

RING THE BELLS, WE HAVE A NEW REV REPORTING FOR DUTY VERY SOON

The K'nocker is delighted to invite Yvonne Hendrie, Minister elect to introduce herself to the village.

“Dear Friends (as I hope I will very soon be able to call you). I will not actually be reporting for duty until next month but this is by way of an introduction. My name is Yvonne Hendrie. I am 42 years old and married with an 11 year old daughter. My husband, Brian is the Minister of Ordiquhill and Cornhill linked with Whitehills, which is where we live.

Both Brian and I felt a very strong sense of calling to the North East towards the end of 2004. We had never been to this glorious coastal strip before, and it was quite a daunting move to somewhere completely new. This was especially true as we were moving from the bright lights of Perth and one of the largest congregations in Scotland at Perth North Parish Church. It felt right though and my calling to serve in Findochty, Portknockie and Rathven seems a further confirmation of this.

As a wife and mother, with a dog, a guinea pig and pet fish to care for, too, my feet are kept firmly on the ground. For the last twelve years, I have worked mainly as a healthcare chaplain in two hospitals and two hospices. You are not worth your salt in these places if you cannot hold a sick bowl or make a cuppa for distraught relatives, as well as doing the things you would expect of a chaplain. That's very much my attitude to ministry—it does mean 'service' after all—I intend to roll up my sleeves and get on with the work at Findochty, Portknockie and Rathven, as I did after my ordination when I ministered in my own church in Hawick, before Chloe was born. In my spare time I like to read and do cross-stitch, and I enjoy creative writing – I have had a few bits and pieces published. Mainly, though I enjoy time with my family and the animals, and will no doubt immerse myself in domesticity on my day off each week, catching up like any working mother.

I don't know what to say about myself other than that I am a very down to earth person. I have a good sense of humour and the ability to laugh at myself and at life's absurdities. I well appreciate that life is full of grey areas and that 'we're a' Jock Tamson's

bairns', all doing our best to make sense of it. Some people find that religion helps in this respect, while others do not. Some people find the whole concept of religion a troublesome one. For myself, I like to think of religion as a living, growing relationship with God, revealed to us in His only son, rather than just a set of rules. It is a journey of discovery rather than something stagnant. I love the fact that the Bible is full of ordinary, sinful human beings with whom God entered into a relationship. And because of that, He led them to be better human beings. It gives me hope for myself – God isn't finished with me yet!

I know what an immense privilege I have been granted to come among you as your Minister. We have to get to know one another and get used to one another's ways. These things take time, and I look forward to meeting you and forming relationships. I take people as I find them, and I hope you will do the same for me. There are many of you and only one of me. Please be patient with me! Goodbye for now and God Bless. Yvonne Hendrie.

TWA “SILVER DARLINGS” TO MAKE A PERMANENT RETURN TO PORTKNOCKIE

To mark the Year of the Homecoming , a village project has been launched that will see a 16ft original artwork installed along the bank of the Horse Road leading down to the Harbour Garage. Local artist, Geoff Roberts has the mammoth task of creating this landmark mosaic over the next three months. The mosaic will feature the two fish on the Portknockie coat of arms in a design to show off the themes of the Homecoming. A unique feature will be the fish scales formed from the handprints of village children. Significantly, it is hoped to include many children and adults from the village at each stage in the design and production of the artwork.

The formal launch of the project was on 3rd March and it is planned to unveil the finished mosaic on a fine day during June.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Half our public telephone boxes have been axed by BT: During January the telephone box by the Ship's Wheel in Church Street was removed leaving the village with just the one BT public telephone box at the junction of Bridge Street and Reidhaven Street.

What do you do with your old clothing? One answer is to take it for textile recycling and we now have our own clothing point bin as part of the recycling bank in the park by Wood Place. From the 2nd March 2009 Northern Textiles ABN Ltd (St Fergus, Peterhead) will be contracted to recycle textiles across Moray. They have agreed to pay all Community Councils, Associations and Village Halls a fixed sum based on the weight of textiles collected from their banks. If you use this arrangement, money will come regularly to Portknockie in return for us dumping our textiles (including duvets, pillows, towels and cuddly toys) in our own village textile bank. The firm also donates money to the Royal National Mission for Deep Sea Fishermen. This could provide the village with a useful payback for making the effort to recycle.

Kut 'n' Kurl
of
Portknockie
840366
Kerry, Susan, Claire & Joanne

Remarkable local weather: During the first week in February Portknockie missed out on the very heavy snow falls, the worst for 18 years, that paralysed the Borders, England and Wales and shut schools and brought chaos to road, rails and air travel. Up to 30cm of snow fell on London causing a complete shut down of the capital's bus network. Here in the village we experienced just a few flurries that barely settled. The afternoon of Tuesday 10th February did see a sudden fall of snow that covered Portknockie well enough for the sledgers to have some fun on the Bakers' Brae. Temperatures during this period fell to -18° C in the upper Spey area but in the village -3° C was about as cold as it got. Still, winter has been a lot colder this year than the Met Office had predicted back in November and December.

The Breast Cancer Care coffee morning on Wednesday 18th February organised by Mary Currie, Isobel Gauld and Nettie Innes must have broken the record for local community fund-raising. On the day

the Seafield Hall was bursting at the seams with a queue of locals and folk from neighbouring villages waiting patiently to donate at the busy sales table and the successful silent auction. The final, amazing sum of £3 045 was raised for Breast Cancer Care in Aberdeen. The organisers were delighted with this wonderful response – as Nettie Innes remarked “so many people in the village have been touched by the threat of breast cancer.” A thank you message was posted in the shops afterwards to all those who helped put on the morning and to all those who came along and supported the event.

Landmark Mosaic Workshop: Any resident who wants to follow the process of making this piece of art for the village or wants the chance to have their handprint incorporated in the final design should come along to the McBoyle Hall on Saturday 21st March between 1-5pm. This is a chance to watch the artist at work and leave a mark for posterity.

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WORLD-WIDE WEB LINKS:

Vera Findlay has e-mailed from Canada with some comments about the Homecoming 2009. She backs the idea of regular hymn singing by the Flagstaff in the summer and she has suggested that we organise a display of old photographs depicting the early days of the Port set up in one of the halls or at the school. She sees the display being ‘manned’ by ladies of the village dressed in old-time clothes – a long dark skirt, plain jersey and a shawl with their hair in a bun and a creel somewhere by if possible. She approves of a fish barbeque if the weather can be dependable but she worries that an outdoor sculpture might attract vandalism!

In other e-mails to Harry Hawkes Vera recalls her memories of the Seafield Hall. “Looking from Church Street I can see the blue and white sign saying Seafield Hall. On entering by the back door to the left is the only toilet, although I do not remember a wash basin with it. To the right the entrance to the stage on which I performed in one of Mrs Gordon's concerts. For the dances we entered at the main door

going up 3 or 4 steps (now a ramp for wheelchair access) to a cloakroom where we left our coats and handbags and never gave a thought to being robbed. There was little to steal anyway other than lipstick and a comb.

