

Geoff has put your hands together - all will be revealed on Saturday 27th June.

Villagers and visitors are invited to gather on Patrol Road overlooking the Hythie for **2.00pm** on Saturday 27th June when Mrs Shona Idle, our school Head Teacher, will unveil the Portknockie Homecoming 2009 Mosaic. This is the outcome of four months of intense work by local artist, Geoff Roberts, and many of our residents to create Portknockie's first major piece of permanent, public art.

The idea to commission a piece of art to commemorate the Year of the Homecoming Scotland 2009 was first raised in this paper last autumn. It has proved to be a project that caught the imagination of the community. People have been so helpful and many have got involved in the project in a practical sense, indeed a part of many of you forms much of the Mosaic. The design is inspired by the past and present stories of the village and the themes of the Homecoming and the blend of images portrayed in the finished mosaic is set out deliberately to challenge and make the viewer think. The final design of the Mosaic was discussed in school with the children and the end result reflects many of their ideas. This has been a special community-embracing collaboration and our Mosaic will create a splendid added attraction to the Moray coastline.

Villagers and friends of Portknockie have been very generous in funding the project and considerable encouragement came from awards gained from the Arts Council for Moray and the Homecoming Community Grant (Moray Council and EU Leader fund)

OUR FIRST HOMECOMING 2009 EVENT, A FINE TRIBUTE TO THE BARD AND TO PORTKNOCKIE

Saturday 16th May brought the pipes, haggis, whisky, kilts, the lassies and Ae Fond Kiss to 100 of the village gathered in the McBoyle Hall to celebrate our first Homecoming 2009 activity, a Burns' Supper. The evening was a huge success thanks to the hard work and attention to detail of the organising team drawn from the Community Council and Community Association members. The Selkirk Grace was given by Martin Miller then Shirley McLean paraded the Haggis to Jim Cowie who slashed it fiercely in his Address. The Bill o' Fare, traditional and tasty, was arranged by the Victoria Hotel and very ably served by a team of 10 comely lassies.

There followed an interlude of Burns' songs led by

Frank Reynolds accompanied by the lovely voice of Maddie Green before the main speeches from the guests: Moray Council Convener, George McIntyre, local MSP, Richard Lochhead, local Councillors, Ron Shepherd (compere) and Gary Coull and Jim Pirrie from Findochty.

During his opening remarks on the meaning of the Homecoming 2009, the Convener praised Portknockie for its many community initiatives and Richard Lochhead paid special tribute to the friendliness of the village in his Address to The Immortal Memory. Gary Coull brought the house down with his amusing take on the lady members of the Community Council in his Toast to the Lassies to which Pearl Murray gave a spirited response before, in a darkened hall, Jim Pirrie performed Burns' poem, "Holy Willy's Prayer" with dramatic expression.

The Hall was then re-arranged for the lively music sets of the Strathspey Fiddlers which soon had folk taking to the floor for somewhat crowded Scottish dancing. Two of the younger Fiddlers sang a beautiful version of "Ae Fond Kiss" and, during a break in the Group's performance, Frank Reynolds popped up, in surprise dress, to render his new "Tale of Big Shaggie McGrew's Home Visit". The evening was rounded up with Frank, Jackie Kirkwood and Maddie singing "Aye Afloat", the Portknockie anthem with an accompaniment by Alec Green on his tin whistle.

Formal Burns' Suppers have not been held in Portknockie for many years but this one was a great success thanks to the excellent organisation by the Community Council and the enthusiasm showed by the guests, the entertainers, the servers and those who bought all the tickets to make the evening a sell out.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Paddling pool shiny, new and blue again. At the end of April two Moray Council workers cleaned and re-painted the village paddling pool in the harbour. This annual spring clean is much appreciated and adds sparkle and colour to our harbour view.

<p style="text-align: center;">Kut 'n' Kurl of Portknockie 840366 Kerry, Susan, Claire & Joanne</p>

Remarkable local weather: Very little rain fell over the Moray Firth area this spring and Portknockie enjoyed a good number of clear blue sky days. The spring flower display in the village this year was long-lasting and very colourful, particularly the rich variety of Daffodils we have planted in so many places such as in the Old Railway Cutting. However, the dominant colour was yellow what with the gorse, the broom and the oilseed rape all in riotous flower. The Long-range weather forecast issued by the Met Office on May 1st suggested the chances are better than 50% that temperatures will be above average this summer. Forecasters studying the global picture of sea temperatures are confident that we should not be heading for a third successive wet and cool summer.

Look out for local resident Mel Brown making the news again this summer. Last year Mel, who stays at 16 Park Street, raised £6 000 for two charities - "The Oaks" Palliative Care Centre in Elgin and MacMillan Cancer Support by completing a well-sponsored skydive over St Andrews on April 19th 2008. This year, at the age of 65, he is planning a series of extreme bungee jumps in June for the same two charities. On the 20th June he will be attempting four physical challenges in Sheffield, on the 21st he will jump from the UK's highest bungee jump (300ft) at the Bray Watersports Centre and on the 27th June he plans to dive forwards and backwards from the only official bridge jump in the UK, Middlesborough Transporter Bridge. His inspiration for this daredevil activity is his late wife, Doris who died from cancer two years ago. His sponsorship forms are in all the pubs and shops locally and he will be very grateful for the support of the community in raising funds for the two cancer charities. He meets all his costs himself so that all the money raised goes directly to the good cause. He can be contacted face at home or on 841223 and e-mail melvyn.brown@tiscali.co.uk

Margaret Zadworny, compiler of the Portknockie Scottish Dances books has sent to Catherine Ritchie another royalties' cheque to be spent for the benefit of the village. £250 of it has gone to the School to help purchase more reading books and £50 has been given to Shirley and Mambo McLean towards the upkeep of the Slater Crescent circle. Margaret was brought up in the McLean's house (No 3) before moving to live in Canada and the circle still retains a special place in her heart. These royalties from the sale of the popular books has now reached £750; many thanks Margaret from all in Portknockie.

Portknockie Mosaic Workshops were held in the McBoyle Hall on Saturday 21st March and Saturday 25th April and in the Victoria Hotel on Wednesday

22nd April. Villagers young and old came along to create a mosaic copy of their handprint from pieces of coloured tile to be used by Geoff Roberts to create the design of the finished artwork. This input means that around 10% of adults from the village and most of the children at the school have had a hand in the making of the Portknockie Homecoming 2009 Mosaic. The workshop experiences were fun events, they provided opportunities to discuss the overall design and the imagery of the Mosaic and they demonstrated to folk what a task the artist was undertaking in creating this 5m x 2m commemorative work.

When the Mosaic is in its permanent place on the Back Road banking beneath Rock House many of the village will be able to claim: "A part of me is in the first piece of public artwork especially commissioned for Portknockie, I have a stake in it, a significant memory for me to recall throughout my life!" How many people can make such a claim? The experience of sharing in the process of creating the artwork may it is hoped, stimulate a demand for community-based courses in the arts or, perhaps, the formation of a local arts group.

Local Rape crop upsets some. After years of set aside on the fields adjoining the village the crop of 2009 is most clearly Oilseed Rape. The bright yellow fields present a colourful aspect but the crop has brought forth a number of local complaints that it is responsible for ill-health, particularly respiratory problems, amongst residents. The evidence for and against the crop does seem to be, however, somewhat ambiguous What do you think?

The National Union of Farmers claims that Rape provides a valuable return (£800 million) for the economy, the bye-product (cooking oil) is healthy for the nation and it is also very helpful towards our bee population, currently in decline. The Union also points out that if Rape was so bad for health then farmers would be the first to suffer and this is not the case. The Medical Research Council has refuted claims that Rape causes widespread ill-health to the population and it seems odd that in countries such as Denmark, France and Germany growing Rape does not seem to arouse the same criticism that it does in the UK.

Here in Portknockie a number of complaints have been aired about the crop causing hay-fever symptoms and such breathing distress that people cannot even bare to be outside their houses while the Rape is in bloom. One resident has even contacted the Council to check whether it is legal for this crop to be grown in such close proximity to residential housing.

