel were asked whether their journey was really necessary. Many of course were obliged to undertake journeys abroad that they might rather have missed. Afterwards it took the holiday some years to again become established. There were some years of strict currency controls, as well as food, fuel and clothes rationing. The Holiday Camp on Britain's coastlines had its heyday in this period.

So now we queue at airports for hours, and scan the conveyor belts for a piece of lost luggage that becomes lost forever. We queue on motorways whilst one man in a sea of cones six miles away wields a shovel. Happy holidays! Heavenly Father we thank you for the times of rest and relaxation given to us in the course of our lives.

Teach us to use this time to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that we may be strengthened and refreshed in spirit for our daily lives
Amen



MONDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER

Medieval Loch Settlements of the National Park – Matthew Shelley
Lecture to be followed by the Group's Annual General Meeting

WEDNESDAY 10th OCTOBER

Robert Cunninghame Graham – Billie Kay
(Joint Meeting with Gartmore in Gartmore Village Hall at 7.45pm)

MONDAY 5th NOVEMBER

Aberfoyle and the Census – Louis Stott

MONDAY 3rd DECEMBER

Music and the Trossachs – Jim Benson

MONDAY 7th JANUARY

Members' Night

MONDAY 4th FEBRUARY

William Wallace: a Stirling Connection – Colin O'Brien

MONDAY 3rd MARCH

All About Brochs – Irwin Campbell

MONDAY 7th APRIL

Maps, Landscape and Time: exploring the past through three centuries of maps of the Trossachs – Chris Fleet. National Map Library

**Mondays, usually in Kinlochard Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Subscription £10
Single Meetings £4**

Chairman JDF Miller
Secretary Louis Stott

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Ospreys In Tip Top Condition

Three osprey chicks nesting in Aberfoyle received a clean bill of health on Friday July 13 after they had a health MOT check as part of a monitoring programme.

Live pictures from the osprey nest site will be beamed to the bird of prey viewing project at David Marshall Lodge which is run by Forestry Commission Scotland and RSPB Scotland. The chicks were weighed, measured and checked for good health before being ringed. Information coded on the leg rings will help wildlife experts keep track of the ospreys and their welfare throughout their lives, including winter migrations to Africa.

Andy Simkins, Education Officer for Forestry Commission Scotland and RSPB Scotland said:

"The oldest chick is almost six weeks old, and the youngest just over five weeks old. At this stage their legs are fully formed and they are not yet preparing to fly, so there is little risk of panic jumping or the ring getting tighter.

"The chicks were carefully checked over and we are delighted that they are in good health. We hope to get some reasonable weather over the next few weeks so that the adult male can continue to bring sufficient fish to the nest so that all three will eventually successfully fledge and eventually leave sometime in September for West Africa.

"The ringing is an important part of the conservation work carried out in Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. Should our chicks return in three years to breed in Scotland, the rings will help us identify them and will provide an invaluable insight into the lives of our ospreys." Opening hours are 10am to 5pm. Admission to David Marshall Lodge is free and refreshments and family walks are also on site. If you can't wait for an up-date, log on to www.forestry.gov.uk/aberfoyleospreys.

Viewing facilities have also been established to enable the public to watch ospreys live on their nests at the following places: Glentress Forest, near Peebles, by Forestry Commission Scotland; Loch Garten, Strathspey, by RSPB Scotland; Loch of the Lowes, near Dunkeld, by the Scottish Wildlife Trust; Kailzie Gardens, near Peebles; and Wigtown Bay, by Dumfries & Galloway Council.

Osprey viewing at the David Marshall Lodge is part of the RSPB's Aren't birds brilliant! project, to find out more visit www.rspb.org.uk/brilliant.

C.R.A.F.T.Y Tales

By Dougie MacPherson

As many of our community know, growing old (though not old age which is a different thing) brings its problems but we do tend to take these things philosophically, if not humorously, as the following might show. The above mnemonic, (or is it pneumatic?) although we think use of the latter word has become a bit over-inflated of late, displays one aspect of aging – memory loss – hence CRAFT – **Can't Remember A Flippin' Thing!** At least we *think* that's what it stands for. And to show what discomfort us old 'uns suffer in this respect, we would like to give some examples. Most, if not all, of these stories are possibly apocryphal. Nevertheless, we offer them for your delectation. Our first story concerns an older couple who visit friends for a meal. After the meal, when the ladies have retired to the kitchen, one old fella says to the other, 'You know, last night the wife and I went out for a meal to this new restaurant. It was excellent. I would thoroughly recommend it.'

'What was the name of the restaurant?' asks the other old 'un.

'Eh....whatsit....' and he hesitated, 'What do you call the name of that flower you give to your loved one, you know, it's red with thorns?'

'A rose?'

'That's it!' Then he called out, 'Hey, Rose, what's the name of that restaurant?'

Then you have the tale of the three old guys sitting in the pub of an evening, discussing their problems, specifically memory loss.

The first guy says, 'I found myself the other day, standing at the top landing wondering if I had got out of bed and was going downstairs or had *climbed* the stairs to go to bed.'