Vera also comments on the idea of planting whin bushes in the Three Creeks Shore area (last issue); she feels broom would be more colourful and less prickly. In her day this area was known as the Fasken where the village garbage was dumped and it even had a sewer outlet for the village. She also recalls the Horse Road from Patrol Road to the garage (the proposed site for the Landmark Mosaic) was great for sledging in the winter. Interestingly, Vera describes Patrol Road as foreign to her. She and her friends (uptoosers) spent most of their time in the harbour or on the Lin Links to the west. Her Portknockie was from Station Road to the bowling green and High Street to the Heid o' the Brae. In those days Haig Street had three houses on each side, the Slack (now King Edward Terrace) had the School House to "Aranmore" on one side with "Hamewith" and a lot of plots to Summerton House and two or three more houses. As she concludes: "Changed days for sure."

Charlie Slater in correspondence with Harry Hawkes has contrasted the sentiments expressed in the last issue about young people not being involved with Remembrance Day activities and the experience in Australia on Anzac Day (25th April when those Australians and New Zealanders who died in Gallipoli in 1915 are remembered). He writes – "The offspring of the Australian veterans are allowed to march alongside relatives or in their place if they are deceased wearing their medals and decorations. When interviewed after parades young ones often show great pride in what their relatives fought for and detailed knowledge of the campaigns. Schools feature the wars in history lessons and visits are paid to War Graves and even to battlefields such as Gallipoli, where so many Australians and New Zealanders perished.

Charlie also wonders what happened to the "Diorama Competitions" that used to be held in this area. He claims quite a few locals were good at making boaties or the little, framed scenes of a furnished room, a workshop, a ship Chandler that formed a picture to hang on the wall. He himself is currently into bone carving. Charlie suggests that with all the inclement weather at this time of the year K'nockers could be busy at homely crafts ready to show off their output at local shows in the summer. This might even be an idea for making money in these difficult times. He says that having a shed is extremely popular at the

moment in Australia – they are just the place for the tools and materials to make toys and other woodwork items either for satisfaction or even as an extra income.

Henry Wood has e-mailed from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He was very interested in Sandra Skelton's article on a "Patriotic Portknockie Family" in the Autumn 2008 issue. He says that the family of Joseph and Annie Wood (Park) who resided at 6 Harbour Place were his grandparents. He remembers as a young lad visiting them with his mother. Henry is the youngest son of Henry Ritchie Wood (Park) who was the youngest son of Joseph and Annie Wood. Henry's Dad married his Mom who was from Portgordon and they had five children, three boys and two girls. They lived in the High Street, Portgordon and Dad was an engineer in the Merchant Navy. Henry emigrated to Canada in 1969, got married and has one daughter and two grandsons. He hopes that Sandra Skelton reads this article and maybe she will get in touch.

Henry goes on to praise the Portknockie website and this paper for keeping people in touch with their roots. He wishes all readers a Happy and Healthy New Year 2009. He attaches his e-mail address: hninth@hotmail.com and would be happy to hear from any of his kin.

NEW PEOPLE TO MEET AND GREET:

Welcome to **Lexi Milne** born on the 9th December 2008 to delighted parents Gillian and Willie of Geddes Avenue.

A warm welcome is extended to **Audrey & Grant Bell** who have moved from Udney Green to 3 Dover Street.

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VILLAGE IN BLOOM SUMMER 2009

Summer will soon be with us and, maybe, this hard winter will lead to a glorious spring and summer.

Have any of you reflected on the appeal in the last issue for volunteers to emerge to take on the Village in Bloom programme?

Portknockie needs more of its residents to step up and offer help to create this year's floral displays. Please do not leave it to others and do not feel that you might be interfering in the business of the few current volunteers. The few would really welcome more of the many who live here and enjoy our floral features to come forward with ideas and helping hands. Please make yourselves and your suggestions known.

<p style="text-align: center;">PORTKNOCKIE FISH & CHIP SHOP</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ron & Dee</p> <p>Mon-Sat: 4.30-8.00 Sunday: Closed</p> <p>Phone Orders welcome: 01542-841553</p> <p>Last orders 15 minutes before closing time</p>

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

The Council comprises: **Chairman:** Alan Beresford (840534/07790023983), **Secretary:** Karen Campbell, **Vice Chair:** Helen Sammon (841794) **Treasurer:** Gladys McKenzie (840542), **Press Secretary:** Pearl Murray (841087) with Lil Urquhart, Sam Muir, Cathleen Harper and Angela Mair.

The Community Council is backing the idea of a programme of Homecoming events in the village next summer. Plans are being drawn up for a special Burn's 250th Commemorative evening on 16th May with speeches, haggis and a piper. It is hoped that shops might dress their windows and the school will be involved in Portknockie's tribute to the great bard.

The attention of elected Moray councillors has been drawn to the poor street lighting in the eastern part of Haig Street. PC Tony McCullie was welcomed as the new police representative at PCC meetings. A letter of thanks has been sent to the Earl of Seafield for his annual donation (£400) to the community. The 20 mph speed campaign backed by the PCC has slowed down for further talks. The original plan for the speed limit to apply on the main A942 through road has been turned down. Instead a scheme is being considered by Moray Transportation officials to

implement a 20mph restriction on the rest of the residential roads in the village. In some streets this might necessitate the creation of costly traffic-calming measures such as speed humps and speed limit signs. At the moment the predicted cost of the traffic calming measures for a 20mph village scheme remains a stumbling block to progress.

Editor: those involved might consider the experience of The Netherlands where traffic control measures in some villages have been removed altogether and it has resulted in drivers proceeding cautiously where roads intersect or there are many parked vehicles as is typically the case in Portknockie. Might it work here and save all the costs of signage?

At the February meeting the PCC discussed the growing practice of draping banners celebrating anniversaries on the gateway arches, the school railings and even the war memorial railings. On occasions the windblown sheets hang around for days after the event being celebrated. It was agreed that those who decide to put up these banners should be responsible for taking them down immediately the occasion is over. The PCC is backing an initiative led by Cllr Anita McDonald to make the walk to school safer for primary pupils and drivers, especially during the dark winter months by providing the children with Hi-vis armbands. Another concern registered at the February meeting was the lack of action on two key community initiatives – the provision of nurse-led clinics in the village and the move of the Library into the school.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

This village group, formed in 2000 and recognised as a Scottish Charity (No SCO30090), has the job of looking after our village hall and raising funds for such activities as Village in Bloom. The members currently are: Jim Urquhart (**Chair**), Bob Croucher (**Secretary**), Celia Going (**Treasurer**) with Lil Urquhart (**Bookings**), and committee members - John Myles, John Bell, John Going, Gladys McKenzie, Harry Hawkes, Cathleen Harper and Anne Barnes.

