

The logo for 'Killearn. Courier' is displayed in a stylized, white, serif font with a blue outline and a slight shadow effect. The word 'Killearn.' is in a smaller font size above the larger word 'Courier'. The background of the logo area is a blurred image of a building and trees.

# Killearn. Courier

ISSUE 56

SUMMER 2023

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# Noticeboard

- |         |   |        |  |
|---------|---|--------|--|
| 26 Aug  | <p><b>Killlearn Horticultural Society</b> Annual Show. Village Hall and Kirk Hall, 2pm–4.30pm. For further info and updates, see: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/killlearnhorti">www.facebook.com/killlearnhorti</a> or <a href="http://www.killlearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk">www.killlearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk</a>.</p> <p><b>Scarecrow Competition.</b> Village Hall car park.</p>             | 14 Oct | <p><b>West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers</b> Beginning Spinning. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am–1pm. New members and visitors welcome. First visit free. See 9 Sept for contact info.</p>   |
| 1 Sept  | <p><b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Generosity at Christmas Blythwood Shoebox Appeal collection begins. Killlearn Kirk and Strathblane Church have collection points. Knitted hats, gloves and scarves are always appreciated.</p>   | 17 Oct | <p><b>Strathendrick Stitchers</b> Open Day. Come and see what Strathendrick Stitchers is all about. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. See 19 Sept for contact information.</p>  |
| 4 Sept  | <p><b>Strathendrick Singers</b> practice. Balforn Church, 7.30pm–9.45pm, thereafter every Monday evening. Come and join us. Contact Philip Gaskell (07980 749972; <a href="mailto:philipgaskell52@btinternet.com">philipgaskell52@btinternet.com</a>).</p>  | 18 Oct | <p><b>Killlearn Community Council</b> meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom. 8pm. For the link to join the live stream, email Fiona (<a href="mailto:fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk">fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk</a>).</p>   |
| 7 Sept  | <p><b>The B Flats</b> invite new members to try out the choir at their Come and Sing event, Kilmarnock Millennium Hall, Gartocharn, 7.30pm–9pm. Refreshments included.</p>  | 19 Oct | <p><b>The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley</b> Lecture by Duncan Pring, ‘The Mayan Civilisation of Central America’. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am.</p>   |
| 8 Sept  | <p><b>Strathendrick Film Society</b> showing <i>Top Gun: Maverick</i>. Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm. Membership £30 (concessions £25). Single film £5.</p>   | 26 Oct | <p><b>Drymen &amp; District Local History Society</b> Talk by James Kennedy, ‘It started with <i>Rob Roy</i>: film making in the Trossachs’. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm.</p>  |
| 9 Sept  | <p><b>West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers</b> Mega Mini Taster Session. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am–1pm. New members and visitors welcome. First visit free. Visit <a href="http://www.weave-spin-dye-glasgow.org.uk">www.weave-spin-dye-glasgow.org.uk</a> or contact the secretary (<a href="mailto:weavers.in.glasgow@gmail.com">weavers.in.glasgow@gmail.com</a>).</p> | 26 Oct | <p><b>Killlearn Community Futures</b> Annual General Meeting. Killlearn Village Hall, 8pm. Contact Graeme Fraser (<a href="mailto:convenor@kcfc.co.uk">convenor@kcfc.co.uk</a>).</p>   |
| 14 Sept | <p><b>Thursday Club</b> resumes. Weekly afternoon social for seniors meets in Killlearn Kirk Hall, 2pm. Contact Maureen (550743), Pat (550074) or Alison (550155).</p>  | 3 Nov  | <p><b>KCFC Bonfire and Fireworks.</b> The Glebe, 7pm. Display at 7.30pm.</p> <p><b>Strathendrick Film Society</b> showing <i>Living</i>. Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm.</p>  |
| 19 Sept | <p><b>Strathendrick Stitchers</b> Share your own Stitching. Sales table and library. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. New members welcome. Visitors: first visit free, 2nd &amp; 3rd visit £3. Contact <a href="mailto:strathendrickstitchers@gmail.com">strathendrickstitchers@gmail.com</a>.</p>  | 11 Nov | <p><b>West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers</b> Spinning with Cath Snape, an in-house workshop. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am–1pm. New members and visitors welcome. First visit free. See 9 Sept for contact info.</p>   |
| 20 Sept | <p><b>Killlearn Community Council</b> meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom. 8pm. For the link to join the live stream, email Fiona (<a href="mailto:fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk">fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk</a>).</p>  | 12 Nov | <p><b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Remembrance Service. War Memorial, 10.45am, followed by a service in the church.</p>  |
| 21 Sept | <p><b>The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley</b> Lecture by Clive Stewart-Lockart, ‘Orientalist Art: Artist Travellers to the Near East’. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am. <a href="http://www.theartsocietystirling.org.uk">www.theartsocietystirling.org.uk</a></p>  | 15 Nov | <p><b>Killlearn Community Council</b> meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom. 8pm. For the link to join the live stream, email Fiona (<a href="mailto:fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk">fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk</a>).</p>   |
| 28 Sept | <p><b>Drymen &amp; District Local History Society</b> Talk by Dr John Riddell, ‘Fairlie’s Secret War’ (the development of sonar during WWII took place at a boatyard in Fairlie). Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm. Annual membership £10 includes free attendance to all talks. Visitors welcome, £3 per talk. <a href="http://www.drymen-history.org.uk">www.drymen-history.org.uk</a></p>             | 21 Nov | <p><b>Strathendrick Stitchers</b> Christmas workshops: Felt Trees and Folded Stars. Sales table and library will also be available. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm.</p>   |
| 1 Oct   | <p><b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Harvest Thanksgiving service, 10.30am. Dried foods and tins donated to Start Up Stirling.</p>  | 23 Nov | <p><b>The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley</b> Lecture by Scott Anderson, ‘The Art of Cameo Glass’. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am.</p> <p><b>Drymen &amp; District Local History Society</b> Talk by Alastair Dinsmor, ‘History of Glasgow Police, the oldest police force in the UK’. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm.</p> |
| 6 Oct   | <p><b>Strathendrick Film Society</b> showing <i>Mrs Harris goes to Paris</i>. Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm.</p>  |        |  |