'That's nothing,' said our second friend, 'the other night I was at the fridge door. I couldn't remember if I was putting something *in* the fridge or had gone to get something out!'

The third man leant back and, with a patronizing air, said 'I feel sorry for you guys. I don't have that trouble, knock on wood.' And he tapped the table three times. 'Hold on,' he said, 'There's the door. I'll get it'

Finally we have the tale of two old men, at least one who should have known better. We are not talking memory loss here, more wishful thinking.

So two old guys are pushing their shopping trolleys around the supermarket aisles, when their trolleys collide. First old man apologises, saying he was looking for his wife. The second says no problem, he also was looking for his wife.


'Let's make it easy,' says the first guy, 'What does your wife look like?'

'Well, she's twenty-seven years old, six feet tall, long red hair, big bosom, wearing hot pants and boots. What does yours look like?'

'Never mind, let's look for yours!'

Ah....happy days! You can remember in minute detail incidents that occurred forty years ago but you can't remember what you did with the bloody car keys this morning! And so, as we gently place our false teeth on the mantelpiece of life and place our worn carpet slippers before the hearth of eternity, we say - farewell!

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HIMALAYAN CHALLENGE THE UPDATE

In the May issue we reported that Colin Hutton and his daughter Corinne, as part of The Colin Hutton Group's 30th Anniversary, were embarking on a trek in the Himalayas for Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres. The following is Colin's story of their experiences. 24 of us arrived at Edinburgh airport with high spirits to fly British Airways to Heathrow (more later). There is good and bad in everything, the good was very good, the bad was awful. First the good news:- We arrived in a quaint little mountain hamlet in the Ladakh region of India called Leh, which means high pass, to spend a few days acclimatizing to the altitude of 10,500 feet. The flight in through the mountains and the landing at Leh were "interesting", I have never before "dropped" into an airport.

The trekking, scenery, camping, food, and of course the company were excellent though the "long drop" toilets were a wee bit "iffy", the other downside was that NO alcohol was permitted on the trek, how would I cope?

Days 1 and 2 of the trek were, compared to our first two days travelling, fantastic, over mountains, through valleys to our campsites which were all set up for our arrival by the crew which consisted of 12 horsemen and of course horses, 9 helpers, 3 cooks who packed up camp, overtook us and set up again for the next night and 3 guides who walked and guided us throughout our trek. Day three - as we made five river crossings, sometimes with boots off and thigh deep in freezing water, others by what they loosely call bridges. As we climbed higher we encountered some altitude problems to a few of our group although, fortunately, neither Corinne nor I were affected. Altitude Mountain Sickness, AMS, can affect even the fittest with headaches, sleep deprivation and the dreaded Delhi Belly and there were some very fit guys and gals [9 in total] who were told, by the trek Doc. that they had to go back down the next day. We were briefed that night

by our leader that on our assent to the summit if anyone took AMS then the whole group would have to go down. That night every other trekker's minds and tummies (butterflies) played up in case they would be the one to force the group to turn back. However our fears were groundless as the remaining 15 made it to the top (quite a climb) to 16,087 feet above sea level, without problems.

The days going down were much harder on the old knees and although the scenery was superb and the mountains majestic, the days passed without incident, apart from the numerous water crossing, which by now were nae bother.

On our last day going down, the nine who had to turn back climbed up to meet us and we all walked down together for a few well earned alcoholic refreshments with all the crew at the finish.

Now the bad news:- I told you that we flew from Edinburgh, that should have given you a clue. The day BA had made their baggage handlers redundant and contracted out this work to Aviance - DISASTER. Three hours late, we left Edinburgh for Heathrow, (next clue), where we missed our connection to Delhi. On route to our unscheduled hotel stop at the end of Terminal 3, our bus came to a standstill in chaos as they evacuated Terminal 3 for a fire drill !!! An hour later I asked the bus driver where our hotel was, he replied and pointed "over there". One hour standing on a bus when we were only 150 yards from hotel???

Up early next morning for flight to Delhi only to find our tour guide absent and no way of contacting her so we got our own way to the Airport and she arrived shortly after a bit flustered and cursing the Hotel for missing her alarm call! The flight to Delhi eventually took off only half an hour late but that was after a panic where one of group had been missed of the list! Any sympathy yet?


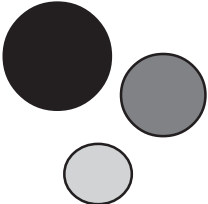
Prior to touchdown in Delhi the Captain announced that there were a number of bags that were not on the flight and could we announce ourselves to the ground staff on leaving the aircraft - guess what? All 24 of our bags were missing - no-one else's!

17 of those turned up on Tuesday, five days late and on the day that we were to leave on our trek. 7 were still missing including mine and Corinne's. The seven of us without bags set off to the shops, i.e. market stalls, to try and buy such essential kit such as sleeping bags, bed roll, boots, wet weather wear and of course some clothes. Not too big a problem for us macho men but the girls all wanted designer gear and wouldn't be seen dead in the underwear available! Not that we got to see it anyway!