Should farmers be advised not to plant Rape too close to residential areas? Somewhat difficult to achieve in countryside areas where arable fields border housing.

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WORLD-WIDE WEB LINKS:

Les Calderwood from the Western Cape, South Africa has posted a message on the Portknockie website saying how much he enjoyed his recent three year stay in Cliff Terrace. He recalls the beautiful sunsets over the Moray Firth, the mountainous waves and the dolphins. He also describes the K'nocker as a good read and he praises Alan Runcie's photography as stunning. Any friends can contact him at ce-tech@telkomsa.net

Charlie Slater has e-mailed Harry Hawkes with one of his fishing poems and gets nostalgic about the Doric:

"Weelmie the Fisherman"

Dressed in Faroe Ganzie an' moleskin breeks
Weelmie stans at the heid o' the creeks.
Then back and fore he tak's a stroll
Chawin a chunk o' Bogy Roll.

He thinks, 'Am nae ready tae gie up the sea,
Cause aifter a' I'm only sixty three.
I think I'll buy a boatie that's engine driven,
Go oot catchen mackerel tae mak a livin'.

So hame he races tae the wife Jeanie Ann
Tae tell her o' his future plan.
Jeanie thinks it's a great idea -
'If he's oot among my feet I'll be a lot free-r.'

Next, Weelmie buys the Fishen News;
'Boats for sale' is fit he views.
He gits a shock at the prices they'r askin'.
Thinks: I'll hae tae scrounge for bawbies doon the
"Faskin"

Weelmie got upset and startet ravin
Till Jeanie said, 'calm doon 'cos I've been savin'.
Fae eneath the bed she pulled en auld tin

Wi' bundles o' powin notes stappet within.

'Good God,' cried Weelmie. 'why wissin't thes bankit?

We hidna a hoose fire, the guide Lord be thankit!
Jeanie said. 'Weelmie, y'ed better relax.

If a hidna deen thes ye wid hive lost it in tax.'

The boatie wis bocht an' seen brocht hame
And Weelmie asked Jeanie tae gie it a name.
'Ha Ha!' said Weelmie. 'That's nae surprise!
Imagine ca'en a fishen boatie "The Excise".'

"The programme, The Peterhead Trawlers, is now showing here on our Canberra TV and locals (fellow bowlers) are bombarding me for translations. They cannot believe how NE fishermen are so game to go out to sea in such horrendous weather – of course, I just throw out my chest and say 'We are MEN' and it is just an everyday way of life and what we were all brought up to do.

They are also astounded by the fact that we were taught navigation and seamanship at the Portknockie Junior Secondary School back in 1945 (I can still name every point of the compass and even do quite a bit of morse code and semaphore). So this gets me thinking "Nostalgia" when I sit down to this keyboard and rattle off the Doric, so please excuse and patronize! Charlie (S***O__S***)."

David Pirie has written in from Aberdeen to claim the prize for spotting the error on page 1 of the Easter issue of The K'nocker. He points out that in the Twa Silver Darlings story the lane leading down from Patrol Road to the Harbour Garage is the Back Road not the Horse Road. The main road to the harbour is the Horse Road and he goes on to recall that during the 1930's it was always very busy. "The steam drifters had to be serviced before and after the fishings. There were plenty of local contractors to do this. Johnie Falconer had three lorries, two Commers and the famous Vulcan. This was a small, wooden lorry which had solid tyres and no glass on the side of the cab and did a power of work. The garage was at the Creeks where the Gospel Hall stands now; it was destroyed by fire around 1938.

Bob Wood had two Bedfords. He drove one and his brother, Henry drove the other one. Bob had a coal store doon the brae where he kept a "cattle float" which hung from a frame; the lorries reversed under it and it was lowered by pulleys. The holiday home next to where the Barometer was housed was a garage cum workshop where Henry maintained his lorries. Every time I see gymnastics on the TV I am reminded

of the rings that hung from the roof of that garage and from which the young lads used to try their skills.

Willie Dyce had a Dodge lorry and a tipper and he had owned a steam wagon before my time. When the boats were away, delivering coal kept all these vehicles busy. An easy way for youngsters to get up the Brae was to have a "hangie on". This was a very dangerous thing to do – the bairns would wait at the bottom of the Brae and make a dash to cling to the back and sides of a lorry as it passed by. It amazes me why there was nobody killed as some lads clung just inches from the wheels of the lorry.

The Ripper boaties landed their fish around 2pm each day and it was a mad rush to get the haul cleaned and boxed in ice to catch the 4pm fish train. It was always a horse and cart for this job and the poor horse had to hurry with a good load on uphill all the way to the station."

NEW PEOPLE TO MEET AND GREET:

Welcome to Grace and Aidan Smith who have moved into 8 Bridge Street from Kemnay and to Ray and Marian Stringer, the new owners of "Mizpah", Seafield Terrace who have moved here from Plymouth to be nearer their daughter, son-in-law and grand daughters in Fyvie.

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HOLIDAY HOME FEEDBACK: It would be interesting to capture some of the experience of people staying in Portknockie's various holiday homes and B&Bs during the 2009 season. Typical of the feedback your Editor has come across were these comments from a Yorkshire Dales couple staying in 7 Blantyre Place in April: "This was our first visit to the Moray area. It is such a lovely and quiet place and in just a week it has become something of a spiritual home for us. The local people were all so friendly and the weather was just wonderful."

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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 Burn's 250th Commemorative evening on 16th May was a sell out with speeches, haggis, pipers and music and dancing. The event realised some £1 100 which has been put towards the sum being raised to pay the costs of the Portknockie Mosaic.

The attention of elected Moray councillors has been drawn to the potholes along Seafield Terrace, the poor condition of the surface of the "Hill" coastal path towards the cemetery, the unfinished state of Aggie Munro's house in Bridge Street and the situation of Council properties in Portknockie which are not being occupied by their allotted tenant.

The PCC remains committed to the 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. Further concerns have been registered at 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. The latter has been delayed by Council concerns about the plans and the need to ensure that European funding earmarked for upgrading the facilities in the new library was in place and available. The latest news is that the Council hope to make the move of the Library into the school during the current financial year. The Community Council intend to monitor this situation very closely. Once the move has taken place the present Library building in Park Street will be sold by The Moray Council.

In April Sergeant McCullie reported that there had been complaints of under-age drinking in the school grounds. The police are monitoring this situation and

carrying out regular patrols of the harbour. Several of the Community Councillors reported examples of the petty vandalism currently upsetting some villagers.

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.

March 3rd was the official launch date for the Portknockie Homecoming 2009 Mosaic project. The artist, Geoff Roberts, local Councillors, members of the local community and children from the school gathered for a press launch on the Back Road by the banking beyond Rock House where the Mosaic will be sited. Geoff explained that both the school and the local community would be playing a big part in the creation of the Mosaic.

There followed a number of sessions in the school which allowed the children to suggest imagery and text for incorporation in the artwork based on events from the heritage of the village and the Homecoming themes. As the Project developed the school had effectively an artist in residence for the children to experience the art of mosaic making.

Fund-raising was launched by The Community Association with raffles for a "Golden Hand" (a unique mosaic of the winner's hand created by the artist in 22ct gold) and the rare George Best £5 note generously offered by Terry at the Seafield Inn. Some of the village bought a tile for a pound and many of the local businesses have made donations either in cash or materials. Several applications were made for grants and £500 was awarded by the Arts Council of Moray and £1 000 presented by the Moray Homecoming Community Grant Fund. Seafield Estate paid £50 to cover the cost of removing the old brick electricity junction building on the site where the Mosaic is to go and Stuart Stevenson generously dug out the site with his JCB digger.

On 21st March and 25th April two family workshops were held in the McBoyle Hall between 1pm and 5pm. This yielded 8 hours of intense concentration as adults and children made over 100 mosaic handprints under Geoff Roberts' supervision. The handprints are symbolic of friendship across the seas and form the scales on the two fishes of the artwork. Geoff also

ran a special workshop in the Victoria Hotel which yielded a further 17 hands. The first fish was set out, cast and completed by the end of April.