Our fund raising activities include continuing with the regular Bingo sessions which have been well-received and the New Year programme began on the 21st January. Bingo is held every other Wednesday evening at 7pm in the Seafield Inn. The "100 Club" membership remains disappointingly down on the previous year but each month three winners pick up cash prizes. The monthly winners are posted on bills at the Chemist and Newspaper shops. Friday 20th February featured a Jumble Sale in the McBoyle Hall.

There were many clothing, book and bric-a-brac bargains for cash-strapped residents to snap up although, on the night, the crowd storming the tables seemed more outsiders than locals! The event raised £243 for the PCA funds.

On Saturday 14th March a Vinyl Night Disco for the over 18s will be held in the McBoyle Hall from 8pm arranged jointly by the School PTA group and the Community Association (funds raised will be shared). Music will be by 'Midge' Middleton. Tickets cost £5 and there will be a bar on the evening. Pencilled in for Friday 17th April is a village Quiz Night and an auction of special experiences is in the planning stage for sometime in June. The PCA will be helping out with the special Burns' evening arranged by the PCC on the 16th May. An exciting future date for your diaries is a day and an evening on Saturday 21st November when SIGMA (Moray's Astronomical Society) plans to hold an astronomical Fun Day of workshops and demonstrations for young and old alike in and outside the McBoyle Hall. This is part of a nationwide International Year of Astronomy 2009 season of events. Portknockie has been chosen for one of the four events across Moray because of its suitable venue and our low levels of ambient light pollution. Plan for the family to come along and do some tutored star-gazing.

The maintenance of our village hall remains a top priority for the group. A project is being put together to replace the antiquated, costly and inefficient heating system at the Hall. It would be good to freshen up the appearance of the Hall in time for the Homecoming 2009 season and negotiations are in place with the Moray Criminal Justice Service that could see people on community orders from the courts repaying for their offences by taking on a Hall painting job in the village. We just provide the paint.

As reported in the front page story the PCA has formally commissioned local artist Geoff Roberts to create a unique landmark mosaic for the village as part of our Homecoming 2009 commemorations. This will be a major project bringing many strands of the village together in common endeavour for the general good. Follow progress on the project by visiting www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk

Over the next couple of months would you all look out for and support a fund-raising campaign on behalf of the Homecoming 2009 Mosaic. Jim Urquhart has agreed to ask around all the local businesses in the village for any help they can give the project; very useful would be in-kind donations that could be used on the project as raffles or on sales tables. One job we

know we need is the landscaping of the bank where the mosaic will rest.

Other residents are not being left out – you all have the opportunity to buy a tile for a pound so watch out for posters asking each family to sponsor a tile. Remember that was how the McBoyle Hall was built way back by everyone purchasing a brick! The tiles you purchase will be broken up and used to form the mosaic design of the two fishes. If you like to give something with a chance of a win at the end then look out for the upcoming **golden hand raffle**; the winner of this will be able to have a unique handprint made by Geoff Roberts using 21ct gold mosaic to decorate their own house. What one-upmanship that will be!

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THE PORTKNOCKIE WEBSITE UNDER THE MICROSCOPE:

January 2009, just one month in the year: number crunching from the administrator of the Portknockie Website, Neil Hedley.

The Portknockie Website has had a busy month with regards to the number of people visiting it. In total the website saw 629 brand new visits and, combining this number with returning visitors, it racks up to a staggering 1053. The busiest day of the week for accessing the website was on Mondays whilst Thursdays proved to be the least.

Most of the traffic comes from the UK but significant numbers of hits have come from Germany, Russia, the USA, Israel, Canada and Ireland. The average time spent on each visit amounts to 159 seconds (2½ minutes) but visits can last as long as 30 minutes or an hour. The most common browser connecting to the website was Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 and the most used search engine was Google.

What are all these people looking for in clicking on the Portknockie website? Just a reminder of the website's content in case you or your relatives are not

making the full use you could be of this local and world-wide source of information about the village:

- **Welcome:** home page
- **About:** a brief description of the village
- **Events:** a list of the Homecoming 2009 events
- **Pictures:** a gallery of local views by land and sea
- **Knocker:** the latest issue for downloading – excellent for those overseas readers
- **Podcast:** a reading of the latest Knocker by the editorial team
- **Local:** a local business directory
- **Walks:** 6 local walks around the village described
- **Your say:** personal comments about the village
- **Holiday Home:** an advertisement for Tigh Na Cala
- **Victoria Hotel:** an advertisement for the Victoria Hotel
- **Forum:** allows comments and images to be shared around the world

If you have not yet used this village website why not give it a run just now by logging on to www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk

MEMORIES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IN PORTKNOCKIE IN THE 1950s by Ian Mair

The Current Loaf

After the qualifying class most brainy classmates left Portknockie JSS for secondary education at Buckie High or Fordyce Academy. Those of us who continued schooling in Portknockie's secondary classes became more into disruption than education.

Sneaking into school early at playtime and rubbing out history notes from the blackboard, mixing red ink with blue or hiding the strap were considered to be good pranks. In the science class a few copper pellets among the brass ones when heated with the Bunsen burner would alter things. In cookery class salt was put in the sugar and baking powder added to the flour. The most disruptive behaviour a teacher would have to face was a rammy.

One morning our class was having a rammy when Mr Moyes, the Headmaster burst into our classroom. He rushed straight up to my desk and walloped me on the head. Everyone went silent as he left the room.

Later that afternoon I was summoned to the Headmaster's office. Fearing the worst I knocked and entered but found Mr Moyes to be very friendly. He asked if I would be kind enough to go to Calder's bakery and get him a current loaf. Being out of school shopping was better than being in class so I went to the baker's.

When I returned with the current loaf Mr Moyes gave me a sixpence. He never apologized for the wallop but to me the trip to the baker's and the sixpence was apology enough.

(see next issue for further confessions by Ian Mair)

The Banffshire Field Club visits Portknockie

SATURDAY JUNE 30, 1888

From:

*Transactions of the Banffshire Field Club
Volume 3 (1887-1893), pp 39-47*

Journeying to Portknockie by the train leaving Banff at 9.30 a.m., and arriving at the former place at 10.25, the following ladies and gentlemen were assembled on the platform:-Mrs Ross, Cathay House, Cullen, and Miss Ada Ross; Rev. Æ. Chisholm, Banff; Mr Cramond, Cullen; Mr Macdonald, solicitor, Buckie; Dr Clark, Cullen; Mr Greig Sandlaw, Alvah; Rev. Mr McIntyre, Seafield; and Mr Arnot, Portknockie.

Under the guidance of **Mr Jas. Wood, Portknockie**, a gentleman who exhibited an intelligent interest in local antiquarian objects, the party walked through the neat and cleanly village towards the harbour. Halting for a moment at the summit of the hill, a fine view was got of the harbour works at present in progress and the broad waters of the Moray Firth, the waves of which on Saturday were extremely rough. A circuitous path down the steep brae brought the party on to the new pier of the:

PORTKNOCKIE HARBOUR.