If you have dates of events for the winter issue of the Noticeboard (end of November until mid March), please contact Heather McArthur (07985 082678; [heather.mcarthur@virgin.net](mailto:heather.mcarthur@virgin.net)).

## Killearn Village Hall Classes and Clubs

### MONDAY

**Yoga Class:** Main Hall, 9.30am–10.30am. Suitable for all.  
Contact Sarah Fleming ([sarahfleming99@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahfleming99@yahoo.com)).

**Monday Club:** Main Hall and Garden Room. 1pm–4.30pm.  
Badminton and bridge.

**Dance with Julie:** Garden Room, 5.30pm–7pm. Contact  
Julie Symmonds (07496 231913; [jjsymmonds36@gmail.com](mailto:jjsymmonds36@gmail.com)).

### TUESDAY

**Badminton:** Main Hall, 9.15am–10.15am.

**Foot Health Clinic:** Committee Room 9.30am–2pm. Contact  
Jacqueline Morton for availability (07703 799112).

**Town Break Stirling:** Garden Room, 2pm–4pm  
([www.townbreakstirling.org](http://www.townbreakstirling.org)).

**DIY circuits:** Main Hall, 6.30pm–7.30pm. All welcome. Contact  
Fiona ([fiona.rennie@btinternet.com](mailto:fiona.rennie@btinternet.com)) or Nick (07860 700928).

### WEDNESDAY

**Yoga Class:** Main Hall, 9.30am–10.30am. Suitable for all.  
Contact Sarah ([sarahfleming99@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahfleming99@yahoo.com)).

**Ear Wax Microsuction Clinic:** Committee Room, 9.30am–2pm.  
Contact Jacqueline Morton for availability (07703 799112).

**Pre-school Dance Class:** Main Hall, 4pm–4.45pm.  
Contact Lynda (770390; [geolyn2000@hotmail.com](mailto:geolyn2000@hotmail.com)).

