

# STRATHARDNEWS

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Issue 94 | February 2016

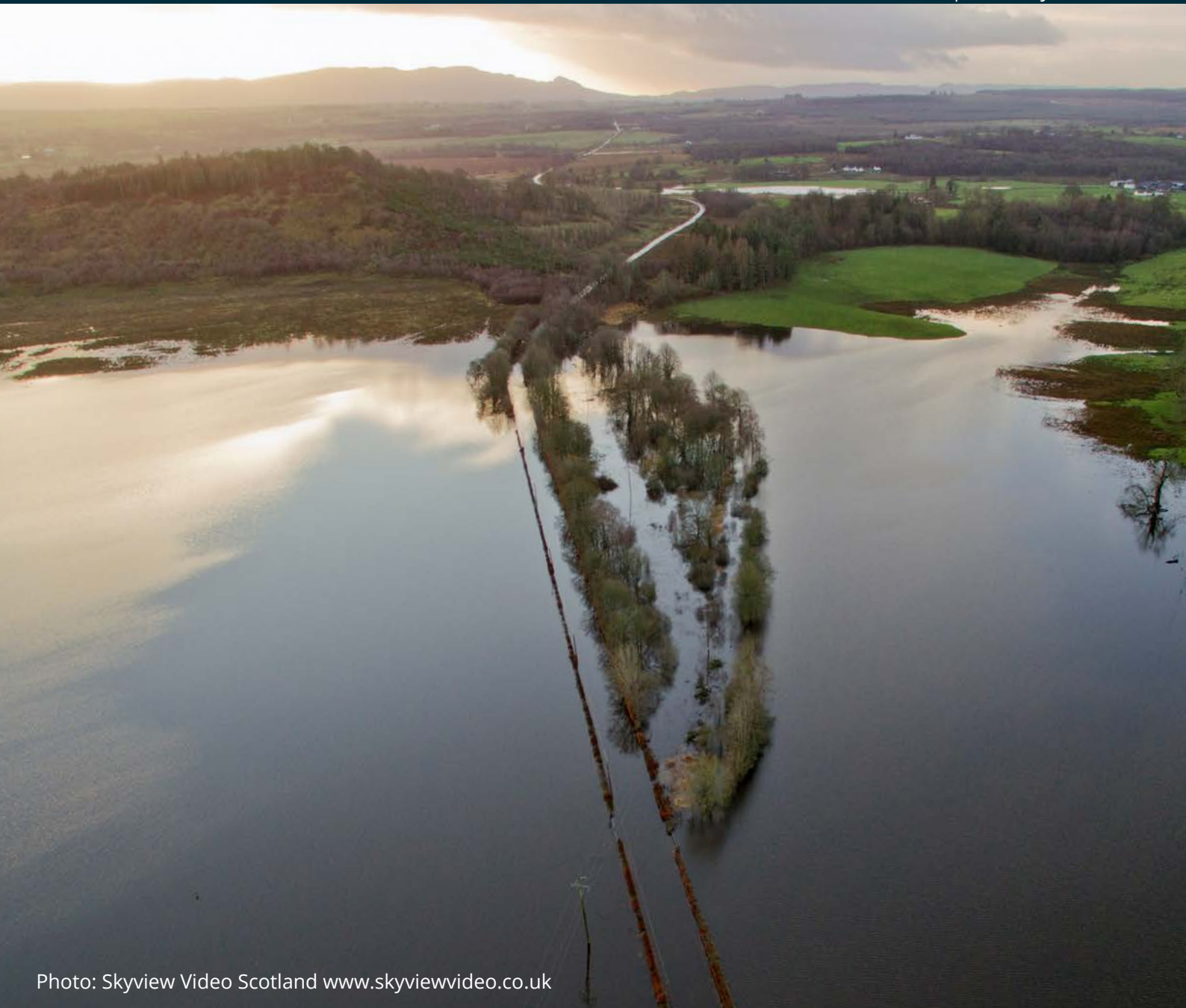


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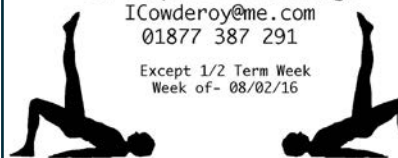
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## THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ARE RECRUITING FOR FIREFIGHTERS RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM (RDS)

Vacancies now exist for Firefighters (RDS) at Doune Fire Station.

Firefighters in the Retained Duty System (RDS) are individuals who live or work close to specific community fire stations and can commit to providing an emergency response service for that station.

Most RDS Firefighters are women and men whose primary employment is in another field, but in

Addition to that, are called upon to deliver the same wide range of emergency services as Whole-time Firefighters, including fires, floods, road traffic accidents and chemical spills.

As an RDS Firefighter your role would be challenging and demanding. There are stressful and hazardous situations to be faced and you will be required to deal with these while providing comfort and reassurance to members of the community. You may be involved in Community Fire Safety Initiatives within your local area to help prevent emergencies occurring.

You must be available to respond to emergency calls from your home, or place of work (by employer agreement), at any time of the day or night within 5-8 minutes of emergency call-outs, however, if you do not meet these requirements your application may still be considered. To ensure you maintain the relevant knowledge and skills required for the role, you will be required to attend your station for a 2-3 hour session each week. In return you will be paid a retainer fee along with additional payments for every incident and training night you attend.

To become an RDS Firefighter, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or over
- Be Physically fit and in good health
- Have the required standard of vision and colour perception

- Be seriously interested in helping to provide an invaluable emergency service for your local community
- Have the express permission of your primary employer to become an RDS Firefighter

Applications should be submitted online on [www.myjob-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjob-scotland.gov.uk)

**Applications are open from the 1st February to 21st February 2016**

**For further information contact Station Manager Brian Fyfe, 07785 572128**

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**Do you** want to learn new skills that can be used in a variety of jobs?

**Are you** over 18 years of age?

**Are you** physically fit and in good health?

**Do you** have good unaided vision and colour perception?

**Are you** interested in helping to provide an important emergency service for your local community?

**Are you** available to respond to ABERFOYLE fire station within five to eight minutes?

**If you can answer YES to all of these questions, we want to hear from you. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service seeks to attract talented candidates from across Scotland's diverse communities.**

**RECRUITMENT DATES:**  
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## MSP AND MP WELCOMES FINANCIAL HELP FOR FLOODED COMMUNITIES

Bruce Crawford MSP and Steven Paterson MP have welcomed the news that funding of over £12 million will be made available to help areas affected by severe weather across Scotland.

The funding is in addition to the £4 million announced by the Deputy First Minister, bringing the total package of support to over £16 million.

An extra £5.8 million will be made available to support households and business properties affected by flooding. The funding will be used by Local Authorities to provide every household, business premises or charity directly affected by flood water with a grant of £1,500.

In addition to flood relief support, businesses whose ability to trade has been severely affected by flooding will be able to apply for an additional grant of £3,000 funded by the Scottish Government.

*"I am pleased that the SNP Government has recognised the very real hardship and misery the impact of the floods has had on many households and businesses"*

*Bruce Crawford MSP*



## RIVER FORTH FLOODING



**Winter Storms** have caused misery for many up and down the country since November last year. By the 5th of January, some communities in Scotland were already breaking records for their 'wettest ever January'. Aberfoyle did not escape, as these pictures from Isabel Piper and Rodger Doubal show.

## CONGRATULATIONS FOR GARTMORE TODDLER GROUP

The Gartmore baby and toddler group have received funding from the Big Lottery Communities and Families Fund.

The group will be using the £4,406 award for a number of projects including to deliver dance classes and theatre workshops to 15 children. The award will also fund new play and exercise equipment to encourage children to take part and explore creative activities.

Laura Hart, Treasurer, Gartmore Baby and Toddler Group, said:

"I couldn't believe that we were awarded the full amount on our application, it is just so fantastic. It will make such a difference to the children who already attend the toddler group and I'm very confident that once we have all our new pieces of equipment our re-launch will be very successful in attracting new members."

## CALLANDER PHOTO CLUB 2016

Please join us for our next meeting of Callander Photo Club to be held Wednesday, 10 February at 7:30 pm at the Waverley Hotel on Callander Main Street. Please bring your camera, tripod and a wide-angle lens for a workshop on photographing smoke.

The photo word for February is 'NEW'. Send your photos (no more than 4) to [callanderphotoclub@gmail.com](mailto:callanderphotoclub@gmail.com)

All are welcome. Members £1/ Guests £3. For more information email [callanderphotoclub@gmail.com](mailto:callanderphotoclub@gmail.com). See us on facebook at Callander Photo Club.

March meeting - 9 March

March photo word - 'CIRCLE'

## GRANT FUNDING FOR FLOOD DAMAGE



*Flooding on Main Street, Aberfoyle on the 30th December 2015  
Photo: Isabel Piper*

Grant funding is now available for Stirling premises that were directly affected by flooding during December 2015/ January 2016.

Stirling Council is to receive funding to support and assist households, businesses, community groups and charitable organisations who have been directly affected (i.e. inundated by water within their premises or with basement damage) with a flat rate grant of £1,500 each. Properties which suffered inundation of water in the garden only will not be eligible to apply.

This funding is to reimburse those affected for not receiving the full benefit of the services they pay for through their Council Tax and to enable people to protect their homes and businesses against future floods by installing flood barriers, or by carrying out flood resilient repairs.

In addition, a flat rate grant of £3,000 will be available for businesses where there is evidence that their ability to

trade was severely impacted by flooding at any point during the recent severe flooding incidents in December 2015/January 2016. This could include closure for a number of days, loss of customers through disruption to production or impact on customer access.

These grants are one-off payments to support businesses in their recovery and are not intended to cover losses incurred which should have been covered by insurance.

If your home, business or community group premises was badly affected, you can apply for grant funding by e-mailing [flooding@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@stirling.gov.uk) or calling the Flood Risk Management Team on 01786 233003, who will do their best to make sure you receive your payment as soon as possible, subject to verification.