6 more bags were waiting for us on our return from our trek, mine was not one of them. Our travel problems were not over yet as we were delayed seven hours in Leh Airport (a glorified porta-cabin with no facilities. Toilets, yes, but they were not much better than those up the mountain).

We flew home the next day with only a few hours delays at Delhi and Heathrow but back in Edinburgh we found 'ONLY' 2 bags lost on the return journey. Mine did eventually turn up after 25 days but when I opened it I found everything was wet through, stinking and mouldy and I am still fighting with British Airways - 'The World's Favourite Airline' !

To finish on a high note the company could not have been better, a great bunch and it was a real pleasure meeting, eating, sleeping (not in the biblical sense) and crying on each others shoulders. Many of those have benefited from the services Maggie's offer and so a big THANK YOU to all who helped us support them and also to MAGGIES for making it (good and bad) possible.



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Ranger's Ramblings

A View from the Lodge!

.....
Contributions welcome. Contact David Wilkie on 01877 382258 or email david.wilkie@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



(photo courtesy of John McKinley)

The Women's Timber Corps Memorial

The Women's Timber Corps, part of the Women's Land Army, was a service originally set up during the First World War and expanded in 1942, whereby girls and women from the age of seventeen were recruited to work in woodland. Once trained, they were billeted in camps and, in the absence of the men who had answered the call to war, carried out the arduous tasks of felling, snedding, loading lorries and trains and sawmilling timber all over Scotland. As there was no official recognition of their efforts during the war, nor since, they have tended to become known as the "forgotten corps". A feasibility study carried out in 2006 concluded that a lasting memorial should be created and it has been decided to locate this within the grounds of the David Marshall Lodge and take the form of a life-size bronze sculpture of a member of the WTC. The statue itself should be in place by late August, although the official unveiling will take place at a later date. Forestry Commission Scotland is extremely anxious to make contact with any members of the WTC who were based in the Trossachs at the time and who would be willing to appear on the day of the ceremony.

Please contact:

David Marshall Lodge: 01877 382258

Forest District Office: 01877 382383



Nick Nairn takes the plunge on Go Ape. Perhaps hoping he'll catch a duck in mid-air for the evening soup!



Artist's impression of finished product



DML Notice Board

Saturday 18th August

11.00am-4.00pm - Lomond Craft Association

Saturday 18th August/Sunday 19th August

1.00pm - Mini-bus tour of the Lochard Forest.
£5 per adult, under-14 free. Spaces limited.

Sunday 19th August

3.00pm - Heelster Gowdie. Live music at the lodge
- free, donations welcome.

Saturday 1st September

7.30pm - late. Bat Watch.

Saturday 8th September

7.30pm - late. Bat Watch.

Both bat events are £5.00 per adult, under-14 free.

Contact DML on 01877 382258 for further details.

iain
painting
glen

Iain Glen
Tel: 01877 382 296
Mob: 07737726338



01877 382473

dml photo gallery



Sheena Lambert gets up close and personal wiht husband Jocky during a celebratory lunch at the Lodge to mark their 60th wedding anniversary



What a perfect picture of 'our Katy' and son Kyle this makes, if it wasn't for the fact that she appears to be working him from the back! 'gottle of geer, anyone!'



Clearly, the Commissions initiative on the abuse of mind-bending drugs has not yet reached the office of Shirley Leek.



This hidden lost treasure, previously overgrown slate paving leading from the Queen Mother's stone, was recently unearthed by Peter and Charlie on the strength of an old 1970's photograph handed into the lodge.



**This photo scorches the theory that you can't find a commission employee when you need one.
READY, WILLING & ABLE!**

Newsletter Launched For Stirling's Young People

Stirling's young people have a new newsletter. The first edition of 'Whatz Happenin?' has just been published. It aims to provide young people with information on housing, health, money and local services for people aged 16 to 25 years in Stirling, in a fresh and engaging way. Alison Barker, from Stirling's homelessness and youth advice project The Bridge, said: "Young people need information. 'Whatz Happenin?' is one of the ways we can get information out there. We've worked with Stirling Council's Housing Services to make 'Whatz Happenin?' happen. We hope that 'Whatz Happenin?' will help signpost young people to the services they want."



'Whatz Happenin?' is being sent to all Council tenants with Open Door, the Council's tenants' newsletter, and will be available at libraries, community centres, doctors surgeries and elsewhere.

Tony Cain, Head of Housing Services, said: "Many young people are already our tenants and many more are our future tenants. We know that the right information can help maintain tenancies. We also want to hear what young people think of our services and the type of housing they need. For us, 'Whatz Happenin?' is the start of a conversation." For further information please contact: Alison Barker, The Bridge, 55 -57 Lower Bridge Street, Stirling. tel. 01786 448633. lorettocare@stirling.gov.uk.