In the provision of this harbour now in course of construction, individual enterprise has been assisted by Government. For well nigh half a century have the fishermen of Portknockie struggled for the acquisition of a harbour and after repeated representations had been made to them the Fishery Board for Scotland, at a meeting on 18th April of last year, resolved to go on with the harbour, provided its total estimated cost did not exceed £10,000, and that £3,500 of that sum was

paid by the locality before the works were commenced. The fishermen and those interested in the attainment of the harbour were only too delighted to give the sum asked to be raised by local contribution, but a feeling has since arisen, and was expressed on Saturday, that either the sum asked for locally was too large, or the sum granted by the Fishery Board was too small. It was understood, it was said, that local contributions towards such objects were usually fixed at about a fourth of the whole cost, whereas the grant raised locally for the Portknockie harbour represented nearly a third. The £3,500 was, however, remitted to the Board last summer, and the works were begun in July last, according to the plans and estimates prepared by Messrs D. & T. Stevenson, C.E. Progress was steadily made, but operations have all along been much interrupted by stormy weather. During last autumn the solid rock by the side of the natural creek, which will form the basin to the harbour, was cut and prepared for a deep layer of cement to be placed above it, and breast walls were erected for a considerable distance. The pier rests on a bed of solid rock. About 200 feet of breast wall have already been built. This pier has still to be extended over a hundred feet to the west in line with what has been already built, when, turning to the south, it will be continued for a distance of about ninety feet. The section of the pier which would, had the weather been good, have been finished on Saturday, measured twenty feet, but the stormy sea put a stop to all operations.

The work at the harbour is very arduous, and even in good weather is accompanied with some danger. Manual labour is, however, superseded as far as possible by appliances worked by steam. A couple of machines for mixing cement, and driven by steam, produce excellent work in a short space of time; and it was calculated that the two of them would manufacture about 200 tons per day of prepared cement. A steam stone crusher, similar in principle to those now in use in one or two of the Aberdeenshire road districts, turns out many tons per day of small metal to be used for the concrete. The stones are got from the beach, and by the provision of a shoot conveying them from the brow of the hill to near the base, much labour in horse power is saved. There are already prepared over thirty massive blocks of concrete, each of twenty five tons weight, ready to be dropped outside the breakwater to form a protection to the main structure. The harbour will be well sheltered from every air except the north east, to which quarter it will open. One great advantage it will possess over many other harbours along the coast is that of having deep water. At ebb tide the water at the outer part of the pier will be not less than twelve feet

deep, thus enabling boats and vessels of fair size means of ingress and egress at any time. Considerable damage was done to the plant and works by the storm on the previous day. A block of cement, estimated to weigh about 50 tons, was washed away, and the staging was damaged very considerably, while a number of boxes had been washed off the pier into the harbour. Messrs D. & T. Stevenson, Edinburgh, are engineers of the works on behalf of the Fishery Board; Messrs Morrison & Son are contractors; Mr Kinnear superintends the work on behalf of the contractors; and Mr John Ross, who attended in the same capacity at the Cullen, Crovie, and other local harbours, represents the engineers. The party inspected the works with a good deal of interest, and after a stay of about an hour, went to view:

THE ROCKS AND CAVES

along the coast to the east of the village are well-worth inspection. Here Mr Wood's local knowledge was greatly appreciated. One of the most picturesque rocks seen was the Scaur Nose or as it is locally termed the 'Fiddle Bow', resembling somewhat the 'Needle's Eye' rock at Tarlair. It was recalled that in 1804, in the channel alongside the rock, the brig Mary of London was wrecked one wild December night, and all hands lost. The almost perpendicular cliffs known as the 'Buchts,' adjoining the rock, have also tragical associations. The 'meikle cave of the divot', and its companion cave to the west of it, the 'little cave of the divot,' were inspected with some degree of interest. With the name of the cave is associated a tale affirmed to be something more than legendary. In 1750 a Dutch vessel was wrecked, and it was deserted by its crew. The men succeeded in reaching the shore, and in thanksgiving for their delivery they went on their knees and cut a divot at the top of this cave - hence the name. Some of the party hinted that it might greatly violate belief in local tradition to suggest that the crew may have got on their knees and offered devotion without cutting a divot. If the divot was really cut what was meant by the action of these rude Dutchmen? With such scenes, and the relation of stories connected with them, the time flew on speedily, and over an hour was spent in profitable pleasure.

The party retraced their steps to the station, and proceeded by 1.20 train to the neighbouring village of Findochty.

“WILD ABOUT PORTKNOCKIE” a series of local nature notes by Mary Thorpe:

Snowdrops!

I could hardly believe my eyes when on the 9th of January I saw a red admiral butterfly flitting about in the sunshine before coming to rest on a corrugated roof where it continued to bask in the warmth. That must be the earliest I have ever seen one I think. It would have been hibernating in a shed somewhere and just come out for the warmth of the sun.

Walking along the railway line between Hill Street and Bridge Street the other afternoon, I had to stop and wonder at the sight of so many beautiful snow drops in a huge drift- oh, that's about right- a snow drift! Further along, the banks held a promise of thousands of gorgeous yellow lesser celandines to come. The lovely heart shaped dark green leaves are there ahead of the flowers. These early yellow flowers are very important to the first bees that venture out. The bees see this colour as ultra violet and home right in to feed on the nectar. In the garden too, snow drops and crocus are already in flower and the daffs look near to following on.

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During that spell of frosty weather we were putting out quite a lot of extra food for our birds. We got in to the habit of putting scraps and also fat balls, nuts and raisins in to the food processor and whizzing it all up together. We then put it out on the ground under the hedge (the gulls can't see it there) and also on the bird table. When it was really cold we noticed a song thrush was coming for these scraps under the hedge. The blackbirds however bullied and harangued the thrush quite badly so we would try and slip him some food on his own. He soon understood our tactics and was getting quite brave in letting us get close to him. We didn't quite realize how used to us he was though until one day I knocked on the window to get Carl's attention and the thrush popped out of a bush and looked at me through the glass as if to say "Yes, did you call?". Another time we were hard at it changing the furniture around in the sitting room when we noticed "our" thrush sitting on the window sill looking in at us. We got the message and took some food out to him! We haven't seen him feeding over

the last couple of weeks but I have heard a thrush singing atop a tree and guess it must be ours. The odd thing about his song is that is not like any thrush I've ever heard. He is maybe a young bird and hasn't learned the words yet because he definitely sounds strange!

Another seemingly strange thrush song I heard the other day actually turned out to be a cheeky starling. I think it might have been the same one that fooled me in to thinking that there were geese flying over. Starlings are so good at mimicking sounds. I have heard what I think are swifts squealing until I realize that it's mid winter and there are no swifts! Had again!