Further fund raising contributions came from the Vinyl Night on March 14th (organised and shared with the School PTA Group), the Quiz Night on April 17th and the profits from the Burns' Supper arranged by the Community Council on May 16th. Surplus funds in the K'nocker Account built up over the past ten years were also added to boost the community total. The final fundraising for the Mosaic will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, the 27th June when a barbecue and sales tables will be set up in the harbour following the unveiling of the Portknockie Mosaic on the Back Road at 2pm.

On Friday 21st August it is proposed to hold a "Gathering in the Square" evening between 6-8pm with a barbecue, sales tables and homebakes followed by Bingo in the Seafield Inn. It has also been agreed to put on a Fireworks' Evening in the McLeod Park probably on Saturday 7th November. November 21st will be the special Astronomy Fun day in the village, at the McBoyle Hall, with tutored observations of the night sky provided by Moray Astronomical Society members. An idea gathering interest is to hold a 25th Birthday Party for the McBoyle Hall which was opened on the 16th November 1984. What form would such a Silver Anniversary event take and are there folk willing to help make the arrangements?

The maintenance of our village hall remains a major priority for the group. A project is being put together to replace the costly and ineffective heating system at the Hall. One idea being considered is to replace the inefficient immersion heating system for the hot water supply, which involves the wasteful heating of a large tank of hot water, with a more efficient instant heating arrangement that only uses power in the kitchen and toilets on demand. Space heating of the large hall is more problematic because of the high ceilings and the total lack of any insulation material in the McBoyle Hall. The way forward on this would involve putting in a false ceiling which should also bring improvements to the poor Hall acoustics but it would be costly to undertake. A further element to consider is the present pattern of usage of the Hall. For much of the year there are only two to three regular bookings a week and the fees paid by hall users in the winter months barely cover the real costs of space heating. Unfortunately, the occasional rather than regular use pattern of the Hall also works against seeking a hi-tech solution for the heating using such power sources as wind turbines and solar panels. It is hoped that a project can be set up that will reduce the

carbon imprint of the Hall while making it cosier and improving its acoustics.

Once again the Community Association has reluctantly withdrawn entry to this year's Moray Best-kept Village Competition and Beautiful Scotland because of the lack of volunteers willing to set out and maintain a Portknockie village in bloom display.

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THE SINKING OF THE FISHING BOAT "SICKLE", SATURDAY 22ND MARCH 1941 written up by John Crawford:

It was a Saturday but there would be no rest for the fishermen of Portknockie, they would be sailing out into the Moray Firth to augment their week's fishing. The fishing boat Sickle (BF353) prepared to leave the tiny harbour at Portknockie at first light on the spring morning of 22nd March 1941.

It was the second year of World War II; the U Boats of the Imperial German Navy had been engaged in the wholesale sinking of merchantmen carrying supplies from across the Atlantic to sustain the war effort in Great Britain and to stock the ever decreasing food supplies. Fishing boats were a target as they were used by the Admiralty in times of conflict. Many of them were engaged in war duties, sweeping for mines, tending submarine nets and acting as rescue boats. Owners were paid on average around £54 per month for their boats to be utilised by the Admiralty for the varied duties. The fisherman gave the country good service in this respect and indeed many won medals for gallantry, including a Victoria Cross awarded to Mr McIntosh of Buckie for his gallantry.

The crew prepared to leave harbour, the boat's skipper, John Alexander Sclater¹ (Slater)² (54) years busied himself in the tiny wheelhouse. His father John Bruce Sclater (Slater) had been a fisherman and

¹ GROS Birth Record Seafield/0033/1886 refers
² GROS Death Record Seafield/0007/1941 refers

boat carpenter and his mother from one of the many Mair families in Portknockie.

John Sclater (Slater) had married³ Margaret Wood on 4th December 1915 in the Gordon Arms Hotel in Elgin. The couple had celebrated their silver wedding just three months before. The marriage was blessed with the arrival of son John Bruce Sclater (Slater)⁴ in 1927; he was with his father as they prepared the boat for sea. John Jnr was still a single man and lived with the rest of the family at 8 Station Road, Portknockie. He was due to be married within a week or two. His fiancé Isabella Findlay, a Cullen girl was working on her last day in the Baker's at Cullen and was shutting up the shop when she heard the news,

John's younger brother William⁵ was also making preparation for leaving the comparative safety of the harbour. He was 47 years of age, married⁷ to Jessie McKay for almost twenty years. The couple lived with their family at 19 Church Street, Portknockie. They too had married in the Gordon Arms Hotel in Elgin, on 14th December 1921. He was the engineer on the boat and was probably tending to his engine deep inside the fishing boat.

The last member of the crew was co-owner and deck hand of the Sickle, Alexander Mair 'Brother'. He lived with his wife of thirty years, Helen, at Sunnydale, 2 Haig Street, Portknockie. John Alexander Slater had been best man at his wedding in December 1911. The house was opposite the school in Portknockie and backed onto the railway line. Their children had grown up and left home to marry and lived scattered throughout the country.

Helen Jane Mair was no stranger to tragedy. Her own father William Mair 'Shy' had perished at sea when he was lost over the side while fishing in the Zulu fishing boat BF317 Spider. He was according to witnesses onboard, lashed to the wheel and singing the hymn "In a little while we're going home". His body was never recovered. A man of 41 years of age, he lived at 8 Portknockie until his tragic loss at sea on the 28th May 1905. He left his wife Isabella Wood to carry on and bring up their young family on her own. She lived on until July 1940 almost a full year before the events that almost took her son-in-law.

The Sickle, a 36-foot Seine netter, sailed out of the tiny harbour, past the breakwater and headed for the

³ GROS Marriage Record Elgin/00140B/1915 refers
⁴ GROS Death Record Seafield/0008/1941 refers
⁵ GROS Birth record Seafield/0075/1893 refers
⁶ GROS Death Record Seafield/0006/1941 refers
⁷ In Elgin in 1921 - record to be obtained

fishing grounds. There was little wind but a heavy ground swell kept the boat moving in the seas. By all accounts they had a fair day at the fishing and were heading back in to harbour in the late afternoon around 16.45 hours. The light would still be good at that time in the late afternoon. The wind was still negligible but the heavy ground swell was still present. The tide was at half flood which gave the fishermen about 18 to 20 feet of water as they came in under the breakwater.

Alex Mair was later to give evidence to a court of inquiry that another boat had passed into the harbour without difficulty and the experienced fisherman did not expect the skipper to have any difficulty.

Nature took a hand and struck the small fishing boat with first one breaker which was weathered but the suction from the wave caused the boat to be pulled round broadside in the current. A second breaker struck the boat and despite John Sclater (Slater)'s efforts the boat was side on to the third and largest breaker coming in. It struck the stricken Sickle 'like a bomb', the boat reared in the air with 'her deck standing straight up' and then turned turtle. Alex Mair was thrown into the sea. The boat was stuck fast with the mast and wheelhouse on the bottom preventing the Sickle from moving back or forwards. A sudden impact ripped her free from the grip of the rocks and she was washed nearer the shore close to a large rock with Alex Mair clinging for dear life onto the bottom of the boat. He could see nothing of his fellow crew members. The boat crashed violently against the rock as a breaker smashed into the stricken craft. Another breaker smashed her with force into the rock. When the third breaker hit, Alex Mair was able to step easily onto the rock. He watched as a small boat left the safety of the harbour searching for the other crew members, he saw them pick one man from the sea. A man on shore, James Sclater (Slater), of 13 Victoria Place, Portknockie had swum out to the rock in the choppy sea and made Alex Mair fast to a lifebuoy and he was eventually hauled to safety and the shore.

When he arrived on shore he saw that William Sclater (Slater) had been the person dragged from the sea by the small boat. Despite their best efforts with artificial respiration he was dead. His brother John was recovered from the sea later that night at 7 p.m.