National Park Access Forum is looking for two new members to represent communities in the northern areas of the Park (Breadalbane, north Trossachs or Argyll) The Access Forum represents both land managers and recreational groups and advises the National Park Authority on outdoor access issues in the Park area under the Land Reform Act. The group offers balanced advice on issues including core path planning and the exercising of access rights. Candidates should have some knowledge or experience of outdoor recreation such as horse-riding, cycling, walking, canoeing, sailing or climbing. The National Park Authority is keen to receive applicants from people with experience of outdoor access for the less able including wheelchair users. The National Park Authority established its Local Access Forum in February 2005 and now holds quarterly evening meetings. The Park Authority's duties include, upholding access rights, publicising the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, preparing a core paths plan and appointing a local access forum. Information packs are available from www.lochlomond-trossachs.org or by contacting National Park HQ 01389 722600. Applications should reach the Park Authority by 7 September 2007. For more information, contact Bridget Jones, Senior Access Officer on 01389 722600 or email bridget.jones@lochlomond-trossachs.org

National Park Callander Area Office was officially opened on Monday 23 July by Bruce Crawford JP MSP, recently elected MSP for Stirling and Minister for Parliamentary Business. The extended former bookshop in Callander's Main Street provides a shop front for the authority and its partners at the heart of the Park's largest settlement. Trossachs and Breadalbane residents can now find out more about the park authority and its activities, view planning applications or arrange to meet board members, planners and other officers. Local groups such as Destination Trossachs, Callander 2000 & Beyond (the community development trust), and the Callander Woodland Link have already made good use of the meeting facilities and various meetings relating to the whole of the Park, such as the Community Partnership Litter Campaign, have also been held.

Countryside Ranger Scott Ashworth is now based full-time in Callander working with local schools and community groups as well as keeping an eye on key sites such as Bracklinn Falls and Loch Lubnaig. Other officers with a focus in the Trossachs or Breadalbane, including Kenny Auld (Access Officer) and Scott Nisbet (Land Management Officer) will split their time between Callander and HQ at Balloch while Valerie Graham and Morven Cattigan are pleased to welcome visitors at reception. Address & phone number 52-54 Main Street, Callander FK17 8BD tel 01389 722126 email info@lochlomond-trossachs.org



Pictured from left to right: Valerie Graham, Scott Ashworth, Bruce Crawford JP MSP and Morven Cattigan

National Park Authority is looking to improve its planning service

and wants to hear the view of its users. In order to implement the necessary changes Mike Hyde, who has worked in the planning department for the past four and a half years, has recently been seconded to the new role of Planning Service Improvement Officer. Speaking about his new role, Mike said, "I'm really excited about the forthcoming challenges. Although we have delivered a lot in the 5 years since we were established I know that people do sometimes have issues with the service that we currently provide. Royal assent in December of last year includes a whole range of new procedures for the Authority to take on board. For example, currently it is the responsibility of applicants to notify their neighbours of their planning applications. Within the new Planning Act, the National Park Authority must take on this duty. Another significant change for the Planning Service will be the introduction of e-Planning. Over the next two years details of all applications, advice and guidance will be made available online. Applications will be able to be submitted electronically and applicants and objectors will be able to check progress of cases without the necessity to visit or telephone our office in Balloch.

In order to speak to as many people as possible Mike will hold a number of planning surgeries around the Park. At present his proposed surgery dates are:

22 August	Sandbank
5 September	Callander
19 August	Sandbank

Hours would be 11 am to 3 pm. If you would like to attend, please call Mike to make an appointment. All comments will, of course, be treated as confidential.

If you cannot attend a surgery, but would like to meet Mike and discuss your experiences, or if you have any suggestions about how we might improve our service, please let him know, either by e-mail at michael.hyde@lochlomond-trossachs.org or telephone on 01389 722620.



Loch Lomond
& The Trossachs
National Park

by Owen McKee

National Park News

The complaint is
always that
e v e r y t h i n g

happens at Loch Lomond and nothing happens in this side of the Park. It is not strictly true, of course, but it is easy to see why people should think that. Now we have a chance to change the perception. Representatives of the communities on this side of the Park were invited to the official opening of the new office in Callander. The Park Convener, Mike Cantley, in welcoming the guests made it clear that the Callander office was for the communities. It is not a Tourist Information Office. That function in Callander rests with VisitScotland and the Rob Roy Centre. The Callander Office is well equipped and has a number of meeting rooms which will be available to local community groups but more importantly staff are on hand to deal with general issues and arrangements can be made for individual interviews whether it is with a Planning Officer, an Access Officer or a Grants Officer.

With the advent of the new Planning Act there will be a number of changes to the way the planning system operates. Work is underway in setting up an ePlanning System and a designated officer is in place to ensure that the switch over is as smooth as possible. Greater emphasis is being placed on the community's role in the planning process and that has to be

reflected in the new systems. To help us to take full advantage of the community's needs the Planning Service Improvement Officer will be holding a number of surgeries throughout the Park. For this area the surgeries will be in the Callander Office on 8th August and 5th September when he will be available from 11.00am till 3.00pm. These sessions are intended to be for two way conversations in the hope that not only can the Officer answer questions of a general nature but also can listen to suggestions and comments about good and bad examples of planning service experience and thoughts on how the service could be improved. Misinformation seems to plague Planning. Everyone hears about the Planning Application that was turned down although they seldom hear the reason for the refusal. What people don't realise is that since the Park Authority took over the Planning function 5 years ago over 90% of Planning Applications submitted have been approved. Admittedly it is not unusual for considerable negotiation to take place before approval. That, I would argue, is more the fault of a poor quality application. Nothing would please me more than if 100% of planning applications merited approval. The Planning Improvement Officer's surgeries are NOT for specific individual planning

queries. As mentioned above if you have a specific planning problem please arrange a meeting with the Planning Officer for the area.