### THURSDAY

**Pilates:** Main Hall, 10.15am–11.15am. Suitable for all. Classes  
include a mix of exercises to mobilise, strengthen and tone the  
whole body whilst having a gentle workout, too. Contact Linda  
([email@talltreesaberfoyle.co.uk](mailto:email@talltreesaberfoyle.co.uk)).

**Children's Music Class:** Main Hall, 2.10pm–2.50pm.  
Contact Clare ([claremondaymusic@gmail.com](mailto:claremondaymusic@gmail.com)).

**Linda Turner School of Dancing:** Main Hall, 4pm–6.30pm.  
Dance classes for children of all ages. Contact Lynda (770390;  
[geolyn2000@hotmail.com](mailto:geolyn2000@hotmail.com)).

**Dance with Julie:** Garden Room, 5.30pm–7pm. Contact  
Julie Symmonds (07496 231913; [jjsymmonds36@gmail.com](mailto:jjsymmonds36@gmail.com)).

**Adult Jazz Dance Class:** Main Hall, 7pm–8pm. Contact Yasmin  
(07979 856837; [yasmin@throthegrapevine.co.uk](mailto:yasmin@throthegrapevine.co.uk)).

**Kundalini Yoga, Meditation & Gong Sound Healing:**  
Garden Room, 7.15pm–8.45pm. Contact Sarah Buchanan  
([sm.buchanan@hotmail.com](mailto:sm.buchanan@hotmail.com)).

### FRIDAY

**Dancercise (adult 50+ fitness class):** Main Hall, 10am–11am.  
Low-impact dance-based exercise and routines for over 50s,  
ladies and gents. Contact Yasmin (07979 856837;  
[yasmin@throthegrapevine.co.uk](mailto:yasmin@throthegrapevine.co.uk)).

**Dance for Parkinson's:** Main Hall, 1.30pm–2.30pm.  
Providing creative movement and dance to the Parkinson's  
and mobility disorders community. Contact Julie Symmonds  
(07496 231913; [jjsymmonds36@gmail.com](mailto:jjsymmonds36@gmail.com)).

**Buchanan Castle Bridge Club:** Garden Room, 2pm–5pm.  
Contact Lesley Nicholl (07720 978998; [lesleynic7@icloud.com](mailto:lesleynic7@icloud.com)).

## Editorial

Hello and welcome to our summer issue. And what a summer! In June, temperatures were in the high 20s and photos showed reservoirs which have never been so low. Then in July, it started to rain just to coincide with the school holidays, reservoirs filled up and it became just another West of Scotland summer.

Throughout the *Courier*, we aim to keep you up to date with the activities of the various village groups, many of which are very active and well supported. For example, the Killearn 10K sees entrants coming from outwith the village and places are snapped up within 24 hours of being advertised! Many groups contribute in their own way to different aspects of the community – Colourful Killearn, the Heritage Trail, the Thursday Club, the Horti Show, Strathendrick Stitchers, Community Council and KCFC, to mention but a few.

As a community magazine, we believe we should support local organisations. We are particularly aware of groups who cannot count upon a regular income from year to year, such as the Cubs, Scouts and Girl Guides. To this end, we published information last year as to how you can source a possible donation, and you'll find it again on the following page.

Apart from articles from our long-standing contributors, from time to time we publish articles which we think you will find interesting. In our spring issue, as a result of a suggestion from one of our readers, we used our centre pages to provide information about Sustainable Killearn. In this issue, our centre pages detail the provision of child care resources available in Killearn and the impetus was the same: a reader's interest. If you have any subject you would like us to investigate, let us know and we will do our best.

Our advertisers are still with us despite the current financial climate, and we give our continued thanks to them. Without their support, we could not publish, so do try to support them in turn.

Finally, given that we have been going for some 18 years, some of our group are getting on a bit in years. [*'Eh? Is he talking about us?'*, the rest of the team wonder.] If you enjoy the *Courier*, and we hope you do, please consider joining us. You don't need to be Pulitzer-prize nominee or budding media mogul, but an interest in and curiosity about our village is a good start. Plus the position of *Courier* Cub is currently open. Get in touch!

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Ian

### Cover Image

The picture of the lovely big oak in the park was taken by Kay Roxby and remains her copyright. We invite readers to nominate their own favourite tree, see page 16.