Another witness, John Wilson, 20 Pulteney Street, backed up most of what the sole survivor of the tragedy had said; he had been standing on the Braeheads overlooking the harbour when the Sickle made its final and fatal approach to harbour.

A full enquiry into the accident was held at the Sheriff Court in Banff where the sheriff returned a verdict of accidental drowning on the three men who were lost. He conveyed his deepest sympathies to the bereaved families and others who had been affected by the terrible tragedy.

Alex Mair lived on in Sunnyside until his death on 11th January 1965 but never forgot the tragedy; it was not the first time that he had tasted the nearness of death and mourned the death of his fellow fishermen. It is these oft repeated tales of the tragedies which affected our fishermen that remind us all of the dangers they face to bring home the food of the seas. They lived a life of confronting danger and sometimes death every day of their lives at sea. Sadly the fishing industry is not as it was, boats being laid up, the jobs scarce and the young males moving away to make a living elsewhere in the country. No matter how far they travel or how remote from the sea they live, they will always have a dash of salt water in their veins, the sons and daughters and kin of the men who braved all to bring home the harvest of the sea.

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

The Lavvy Chines

During my schooldays, spent entirely at Portknockie Junior Secondary, the school had outside toilets. They were in a row from the playground to the woodwork class with a large wall separating the girls from the boys. The boys' entrance was from the playground and the girls' entrance was next to the woodwork class. The toilets were flushed from an overhead cistern by pulling on the lavvy chine.

One evening when playing near the school I went into the toilets and unhooked all the lavvy chines from the plunger arm on each cistern.

The following morning at assembly Mr Moyes, our Headmaster, appealed for the return of the chines. Primary children who could not reach up to the plunger handle were having to use the inside staff toilet.

Next day, Mr Moyes again appealed for the return of the lavvy chines. He added that the person responsible would not be punished for disclosing where they were hidden. The following day I got up early and watched from my bay window for Peter Geddes, the Janitor coming along High Street on his way to school. I met him outside my home and told

him that I had removed the lavvy chines. Where were they hidden? I had dropped each lavvy chine into its cistern!

The Headmaster kept his word and I was not punished. **Editor:** How did your fellow pupils take this prank? Were they not put out a bit?

MORAY CITIZENS' PANEL:

The April Questionnaire, "The Safer Communities Survey" sought opinions and experience of crime and anti-social behaviour problems in one's local area, across Moray and in Scotland as a whole. One set of questions checked how safe one felt walking alone during the day and at night and traveling on public transport. There was an invitation to specify what kind of safety measures would be welcomed in one's local area and was there any awareness of the work carried out by Community Wardens in this respect? The possible safety initiatives included improved street lighting, road safety measures, home and fire safety initiatives, violence and anti-social behaviour initiatives, more community wardens, greater use of CCTV, anti-drug and alcohol campaigns, more facilities for teenagers/older children and more crime prevention information.

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One question on road and fire safety posed the inquiry "Have you seen or heard any fire safety messages in the past twelve months and have you made any changes to your home or lifestyle as a consequence of fire safety concerns?" The Survey ended with a section on discrimination and equality in Moray. The question was "Have you experienced any discrimination or harassment and do you detect any prejudice against minority groups in Moray?" The list for consideration comprised people from black and minority ethnic groups, people of religious faiths, people with disabilities, elderly people, women, young people, gay/lesbian/bisexual/ transgender people and people from elsewhere in Scotland or other parts of the UK. How do you rate Portknockie as a safe and welcoming community?

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

Baldy the Blackbird and Cutie the Mouse

I saw the most beautiful sight one Saturday morning in mid April. I was in the garden and I heard the honk of geese going over on their trip north and when I looked up there seemed to be at least two hundred. I quickly came in for my binoculars for a better look, as they were quite a way off. As I looked towards them and they came in to sight, I could see not only them but a huge, gorgeous moon as a backdrop to their formation. The sun was shining on this lovely morning so the moon couldn't be seen with the naked eye. I watched the geese until they were out of sight but try as I might I could not find that moon again!

Well, I think the geese have all now returned to their breeding grounds. The swallows and house martins are back with us though I hope there are more to come. Swifts should be here soon but they are somewhat later than the swallows and martins. Bird numbers of all sorts seem to be down. The latest is that the cuckoo numbers are down dramatically and could actually disappear in the next couple of decades. Also woodland birds such as the pied flycatcher and redstart are down in large numbers. It is possible that this is due to earlier warmer springs bringing caterpillars too early for these birds to feed their young on. I know our garden bird numbers have declined particularly sparrows and blackbirds. Our goldfinch numbers are down but we now have a lot of siskins on the niger feeders. I heard what was obviously fledglings making a demanding din for food and was so pleased to see a whole family of them being fed from the feeder. Hopefully the goldfinches will follow suit before long.

Also in the garden we have not seen the thrush since the last lot of really cold weather but we now have another character to make friends with. He is a blackbird with a totally bald head which gives him a very comical appearance. It does make me wonder what on earth could have happened to him. I don't think a cat could have got hold of him from the front so maybe he poked it somewhere that it wasn't wanted! It obviously doesn't put the girls off as he is collecting food to take away to his chicks.

Preparing dinner one evening I had some vegetable peelings for the compost and went up the garden to empty my crock in to the compost bin. Well! What a fright I got. As I lifted the lid something was scurrying around inside. I jumped, the contents of my crock went all ways and when I gingerly lifted the lid

again to see what was going on there was the cutest little wood mouse blinking back at me. It didn't seem to mind me peering at it and I went for Carl and it was still there before it disappeared via the top of the bin. It is often there, particularly in the evening and one night there were two of them snuggled in together quite at home. But then I suppose that their home is somewhere inside the warm compost!

The daffodils on the railway cutting are all but finished now but have been followed by swathes of bluebells and the odd red late tulip. Stitchwort is plentiful particularly towards the bridge at Cruats. I have noticed too that nearly all the saplings that were planted (and subsequently some were vandalised) have all come good and go from strength to strength. Even the damaged ones are bravely sprouting new leaders where they have been snapped. There is a beautiful Kilmarnock willow that Carl replanted a number of times after it was pushed over and even wrapped up the main trunk to repair it that seems to have recovered completely. We have been adding plants to the top of the bank and also planted wild flower seeds to try to attract butterflies but as yet none seem to have germinated. Maybe it has not been warm enough yet. As I write this today (16th May) it is only nine degrees. Apart from which it is blowin' a hooley and chucking it down with rain. Our runner beans are blown to bits and the lilac and laburnum flowers are like confetti in the wind. Roll on summer!!

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WHY DO THEY CALL IT THAT? compiled by Harry Hawkes.

The origin of names that people give to places is usually lost in the mists of time. Very often, the name is based on the local geography of the place but natural features can change over centuries, so that what was significant for a medieval crofter might not be so for a modern farmer.

Banffshire is rich in names that date back to ancient times when Celtic culture was dominant here and the Gaelic language gave names to places according to

the streams, hills, vegetation and customs of the area. Way back in the 1880s, a Buckie solicitor, John Macdonald, who was also a native Gaelic speaker, presented his explanations about local place-names to the Banffshire Field Club. Here are some of his thoughts on names in the Portknockie area, in his own words.

Portknockie *Port*, 'harbour' and *nocti*, 'exposed', 'jutting out' – *Portnocti*, 'the exposed, or out-jutting port'. [Presumably this refers to the way that the Green Castle juts out and shelters the harbour from seaward.]

Cruats near Portknockie, appears also to be of Gaelic origin. *Cro*, 'a fold or cave', and *Aite*, 'a place'. *Croait*, 'a place of caves'.

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Denside and **Arnbog** Not far from Cruats there are two small burns, called the Den and Arn, giving names to the two farms of Denside and Arnbog.

'Den' is a corruption of *De-an*, 'a small river'. *De* is an old Gaelic name, signifying 'a river or stream'.