For more information, please contact: Siân Lower, Communications Officer, 01786 233033, [lowers@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:lowers@stirling.gov.uk)

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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 hear an interesting talk and meet like-minded neighbours and friends.

**March 2nd 2016 :**

John Davidson-Kelly

"Piping, Its History and Heritage"

**April 6th 2016 :**

Jennifer G. Robertson MA PhD  
FSA Scot. MIFA

"Bruach Caorainn & other abandoned farming settlements"

## DON'T MISS THE APRIL PROGRAMME

Right on our doorsteps in Loch Ard Forest and of great local interest Braechurnmor, has been described by RCAHMS as one of the most interesting examples of a pre-clearance Township in Stirlingshire.

We are privileged to have an enthusiastic and very knowledgeable speaker in the shape of Archaeologist and passionate local historian, Jenny Robertson, who carried out the archaeological survey of the site for the recent hydro-scheme application. The evening will enlighten us not only on the extensive remains of Big Bruach Caoruinn township but also on other similar sites in rural Scotland



Come along on Wednesday 6th April – 7.30 in Kinlochard Village Hall

All welcome to hear more of the mediaeval village in the shadow of Ben Lomond

At Bruach Caorainn, River Bank of the Rowans

Seldom does it get more local than this

*£4.00 for a single meeting,*

*£15 annual membership*



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7.30pm

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**Concessions for Senior Citizens  
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## Bistro Buffet Night

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In Kinlochard Village Hall

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February**

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**Men!!!  
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**Ever fancied being a gangster? Ever sing in the shower? CAOS are looking for men of any age over 16 for their production of Guys and Dolls in spring 2016. Whether you fancy claiming the lime light with a main part, or being part of a fun chorus we need YOU. No audition necessary. Please drop an email to [gemma-dance@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gemma-dance@hotmail.co.uk) for further info. We look forward to seeing you soon.**



## ABERFOYLE BROWNIES

We would like to start off by thanking everyone who came along to the Memorial Hall during the Christmas Fair and supported our wee stall. Hopefully you all enjoyed eating the "Snowman Poop". As a result of your generous support and the Brownie's teamwork they managed to raise £35. The Brownies decided that they would like to split the money between an animal charity and a "people" charity. The Owls placed the names of all the suggested charities in a hat and drew the SSPCA and The Salvation Army, each of whom received a cheque for £17.50. Well done girls on your fundraising effort!

Our Christmas party took place in the very elegant and scenic setting of Duchray Castle. The Brownies made decorations, organised party games, provided a buffet (thank-you Mums and Dads) and even put on a play. Everyone had fun and it was lovely to have so many friends and families join us. Thank-you to Frances and Ollie for turning Duchray

Castle over to the chaos for the evening.

This term we will be working on 3 different badges as a unit! We hope to have earned both the Agility and Healthy Heart badges by the end of term. We have decided to work towards a World Thinking Day 2016 badge too. The 22 February is World Thinking Day. This is an international day of friendship where Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world celebrate their common connections. Look out for us in our Brownie uniforms on Monday 22 February.

1st Aberfoyle Brownies would also like to say a huge THANK YOU to all the Co-op members who voted for us in the Co-op Local Fund award. We are delighted to have been chosen and are making plans for adventures throughout the year. We will be sure to tell you all about them!

Brownies gives girls an opportunity to explore new ideas and activities. If you feel you might have a particular skill which you would be inter-

ested in sharing with us please get in touch. We love welcoming visitors to our unit and while the Owls try their best, they can't be good at everything!

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](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk) or to make an

# Brownies

## QUIZ NIGHT PORT OF MENTIETH

Friday 19th February 2016 at 7.30 pm. All welcome

Adults £5 per head Children £3 per head

Raffle, Tea, coffee and biscuits

Proceeds in aid of the Port Kirk

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## ABERFOYLE AND PORT OF MENTEITH PARISH CHURCH

REV TERRY TAYLOR

What a week this has been, the death of David Bowie, Alan Rickman, Dan Haggerty (Grizzly Adams) and it seems every day we have heard news that has affected us in one way or another, sadness at the death of these people who have been part of the landscape of our lives. And we pray for their families at this time, and we pray for the families in our own community who are in the midst of the sorrow of bereavement, ill health and other problems.

Then there's the news of those who have had big lottery wins. John and Lisa Robertson from Tennessee have just won over £300m on a lottery. How hard it must be to take this in, certainly a life changing sum, almost ten times more than the couple from Dumfries who won £33m.

Of course the media are keen to interview them and hear their thought on how this huge win might change their lives. And many people are dreaming of what they would do with such an amount of money. The Dumfries couple are keen to do something for their community where many are suffering from the effects of the recent floods.

I smiled when I listened to the American couple being interviewed. They have no plans to give up their jobs nor to move from their one storey home. Big houses are fine says the husband but they've gotta be cleaned. Yeah, responds his wife and I work full time!

I wonder if their thoughts will change when they realise just how much money they have won!

My call to ministry was a life changing event, but before that the call to follow Jesus was even more life changing. Now, I don't remember a time when I didn't believe in God, but I do remember a time when I wasn't aware of what that might mean for me in how I lived my life

day to day. Jesus told his disciples that he had come to give us life, life in all its fullness. That life in all its fullness is a terrific promise. It's a life that knows God's peace, even in the most trying of circumstances. It is living life knowing we are loved by the one who created us and always has our best interests at heart. It is living free from guilt, because God offers us forgiveness and cleansing through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the power to be content when we have much or when we are in need. There is great wonder in following Jesus, it is not the easiest path to trod, it doesn't mean that life will be a bed of roses, in fact for very, any people it means quite the opposite,

It does mean we live with hope, assurance. David Bowie's final album, Blackstar and the song, Lazarus, that has been referred to so much. In the song he speaks of being free as a bluebird, (perhaps an allusion to those happy little bluebirds that fly beyond the rainbow) and this has got many people thinking about what lies beyond this life. Even those who would think that Christianity and the hope Christians have is just pie in the sky when you die. For we all of us, at some point, wonder, what lies beyond this life. It's like we are created with something that makes us feel in some way that we are eternal and life will go on, but somehow we can't quite grasp it. David Bowie has tried to capture something of what life after death may be like.

Soon we will be celebrating Easter, when Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus and the promise that all who follow him will live because he lives. And so, while David Bowie wondered and imagined what life beyond death may look like, Jesus showed the way; his life, his death and his resurrection point us to the eternity that God

has placed in our hearts and God's spirit is opening the understanding of men and women everywhere to enter into that great mystery.

Following Jesus isn't just about what happens when this life is through, it's about that fullness of life now, the security of living in God's love, knowing his guidance and his care. The joy of being loved and the joy we experience in loving God.

The woman from Tennessee couldn't begin to imagine how she would manage to clean a big house and work full time and all the while have such a huge amount of money to hand.

There are many people who don't understand the richness that Jesus offers, for this life, as well as after death, many who live on or below the spiritual poverty line.

This hope, this love, this joy is for sharing. Here's the mystery of God's economy, the more we share His love with others the more joy we experience and his love is eternal, never ending, we share and lose nothing, no, rather as we share we experience even more of the riches of Christ.

Perhaps a bit early for Easter but, may the hope, peace, joy and love of the risen Christ bless you this Easter season.

## DIARY DATE

*Sunday 6th March,*

*The sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated in Port of Menteith Kirk at 10.00am and at Aberfoyle Parish Church at 11.15am*

**ALL WELCOME**



## ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### RICHARD GROSSE, RECTOR

Still honoured

It is nearly a year since Peter McColl, both a father figure and an elder statesman of Aberfoyle died. His funeral took place last Easter Monday thus continuing the family connection with St Mary's. There, Peter's grandfather Duncan is honoured on a memorial as one of the slate quarrymen who in the closing years of the 19th century, laboured in their spare time to found and construct the church.

Peter was born in Dunfermline but was schooled at Aberfoyle. As was common with those of his generation, he left formal education to start work at 13. His first job was on a farm at Balfron where he lived in nearby lodgings. It wasn't long before his employer discovered Peter's affinity to large machines; thus he was placed in charge of an ancient stationary engine that powered a sawmill.

Not long after, the Second World War broke out and Peter was called up into the REME The Electrical and Mechanical Company of the Royal Engineers. In June 1944 Peter embarked on the 'Empire Earl' at London's East India Docks. He and his companions had probably only a vague inkling of their ultimate destination. It was to the Normandy Beaches which the ship reached after a choppy sea passage on the morning of the 6th June 1944. The ship unloaded men and equipment into a barge which was directed to the Arromanche beach, under heavy enemy fire. The unit's first task was to set up electricity generating sets to supply field hospitals which were soon to be filled with wounded soldiers. The battle was unbelievably fierce and the casualty rate soon mounted.

The enemy by degrees retreated inland blowing-up bridges and roads to hinder the allied advance. Hap-

less civilians in its path were left without a water supply. Peter's unit was charged with restoring working order and without it's assistance, the allied advance to eventual victory would not have been possible. At times the unit's advance became dangerously close to the tail of the retreating army. On one occasion the unit captured part of a field kitchen left behind with soup still hot in saucepans ready to be served.

It was perhaps the 60th Anniversary of D Day in 2014 which Peter was able to personally attend that prompted the French Government to recognise the unit's invaluable efforts and Peter's in particular. Thus only months before he died, Peter was informed that he was to

be awarded the 'Legion d' Honneur' This medal was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 and is the nation's highest honour. It is divided into five degrees the highest being the Chevalier which translated means knight. It was this highest degree that Peter was posthumously awarded in November.

Billy, Peter's son will in future be entitled to wear the medal on his right lapel on his late father's behalf. The medal is a most splendid object that has now been provided with a red clasp. It will be worn with the pride the medal and Peter's memory undoubtedly deserve.