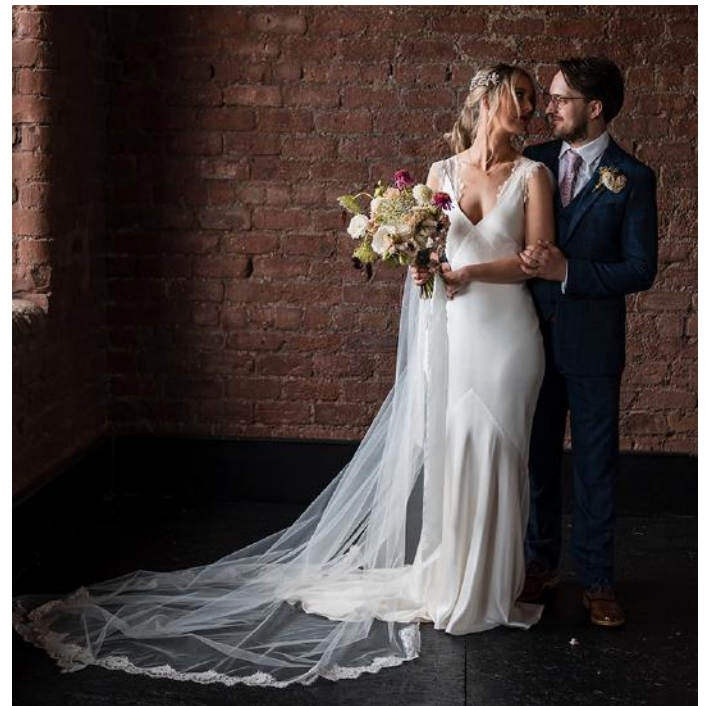
### News in brief

**K**illearn Pharmacy has teamed up with [@terracycleuk](mailto:@terracycleuk) in response to local demand to be able to recycle EMPTY medicine blister packs. The pharmacy requests users to make sure they read what is and isn't accepted before placing in the boxes. Please note that any blisters still containing medicines or dry powder inhalers can be recycled at the counter in the pharmacy instead.

**K**illearn has four eBikes available for use by residents and those who work in the village. Applicants must be over 18 years of age. For more info, please email [cycling@kcfc.co.uk](mailto:cycling@kcfc.co.uk). Do also join the 'Cycling Killearn' Facebook group. The eBike leads – Beth Carruthers, Sarah Deas and Carol Murray – aspire to build a cycling community, promoting active travel and personal wellbeing.

**S**cottish Government funding of £720,000 from the Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund has allowed 40 Stirling Council properties to be brought back into use for displaced Ukrainians. This will help refugees in temporary accommodation to have a permanent place to live and allow integration into their communities.

**F**orth Valley Art Beat took place in June this year. Local artists opened their studios to the public, providing a trail covering 58 venues. The rich programme showcased the wealth of artistic talent throughout the Forth Valley area. Next year's dates for your diary are 8–16 June. More information at [www.forthvalleyartbeat.com](http://www.forthvalleyartbeat.com).



The wedding of Sarah Leonard and Ewan Laing took place in July last year at the Engine Works in Glasgow. Sarah grew up in Killearn and attended Killearn Primary and Balfour High before studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating with a Master's degree in 2014.

The couple met in 2014 whilst recording a live album in Cottiers, Glasgow. Their wedding was originally due to take place in July 2021, but was postponed by one year due to Covid restrictions at the time. The wedding featured an array of wonderful live music performed by the couple's friends.

## Can We Help?

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Over the years, the *Courier* has accumulated a modest sum of capital and we have been delighted to make donations from time to time to various local organisations in partnership with the Killearn Community Futures Company (KCFC).

We are keen to continue with our support for the community in this fashion, so if you think we could help your organisation, contact us at [courier@kcfc.co.uk](mailto:courier@kcfc.co.uk) or via KCFC [www.kcfc.co.uk](http://www.kcfc.co.uk). Alternatively, you can contact the Editor at 36 New Endrick Road, G63 9QT or any member of the *Courier* team.