Farskane is from an old Gaelic word *Fairc* or *Farsg*, which means 'the drift sea-weed on the shore' or 'in a creek', and *Ceann* is corrupted into 'Kane', 'the head'. 'Farskane' (*Farsg-ceann*) would therefore mean 'the point or headland above the sea-weed creek'.

Boar's Craig Below Farskane there is a large mass of conglomerate rock, called the Boar's Craig. This seems a corruption of *Bior Creag*, 'the high pointed rock'. The rock in question is not pointed now – it is rather massive and round, but climate might have altered its original appearance. There are other rocks on the Cullen shore, the "Three Kings", which, from their appearance, would exactly answer the description of *Bior Creags*.

Hill of Maud takes its name from *Mod*, which means 'a place of conference', or 'of a court of justice'. The seat of justice was, in olden times, placed upon a hill. This word is found in the English form of 'Mot' and 'Mut', as for instance, the Muthill in Aberdeenshire.

Findochty, popularly pronounced 'Finaichtie', is from the word *Fionn*, 'white', and *fhaiche* or *fhaichte*, 'a field', *Fionn-fhaichte*, 'the white field'. To this day

the name is applicable to the more prominent parts of the land there, as they look white from the presence of long dry and benty grass.

Bauds is from *bad*, 'a marked place' or 'a particular spot'.

Tronach rock, near Portknockie, is from *Stron*, 'a Nose'.

Sgeir-na-roan, at Portessie, which is pure Gaelic, is 'the rock of the seals'

The **Mucks** in Buckie Bay are derived from the Gaelic *Muc*, *Muc-mara*, 'a whale'. There are rocks in the Hebrides also called *Muc* or *Mucan* – *Sgeir-na-muc*, from the circumstances that, like the Buckie 'Mucks', they look, when nearly covered with high water, like so many whales following one after the other.

Arradoul, the old spelling of which was 'Airydoul', is derived from *Airidh*, 'a shieling', and *Sabhal*, 'a barn'. *Airidh-n-t Sabhal*, pronounced 'Arintoul', 'the shieling of the barn'. It must have been cultivated at an early date.

Letterfourie is derived from *Leiter*, 'a hillside', and *feoiridh*, 'grassy'. *Letter-feoiridh*, 'the grassy hillside'. 'Tillyfour' is from *Tulloch-feoir*, 'the knoll of the pasture'. The usual etymology given of 'fourie' and 'foul', is *fuair*, 'cold'. No doubt the words have a strong resemblance to each other but I find so little notice taken of climatic qualities in our ancient topography that I venture to prefer my own explanation. Why Letterfourie or Tillyfour should be marked out as cold above all other places, I entirely fail to see.

It should be noted that explanations of names can vary; and the origins are so far back in time that nobody can say whether one explanation is better than another. For example, Collins 'Dictionary of Scottish Place-Names' has a slightly different 'take' on **Portknockie**:

Port, 'harbour'; *cnoc*, 'rounded hill'; *-ie*, (diminutive) 'little' = 'the harbour by the little round hill';

and on **Findochty**

Fionn, 'fair, bright'; *dabhach*, 'land measure'; *taigh*, 'house' = 'house on the fair land measure'.

Explanations can sometimes be wildly different. John Macdonald suggests that the name '**Buckie**' is not Celtic but from ancient German contacts and is based on the expression *Der Bucht*, 'the bay' = 'the town on the bay'. Collins dictionary says it is of Celtic origin and suggests either *bocaidh*, 'whelk', or *bucaidh*, 'pimple'. You pays your money and you takes your choice.

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Aberdeen RI: 0845	4566000
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Gas leaks: (24 hrs) 0800	111999
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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
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Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Neighbourhood Watch (J.Myles)	840 000
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PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

Moray Council has issued a reminder about the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act of 2003. It is an offence under this Act if a dog defecates on any public open place and the person who is in charge of the dog at that time fails immediately to remove the faeces. Note this Act does not apply to agricultural land.

A fixed penalty can be issued by police officers as part of existing powers and by Community Wardens and Animal Services Officers authorised by The Moray Council where there is *clear intention* on the part of the offender to not remove the faeces. Any fixed Penalty Notices issued should be paid within 28 days to the Antisocial Behaviour Unit, The Moray Council, High Street Elgin IV30 1BX. At any point within the 28 day period the individual can give notice to the Antisocial Behaviour Unit requesting a hearing in respect of the offence.

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HAME COOKING by SWRI members:

Tomato & Lentil Soup (vegetarian)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of lentils
- 2 cups of boiling water
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped garlic
- 5 chopped fresh basil leaves or teaspoon of dried
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- 1 large chopped onion
- 1 cup of chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil

Method:

Soak the lentils in boiling water for one hour. Add the rest of the vegetables bring to the boil and simmer for two hours. Blend in the olive oil and serve. This

soup is suitable for freezing.

Caramel Dumplings
Serves 4

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup of self raising flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 oz (25g) butter
- ½ cup of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- ½ cup of milk

Method:

Sift the flour and the salt into a bowl, rub in the butter and add the sugar. Combine the vanilla and the milk, add this to the mixture and mix well. Drop tablespoons of the dumpling dough into the simmering sauce, cover the pan and continue simmering for 20 minutes. Serve with whipped cream.

Ingredients for the caramel sauce:

- 1 oz (25g) of butter
- 1½ cups of tightly packed brown sugar
- A pinch of salt
- 1½ cups of water

Method:

Combine all the ingredients together in a large pan, stir constantly until boiling then reduce heat and simmer ready to receive the prepared dumplings.

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“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

Bluebells, Blackbirds and Bells

By the time this issue of the K’nocker is published it will be farewell to the mass of bluebells which, at the moment, are providing colour along the old railway cutting line from Portknockie to Cullen. Now that the weather has turned warmer it is such a delight to be able to walk in spring-like conditions rather than battle against the cold winds. Having lived down south for some years we have been more familiar with the bluebells which grow in wooded areas not as here in the open. They are the same lovely rich

violet-blue colour but they grow into a beautiful curve as all the flowers are on the same side and the effect of gravity pulls the flower over.

Our resident blackbird is back on his perch serenading us from the top of the telegraph pole or from the rose trellis. We have been serenaded for a few years now by a blackbird, so it will be grandson or great grandson of Bertie, our original songster! We name them all Bertie! Unfortunately, we have lost our thrush, not because he has died, but because he has been ousted by the blackbirds. Our garden is a blackbird's paradise and we do enjoy them, but they are such bullyboys and give the other birds a tough time.

And now for the Bells! Did anyone read recently that the world's oldest circle of church bells, named Wolsey's Bells, are to ring again after lying silent for 20 years? These five bells of St Lawrence Church in Ipswich date back to the 15th century and were reputedly heard regularly by the young Thomas Wolsey, who went on to become chief adviser to King Henry VIII. They have not sounded in two decades because of their booming noise shaking the medieval church tower which had grown weak over time. Our Portknockie Church of Scotland cannot claim medieval status nor does it have five bells but have the folk noticed that its bell has been silent for some time? The welcoming sound echoing across the village is sadly missed. Let us hope our bell, just like the Wolsey Bell, will be ringing again soon. In the small villages around this area would there have been, in the past, many church bells summoning people to worship? Now, sadly, many village churches have had to close or have become places of residence, and their bells have long disappeared. Growing up, as I did, in Aberdeen, you were well used to the sound of bells – the lovely rich sound of the carillon of the St Nicholas Kirk in Union Street springs to mind, but there were many others.

Flowers blooming, birds singing, bells ringing; spring breathes new life into us all and we have had some warm weather which is always invigorating. Goodness knows we could do with it, as chasms of debt open across the future. Summer is coming and the weather forecasters are predicting a good one!

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POETS' CORNER: From the Davie Mair Collection.

The Fisher Quine

She cam' tae a fisher faimily
Eichty odd years ago
Lived through the wars an' hard times
Seen mony watters ebb an' flow
Fin she wis young an' bonnie
Days that are fresh in her mine'
She followed the herrin' drifters
Fin she wis a fisher quine.