**Callander Amateur Operatic Society Proudly Presents...**

# GUYS AND DOLLS

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With fabulous songs including *Sit Down You're Rocking The Boat, Luck Be A Lady, and Take Back Your Mink*. Come and tap your toes, and enjoy an amazing performance of a brilliant musical.

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# COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPORT

*Flooding Drop-in Session Aberfoyle Memorial Hall*

*Saturday 13th February 2016 from 12 to 4pm*

Following the recent flooding incidents Stirling Council has confirmed the date and time for its drop-in community information session in Aberfoyle. Plans for the proposed flood protection scheme will be available, also details of other works currently being carried out to lessen the impact of flooding incidents and to improve warnings and communication. Other agencies such as SEPA and FCS will be there too. We would encourage everybody interested or affected by flooding to take the opportunity to come along and get their questions answered. If you cannot attend but have a comment or query which you would like us to ask on your behalf please leave this in writing at the Post Office.

Flooding Grants

You may have seen the announcements in the press about Government compensation for the flooding in December 2015. Stirling Council is now receiving applications for grants of £1500, which can both reimburse for loss and pay for future protection. There is also compensation of £3000 for businesses where trading was affected. Full information is on the Council website and you can claim by filling in an online form. Also you can contact the Council Flood Risk Management Team on 01786 233003 for information or help, or email [flooding@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@stirling.gov.uk).

Seniors Christmas Dinner – Thank You

Our thanks to all those who helped make this annual event such a success. We rely on the support of many sponsors to run the dinner, all of whom we gratefully thank,

and special mention for their valuable contributions are due to: Forest Hills Hotel for hosting the event and providing an excellent meal, Buchanan Cabs for transport, The Kinlochard Ceilidh Band and the young members of Abtrad for providing music and entertainment. Also our thanks to the many local businesses and people who made donations or contributions of prizes for our raffle, which is one of the highlights of the evening and helps provide gifts to the oldest members of our community. Thanks are also due to those who helped organise and erect the community Christmas trees and lights.

Community Councillors wanted!

As previously announced there are vacancies in Aberfoyle and Stronachlachar, currently being advertised by Stirling Council. The deadline for nominations is 12th February 2016 at 4pm.

Community Information

- Our website is [www.strathard.org.uk](http://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 in the box on the left – please do get in touch with them on any relevant matter if you would like our help.

*Fiona*

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 meeting will be held on 3rd March at Inversnaid Hotel. 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 noticeboards 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

### Inversnaid

Andre Goulancourt

### Stronachlachar

1 vacancy

### Kinlochard

Fiona McEwan  
Colin Smith  
Stuart Stephen

### Contact details:

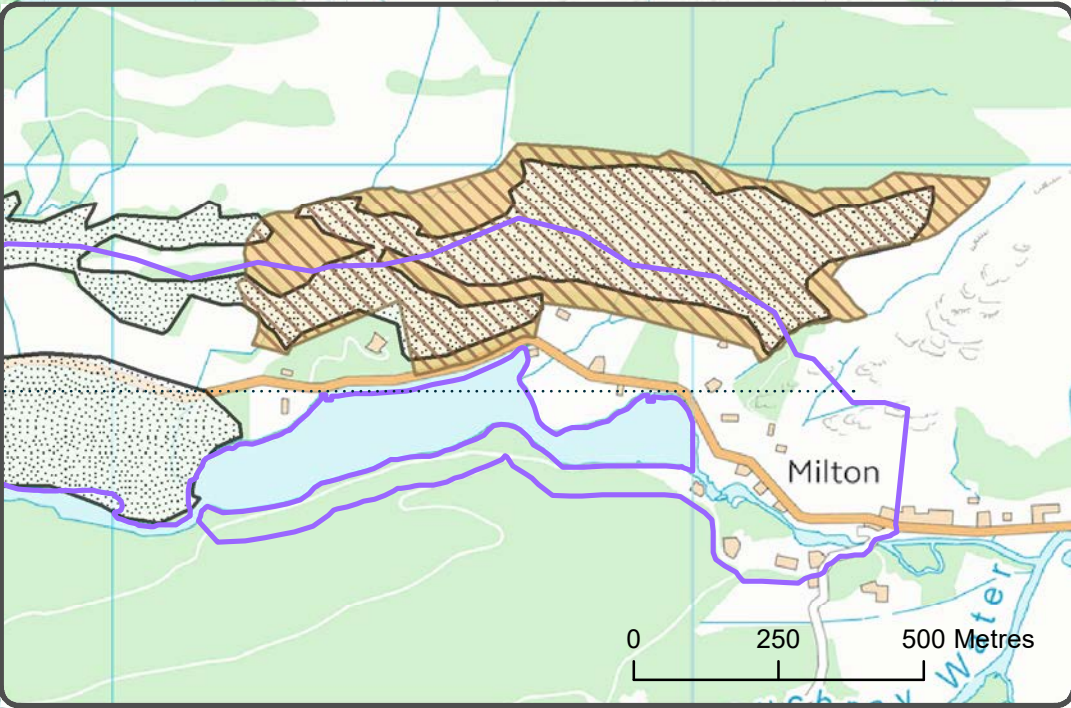
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NATIONAL PARK ACCESS



- KEY**
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)
  - Trossachs West Proposed Management Zone
  - National Park Boundary



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The representation of features or boundaries in which LLTNP or others have an interest does not necessarily imply their true positions. For further information please contact the appropriate authority.

NEW CAMPING BYELAWS APPROVED FOR NATIONAL PARK

On 26th January the Government decision was finally announced to approve measures aimed at dramatically improving the experience on pressured lochshores, as proposed by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.

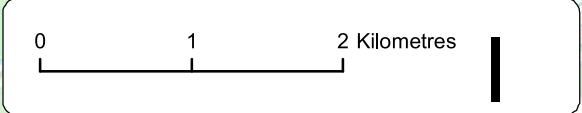
These were the subject of a consultation in early 2015, and feedback from local people and the Community Council was reflected in the final proposals submitted for approval, including extending the lochshores covered by the new byelaws, which are seasonal from March to September.

Over past years increasing concerns have been raised over the behaviour of a minority of visitors who failed to treat areas of natural beauty like Strathard and other areas within the Park with respect, and these byelaws address a remaining target within our last Community Action Plan: “to make sure that wild-camping does not disrupt or despoil the area”.

This Trossachs West map shows that to some degree most lochshores in Strathard are covered by the measures. Full details can be found online at [www.thisisyourpark.org.uk](http://www.thisisyourpark.org.uk).

*Of particular interest in the announcement was that early investment in better camping facilities will impact on Strathard in an area where problems have been seen in the past.*

*“Feasibility work is already well underway at Loch Chon where we plan to develop informal, low-impact camping facilities on land owned by Forestry Commission Scotland.”*





# THE TROSSACHS NIGHT TRAIL SERIES

## A RACE ACCOUNT BY SEAN MCFARLANE FROM TRAIL RUNNER MAGAZINE

I'm running quicker than normal with the excitement clearly getting the better of me. I can hear a river to the left of me though I'm keeping my headtorch fixed on the ground ahead. I'm winding my way through the trees, over damp roots with the pitch black all around. I need to concentrate. Up ahead I can see a line of lights set against the blackness. Behind I can sense the lights of others, pushing me on. I've absolutely no idea how to get back to my car but this is great fun!

I'm taking part in a midweek night trail running race. It's the first race in a three race series. Set in the splendid Trossachs in west central Scotland, we've been blessed with a clear, cold and still winter's evening. The series is being organised by Scottish hill running legend Angela Mudge. This area is Angela's playground and she is keen for others to discover its delights. I can fully see, with the help of my headtorch, why.

Despite having done a decent

amount of headtorch off-road running over the years, this is my first race in this format. To be fair, night time races are still somewhat in their infancy in this country but as we congregate in the car park and head into the local pub to register, I can't help thinking that these races are going to go from strength to strength. More and more of us are realising that some of the best winter running conditions are at night, when the light fades and the frost crisps up the terrain.

As I pin my number on, I meet several familiar faces, most of whom seem to have the same "this is all new to me" expression on. We make our way over to the start line, with the gathered breaths combining to form a lingering mist. There's plenty of hand rubbing and knee raising going on. Angela's race briefing is mercifully short. I know, like everybody else bar one, that I'll just follow the person in front.

Quickly to the start line and then

*"It's the first race in a three race series. Set in the splendid Trossachs in west central Scotland, we've been blessed with a clear, cold and still winter's evening."*

we're off. Straight away I feel faster than usual, but having mountain biked in the dark before I know the light combines with the black ambience to make things feel quicker than is actually the case. Call it an optical illusion but whatever it is, as a result I back off. Immediately I think of the next race where I will be better prepared and more successful at trying to pace myself when surrounded by darkness.

Talking of preparation, my mind quickly turns to the map I saw at registration. Or rather glanced at. Pre race course familiarisation is not one of my strengths and, when combined with these night time conditions, means I haven't really got a clue where I'm going. Again a lesson for next time. For now, this "stepping into the unknown" element merely adds to the fun.

Most of the course is on wide forest tracks but after 3km of fairly flat off-road running, I see the headtorches ahead beginning to climb. I know I'm next. As usual I'm eager to attack this section, confident that I'm a stronger climber than those just ahead. No doubt they do such things as interval training. Of course everybody behind me thinks the

same thing as we puff and pant up the steep rising single track. We're spat out once more onto the forest road and the running order is little changed. That's certainly lifted my heart rate though and I can feel my breathing is heavier. I figure I'm about half way now and although I'm keen to chase down those in front, I feel I'm running at the right pace for me. Whatever that might mean.

This really is a cracking way to spend a Wednesday evening in mid-winter. I can't help thinking of those gym users, pounding the treadmills in that lovely sweat infested indoor air as they forlornly try to enhance their enjoyment levels by watching the One Show. There's no contest here. People seem to have the very odd opinion that when it's dark, especially in winter, that must mean it's bad weather. Make no mistake, I thought like that too until a few years ago. How wrong could I have been? Really it's just about having the right kit and giving things a go. I briefly forget I'm in a race and my mind wanders to all those friends who would love tonight.