Your organisation must be operating in Killearn, be community-based and not-for-profit. You will need to tell us what any donation would be used for and the benefits it would bring your group. Your submission will be considered by the *Courier* group and you may be contacted for further information before we pass your request to the KCFC Board.

## Popcorn at the Ready

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The Strathendrick Film Society will be opening its doors for the 2023/24 season of films on Friday, 8 September at Balfour High School. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

This year we are showing seven – possibly even eight – films if no dates clash with other school activities.

We're starting off with *Top Gun: Maverick*. Film buffs have commented that it's 'one of the best movies ever made', so come and see for yourself.

Subsequent films, all shown on Friday evenings starting at 7.30 pm in Balfour High School are:

*Mrs Harris goes to Paris* (October)

*Living* (November).

Please check the Noticeboard (p2) for details.

The membership fee is £30, £25 for concessions, and £5 on the night for just a single film.

All subs are typically paid on the first night, so please come early as there is usually a queue.

# Come to the Annual Show

The Killearn Cottagers' Horticultural Society's Annual Show takes place on 26 August. Based around the Kirk and the Village and Church halls, the Show is a family-friendly event which everyone is welcome not just to attend, but also to enter the competition.

The Schedule has full details of all the Classes which are not just all about plants: sections include baking, craftwork, art, photography, preserves, wines and cordials, as well as the very popular cut flowers, vegetables and pot plants.

If you missed the village Schedule sellers, please contact 07788 373142, or message our Facebook page, and we will deliver a Schedule to your door for £3. Bring it to the Show on the day for free entry for you and your family.

The Horti committee is keen to ensure there are lots of entrants in the Youth section and to encourage youngsters to enter the Show, there are three school age groups.



The Art & Craft section is split into 15 categories for all three age groups. The Horticulture section features fruit and vegetable entries with three categories. Keep your eyes peeled for the most amusing misshapen vegetable! The Floral section has two categories for three age groups.

Here the imagination can run wild for the 'Arrangement in an unusual container'. Lastly, the Baking section is even bigger, with four categories for younger children and four categories for teenagers.

Top tip: try not to eat too many test products perfecting your bakes. And did we mention there are all sorts of prizes?

Visit [www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk](http://www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk) for the latest news, updates and reminders. Don't forget to bring your Schedule for free entry, and we look forward to seeing you on the day!



And did we mention there are all sorts of prizes?

## Scarecrow competition!

The Horti Committee would like to remind everyone about the Scarecrow Competition at the Annual Show. Scarecrows are invited to the Annual Show to be judged, and there will be a prize for the best entry!

Your scarecrow can be any size, any shape, and any animal or person, real or fictional. You could even make a tableau of scarecrows!

Here's how to enter:

- write your name(s) and address on a piece of paper and place in a sealed envelope
- attach the envelope to your scarecrow
- bring your scarecrow up to the Annual Show, **between 12noon and 1.30pm** (before the Show officially opens), to the back of the car park.

Following judging and the end of the Show, you can take your scarecrow home with you.



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# The Weather Channel

We have had a slightly colder winter and early spring this year, and while April and May were quite warm, May had very little rain. We had this pattern in 2022, and it ended with a disappointing summer.

A report from the World Meteorological Organisation (2023) indicated that this year is anticipated to be warmer than expected as it is likely to be an El Niño year.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2022) issued a rather gloomy paper talking in detail about the urgency of near-term integrated climate action. They suggest that 1.5° global warming in the near future is inevitable and may be exacerbated by the anticipated effects in 2023/4 of El Niño, following three years of La Niña. The BBC also gave advanced warning of an El Niño year.

So what are El Niño and La Niña? These phenomena are opposite climate patterns in the Pacific Ocean that have a worldwide effect that affect both the Pacific Ocean and the atmosphere. These phenomena cycle back and

forth every 3 to 7 years, and typically last 9 to 12 months.

In normal conditions in the Pacific Ocean, trade winds blow west along the equator taking warm water from South America towards Asia. To replace the warm water, cold water wells up from the deep.

During an El Niño, the trade winds weaken, and warm water is pushed back east towards the west coast of North and South America. These warmer waters cause the Pacific jet stream to move south, changing the weather patterns in the northern hemisphere. A La Niña is the opposite, with stronger trade winds blowing towards Asia, the Pacific jet stream moving north and characterised by stronger upwellings along the American Pacific coasts.