In conjunction with VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley and Stirling Council, the Park Authority is working on ways to improve the business opportunities of tourism. Local businesses have joined forces with the agencies to form a Trossachs Destination Organisation and we are all focussing on ways of branding the Trossachs so that the area can be successfully marketed to attract the quality/quantity of visitors to increase business and jobs in the area.. You would think that with such a wonderful asset as the Trossachs the task would be easy. Unfortunately the competition is worldwide and consequently our marketing tools must be razor sharp. Let's hope we can perfect a strategy that can be launched for next year.

As always I can be contacted as follows:

Post: Taigh Na Bhuth,
Locheearnhead,
FK19 8PR

Phone: 01567 830214
owen@thevillageshop.fsbusiness.co.uk

Anti Social Behaviour

As I travel around the Park many are commenting on examples of anti-social behaviour evident in the Park this year. These incidents are primarily weather related and occur around lochs and roadsides accessible by car and tend to feature people camping and sometimes drinking or lighting fires. These problems are associated with informal camping but do not fall within the legal examples of "wild camping" as detailed in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Our Countryside Rangers have no legal power to move people on who are not behaving appropriately. Our Countryside Rangers can talk to these individuals and try as best we can to encourage them to behave responsibly and stay within the bounds of the law. If any criminal activity takes place then of course it becomes a matter for the police. The police are taking these matters very seriously but they too are hampered by the challenges of covering a large geographic area, and planning for weather related concentrations of activity. What's more, if campers arrive by car and

then drink, the police must exercise great care in instructing them to move on. Even when it is clear that the law has been broken, the nature of the crimes (cutting down trees, excrement, even assault) can be very difficult to prove.

The role of the National Park Authority is of course to co-ordinate the resolution of difficult issues like these by working in partnership with the police and others; and I can give you an absolute assurance that we intend to do just that. Our respective police forces of Strathclyde, Central and Tayside have been extremely supportive in their approach to these challenges. Strathclyde have deployed extra police to last year's "hot spots" like Luss, and the National Park patrol boat on Loch Lomond actually carries police officers at weekends. Central Scotland Police are deploying extra manpower to patrol lochs in The Trossachs, especially at weekends where most incidents are generated. Plus Tayside and Central forces have been combining resources to tackle anti-social behaviour around Loch Earn. What's more,

our police, our Countryside Rangers, Forestry Commission staff, and landowners are working together to share information and intelligence regarding what's happening on the ground with the objective of detecting and dealing with potential trouble spots before they get out of hand. So, this summer I hope everyone will have confidence that we're doing everything we reasonably can to deal with what is a very challenging problem.

But everyone can play a role. If you see people acting suspiciously then you are urged to contact the police. Through working together I'm confident this problem can and will be addressed. Anti social behaviour in our National Park cannot be tolerated.

Mike Cantlay
Convener Loch Lomond and The Trossachs
National Park Authority

The Garden

Is your garden looking bright and colourful? If you have been continually deadheading your annuals the colour should continue for a couple of months yet. No matter how dull or wet the weather may seem don't forget to water your hanging baskets, tubs and window boxes and feed them with soluble plant food. Remember, there are a lot of plants sharing the small amount of soil with only a limited amount of water and food available so daily watering is essential and feeding twice a week will keep them happy. Also, a bonus of feeding is it will make the plants strong and less susceptible to disease. Just like us, if they are fed properly and have the minerals etc they need, they will become robust and healthy.

Regularly at this time of year pansies that have looked lovely and flowered well since spring, get scruffy, leggy and spotty. Sounds like some teenagers I know! Unlike teenagers we can just chuck them out! There is no need to have an empty space where they have been. There are still quite a few late flowering plants available: fuchsias, dahlias and chrysanthemums for example. They will flower well into autumn and it won't be long until the winter (universal) pansies will be on sale. Or, why not sow some pansy or viola seeds now yourself?

There are a lot of plants and shrubs that are still to give us their best like buddleias, lavatera, roses and the herbaceous plants (perennial) that die down in winter then

come back up every year - phlox, asters, crocosmia (better known to more mature gardeners as montbretia) and anemones to name but a few.

The late flowering hydrangea is a favourite of many. They look beautiful when in full flower in the garden centres just now and make lovely presents but people often ask me why it is that their bush doesn't flower ('ever again'). One reason may be that the flowering tips of the branches have been damaged long before the buds begin to show. This could happen when the spent flowers are taken off or, during the cold damp weather in the winter, frost literally 'nips them in the bud'. My best advice is - if planting a newly acquired bush find a sheltered place for it where the frost won't damage those tips. Don't prune and just leave the old flowers on. They look lovely when dry and the frost is on them (protecting those precious buds). Whether newly planted or settled in a permanent position, fork some sulphate of potash around the base of the plant. This helps strong flower buds develop.



