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Strathard News

Issue 93 December 2015

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Photo of Loch Ard by Mo Lee ©

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Trossachs Community Choir (KVH Branch)



Friday 18th December 6.30pm

Kinlochard Village Hall

End of Term Christmas Finale

Kinlochard Christmas Tree



Lights switch on, featuring

The Kids of Kinlochard



Mulled Wine and Nibbles

All Welcome

ABERFOYLE MEMORIAL HALL

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE

SATURDAY 5th DECEMBER 2015

1 - 4 PM

Come along and meet Santa, enjoy a mince pie and some Mulled wine/tea/coffee. Lots of locally crafted gifts to purchase and raffle prizes to be won.

Entry £1 Adults, 50p Children & under 5's free (Includes Mince Pie and Mulled wine/tea/coffee.)

If you wish to book a table please call Trish Roberts 01877 382705 or e-mail aberfoylememorialhall@hotmail.co.uk



FEED A FAMILY *this Christmas*

Christmas cheer doesn't come cheap, we all know that.

But as you decide where to spend Christmas day, who to invite for dinner and how to cook the turkey, over 100 families in Stirlingshire will need to decide between heating or eating.

The sad reality is that many families can't afford to do both so we are asking for your help to Feed a Family this Christmas.

**Donate online at tiny.cc/feedafamily
'Donate Now' on our Facebook cover page or
Visit www.startupstirling.org.uk**

£5

will provide turkey

£20

will provide
Christmas Dinner

£50

will provide a family
food pack

£100

will provide a family
with food for 4 weeks.

And if we exceed our target? Then we can Feed a Family (and individuals) for longer!

Any additional funds raised will be used to cover our on-going costs, helping us pay the bills into the new year.



Reg Charity No SCIO 35477

**Order Your Tickets
NOW!**

Ne'er Day Family Ceilidh



Kinlochard Ceilidh Band

Friday 1st January 2016

8pm - Midnight

Kinlochard Village Hall

Adult £7.50 Child £5.00

Family £25 Under 5's Free

BYOB

Tickets:

**sec@kinlochard.org.uk
or phone**

Bridget or Katy

01877 387 341/264

**Admission Strictly by
Ticket only**

ABERFOYLE PARISH CHURCH

**CAROLS and READINGS
by the Loch**

**on Sunday 13th December
at 3pm**

**KINLOCHARD VILLAGE HALL
followed by Mulled Wine and
Mince Pies**

ALL WELCOME

Church Christmas Services

St Mary's and Aberfoyle Kirk joint service.

Sunday 20 December at 4pm: Christmas Carol Service at St Mary's.

Christmas Eve at 11.30pm: Midnight Service

St Mary's

Christmas Day at 11.15am: Family Service



- Craft bakery - award winning sweet and savoury bakes, hand made in small batches in Scotland.
- Catering - delicious food created with passion for your special occasion.
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www.cookroom.co.uk t: 01877 387236



FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS AT LOCH KATRINE

Enjoy the magnificent scenery and all the festivities of the winter season onboard The Steamship Sir Walter Scott as it sets off on its journey across the winter wonderland of Loch Katrine.

Sail with Santa

Join our popular "Sail with Santa" cruise on the iconic Steamship Sir Walter Scott. On this hour long sail Santa and his helpers will spend time with each child and give them a wrapped up gift. Our price includes a glass of mulled wine for the adults and local Christmas fayre.

Saturday & Sundays 5th & 6th, 12th & 13th, 19th & 20th December 2015

Cruises depart from Trossachs Pier at 1pm and 2.30pm



New Year at Loch Katrine

Come along and enjoy our popular one hour New Year Celebration Party Cruise, aboard The Steamship Sir Walter Scott, and in addition to enjoying the magical scenery of Loch Katrine & The Trossachs, we invite you to join us in a complimentary toast to the Auld and New Year with traditional, locally produced black-bun and shortbread whilst listening to live traditional Scottish music.

Monday 28th to Wednesday 30th December & Friday 1st,

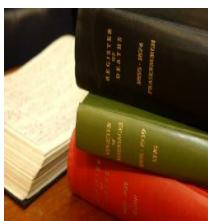
Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd January 2016

Cruises depart from Trossachs Pier at 1pm and 2.30pm



Trossachs Pier, Loch Katrine, by Callander, Stirling FK17 8HZ
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www.lochkatrine.com

The Registrar



A much quieter time, in that there were no new babies registered in this area since I last wrote. While we miss those welcome arrivals, on a happy note nor were there any deaths registrations to report upon.

As could have been expected, given the bumper year the area has seen, weddings have continued into the Autumn virtually unabated! To mention just a few of these; from Stirling, Lorna Hope and Lyndsay McKenzie, chose Altskeith Country House for their wedding day, as did so many others, including Martin Morrow and Jennifer Thirland, who travelled from Monifieth, to be married in that glorious setting.

Duchray Castle, has also continued to be busy; hosting such events as the wedding of Edinburgh couple, Gavin Stewart and Lyndsey Moody; and from a little further, in Norwich, Stephen Carman and Sandra Money.

Meantime, Robert Calkin and Valerie Farrow chose the Lake of Menteith Hotel for their big day; as did James McCartney and Nicola Ballantyne from Stirling.

The year's not done yet, with still one or two more events to come! Indeed my last wedding of the year is a 'Secret Wedding' which will take place on Hogmanay. In fact, it's so secret that (while I know it will take place *somewhere* in this area), I don't actually know where or at what time it will be held! I will be told the day before. Mysterious!

So a bumper year indeed! It is wonderful to know that so many people love this area as much as we do and, not deterred by rain, hail, shine or midgies, they want the area to be part of their life events. We have indeed seen a busy year and it is my hope that next year will be even busier. I can't actually do anything to up the number of births in the area, but I will be doing everything I can to smooth the path for those using Registration and Local Office services and to ensure that we can provide a full service for those planning events.

For now, I wish you all the best of Seasons Greetings! Please note that, while Aberfoyle Registration Office is generally open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am until 1pm, we will be closed on the 25th December and the 1st January. Appointments can be made by telephone [01877 382 986] or by email [regaberfoyle@stirling.gov.uk], and I look forward to helping you in every way that I can.

Sharon Johnston Registrar



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mobile: 07788 864 296

home: 01877 382 709

charlesplastering@btinternet.com



Steven Paterson MP

Welcoming Syrian families to our communities this Christmas



Every single one of us was moved by the images coming from the Mediterranean and from across Europe as the Syrian refugee crisis unfolded this year. One image, that of a small boy washed up on a Turkish beach, energised people to act in any way they can to help with homing desperate people who have no choice but to flee their home country in search of a safe place to live.

Since then, I have received hundreds of emails, letters, and phone calls from constituents who want to see the welcoming hand of support extended to refugees across Europe. We have seen the media and politicians alike have moved away from even using phrases like 'migrant crisis' and towards treating the situation for what it is: a humanitarian crisis.

The public response was so strong that the UK Government have altered their immigration policy to make provision for 20,000 Syrian refugees coming to the UK over the next five years. On behalf of constituents who have been in touch with me, I have on-going correspondence with relevant Government Ministers and Stirling Council officials to keep up to date on the situation.

I was delighted to have attended Stirling Council's Refugee Summit along side local representatives, the Scottish Refugee Council, and members of the public. It was a constructive discussion on how the Stirling area can mobilise to welcome refugees and I would like to thank the Council on taking the lead in this area.

The Scottish Government's efforts should also be commended. The First Minister has chaired similar summits along side other Scottish political party leaders and the Scottish Government has collaborated with the Scottish Refugee Council to produce an informative website that aims to equip people who want to help welcome refugees to their communities. The website can be found at: www.scotlandwelcomesrefugees.scot

The result of the hard work that has taken place behind the scenes comes with the news that the Stirling area is set to welcome the first Syrian refugee families before Christmas. This is a testament to cross-party support, to the dedication of those working on this issue, and to the voices of constituents who called for it.

And as the hard work continues to ensure more families have the warmth of welcome and security of shelter in our communities, I would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Constituents can contact me via:

Telephone: (01786) 406 375;

Email: steven.Paterson.MP@parliament.uk



www.parliament.uk

Iain Glen
Interior & Exterior Painting

Iain Glen

Tel: 01877 382 296

Mob: 0773 772 6338



Bruce Crawford MSP



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Our National Health Service is our most cherished public service, something that everyone of us has utilised at some point in our life. However it is facing unprecedented challenges with an aging population and rising costs of care.

Recognising these challenges the SNP Government has announced a range of additional measures to help support our NHS. For instance the number of training places for GPs will increase from 300 to 400 a year, contributing towards a more sustainable future GP workforce.

This announcement follows on from the commitment earlier this year to provide an additional £60 million for transforming primary care, £20 million of that allows GPs to trial new ways of working, so that we can learn from successful initiatives in different parts of the country.

The Scottish Government have also allocated £16 million to recruit an additional 140 pharmacists who can work directly with GPs. GPs should be at the heart of teams who will be able to meet a wide range of health needs.

The future model of primary care is community health hubs – multidisciplinary teams of psychiatrists, paediatricians, pharmacists and other specialists as well as social care working with GPs to meet the needs of their communities.

NHS staff across Forth Valley have been working extremely hard to ensure performance continues to remain high and I would like to thank them for their efforts. From the latest figures available 95.6 per cent of patients in Forth Valley Royal Hospital were seen and subsequently admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours, above the Scottish average. This is a strong position to be in as we head into winter and is testament to NHS staff across Scotland. This will be further supported through the additional investment of £10.7 million that will help ease pressure on Scotland's NHS across the winter months.



Warning over cold calling scam

Bruce Crawford MSP for Stirling Constituency is warning people in the Stirling area about cold callers targeting households claiming Scottish Government legislation states they must replace their existing heating system with a new A rated boiler.

Mr Crawford is urging people seeking heating help to call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland advice service on 0808 808 2282. The energy efficiency advice service, which does not cold-call out to homes, has helped thousands of households with grants, loans and advice and support on how to keep their homes warm and save money. More than 28,000 people have contacted the advice service in the past nine weeks alone.

Anyone concerned about nuisance calls should contact the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) which is responsible for the regulation of unsolicited live calls, recorded calls and texts and can take action against companies. The ICO helpline number is 0303 123 1113.

Commenting Mr Crawford said:

"It is fantastic news that so many people can access the Home Energy Scotland advice service, and be supported to make changes to their homes that will ensure they are warm and energy efficient.

"What is not acceptable, however, is the number of nuisance callers profiteering from this, and pressurising householders to replace heating systems when they don't need to. To be clear: Home Energy Scotland will never call households that haven't asked them to call.

"Other calls which are unsolicited not only undermine the trust and support for the energy efficiency sector, but they also cause many householders to feel intimidated and distressed.

