

Seabraes development site approved in the revised Local Plan for expansion

The revised Moray Local Plan has given approval for a larger housing development on the Seabraes site at the eastern edge of the village between the McLaud Park and Addison Street. Up to 50 new houses are to be allowed on this site with access via Wood Place and Addison Street. The current total of households in the village is 514 so this represents a 10% expansion of housing development.

The new housing will necessitate some alterations to the existing road network especially where Admiralty Street meets Seafield Terrace and the main road, A942. Wood Place will be widened to 6m and there will be parking provision on the new estate.

Because this is an exposed cliff top location the eastern boundary line will need sensitive treatment to ensure a seamless visual integration with the surrounding countryside, which is of special scientific interest. Footpath links will be provided to the coastal path and the playing fields.

The current population of the village is 1 217 (2001 census) and this proposal is seen as a low and steady level of future development.

This revised Local plan maintains protection for designated open spaces on Addison Street, Bridge Street, the sports areas, the national cycle route, the

former railway line and the braes above the harbour. The prime use of the harbour will be for recreational use only. The caravan site is retained for holiday use with a presumption against any other redevelopment. Patrol Road remains for small business.

MALCOM 'MIDGE' MIDDLETON IS THE PORTKNOCKIE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

At 6.30pm on Saturday 25th November the village Christmas lights display and the tree in the Millennium Garden were switched on by the youngest school pupil, Nyah McKay.

The ceremony was watched by a large crowd of residents and folk then met in the Seafield Hall for carols led off by the young members of the Friday Children's Meetings introduced by the Minister, Graham Austin. There followed the award of the John Addison Trophy presented to the 2006 Citizen of the Year, Midge Middleton by Pearl Murray, the current holder of the title. A presentation from various village groups was made in recognition of Midge's involvement over three decades in providing music and sound at village events

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Did you see it? During the last week in October there were several sightings of HMS Illustrious sailing past Portknockie. This massive aircraft carrier with its helicopters and Harrier jump jets on its curved flight deck was carrying out training exercises in the Moray Firth before heading back to its home base in Portsmouth.

Did you see them? On Sunday 23rd October a couple of well-equipped twitchers were peering around the cycle track near the Bowling Club hoping to catch a glimpse of a Yellow-browed warbler, a scarce autumn passage migrant to NE Scotland from Eastern Europe and Asia.

Did you see the white stretch limo? It was in the village on Saturday 29th October taking Cliff

& Sandra Smith's daughter Kaye to the church to marry Nicky Simpson. Best wishes to the happy couple, who spent their honeymoon touring near Loch Lomond and around the Newcastle area.

Did you notice this bloomer in the Northern Scot? The Norman Scot feature on 28th October suggested a list of the Seven Wonders of Moray which included Elgin Cathedral and the Fiddle Bow Rock! It's a wonder this local, award winning paper couldn't get the name correct.

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JOINERY MANUFACTURE REPLACEMENT WINDOW SPECIALIST

“Portknockie Harbour has real potential for some imaginative tourist development.”

Remember this quote in the last issue? Not one of our readers responded to the invitation to propose ideas that might promote tourist development. As an example, your Editor suggested resurrecting a week-end of aquatic sports, the Portknockie Regatta. This was, apparently, a feature of local life 100 years ago. Has no-one any other ideas that might be worth consideration?

A letter of thanks for a donation to the village: Pearl Murray on behalf of the Portknockie Community Association and the people of Portknockie has written to thank the Elgin Rotary Club for their recent generosity to community groups. Portknockie Community Association was one of 100 Moray organisations to receive a cheque for £585 from the proceeds of the 2005 summer Marafun fund raising. The allocation to our village is much appreciated.

The money will be used to help brighten up Portknockie this festive season through our new Christmas tree lights and will give us a lasting memory of the Rotary Club's generosity.

On the move: Margaret Sutherland and Charlie Cowan, who have moved to Findochty would like to welcome Pat & Arthur Nash to number 17 Admiralty Street. The Nashes are up from Perth

bringing their dog, Ria with them. Sadie & George Walker from 38 Church Street leave soon to live in the warmer climes of Spain.

Back living in 5 High Street are Lesley and Graeme Calder twenty two years since starting married life living downstairs from Granny and Granda. They have moved back here with their teenage children, Debbie and Matthew, from Inverness. The house, built for the Lesley's great grandparents, has been the family home in Portknockie for over 100 years.

The Annual Remembrance Day Service was held in bright but cold conditions on Sunday 13th November. There was a good gathering of residents present on this 60th Anniversary of the ending of WW2 - higher than recent year's observances. A very welcome sight was the presence of the Sunday School youngsters, the next generation, making it an all-age community act of remembrance. Wreaths were laid by Cllr Ron Shepherd for Moray Council and by Helen Sammon, Vice Chair of our Community Council. The service was conducted by Margaret King. On the following Monday youngsters from the Sunday School placed specially painted stones by the wreaths featuring poppies and the saltire.

A Memorial Seat has been ordered by Angela Flynn, daughter of Ira Slater, dedicated to the Slater family of Cathie, Abby, Eva, John, James and Ira formerly of 5 Cliff Terrace. The seat will be placed overlooking the harbour beneath the Fishermen's Memorial.

The Met Office issued a weather warning for Friday 25th November. The northerly wind was very strong overnight and, in the morning, huge white-crested waves crashed over the north jetty of the harbour. The predicted snow fell further south on the high ground and Portknockie got off with just a lashing of rainfall lasting some days.

Did anyone notice the going of the brown wooden sign to Cullen? It was a guide to visitors at the junction of Addison Street and Admiralty Street. Just a stump remains!

The K'nocker editorial group of Bob Croucher and Margret Wood is delighted to welcome Harry Hawkes from 18 Church Street as a third member of the production team. Harry has lived in Portknockie since 1989 and hails originally from Dumfries. He has travelled the world

working as a teacher of English and he has experience of producing a golf club magazine. He is a keen supporter of the village newspaper and in this issue he introduces himself with a Scottish quiz and a history of the Seafield Inn.

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2005

The season this year culminated in Portknockie reaching the Finals of the Scotland in Bloom Competition and receiving a Special Award in the Moray best-kept Village Challenge. Lil & James Urquhart with Helen Field and Eric Earl represented the village at the Beautiful Scotland in Bloom finals held in Edzell on October 14th. The Large Village Category prize went to Falkland in Fife but we did very well to get to the best top 5 large villages in Scotland. In the Best-kept Village in Moray competition we were ruled out of the top spot because of our three previous consecutive title wins but we were awarded a special certificate to mark the 3 in a row achievement and adjudged to merit a special certificate for presenting the best floral impact of any of the Moray villages.

This year the cost of the Village in Bloom displays was £4 000 plus the very substantial investment of time and energy by the organising group and the volunteers. It should also be acknowledged how many of you in the village take the trouble to ensure that your own gardens and streets present a bonny picture through the summer months. We know that many of our seasonal visitors are appreciative of all the effort put in to ensure that Portknockie blossoms throughout the summer. This reputation has grown year on year and Village in Bloom not only brings in the visitors, it helps to sell local property. Hopefully all of you continue to feel that the annual investment in Village in Bloom is well worth it.