One last thing before I end. Slugs don't seem to be much of a nuisance in the summer months but don't become complacent! They are the gardener's number one enemy! In Scotland's damp climate they thrive and although there are not so many soft young shoots for them

to devour don't forget they are out there under large primula, hosta and rhubarb leaves, breeding! Now, you will have heard of putting out a sunken bowl of beer for them to sniff, slide, then submerge themselves and ultimately drown in. Well, it really works! I was spotted at my son's recent birthday party, decanting all the dregs from abandoned beer and lager bottles into soft drinks

containers to take home. This did my reputation no good but do I care? Not one iota. In the space of a week I had many full bowls of drowned, drunken slugs and perhaps a few inebriated birds to boot. So remember when you next have a BBQ or are just relaxing with a shandy in the garden on a hot afternoon..... save some drink for the slugs!

by Fleur



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6. I purchase individual items
7. I purchase complete estate or house contents

Every contact is made with total discretion, confidentiality and courtesy, at a time to suit the client. Properties cleared will be left secure, swept and tidy.

Welcome to the news from Glendrick Roost

Unfortunately due to changed circumstances at the farm we are once more having to look for other accommodation. Not only is there insufficient grazing on the farm for the animals in our care but the buildings and land are needed by the owner to extend his own business. Already we have had to move some of the ponies to better grazing to enable those remaining to have enough grass to eat - that in July !!!

We hope that someone will hear our plea and help the animals find the home they seek.

Animals continue to come into the centre requiring our help. Chinchillas are the animals in 'vogue' at present and another six were admitted last month. These endearing, nocturnal creatures are poor pets for children but people still buy them and then discover they are VERY active and do not sit still to be cuddled; they sleep all day; ping poo long distances; can live for upto twenty years and eat hay as their staple diet, that then gets all over the house. BUT if anyone can look past these traits to see these adorable animals for what they are they are worth having in our homes. I love them. We do have several young males still looking for loving permanent vetted homes. Several rabbits and guineapigs have been admitted; two baby rabbits now learning to be extra friendly to be used by ourselves in the many talks and demonstrations we give in the local communities throughout the year. We also have several registered Pets as Therapy dogs and cats that can be taken to talks. If your group, club or school would like a visit from some of the animals and see what it is we do at the centre please get in touch with me - Mione Morrison.

The breeding season is a very busy season for all animal rescue centres as young animals and birds take their first steps into our dangerous alien world. A very large part of our work consists of assisting injured wildlife that we take in; we apply first aid and transport most of them to Hesselhead the

wildlife hospital that has the expertise and facilities to rehabilitate these damaged creatures back into the wild.

Over the past month amongst many animals taken there I have taken

- a young pipistrelle bat [doing well in the bat nursery]
- a young swallow that had fallen out of the nest; a tiny blue tit that had been caught and had its wing feathers damaged; a young pied wagtail; a baby starling caught by a cat.
- a family of mum and five baby hedgehogs that had just got their eyes open [dug up from the compost heap]
- two baby hedgehogs still with their eyes closed [they had wounds that were already infected with maggots - they are doing well having had the maggots removed and the wounds have healed]
- a young buzzard caught by a car [he/she has a head wound that hopefully will heal and two tawny owl chicks from separate locations].

All these animals have survived so far.

- Two lesser black backed gulls both with shattered wing joints could not be helped and had to be humanely destroyed along with a duck found with a badly damaged beak.

We have enquiries daily regarding rehoming dogs and puppies or cats and kittens. We also deal with welfare enquiries covering all aspects of animal care.

Volunteers are constantly needed in all aspects of our work. If you can offer a few hours in any capacity please get in touch, you will be very welcome.

Mione Morrison Tel: 07748351287

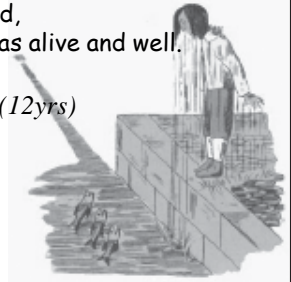


The Silly Fool

One day I was walking
Beside the bubbling brook.
Suddenly I spotted something moving;
Upon inspection I saw a fish,
A flash of gold and green
Circling and circling darting and moving.
I stared and stared in amazement,
Got too close to the side
And fell in with a loud splash.

People passing on their bikes
Laughed and laughed.
What a sight!
I was dripping wet, miserable and cold.
Walking home, my fishing net collapsed,
My spirits crushed,
But my memory was alive and well.

Mathew Simpson (12yrs)



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NOT HERE.... BUT NEAR!

Trossachs Trundler Starts Its Summer Season

The Trossachs Trundler 2007 has now started operating for the summer season. The bus service is operated by Harlequin Coaches and funded by Stirling Council.