In summer, an El Niño year increases the risk of hotter summer temperatures and we've already seen this in parts of Europe.

Let's see what happens during the rest of this summer and next year!

TOM RENFREW

Half-Yearly Summary for Killearn (2023)

|                            | Jan   | Feb   | Mar   | April | May   | June  |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Highest Temp</b>        | 10.3  | 10.6  | 15.8  | 17.3  | 24.2  | 28.9  |
| <b>Lowest Temp</b>         | -4.1  | -3.5  | -6.7  | -2.4  | 4.2   | 5.3   |
| <b>Mean Temp</b>           | 4     | 6.1   | 4.8   | 7.8   | 11.8  | 15.7  |
| <b>Days Below Freezing</b> | 8     | 4     | 12    | 2     | 0     | 0     |
| <b>Highest Wind Gust</b>   | 31    | 36    | 20    | 21    | 23    | 15    |
| <b>Monthly Rain</b>        | 136.2 | 52.2  | 120.8 | 61    | 31.2  | 57.6  |
| <b>Most Rain in 24 hrs</b> | 19    | 9.8   | 26.6  | 24    | 16    | 12.8  |
| <b>Days without Rain</b>   | 9     | 11    | 11    | 18    | 22    | 14    |
| <b>Cumulative Rainfall</b> | 136.2 | 188.4 | 309.2 | 430   | 461.2 | 518.8 |

Temperature in °C, rainfall in mm, and wind speed in miles per hour

## Safe Nights Out

College and university terms are set to begin soon. Many young people will be heading off, leaving home for the first time and quite possibly moving to a new town or city. Now's a good time to give all you Freshers a heads up about ways to stay safe when out socialising.

- ★ Plan your night out and how you will get home.
- ★ Take your mobile phone and make sure it's fully charged.
- ★ Look after bags and valuables. Stay alert at cash machines: be aware of who's behind you, and keep money and your PIN out of sight.
- ★ If you feel very drunk or unwell after a small amount of alcohol, then ask a trusted friend or alert a member of the club or pub management for help.

- ★ If you think you have been spiked, report it to the police and seek medical assistance – all reports will be investigated.
- ★ Don't take drugs or new psychoactive substances (sometimes and misleadingly called 'legal highs').
- ★ Don't have sex with anyone who is drunk or under the influence of drugs – they can't give consent, and in Scots law this is rape.
- ★ Stay with your friends and don't leave with strangers.
- ★ Keep enough money to pay for your journey home, and use a trusted taxi company or arrange for a friend or family member to collect you.
- ★ Have a great time!

PC GRAEME McNULTY

## Rüegg – Beattie



Anja from London and Stuart Beattie from Killearn were married on 27 August 2022 at Karma Lake of Menteith. It was such a special day shared with family and friends, and the sun shone throughout. The couple are currently living in Dunblane.

## Evans – Williamson



Gwyneth Evans of Killearn and James Williamson of Deaconsbank, Glasgow were married in Kinlochard Village Hall on 25 March 2023.

It was a truly family affair. They were piped in by the bride's brother, Fergus, and the groom's sister, Abby, sang during the ceremony.

Bunting and flowers were taken care of by the mother of the bride and the bride's father made the wedding cake and canapés. A ceilidh band rounded off a beautiful day celebrating with family and friends.

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# A Re-invigorated Market Returns to Killearn

If you are reading this on Saturday, 12 August, then put the *Courier* down and pop along to the Village Hall to visit the new market.

The re-emergence of the market is the brainchild of Megan, herself a crafter (among her many other talents) who recognises the importance of running a regular community market, both for residents and as a draw for visitors to the village.

The market hosts traders and crafters – both local and from further afield – selling a variety of arts and crafts, aromatics and jewellery, bakes, treats and more. Megan is aiming for variety in the stalls and, with the majority of vendors differing from month to month, will ensure the market stays interesting and diverse. The list of vendors is published on social media for each month or by contacting Megan.