The end of season work collecting in the tubs and planters and recycling the compost was completed by the end of October. We now have so many tubs that storage is becoming a bit of a problem. Does anyone want to offer a shed or greenhouse that could be used as a winter store?

Thoughts are now turning to next year's display and how best to organise it. All residents are invited to consider volunteering themselves for this annual community challenge. Next year we would like to see more folk involved in the plant watering roster. Keeping all the tubs and planters

watered this year was a very big undertaking and we could certainly have done with some extra help during dry August when regular watering was difficult and our displays rapidly dried out and quickly deteriorated.

A big **Thank you** goes to Lynn Selwood for donating some sturdy ceramic tub plates and a couple of surplus plants which have been found a new home on Flagstaff Hill.



Happy Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous New Year to all our customers.

A day at Holyrood: As part of its on-going campaign to secure Moray's rural primary schools from cost-cutting closures, the Moray Rural Schools Forum visited the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 26th October to lobby members of the Parliamentary Education Committee meeting to take evidence on the closure of rural schools across Scotland. Pearl Murray represented the Portknockie School Action Group and met the Scottish Education Minister, Peter Peacock – she writes: "Incredible, unfortunate in the extreme, a template of the worst practice" with these words the final nails were put in the failed Moray School Estates Management Plan, and they came from the highest level, the MSPs present and the Minister for Education, Mr Peter Peacock. The Forum took encouragement from the Minister's announcement that there is to be a review of the Executive' school consultation guidelines and that the Audit Commission is to be consulted on the 60% occupancy trigger figures which local authorities like Moray are using to threaten closure of Primary schools such as Portknockie.

We left the Parliament feeling encouraged by what we had heard Peter Peacock say and we hope this promises a more secure future for our school. Although we felt vindicated in our actions over the summer, it was still grim listening to the scathing attack over Moray's

school closure consultation process. It is time to move on, we welcome the Keddie Report (a new report on the way forward for Moray's Primary Schools being prepared by the Chief Executive) and we hope that we can work together with Moray Council in the future."

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

The Community Council reformed for its new four year term at the beginning of October. The Council is made up of: **Chair:** Alan Beresford (840534/07790023983), **Secretary:** Janice Smith (842826), **Vice Chair:** Helen Sammon (841794) **Treasurer:** Gladys McKenzie (840542, **Press Secretary:** Pearl Murray (841087), Lil Urquhart, (840004) and Sadie Walker (841545).

Moray Councillor, Ron Shepherd has been asked to check out the land slip at the junction of New Street/Patrol Road, the state of the roadie down to the Harbour Garage and the need for tarring in Victoria Street. Cllr Shepherd has also been requested to update the PCC on the working of the new Policy & Resources sub-committee set up to report on the future of Moray's Primary Schools. Another priority for the Community Council in 2006 will be to campaign that more sheltered housing be provided in the village.

The issue of the relocation of an electricity sub-station from Mid Street to Dover Street is being examined. Mrs Sadie Walker who is leaving the village has been thanked for her membership of the PCC. Sadie's departure means that there are now four vacant places needing to be filled. Anybody interested please get in touch with any of the Community Councillors.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

The Community Association AGM was held on Wednesday 19th October in the McBoyle Hall. Cllr Ron Shepherd took the Chair while officers were elected for the year 2005/6. The new Committee comprises – **Chair:** Pearl Murray, **Vice Chair:** Brenda Cowie, **Secretary:** Bob Croucher, **Treasurers:** Donna Coull and Lil Urquhart working with Helen & David Field, Eric & Betty Earl, John Myles, Jim Urquhart, Angela Cowie, Dawn Shepherd, Cathlene Harper, John Bell, Helen Sammon, Catherine Ritchie, Fiona Grant, Harry Hawkes and Alan Beresford. The Secretary was asked to prepare a letter of appreciation for the contribution made by Sadie Walker to the Community Association over the past few years. Sadie and husband

George will be off to live in Spain following the sale of their house in Church Street.

The Treasurer reported on fund raising and expenditure over the past year. Expenditure includes the running costs of the McBoyle Hall which amounted to some £2 500 with insurance costing a further £602. On the fund raising side, last year's Boxing Night and Hogmanay Night dances raised £1 46, the Flower Show week brought in £3 039 and the Thrift Shop raised over £1 000. £3 250 of environmental grants were awarded by Moray Council for the Fishermen's Memorial plaque, landscaping and additional signage. Some of this grant money remains unspent as we await work on the signage to be completed.

The Secretary presented a written report on what the Community Association achieved last year:

"First, let me remind you of the purposes of this village group. The PCA is a registered charity and was constituted in 2000. It provides a means for organising a group of local volunteers to take on activities that bring improvements to the quality of life enjoyed by all our residents. The main focus of its activities relates to social welfare, education and training, recreation and leisure and environmental matters. It is an active group and it carries no special allegiances except to the common good. The PCA has taken over the lead once taken by the Amenities Group - particularly its responsibility for the McBoyle Hall and its upkeep. In addition it also manages some of the tasks previously undertaken by the Community Council e.g. the Village in Bloom. Membership of this group is open to all of the residents. We have chosen so far to work with a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer as elected officers with a working Committee of volunteers. There are no limits on the number of volunteers who can get involved with the PCA. We meet each month on a Tuesday in the McBoyle Hall to agree an action plan and to organise activities. It is very helpful to have on the Committee representatives from all the main village groups. Minutes of each meeting are provided to all the committee members and can also be seen in the Library by other residents.

This year (2004/5) a strong, willing and consistent committee carried out the following programme:

- Undertook two environmental improvement projects match funded by The Moray Council and our own voluntary efforts. The Flagstaff Hill landscaping and the provision of a commemorative plaque for the Fishermen's Memorial. Still outstanding from this project is a scheme of new road signage directing folk to the Memorial.
- Roof and drain pipe repairs to the McBoyle Hall.
- Provision of a new quality sound system for the Hall.
- The 2005 Village in Bloom display and the War Memorial competition entry.
- A rich variety of activities and fund raisers – Bonfire Night, the Christmas Lights, a Craft Fayre, a Concert, soup and sweet lunches and coffee mornings, Quiz Nights, the Flower Show Week and Gala, the launch of a "100 Club" in March, a Heritage Display, fun days for children and the opening of a Thrift Shop. This range of activity has enriched village life, has improved things for McBoyle Hall users, benefited the Youth Club and has given visitors something to join in and enjoy.

Upcoming activities planned so far for this year include a Fireworks evening, a Children's Concert, new Christmas Lights, a Christmas tea shop and grotto, the Boxing Day and Hogmanay dances, repairs to the McBoyle Hall (re-surfacing the frontage), a 1960s/70 evening, proposed by David Cowie, for March and 2006 will be our second Festival of Fishing event.



An order has been placed for additional folding tables so that, in future, it should not be necessary to borrow tables from the Seafield Hall. It was agreed at the AGM meeting that any individual wishing in future to loan the McBoyle Hall tables for private functions will be charged a refundable deposit of £40 against possible losses or damage.