I then make the debatable mistake of taking a second or two to look well ahead. As I do, I see two lights

*"This really is a cracking way to spend a Wednesday evening in mid-winter"*

that seem literally miles ahead. Dog walkers perhaps? Probably not but either way I need to focus more on what's immediately in front of my feet. The forest trails seem like a good flat surface but years of timber trucks and rain have washed much of the surface earth off of them, leaving a lot of embedded rock. Most of them are flat but there are plenty pointy edges just right for my cumbersome toes to trip up on. Lift those knees Sean!

I'm now pretty tired. I've taken off both buffs I started with - one on my head and one round my neck - and they are now around my wrists. Like

a true amateur, I'm not even entirely sure how far the course is. The race is advertised in miles and I recall it being 5 point something. The markers, just for an extra challenge, are in kilometres! I reckon it should be at least 8km but not much more. I'm now at 6.

Whether it's effective race strategy or just desperation, I'm now cutting the corners. I'm sticking to the wide forest track but using every opportunity to take as direct a line as possible. After what seems like much more than one kilometre, I pass the 7km marker. Right, time for my finishing burst. I could perhaps manage a slight upping of the pace for 1.5km, but definitely no more. Unsure as to how far it is to the finish, I resist the urge to increase my pace, safe in the knowledge that I probably couldn't do it anyway. Other than fellow competitors and marshals, I haven't seen any other lights since we started, so I have no idea where the village of Aberfoyle is. But surely it can't be far away? Then again, is the finish actually in Aberfoyle, where we started? It must be, surely? I really should have done some form of recce beforehand!

Suddenly, and not a moment too soon, I see the lights of Aberfoyle. Not exactly where we started but I can now see the finish. I attempt a sprint and realising that is never going to happen, jog over the line. I finish 17th out of 78.

I've done plenty of races of varying guises over the years but that was very new for me. As I chat to the others finishing, it's clear it's new to most of them as well. Straight away talk turns to the next race. I'm confident I can improve my own performance, on various aspects of the race. The only problem is that it's clear everyone thinks the same. Bring it on!





Photos of an eagle chick being ringed and fitted with a satellite tracker.



ringlets and the specialist plants that flourish on the limestone. Trail cameras in wooded areas show red squirrels, pine martens, foxes and badgers while a neighbouring estate recorded 53 male black grouse on one noisy lek.

2016 started well with Dave Anderson's fascinating talk on Kestrels, Ospreys and Golden Eagles as subjects of 'Close Encounters with Wildlife'. The behaviour and movements of these species are being recorded using leg rings, camera traps and tracking devices. 20 years ago tracking required triangulation by

2 or 3 people with radio receivers, yielding around one fix per week. Today satellite tags beam virtually continuous signals while Dave's preferred GSM tags can store up to 15,000 data points and send a text each time the bird passes a mobile phone mast. Altitude data identifies any travelling by ferry! The trackers must weigh less than 3% of the bird's bodyweight and last ~5 years when the harness also degrades. Their batteries are charged by solar cells so many in Scotland this winter have flat batteries!

In June 2015 6 kestrels in Ayrshire were fitted with trackers to help to understand their 70% decline over 20 years. These are fitted on chicks around 28 days old; incredibly, they reach full size in 35 days. More data are expected in Spring but one did go down to Wales before moving to the Poole area.

For more information and some excellent photos see Gordon Riddle's website; <http://www.riddle-kestrel.com/SatelliteTagging/index.htm>.

Ospreys in Central Scotland have been encouraged by FCS-built nests in quiet areas and reached 26 pairs in 2015. Two were tagged in July; a 2100g female brought back fish from as far away as Loch Leven, often as heavy as herself. Ruskie, a

1500g male, was tracked migrating via Cowal, Kintyre & Ireland before reaching just north of Portugal in 27 hours! After Xmas by a reservoir in Spain he flew over the Sahara to Sierra Leone and today is between Senegal and Gambia, resting ahead of his return flight in March.

The unofficial estimate is that Scotland has 430-450 pairs of golden eagles. However, few in the west are raising young due to degraded habitat although the richer eastern sites show good numbers. Nest cameras record chick development & diet; one had red & roe deer, crow, badger & 4 fox cubs -no lambs! Eagle chicks (fully grown by 12 weeks) are tagged on the nest but adults are caught at baited sites in a bow net then also (carefully) measured and weighed, 4.5kg males to 7kg females. 'James' (colour ring 007!) was tagged in January 2015 near Loch Katrine and has remained in a tight area with digressions to Lochs Sloy and Vennacher, regularly flying over others' territories. See him in BBC's 2016 Winter Watch.

*NOTE: the next two meetings have been switched; 9 February is 'Salmon Movements in the Forth, Teith & Allan Water' and 8 March is 'Tree Threats & Diseases'.*

Lesley Hawkins

*For more information on the John Muir Trust, visit*

<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org>

*or the Wild Space visitor centre in Pitlochry.*

*For information and photos of the kestrel tagging visit Gordon Riddle's website*

<http://www.riddle-kestrel.com/SatelliteTagging/index.htm>

# Scottish Wildlife Trust

## JOHN MUIR TRUST AND TRACKING RAPTORS

John Muir may be best known for his conservation work in the USA (Yosemite Valley, Yellowstone National Park and founding the Sierra Club) but he grew up in Dunbar, his family emigrating to the USA when he was 10. The JMT UK charity, established in 1983, manages land to restore habitats, maintains footpaths, campaigns against detrimental developments and encourages public connection, including the John Muir Award.

The speaker at the December SWT meeting was Liz Auty, JMT Ecologist and Estate Manager of the East Schiehallion property, purchased in 1999 for its limestone habitat and in historical importance. Due to its isolated position and regular shape, in 1774 Astronomer Royal, Nevil Maskelyne, used it for an experiment to estimate the mass of the Earth. The deflection of a pendulum by the mass of the mountain gave an estimate of the mean density of

the Earth, from which its mass and a value for Newton's Gravitational constant G were deduced. His assistant, mathematician Charles Hutton, also devised the system of contour lines.

The mountain summit sees 20,000 walkers per year so in 2005 a new, more resilient footpath was opened. Conservation work includes control of grazing, surveys of species such as stonechat, whinchat, mountain

*"For 50 years, the Scottish Wildlife Trust has worked with its members, partners and supporters in pursuit of its vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems across Scotland's land and seas."*



## SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST CALLANDER GROUP

The Scottish Wildlife Trust, Callander Group Diary for February & March 2016. The group meet in Callander Kirk Hall, South Church Street, Callander, FK17 8BN. Dates and topics below:

- Tuesday 9 February 7:30pm 'Salmon Movements in the Forth Teith and Allan Water' by Jo Girvan, Forth Fisheries Trust
- Tuesday 8 March 7:30pm 'Tree Threats and Diseases' by Andy Malcolm, FCS

£2 members, £2:50 non-members, free for students, includes tea/coffee and biscuits. Everyone Welcome!



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# The garden in early spring

## HINTS AND TIPS FROM THE BENVIEW GARDEN CENTRE

As I am writing this in mid January winter has just arrived. After all the rain of December and earlier in January it's a huge relief to get some clear, dry days and lovely cold nights and lovely to see a covering of snow on the ground (but no more than that please!); the ground will have a bit of a chance to dry out and some of the bugs should be killed off by the frosts. And as the days are getting longer and Spring is just around the corner it's time to wrap up warm and get out into the garden now, if you haven't been doing so already that is.

### In The Garden

Pruning and organizing are the two of the main jobs to be getting on with. Get the loppers and secateurs or chain saw out and prune back any broken branches, restake trees if necessary and if hedges have been pushed over too far by wind or snow think about renovation pruning.

While you've got the loppers or pruning saw to hand, carry out any work on apple and pear trees before they come into leaf (while you can still see the branch network); opening up the canopy will enhance air circulation and reduce the chance of fungal disease. But don't be tempted to tackle any of the Prunus species (plums and gages – stone fruits) until in leaf.

Prune Wisteria, late flowering Clematis, ornamental vines such as Virginia Creeper and cut back ornamental grasses and winter flowering heathers (shears are the best tool for this).

All the fruit trees will benefit from a high potash feed; wood ash is excellent.

Autumn fruiting Raspberries should be cut back to the ground now and new canes planted. And established blackcurrants should have a quarter of the old stems cut to the ground. Also plant other fruit bushes and trees – some may still be available as bare root plants.

Deciduous trees and shrubs that are in the wrong place can still be moved now and deciduous hedges should be planted now too – bare root plants may still be available which make the job a lot easier and cheaper than using pot grown stock later in the year.

If you haven't done so already dig over the vegetable plots and at least plan out what you're going to plant and where following a crop rotation programme. You can then start to sow seeds indoors now and outdoors later in February for some crops. Also start to chit potatoes and to force Rhubarb.

Take hardwood cuttings now, and when snowdrops have finished flowering they can be divided and moved.

### Bird Care

I'm sure you've all been looking after the birds all winter so far, but it's not time to ease up on the feeding yet as there's still plenty of time for more harsh weather. Continue to make sure they have something to eat and unfrozen water to drink and bathe in; it will soon be time for the birds to be thinking about nesting so cut back any deciduous hedges before they start and put up/clean out a bird box or two.

In the greenhouse or shed there is

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

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

Houseplants can be repotted now so they grow away well for the rest of the year. This includes many orchids; assuming they have finished flowering and before they put on new growth, if they have not been repotted for a couple of years think about doing it now. If you're not confident to tackle this job yourself bring them in and let us do it for you.