My father-in-law made us a new bird table and, after he put it up, I thought it looked smaller than the old one and wondered if the jackdaws would still fit on it. I do like to make sure they get some food as well and they like to visit the bird table. I needn't have worried as when I looked out one day there was a thumping great rook on it! As it turned out the table was exactly the same size as the old one.

I was very disappointed when, on the day of the RSPB big garden bird count in January we didn't see one goldfinch. We counted seven last year for the survey and its only been this last week that we have seen them coming back to feed on the niger seed. We have had quite a few siskins though so the seed hasn't gone to waste. My mum must have ours I think as she had seven on the day of the count. Most bird numbers in our garden were down this year unfortunately, especially blackbirds, starlings and sparrows.

Still on a serious note, the environmental and wildlife charity the WWF (World Wide fund for Nature) are appealing for people and organizations all over the world (hopefully a billion people) to switch off their lights for one hour at 8.30 on the 28th March for their campaign WWF's Earth Hour. This campaign will hopefully send out a message to world leaders that people really want action when it comes to climate change. The UN climate change summit is in Copenhagen this December. If you are interested in registering your support for this campaign you can do so on line at wwf.org.uk/earthhour

Also this year, the Marine and Coastal Access Bill if it gets Royal Assent should help to protect Britain's coast line and sea bed. At the moment only 2% of coastline and 1% of the seabed has any protection by law. This bill will hopefully work nationwide but the

Scottish government is also intending to introduce a marine bill into parliament this year.

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WHAT ABOUT THIS FOR AN IDEA? This is a feature that any reader can use to put forward a suggestion to make Portknockie an even better place. Give your best ideas to the Editorial Team.

No ideas received this issue!

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The Suilven Trophy

In the December 2008 issue of the K'nocker we reported the finding (in a car boot sale in Coupar Angus) of a silver cup, a trophy of the Boys' Brigade in Portknockie, engraved as "The Suilven Trophy". We can now explain the origins of the trophy, thanks to information that has come from various sources.

The original trophy was donated to the Portknockie Boys' Brigade in 1980 by John Cowie, then skipper of the fishing boat "Suilven", who lives in Seafield Street in the village in a house of the same name. ("Suilven" is the name of a distinctive, conical mountain dominating Lochinver, in the far north-west of Sutherland, and well known to fishermen working the waters of the west coast of Scotland. See the article on Suilven in Wikipedia for a photo of this spectacular mountain).

George Innes, of Bridge Street, helped to run the Portknockie Boys' Brigade. The Portknockie group was eventually amalgamated with the Buckie Boys'

Brigade, George retained the Suilven Trophy in safekeeping and it remains in his care today.

There was still the problem of the Coupar Angus silver cup. This was identical in size and shape to the original trophy and was also engraved as "The Suilven Trophy". However, it had extra, random engravings. There was an additional title, "The Colin Cup" and the first 'winner' of the trophy was listed as "1980 – Colin McPherson, Rathven".

The explanation of all this came from Moira Smith, who popped up in the Victoria Hotel, Portknockie, in the first week of February as a player in the pool team of the Highlander Hotel from Buckie. She had seen the article in January's "K'nocker" and called in to the Seafield Inn to say that her brother was the Colin McPherson involved. He was, in 1980, an apprentice engraver and had obviously used the Coupar Angus cup for practice.

So far, so good. It would still be nice to know why such a fine silver cup became available for random engraving practice; and how it came to be in Coupar Angus. Colin McPherson no doubt has the answers. Watch this space.

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PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

PC Kevin McPherson, Buckie Area Community Beat Officer writes in on Anti-social behaviour:

“In recent weeks, there have been a number of instances of Anti-social behaviour within the village, particularly in and around the Samson Street and Admiralty Street areas. The incidents which generally occur in the evenings involve a group of males running through back gardens, climbing on property such as sheds and garages and causing upset to residents. A number of individuals have been seen by myself, on behalf of concerned residents, in the presence of their parents and asked politely to desist. It is likely that some of those involved have not thought about how their actions affect their fellow villagers and I would ask them to consider how such behaviour would affect their own families.

Anti-social behaviour can be reported by telephone through the Grampian Police Call Centre on 0845 600 5 700 and, in certain cases, for example ongoing vandalism, incidents can be reported via 999 calls.

The local Neighbourhood Watch helps tackle these incidents and it is the responsibility of all residents to work together to maintain the high standards of the village and reports all crime and anti-social behaviour to the Police. The message remains the same – ‘see it report it’. PC Kevin McPherson.”

Ron Gray
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The amount of any benefit granted will depend on your income and capital, your personal circumstances whether other adults are occupying the property and the amount of council tax you are already paying. You can also get leaflets about this scheme from Libraries so why not check whether you can cut your council tax and save some of your money?

BE GAS SAFE an update provided by Russell O’Hanlon, Plumbing and Heating, Portknockie.

From 1st April 2009 **Gas Safe Register** replaces CORGI gas registration as the official gas safety body in the Great Britain. So from April 1st, by law, only **Gas Safe Register** engineers should carry out work on gas appliances or installations in your home. From 1st April existing CORGI installers must be on the new register. It is all about safety. To make sure that gas appliances such as boilers, fires, ovens and hobs are installed, maintained and serviced safely you should employ a **Gas Safe Register** engineer to carry out the work. You could be risking the safety of

your family and your property by having gas work in your home carried out by unregistered engineers.

Why is CORGI gas registration in Great Britain ending on the 31st March 2009? The Health and Safety Executive undertook a review of gas safety in 2006. This review concluded that there was a strong case for improving the gas registration scheme calling for there to be a clearer focus on gas safety and simple registration and competence requirements for gas engineers without compromising safety or service standards. All **Gas Safe Registered** engineers will have an ID card with their licence number and a photograph on it, so ask for the card to check whether any gas engineer calling is part of the official scheme. To find a **Gas Safe Registered** engineer in the area visit www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk or from 1st April call on 0800 408 5500.

In an emergency: if you smell gas or think there might be a gas leak: turn off the gas at your meter, extinguish any naked flames, open windows and leave the area. Seek medical advice if you feel unwell. Call the Gas Emergency Freephone number 0800 111 999.