Running between Loch Katrine, Kilmahog, Brig O'Turk, Callander, Aberfoyle, and the Port of Menteith, the Trundler can carry up to two bikes and is fully wheelchair accessible. Leaving Callander four times a day, six days a week, it stops on request and is timetabled to link up with sailings of the *Sir Walter Scott* and *Ellen's Isle* on Loch Katrine.

The Trossachs Day Rover Ticket, priced £8 for an adult, £6.40 for a concession, £2.80 for a child and £19.20 for a family, gives unlimited travel for one day on the Trundler. Tickets can be on bought on board the Trundler or at Stirling Bus Station. National Entitlement Card holders travel free.

For further information contact the Public Transport Co-ordination Centre on 01786 442707 or local Tourist Information Centres.

Forest Theatre Company (and friends) are having a Night of Soul when they perform the songs from The Commitments film. Singers and musicians from Forest Theatre will be joined by local saxophone, trumpet and trombone players for one night only. All profits made will be given to Gartmore Association to help renovate the hall and provide a better heating system.

The concert will be on Friday 17th August from 7.30pm in Gartmore Village Hall. For further details see posters in local shops or contact Helen Webster, Chairperson 382810.

Green Essentials

An interest in environmental issues and the decision to join a village co-operative buying group to source eco-friendly products, has led Stirling couple, Richard & Sue Waite to launch Scotland's first major web-based enterprise specialising in the sale of a range of 'green' household products.

The business, which trades under the name www.greenessentials.co.uk is located in the heart of the Stirlingshire countryside, at Dunaverig Rural Enterprise Park, Ruskie, outside the village of Thornhill.

Visitors to the website will be able to source environmentally friendly household, bathroom, baby & child and energy saving goods. The company also specialise in hard to find products such as low energy spotlight bulbs and organic cleaning materials. Items will be delivered direct to the customer's door within two working days of an order being placed.

In a bid to overcome the environmental impact of nationwide delivery, Richard and Sue have also come up with a Community Delivery Service. This means friends can get together to place an order. Each person's order is individually packed, then grouped and sent to one address. Customers get free delivery and delivery miles are reduced. The service is aimed at work colleagues, neighbours and community groups and is the first of its type in the UK.

For further information, contact Richard and Sue Waite, Green Essentials on Tel: 01786 850895 E-mail: info@greenessentials.co.uk or visit the website: www.greenessentials.co.uk



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Third Age Group Strathendrick (T.A.G.S.)

The popular trip last month, to Malleny Gardens and Roslyn Chapel had a full coach and the locations were greatly enjoyed by all. Some of the members had their photo taken in the Gardens.

The next day trip is on 29th August to Dundonald Castle via Cardwell Nursery and Hayes Garden Land. The Coach picks up at Callander 8.50am, Gartmore at 9.20am, Buchlyvie 9.40am, Drymen at 9.55am, Balfon Cotton St at 10.10am, Register office at 10.15am, Killearn at 10.25am.

Book at Balfon Library 01360 440407. Cost is £15 including entry. New members welcome.

New Balfon Business Takes Clutter To Task

A new Balfon-based enterprise is throwing a lifeline to the disorganised, by offering a home and office clutter management service. Thirty-seven year old Claudia Duncan is the brainchild behind the business idea which will trade under the name 4D Organising. Claudia explains: "What 4D Organising will bring to the table is professional experience in office and home organising, paperwork management and de-cluttering. We provide an on-site service for small to medium sized businesses and individuals that is efficient, confidential and reliable."

4D Organising is a member of the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers www.apdo-uk.co.uk and has full public liability insurance. Claudia will undertake work within a 20 mile radius of the Balfon area. Travel expenses will apply to clients based outwith this locality. For further information, contact Claudia Duncan on Tel: 01360 449 101. Mobile: 07981 768 081. E-mail: claudia@4dorganising.co.uk or log on to the website www.4dorganising.co.uk

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Milton

Hello Children,

Did you manage to get to the Highland Games at Kinlochard? It would have been a great pity if you had missed it and nearly everybody I know was there, enjoying the wonderful weather. There was so much to see and do. Two of the strongest men I have ever seen were taking part in a real Highland Games, putting the shot, throwing very heavy weights and tossing the caber. I thought that the hammer throwing was the best of all. Hamish Davidson and Peter Whitehead really thrilled the crowd. In 1979, Hamish set a Scottish record for the 22lb shot, putting the stone 51ft 1in. All measurements at Highland Games are in old fashioned imperial instead of modern metric. Roughly speaking, 1lb is just under 0.5kg, and 3ft is slightly less than a metre. You can do the arithmetic for yourselves, but I can tell you these athletes send very heavy objects a very long way!