## BENVIEW GARDEN CENTRE

Ward Toll  
Balfron Station G63 0QZ  
Tel: 01360 850525  
[www.benviewgardencentre.co.uk](http://www.benviewgardencentre.co.uk)  
[info@benviewgardencentre.co.uk](mailto:info@benviewgardencentre.co.uk)

Opening hours  
Mon – Sat 9.30 – 4.30 Sunday  
10.30 – 4.30  
From 1st March: Mon-Sat:  
9.00-5.00 Sunday: 10.00-5.00

## GREEN ROUTES

*building a positive learning environment where people with additional support needs can realise their potential and become equipped to make positive contributions to their communities.*

For the past year, we have had new additions to the livestock in the Garden at Green Routes. Three Jacob ewes with their cross-Suffolk black lambs have been part of the daily care programme for students and have proved to be of huge interest. Students have learned all about their care, beginning with making sure the fences were escape-proof, and how to tie up a gate. Feeding encouraged the sheep to become less nervous and whoever carries the bucket of feed will find Barbara (Baa-aa-baa-ra!) is first with her head in the food, closely followed by Hannah and Annie (the latter named after Princess Anne because her horns create a crown on her head). Straw bales have to be carried and on the few occasions when the sheep were kept indoors, mucking-out also became a daily chore.

Great excitement is felt when the sheep have to be moved and before we had the help last week of Colin McAlpine and his collie, Ted, we all had to become path-blockers and try our best to encourage reluctant sheep to leave their familiar field and travel to another. Sheep-shearing was a huge event followed by lots of work to wash the fleeces, and to help Susan Hunt to card the wool ready for spinning. Spinning is a specialised job and we have been very grateful for the time put in by Susan and Margaret Hill. The wool is lovely, naturally coloured in shades from white to dark brown and has been knitted into beanie hats and fingerless gloves.

A fine, curly-horned tup has been in the field with the three ewes – we have high hopes of little spring

lambs. Our three fat, healthy lambs are now ready for their new owner, and we have acquired two new Jacob ewes...still to be named – watch this space!

Several students have expressed a wish to be as involved as possible with the sheep herd, and one student is eagerly looking forward to a placement with Fergus Wood at Le-dard later in the year.

And finally: a plea to anyone who could spare some time, perhaps even as little as an hour a fortnight, to help us spin our wool or support students who are keen to learn to knit and crochet – we would love to hear from you.

Contact Gillian Forster on 01877389082.







## TROSSACHS SEARCH + RESCUE

### HEARTSTART & PUBLIC ACCESS DE- FIBRILLATORS

In each of the past three years our Heartstart Instructors have trained over 340 local people how to perform CPR and use a defibrillator, supplemented now with us managing 51 public access defibrillators across the local area. Two lives have been saved by the use of our defibrillators and so in 2016 this project moves to a phase of maintaining what we have in place but building on the CPR & defibrillator training locally.

### THE HOFF

It's not every day we receive a request to meet an international star. On 24th December 8 of us and as many dogs headed into Glasgow to meet David Hasselhoff, star of Knight Rider and Baywatch. Turns out he's a dog lover and whilst appearing in panto in Glasgow he'd heard about the work of our dogs at The Clutha tragedy hence the invitation to meet him.

David and his daughter Taylor spent around 45 minutes with us and we have to say they were both absolutely down to earth and lovely people. It made our Christmas.

### CHARITY PARTNER 2016

Drymen based family business Fraser C Robb has just announced a charity partnership for 2016, with Trossachs Search and Rescue.

Fraser C Robb sell, hire and service garden and agricultural equipment for customers all over Scotland and have supported many local charities over its 40-year history. However, as founder Fraser Robb explains they wanted to do go one step further this year.

"We have set ourselves the challenge of creating real value for a charity this year. As well as donating funds we want to help a good cause in whatever way we can. We're happy to offer practical support in addition to some exciting fundraising initiatives. We've got a number of ideas that will involve our staff and customers".

Trossachs Search and Rescue were among a number of local charities to seek this partnership and as Stuart Ballantyne from the charity explains they were thrilled when they received the news that they had been chosen by Fraser C Robb.

"This is a perfect start to 2016 for our charity. Right from the first meeting we have seen the enthusiasm from Fraser C Robb and are looking forward to working with them throughout the year."

As Fraser from Fraser C Robb explains the partnership has got off to a very positive start.

"Speaking to Trossachs Search & Rescue and hearing about their CPR classes we immediately signed up to one for all of our team, and will be arranging another to offer to our customers. We are pleased also to have already helped them with maintenance of their mobile medical unit vehicle and are planning a number of fundraising activities throughout the year'. We have also pledged to donate £5 to Trossachs Search and Rescue for each Mountfield lawnmower that we sell in 2016."



## WALK IN THE PARK ABERFOYLE



**Looking Back** – At the end of 2015 we celebrated with a delicious Christmas meal served by the wonderful staff of the Forth Inn. We enjoyed the company of walkers who take part in the main walk on a Monday morning and the Strength and Balance sessions on a Monday afternoon. The photo shows some of the walkers enjoying their meal. A big thank you to the staff at the Forth Inn and to all the walkers for making this event so special.

**Looking Forward** – After a wee break over the festive period the walking group and the Strength and Balance sessions have now started up again. Weather permitting, we will continue with the schedule during February and March looking forward to the better weather in the Spring and Summer when we hope to include in our programme, outings, picnics, special walks and events. Information about these will be given in the Strathard News so we will keep you posted on this page.

Walk in the Park offers Health Walks in and around the village which are led by trained volunteer walk leaders and are on flat paths and good walking surfaces. Walks take place on a Monday morning, meeting at 10.20am at the Scottish Wool Centre Car Park.

All of our sessions and walks are free of charge although walkers pay for their own refreshments at the Forth Inn or the Lodge Forest Visitor Centre. Walks last from 30 - 45 minutes. Just turn up and join in.

A Strength and Balance exercise session takes place most Mondays at 12.15pm in the Forth Inn for around 30 minutes. These sessions are most suited to older adults and are very gentle exercises mostly done from a seated position or standing behind a chair. Please contact Cathy to confirm on the day before coming along and it's best to check with your GP or physiotherapist if you have a health condition before taking part in the session.

If you have any questions regarding joining any of our walks or exercise sessions please contact the Project Coordinator- Cathy Scott on 01877 330055 or

email: [cathy.scott@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:cathy.scott@lochlomond-trossachs.org)

## COME ALONG AND JOIN IN THE FUN

*Meeting at the Woollen Mill Car Park at 10.20am*

*All Routes: Walk from 10min – 1 hour*

1/2/16	Car share	Forest Visitor Centre
8/2/16	Car share	Loch Ruskie or Cycle track
15/2/16	Car share	Loch Ard or Cycle track
22/2/16	Car share	Lemahamish
29/2/16	Car share	Forest Visitor Centre
7/3/16		Ballaich
14/3/16	Car share	Lochen Spling
21/3/16	Car share	Forest Visitor Centre
28/3/16	Car share	Loch Ruskie or Cycle track



*Trossachs Search & Rescue Team is a Scottish Charity, No. SC028266, formed in 1998*

*Its Trustees are: Matthew Mitchell, Stuart Ballantyne & Joanne B Reid MA LLB*

*The Registered Address is: Morven, Indians Road, Balfron Station, Glasgow G63 0SB*

*Email: [trossachs.sar@btinternet.com](mailto:trossachs.sar@btinternet.com)*

*Twitter: @TrossachsSAR*

*Facebook: TrossachsSAR*



## NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIR OF SCOTLAND

NYCoS National Girls Choir is releasing a new CD with its patron, international mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill, and pianist Philip Moore, featuring the first ever recording of Michael Head's (1900-76) song-cycle Snowbirds.

Choir member Natalie Klaes, who appears on the CD, is from Aberfoyle.

NYCoS is dedicated to providing high-level singing opportunities for Scotland's young singers. Formed in 1996 as a flagship youth choir, its activities have dramatically expanded since then. 2016 sees NYCoS celebrate its 20th anniversary.

Membership for all NYCoS National Choirs is granted by annual audition and is open to singers who are born, resident or studying in Scotland. The basis of the choirs' activities stems from a residential course where time is split between individual vocal coaching, musicianship sessions and sectional and full rehearsals.

The CD is released on Friday 8th January 2016, priced at £10.

For more information, contact:  
David Fettes  
Marketing & Communications  
Assistant  
National Youth Choir of Scotland  
0141 287 2801  
david.fettes@nycos.co.uk



## FORESTRY COMMISSION



### LABOUR STATUTE ROAD DIVERTED AT LOCH DHU, LOCH CHON AND FAERY KNOW

Labour Statute Road diverted at Loch Dhu, Loch Chon and Faery Know

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) are planning tree felling and removal from the area close to Loch Dhu. Access around these works will be managed with signage and will include a diversion on the Labour Statute road to the public road at Kinlochard. These works are expected to take up to 5 months and will require some minor interruptions of the overhead power supplies - this will be managed by SSE and all residents.

Further along, sections of the Statute Labour road are also diverted along the public road due to tree felling at Loch Chon. This is the start of complex tree felling activity which will remove the risk of sedimentation or physical damage to the Loch Katrine water tunnels as a result of wind blow. The trees can only be removed by winch and will take up to 3 years to complete.

Following the damage of recent storms Desmond and Frank sever-

al trails and forest roads have been adversely affected including a landslip that has resulted in a significant amount of debris blocking a section of the Statute Labour road. This has required a diversion on to the public road at Faery Knoll near Loch Arklet. It has also been necessary to close the Primrose hill trail at Loch Katrine for the same reason. FCS has arranged for a slope stability survey specialist to attend the affected areas to assess the situation and provide advice as to the most appropriate action before repairs can be sanctioned.

We apologise for any inconvenience these works may cause and we intend to keep this to a minimum. Please follow the diverted route signage.