The 100 Club draw for September: 1st Donna Coull, 2nd Kirsty Coull and 3rd James & Kathleen Mair. **The October draw:** 1st Amanda Brandt, 2nd Cullen House and 3rd Ally and Anne McKay. **The November draw:** 1st Julie McKay, 2nd Joan Reynolds and 3rd John Myles. Members pay £15 a year subscription. To join the 100 Club contact Donna Coull or any of the Committee members.

A MEMORY ABOUT DENTISTS – Anon.

Dentists are very much in the news just now, which brings to mind dentistry in Portknockie in the 1930s. (**Ed.** a reference to the difficulty people now have in finding a NHS dentist locally and, in fact almost anywhere in the country!).

You left your name with Helen Hay who lived in Church Street. Scot, the Dentist, came over from Buckie once a week and attended to your needs in your own home. There was no fancy operating with reclining couches, face masks and surgical gloves then! I remember having a tooth pulled while sitting on an ordinary chair. Oh boy it was sore! I doubt if the dentist even washed his hands. **Ed.** No infection control then!

MORAY CITIZENS' PANEL

Are there any other residents in the village who were invited as foundation members of the new Moray Citizens' Panel? This is a questionnaire-based way of seeking public opinion about the services provided across Moray. The purpose is to gather feedback that will help the service providers – NHS Grampian, Moray Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire & Rescue Service and the Coastguard Service – check the effectiveness of what they provide and clarify what changes might be desirable. So far we have been requested to give our experience of making contact with Moray Community Planning Partnership members and our views on the options for the new secondary school arrangements for Elgin.

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GHOST TOWNS IN BRITAIN – ARE WE UNDER THREAT? Local Works, a national

pressure group has gained a lot of support, so far mainly in England & Wales for a campaign to promote the sustainability of local communities. There is information on www.localworks.org

You will be aware of proposals to close the Clydesdale Bank in Cullen and of course, the threat to our own Primary School from Moray's review of its school estates management.

The Local Works campaign seeks support from individuals and organisations for a Sustainable Communities Bill to go to the UK Parliament. Its research has highlighted the following decline in our rural economies:

1999-2004 – 3 700 Post Offices closed; 2000-2005 - 8 600 independent grocery stores closed; 1992-2004 – 4 000 bank branches closed down, 1997-2003 – 200 police stations closed; 1995-2004 – 13 000 independent newsagents closed; 1997-2003 – 20 independent pubs closed every month. The result is that 70% of rural parishes have no general store, 75% no daily bus service, 83% no GP and 43% no Post Office.

Those leading this campaign feel that the starting point for tackling rural decline is in the hands of rural communities, the residents of which are the true experts on their own problems. They look to Government and Councils to engage with the people to take the necessary steps that will help rural communities bring this decline to a halt. During the Moray Save our Schools campaign this summer we the people speak loudly and clearly with claims such as, "The loss of our school will tear the heart out of our community."

I guess the conclusion to draw is that we need to stay alert and aim to work as a team to preserve those aspects of community we hold dear and essential both for now and the future. Bob Croucher.

ADVICE TO FOLLOW IF THE MET OFFICE FORECASTERS ARE CORRECT AND THIS WINTER IS COLDER THAN NORMAL.

To stay warm take hot drinks frequently and eat lots of small meals to maintain your energy. Avoid taking too much alcohol because it tends to encourage blood flow to the skin, causing more rapid heat loss from the body.

Wear layers of light clothing as opposed to one thick layer. Warm air will get trapped between

the layers and give better insulation. If you get too warm you can always remove one or more of the layers. Wear a hat out doors and go to bed in woollen socks and, perhaps a hot water bottle. Even wear a bonnet in bed!

In the home draw your curtains before it gets dark and keep your doors closed to stop warm air escaping. During the day try to maintain the temperature in your living room at a steady 21 degrees. Keep an eye open for each other, as good neighbours should do.

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"WILD ABOUT PORTKNOCKIE" - a series of local nature notes by Mary Thorpe:

SLUGS AND WINTER VISITORS

I must tell you a strange story about an elusive slug! Not a creature usually taken much notice of apart from when they munch through our precious tender plants but, wild they are and there are plenty of them to be found crawling around Portknockie! Anyway, the slug in question was not outside at all but had set up home in a corner of our living room. It had arrived around March time. We had noticed a slime trail on a couple of mornings in this corner and we searched and searched for the thing to no avail. Salt was sprinkled down and saucers of beer left to trap it but it remained at liberty! In August it was Carl's birthday and his cards were duly displayed on the shelves on the wall in **the** corner. When I took them down I noticed one of the cards had a strange circular pattern on the inside that looked like it was eaten away and we soon realised that there was also slime glistening on it. Yes, it was the work of our slug!

We had been wondering what it ate to live on as the plants in the room were untouched. Anyway, the thing eluded us for several more months. It eventually dawned on me to look for it in the small wee hours, which was obviously when it was active. So, on my visits to the bathroom in the night I would go and look in **the** corner. I

found nothing for weeks and then one night eureka, there it was! It soon got disposed of out into the garden. Just like that and yet it had existed in our living room for the best part of eight months and we never did find its hiding place! I dare say it will soon be time for our friends the field mice to take up their residence in our loft for the winter.

We are all used to seeing and hearing large skeins of geese arriving on our shores at this time of year to feed in the fields but, one day in October, I heard a somewhat different sound from the birds flying overhead. When I looked up I was delighted to see a flock of swans. They were most likely to have been either Bewick's or Whooper swans both of which leave their Arctic breeding grounds to come here for the winter. They were quite vocal but both types do a lot of trumpeting in flight. They were quite large birds so I am plumping for Whoopers, as the Bewick's are our smallest swan. Since that first sighting I have seen another couple of flocks flying over and what a treat it is to see these majestic birds in flight!

(Ed. The Times' "Nature Notes" informs that Whooper swans come here from Iceland and they can be distinguished from our native Mute swans by their black and yellow beaks – Mutes have orange beaks. The Bewick's also have black and yellow beaks but they are smaller and daintier than the Whoopers. They are named in honour of the Northumberland bird artist, Thomas Bewick(1753-1828), they arrive here from Siberia and are more common in southern England and Ireland.)

Another winter visitor to look out for and to try to attract to your garden is the Redwing. They are thrush-like in appearance but with a red flash on the flanks and under the wing, which is visible in flight. They favour more open spaces but if the weather is particularly bad they will come to gardens especially if there are apples to feed on. Sometimes you might hear them flying at night so if you are outdoors and hear thin, high-pitched calls it will more than likely be a passing flock of Redwings.

This winter is going to be our worst for ten years according to the forecasters, so feeding our feathered pals will be even more important than usual. Nuts and seeds can be supplemented with kitchen scraps and grated cheese and fat are particularly nourishing for birds. More

important than anything though is water and a very useful tip is to put out a clean paint roller tray with fresh water in it but you may need to weigh it down with a stone if it is windy. I saw a strange sight one day in New Street in the shape of a small brown bird on the ground. It was sort of bobbing about in the style of a wagtail but it was actually a rock pipit. It was somewhat out of its normal environment though there are plenty of them all around the braes.

I have noticed that the Eider drakes in the Three Creeks Shore are looking at their best just now with their new jackets on. They are very resplendent in black and white – their pale pink and lime green bits are quite hard to spot at a distance but how lovely to see when you can get close to them. They are extremely buoyant bobbing about on the water but they dive expertly looking for mussels amongst the rocks and they flatten their plumage to squeeze out the air to enable them to dive deeply. Clever stuff eh?