There was a great deal of activity all over the games field and on Loch Ard, as well. The twins, Duke and Katrine were desperate to have a spin in the seaplane. To my surprise

dad agreed, so the whole Otter family and George the Hare took off with Captain David West at the controls. Based at Loch Lomond, Captain West told us that we were flying in a Cessna Turbo Stationair Seaplane. The Captain also said that this was one of the most advanced, sophisticated and safest aeroplanes - I was really glad about that last bit. Braeval, my normally talkative, know-it-all sister, was strangely silent as the loch disappeared beneath us. In no time at all we were flying high above Strathard. We could see for miles! We could see the sea to the west and we see the sea to the east, from one side of Scotland to the other. Grandpa Otter pointed out the rivers we have all swum in, and lots of others, too. From 17,000ft in the sky, even Ben Lomond looked rather small.

All too soon we were back on the ground, but what an experience that had been. There was still an awful lot to see and do at the Games. Mum and dad went off to the tombola stall, George was looking for enough people to join him in the giant sack race and the rest of us wanted to watch the Most Beautiful Sheepdog contest. That was won by Alice, clearly the best looking collie in the whole of the Trossachs. With her handler, Jake, all the other competitors were fighting for second place. At five o'clock the end of the Games came, all too soon. But there was still the ceilidh to look forward to. This had been the first Highland Games to be held at Kinlochard for many years. I hope there will be another one in 2008.



That was just one day of our school holidays. And by the time we got back to our holt at Aberfoyle, it had been a very long day, indeed. In fact, it was already daylight before we got to our beds. Although I quite enjoy going to school and learning about lots of different things, holiday time is much more fun. The next day we all had a long lie and a rather late breakfast. Then mum packed a picnic and we swam down the River Forth to Lemahamish. The afternoon started off quietly enough, but then the twins decided to have their own Highland Games - and everyone else just had to join in the fun. In our version of Games we added swimming, running and tree-climbing events, too. Some of the other Highland Games used to have unusual events as well. In one Games, long ago, they used to see who was best at twisting the legs off a cow! The prize for the winner was a fat sheep. Of course, they didn't really pull off any of the legs of that poor cow, the animal had to be wrestled to

the ground and onto her back with all four legs in the air. That just would not be allowed at any Highland Games in the twenty-first century.

This year Aberfoyle is determined not to be left out of the summer fun and will be holding a Gathering of its own: the date to look forward to is Saturday, 25th August. I am sure that the hardworking organisers will provide lots of things to do. Aberfoyle began as a place where animals from the Highlands would be gathered together and sold at special sales, known as fairs. The biggest of the Aberfoyle Fairs was held as near to St Bartholomew's Day as possible, and that is 24th August. So this year they are pretty close to the actual date. In those olden days there were no lorries to transport the animals to where they wanted to go, they just had to walk all the way. Some of the cattle sold at Aberfoyle would walk all the way to London, a journey that took about six weeks. Now it is possible to get to London in six hours.

Next week the whole family will be helping the National Park Rangers and lots of other volunteers to pickup the huge amount of litter and rubbish left behind by thoughtless people. I am sure that most of our visitors take their refuse away with them, it is the few that simply abandon their rubbish that cause the problem. I think that we shall be clearing up along the shores of Loch Chon. I'll let you know how I got on.

Bye for now,
Milton.

Forth Inn Events Diary

25th August - Karaoke in The Wallace Bar. Fun starts 9pm

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2nd September - Pub Quiz, Prize for Winning Team, starts 9pm

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15th September - Karaoke in The Wallace Bar Fun, starts 9pm

.....

30th September - Pub Quiz, Prize for Winning Team, starts 9pm

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Main Street, Aberfoyle FK8 3UQ

Tel: 01877 382 372

E-mail: Phil@ForthInn.com

Grilled Whole Mackerel on a Rocket and Olive Salad (Serves 1)

Ingredients:

1 Mackerel
(Head and Tail off and Boned)
½ Red Onion Sliced
Basil (chopped)
½ Lemon (juiced)
1 floz White Wine
½ oz Butter
White Pepper
Rocket Salad
Pitted Olives



Method:

Place the mackerel skin down in an oven proof tray. Add the onion, lemon juice, wine, butter and pepper.

Grill for 4-5 mins., turn over and grill the skin side for 3-4 mins.

Arrange the salad on a plate with the olives, place the fish on top.

Add the basil to the cooking liquor and drizzle over the fish. Serve with a few new potatoes.

sponsored by *The Forth Inn*



Janefield, Ruskie, Stirlingshire, FK8 3LG

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INTERESTING!!!

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

Vehicles for Sale



Jaguar XJ6 3l (53) 41,000 miles, 2 owner car in carnival red with beige leather, GoodExtras, immaculate car. **£15,750.00**



Vauxhall Astra 1.4 Life 5dr (07/07) 1,100 miles, moonstone silver, As New **£8,995.00**



Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8 FQ300 (53) 31,000 Miles, FSH. **£15,995.00**



Volkswagen Golf 1.6 FSi S (06/56) in Black, 7,000 Miles, As New **£11,250.00**



Land Rover Discovery TDi S (96/N) 144,000 Miles, 1 year Mot, Category C Recorded but good old car. **£1,900.00**



Audi A6 Allroad 2.5 TDi in Highland Green with matching leather, 114,000 Miles, FSH. **£7,750.00**

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

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.....the community

Gathering

Aberfoyle



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