Should you have any questions, comments or to report any issues regarding these works please contact Forestry Commission Scotland at Aberfoyle on 0300 0676600 e-mail: [cowltrassachs@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cowltrassachs@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)



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## MILTON

Hello Children,

A lot of things have already happened in 2016 and there are a great many adventures ahead of us. It is not too late to wish you a happy new year, particularly as the Chinese are only just starting their own "Year of the Monkey". I hope monkeys like pancakes, because the very next day is "Pancake Day". Called crêpe by the French, I love my pancakes sprinkled with white sugar and drizzled with lemon juice. No sooner will we have digested all that, it will be time to celebrate St. Valentine, the patron saint of people in love. There will be so much romance in the air that all the birds will be busy selecting their partners. Spring will soon be here, the days are noticeably lengthening.

Dangling, yellow, lamb's-tail catkins, brightening hazel trees, all along Strathard, are the first sign of approaching spring. There are less obvious purple catkins dangling from our alders, too. On the ground, snowdrops are in flower, living up to their old country name of "Fair maids of February". The final proof, if proof was needed, that spring is coming, is my sister Braeval anxiously waiting for the Mobile World Congress to unveil the very latest smartphones. She lives in her own hi-tech world! Meanwhile, at the head of Strathard, winter's grip still hold fast. Even so, the fold of highland cattle, owned by the Forestry Commission are looking forward to much better weather.

Black Fiona lives with a mixture of red and black highlanders, their thick skin and shaggy, double-layered coats protecting them from all weather. Every cow has a special tag in each ear, showing a long, twelve-digit number, recording herd and check numbers along with individual identity of the animal. Fiona is officially UK545918 300180. Highland cattle are an ancient native breed, well able to thrive on the pallid grazing of

muirland and mountainside, scrambling on sure feet to get to their food. Very little extra feeding is required. These are the best animals for grazing environmentally sensitive areas, even improving the habitat. Fiona is expecting a springtime calf.

This is not the only excitement. After a family conference, the Otter family took the decision to take a couple of refugees into our holt. Following the recent floods, a record number of otters had their holts completely washed away, being left absolutely homeless. Many of these were rescued and taken to the National Wildlife Rescue Centre, at Fishcross, Clackmannanshire, which quickly became rather crowded. As soon as they have recovered and are strong enough, two young cubs will come to stay with us. During the flooding, with much of Aberfoyle disappearing beneath the raging river, everybody was glad to see Kerry and her crew coming to the rescue.

The snow has been fun. George the Hare almost became invisible, his coat blending perfectly with the background. Strangely, on one tree, the hard frost seemed to squeeze out fine strands of ice, like white candy-floss, which became magically wrapped around a few dead branches. Quite beautiful. While the weather is on the hard-side, please remember to put out food and water for the birds.

Bye for now,

Milton.





## ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

RICHARD GROSSE, RECTOR

Still honoured

It is nearly a year since Peter McColl, both a father figure and an elder statesman of Aberfoyle died. His funeral took place last Easter Monday thus continuing the family connection with St Mary's. There, Peter's grandfather Duncan is honoured on a memorial as one of the slate quarrymen who in the closing years of the 19th century, laboured in their spare time to found and construct the church.

Peter was born in Dunfermline but was schooled at Aberfoyle. As was common with those of his generation, he left formal education to start work at 13. His first job was on a farm at Balfron where he lived in nearby lodgings. It wasn't long before his employer discovered Peter's affinity to large machines; thus he was placed in charge of an ancient stationary engine that powered a sawmill.

Not long after, the Second World War broke out and Peter was called up into the REME The Electrical and Mechanical Company of the Royal Engineers. In June 1944 Peter embarked on the 'Empire Earl' at London's East India Docks. He and his companions had probably only a vague inkling of their ultimate destination. It was to the Normandy Beaches which the ship reached after a choppy sea passage on the morning of the 6th June 1944. The ship unloaded men and equipment into a barge which was directed to the Arromanche beach, under heavy enemy fire. The unit's first task was to set up electricity generating sets to supply field hospitals which were soon to be filled with wounded soldiers. The battle was unbelievably fierce and the casualty rate soon mounted.

The enemy by degrees retreated inland blowing-up bridges and roads to hinder the allied advance. Hap-

less civilians in its path were left without a water supply. Peter's unit was charged with restoring working order and without it's assistance, the allied advance to eventual victory would not have been possible. At times the unit's advance became dangerously close to the tail of the retreating army. On one occasion the unit captured part of a field kitchen left behind with soup still hot in saucepans ready to be served.

It was perhaps the 60th Anniversary of D Day in 2014 which Peter was able to personally attend that prompted the French Government to recognise the unit's invaluable efforts and Peter's in particular. Thus only months before he died,

Peter was informed that he was to be awarded the 'Legion d' Honneur' This medal was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 and is the nation's highest honour. It is divided into five degrees the highest being the Chevalier which translated means knight. It was this highest degree that Peter was posthumously awarded in November.

Billy, Peter's son will in future be entitled to wear the medal on his right lapel on his late father's behalf. The medal is a most splendid object that has now been provided with a red clasp. It will be worn with the pride the medal and Peter's memory undoubtedly deserve.

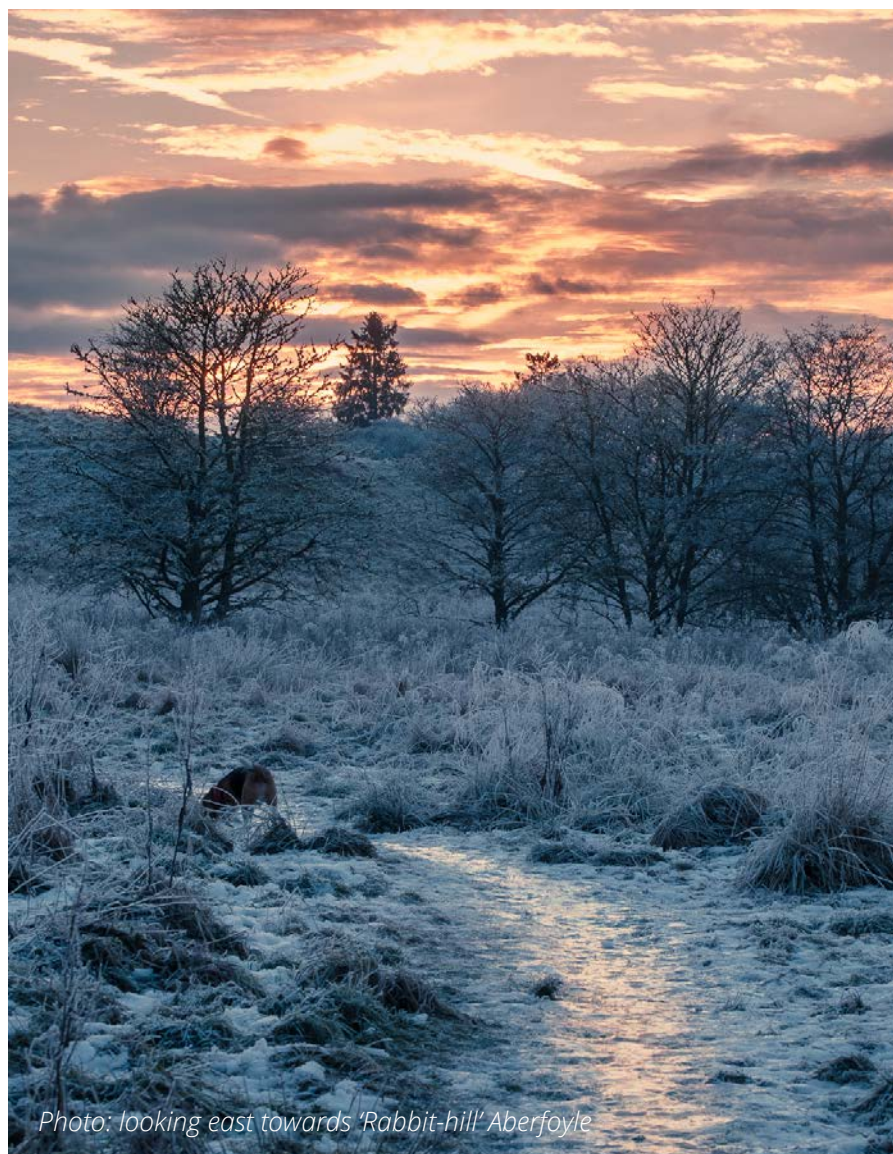


Photo: looking east towards 'Rabbit-hill' Aberfoyle

# THE GREAT TROSSACHS FOREST UPDATE

## THE UK'S LARGEST & NEWEST NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Last year was a busy year for the partners of The Great Trossachs Forest. It was also a really successful year and we are hoping 2016 will be even better- read on to find out more.

Conservation work:

Despite two hill fires early in the year, we still managed to complete all our planned HLF funded tree planting work resulting in more than 300 hectares of new woodland being created. The majority of the felling of the non- native conifers on the slopes of Ben A'an has also been completed with this land will be returning to mostly native woodland.

We are also about to start work on a new habitat. In association with Highland Birchwoods we will be planting some montane woodland on some of the ridge between Loch Katrine and Glen Finglas. Montane plants are the shrubby layer between woodlands and the open hill and are a really important habitat in terms of food and shelter for many upland animals.

Facilities:

Last year was our first season that our 2 Visitor Gateways, our play trail and The Great Trossachs Path were fully open. Feedback was extremely positive on all of these new facilities and so we are looking forward to a bigger and better season this year (and hopefully better weather). The Glen Finglas Visitor Gateway is looking for volunteers to help staff it over the summer, so please get in touch if you are interested.

Our new app – The Great Trossachs App- is currently available to download for free from the App Store. It will be available for android phones shortly. This has mostly been created by a volunteer and provides GPS enabled information on various topics such as history, wildlife and gaelic. We would love feedback on what you think about it.

National Recognition:

Our long distance route, The Great Trossachs Path is now one of Scotland's Great Trails- this series of trails was established to showcase the best that Scotland has to offer, so it is fantastic to be part of this.

In October 2015 we applied, and were successful, in becoming a National Nature Reserve. The Great Trossachs Forest is now the newest and the largest National Nature Reserve in the UK. There are three main criteria for becoming a National Nature Reserve: to have important habitats and wildlife, to manage the area to a high standard for conservation and to provide facilities for people to enjoy nature. Dr Aileen McLeod, Scottish Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform visited The Great Trossachs Forest in October to officially declare us a National Nature Reserve.