"I want to reassure people that there is no legislation requiring anyone to replace or upgrade their heating system."

You can write to Bruce at: Suite 3:3, Wallace House, Maxwell Place, Stirling, FK8 1JU.

Call Bruce anytime: 01786 471 899

Bruce holds regular surgeries. To find out about times and locations or to make an appointment please contact his Constituency Manager on 01786 471899. Alison Pendrill: alison.pendrill@scottish.parliament.uk

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Celebrate safely

- Consuming even a moderate amount of alcohol can greatly increase the risk of fire and fire injury.
- Ensure that exit door keys are kept readily available and/or exit doors can be opened from the inside in the event of fire or emergency.
- Take care of older people, children and those who may find it difficult to react quickly and safely if there is a fire.
- Make sure your family and/or visitors know what action to take in the event of fire or actuation of smoke/heat alarms.
- Smoking is the main cause of death from fire in the home. If people are smoking in your home provide a sufficient number of ashtrays.
- Stub out cigarettes properly – make sure there's no smoke.
- Pour water on cigar and cigarette ends before putting in a bin.
- Leaving cooking unattended or being distracted while cooking is the most frequent cause of fire in the home. Never cook hot food while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- If celebrating with fireworks remember that they are explosives. Store them safely out of the reach of children and always follow the fireworks code.

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Trossachs Night Trail Series

Three Wednesday night trail races
of 5 to 6 miles starting at 7pm

Race 1 - 2nd December, register at the Forth Inn, Aberfoyle
Race 2 - 27th January 2016, register at Wheels, Callander
Race 3 - 9th March, 2016, register at the Forth Inn, Aberfoyle

Registration from 6pm.

Entry fee £5 for each race or £12 for the series of 3 races.

Each race will follow forest trails and fire roads in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, courses will be marked with reflective tape and head torches are mandatory. In the event of bad weather the race may be cancelled or the route changed. To count in the overall series - 2 out of the 3 races must be completed. Prizes for overall series provided by



Entry either on the day or pre enter on form.

For further information <http://carnethy.com> or contact Angela on 07765570503. Event organised by Carnethy Hill Running Club. Entry forms available at www.carnethy.com

Carnethy Hill Running Club is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in Scotland with registered number SC492072 and having its registered office at 25a Stafford Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7BJ



National Park welcomes new Board Member

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park has welcomed a new Board Member following a by-election for the Ward 2 area of the National Park covering Breadalbane and the Trossachs.

Following a close fought contest, Billy Ronald from Crianlarich has been appointed and will start his new role immediately.

An unprecedented number of people expressed interest in running for election with seven candidates standing for nomination. A count was held on Thursday 29 October at the National Park headquarters in Balloch.

Speaking of the appointment, National Park Board Convener, Linda McKay, said: "We're really pleased there was such a high level of interest from people in the area who care passionately about looking after this very special part of Scotland. It's an absolute privilege to contribute to the safekeeping of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and I'm sure Billy Ronald with his local knowledge and experience will make a positive impact in the role of Board Member. On behalf of the Board, I would like to welcome Billy and I look forward to working with him."

Speaking at the election count, new Board Member Billy Ronald said: "I would like to thank all of the people that voted for me and I look forward to working with everyone involved in the National Park."

The National Park Board meets regularly to make strategic decisions about how the Authority fulfils its role in delivering the four National Park aims including balancing the requirements for conservation and economic development within the Park's 720 square miles.

For more information about the role of the National Park Board and Board Members, visit www.lochlomond-trossachs.org



Linda McKay National Park Convener, Billy Ronald new Board Member, Gordon Watson National Park Chief Executive

FESTIVE MENU

Enjoy 2 courses for £15.95 or 3 courses for £18.95 Per Person

Starters

Mushroom, Broccoli & Blue Murder Filo Tart

Timbale of Scottish Salmon & Tiger Prawns with Tarragon Dressing.

Confit Duck Leg on crisp salad with Raspberry & Balsamic Dressing.

Mains

Traditional Roast Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing & all the Trimmings

Pan Fried Sea Bream with Herb Sauteed Potatoes

Honey Roast Gammon with Roast Potatoes

Half a Roast Aubergine topped with Goats Cheese, Chestnuts, Olives & Thyme served with a Spinach & Nutmeg Sauce

All the above served with Seasonal Vegetables

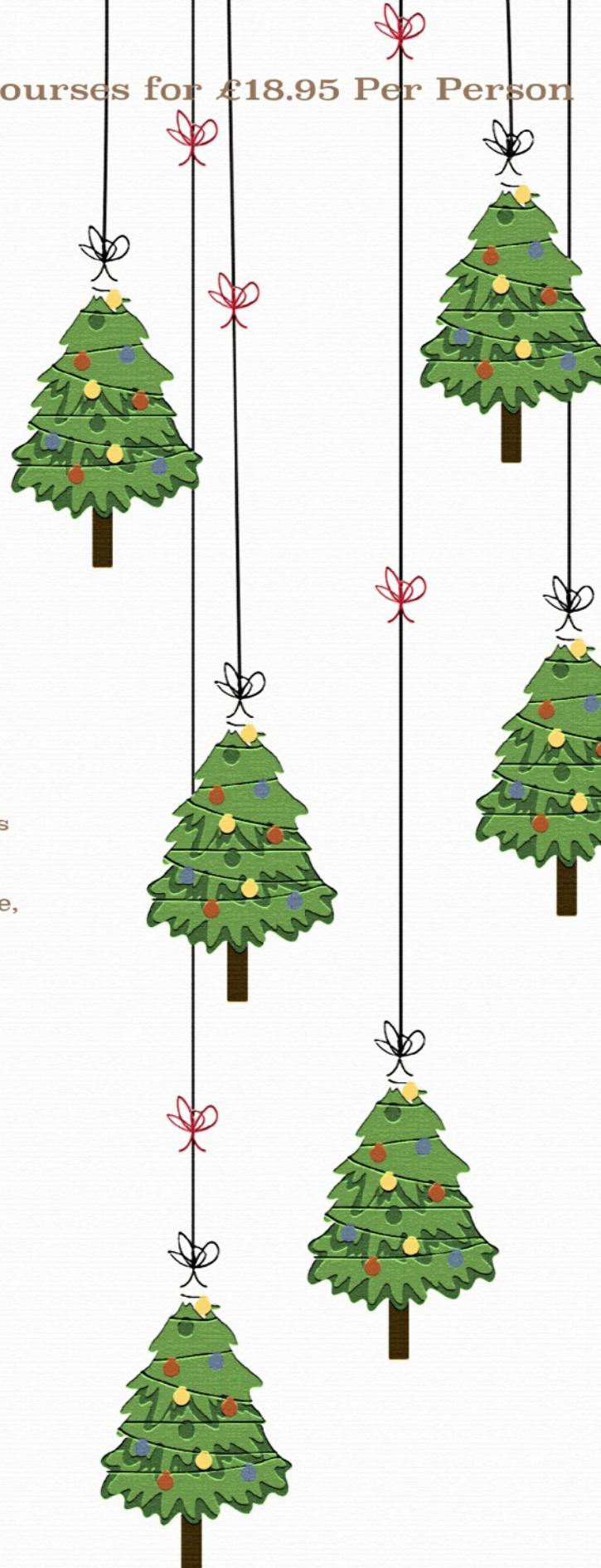
Desserts

Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce

Chocolate Yule Log with Ice Cream

Poached Pears in Mulled wine with Honey Cream

Merry Christmas



THE
FORTH INN
ABERFOYLE

Walk In the Park Aberfoyle

Coordinator – Cathy Scott - Tel 01877 330055
cathy.scott@lochlomond-trossachs.org



Date	Meeting Place	Route
7/12/15		Lemahamish
Monday 10.20am	Scottish Woollen Mill Car Park (Car Share)	
14/12/15	Scottish Woollen Mill Car Park	Ballaich
Monday 10.20am		and Christmas Lunch at the Forth Inn. All Welcome. See Cathy to book.
11/1/16		
Monday 10.20am	Scottish Woollen Mill Car Park	NCR7 to Rob Roy Motel
18/1/16		
Monday 10.20am	Scottish Woollen Mill Car Park (Car Share)	Lochen Spiling
25/1/16		
Monday 10.20am	Scottish Woollen Mill Car Park	Cycle Track and Dounans

In association with:



Trossachs Area Community Transport Community garage - November update

We are continuing with upgrade works on the site as planned when funding allows. So far renovations have included tanks, all pipework & fuel systems, the computerised till system, and repairs to the site, building and roof.

Our forecourt upgrade is now underway having been delayed to take advantage of a brand new image offered by Thames, our fuel supplier. Earlier this year Thames was taken over by Highland Fuels and we are the first site to receive the new Highland forecourt livery – we think it will be worth the wait! Staff are especially looking forward to the new remote-controlled sign which will mean climbing a ladder to change prices will no longer be needed. Other exterior works are taking place in the quiet period before Christmas, including on the car park and buildings. We are also working on plans for the shop re-fit. If you are in the garage do help us by picking up a questionnaire to say what else you would like stocked – especially goods and services that you cannot buy elsewhere locally but need regularly.

During the past few months we've had some short-term manning gaps to fill and thanks to all the staff who have responded, often at short notice, to stand in. We were sorry when our very first employee Jen McLean left and our thanks are due to Jen for all her help in the past. If you are interested in working at the garage please do send in your details – we keep these on file ready for when new staff are needed.

Pump prices reflect the cost of each weekly fuel delivery, and are at a fair price which continues to equal or beat many other filling stations in the rural Stirling area. Every local customer who buys fuel contributes to keeping our local supply, so our thanks to those who help in this way.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our customers. During the festive period we will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, with slightly shorter hours on some other days. A leaflet with exact opening times will be available as before. Otherwise opening hours remain as:

Weekdays: 7am to 7pm

Saturday: 8am to 7pm

Sunday: 8.30 to 7pm



Walk in the Park News December 2015 – January 2016

The group have been enjoying their walks this autumn in the stunning colours of the countryside and the Strength and Balance sessions in the Forth Inn are going well. Please see the attached schedule for the winter walks up until the end of January.

Christmas Lunch

The group will have their annual Christmas Lunch in the Forth Inn on Monday the 14th of December from Noon onwards. Everyone is welcome to join us so if you haven't been able to walk with us for some time we would love to invite you along. Booking is essential so please see a walk leader or myself to pre-book your meal.

After the 14th December both the Health Walks and the Strength and Balance sessions will have a break for the winter returning on Monday the 11th of January, weather permitting. Look forward to seeing you all at the Christmas Lunch.

If you have any questions about joining in any of our walks or exercise sessions please contact the Walk in the Park Coordinator, Cathy Scott 01877 330055 or send an email to: cathy.scott@lochlomond-trossachs.org



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What's on – winter activities at the Lodge

The Lodge Forest Visitor Centre has a range of events over the coming months for all the family.