HAME COOKING by SWRI members:

Sausage Cakes

Ingredients:

1lb (450g) pork sausage meat
4oz (100g) of streaky bacon
6oz (175g) brown breadcrumbs
1 cooking apple peeled and grated
A pinch of salt and black pepper
1 beaten egg
Fat for frying

Method:

Take the rind off the bacon and chop into bits and mix together with the sausage meat and the grated apple, then season well and divide into 8 round and flat cakes. Dip each of these into the beaten egg and coat with the breadcrumbs. Then heat up the fat in a frying pan and fry the cakes for 8-10 minutes turning once and until golden brown. Make sure they are cooked right through and serve with fried eggs and tomatoes

Macaroons

Ingredients for the rich short-crust pastry:

5oz (125g) plain flour
3 oz (75g) butter

2 oz (50g) caster sugar
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon of chilled water
Pinch of salt

Method:

Sift the flour and the salt into a bowl and rub in the butter. Mix the water with the egg yolk and add to the flour and butter mixture. Mix to a firm dough. It helps to wrap the pastry in cling film and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes. Roll out and cut circles of pastry to line a cake tin

Ingredients for the filling:

Use apricot or raspberry jam to line the pastry cases
1 teacup of caster sugar
2oz (50g) of ground almonds
1oz (25g) of ground rice
1 beaten egg
1 tablespoon of water

Method:

Mix the sugar, the almonds and the rice with the beaten egg and the water and spoon into the pastry cases then sprinkle with a little of the caster sugar and bake in the oven at 375-400°F (190-200° C) for 15-20 minutes.

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“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

Winter reminiscences

After being housebound for some weeks, I am now venturing out on short walks and will meet someone who, as soon as he or she is in speaking distance, will observe “Aye, you’re oot for a walk”. Now we are back up North one of the great things staying in the country among your ain folk and talking in your ain tongue is the comforting familiarity of rural ritual which comes so naturally to anyone born and brought up in the north-east.

The garden outside the patio window has also provided much joy, watching the birds enjoying the

berries during the recent cold spell. Even though the snow flakes have been falling fast and furious there is enough coverage amongst the trees and shrubs to give them some respite from the cold. Though all the holly and cotoneaster berries have now gone we hope that the thrushes and blackbirds will continue to visit – certainly the blackbirds will as our garden seems to be a blackbird’s paradise. However, they can be bully boys and they give the robin and the sparrows a tough time. A few days ago we even had a brief visit from the timid fieldfare.

As it has become milder the spring flowers are now putting in an appearance. The snowdrops’ faces betray no gloom – what a joy they are to behold. Our snowdrops are well-travelled: they originally came from my husband’s family garden near Huntly, went to southern and south-west England and to a friend’s garden in central France. Our daughter in Eastbourne now has a clump – doing well! And now they are back north, this time in Portknockie. The crocuses too are showing colour and the brave polyanthus have been flowering all winter – though some are looking rather bedraggled.

The tête a tête daffodils are pushing upwards and will soon be providing a yellow mass of colour at the front of No 1. Look out for the “yellow daisies” which have had a very tough time but enough should have survived to give a good show from early summer onwards. Spring is just round the corner!!

Thanks for the best wishes from the K’nocker in the last issue. I look forward to hearing the reassuring words when I am out on my short walks – “Aye, you’re oot for a walk”. Then I know I am back among my ain folk.

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POETS’ CORNER: From the Davie Mair Collection, two poems by John Innes, Fisherman.

A Happy New Year

A Happy New Year to one and all
Whether your purse is great or small;
There’s a greater blessing flowing free
Around us like a boundless sea.

Years will come and years will go
With all their changes here below;
But when the storms of life are o’er,
Inhuman war shall be no more.

What are riches alone after all
When the pale messenger gives the call;
If we have not the greater riches in view,
What will it profit me or you?

The thirst for revelry in our day
Is carrying millions very far away,
Like the Prodigal Son who left his home,
Then looked for friends, but there was none.

The Gospel seems an idle tale,
As love for pleasure doth prevail;
None can blindfold their eyes to see
The racing on towards the lee.

Read what the nations came to before
Who defied the laws of God in days of yore;
Let us take a warning, one and all,
For the Kingdom of darkness is sure to fall.

My Good Pilot

When it’s dark I canna’ see,
I need the Pilot then with me;
He knows every stepping stone
And leads me safely to my home.

He’s a very intelligent young man
Nane o’ yer ignorant hooligan clan
That knows nothing but what the spoon puts in
In this age of the greatest sin.

There’s pubs and theatres and picture shows
Leading this generation to endless woes;
Give them money – they don’t care
For the blindfolded not a hair.

But my Pilot does not go that way;
His kindness shows every day,
Which makes life worth the living –
The only way to reach Heaven.

It’s just a little rhyme, you see,
To show how good the Pilot is to me
That’s how I have composed these lines
To cheer us in these perilous times.

Don’t we need a Pilot then today
When humanity has gone so far astray?
They neither care for God nor man,

But their doom will let them know they're wrang.

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paid up subscribing member.

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Remember you can always advise relatives and
friends to download a copy from Neil Hedley & John
Smith's village website at:
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John Myles: Findlater Avenue and King Edward Ter.

Morag Reid: Admiralty Street and Seafield Terrace.

Karin & John Rose: High Street and Station Road.

Margret Wood: Firthview, Westfield Drive and
Station Court.

Isobel Worrel: Seafield Street.

Grateful thanks to Sandra and her colleagues in the
Chemist Shop who sell single copies to visitors and
those who do take out the annual subscription.

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WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT?

Portknockie Seniors' Group: the Scotch Night on
January 20th was very well attended. The staff of the
Victoria Hotel presented a very traditional and tasty
haggis meal at which Mary Reid slashed the "Great
Chieftain o' the puddin' race" and recited the Selkirk
Grace. After the meal everyone joined in with the
popular songs presented by the Merry Minstrels.
There was an unfortunate ending to the February
meeting when one of the "Gan-a-boot Fowl" fell
from the stage during the second half of the group's
programme. John Sanderson was knocked out and
suffered a fractured shoulder. The dramatic accident
stunned the audience and there was great relief when
the unfortunate entertainer finally regained full
consciousness. Mary Reid later sent a get better soon
card on behalf of the Seniors' Group and it was learnt
that John had left the hospital well-strapped up. The
programme for the rest of the season includes on
March 17th the Ythan Fiddlers; on April 21st the AGM
and Donnachaidh. All these meetings start at 7pm.
The Morning Tea will be held on Tuesday 26th May
and the Annual Bus Run will take place on the 9th
June.

**Portknockie Harbour News - HD Reid, Harbour
master:** The time is fast approaching when it will be
full steam ahead to get the boats back into the water.
Crane in day is set for the 10th April if all goes well.
Some of the boats have been working during the calm

spells and a few yachts in other harbours have been enjoying good sailing.

There was a Harbour Advisory meeting held in the McBoyle Hall in February which was well-attended to discuss matters about the three local harbours. One of the main issues was the habit of young swimmers diving into the water when boats are entering or leaving the harbour. This happens at all the Moray harbours, even in Buckie. I heard that a lad had actually crash-landed on a boat while it was leaving Cullen harbour last year. Will it take someone to be seriously injured before they realize that this is a very dangerous thing to do? Boats are not like cars which can stop quickly by braking. **Editor:** Perhaps local parents should ensure that they warn their children about these dangers before they allow them to swim unattended in our harbour this summer.