If you want to find out more about any of our work- please get in touch:

info@thegreattrossachsforest.co.uk or via social media: @TheGTF or search The Great Trossachs Forest on facebook.



## ABERFOYLE AND PORT OF MENTIETH 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.

Due to weather conditions the January meeting was postponed.

At the next meeting on 15 February 2016 the speaker is Cathy Scott, walk coordinator for Walk in the Park. Her topic will be the local health walks along with strength and balance exercises for older

people.

The World Day of Prayer will be held on Friday, 4 March 2016 at Gartmore Parish Church.

Our final meeting for the session is on 21 March 2016 when there will be a speaker from CHAS.

New members will be made welcome.

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



# STRATHARD; A LANDSCAPE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

is a collaborative initiative which will give people the opportunity to influence how the land, forest and water is managed in the Strathard area.

The launch event will be the first of a series of opportunities around the area for people to get their views over and to maybe think in a different way about the landscape and how it shapes their lives.

Microfilms Scotland will show the first of a series of short films about the landscape and the people who live and work in it and who use it for recreation.

On the ground will be the Community Partnership who will focus on engaging with members of the Strathard community to raise awareness of the initiative.

Fran Crumley of the Community Partnership said "This is a great opportunity for people in Strathard to tell us how the landscape affects their lives and how they affect the landscape. They can tell decision makers exactly what the issues are for them"

Details of all our community events in your area will be available on our

website [www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk](http://www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk). You can also keep up to date by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

For further information get in touch by calling 01389 722639 or drop us an email to: [info@thecommunitypartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@thecommunitypartnership.org.uk).



## Calling all residents, businesses, visitors & landowners in Aberfoyle, Kinlochard, Stronachlachar & Inversnaid

**Strathard: a landscape to live, work and play** is a collaborative initiative giving you an opportunity to **influence** how the land, forest and water within Strathard is managed.

**Drop into the community launch event & get involved!**  
Community film premiere, interactive workshops & refreshments!  
Everyone welcome!

## Community Launch Event

Sat 27 Feb 10am – 12pm  
Kinlochard Village Hall

Strathard: a landscape to live work and play  
 [www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk](http://www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk)

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t: 01389 722639



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[www.forestry.gov.uk/qefp](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/qefp)  
Follow us on @LodgeAberfoyle







## HOUSING ASSOCIATION

### RURAL STIRLING HOUSING ASSOCIATION – NEWS UPDATE

We recently marked our 25th anniversary as an affordable housing developer and Registered Social Landlord (RSL). We now have almost 600 homes in management throughout the Rural Stirling area – with 48 in Aberfoyle, 4 in Kinlochard and 2 in Stronachlachar. We are continuing to build new homes to meet housing needs. See [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk) for more information.

#### Opportunity to join our Management Committee

The Association is overseen by a volunteer Management Committee of local people.

We are currently seeking to recruit up to two additional Members with particular skills/experience, at a management level, in relation to:

- Housing development or procurement of building works more generally.
- Finance and business management

We also always welcome interest from RSHA tenants in joining the Committee.

The Committee holds monthly evening meetings. Travel and other eligible expenses are payable. Please contact Tony Teasdale (Director) by 26th February for more information about what is involved and to register an interest ([tony@rsha.org.uk](mailto:tony@rsha.org.uk)).

#### Tender for Repairs Service

We regard a high quality Repairs Service as a key element in delivering excellent customer satisfaction. We will shortly be tendering our Reactive Repair and Void Property Maintenance Service. The intention is to create a Framework of contractors covering all the main trades for the 3 year period, 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2019. By advertising in a range of local publications it is hoped to encourage locally resourced contractors to compete for inclusion on the Framework. The Framework will also be advertised

nationally via the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website and this is where all interested Contractors will be able to access the tender documents and submit their bids - [www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk](http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk). It is anticipated that the Framework will be advertised on the PCS website no later than 4th March 2016.

The opportunity will be issued as one tender document and will comprise 5 separate Lots as follows:

Builder works  
Painter works  
Electrical works  
Plumbing works  
Joiner and Glazier works

If you have any queries regarding the tendering process or operation of the Framework, then please contact:

Malcolm Lee, Senior Maintenance Officer 01786 841 101

*Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune FK16 6AA. Tel: 01786 841101*

*A Scottish Charity - Registration No. SC037849*





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# ABERFOYLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Primary 1 Assembly

On Thursday 19th November, Primary 1 acted out the story of 'Jack and the Flum Flum Tree' by Julia Donaldson to their parents and grandparents. The children worked extremely hard to learn all of their lines and their hard work paid off as they were fantastic! The scenery was done by the children and Miss Brown and a special thanks has to go to Jackie Stanford for making our lovely patchwork sack! Thank you also to our parents for helping with outfits and to those who donated shark fins, monkey costumes and a doctor's coat for specific characters.

## Primary 1 and our local community

Primary 1's social studies topic last term was 'People Who Help Us'. On Tuesday 3rd November, we visited the Post Office. The children were shown the sorting office where the postmen were busy at work, and Ros and Kerry helped us post our letter. It was difficult choosing a stamp we liked with the selection on offer as there were Star Wars stamps and Christmas stamps to choose from. We even got a sneaky peek inside the post box outside too! Thank you very much to everyone at the Post Office for allowing us to visit.

On Wednesday 11th November, the children were invited along to Aberfoyle Medical Centre. It was lovely to have a look around the medical centre and find out about the important roles of the members of staff and the significance of the medical centre to our village. Thank you very much to everyone at the medical centre for welcoming us and showing us around – we had a lovely afternoon, and I know the children would have quite happily stayed for much longer!

On Monday 16th November, Primary 1 visited Aberfoyle Fire Station and the children thoroughly enjoyed



looking around the fire engine, finding out all about the equipment held on board, and the children even sat inside the fire engine which was brilliant! Using the hose to soak firefighter Douglas at the end of our visit was possibly the best highlight! Thank you to all of the team at the station that day for welcoming us and showing us around – the children and Miss Brown had a great time!

## Primary 2/3 Open afternoon and a special visit!

Primary 2/3 welcomed their parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents into their classroom on Wednesday 25th November. The children dressed up in knights and castle themed clothes for the afternoon and they performed Scottish dancing in the hall to a wonderful audience. The children made their own puppets along with some help from their parents and the puppets they made were based on stories they had created in small groups.

Primary 2/3 were delighted to welcome Mr and Mrs Dalglish (Johannes' mum and dad) into their classroom to talk about artefacts. The artefacts were from Kelvingrove Museum and they were bits of jars, cups and pipes. Mr and Mrs Dalglish talked about the items and the children drew pictures of who they thought would have had each item and what they thought the whole item would have looked like. It was a really interesting session and we thank both Mr and Mrs Dalglish for coming in.

By Johannes and Shanna (P2/3)

## Primary 3-7's 'Jack and the Beanstalk' pantomime

Our pantomime this year was Jack and the Beanstalk. Emma Coakes was our leading role playing Jack. On Thursday 10th of December we performed their first dress rehearsal in front of an audience of children and staff from Gartmore Primary School, The Woman's Guild and grandparents of pupils in school. Everyone

thoroughly enjoyed it and we received excellent comments about the show. The following week was the final performances (afternoon and evening) in front of family and friends. We would like to say a massive thank you to all the teachers who helped organise and lead the show and a massive thank you to all of the SLA's who helped us with our costumes and make-up. Thank you also to Forest Hills Hotel, The Woolen Mill and Ros at the Post Office for your help and resources. Well done also to our nursery children and pupils in Primary 1 and 2 who performed a selection of Christmas songs as our 'warm-up' act before the pantomime. Everyone did exceptionally well and we were delighted to be showcasing another spectacular pantomime this year!

By Megan and Maiya (Primary 6)

## Chaplin's 'Jack and the Beanstalk' pantomime at the Memorial Hall

On Thursday 17 December parent council organised for the whole



school and nursery to see a pantomime in the memorial hall by Chaplin's theatre group. The production was Jack and the beanstalk and it was a great performance! There were lots of opportunities for the children to get involved and adults as well. There were five actors we were amazed that some of them played two parts in the production. We all liked seeing the show as it gave us some fabulous ideas for future pantomimes in school!

By Rebecca and Mia (Primary 5)

### Fundraising

Primary 1's social studies topic this term was 'People Who Help Us'. The children received an excellent visit from Mike from *Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA)* and from this visit decided to raise money for the SCAA by organising a 'Guess the bear's birthday' and making and

selling fingerprint robin gift tags in time for Christmas. Primary 1 and Miss Brown would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in our competition of 'Guess Mumbles Birthday' and to those who purchased gifts tags – our grand total raised was £56.00. The winning date for Mumble's birthday was August 26th however no one selected this date so the nearest date chosen was August 28th. The winner of Mumbles the bear was Mrs Nuttall and she was delighted to win the bear. The children wrote a letter to the SCAA enclosed with their cheque. Well done Primary 1! Staff at Aberfoyle Primary School also raised £20.00 for Strathcarron Hospice this Christmas by signing one Christmas card and making a donation to this wonderful charity instead of sending out cards to every colleague in school.

The school organised a raffle to

raise funds for school trips during the week of the pantomime. The raffle raised over £200 with thanks to local traders for their generous donations and help from the parent council and the Junior Management Team. Top prizes included in dinner for 2 at Forest Hills, vouchers from local traders and a luxury hamper which was won by Mrs Gibson, not forgetting the lovely Santa donated by the Christmas shop.

### School Sports Events

On Tuesday 24th November 8 children took part in the McLaren cluster soccer sevens event Aberfoyle won one game against Callander 1, with a score of 1-0. The remaining games were lost but everyone had a great time taking part.