MORE MEMORIES OF PORTKNOCKIE
from William Slater, Cults, Aberdeen.

The K'nocker brings back many memories, some happy and some sad, to old timers from the Port like myself. First let me pay tribute to the members of the committee who give so much of their time and effort not only to producing the newspaper but to improving the appearance of so many things around the village. What about memories? My mind goes back to an evening in the late 1930's when, along with my cousin, we were on our bicycles near the then Post Office in Blantyre Place run by GC Wood when suddenly we heard a loud explosion coming from the harbour. We quickly made our way to the 'heid o' the brae' and saw flames coming through the wheelhouse of the seine-netter, **Utility** (BF382) which was moored next to the **Sickle** (BF353) in the inner basin at the tail end of the jetty, the **Sickle** being next to the wall. I rushed to alert my father, skipper of the **Sickle**, and by the time we got down to the harbour a number of men were there.

Fortunately the tide was in and both boats were afloat, the **Utility's** mooring ropes were cast off and the boat pulled round to the outer basin where she was soon a blazing hulk and the remains quickly sank to the bottom. Some time later Johnnie Falconer who ran a coal business with his brother decided to salvage the engine.

He located a rope and tackle and with one end anchored on the quay at the top of the harbour and the other attached to the engine he was able with help to haul the engine out of the water. His coal business was later taken over by Bob Wood. The coal lorries were garaged in a large shed at the bottom of the brae, the remains of which can still be seen to this day.

The **Utility** was a total loss but mercifully there was no loss of life. Sadly, the same cannot be said of the subsequent loss of the **Sickle**. On a Saturday afternoon at the end of March 1941, returning from the fishing grounds she was about to round the breakwater when an unusually large wave arose and before the boat could enter the harbour she turned turtle and my father, uncle and brother John were drowned. The only survivor was Alex Mair (Alinger) who had had a similar experience in 1917 when the **Plantin** (BF 453) was blown up by a mine during war service and he was the only survivor on that sad occasion.

Due no doubt to climate change among other things we seldom now experience heavy snow blizzards. It was not so in our young day. In fact before my father and brother could be buried on the Thursday a terrible storm arose on the Wednesday and the roads were blocked with heavy snow. About 100 men with shovels cleared the road up over the 'blue ribbon brig' to Hillhead Cemetery to enable the burial to take place. The storm was so severe that Aberdeen harbour was closed and a number of trawlers with crews from the coast found refuge in Buckie harbour.

A friend and former shipmate of my father was on one of the trawlers. His name was George Mair (Shanker) and on the Thursday morning he walked all the way from Buckie through the deep snow to attend the funeral. George was a fine Christian gentleman who I greatly respected. He died in 1972. I never forgot the great effort he made on that day.

The Cairn installed at the Flagstaff is in memory of all fishermen who have lost their lives at sea in pursuit of their dangerous calling. I received a copy of the tape recorded on the evening of the dedication of the Memorial and as I listened to it I recalled the verse from the Bible which was read at the service for my father and brother: "There is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet" (Jeremiah 49 v23). They are now safely

anchored in the harbour where waves and storms can never rise - "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

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A SHPWRECKED ANCHOR SURFACES AGAIN:

Just after the Remembrance Day service on 11th November an anchor of the SS Moray found a new, dry resting place in the garden of the Donaldson family at 30 Park Street. This was the same anchor described in the last issue of The K'nocker as suddenly appearing in the outer basin of Portknockie harbour.

The story began back in November 1893 when the Moray, a 438 ton, three-masted steam ship sank during the "Great Gale" off Sandend on the 23rd with the loss of all the 13 crew. The Moray was owned by William Adam, a well-established chemical manufacturer from Burghead. She ran cargoes of coal and wheat between Sunderland and Burghead. She had left Burghead on Thursday 22nd November and went down in the severe storm at about 11pm on the following day. The ship was only 4 years old having been built at the Grangemouth Dockyard Co, Alloa by Allen & McLennan of Glasgow in 1889. It was surmised that the ship foundered without hitting the rocks and that the boilers burst and blew up the after cabin. Amongst the wreckage washed ashore were the bare keels of two ships' boats and a clock which had stopped at a quarter to 12.

For many years fishermen reported finding bits of coal off Logie Head and in 1976 Brian Donaldson diving in the area found the wreck a mile offshore in a 100 ft of water. At the time the wreck was undisturbed and contained on the sandy bed of the Moray Firth. Brian was able to find out that living near Elgin was a farmer, Mr Duncan Adam, a surviving grandson of the SS Moray's owner, William Adam. In 1996, as a token of remembrance, Brian managed to raise

one of the two ships' anchors using flotation bags and it was passed on to Mr Adam.

This summer the story took on a fresh twist. Brian became aware that intensive fishing for squid along this coastline over the past couple of seasons was dispersing the wreckage of the SS Moray. He found the remaining anchor with its large flukes dragged clear of the wreckage and looking vulnerable to loss. So he decided to mount a second recovery operation. That second anchor, sound but well rusted, can now be seen in his garden from Patrol Road – safely recovered heritage and a sturdy memory of a sad loss of life 112 years ago.

THE WONDERS OF PORTKNOCKIE – what do you the reader think?

As Editor, I will start you thinking with the proposal that one of our local wonders must be the bottlenose dolphins we see, so frequently, just off-shore in the Moray Firth.

This group, reckoned to number 130 is the most northerly population of bottlenose dolphins in the world. Dolphins have a powerful tail fluke that can propel them along at speeds up to 40mph. They have superb hearing and 20/20, the best, vision in and out of the water. The local dolphins are subject to regular observation by marine biologists from Aberdeen University and individual cetaceans (the scientific name for marine mammals, including whales, dolphins and porpoises) can be recognised by analysing photo identification of the shape and the physical characteristics of its dorsal fin – the one on the centre of its back.

Most of the bottlenose dolphins remain in the Moray Firth all year round but it seems that some of them travel as far south as the Firth of Forth and they have even been seen off the coast of Northumbria. Our village is one of the best spots to see bottlenose dolphins either from the cliffs or by taking a trip on the local accredited boat operator for viewing dolphins at sea, the Gemini Explorer. She sails from Buckie (it can be contacted on 01309 675650). A useful local newsletter on bottlenose dolphins is the 'Dolphin Echo' produced quarterly by the Moray Firth Partnership and available in Libraries. People seem to love everything about dolphins and seeing them on a visit to Portknockie gives many of our visitors a great thrill and warm feelings.

What are the other wonders of Portknockie? Send in your suggestions in time for the next issue of the K'nocker.