In summer, she wid gan' doon tae Shetland
The land o' the midnicht sun
Gutted or packit the herrin'
In barrels, till each day wis done
For 'oors she stood in a' weathers
In days that wir dreich or fine
Wi' fingers stiff, sair an' gory
Fin she wis a fisher quine.

At times she wid gan' tae the Orkney Isles
Peterheid, the Broch an' Week
Lived rough in digs or bothies
Times wir hard an' bleak
Wi' fingers rowd up wi' cloties
Nae manicured an' fine
Noo these days seem sae happy
Fin she wis a fisher quine.

Come Autumn, she geid tae Yarmouth
Tae follow the herrin' fleet
In dreich cauld misty mornings
She wid aften hae a greet
The shoals seemed iver endless
As they chavved among the brine
The herrin' lay 'aroon in millions
Fin she wis a fisher quine.

The barrels they filled wir countless
The 'oors they chavved wir lang
They wir aften tired an' hungry
They workit for a sang
As she looks back on the auld days
That still live in her mine'
O' that she wis still guttin' herrin'
Fin she wis a young fisher quine.

She's noo auld, a lot wiser
As she noo reclines in her chair
There's nae mony left that are like her
The past tae cherish an' care
The days o' guttin' the herrin'
Wi' fingers rowd up wi' cloties

Are jist a fond distant memory
A' wrapped up in her roots
She aye tells us the stories
O' the times fresh in her mine'
Though she' noo reached her twilight
She is still a fisher quine.

The fisher quines cam' frae a' aroon
Frae a' the airts that blaw
Frae the North Isles tae the mainland
The Hebrides an' Stornawa'
A' trying tae earn a shillin'
Wi' a deft knife in their fingers
As they gutted hunners o' crans
A' cam' doon the same line
A chapter noo written in history
Is that o' a fisher quine.

Forget what they have been

It takes a motley crowd of folks
And some are fools they say
To keep this old world up to date
And every part to play.
One class of actors I regret
Who maybe often seen
Are those who in their daily walk
Forget what they have been.

Sometimes the poor besotted wretch
Who missed a drunkard's grave
Will pass an erring brother by
Whom he might stoop to save.
He dare not spoil his spotless soul
In company so mean
Though once was bad, he has, alas
Forgot what he has been.

See yonder youth and maiden fair
Be-decked in gaudy style
Withholding from a well-dressed pair
Though friends, a look, or smile.
Such arrogance, but ill-befits
The example they have seen
While blind assumption, shows they have
Forgot what they have been.

Sometimes a despot you can find
Placed o'er his fellow man
Tho' from the ranks, he only rose
He crushes all he can.
His merit failed to put him there
On influence he did lean
But yet his actions show he has
Forgot what he has been.

Our souls by subtle foes are off
Beset on every side
But single-handed now assail
So cunningly as pride.
Society all around it strikes
With poisoned weapons keen
And makes both poor and rich alike
Forget what they have been.

THOUGHTS FROM THE MINISTER by Rev. Yvonne Hendrie

As the new Minister in Portknockie, I am delighted at the large attendance of children we have at the church each week. Sunday Schools elsewhere are struggling to achieve even half that number. Of course, our committed and gifted Sunday School teachers must take a large part of the credit, although such is their modesty that they would not admit this. Parents also must be thanked for bothering to care about their children's spiritual welfare, and for getting them ready for 11.15 each Sunday. Their children are a credit to them. I do wish, however, that more parents came with their children, and I am therefore extending an invitation to them to do just that. The church is a family, and we are missing the ones in the middle! We have the older generation, and the younger, but mums and dads, please come: we would love to have you on board!

Of course, this is not a new problem. Nearly twenty years ago, when I was in training for the ministry, the Minister who was supervising my placement asked me to visit the parents of a family of four who were at Sunday School every week. He asked me to try to persuade them that they should be there, too. Before I could even bring the conversation round to that subject, however, the father said that he had a problem with the Church. He said that Sunday School really should be on for two or three hours each Sunday, "*to give the parents a decent break*"! He said he had no sooner dropped his children off than he had to go back for them, and it was such a short time, he barely had time to read the paper!

That was perhaps my first experience of how the "consumer society" views the Church. He thought that Sunday School existed for the benefit of parents, like a sort of crèche. I'm sure Portknockie parents don't think that way. Maybe you've just got out of the habit, or maybe you never got into it in the first place. But has it ever occurred to you that the Church might not be there for your grandchildren? The Church needs people. The Church needs you and your children. Please give us a chance, and we will give you a welcome.

May God's blessing be with all of you who read this – and why don't you come and visit us, too, no matter your age or background? All are welcome!

Yvonne Hendrie

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Harry Hawkes: 18 Church Street, 01542-840718 or e-mail hrhyic@yahoo.co.uk

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Grateful thanks to Sandra and her colleagues in the Chemist Shop who sell single copies to visitors and to those who do not take out the annual subscription.

During 2009 the K'nocker will be published quarterly in March, June, 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 e-mail to rmcdram@onetel.com in the month before each quarterly publication. In fact, the earlier you send in articles the easier you make things for your editorial team!

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WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT?

Portknockie Seniors' Group: A very well-attended Morning Tea was held on Tuesday 26th May in the Seafield Hall with a sales table, raffles and a concert of singing by youngsters from the Nursery. It was also the opportunity to sign up for the Annual Bus Run which will take place on the 9th June and end up in Ullapool.

Molly Duguid has been forced by ill-health to leave the Committee but Nettie Innes is back on board and has been joined by Tony Barnes.

Portknockie Nursery: 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.

The Nursery will be holding a summer fete fundraiser on Saturday 13th June from 11am to 2.30pm in the McBoyle Hall. Burgers, kippers, hot dogs, home bakes, bouncy castle and face painting. Table sale also available at £5 per table.

The children attended the Portknockie Seniors Group morning tea on Tuesday 26th May and sang some songs which were well-received. The children have enjoyed visits to Portknockie Library and Buckie Sorting Office.

Dates to note: Sports Day (Friday 29th May), Induction for new children (Thursday 18th June), trip and picnic to Macduff Aquarium and Duff House Park (Tuesday 30th June) and Graduation (Thursday 2nd July).

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Portknockie Bowling Club notes:

The last two months have been a busy time for the Club. Our successful indoor season came to a close in late April with Linda Wood having won the Singles Trophy, Linda (again) and Albert Farquhar together capturing the Pairs Shield, and Wilson Weir proving a clear winner in the weekly hat nights.

The bowling green reopened on the 25 April. The opening ceremony saw Linda throw the first jack: thereafter a large turnout bowled in splendidly sunny weather.

The outdoor season is now in full swing. May tends to be a busy month with various ties due – mid May saw us in a soggy Keith being knocked out of the Banffshire Top Ten competition, while the second half of May saw a number of our members taking part in the SBA National Competitions – at the time of writing this both the Pairs and Mixed Pairs teams are progressing. Saturday 30 May sees the annual Club Dougal Cup played for, while on June 5 the Club will host four rinks of bowlers from Dufftown in the first round of the Banffshire Duthie Shield. Mid June will see the commencement of our league programme, and our annual Open Pairs tournament will start on Friday 19 June.

Again this year the green is in very good condition, and is being cared for meticulously by Wilson. Old and new members will be most welcome. If you have not played before come down and have a try – flat shoes will be needed but bowls are always available in the club. Hat nights are normally on Mondays and Thursdays at 6.30pm, but – especially in fine weather – members are often around at other times.

Neighbourhood Watch is simply looking out for one another, although in a close-knit village such as Portknockie many residents do that as a matter of course. We are fortunate to live in a low crime area although that does not stop persons from outwith visiting. One of the warnings issued recently concerns

cold calling by bogus or fraudulent workmen – the police would appreciate it if residents would generally employ vigilance around their property, but more so where there are elderly neighbours. Door stickers to try and deter cold callers are produced by Trading Standards and are kindly kept by Sandra in the Chemist.

On a more local note there have recently been instances of minor vandalism: again the police would ask that this is reported so at least the Community Beat Officers are aware of any problems.