On Wednesday 9th December Ryan, Catriona, Megan, Emma C., Shannon, Finlay took part in the McLaren cluster swimming gala at McLaren Leisure Centre. Everyone tried their best and we were delighted that Catriona and Megan made the final of their races.

Every Tuesday morning throughout November/December, Claire from Active Stirling ran a table tennis club for children in P4-7. Everyone had a great time! Those who were keen to participate in a table tennis competition were then invited along to Wallace HS on Thursday 3rd December to compete with other children from Stirling schools. Catriona Manders, Benjamin and Joshua Kennedy represented Aberfoyle Primary School and they really enjoyed playing against other children from schools across Stirling. It was a tough competition but Catriona was very lucky to make it through to the semi-finals and both Benjamin and Joshua did well competition with some very talented individuals. All three of them are looking forward to entering the competition again next year!

On Friday 4th December, twenty children from Primary 5-7 repre-



sented Aberfoyle PS at McLaren Schools Cross Country Trial at Aberfoyle Play Park. The event was organised by Active Stirling, and many thanks go to Claire Peebles and Alison Grey for organising and running the event.

### Winning School House for Term 1

Well done to Mars who won the house treat for this term. The children's hard work to achieve the most house points in the school paid off! On Tuesday 15th December the children enjoyed a warm and cosy pyjama and movie afternoon with treats. Emma, house captain, and Holly, vice-captain, were delighted to have won the treat for the first term this year! Well done to everyone in Mars and to the remaining three houses who have also tried really hard to earn as many points as they can!







# McLAREN HIGH SCHOOL

## Bugs and Beasties – part of the S1 Challenge

Day 1: Mr Williamson and his group of S1s went to Lochend Chalets and helped to make some bug and beastie hotels. First we went foraging for sticks, moss, bamboo, acorns, pipe, bark and lots more. After we had collected all the bits we needed for our 'hotels' we put them under a shelter and headed to see where our boxes would go. Then it was time to go back to school.

Day 2: The next week it was time to make our bug hotels. We were told to pair up and some people had to go in threes. Then we were told what kind of box we were to make – pipe or normal. Two groups made



pipes and the rest made normal. After we showed Mr Williamson our diagrams we were allowed to get the things we needed to make them. We assembled the boxes layer by layer until we were done. Once we were all finished we headed outside to place them on the stand. They all slotted in perfectly together and we all smiled and said thank you to the people from Lochend for helping us and letting us go to the chalets for our S1 Challenge. Katie Davidson S1

## Hedgehogs – part of the S1 Challenge

As part of our S1 Challenge 1B have been going to Lochend Chalets in Port of Menteith. We have been going there each week because they have a nature walk which they know has 2 hedgehogs living in it. 1B's challenge was to make some hedgehog houses and find some more hedgehogs to put in them. We made the houses out of wood and then put a waterproof covering over the top and filled them with straw. We then camouflaged them with leaves and twigs to blend in to the nature walk so that the hedgehogs would feel more at home. Once they were in place there was only one more thing we needed –

HEDGEHOGS! We managed to get 2 hedgehogs – a Mr and a Mrs – from a rescue shelter on the outskirts of Glasgow. When we put them in their houses they looked quite at home! Our final challenge is to see if the houses are comfy and warm enough for the hedgehogs – will they stay in them....? Beth Alderman S1



## Young Rotary Chef Competition

The McLaren High School heat of the Young Rotary Chef Competition took place in school on Thursday 26 November. Pupils who took part were Innes Manders and Reuben Dimmer (S2), Niamh King, Jamie Milne and Saffron Paterson (S3) and De Lo (S6). They had 2 hours to produce a 2 course meal and the judges had an extremely difficult time choosing the winner from some amazing dishes which were cooked to a very high standard.

De Lo was declared the winner with Niamh King a close second place. De's dishes were: A Trio of Paper Wraps filled with Minced Pork, Rice Noodles and Seaweed, garnished with Wasabi Mayonnaise and sweet Chilli and accompanied by a Vietnamese dipping sauce, and Coconut and Lime Cheesecake flavoured with Matcha Tea Powder.

Well done to all the pupils who took part and thank you to the judges – Peter Ireland (Rotary Club of Callander and West Perthshire), Joan Leddy (former McLaren High HE



Teacher) and Nick Parkes (Chef/ Owner Callander Meadows) for giving up their time to judge this heat.

De will now go forward to the District Competition on 6 February in Dundee when he will make a 3 course meal in 2 hours – good luck De!

## Duke of Edinburgh Ceilidh



The McLaren D of E Group held their annual fundraising ceilidh on Friday 20 November. The event was very well attended and the dance floor was very busy as people enjoyed the music from Ian Milligan's band. Thank you to everyone who supported the evening including local businesses who donated prizes for the raffle and silent auction. A fantastic total of over £1,100 was raised which will assist purchasing equipment and assist in the costs of running future expeditions at Bronze, Silver and Gold level.

## Zoolab Visit to S1

On Thursday 10 December we had a visit from Kayleigh who works with Zoolab. She brought a number of animals to show us and we learnt about the animals and the things that can harm them.

The first animal we saw was a millipede called Mildred – all of the animals had names! Mildred is 4 years old and has 240 legs. A millipede can grow up to a foot long. She has an exoskeleton as she is very soft and squidgy inside. We were able to touch her – she can't move very fast but can dig burrows which she hides in if she can sense danger. Mildred eats bark and leaves.

The second animal we were shown was a tarantula called Peek-a-Boo.

She was named this because she covers her eyes with her legs and thinks that no one can see her. We were not able to hold her but we could touch her legs. She was a trap door tarantula and eats most insects.

As well as learning about the animals that Kayleigh brought in she also told us about environmental issues that can harm the animals. One of them is acid rain which is caused by burning chemicals to make electricity. All the chemicals that are not used go into the clouds. When it rains the chemicals mix with the water and create acid rain. This is extremely harmful to animals especially in the rainforest. She also told us how important recycling is and that paper is a material that should be recycled. To make paper we have to cut down trees in the rainforest which is where a third of our animal species live.

I really enjoyed seeing all of these animals and learning all about them. Katie O'Brien S1

We also got to see Katness the cockroach. She can survive being frozen in ice for a year because she has anti-freeze in her blood. Katness could survive being dropped from a height similar to someone standing. Hanging upside down is another





er thing she can do. Katness was named after Katness Everdeen the Hunger Games Character. The male cockroach has antlers on his head.

Then we saw a Cayan toad called Russell Croak. It needs to be kept wet and when the toad came round in its container it was blended in to the mud. When he opened his eyes we all got a fright. When he eats he can't swallow and he has to blink so hard that his eyes go down his throat and push his food down!

The final creepy crawlly was the corn snake. It was not venomous in any way and had no teeth to bite with. He got fed once a week with an extra large mouse! On the belly of the snake they have scale type things that help them climb and grab on to things and assist them to move in a straight line.

Ellen Banks S1

#### Anthony Nolan Clinic

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have been working in partnership with 'Anthony Nolan' since 2009, organising events that have seen over 6,200 potential donors join the stem cell register and 14 people actually donate their stem cells to save someone's life. A further 33 potential life savers were added to the Anthony Nolan register by SFRS volunteers on Thursday 10 December at McLaren High School.

SFRS have been focusing on donor recruitment events in schools due to a change in the age criteria for joining the register. Paul Elliot, from the Partnership said, "Research has shown that young donors under

the age of 30 are more likely to be a match for someone and provide better patient outcomes post-transplant. Since Anthony Nolan changed the age criteria to 16 to 30 we have focused on schools to recruit healthy young donors and we've now added over 1,000 pupils to the register. I'd like to thank the students and staff from McLaren High School for showing a real willingness to improve the lives and wellbeing of those less fortunate than themselves, everyone at the school should be very proud of what they've done. To see young people step forward and potentially save someone's life is extremely gratifying."

#### Ashlea Christmas Visit

On Wednesday 16 December 5 pupils, along with music teacher Miss Bilsborough and headteacher

Mr Fleming, visited Ashlea Nursing Home in Callander to entertain some of the residents. Callum Hall and Callum Convey (both S5) played a selection of traditional Scottish tunes on small pipes, banjo and bodhran. This was followed by a variety of Christmas songs sung by Charlotte Scott, Megan Milligan and Natalie Klaes (all S3) to get the residents in the festive spirit. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the performance and there was plenty foot

The S1/S2 Dance took place on Monday 14 December followed by the S3/S4 Dance on Wednesday 16th and the Senior Dance on Thursday 17th. There was an excellent turnout at all the dances with over 400 pupils dancing over the 3 nights. Ian Milligan and his band provided music each night and was a huge hit with the dancers as always. Thanks must go to Hannah Michael S6 who headed up the Events Committee this year assisted by Skye Campbell,

hall (with standing room only at the back) was treated to a brilliant evening of entertainment. There were Christmas carols interspersed with pieces from the orchestra including a selection of music from the film Frozen. The Pipe Band wowed the audience with 3 short Scottish selections (complete with fairy lights adorning their pipes and drums!), the Mixed Voices sang Mister Santa, Light a Candle and Oh, What Wonder in Bethlehem and the Tra-



tapping and clapping their hands to the music. To end the visit everyone sang along to Jingle Bells. The pupils were treated to juice, tea and coffee and have been asked back to play at Easter time. Some of the residents took up the invitation of seats at the Christmas concert and enjoyed another evening of Christmas entertainment.

#### Christmas Dances

Amber MacLean, Freddie Bawden, Eden Parkes and the rest of the committee – the smooth running and great organisation of all 3 dances was commented on by a number of staff so well done to all involved!!

#### Christmas Concert

McLaren High School's 45th Annual Christmas Concert took place on Monday 21 December and a packed

ditional Music Group received great applause for their two selections of Scottish tunes and the waltz Hector the Hero. The Concert Band, McLaren Strings, Jazz, Brass and Ukulele Ensembles all played Christmas selections which added to the festive evening. A great night was had by all and a brilliant way to start the Christmas break!



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