Sunday 29th November and Sunday 20th

December:

Monthly Nature Club

Monthly themed outdoor activities and crafts. Booking essential, call 0300 067 6615 or email thelodge@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Saturday 12th
Sunday 13th

December:

Winter Wildlife Festival

Come and enjoy activities and crafts around winter wildlife and hibernation in our wildlife viewing room. There will be festive crafts themed around nature and hibernation, easy to make bird feeders and winter wildlife bingo to play whilst enjoying the trails! The Lodge café will also be running a barbecue on the terrace to keep you warm.



Saturday 12th December:

Lomond Mountain Rescue Team

Lomond Mountain Rescue Team will be bringing their hard working dogs to the Lodge to raise money for their worthy cause.

Christmas trees

Come to the Lodge and discover the beauty of real Christmas trees at our Christmas Tree Sales centre, which will be open from Tuesday 1 December – Tuesday 22 December 10am – 4pm. Tree prices start at £14, and you can also pick up firewood, tree stands and Swedish candles. There will be some lovely Christmas decorations to pick up from the shop at The Lodge too, and hearty fare available at the cafe.

Enjoy a winter walk, choose your real Christmas tree, eat a mince pie and hot drinks in the café. Take part in our festive Elf trail- follow our accessible trail down to the waterfall and find out which elves live behind the doors...then pop into our festive marquee and take an Elfie Selfie!

For further details, call The Lodge on 0300 0676615 or e-mail: thelodge@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



New project:

The Lodge House Activity Centre

Work has been taking place on converting the former warden's house at the Lodge Forest Visitor Centre into an activity base! The project is Part funded by Sport Scotland under the 2014 Legacy Active Places Fund, the project aims to create a space that will be available to community groups, education providers and businesses to use an activity centre, or to use as an events hub to support outdoor activities.

If you are interested in using this space please get in touch with Liz Walker: CowalTrossachs.FD@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

There has also been improvement works taking place on the access road and disabled parking to the Lodge. We thank you all for your patience in following the diversion signs over some muddy areas and we can confirm that the disabled parking and access will be fully open from 1st December.

The Visitor Centre will be open at the following times:
10am – 4pm, from Oct – Dec
Close at 2pm on the 24 December
Open 2nd January 10am- 3pm, Jan - Feb



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

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10% off
forestholidays

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10% off accommodation with Forest Holidays. Enter Lodge10 at forestholidays.co.uk or call 03330 110495 quoting code when you book. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer.

For more details, call 01877 382258 or e-mail: thelodge@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

www.forestry.gov.uk/qefp

Follow us on @LodgeAberfoyle





What's on this Winter

This Winter MCLC will have a host of great activities going on to keep you active and out of the cold.

As well as our regular classes and clubs, for both adults and children, we will also be running a special event to get you and your little ones into the festive spirit.

Elves Work Shop

(13th Dec from 12:00-15:00)

This family friendly event will get everyone in the holiday spirit only 12 days before Christmas!

The day will include:

- Fancy Dress Competition
- Family Treasure Hunt
- Meet Santa Clause
- Bouncy Castle
- Craft Tables
- Prizes!

Instructions for completing the family treasure hunt will be provided at reception upon payment. Families will be able to complete the adventure anytime between 12:00 - 15:00.

We will have Christmas characters (elves) on there to give you a helping hand along the way.

Christmas Opening Hours

Wednesday 23rd Dec (08:00-21:00)

Thursday 24th Dec (09:00-15:00)

Friday 25th Dec (Closed)

Saturday 26th Dec (Closed)

Sunday 27th Dec (09:00-17:00)

Monday 28th Dec (09:00-17:00)

Tuesday 29th Dec (09:00-17:00)

Wednesday 30th Dec (09:00-17:00)

Thursday 31st Dec (09:00-15:00)

Friday 1st Jan (Closed)

Saturday 2nd Jan (Closed)

After the 2nd January we will return to our normal opening hours

MCLC Soft play

MCLC is pleased to announce exciting new plans for our, already popular, soft play area. Over the next few months, we will be developing plans to transform our soft play area into a brilliant new play centre for children under 8 years old. There will be new multilevel soft play frames with slides and

other exciting features, plus fun interactive learning areas. We would like kids and adults who use the soft play to help us make this new area as fun as possible. So keep an eye out for your chance in helping us with designing this new space.

Child Care for Callander

MCLC as a community organisation is keen to help meet the needs of local families looking for high quality child care. After considering the costs and benefits as part of recent discussions with MCLC board, we would like to invite people with a background in child care to help start this program. Anyone with out-of-school care and experience of designing and obtaining funding for these types of services would be particularly valuable. If you are interested in helping out please email trish@mclarenleisure.co.uk

New 16-18 year old Fitness Suite Memberships

McLaren Community Leisure Centre is going to trial a 6 month fitness membership specifically for 16-18 year old's. This fitness membership will entitle members to access both the fitness suite and conditioning room within the centre. We are putting this membership in place to encourage young people to keep active. It will be £19.50 per month and will be available on a direct debit basis only and T&C will apply. Application forms available from reception. This trial period will run from 01/11/15 till 30/04/16. For more information please contact reception.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuous support of McLaren Community Leisure Centre. The management team would also like to reiterate our thanks to the Board of Voluntary Directors, who between them devote hours of their time and expertise to help ensure the centre remains a key asset to the community.

David Gordon-McWhirter
Marketing Manager
davidg@mclarenleisure.co.uk

Iona's Pilates

Weekly Classes in Aberfoyle starting

Any Body 19:30 12/01/16
Keeping Sprightly 11:00 14/01/16
For 6 weeks

£10 a class

Private classes available at your home or mine
For enquiries & bookings
ICowderoy@me.com
01877 387 291

Except 1/2 Term Week
Week of - 08/02/16



Pilates is an exercise program suitable for all. Following a Pilates exercise routine regularly enhances good posture and alignment, overall stability, strength and flexibility. It enables you to have an awareness of good movement in daily life. Iona Cowderoy is offering two classes a week at the Memorial Hall in Aberfoyle. Iona was trained as a Pilates instructor by Lolita San Miguel -- Internationally Acclaimed First Generation Pilates Master Teacher. Iona is fully accredited by Body Control Pilates.

Pilates for Any Body is on a Tuesday evening at 7.30 starting on 12th January. This is a class for anyone to join. It doesn't matter if you have never done Pilates before. The exercises work on spinal mobility, good posture and core strength. The exercises are tailored to your needs, taking into account injuries and ailments.

Pilates to Keep you Sprightly, is on a Thursday morning at 11.00 starting on the 14th January. This is designed especially for those over 60. The exercises will be seated, standing or on the floor depending on how mobile you are and on how you feel on the day. They concentrate on spinal mobility, good posture, general strength and balance. The exercises are tailored to those who attend and it does not matter if you have never done Pilates before.

If you would like to come along and try it out, please call Iona on 01877 387291 or email her at icowderoy@me.com

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Strathard Community Council

Flooding Update

The Stirling Council flooding team recently updated us on its project aimed at reducing the number of disruptive floods experienced in Aberfoyle and at Loch Ard. This latest report confirmed that much of the work previously advised in May to improve and clear culverts at multiple locations has been carried out, as has work at Loch Ard, in particular Echo Rock. Also tree/branch removal in the River Forth has been started where possible, although specialist equipment will be needed to access some locations. New river and rain gauges have been installed which will help facilitate a SEPA flood warning scheme in future.

Plans for the proposed flood protection scheme in Aberfoyle, aimed at lessening flooding incidents between the School and the Wool Centre, have been progressed after survey work during the summer. Design drawings are currently in draft although some significant queries remain for the Council to investigate further. We await Stirling Council providing a date for a community information drop-in session to update local residents and show them the scheme planned – this will hopefully take place on a Saturday in January. Please watch noticeboards for the date, or look out for our community emailing.

Stirling Council Consultations:

The following are online now. For those without internet access paper copies of the documents are available in Aberfoyle PO and the surveys can be completed there.

Priority Based Budgeting

There has been new information published by the Council about this process including a Draft Budget Report and a survey can be completed online up until 15th January 2016, before the Budget is decided in February.

Fiona



andrew baird OPTOMETRIST

Optician & Contact Lens Practitioner

CHRISTMAS OPENING

Christmas Eve 9am – 1pm

Christmas Day Closed

Boxing Day Closed

New Year's Eve 9am – 1pm

New Year's Day Closed

2nd January Closed

Otherwise we will be open

9am to 5pm as usual. Please

note that we are closed

Wednesdays and Sundays



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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF
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Supported Public Transport

Stirling Council is looking at changing the arrangements for subsidised transport (both buses and DRT) in our area, which could result in reduced services. We would encourage your feedback directly into the Council via its online survey available until 18th December 2015.

Community Councillors wanted!

There are vacancies in Aberfoyle and Stronachlachar, which will be advertised in late January. You can let us know if you wish to be advised when this occurs, or check the information online.

Seniors' Annual Christmas Dinner

This will take place on Monday 7th December. Do please let us know by then if you have not received an invitation to this popular event in the past, but have now become eligible and wish to come (contact Ros at the Aberfoyle Post Office on 382231 asap). Anyone receiving a state pension is eligible and couples are invited once one partner qualifies. Donations to the evening's raffle are always gratefully received, and can be left at the Post Office or the garage shop.

Community Information

- Our website is www.strathard.org.uk, and can be accessed in Aberfoyle Post Office.
- We send out e-mailings on matters of general community interest. You can sign up for these e-mailings by contacting us via the website.
- Information is also placed on our 4 community noticeboards.

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

With all our best wishes for the festive season and 2016.

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 Aberfoyle Memorial Hall on 7th January and Inversnaid Hotel on 4th February. Half an hour prior to our meetings a local Stirling Councillor (Martin Earl, Alycia Hayes or Fergus Wood) normally will hold a surgery for residents who wish to raise issues or concerns. If you are planning to come to one of these surgeries we suggest you check notice boards or our website in advance, since there are sometimes dates when Councillors cannot attend.

Community Councillors by Ward

Aberfoyle

John Clow (vice-chair)
Michelle Colquhoun
Ros Dingwall (secretary)
Jimmy Quinn
Geraint Short
1 vacancy

Kinlochard

Fiona McEwan (chair)
Colin Smith (treasurer)
Stuart Stephen

Stronachlachar

Ralph Wolfe

Inversnaid

Andre Goulancourt

Contact details:

Tel 01877 387200
[Cc@strathard.org.uk](mailto:CC@strathard.org.uk)
www.strathard.org.uk

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Aberfoyle Primary School

Nursery News

All the children in nursery have been learning about their senses. They have been using their senses to explore a variety of materials including shaving foam, hair gel, stones, mud, play dough. We have been listening to environmental sounds using a CD player and the children have enjoyed investigating how sound travels through a variety of tubes. We are beginning to investigate further sound and taste. The Nursery children and staff would like to say a big THANK YOU to all of our parents who have helped transform our garden through work and donations. Your contribution is greatly appreciated!