If you would wish to become a NW member – there is no charge – or simply wish further information, please contact the Co-ordinator John Myles on 840000.

JMK

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AB56 1HA.
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Mobile: 07900 931905
Email: juliemckay@btconnect.com

Library Opening Hours: 5-8pm Tuesdays; 2-5pm & 6-8pm Thursdays; 10-12noon on Saturdays.

Library News: At last progress is being made with the planning of the transfer of Portknockie Library to the Primary School. In the new library there will be an increase in the number of computers available to adults and children and the integrated provision will be of benefit to the school and the whole community. There are no precise dates yet for the move but the new Library provision is expected to be in place by the autumn.

I was delighted to welcome children from the Portknockie Nursery on two days in May. This summer sees the children's Reading Challenge (Quest Seekers) taking place – more information will be made available to the school and by posters in the community.

New titles are arriving weekly: Scarpetta by Patricia Cornwell, The Final Warning by James Patterson, Being Elizabeth by Barbara Taylor Bradford, Passion by Louise Bagshawe, Heart and Soul by Maeve Binchy (Large Print) to name but a few; so come in and have a browse.

Fishing News: The weather has been fine but prices have taken a drop. As a matter of interest did you know that The Fishing News was established in

1913? It is reported to be the most widely read and the longest standing commercial fishing paper for the UK and Ireland.

Portknockie Thursday Club: for toddlers meets on Thursday afternoons between 1 -2.30pm in the McBoyle Hall.

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.

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

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En-suite accommodation available

01542-841627

The Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group have organised a week-long Heritage Event in Cullen focusing on the life and times of the 100 years since 1909. The Grand Opening by the Earl of Seafield will take place at 2pm in Cullen Town Hall on Tuesday 16th June and there are displays open between 10am and 5pm until Sunday 21st June (the Sunday display closes at 4pm). A local opportunity to find your ancestors, look at heritage displays, see a typical room of 100 years ago, admire costume dress and watch needlecraft demonstrations and net making. There is also a programme of interesting talks each evening Tuesday to Friday between 7pm and 9pm with a musical evening on Saturday the 21st June starting at 7pm until 10pm. This Heritage Festival is part of the Moray Homecoming Scotland 2009 Programme.

Seafield WRI: In March, members were given a very interesting and detailed account of events following the Lockerbie disaster in 1988 by Mr John Crawford, who was one of the detectives called to investigate it. He explained how painstaking the work was and how it badly affected all the people who worked on the

case as every body found had to be treated as if it was a separate murder scene.

The April meeting had Complementary Therapist, Olwen Christie from Portsoy as our guest speaker. She explained how Aromatherapy is a holistic treatment, used to promote health and well-being. Olwen also gave an insight to how Reflexology works on the body. She then demonstrated the Bowen Technique on three of the members. This is a hands-on therapy, in which the practitioner uses thumbs or fingers to make rolling type moves over muscles. The aim is to balance the whole person, not just cure the symptoms. April, a busy month, also saw 15 of our members invited to Cornhill SWRI for an evening of entertainment by their members, Skip to the Beat and the Young Highland Dancers. This was followed by a lovely tea and a huge sales table. April also included an invitation to Deskford where another lovely evening was enjoyed with the entertainment provided by Pat Fraser and friends. On April 17th the Seafield SWRI entered a team in the Portknockie Community Association village Quiz Night where 'they did well!'

Early in May twelve of our members went to Fordyce where the SWRI held an evening of flower arranging. Ten Rurals attended and enjoyed the presentation by a very talented, Anne Rendall, who not only produced beautiful arrangements but told us very funny stories of things she has done and places she has visited. A couple of our members were lucky enough to win some of her work in the raffle. This was followed by tea and tables laden with homemade cakes. May 28th will be our last meeting of the year and we will be entertained by the Hip Bumpers from Keith. The Trophy will be presented to the member with the most points in our monthly competitions. In June we are off on our annual bus run to Deans' of Huntley to see the shortbread being made then it is shopping in Inverurie. We shall finish off the day with a high tea at Newmacher.

KEEP YOUR BRAIN AND BODY ACTIVE

Join the Portknockie Scottish Country Dancing Class for Beginners commencing with a FREE Sampler Session on Wednesday 2nd September, 2009 at the Seafield Hall from 7 to 9 pm. The Class provides a ten week introductory course covering Scottish Country Dancing Basic Technique and Formations. No need to bring a partner and come in casual dress with soft-soled shoes.

For further information, please contact Robert Dawson on 01542-840491

Chemist's Corner

Hi there - It is nearly time for summer – whether our weatherman realises it or not! Even if the sun is slow to come out, many of us are already feeling symptoms of hay fever and summer allergies. Also the sun has been catching us by surprise when it has shown face lately. Start using your sunscreen because the sun's rays are strong enough to damage our skin even this early in the season. Many of us native to this country need to use cream with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.

As for coping with hay fever, the usual aids are daily essentials for sufferers: eye drops for itchy, watering eyes; once daily tablets for sneezes and sniffles and nasal sprays to prevent pollen from getting into your system. A little Vaseline rubbed around the nostrils can prevent pollen from getting into your system. Allergy creams are also on offer to soothe bites and stings should anyone become victim to a midge.

If you are planning a picnic, take some baby wipes for sticky fingers and also some sterilising hand gel in case there is nowhere to wash hands before eating. There may be some members of your clan who suffer travel sickness – tablets are available so that they can enjoy the picnic when they get there too. Travel sickness tablets are also handy to settle nervous tummies before flying or travelling by boat.

Whether you are enjoying our local countryside or venturing further afield this summer pop in and see us for some travel advice and summer essentials.

Happy holidays! Claire, Sarah and Sandra.

SEAFIELD INN DARTS NEWS: The Seafield Inn "A" darts team is again in a very strong position towards the end of the annual competitions in the area. They have already effectively won their League, being too far ahead on points for anyone else to catch them. They are looking very good as they come up to their final games for the various cups that they are competing for. It could be time to invest in another bottle of silver polish!

Portknockie Primary School News

This is the school's last contribution to the Knocker for the 2008-09 school session, and also my final contribution as Head Teacher at Portknockie Primary School. This is the year of the Homecoming, and I was delighted



to come "home" and have the opportunity to spend what has been a brief but busy time here at Portknockie School. However, "home" for me is also New Zealand, and my husband and I have made the decision to return there. I will, therefore, not be returning to school after the summer holidays.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of Portknockie for the warm welcome I received and for the support I have had over the year I have been here.

The Portknockie Mosaic

One of the highlights of the year has been the school's involvement in Portknockie's Homecoming Mosaic. This is what Ross Coull, P5, wrote about Geoff Roberts' recent visit to the school:

Artist in Residence

Portknockie artist Geoff Roberts has been at Portknockie Primary School for the last two days making a mosaic. He has been at Portknockie School because he wants the children to see how he works.

There are lots of different things on the mosaic, like a melted telephone, the Scotland flag and lots of the children's hands. All of the children's hands are scales because the mosaic is going to be a fish.

The melted telephone is there because about two years ago there was a ball of lightning that struck a house and melted a telephone.

The mosaic is to mark the Homecoming which is a special festival.

Geoff Roberts said, "I have included something about myself on the mosaic so I put on one of my fake hips. Also, there will be my dog Lulu on a skateboard."

Charlotte Smith, P6, added:

The handprints are from all of the school, people in Portknockie, Geoff, and Frank Reynolds. Also Geoff has put words on the fish saying, "We will make our way back home." The mosaic is to celebrate Scotland's Homecoming and it will be put down the harbour, on a slope beside the garage. The mosaic is going to be at least 9 and

three quarter metres long and Geoff said, "It will be really long and clear so people can see it from the cliff sides." Geoff hopes the five and a half and the four and a quarter metre fish will be finished by the end of June, so we will hope to see them in the sunny days.