I remind persons fishing on the piers that they should remove their fishing lines whenever boats are leaving or entering the harbour particularly if their lines are in positions near the navigation channel. Some damage to the guttering around the toilet block has occurred during the winter months. It has been reported to Moray Council and an order for it to be repaired has been served. The waiting list for berths is still as long as ever. A couple of boats have been sold at the end of last season so there will be some new ones to welcome this season. Here is hoping for good weather during the coming summer season.

Portknockie Nursery: We have appointed a new member of staff, Sheena-Kay Smith, who started work in the nursery at the beginning of January. We are busy fundraising for new resources in the nursery. We will be holding a coffee morning on Saturday 18th April in the Seafield Hall. The children will be taking part in a sponsored obstacle course on Monday 9th March wearing their pyjamas.

This term we celebrated Burns' Day in the nursery with a Burns' Supper during the session. Chinese New Year then followed with a week of celebrations in nursery. The children made Valentine's biscuits which were sold to the parents.

There are spaces available in our 2-3 group which runs on Monday and Wednesday afternoon from 12.30 to 2.30 at £4.50 per session. If interested please contact Margaret on 841825

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Bowling Club Notes: The winter season is going past very quickly. At the time of writing we have only one league game (against Findochty) still to play, and while we are not top of the table, overall our league results have been quite good this winter.

As usual, members have been out and about taking part in various competitions in the local area. A special mention must be made of Linda Wood and Wilson Weir who captured the silverware in both the Cullen Open Pairs and Cullen Mixed Pairs events: a great achievement considering this is the second year running that Linda and Wilson have done this. One day we may even need to extend the display case.

In January we again held an enjoyable Sixties Night in the McBoyle Hall. This is our major fundraiser for the year and the Club is most grateful for the support from all who helped in any way to make this evening such a success.

Indoors we will continue in the McBoyle Hall (generally on Monday and Thursday each week at 6.30pm) until around mid-April. Old and new members, or indeed anyone just wishing to try the game out, will be most welcome – slippers will do fine and there are always spare bowls available. As the grass will be thinking of starting to grow soon, preparatory work will shortly start on preparing the green – all going to plan this will open late April and we look forward to another successful outdoor season.

Neighbourhood Watch is simply looking out for one another – all for one and one for all. In a close-knit village like Portknockie many residents do that as a matter of course. Recently the third of the combined Community Council/Grampian Police/Neighbourhood Watch circulars was distributed, which resulted in a number of requests to join. If you would like to join (no charge) or simply find out more information about the scheme please phone the Co-ordinator, John Myles on 840000.

The Police non-emergency calls remains at **0845 600 5 700** but, as an alternative, the Control Centre can be

accessed at servicecentre@grampian.pnn.police.uk

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Library News: The Library is still in Park Street so I look forward to you all popping in and seeing our new stock in hardback, paperback and Large Print; talking books in cassette or CD form are available to borrow for 50p per month; order a new title for 60p which usually takes a couple of weeks to come. Those who visit other libraries in Moray can return their books at Portknockie Library and vice versa you can return books loaned from Portknockie to any Moray library.

The Jacqueline Wilson Challenge was on over the Xmas period until the 31st January 2009 – Kristy, Shannon, Ellie and Joy all managed the challenge and will receive their Certificates shortly.

Fishing News: The poor weather and rising costs, so far this year, are seeing many of our boats landing in Lerwick, Shetland to conserve fuel and to be nearer the fishing grounds. Rules and regulations are getting more complex by the day. Good fishing to you all.

The New Minister's Service of Induction is provisionally set for April 3rd in Rathven Parish Church followed by a social in the hall of the Buckie North Parish Church.

Portknockie Thursday Club: Due to a lack of members Portknockie Toddler Group has now been changed from Thursday mornings to Thursday afternoons between 1 -2.30pm at the McBoyle Hall. The group has been re-named the "Thursday Club".

It is hoped that this different time will attract more members who could not attend in the mornings. All parents, grandparents and carers with children aged up to 4 years are invited to come along for a cup of tea and a chat at the new time while the toddlers have fun playing with our collection of large toys. Please support your Thursday Club; we are really hoping that this change will be a great success for our community.

To obtain more information about what is being offered by this group, please contact Emma Walker on 842736 or Joanne Wood on 842895.

Falconer Simpson Trophy boosts RNLI Funds:

Buckie RNLI funds recently benefited from a contribution of £300 raised through the holding of the Falconer Simpson darts competition in the Seafield Inn on 28th December last. The bulk of the cash was raised by a £5 entry fee to the competition and the raffle of two bottles of spirits donated by the Seafield Inn. A very generous donation by skippers of local fishing boats rounded the total up to a fine £300, receipt of which was acknowledged by the Buckie Branch of the RNLI on 22nd February 2009. The Trophy was won by Eck Smith and the runner-up was Ivor Simpson.

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The Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group is holding a Coffee Morning in the Seafield Hall on **Saturday 4th April** 10-12 noon. The Club members will be displaying a selection of the material that they have illustrating the olden times and the tales of your ancestors in Portknockie.

Seafield WRI: In December our members went to Christies of Fochabers for our Christmas Lunch where they enjoyed a lovely meal followed by a raffle. There was plenty of time to browse around to do some Christmas shopping before returning home.

In January our President, Margaret Greig welcomed visitors from the Hilton and Deskford institutes. We were given a wonderful evening of entertainment by Madeline and Alex Green and the Local Vocals. The ladies of the Local Vocals sing in beautiful harmonies and sang music from nursery rhymes to mill weaver songs. Madeline and Alex treated us to the accordion and the tin whistle and gave us lots of songs to sing along with. A lovely spread of sandwiches, pancakes and home-bakes for visitors, entertainers and members was then enjoyed by all.

February saw members gathered at the Golf Club in Cullen for Seafield WRI's 79th Annual Dinner. A lovely meal was provided and this was followed by raffles and a Quiz.

In March we look forward to hearing John Crawford (nephew of Bessie Mair) giving a presentation of his work following the Lockerbie Disaster. The monthly competition will be 4 pieces of tray bake.

The April meeting will see us welcoming Olwen Christie, giving a talk on Complimentary Therapies. The competition will be Bulbs in a Pot/Container.

Portknockie Primary School Newsletter

February was an interesting month with closures brought about by snow and a related problem with our heating system. We do hope we won't have to go through such disruption again.

Token Collecting

We have a few token/voucher collecting initiatives going on at the moment. Any support from the community in collecting tokens is most welcome. Tokens may be handed in at the school office or given to children to take to school.

- **Times/Sunday Times Books for Schools:** tokens are printed in The Times every day, and in the Sunday Times, and we can exchange these for children's books.
- **Tesco Vouchers:** vouchers will be in Tesco stores from 2nd March until 7th June. We can use our vouchers to select from a huge range of goods, and the number we manage to collect will really make a difference.
- **Nestle Box Tops for Books:** these are available on cereal packets and will be exchanged for books. The closing date is **31 March**.