Primary 1 News

In Maths the children have been focusing on addition and they enjoy making and solving sums with the symbols + and =. We are busy learning the names and properties of 2D and 3D shapes as well.

As part of their People Who Help Us topic, Primary 1 have made their own ambulance out of cardboard. It is extremely big to allow the children to play in it! Once the structure was complete, the children painted it white and cut out the lettering to stick onto the ambulance. It has its own registration plate, window wipers, opening back doors and wing mirrors. The children have gardening overalls to wear when in role as a paramedic. We were delighted to show it off to our family and friends, and particularly keen to show it to Tony Devine, a local paramedic, who visited our class on Friday 30th October. Tony even went inside for a picture with us all!

Primary 1 have also enjoyed visits from Stuart and Mitch the search dog, from Trossachs Search and Rescue, Mione and her doggies from Glendrick Roost Animal Rescue, Stuart and Craig from Stirling Council Waste Serves and Sister Fiona Oakey (Connor O's mummy) who talked to the children about her job as a nurse. Upcoming visits are the local Post Office, Fire Station and SCAA.



Primary 3-7 are performing a pantomime this December. The production will be Jack and the Beanstalk! Auditions have been carried out and the children have all been allocated their parts. The main roles are: Emma Coakes (P7) as Jack and Morven Jackson (P6) as Jack's mother. Rehearsals will be underway very soon – please do look out for dates and times to purchase tickets – you will not be disappointed!

Primary 4/5 have been enjoying our outdoor learning sessions every Thursday since starting back after the summer break. During our first outdoor learning session we pitched a tent in the school field. Up in the forest we have been making dens and we have made mud faces on trees and rocks using natural materials.

The children have been very lucky to have the opportunity to work with iPads to help us with our learning this year. As well as learning about current technology, the iPads have given us the chance to present our work in new and interesting ways. We have been using the Book Creator app to keep a record of our work in topic, maths and language. Our homework is submitted through GLOW and we even have an individual blog to record our personal achievements. Watch this space for more updates as we become more confident using this exciting technology!



Primary 2/3 news

We are busy helping to tidy the school garden at the back of the main building. Already it is looking much better! We have added bugs to our bug hotel and we found two frogs which was really exciting!

Our social studies topic this term is Castles. We designed and made pennants out of card - they were really colourful! We also made fantastic models of our own castle as part of our home learning activities.

P2.3 had a class trip to Stirling Castle on Wednesday, 28th October. Despite the very rainy weather we had a great time and got to dress up in different costumes and handle some weapons and equipment.

We sat around a banqueting table in the Great Hall and the thrones even had a toilet flap underneath so that the lord and lady would not have had to excuse themselves during a long feast!

We had a tour of the palace and kitchens and met a maid and a huntsman who explained all about the castle rooms and about their jobs.

In class we made delicious vegetable soup. We prepared the ingredients, adding rice, onions, potatoes and turnip. It was really delicious!





Halloween Disco

A massive thank you to our Junior Management Team who planned and organised the Halloween Disco's on Tuesday 27th October. The group helped decorate the hall, organise tickets and games for both the Nursery-P3 disco and the P4-7 disco, under the guidance of Mr Fielden. All of the costumes were brilliant and we had some amazing dancers, particularly in the N-P3 disco! Glow sticks were on sale for both discos and George (Primary 7) did an excellent job as DJ! The total amount raised by the children was £154. Thank you to our local CO-OP for donating juice and crisps as well as decorations – your contribution was greatly appreciated!



Primary 6/7 News

Primary 6/7 really enjoyed making their own cakes in class using our new cooking equipment within school. They were normal sponge cakes until the children added strawberry, lemon or vanilla flavouring. Instead of using traditional cake cases, the children poured and cooked their cake mixture in an ice cream cone. Yummy!

In class we made haiku poems for Harvest. We also did hope poems and they were about anything we wanted. We put them in a special shape according to what we wrote it about.



Brownies

Our Christmas term is nearly finished at Aberfoyle Brownies, many things have been happening and a few more are to happen.

The Brownies have been working towards their Fire Safety badge by learning how to make a camp fire, while having hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows of course and maybe some scary stories were told too... A big thank you to Mandy Strachan for coming and helping us with the fire.

The Brownies are now putting all their brilliant skills to use working toward two objectives. They are making their own Christmas decoration, by recycling a glass jar. In mid-December they are hosting their own Christmas party which will be full of fun and laughs for them.

The Memorial Hall Christmas Fayre will take place this year on Saturday 5th December from 1pm to 4pm. The Brownies will be showing their support by giving a helping hand at the Craft and Wrapping stalls. They will be raising funds too by selling some Christmas treats. Please come along and support us.

We are delighted to inform you too that the Aberfoyle Brownies are in the short list of the Co-Op Local Fund. From Monday 16th November, Co-Op members will be requested to vote to choose which charity they would like to support. We would really appreciate if you could show your support and help spread the word out to give us as many chances as possible. We would like to use the money awarded to have adventures away from our meeting place.

1st Aberfoyle Brownies meet Wednesday evenings (term time) from 6 - 7:30pm at the Aberfoyle Church Hall. Most of the Brownies attend Aberfoyle Primary School together, but we are especially glad to welcome Brownies from the surrounding area. The girls are very keen to make new friends and wider connections. If you are between seven and ten and would be interested in joining us you would be most welcome. When you start, you will have your own Brownie Buddy to support you through the first few weeks of Brownies.

You can make an initial enquiry on the Girl Guiding website at www.girlguiding.org.uk or to make an informal enquiry you can contact us directly on aberfoylebrownies@hotmail.co.uk.

The Post Office would like to thank everyone for their generosity. Between bucket and Pudsey merchandise £170.93 was raised for children in need.



Calido Calido

SOLID WOOD FUEL SOLID WOOD FUEL

Calido Logs was established in 2014 by me, John Farrell, after years of wanting to supply good quality firewood at reasonable prices.

Having qualified in forestry and worked in the wood fuel sector for others for over ten years I finally decided it was time to try doing my own thing and Calido Logs (*Calido* is latin for hot) was born!

Our logs are sourced from sustainably managed forests and we visit our suppliers regularly to make sure the high quality we provide is maintained. Over time it is our intention to add some more products like wood pellets however we want to keep our product range small but of good quality. Specialising in a small selection of high quality items, we are able to maintain both a highly competitive pricing structure as well as a consistent client satisfaction rating. This is the reason customers continue to choose Calido Logs over our competitors.

We truly believe kiln dried logs are better value for money, better for your stove and chimney. We've tried the logs that blacken up the glass and tar up the chimney, they're not for us and we don't think you should have to use them either.

I manage the day to day running of the business, and behind the scenes is my partner Lauren, who is the creative brains of the operation and also manages to keep the finances under control!

Give our kiln dried logs a try and you'll not look back!

Calido

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- Use cash machines in well lit, non-secluded areas and stay alert. Check the machine hasn't been tampered with, hide your PIN, be aware of who's behind you and keep your cash out of view.
- When you're out Christmas shopping, you might not realise how much all the presents you're carrying around are worth – look after your shopping bags and don't leave them out of your view.
- If you're driving to the shops, park your car in a busy, well-lit area. Don't keep any presents in the car for longer than you have to and always keep them out of view.
- Ensure your bag is closed and your purse or wallet is not easily accessible when not being used.



- Think before you post photos of your Christmas night out online. What may seem funny in private could embarrass or humiliate someone in public. If in doubt, don't click. Remember, what goes online stays online!
- When shopping online, make sure your web browser and internet security is up to date. Check the website payment page is secure and look for the padlock in the address line before you enter any card details.
- If you're buying your child a mobile phone or tablet for Christmas, think about how you can keep them safe online.
- If you are away from home over the Festive Period or even just out and about, be careful about what you say on social networking sites – don't let thieves know your house will be empty.



- Try to plan your Christmas night out – charge your mobile and remember to take it with you. If you plan to use it to arrange transport, make sure that you have enough power left at the end of the night.
- Think about how you'll get home, ensure you have money to get home if you need to get a taxi, bus or train. Always book taxis from a reputable company or arrange for a family member or friend to pick you up.
- Stay safe on your journey home - never take isolated short cuts. Keep to busy areas and on public transport, sit where there are lots of other people.
- If drinking alcohol, be sensible about how much you consume and don't accept drinks from strangers or people you have just met.
- Don't leave drinks unattended; be sensible and pace yourself. A drunk person is a far easier target for a criminal.
- Don't use drugs or New Psychoactive Substances, sometimes misleadingly called 'legal highs'. Legal doesn't mean safe – they can contain toxic and harmful chemicals. Why risk your life?
- Stick with friends – don't leave nights out on your own or with strangers. Take care of each other and make sure you all get home safely
- Drivers should be mindful that partygoers, particularly those under the influence of alcohol can step out / stagger onto the road without warning. Slow down when in crowded areas.



- Thieves know that over Christmas there will be high value presents and maybe more cash in your house than normal. Keep your home secure - lock all windows and doors, don't leave gifts in view of the windows and keep cash in your home to a minimum.
- If you're going away for Christmas, keep your home secure. Lock all windows and doors, set your house alarm if you have one, use timers on lights, cancel any deliveries and ask a neighbour or friend you trust to keep an eye out while you're away.
- If you're having a house party with lots of guests, it can be all too easy for a thief to slip in unnoticed. Make sure you know everyone who is there. If you're going to a party, don't let anyone tailgate you into a house or through a secured communal entry door who may not be a guest.
- Protect any gifts you've bought for your friends and family. Get them to register mobile phones, tablets, laptops and cameras at www.immobilise.com. Don't give them a good quality bike without giving them a good quality lock, and register bikes at www.BikeRegister.com.



POLICE
Scotland



How to Contact Us

In an emergency always dial 999

Non-urgent crime, and other matters, phone 101
Email: TrossachsTeithCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Our Twitter and Facebook sites are not for reporting crime and they are not monitored 24/7. Please remember that your local community policing officers are out on patrol in your community the vast majority of the time, so your email may not be read or attended to immediately.

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Goats Cheese and Cranberry Tart £5.25

Seafood Terrine wrapped in Parma Ham £5.75

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Mains

Classic Beef Bourguignon £13.95

Braised Lamb Shank
served with Creamed Mash
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Breast of Chicken served
with Bashed Herb potatoes
& Tarragon Cream Sauce £12.95

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Winter Greens, Sunblush Tomato & Sauce Vierge £14.95

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Merry Christmas

from

The Faerie Tree

Aberfoyle & Port of Menteith Parish Church

Rev. Terry Taylor

As I write this it is only a few days since the bombings and shootings in Paris. People I've spoken to have told me it's worrying because it is so close to home, just across the channel, and who knows what else may have happened by the time you are reading this.