Sponsored Litter Pick-Up

Another school – community effort was a sponsored litter pick-up on 1 May, when staff, pupils and parents between them picked up enough litter to completely fill a skip. Time and energy ran out, unfortunately, as there were still large amounts of rubbish left in some areas around the village, most notably the harbour and creeks. Sponsors showed their appreciation of the school's effort by the generosity of their donations, and the total amount raised for school funds was over £650. Many thanks to all who supported the school with help on the day or with sponsorship.

Bags 2 School

Thanks to all in the community who supported Bags 2 School, one of the parent council's fundraising projects. An impressive number of bags of unwanted items of clothing, bedding etc were collected and these will soon be on their way to Eastern Europe and Russia, and, in return, a large cheque will soon be on its way to the school.

Cross Country Success: Portknockie Boys Win Gold

Just before the Easter holidays, a number of children took part in the Active Schools Primary Cross Country Competition at Elgin Academy. This was a huge event, with over 800 children from across Moray participating. All the children were a credit to the school in terms of effort and behaviour, and congratulations go to the team of P6/7 boys – Nathan Wood, Alex Kirkwood, Marcus Cowie, Jack Anderson and Kris Stevenson - who returned with the trophy and a set of gold medals as winners in their category. Before the competition, Mr Custodio, our PE teacher, organised a cross-country event for local schools at Portknockie, and this, along with all the weeks of hard training at lunchtimes with Mrs Woolgar, Mrs Donaldson and Mr Custodio, undoubtedly helped the boys along the road to success.

Book Jacket Competition Success

On 23 April the P7 children joined with other P7s in the area at Buckie High School to hear Scottish author Catherine McPhail. Catherine McPhail also presented the prizes to the winners of a design a book jacket competition, organised for the P7s by Sarah Marsh, Buckie High School librarian. Eleanor Winteringham won the runner up prize out of all the schools in the Buckie area – well done, Eleanor!

StART to Exhibit Art Project

P3/4 and P5/6/7 have been involved in an art project which culminated in an exhibition of P3/4 clay art work. The P5/6/7 children visited The Moray Arts Centre in Findhorn and learned about exhibiting art, and on their return wrote information cards to accompany the P3/4 work. A group of P5/6/7 children then displayed the work in an exhibition in school which was viewed by children and parents. The P5/6/7's selected the work of Jodie Davidson, Emily Smith, Honor Adam, Alana Dow and Brooke Wood to go to an exhibition currently at the Moray Arts Centre in Findhorn. The remaining art work is to be sold at the school fete.

At Long Last - the Library!

After a very long wait, it looks like work will begin on the new community library early in the school holidays. Children and staff should return after the summer break to find themselves with the use of a brand new library!

This will be a real asset to the school, offering the children an up-to-date selection of books which will be changed regularly, and which will also serve the needs of the school curriculum.

Sporting Activities

The children have enjoyed a number of opportunities to be active in school this term. P6 children spent a successful day playing Kwik Cricket at Fochabers and just missed earning a place in the final. Mrs Woolgar's netball team is taking part in the Girls' Netball Tournament early in June, and we have had rugby, football and cricket coaching in school, as well as cycling for P2 and 3. Our school sports is coming up soon, on 16 June if the weather holds, 23 June if it doesn't, and we will be sending a team to the inter school sports in Elgin on 11 June.

Healthy Activities

Health professionals will be visiting the school in June to work with the children on various health topics. On 10 June all the children will learn about oral health, and the senior class will also learn about tobacco, and on 18 June there will be workshop sessions around healthy snacks and lunches.

Earlier this term the P7s travelled to Aberdeen to see the Choices for Life exhibition. P3/4 children have been honing their skipping skills and hope to put on a performance for parents later this term, with proceeds to go to British Heart.

Transition Events

We have nine new entrants starting school next session. The P1/2 children will have an opportunity to meet the nursery children at their sports, and the new entrants will be starting a series of visits to their new classroom early in June, finishing with a school lunch with their parents on 24 June.

P7 children have been involved in a variety of transition events already, including singing in a Scottish Opera production – thanks to music teacher Mrs McKay and Cullen Primary for inviting the children to join Cullen P7s for rehearsals – library visits and a reading group.

Guidance teachers have visited the children here, and still to come towards the end of June will be the Buckie High School visit as well as a transition event to showcase work done on the theme of the Homecoming.

Homecoming Genealogy Project

The P5/6/7 children were invited to take part in a genealogy project by the Cullen and Deskford Heritage Group. The children were asked to find out about their own families and to record their information on simple family trees. Some of these will be displayed at an exhibition in Cullen Town Hall 16-21 June.

Enterprise

P3/4 children are keen to improve their environment and have been trying to raise money towards making an attractive quiet area in a corner of the school playing field. So far, they have had a bird table made, and they are

currently looking for someone to build a bench to their design as cheaply as possible. If anyone can help with this, the P3/4 children would be extremely grateful!

All the children have been making items and raising seedlings to sell at the school fete on 30 May, so hopefully their efforts will be richly rewarded!

P1/2 Visit

The P1/2 children had a science day out when they visited Satrosphere in Aberdeen. The visit was made possible because the bus was fully funded by Satrosphere, and thanks to the parent council for funding entry fees.

Assemblies

We are delighted to welcome Ann Cordell of the Salvation Army, and Church of Scotland minister, Yvonne Hendrie, to school to help us with our assemblies. We greatly appreciate their contribution to the school.

Dates for Diaries

- Monday 8 June – Buckie area schools closed (occasional day)
- Thursday 11 June – inter school sports, Elgin
- Portknockie School sports – Tuesday 16 June (23 and 30 June are backup days)
- Reports go home, Friday 12 June
- Parent – teacher meetings, Monday 15 June.
- End of year ceremony, afternoon of Wednesday, 1 July
- Last day of summer term, Thursday, 2 July

Shona Idle.

LATE EXTRA: Another poem from Charlie Slater in Australia has arrived via the magic of the internet:

On a Friday Night

It's hauf past sax a'clock on the chumley knockie
On a Friday nicht a'ower Portknockie.
The mannies a'heed for Wullie Fisher's shoppie in
the Square;
The 'Green Final' is gaun tae be for sale up there.

They're a' hopin tae win seventy five thoosin';
Siven draas is fit's needed tae finance 'the Boozen',
HILLS fixed ODD S could git them tae Tenerief
Of course the wife an bairns wid get relief.

Ninety percent aur niver luckie,
So on a Sunday Nicht they're auf tae Buckie
Whaur at Twal' o'clock the bar is liftet
An' fower hours later the net is drifted.

The young cook is stel hauf asleep an' dreamin'
O' The Fisherman's Hall an' a' the bonnie weemin.
He's hopin next Friday nicht tae be ashore
So'at bonnie quine he can kiss some more.

The forecast is predicten some hivvy squalls
So the skipper is hopin for some decent hauls.
The cod and haddock are up in price;
A few hunner boxes wid come in nice.

The crew widnae hae tae rely on fitba pools
Tae send their kids tae yon mare expensive schools,
An' the wife could get a bonnie wee caur
For her tae gang shoppin' near and faur.

They'd go tae Markies in Aiberdeen,
Buy some twin suits, hand bags, and pairs o' sheen.
They widnae forget tae treat their Man,
He'd get a coat made o' Astrican.

The unluckie anes are on the dole,
A thing that maest men canna thole.
Bit they've nae need tae feel ashamed
It's politicians and quotas that should be blamed.

These fisher folk are among the best
A've lived and worked among the rest.
Yer hospitality and friendship is beyond compare
Something a'm hopin' eence mare tae share.

Slater – long time left but ne'er forgotten.

WHAT ABOUT THIS FOR AN IDEA?

Readers' suggestions for making Portknockie an even better place.

Charlie Slater has sent Harry a catalogue of The Canberra CRAFTS EXPO, an annual event at the Royal Canberra Show. Every craft that can be imagined from Beading, Ceramics, Framed cross stitch, Lapidary, Millinery, Models, Quilting, Textiles, Woodcraft and many more are exhibited to win the best in class. Local firms sponsor different classes and there are prizes to be won. Would it work here? A number of villagers are keen on craft work.