THE PORTKNOCKIE DIRECTORY

Police: Emergency		999
	Non-Emergency	0845 600 5 700
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	(Buckie)	831555
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Dr Grays, Elgin:	01343	543131
Aberdeen RI:	01224	681818
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BT: (fault reporting)	0800 800	151
Coastguard: (24 hrs)	01224	592334
Environmental Incidents:	0800	807060
Moray Council:	01343	563000
Out of hours	08457	565656
Buckie Access Point		837200
Uplift service (after 10am)	01343	557318
NHS24 - Health Advice	08454	242424
Crimestoppers	0800	555 111
Neighbourhood Watch (J.Myles)		840 000

Travel Information telephone numbers:

Bus & Coach:		
Bluebird (Macduff)	01261	833533
First Aberdeen Ltd.	01224	650065
National Coaches	0990	808080

Airports:		
Aberdeen	087004	400006
Inverness	01667	464000

Seaport: (Aberdeen)		
Northlink		0845 6000 449

Trains:		
National Rail Enquiries	0845	748950

Taxis: (Portknockie)		840875
Portknockie Post Office		840201
Portknockie School		840244
Portknockie Library		841149
The K'nocker (Bob Croucher)		841291

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

Scottish Water has issued some advice if a pipe freezes this winter. Your **first** action should be to turn off your stop valve immediately and switch off your immersion heater and central heating. Let any solid fuel fires die down. **Secondly** open all your cold taps to drain the system but never turn on the hot taps because your hot water cylinder may collapse if the pipes leading to it are frozen. **Thirdly** check for any obvious signs of a leak or sprung joints then gently heat with a hair dryer or a heated cloth wrapped round the pipe. Never apply direct flames. If in doubt, call out a qualified plumber to check over your pipes.

Avian Bird Flu spreading to wild birds. If you find a dead wild bird locally and it is not obvious how it has met its end, the advice is do not touch it, but remember its location and phone the 24 hour UK Defra Helpline on 08459 335577. The caller will be asked for details such as the location of the dead bird and its species, if known. The fear is that migrating wild birds may be spreading the virus H5N1.

Christmas and New Year Closing Times – The Cullen Medical Centre: The surgery will be closed on 26th and 27th December and 2nd and 3rd January 2006. Patients should remember to order medication well in advance should they fall due for repeat during this closed time.

Christmas Mail – The last days to send out your Christmas cards to arrive before Christmas are Saturday, 17th December for 2nd class post and Tuesday 20th for 1st class mail.

The 2005-8 Moray Community Safety Strategy was launched at the Knockando distillery on Thursday 15th November – your Editor attended as a member of the Moray Citizens' Panel and reports back -

This new strategy is a set of proposals within the Moray Community Plan designed to achieve a safer environment for all those who live, work or visit Moray. The main priority is to encourage members of the public to be more responsible for their own safety and to take a pride in their own communities. Top of the issues to be tackled over the next three years, in response to public surveys, are vandalism, dog fouling, litter and drugs abuse. Under-age drinking is also a priority for action.

The main approach to these issues is through education, information, support groups, the use of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) and the employment of community wardens. There are 5 of these now in Moray and our local warden is based in Keith. They are in uniform like the police and they can issue on the spot fines. The public can request a warden patrol on matters of community safety concern by contacting the Grampian Police call centre – 0845 600 5 700.

A leaflet on Alcohol and young People is produced by Alcohol Focus Scotland, 2nd Floor, 166 Buchanan Street, Glasgow, G1 2LW, tel: 0141 572 6700 or www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk Young people, like adults, need to know how to drink safely and responsibly.

AUNTIE MARY'S HAME COOKING:

Smoked Haddock Fish Pie to serve 4 – You need four smoked haddock portions weighing 110g (4 ozs), 125g (4½ ozs) cooked peeled prawns, 55g (2ozs) butter, 1 sliced leek, 30g (1 oz) flour, 300ml (1½ pints) milk, salt and freshly ground pepper and 3 large potatoes, peeled, par-boiled and sliced.

Method: Preheat your oven to 200C (400F or Gas 6). Melt half the butter in a large saucepan and cook the leeks for 2-3 minutes until soft. Stir in the flour and cook for a further 1-2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and gradually stir in the milk. Return the pan to the heat and cook stirring until the sauce is thickened then simmer gently for a further 5 minutes. Stir in the prawns and season with the salt and pepper. Place half of the sauce in a pie dish, add the fish and spoon over the remaining sauce. Top with the sliced potatoes and dot with the remaining butter. Season with some more pepper. Place the dish on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 35-40 minutes until the potatoes are golden.

Boiled fruit cake to serve 8 – You need 150g chopped butter, 300g sultanas, 300g currants, 180g soft brown sugar, 1rsp ground mixed spice, 1 tsp ground cinnamon, 1 tsp of ground ginger, 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda, 250ml water, 2 well-beaten eggs, 150g plain flour and 150g self-raising flour.

Method: Heat the oven to 180C/gas 4. In a saucepan combine the butter, sultanas, currants, sugar, spices, bicarbonate of soda and the water. Bring to the boil, stirring all the time and then set to one side to cool. Add the eggs one at a time beating well with a wooden spoon. Sift the two flours into the mixture and beat well. Pour the mixture into a lightly oiled 22cm/8 inch cake tin and bake for one hour or until a thin skewer inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow it to cool before removing the cake from the tin. It should store in an airtight container for up to a week.

SHEAR DEZIGN
 Hair by Lisa
 Open Tuesday – Saturday with late night Thursdays.
 Phone 841711 for an appointment

Happy Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous New Year to all our customers.

“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

Light Reflections for Christmas

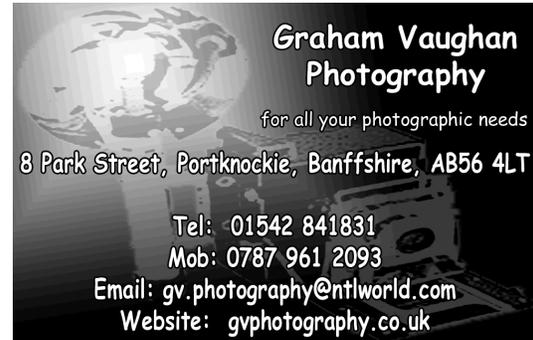
Christmas comes but once a year but when it comes it brings good cheer. Perhaps the following “Christmas Crackers” will bring light relief from decorating the Christmas tree, icing the cake and stuffing the turkey!

A party from the local church went to sing carols at a home for old people. After the group had sung several old favourites, their leader asked the residents, “Is there anything else you would like?” One old lady answered promptly, “Yes, I would like to go to bed.”

A Minister visited a hospital patient who was recovering from a very serious operation. He was met with the words, “I vaguely remember you coming yesterday and thinking I can’t be in heaven because there is the Minister.” While addressing the crowd at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park, London, Lord Soper was interrupted by a heckler who kept shouting, “What about Flying Saucers?” Finally, Lord Soper turned towards him and replied, to the delight of the crowd, “I cannot deal with your domestic difficulties now.”

A Methodist minister at the September Synod was asked to attend a meeting the following June. Looking at his diary he said, “I’m sorry, I can’t go. I have two funerals on that week.”

Merry Christmas to all the readers.



**Graham Vaughan
Photography**
 for all your photographic needs
 8 Park Street, Portknockie, Banffshire, AB56 4LT
 Tel: 01542 841831
 Mob: 0787 961 2093
 Email: gv.photography@ntlworld.com
 Website: gvphotography.co.uk

POETS’ CORNER:

Fancy meeting you

I dreamt death came the other night
 And Heaven’s gate swung wide
 An angel, with halo so bright
 Ushered me inside

And there to my astonishment
 Were folks I’d judged and labelled
 As “quite unfit” of “little worth”
 And “spiritually disabled.”