We have been reminded that there are disasters like this happening around the world most every day. There are many across the world suffering in much the same way as the people of Paris.

Reactions have uncovered a multitude of emotions. Social media is awash with comments some full of hatred and rage, exhibiting a deep desire for vengeance, a settling of scores. Others reject the way of violence and try to imagine that there may be another way, a better way; a way of peace.

Prayers are offered in churches, mosques, synagogues. Prayers are offered in bedrooms, at kitchen tables, in cars, on trains.... wherever we are and whenever we think about these things we pray, or we try to pray.

Prayer can be difficult, what do we pray? How do we pray? The apostle Paul, gave the early Christians great words of encouragement, he tells us, that at times when we don't know how to pray that God is with us. God's Spirit pleads on their behalf. When our hearts are sore, when all that we can do is groan in God's presence because of the pain and the hopelessness we feel, the Spirit of God takes our groaning and turns them into prayers. I find that incredible, I find it comforting; it gives me a great sense of relief to know that it is of no consequence that I cannot find the words. To know that our compassionate God is present with us as we weep, as we pray, as we struggle to pray. And the real significance of Christmas is **God with us**. God becoming vulnerable; a wee baby who would be taken from his homeland to Egypt, a refugee, because there were those who sought to kill him. Herod, fearful of this 'new king' that the 'wise men' had told him about strikes out with violence. This baby is the promised one. Many years before the birth of Jesus, at a dark time in the history of the nation of Israel God promised that the time of darkness will not go on forever. God promises light to those who walk in darkness, the prophet Isaiah describes it this way.

For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. These will be his royal titles: "Wonderful," "Counselor," "The Mighty God," "The Everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace." His ever-expanding,

Aberfoyle & Port of Menteith Guild

The Guild is open to both women and men and meet in Church House, Aberfoyle at 2 pm on the third Monday of the month. Members met on Monday, 16 November, 2015 when we were entertained by "The Mondayles", a Ukulele Band who as well as playing their ukuleles sang and told stories. There was a party atmosphere as Mrs Ralston announced that this year was the 120th Anniversary of Aberfoyle Guild being formed. Our next meeting is on Monday 21 December when we are having Christmas Celebrations. The January meeting is on Monday 18 January for a Members Afternoon. New members will be made welcome.

Contacts are Anne Ralston, President/Secretary (382847) and Isabel Piper, Treasurer (382667).



peaceful government will never end. He will rule with perfect fairness and justice from the throne of his father David. He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world. This is going to happen because the Lord of heaven's armies has dedicated himself to do it!

When the darkness of violence threatens we may want to remember that this child whose birth we celebrate, the Prince of Peace is also the light of the world and in Him there is no darkness.

A prayer for ourselves at such a time as this.

We long for peace, for relief from fear, for violence to be absent in our world.

Yet day by day our news programmes bring forth stories of violence, hatred, abuse of women and children, tempting us to live in fear of the stranger.

This burden is too great for us to bear, we feel the pain of the victims,

We feel anger, righteous anger at the perpetrators of this violence and hatred.

We seek revenge, our gut instinct, to throw a bigger stone, to fire a bullet, to throw a punch. Some tell us revenge is a dish best served cold..... a wise man told me revenge is a dish best served not at all!

For this is not the way of peace.... Not the path of reconciliation It was not the way of Jesus, faced with violence he knelt in prayer, faced with accusations he spoke not a word,

Jesus Prince of Peace, when our instinct is to strike back, by your spirit of love – hold us back

When the violent words come so quickly to our mouths, stem them and replace them with prayers of pity for the afflicted, and prayers for mercy for the engineers of violence, for prayers of wisdom for those whose decisions may serve to fuel or diminish the practice of violence.

Be merciful to us Lord; give us courage to walk in the light, in your way of peace, bringing glory to your name and rest to our souls.
AMEN

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Sunday Times

St Mary's Episcopal Church

Richard Grosse, Rector of St Mary's

A century ago..

Remembrance Sunday has only just passed and Christmas presently seems too far ahead. Thus I write with thought of the former but in the knowledge that by the time you read this, Christmas will not be far away.

The Blacksmith's Shop at Gretna Green in the Borders has stood since 1712 as one of the earliest destinations for runaway couples to marry. It has made Gretna world famous but it was not for this reason that the Princess Royal along with the First Minister attended a ceremony at its parish church on Friday 22nd May of this year.

On the following day, a further act of remembrance was held at Rosebank Cemetery in Edinburgh as indeed has been the case on the nearest Saturday to the 22nd May for many years.

The reason for these ceremonies will be readily apparent at Rosebank. There, a large memorial overlooks a mass grave commemorating a disaster which occurred just a few months over a century ago on the 22 May 1915 at a point north of Gretna called Quintinshill. Here a great number of soldiers from the 1st and 7th Battalion The Royal Scots perished. These were Territorial soldiers previously employed on home duty. However, following heavy casualties on foreign battlefronts amongst the regular battalions, reinforcement was urgently needed. Mostly recruited from Leith, these men were on their way to board a ship at Liverpool en-route to the battlefield at Gallipoli. Almost five hundred officers and soldiers had in the early hours entrained at Larbert tightly packed into wooden carriages lit by gas. As was the norm at the time with all troop trains, the carriage doors were locked.

This was the first full summer of the Great War. The railway network was exceptionally busy not only with troop trains, but goods trains ferrying extra coal to fire ammunition factory furnaces as well as the boilers of the Dreadnought warships poised to defend the nation's sea routes. All these requirements were in addition to the usual timetabled services.

In these circumstances, it was little wonder that at 6.30 on the Saturday morning of the 22nd May 1915, the railway tracks through Gretna were busy with traffic. The lines at this point were controlled from the signal box at Quintinshill. At this time of day, the night signalman at the box was relieved by the day shift. As the change of personnel occurred, there was a certain amount of distracting conversation between the two signalmen and a railway fireman also in the signal box at the time. One was holding a newspaper and reading snippets of news aloud to the others.

Heading north on the lines outside was a Euston to Glasgow express. It was running late and straining to make up time. Ahead of the express was the Carlisle local train, also running north. The signalmen decided to stop the local train to allow the express to pass it. In halting the local train, the signalmen momentarily forgot the Royal Scots troop train from Larbert now rapidly approaching Quintinshill southwards, on the same line. The troop train ploughed into the stationary local train at such speed that its original length was halved, with wreckage spilling onto the other main line. Those troops who survived the impact clambered through the debris and onto the up line. The signalmen hearing the sound of the collision outside their box then recalled with horror the imminent approach of the northbound express. The guard of the local train tried to signal the express to slow, but in vain for the express arrived at the scene with little opportunity to reduce speed. It first ran over many of the survivors of the troop train. They were distracted by the plight of injured comrades and had little chance of escape. The express ploughed into the wreckage of the troop train now blocking its track and, simultaneously, hot coals from its boiler showered down upon its timber carriages. Within a moment the gas cylinders used for lighting the troop train had ignited the wreckage in a fire that burned for a day. The day after the disaster a roll call of the troops revealed only fifty-two of the original 500 soldiers on the train had escaped death or serious injury. Accurate figures were impossible to calculate as the register of those aboard had been destroyed by fire. Eventually it was estimated that 215 men and officers sacrificed their lives not on a battlefield but perversely on a stretch of railway line on home soil. As was common in wartime, the public was not apprised of the horror for some time. Only the grieving families in Leith would then have been fully aware of the extent of the tragedy. Pity also the two signalmen who had responsibility for others safety, but whose moment of inattention under pressure proved so costly to life. Alas, warfare is costly of life whether on or off the field of battle.

St Mary's Christmas Services

Please come to our Christmas Carol Service at 16.00 on Sunday 20th December. The main Christmas services will be the Midnight Service on Christmas Eve at 23.30 and the Family Service on Christmas Day at 11.15. The Carol and Midnight services are joint services with Aberfoyle Kirk.

All good wishes for the season, and, when it comes, 2016.

Richard Grosse, Rector

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Loch Ard Local History Group



Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month from October to April in the Village Hall in Kinlochard. Although we style ourselves as a "Local History Group" our talks often cover much broader fields, so long as the subject is historical and has a Scottish connection. All are welcome to our talks which are always followed with refreshments and a good deal of conversation, so it's a great way to meet like-minded neighbours and friends.

Annual Membership £10 Single Talk £3

Chairman: James Kennedy

Secretary: Alan Cooper

01877 387270 cooper645@btinternet.com



Christmas Pet Survival Guide

Here are some tips to help make Christmas less stressful and hazardous for your pets:

Create a Christmas pet den

Minimise their stress, by making a quiet, cosy 'den' in advance.

For dogs, put it behind a sofa in a quiet room.

For cats, put it securely on a shelf or chest of drawers: they feel safest when high up.

Encourage them to go into their den. Give them healthy treats or praise when they're relaxed in the den. They will learn to view it as a pleasurable and calm place, where they can escape all the bustle and noise.

Place a pheromone diffuser nearby. This will emit calming scents which only pets can smell.

Coping with Christmas decorations

A Christmas tree is a playground full of temptations – shiny decorations and flashing lights. But pets can injure themselves as they explore, so here are some ideas: Supervise your pet in rooms containing trees and presents: keep an eye on them as you would a young child.

Keep doors closed when you're not around.

Distract them by allocating some 'pet playtime' instead, with suitable toys. Take dogs out for a good run around.

Play with your cat using fishing rod-type toys.

Remove wrappings, wires as well as toys and batteries after opening. They may cause choking as pets often explore new items with their mouths. Batteries can also cause internal burns if they are swallowed and start leaking.

Kitchen hazards at Christmas

Keep kitchen doors closed so pets can't get under your feet. With a big Christmas dinner on the go, full of hot ovens and boiling pots and pans, they are more hazardous places than usual.

Christmas food

Keep Christmas food out of the way of pets. Whilst you snooze, they cruise. They'll sniff out extra treats, but whilst you may feel relaxed about it, as it's Christmas after all, they can be hazardous. Human food leads to pet obesity. Pets can also choke on turkey bones. Onions, raisins and certain nuts can even be poisonous. Sage and onion stuffing, Christmas cake, chocolate and mince pies can also be harmful

Coping with freezing Christmas temperatures

Hypothermia can occur after just a few minutes in freezing temperatures and can kill. Due to their smaller size, our pets are even more at risk than we are, so prevention is always better than cure:

Don't let any your pets stay outside in freezing temperatures for a lengthy period without access to shelter and warmth.

Give a warm dog coat in colder weather if your dog is going to be susceptible.