Thank you for your support with this.

Fundraising Bags for Schools

We are once again looking for old clothes to help us raise funds through the *Bags for Schools* scheme. If you are intending to have a clear out, please send your items of clothing to school in

bin bags between now and the end of this term and we will store them until they are collected.

Midge's Vinyl Night

The Parent Council has organised a "Vinyl" Night for Saturday 14 March at the McBoyle Hall. As this is a licensed event, it is strictly for 18s and over. Bar proceeds will be split with the Community Association. Donations are requested for the raffle, please – either a bottle or something wrapped. These may be dropped off at school or brought along on the evening. Tickets are £5 each and sandwiches are included in the price.

Contact members of the Parent Council or the school to secure your entry to what is a one-off, never-to-be repeated blast-from-the-past event!



Many thanks to Nigel Middleton for offering his services and his "vinyls" for this fundraising event for the school.

Please Can You Help?

We are planning to get the children involved in some fundraising at our school fete, which is on Saturday, 23 May. We hope to grow some plants to sell so we will be looking for supplies of yoghurt pots or any other containers suitable for growing seedlings. If you have any seeds or compost you'd like to donate, those would also be very welcome.

P3/4 Fundraising

P3/4 children have embarked on an enterprise venture which will result in an improvement to the school playground. They are raising money to buy a seat to make a quiet sitting area in a sunny (sometimes!), sheltered part of the playground.

The children have been baking healthy fruit muffins and making mini pizzas and selling those at playtime.

Coming Events Scots Verse Competition

The children have been preparing Scots poems for a Scots Verse Competition which we are holding on Wednesday, 18 March at 2 pm.

Winners of class heats will recite their poems for the competition, and there will also be some musical performances as well as some refreshments. Parents and friends of the school are warmly invited.

Homecoming Art Project

The school is to be involved in an exciting community art project as part of this year's Homecoming project. Local artist and project leader, Geoff Roberts, will be working very closely with the children in the production of a large scale mosaic which will be a permanent feature near the harbour. Geoff has been in school talking to the children about the project. He brought with him a paper fish the same size as it will appear in the mosaic so that the children have some idea of the scale of the finished art work. He also explained the processes involved in making the mosaic hands which will be the children's contribution to the work (the hands will represent the scales of the fish). Geoff has also been working with the children on paper mosaics in preparation for working with tiles. We are looking forward to having Geoff visit the school from time to time during the project as our "artist in residence." The children will be able to see him at work at various stages in the project, and will have the opportunity to talk to him and ask questions about his work.

Scottish Opera

The P7 children have started work on a P7 transition project involving all the schools in the Buckie area. The children are working on songs which will culminate in a performance of *The Sands of Time* at Millbank Primary on 26 May. Singers from Scottish Opera will work with the children to help them polish their final performance. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to join with P7 children at Cullen Primary to work on the songs during their music time.

StART Art Project

We have been given the opportunity to take part in an art project which involves the P3/4 children visiting Brodie Castle to look at some of the art work there. An artist will then work with the class at school to help the children create their own art works in clay. Next term P5/6/7 will visit

the Moray Arts Centre in Findhorn to work with an art curator and the children will be given the job of preparing the P3/4 art works for exhibition at the Arts Centre and at school.

Cross Country

Children from P4-7 have been training hard in preparation for the Active Primary Schools Cross Country Competition in Elgin on 26 March. Mrs Woolgar, Mr Custodio and Mrs Donaldson have been taking the children out on runs during Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes so everyone should be really fit by the time the event comes around.

Dance

The P4/5 children have been receiving tuition in dance every week this term, working towards a performance for families and friends at the Buckie Primary Schools' Dance Festival in the Fisherman's Hall on the evening of Tuesday 24 March.

Past Events

"Wolfie" Project

The P3/4 children have been taking part in the "Wolfie" project with woodwind instructor, Mr Bob Garrety. The project, which ran over a six week period, gave the children an introduction to instruments of the orchestra and classical music through the music and story, *Peter and the Wolf*.

Grow Your Own Potatoes

P1/2 children have been given a potato growing kit by the Potato Council. Portsoy farmer, Mr Charles Grey, visited the class and talked about planting the seed potatoes. The children weighed the seed potatoes, and when harvest time comes they will weigh the potatoes they have produced and possibly enter their results in a competition.

Falconry Centre Visit

Mr John Barrie of the Falconry Centre near Huntly visited all three classes earlier this term, bringing with him three different owls as well as a falcon. This is what some of the P5/6/7 children wrote in their thank you letters to Mr Barrie:

Caleb:"I felt very lucky when I got to hold the big owl. I was surprised to learn that owls can live

inside buildings and that the barn owl makes a hissing noise.”

Shannon: “My favourite part of the lesson was when the eagle owl stretched out his long and beautiful wings. I especially like the part when I got to hold the white barn owl.”

Weronika: “When you came I was very interested because I didn’t know that much about owls and when you took out that big bird I was scared because I have never seen a big bird like that!”

Dean: “I liked seeing them because I like animals. I learned that the biggest kind of owl is an eagle owl and owls make different sounds.”

Rotary Club Quiz

Kirsty Simpson, Eleanor Winteringham, Marcus Cowie and Kieran Rough recently participated in the Rotary Club’s annual quiz at Buckie High School. The children represented the school well in a quiz which covered a wide range of general knowledge topics, from pop music to science to sport.

Coming Events

- Moray Science Festival, Moray College – P5/6/7, Wednesday, 11 March.
- Midge’s Vinyl Night – Saturday, 14 March.
- StART project, visit to Brodie Castle – P3/4, Monday, 16 March.
- P1 and P7 dental inspections – Tuesday, 17 March.
- Active Schools Dance Festival – P4/5, Fisherman’s Hall, Tuesday, 24 March, 6-8 pm.
- Active Schools Cross Country Competition, Elgin – P4-7 cross-country runners, Thursday, 26 March.
- P6/7 Children’s Library Book Quiz, team of four – date to be arranged.
- Ready Steady Bike – P2/3, postponed from term one, four Mondays starting 20 April, 9.15-10.15 am.
- P7 visit to Buckie High School Library to hear from writer Catherine McPhail – Thursday 23 April, 10-11.30 am.
- Sponsored Litter Pick-Up – whole school, Friday 1 May.

- Choices for Life, Aberdeen – P7 children, Wednesday 13 May.
- School Fete – Saturday, 23 May.
- Scottish Opera production, Sands of Time, - P7 children, Tuesday 26 May

Term and In-service Dates

Spring Term ends Friday, 27 March.
Summer Term starts Monday 13 April.
May Day holiday: Monday 4 May.
In-service closures: Thursday 21, Friday 22 May and Monday 22 June.

Kind regards
Shona Idle,
Head teacher.