Indignant words rose to my lips
 But never were set free
 For every face showed stunned surprise
 No one expected me!

Another of Sheena Pirie’s poetry gems taken from the Davie Mair Collection focuses on a common family relationship problem:

TROUBLE

Jist seen my guid-dother oot buyin’ beef
 The bairn in his pram – left outside
 Noo I niver interfere
 But I said loud and clear
 That bairn shid be wrapped in a sha’l.
 The mothers the day jist throw money away
 On nappies that they canna wash
 Noo I niver interfere
 But I said loud and clear
 Some day ye may need a’ that cash.

I wove jackets an’ bonnets an’ bonny wee socks
 And niver ane has he worn
 Noo I niver interfere

But I said loud and clear
Dinna like bairns dressed in that 'all-in-ones'.

She's niver asked my advice, tho' once or twice
I've tried some wise words to impart
Noo I niver interfere
But I said loud and clear
The richt wye tae bring up the wee lad.

Noo, if only I was ane that did interfere
The advice I could gie that young lass
But it's jist nae my style
So I'll bide a wee while
Till she sees I'm the ane that kens best.

LIMERICKS: remember the competition in the Summer organised by Moray Libraries? We had a winner from Portknockie – **Sarah Reid** with the following:

“There was a young sailor called Larry
Who set sail in a stolen Ferrari
He got a fright, when sunk in the night
But it served him right said his granny!”

Well done Sarah.

Best Poem Competition: This is another free to enter competition open to young and old to write a poem about life in your own home town or area. The best poem will win £1 000 in cash and you can send up to three entries to 'Local Poem', United Press Ltd., Admail 3735, London. Each entry must be no more than 20 lines and 160 words long. The closing date is 31st December 2005. If you are shy about winning the money just send your poem to The K'nocker and we will publish it in the next issue for free!

TOPICAL OBSERVANCES FROM OUR MINISTER – Rev Graham Austin.

It's Christmas time and the usual things will be happening that have happened in the years before. Present buying, food preparation, card writing and family get togethers. It is all good fun and an excuse for joy, happiness and a party. But of course it's more than this. It is the story of God coming to be one of us and rather than starting from the position of mighty power he comes as a fragile baby dependant upon the care of a poor family and beginning his journey from a stable. Not the best start in life materially but he was surrounded by parents who loved him and cared for him.

The material things that we have and gain and give should not be a substitute for human tenderness, care and compassion. As adults we can give our children all sorts of marvellous and expensive gifts that will be the envy of their friends but as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 if there is no love they are meaningless. I fear we have created a society in which the measure of our love is gauged by the expense of our material giving. But we know that when all the fuss of our commercial Christmas has past both children and adults want to know that they are wanted, they are precious, they are loved.

The first Christmas was a gift of God's love as the famous John 3:16 tells us. So this year for Christmas, as well as presents, give love to one another.

CAR PARKING AT DR GRAY'S HOSPITAL, ELGIN:

£316 000 has been allocated to improve traffic management around the hospital with work expected to begin soon. There will be some additional car spaces added at the front of the hospital and with other modifications the plans envisage bringing the number of parking spaces up to 397. There will be two parking attendants supervising parking and there will be a pay and display system at a cost of £1 for anyone parking over 30 minutes between 8am -5pm, Monday to Friday. However, disabled drivers and patients who have to attend the hospital more than six times in any 30 day period will be able to park at Dr Gray's hospital without charge. There will be extra spaces for motorcycles. The new scheme is expected to be implemented from April 2006.

All revenue from the charges will be reinvested directly in improving the flow of transport at the hospital. The plans should be welcomed as 70% of the complaints received at Dr Gray's Hospital are concerned with the difficulties of finding parking. Residents living nearby will be fearful that the parking overflow will continue to seek spaces along the adjoining roads to the hospital.

BUILDINGS OF PORTKNOCKIE: a new series by Harry Hawkes.

The Seafield Inn

In the first week of December 2005 the village saw the departure of Doreen and Jim Mundie, the

licensees of the Seafield Inn, who retired after 17 years of assiduous attention to their customers. Their period at the Inn, from 1988 to 2005, saw constant work on the upkeep and improvement of the property, with almost all the work being undertaken by the couple themselves – both were very much into “self-help” and Jim was a DIYer with an impressive range of practical abilities.

The amount of time and effort spent on the property stemmed from their appreciation of the Inn as an item in the history of the village, quite apart from its importance as a business venture. This interest led Doreen and Jim to have the story of the Inn professionally researched and the printed results of the research were hung, framed, on the bar wall during the years of their ownership.

The K’nocker now brings you the story revealed by the research, so that it may be known to a wider audience than the customers in the public bar. The following information, however, is but the bare bones of the story as revealed by public records. There is no doubt a great deal of flesh that can be added from living local memory. We shall be glad to receive any extra information or anecdotes to add to the story in future issues.

The research opens with a general, disapproving comment from the 1842 *Statistical Account* for the Parish of Rathven, which apparently had: “...30 inns in total, a number by far too great and which must end and that in no ordinary degree lends both to impoverish and demoralise the people ...” Strange that, 163 years on, with our modern problems of binge drinking, we are still being told that there are too many pubs around. Plus ça change...

The first recorded mention of an actual business premises does not come until 1860, when one John Wood held a tenancy on the property from the Countess of Seafield. (Hence the name of the place, presumably – always good for business to have the local bigwig’s name attached to it.) The property was designated for use as a shop, but John Wood is recorded as a “vintner”, or wine-merchant. This possibly means that the premises doubled as both village shop and pub, a dual purpose still seen sometimes today, for example in small rural communities in Ireland. John Wood probably did not restrict himself to wine anyway. There was likely to be ale brewing somewhere in the background, and various

whisky distilleries (legal or otherwise) were getting into their stride in the region.

By 1870 the business was in the hands of William Geddes, who is listed openly as “innkeeper”. The use of this title possibly means that the place by now had rooms to let. Geddes and his eventual widow, Isabella, had the business until 1921 – the longest tenure in the history of the Inn. (Doreen and Jim Mundie are the next longest, with their 17 years.)

An interesting aspect of the decade 1860-1870 was the great increase in the local tax burden of the Inn. In 1860, the yearly rateable value of the Inn was £3. By 1870 this had quadrupled to £12. Strange, again, to note a parallel with our own modern decade, 1995-2005, when Council Tax has also rocketed. Plus ça change...

In 1921, when presumably Isabella Geddes passed away or found the business too much, one Donald Ewen (“Wine and Spirit Merchant”) took over and received a feu charter on 8.1 poles of ground known as “The Inn”. Part of the feu charter stipulated that Ewen should build a dwelling house within one year, so possibly the property had been on a ‘lock-up’ basis until then.

Ewen was in possession until 1924, when Charles Fraser (“Farmer, of Muirtack by Ellon”) had the Inn up to 1926. Fraser is noted as trading with the brewer Thomas Usher, of Edinburgh, at this time.