Prevent snowballs from forming by trimming the hair between your dog's toes or training it to wear doggy boots

It's Christmas for your small pets too...

Don't forget about smaller pets either, e.g. rats, rabbits, guinea pigs and ferrets. Let them join in the festivities: offer them some of their favourite food wrapped in brown paper. Figuring out how to get to the food is a great challenge to occupy their inquisitive minds. Using relevant objects and puzzle feeders helps animal wellbeing and prevents boredom. This is called 'environmental enrichment' – a term often associated with zoos – but it's equally important for our pets.

Small pets need special care in winter, even on Christmas Day. They are more likely to feel drops in temperature because of their size, so follow these rules:

House guinea pigs and rabbits indoors in winter. A warm shed or a car-free garage is ideal, but they should still have access to natural light and an exercise run.

Give them extra bedding in the hutch to help keep them warm.

Put a blanket or piece of carpet over the hutch to help keep it warm. Make sure this doesn't obstruct the ventilation.

Check water bottles every day to make sure they aren't frozen.

If you have to move the hutch in to your home, make sure it's kept away from other pets, stressful noises and smoky atmospheres.

Milton

Hello Children,

Wow! Have we been having an awful lot of weather? Rain, snow, wind and more rain. Storms are now given names, Abergail leading the way and blowing the last of the leaves off our trees. The level of the River Forth was much higher than the entrance to the Otter family holt but, as usual, absolutely no water even managed to trickle inside. The cleverly constructed doorway, forming an efficient airlock, makes sure we all stay snug and dry inside our living quarters. Out of water, an otter's coat is instantly dry, one good shake and all the drips have gone. Useful living in Aberfoyle!

When the clouds clear from the night sky, the stars are truly brilliant. Venus, presently appearing as the Morning Star, is really putting on a fantastic show. Watch early morning on 7th December, as Venus and the old crescent moon look as they are going to collide! The new moon will set early on the evenings of 13th and 14th, allowing the Geminid meteor shower to be seen to full advantage. They will flash across the dark sky at the rate of 100 – 120 an hour. Next day, 15th December, Major Tim Peake will be the first Briton for many years to go into space. You can watch his adventures in the International Space Station on Blue Peter and Newsround. I'll be looking through my telescope.

George the Hare came rushing down from Shannochill, shouting that we were being invaded from outer space! At that moment, with his coat a motley mixture of dark and light fur, he was acting very peculiarly indeed. George had seen strange, multicoloured lights over Flanders Moss, coming down through the clouds. Dad and Grandpa Otter thought we had better go and take a look for ourselves, safer from the Doon Hill, where the trees would hide us from view. From the top, sheltering beneath reverend Kirk's pine tree, from the aliens and the falling snow, we could see the spectacular light show splitting the sky at Balfron Station. No space invaders – this time!

Saint Andrew's Day is now behind us and Christmas decorations are beginning to festoon brightly lit windows along Strathard and Glen Arklet. This is a timely reminder to post all present lists off to Santa Claus, either straight up the chimney or into the nearest post box. Jimmy, Kenny and Roy, three wise postmen, will make sure all Santa's letters will get delivered to him, without delay. The twins are asking for something called hover-boards, Katrine wants a tablet and I would like my own copy of the new book, all about the life of Hamish the world famous highland bullock. I hope George gets a new hair brush, his straggly coat could do with a really good grooming. Fiona, a black-coated highland cow, will take my letter to Santa. Fiona lives in Glen Arklet, with her fold of shaggy cattle and, on Christmas Eve, will lead Santa's reindeer team to all the houses in the Scottish Highlands. If you have been good this year, you might just get what you asked for!

Bye for now,
Milton.



McLaren High School

Charities Bake Sale

On Friday 25 September the new Charities Committee held their first event of this session. It was an Inter House Bake Sale and Wear Your Own Tie day to raise money for Save the Children. S6 pupils and teachers baked lots of delicious cakes to sell and it was a great success as we raised £613.35 for the crisis in Syria. Dochart won raising £236.29. Thank you to everyone who took part!



Autumn Concert

McLaren's first concert of the new session took place on Thursday 8 October and the evening got off to a great start with the orchestra playing Purcell's Intrada and Sarabande.

This was followed by one of 3 new groups to be performing – the newly formed McLaren High School Pipe Band. Their debut performance was fantastic as they marched in, around the hall and played a set for the audience before marching out again. Well done Callum Hall in S5 for taking the initiative and organising our first pipe band in over 10 years!

Performances by the Brass Ensemble (Lazy Bones), Wind Band (Sweet Caroline and a Glenn Miller mix), String Ensemble (Inception and Thriller) and Jazz Band (Blue Bossa and C Jam Blues) followed throughout the evening giving the audience a taste of the different genres of music.

There were also debut performances by the Traditional Music Group who played 2 sets including well known tunes Battle of the Somme and The Gael (theme from The Last of the Mohicans) and the Doune S1 String Quintet.

The Ukulele Ensemble seems to grow each year and they played a great rendition of Little Talks, followed by the Mixed Voices who sang Wade in the Water (acapella) and Blue Mountain River accompanied by Megan Milligan S3 on piano. The evening was brought to a close by the final orchestral piece, a brilliant version of Kernkraft. Well done to all pupils and staff involved, we are now looking forward to the Christmas Concert on Monday 21 December!



Lunnan Bay Geography Field Trip

On a windswept Monday the Higher Geographers embarked on a field work study of the sand dune system at Lunnan Bay near Montrose.

We had arranged to meet Alison O'Hara of the Scottish Wildlife Trust who is based at Lunnan Bay and had excellent local knowledge of both the immediate and surrounding areas, allowing for a greater insight into the fieldwork that we were undertaking. Before long, the Higher pupils began their fieldwork, measuring slope, angle, sedimentation and identifying plant species on the dune system, looking for similarities and differences along the dune network. A few lessons were learnt about watching out for waves when sampling from the area where the waves were breaking. A few soggy wellies later samples were collected and the study continued.

After a brief pause for lunch we then pulled all of the information together and finished off a few odds and ends where people had to finish off their data collection. When all the pupils were finished, samples collected and data shared, the geographers were climbing back into the bus and the rain began to fall. Perfect timing some may say, or would it just be the excellent planning of the geography team...

The next destination for the Higher pupils will be a study of Edinburgh city centre. More to come on that soon!



Royal Highland Educational Trust Careers Event

On Friday 6 November, 30 S2 pupils attended a Royal Highland Educational Trust Careers Event at United Auctions in Stirling where they had the opportunity to experience different aspects of careers related to farming and agriculture, butchery and food production, outdoor learning and veterinary services. This is Emily Fraser's report on the day:

We left the school at 9.30am to go to United Auctions Livestock Market. When we arrived we dipped our feet into pink disinfectant then went inside. We split into groups and went to our first event.

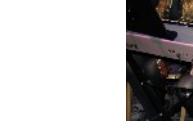
Robert Bryce from a company called Genus gave a presentation all about Genus and ABS. He told us some of the jobs you can do such as technician, stockman, sales advisor and loads more.

We then moved on to our second event which was veterinary. Charles Marwood from Clyde Vet told us all about his job and how to become a vet in the agricultural business. He told us about some of his experiences and how he has been to some of the best farms and delivered lots of calves. The third event we moved on to was Agricultural Finance. Marion Bayne, a manager from the Clydesdale Bank, talked to us about how farmers need banks. One thing they do is lend money to farmers so that they can buy tractors or more animals.

Butchery was next and Willie Crawford talked to us about his role while demonstrating some skills you need to be a butcher.

Then we went to our next event where agronomist ('crop doctor') Jim Warnock from WN Lindsay, an independent grain merchant, told us about some of the crops they sell. Barley is a big cereal crop in Britain along with wheat and oats. They also do soil tests for farmers with a Kubota buggy which plots soil type using GPS to give farmers a detailed map of their fields. Our final event was machinery. Colin Duthie from Agricar showed us around the shop and told us about how to become a good salesperson or engineer. He showed us some of the machinery such as tractors and quad bikes and explained what farmers would use them for.

I had a great day and learned so much about all the different sectors on show.



Children in Need

On Friday 13 November we held a mufti day to raise money for Children in Need – pupils had to pay £1 to come to school in casual clothes. S6s paid £2 to come to school in fancy dress and compete along with the teachers for the titles of 'best dressed'. The junior Pupil Council were in charge of judging at the costume parade at break time. The Numeracy & ICT team dressed as the cast of "Despicable Me" and won the prize for the best dressed teachers. Skye Campbell, S6, won the best individual costume dressed as "Day of the Dead" from Spectre and Connor Clark, Gregor Nixon and Logan Trotter won the best S6 group dressed as fairies!

At lunch we had a raffle with various prizes and an auction of members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Rebecca Edwards, S6, raised money at lunch time by doing makeup and nails.

It was a great day and we raised £921.55 for Children in Need – well done to everyone involved!

Tara Leishman S6

Skiing

McLaren High School ski teams recently achieved both 1st and 2nd place in the Autumn Dual Slalom Series and are all set for the final on 29 October. We climbed into the bus and set off early on that beautiful sunny morning in order to get a few practice runs in before the racing began. Upon arriving, we had an hour to spare so began a very rigorous training session! (Walking from the bus to the slope in the heat was enough to warm us up).

In order to compete well in the final, we will be attending sessions at Tillicoultry where we will fine tune our racing order and starting technique.

The teams for the qualifier were:

McLaren A: Lachie Fingland, Drew Galloway, Dan Hesp

McLaren B: Craig Fingland, Connor Ramsay Clapham, Ross Ronald, Cameron McLay

Hopefully both ski teams will keep up the good work in representing McLaren in the final!

Craig Fingland S6



Cameron House

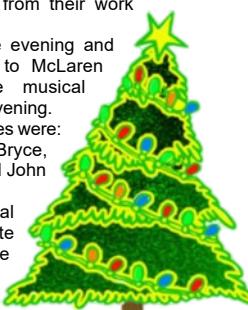
On Thursday 29 October pupils from McLaren High School were invited to the Park Stars Awards Ceremony at Cameron House Hotel. The evening was organised by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Community Partnership's Skills Partnership Park Previews Project as a way of saying thank you to the many partners who have supported the project over the past year and to celebrate the achievements of all the young people who took part.

McLaren pupils were involved in 3 days work experience earlier this year at Monachyle Mhor Hotel, Balquhidder, and were filmed and photographed by the young trainees while they were taking part. The films that the pupils produced were premiered during the evening and pupils received certificates from their work experience employers.

Everyone had an enjoyable evening and special thanks was given to McLaren pupils who provided the musical interlude at the start of the evening.

Pupils who received certificates were: Megan Pease, Rebecca Bryce, Rhys Wykes, Laura King and John Paterson.

Pupils who provided musical entertainment were: Charlotte Scott, Megan Milligan, Natalie Klaes, Fergus Walker and Callum Convoy.





This evergreen creeper is a familiar sight scrambling over the ground, climbing through trees and clinging to cliffs. Unlike most other plants it flowers in the autumn and then produces bitter black berries in January or February. There is some debate as to whether ivy causes harm to its host, but I am sure the weight of the plant in a tree could be a factor in high winds and cause the tree to either shed branches or be uprooted. Ivy's evergreen nature symbolises immortality and has been made into wreaths and crowns for centuries not only by Christians but in earlier times.



Ivy looking luxuriant on a host tree.



Bitter black fruit of Ivy in February



Flower buds of Ivy in September

Ivy has also been used medicinally, an infusion of the leaves was apparently used as an eyewash, the leaves pulped with butter were reputedly an effective salve for burns, while a brew of the leaves in vinegar was supposed to burn away corns. In all these cases it is not entirely clear whether there was an active ingredient in the leaf, or whether the boiled water, butter or vinegar respectively were responsible for the beneficial effects. One fact I can be certain of, however, is that the local goats find ivy very palatable and there is always a neatly trimmed 'tideline' at browsing height. Have a good festive season.

Jane Jones

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Family Friendly Pub of the Year



The Faerie Tree was nominated by Heineken (Star Pub) for their award of Family Friendly Pub of the Year 2015.

Whittled down to six finalists from all over Britain we were the only Scottish pub to make the shortlist.

Unfortunately we did not take the top honour but we would like to thank our staff for their hard work and congratulate them on the recognition gained from within the industry.

The speaker at the October SWT meeting in Callander was Paul Yoxon, CEO of the International Otter Survival Fund based in Broadford, Skye. Of 16 otter species worldwide, 13 are in decline. IOSF works on conservation of otters and their habitat from the UK to Asia, covering exotic species such as the Cape clawless otter, Chilean sea cat and the Vietnamese hairy-nosed otters.

The Eurasian otter, now only found in Europe, is the UK's largest land carnivore: males are up to 1-1.2m long & 9-11.8kg. With territories up to 50km, their population is difficult to estimate but is believed to be ~10,000 in the UK, 8000 of those in Scotland. They are classed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red list and a protected species so it is illegal to kill them or disturb their habitat. In Czechoslovakia and Germany they can live up to 15 years but in England only 10% of dead otters analysed are more than 4 years old, road deaths being the major cause. The 2-3 cubs stay with the mother until maturity at 18-24 months so population recovery is slow.

To suit a semi-aquatic lifestyle, they have a thin layer of blubber and incredibly dense fur (50,000 hairs/cm²) to trap insulating air – the cause of their previous demise. This must be kept clean so they are badly affected by water pollution and coastal otters wash in fresh water. Scat analysis shows that fish make up 75% of their diet but they also eat crabs & amphibians, more surprisingly the odd bird and mammal, including rabbits on Pabbay!

There is a wealth of information on the IOSF website www.otter.org, including tips for spotting otters. Please help by reporting all sightings.

In November James Silvey, Nature Recovery Officer in Scotland spoke about RSPB's All Nature programme. Founded as the Plumage League in 1889, the original members of the RSPB were all women who campaigned against the fashion for exotic feathers

in hats. RSPB has since widened its scope, its 213 reserves (140,000 acres) being home to a high percentage of the UK's non-avian species. The All Nature programme has identified 83 priority species, 59 of which are found in Scotland with 10 unique such as the diminutive purple Scottish Primrose, now restricted to Orkney & Caithness.

The Natterjack Toad has been studied by RSPB for 30 years in which time development has drastically reduced its coastal dune habitat, restricting them to small areas such as Mereshead Reserve on the Solway Firth. This small toad, with its distinctive yellow stripe, is a pursuit hunter so runs rather than jumps. To protect the small tadpoles they breed in ephemeral ponds away from predatory fish and amphibians rather than returning to the same pond annually. To then attract a mate the males have the loudest call of any amphibian in Europe. This makes them easy to find but to estimate adult populations individuals are being identified by photographic comparison of their unique pattern of warts.

A second example is the Great Yellow Bumblebee, identified by the single black stripe in line with the wings. It is a long-faced bee so feeds from deep nectar plants such as clover and knapweed but reduced meadows & threatened machair habitat now restrict it to the Hebrides, Orkney & Caithness. Its demise is not fully understood but future surveys will determine the success of wild flower habitat restoration.

More positive highlights include the northernmost chequered skipper butterfly seen in Ardnamurchan, water voles at Insh Marshes for the first time in 20 years (following mink clearance) and, on Oronsay 196 spikes on Oronsay of Lady's Tresses were found, Europe's rarest orchid.

Lesley Hawkins



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Mhairi's War

By Janette P Martin

A light hearted tale



As I watched the pigeon scarting about on the floor of the bus station, searching among the discarded bus tickets and crisp packets, I was put in mind of my friend Mhairi. It wasn't its spindly wee legs, or its busy bobbing head as it cast an eye over an empty packet of Hula Hoops. It was neither of these, although Mhairi has been known to devour a six pack of ready salted in one evening.

It was that Mhairi, an otherwise rational, intelligent, kind hearted person, detested pigeons and waged a one woman war against them. "Vermin with feathers" was one of her kinder epithets. Her vendetta extended to Joan her downstairs neighbour who provided a supply of food for the birds, in her garden. Mhairi had made her thoughts on encouraging pigeons very clear to Joan and anyone else who would listen, but Joan could not be deterred and a constant battle of wits ensued.

What had always intrigued me was, that Mhairi couldn't see the incongruity between her hatred of pigeons and her affection for doves. For as long as I could remember, her annual Christmas card pictured a white dove and the word 'Peace', yet she continued to wage war on their 'cousins' the pigeons. Apparently her lifetime CND membership and pacifist beliefs did not extend that far.

As a teenager, Mhairi had a traumatic experience on her way to a 'first date'.

Suffice it to say that it involved an overhead pigeon and Mhairi's new beehive hairdo. An angry and dishevelled Mhairi wasn't asked for a second date and pigeon hostilities commenced.

The council and the community council had both been informed by Mhairi about the pigeon menace in her street and of her neighbour's flagrant disregard of her pleas not to feed them. Joan however, was as passionate for pigeons as Mhairi was against them. It was the annual summer bus run of the 'Strathclyde Worthies'. This year it was a boat trip on Loch Katrine followed by a "fish tea" in Aberfoyle. The sail was glorious, blue skies, calm loch and one of the few days with no rain! We had time to spare before our meal and wandered over to the 'Wool Centre'. At the entrance we came across a display of Birds of Prey. We moved closer to listen to the falconer. Mhairi looked bored until he mentioned the fact that his Harris Hawks were used to clear birds from airport runways.

'Could you use them to clear Pigeons?' I heard Mhairi ask.

'Not only pigeons, he replied, 'These hawks will scare away all the birds, in the neighbourhood.'

I caught a look of glee in Mhairi's eyes and glancing across to the other side of the group, horror in Joan's. 'But surely you can't use Hawks in built up areas can you?' I ventured.

'Well no, not in areas of dense population and busy roads. Health and safety issues.'

Joan looked relieved but dismay rolled across Mhairi's face. Her vision of a mass exodus of pigeons from her street now shattered. In an effort to cheer her up we walked on up through the main street going in and out of the many wee shops in the village. Mhairi was an inveterate shopper but I wasn't. Nothing pleased her until we wandered into my favourite, the garden centre. She was in front and I almost fell over her when she stopped abruptly, shouting 'Yes!'

She was standing in front of a gruesome bunch of garden ornaments. She was gazing longingly at a large concrete figure of the ugliest bird of prey I have ever seen. It was larger than life with large evil yellow eyes, an open vicious beak, unfolded wings and grasping talons.

'The very thing', said Mhairi.

'The very thing for what, you don't have a garden?'

'No, she replied, but I've got a windowsill permanently fouled by pigeons.'

'Never mind scaring the pigeons you'll frighten the life out of folk walking past. That monstrosity will stop daylight getting in. Thank goodness it's far too big for you to take back on the bus.'

I took her by the arm and walked purposefully towards the food area. 'I need to buy ginger tablet for John and you need something for Katie', I told her.

She perked up at the mention of her beloved granddaughter and went to look at the books promising to meet me at the restaurant where we were to have our meal. I got there to find a much more cheerful Mhairi waiting for me. 'Did you manage to find a 'Katie Morag' book that she doesn't have?' 'This one is just out so I know she won't have it.'

She opened her bag and I saw 'Katie Morag goes to the Bird Sanctuary'. Joan who was sitting beside me began to shake with laughter and it was all I could do not to join in. All the days exertions made the fish tea taste better than ever and when we climbed aboard the bus for our journey back home, Joan and Mhairi were actually smiling and enjoying each others company. I should have known that Mhairi had something up her sleeve. Well not literally, it was in the luggage hold on the bus.

As we pulled up in the High Street Mhairi asked if I was coming back to hers. 'That would be lovely', I replied.

'Great, you can help me back with my parcels.' 'What parcels? Oh No, you didn't, not that hideous garden ornament?'

'It wasn't hideous and anyway it was far too big.' I heaved a sigh of relief.

'You'll see it when we get back.'

We had got down from our bus and the driver handed us two large boxes. We didn't have too far to go but the boxes were awkward and by the time we had climbed the two flights of stairs to Mhairi's door we were exhausted. 'This had better be worth it,' I muttered.

'It is,' she replied as she hurried to the kitchen to put the kettle on while I collapsed onto the sofa. She arrived back brandishing a kitchen knife and set about cutting open the sealed boxes containing the 'wee present' she had bought herself.

The first box revealed a large concrete base with two yellow legs and familiar grasping talons. 'You said you hadn't bought that awful buzzard.'

'I didn't, you were right it was far too big. This one's a peregrine falcon. He's much smaller but just as scary on my windowsill.' She pulled the top half of the falcon from the other box. 'Pigeons will not be fouling my windowsill anymore with "Peregrine" on duty.'

I had to agree. No bird, not even a falcon desperate for a mate or even hoping for a one night stand would venture near this leering caricature of one.

It was when Joan came back from Glasgow the next day that she saw Peregrine. She stared in horror at the hideous figure. It sat right in the middle of the windowsill directly above her fat ball feeder for the tits, her favourites. She loved to sit and watch as they enjoyed their meals, it helped her to relax. Peregrine did his job well and Mhairi was delighted. For the first two days no bird was keen to go anywhere near him, no matter how tempting the titbits. 'Enough' shrieked Joan as she threw her empty packet of herbal tranquillisers in the bin and stomped out of her flat and up the stairs to Mhairi's door, pressing the bell until she heard her coming.

'Hi Joan, what's up are you coming in?' 'Coming in,' seethed Joan, 'you've scared away all my birds with that hideous gargoyle you've stuck on your windowsill and your making our building look ridiculous.'