Next comes a 6-year tenure by one James Shand Campbell (“of Dee Street, Aberdeen”), 1926-32. The property is noted as “Inn & Stabling” at this time – an expansion of business that perhaps dates back to Donald Ewen’s construction of a dwelling house under his 1921 charter, or even earlier to William Geddes as “innkeeper”. The stabling was housed in front of the Inn, on what is now signed as the pub beer garden.

James McGillivray (“of Sunnybank Road, Aberdeen”) then took over 1932-39. Also, “interested parties” at this time are noted as “Wm. Hay & Sons, Aerated & Mineral Well Water Manufacturers, Aberdeen”. Could this have been an attempt to get Portknockie to sign the pledge?

William Munro (“of Boots, Gordon Arms Hotel, Elgin”) came next, from 1939 to 1948, and dealt with William Younger & Co, Brewers. He was

followed by Archibald Smith (“Engineer, York Street, Aberdeen”) from 1948 to 1950. He gave way to James Morrison (Jun.), (“Warehouse foreman, Reidhaven Street, Elgin), 1950-60. The research notes that “James Morrison moved to P. Office in Fochabers” – presumably a less demanding occupation than running an inn.

Thomas Alex Foote Banks (“believed to have been tenant for short period previous to being proprietor”) kept the Inn from 1960 to 1962, followed in quick succession by Dennis Roy Buckland (“Plumber”) and Isabella Buckland (“Taufield Walk, Aberdeen”), 1962-65; and John Mitchell (“Builder, of Alford, Ayrshire”), 1965-67 (who “moved to the Lumsden Arms Hotel, Lumsden”).

William J. McRae (“Farmer, of Bilbopark, Auchmacoy, Ellon”) was host from 1967 to 1973, selling the Inn on to John Sheed (“Hotelier, of Commercial Street, New Byth”) who was there during 1973-78. The inn was then jointly owned by Ian William S. Morrison and Josephine Campbell Morrison (“heritably, of Dallas Hotel, Dallas”) between 1978 and 1988, until it was purchased by James Henry Mundie and Doreen Herd Mundie in 1988.

The present oldest, regular customer of the Inn, since coming of legal drinking and military service age during WW2, has therefore, to date, seen ten landlords come and go in his time and is now welcoming the eleventh. There is obviously a lot to be said for a Mackeson stout with a chaser.

WHAT’S ON IN THE PORT:

Sunday School: Our Nativity Play this year is called “The Innkeeper’s Breakfast” and we will be presenting this on Sunday, 18th December at 11.15am and on Christmas Eve at 7pm. Please come along and support the children. Our Christmas Party is on 17th December and we look forward to a visit from Santa.

HAIR STUDIO
New Street
Portknockie
Ladies & Gents Hairdresser

For an appointment phone 841028
Welcome back to Joanne and welcome to Rosemary, our stylists

Gents walk in on Saturdays 10-12 noon. No appointment necessary.

Happy Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous New Year to all our customers.

Portknockie Seniors: The Xmas Party is being held on Tuesday 13th December at The Mill at Tynet with entertainment by Gordon Grant. The first meeting of 2006 will be a Farmhouse Tea on Tuesday 24th January with entertainment by Ray Morton. February’s meeting on Tuesday 21st will feature a lively home grown act, The K’nockers in Concert and there will be a fund raising Jumble Sale on Tuesday the 28th. The March meeting on Tuesday 21st features the all stars Fochabers Fiddlers.

Seafield Women’s Rural Institute: The Christmas meeting is on 8th December and features a party get together for the Members and the Competition is a Xmas centre piece for a festive table.

In the New Year on January 19th Laura Taylor from Moray Council will be explaining waste recycling changes which will be introduced into Portknockie some time during March 2006. The Competition is a picture made from rubbish. February 16th is our Annual Dinner.

Thanks to member Margaret Grieg for ferrying Isobel Mair and Mary Sutherland to the SWRI Banffshire Federation Bi-annual meeting in Keith on a stormy Saturday, November 24th. The Federation wants members this year to fund raise for the “Farm in Africa” appeal. Each Rural will be asked to raise funds to help purchase goats, lambs and other farm-yard animals that will help African villagers move out of poverty and hunger. Last year the Seafield WRI donations went to the Dr Gray’s scanner appeal and the Banffshire Federation’s Sightsaver Appeal.

The SWRI will have its own website soon so members with access to a computer can follow developments. On the morning of 26th April 2006 there will be an opportunity to take part in an embroidery and sewing class at Deskford Hall. The Federation meeting ended with a raffle which included some prizes from Blackwater, Australia – a twinning link that started during WW2 when the Australian Country Women’s Association started sending parcels of dried fruit and cakes to their Scottish contemporaries. This link has continued up until two years ago.

Bowling Club Notes: The winter carpet season is now well under way. In fact with the present dark nights it seems ages since we last played on the outdoor green. During this session the Club plays in the Banffshire Coastal League which is made up of 12 teams. Three games have so far been played with rather middling results. At this time too, many of the surrounding clubs run open competitions in which our Portknockie members acquit themselves well. While bowls indoors on a short carpet with a stick in the middle sometimes takes a week or so to get used to, it is good fun, especially as it is nice and warm and we do not get rained off! (Ed. also it is very healthy exercise for the elderly according to the NHS, as it builds up body co-ordination and helps to prevent potentially dangerous falls).

There have been good attendances this winter but if you fancy a try, please come along to the McBoyle Hall – generally club nights are on Mondays and Thursdays at 7pm. A pair of carpet slippers on the feet will do and there are always sets of bowls in the cupboard to borrow.

Library Opening Hours: 5-8pm Tuesdays; 2-5pm & 6-8pm Thursdays; 10-12noon on Saturdays. Margret reports that new books are arriving in the van run most weeks so come in and see the titles. Recent arrivals include: "Toxic Batchelors" by Danielle Steel, "Predator" by Patricia Cornwell, "Dorothy's War" by Ruth Hamilton, "Summer Lightning" by Pamela Oldfield, a "Three Act Life about Anthony Hopkins" by Michael Feeney Callan and a "Year in the life of Glencoe" by Bill Birkett – there are many more including some in large print. Computer classes are available in the Library – 2 per session costs £5 for each person. Call in and give your name and a telephone number and I will forward this to Elinor Kidd who will contact you to set up a mutually convenient date.

Margret wishes all her readers young, and not so young a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Fishing: Overall the fishing has been good for the last couple of months but the weather at the end of November was atrocious. Our thoughts are with Graham Reid's family and the crew of the Zenith who were devastated by the fire aboard their boat while berthed at Fraserburgh. A New Year will herald hopefully a new and

brighter start for all. The tie up for the fishing fleet will soon be here and we would like to wish all skippers and crews a Merry Christmas 2005 and a prosperous New Year 2006.

CATHERINE 'S CERAMICS
Qualified Teacher

Classes available
**ON SALE: Paints, greenware,
brushes, bisque**

**8 Victoria Street
Portknockie
01542-840554**

Portknockie Play Group News: Our Christmas Party will take place on the last day of term that is Thursday 22nd December, at 10am in the Playgroup.