'No more ridiculous than your feathered friends Café. I'm only trying to keep my windows clean and vermin free. I'm sorry but Peregrine is staying put.'

Joan stomped back downstairs muttering dire threats and using language completely out of character for this usually mild mannered pillar of the local church. To Joan's delight, after a seventy two hour boycott, a few intrepid birds decided to risk visiting her garden again and gradually more and more began to return to the feeders when it seemed that 'Peregrine' wasn't going anywhere. Joan was able to relax again.

Later that week however, she arrived home to find that her fat ball feeder was no longer where it should be and neither was Peregrine. He was lying in pieces on top of the fat ball feeder and the crushed body of a little blue tit. Joan felt tears flow and her blood pressure escalate. She buried the little blue tit in the corner of her garden and put the remains of Peregrine in the bin. To her credit, Mhairi left her a bunch of carnations and a card saying how sorry she was. An uneasy truce followed.

When I called on Mhairi later that week, I saw the little grave for myself and as she seemed chastened by the whole experience, I hoped that this would put an end to hostilities. Not a hope. She had commissioned an ingenious device from a local welder, guaranteed to prevent birds sitting on her windowsill. It was a long metal plate with jagged spikes which would prevent anything from landing on it. She was delighted and her windowsill was bird free again. To avoid the possible decapitation of an unwary passer by in the event of it 'doing a Peregrine', it was brought in after the birds had roosted for the night and so peace was restored.

Joan replenished her feeders and bird tables on Monday morning as usual and walked into town to post off the renewal of her RSPB membership. As she turned into the close on the way back, she glanced up at Mhairi's window and was surprised to see a pair of pigeons sitting there. She must be away or forgotten to put out her pigeon repeller.

Returning home next day from lunch with a friend, Joan noticed five pigeons on Mhairi's windowsill. As she came into the close Davie was leaving. He lived across the landing from Mhairi and kept an eye on things when she was on holiday. As far as he knew she wasn't due to go away till the end of the month. 'Maybe we should knock her door and make sure she's alright', said Davie. The pair climbed to the first floor and rang the door bell but there was no reply.

'Do you think we should go in, I've got her spare key?' Joan nodded her agreement, Davie put the key in the lock and she called out, 'Mhairi, are you there?'

A faint reply came from the living room and when they pushed open the door they found Mhairi lying awkwardly under the window beside an upturned stool and pigeon repeller.

'Oh, Mhairi you poor thing,' Joan comforted her while Davie phoned for an ambulance.

Mhairi had a broken bone in her ankle and had concussion but if it had not been for Joan's prompt action, it could have been much worse. For Mhairi, the fact that she had Joan and the pigeons to thank for her rescue, was the cruellest cut of all.

Joan lost no time in telling everyone, including the local paper, how the pigeons had been responsible for 'saving Mhairi's life'. They sent a photographer who took a lovely photo of Joan in her garden with her birds, and Mhairi on crutches, grimacing beside her.

'Pigeons Save Local Woman', ran the front page headline. Joan and Mhairi were guests of honour at the local Ornithology Club dinner and two wee boys even asked for her autograph. Mhairi seemed to be enjoying her new found celebrity status. She was considering going on a bird watching trip with the local group and had contributed bird seed for the table in Joan's garden.

She made no comment when I mentioned that maybe now at last her war was over. As far as she was concerned, the battle may have been lost but the war would soon be resumed more stealthily.

'There was an ad in that magazine you brought me. I got Joan to post the cheque. It's a revolutionary new electronic device guaranteed to clear an area of pigeons up to 10 metres. Sound drives them mad apparently. I get bird free windowsills and Joan just gets a few less birds on her table. Clever eh? Best of all they say it's unobtrusive so she'll never know its there. Visions of maddened pigeons their wings over their ears fleeing the vicinity of Mhairi's no-go zone fill my head and I'm incapable of finding a reply.'



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Not here.....but near

Callander Ramblers' Diary December 2015 & January 2016

December 2015

Wed 2 Dec 09:30 Ramble: Strathyre Forest Loop (6.5 miles) Contact 01877 384227

Sat 5 Dec 08:30 Hill: Cort-ma Law (531m) Contact 01877 339080

Wed 9 Dec 09:30 Stroll: Dunblane Donder (4 miles) Contact 01786 825249

January 2016

Sat 2 Jan 11:00 Stroll: Town Walk (4 miles) Contact 01877 330444

Wed 20 Jan 09:30 Ramble: Loch Katrine Aqueduct Towers (6 miles) Contact 01877 330059

Meet in Ancaster Square. Visitors welcome. Please let the contact know if you plan to come along.



Callander and West Perthshire U3A

A recent promotion by C&WP to raise awareness of the U3A coincided with the NHS using the media to promote awareness of ill health due to loneliness and our display stand at Callander's GP surgeries on the day of the Flu Vaccinations drew much interest. Members of our U3A took turns to answer queries and hand out leaflets, timetables and membership forms. The pharmacy staff initiated the idea

of putting small information flyers in with every prescription bag for older patients and as a result we have recruited new members. Other village surgeries were leafleted on their Flu Vaccination days and the Buchlyvie Pharmacy is also adding flyers to prescriptions.



Spanish conversation is a new group recently started and well attended, as is the newly re-formed 'Singing for Pleasure' group. A Yoga Group will begin in the New Year. Details will be posted on our website 'Callander and West Perthshire U3A'. The Scottish History Group organised an outing to the Battle of Bannockburn Experience and the Poetry Group went to see the new film of 'Under Milk Wood'. At the time of writing we are looking forward to a talk on 'Winter Driving' by Angus Maciver of the Institute for Advanced Motoring and plans for the Christmas Lunch at Venachar Lochside have been finalised. Details of the menu have been circulated to members but the nature of the musical entertainment on the day is to be a surprise.

We would like to wish all members of C&WP a very happy festive season and look forward to new ventures in 2016.

Scottish Wildlife Trust, Callander Group Diary December 2015 – January 2016 in Callander Kirk Hall, South Church Street, Callander

Tuesday 8 December 7.30pm

'John Muir Trust: Giving Wild Land a Voice' by JMT

Tuesday 12 January 7.30pm

'Close Encounters with Wildlife' by Dave Anderson, FCS
Conservation Manager

£2 members, £2.50 non-members, free for students,
includes tea/coffee and biscuits. **Everyone Welcome**

Editorial

This issue, the last of 2015, is also my last issue, but hopefully not the last of the Strathard News. After 14 years of doing the layout, and acting editor since last year, it's time for me to retire. The committee are keen to carry on, and have every confidence that a new editor will step up to the plate. Committee member Craig Bunyan will take over the production of the next issue of the newsletter. The committee know there is a genuine fondness for the Strathard News, and local people miss it if it is not there, as evidenced by the many reincarnations over the years. Please help to keep it going by volunteering to take on a role; we need an editor; someone to do the layout; someone to update and maintain the website; a 'journalist' to write news and articles; regular columnists. 6 issues a year won't take up too much of your time. If you have the skills, and/or the enthusiasm to bring please contact a committee member as soon as possible.

The one constant over the years has been the very generous support of local businesses, in the way of advertising, which mostly funds the printing costs of the Strathard News. Public and private donations also contribute to the cost of producing the newsletter. Sponsorship of an issue is a great way to get more exposure for your goods or services, and remains a good deal at £150. Please contact a committee member if you would like to do this. There are 5 issues next year waiting for a sponsor.

The festive season is nearly upon us and I would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year. If you're looking for a unique Christmas gift why not take out a Strathard News subscription for a friend or relative.

All the best
Marion

Deadline Dates 2016

		<u>sponsor</u>
Issue 94	17 January	✓
Issue 95	28 February (Easter)	✗
Issue 96	8 May	✗
Issue 97	10 July	✗
Issue 98	18 September	✗
Issue 99	13 November (Xmas)	✗

Advertising Rates

Full page advert £100

£25

£12

Half page advert £50

1/3rd page £35

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Tues	Aberfoyle Fitness	9.30am-10.30am	Alison Woods 07548 677540
Wed	Toddler Group	10.00am-12pm	Cindy 07886 511894
	French Lessons	3.30pm-4.30pm	Frances Bigwood frances@duchraycastle.com
	Country Dancing	7.30pm-9.30pm	Allan Shepherd 01877 385236
Thur	Karate For All ages	6.30pm-9.00pm	Julie Glen 01877 382 296
Sun	Abtrad Music Group	5.00pm-6.00pm	Cindy McLoughlin 07786 511894

Aberfoyle & Buchlyvie Medical Practice



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Wed	3.00pm-5.30pm	By Appointment
Thursday	9.00am-11.30am	By Appointment
Friday	8.15am-11.00am	By Appointment

BUCHLYVIE - 01360 850237

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	2.00pm-3.00pm	Open Surgery
Tuesday	10.30am-11.30am 4.00pm-5.30pm	By Appointment
Wed	9.00am-10.15am 2.30pm-3.30pm	Open Surgery
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Remember You Can Book Appointments on Line
Please Ask at Reception

Elected Councillors Ward 1 Trossachs & Teith



Councillor Martin Earl, Conservative.
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tel 01786 443497, mob 07881 310 922,
e-mail earlm@stirling.gov.uk



Councillor Alycia Hayes, SNP
Stirling Council, Old Viewforth, Stirling, FK8 2ET
tel 01786 443497, mob 07881 310 924,
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e-mail woodf@stirling.gov.uk

Distribution: Arthur Jones

01877 382 682
Deadline Dates 2016
An email reminder is sent out one week prior to the deadline date. If you would like to be added to the list, please send your details to editor@strathardnews.com

Next Issue deadline - 17 Jan 2016

Sponsorship

A huge thank you to our sponsors for your support and commitment. If you would like to sponsor an issue next year please get in touch to book your slot.

Advertising

When you place an advert with the Strathard News, we will continue to run it unless you stop or replace it. To place or cancel an advert, please contact Margaret Hill. To amend existing advert, please contact Craig Bunyan.

www.strathardnews.com



Never miss an issue!

Why not have the newsletter delivered to you for the next year for only £12.

If you wish to take out an annual subscription please complete the information below.

The completed form should be posted to The Treasurer, Strathard News, Innis Ard, Manse Road, Aberfoyle FK8 3XF along with a cheque for £12 made payable to Strathard News. Alternatively, hand in to Aberfoyle Post Office.

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Jim Lightbody
aultwhur@hotmail.co.uk

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Saturday 10:00 - 14:00

mobile bank RBS

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Contact: Fr Jim McCrudden:

01877 330 702

NHS 24 111

Aberfoyle Fire Brigade 01877 382 969

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Library Service 01786 237553

Health

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Dentist (Drymen) 01360 661097

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**

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