Portknockie Christmas Cafe & Grotto opened in the Youth Centre on December 1st. It will be open every Thursday and Tuesday until Tuesday 20th December. It is open from 10am-12noon in the mornings and from 6-8pm in the evenings. Santa will be in his Grotto only in the evenings – he is busy elsewhere in the mornings! Home baking, tea and coffee will be served by Santa's helpers. Posters are in the shops.

Portknockie Toddlers: The Christmas Party is on Wednesday 14th December between 1-3pm in the McBoyle Hall. After the Christmas break the group will be opening in January 2006 – all parents and their pre-school children are welcome every Thursday morning 10-1130am at the McBoyle Hall.

Pearl Murray writes: "I thank all the people of Portknockie for giving me the honour of becoming Citizen of the Year 2005. This came as a complete surprise, nevertheless a very nice one and I wish to thank everyone for the cards, e-mails, phone calls and personal congratulations."

PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL:

School Dates 2006:

- Spring Term Start Monday 8th January 2006
- Local School Holiday Friday 10th February 2006
- Mid Term Holiday Monday 13th February 2006
- Spring Term End Friday 31st March 2006
- Summer Term Start Monday 17th April 2006
- May Day Holiday Monday 1st May 2006

In Service Closure Thursday 18th May 2006
In Service Closure Friday 19th May 2006
Summer Term End 30th June 2006

Portknockie Primary School is in the midst of another busy term and indeed busy year. Main developments include:

- launch of our school eboard
- our pages on the Buckie Community High School Website. This has given us the opportunity to advertise all key events taking place throughout the school year. It has also allowed the school to develop ICT skills in a real situation and it has opened the door for access to websites for children and parents to share learning activities.

The eboard e-mail address is
portknockie.buckiehigh.site.eboard.com The password is 'school'

One school development plan this year is 'Citizenship' and we have been developing this through improving the school grounds, with input from a variety of sources - Pupil Council/ Eco-Committee and liaison with the Parent Support Group. We recently planted fruit trees, shrubs and many spring bulbs in the school grounds. It was a cold and wet afternoon but the children and adult volunteers rose to the challenge and planted all the items with great enthusiasm. Several photos of this event are available on the website; including Mr Bob Croucher wrestling with a Bamboo Plant and several primary 7 boys! We are aiming to apply for our 'Silver' Eco School Award in April 2006.

We have recently had installed a number of bicycle racks so that children can cycle to school and leave their bikes safely. We hope to be able to run a series of cycling proficiency courses in the summer term. We would be grateful for any volunteers to come and assist. If you are interested, please contact the Headteacher.

Diary Dates for the end of term:

School Christmas Concert 'Miracle Child'
Thursday 8th December 2005 2pm School Hall.
The School Christmas Service is on Thursday
15th December 2005, 2pm Portknockie Church.

Christmas Parties:
Monday 19th December 2005 P1/2 Christmas
Party 1.30-2.50pm

Tuesday 20th December 2005 P3/4 Christmas
Party 2.00-3.20pm
Wednesday 21st December 2005 P6/7 Christmas
Disco 6.30-8.30pm
Thursday 22nd December 2005 P5 Christmas
Party 2.00-3.20pm
Last day of Term Thursday 22nd December 2005.

Portknockie Primary School Parent Support Group Update

Portknockie Primary School Parent Support Group is looking forward to a very busy 2006. We are going all out to fundraise and hopefully purchase play equipment for the school. We have always had good support from the village and we know you will back us in the future. Our plans include a Fashion Show in January and a joint Gala with the Community Association. We had a great response from our "PJ" day raising about £700. So thank you to all the parents and families for their great support. Please read the monthly newsletter which will give you all the details of any forthcoming events.

Miss Moira Cooke
Headteacher, Portknockie Primary School

JMK

19 Cluny Square
Buckie
AB56 1HA
Tel/Fax 01542 835665
Mob. 07900 931 905
Email: juliemckay@btconnect.com
Late night Christmas shopping with 10% off on Thursday, the 8th December.

Happy Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous New Year to all our customers.
It's that time of the year when you should be making resolutions to sort out and improve your life. So make one now to **renew** your subscription for the 2006 issues of the K'nocker! Over half the houses in Portknockie receive this newspaper and a number of copies go beyond the village to "K'nockers" world-wide. The first subscription payment and order for the 2006 issues of the K'nocker arrived in the middle of November! Well done Mr David Pirie (Darlin) of Aberdeen.

Your new subscription falls due **before** the next issue comes out at the beginning of March 2006. Please place your order with Margret Wood in the Library before then and you can

enjoy **4 copies delivered for £3**. This price has not gone up for years! Single copies are on sale in the Library or at the Chemist's for £1 each. See Margret Wood for postal copies but we have to charge extra to cover p&p for the four issues.

Remember you can always advise relatives and friends to download a copy from Neil Hedley & John Smith's village website at: www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk

In 2006 the K'nocker will be published in the first weeks of March, May, September and December. Copy, letters and adverts for each issue should be passed to the Editor, through the Library or the letterbox of 23 Harbour Place or by lower case e-mail to rmdram@onetel.com at least a week before each quarterly publication date. In fact, the earlier the better!

Christmas and New Year greetings to all our readers and a very special thank you to those in the village who deliver your village newspaper throughout the year. When you see them why don't you thank them!

Eddie Anderson – Haig Street, Moray View and Seaview Place.

Alec Campbell: King Edward Terrace.

Monique Cavalier: New Street, Park Street and Reidhaven Street.

Bob Croucher: Blantyre Place, Cliff Terrace, Commercial Road, Gordon Street, Harbour Place, Harbour Terrace, Hill Street, Mid Street, Pulteney Street, Seaforth Street, Victoria Street.
Cath Dawson: Church Street and Bridge Street.

George Donaldson: Addison Street, Bruce Place, Craigview Road, Mairs Street, Samson Place, Samson Street and Stuart Place.
Shirley McLean: Falconer Terrace, Geddes Avenue, Logie Drive, Slater Crescent and Wood Place.

Morag Reid: Admiralty Street and Seafield Terrace.

Karin & John Rose: High Street and Station Road.

Isobel Worrel: Seafield Street.

And, finally, grateful thanks to Sandra and her colleagues in the Chemist Shop who sell single copies to visitors and those who do not subscribe on the annual subscription basis.

Banffshire Field Club

The Banffshire Field Club meets at 2.15 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month for presentations and discussions on the history, archeology, geology etc. of the area. Meetings are held in the Community Centre at the secondary school in Keith. The Club's programme for 2006 begins in January and the first three meetings are noted below. Annual membership is £5 (with a £2 contribution per meeting – includes tea and biscuits!). Visitors are most welcome, at a flat rate of £3 per meeting.

Saturday 14 January : The Northern Constabulary

Speaker: Mr Stuart McKenzie, Fochabers.

Saturday 11 February : Building Traditions and Traditional Buildings. Speaker: Mrs Elizabeth Beaton, Duffus

Saturday 11 March : Ancient Celtic Divisions of Scotland. Speaker: Mr Roy Pedersen

Please contact Harry Hawkes (01542-840718) for further information. (This will include how to penetrate to the meeting room – construction work is in progress at the main entrance to the Community Centre and visitors need to find their way round to the back door.)

James Urquhart

Painter & Decorator

01542-840004

Wishes all friends and customers a very merry Christmas & a happy New Year