To support our local eateries, there is no café within the market. Instead, pop-up workshops in the committee room will offer activity for youngsters, making the market something for the whole family. There will also be ticketed workshops for adults, where new hands-on skills can be learned. Seasonal events both inside and out will make this more than a monthly market.

‘If you want something done, ask a busy person’, so the saying goes. In this case the person willing to put in the hard work to reignite the Killearn Market is Megan Lee. Combining her day job as a learning technologist within Strathclyde University’s Business School with Lens-a-Hand Photography, where Megan specialises in events and candid people photography, plus being a keen musician and Latin dancer certainly qualifies her as a ‘busy person’.

Megan moved to Killearn during the Covid pandemic, but has a long association with the area through her parents who stay in Balfon. Along with her mother, Anne, known to many as the leader of the Balfon Community Singers, they run Dunmore Designs. It is this jewellery-making venture that gives Megan an inside understanding of how to run a successful market.

Each monthly market will support a different charity, with a tombola stall, donation buckets, etc., in aid of either a local charity or one associated with a local



resident. If you wish to apply to be one of the charities, stallholders or have a workshop idea then you can contact Megan through social media or email.

The Killearn Country Market is held on every second Saturday of the month, 11am–4pm, except the Christmas market which is on the first Saturday in December .

Support your local market:

Email: [killearncountrymarket@gmail.com](mailto:killearncountrymarket@gmail.com)

Facebook.com/[killearnmarket](https://www.facebook.com/killearnmarket)

Instagram.com/[killearncountrymarket](https://www.instagram.com/killearncountrymarket)





# It's Never Too Early for Advent Windows

Here we are, already at the summer edition of the *Courier*, so if you're like us, you're starting to think of Christmas. (Are we? Well for the purposes of this article, we are!) Having raised over £3,000 for Shelter in the past three years, we're ready for our fourth year of Advent Windows.

This has become a very popular and anticipated tradition in the village, and we are now starting to look for people to come forward to decorate their visible-from-the-street window – people who have been involved previously, newbies to the initiative, people who have taken a year out... we would welcome everyone who is interested.

Nearer the time, we're obviously keen for villagers to contribute towards the fundraising effort and, of course, to take a walk with the kids/oldies in the early evenings to see people's handiwork.

If you are interested in offering your skills in creating a window in your home – or business – in the village, or

for more information, then please do get in touch with Glenda at [killearn.advent.windows@gmail.com](mailto:killearn.advent.windows@gmail.com), so we have a feel for numbers and whether we're able to run the initiative again. We look forward to hearing from you!

Now, we're off to get out those winter woollies...



Buchanan Castle  
Golf Club  
**OPEN DAY**  
Sunday 17th  
September  
10am-1pm



New Member Autumn Deal available | Come along and try out the course  
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## Bridge by Zorro



At the recent Killearn Club AGM, we decided that when we re-open in September, we'll continue last winter's pattern of meetings. This means face-to-face bridge in Killearn Village Hall on the

first Tuesday evening of each month and online bridge on other Tuesdays. We are also willing to offer classes for anyone who would like to learn to play bridge or to improve their game. If you would like to join us, please use our contact form via the website, or phone our secretary on 550074.

In this issue, the focus is on slams. Bridge players soon learn that to make a small slam with a balanced hand, a partnership needs a total of about 33 points. To make a grand slam, they need a total of about 37 points. However, what about distributional hands? If one player holds all 13 cards in a single suit, a grand slam makes in that suit with only 10 points.

Alas, such distributions do not happen in the real world, but hands with seven- or eight-card suits are not uncommon. With between six and ten points, most players would open at the three-level with a seven-card suit and at the four-level with an eight-card suit. When should partner bid on to a slam? With a trump fit, the Losing Trick Count (LTC) will help them decide.

The LTC applies to the three highest ranking cards in each suit. Fourth and subsequent cards are counted as winners, not losers. Any card amongst the top three apart from an Ace, a King and (normally) a Queen are counted as losers. A Queen without any other Honour card is counted as 0.5 of a loser. Take East's hand in the deal that follows. Their losers are ♠9, ♥J, ♦J, ♣8, ♣5 and ♣4, so seven in total. Had the Diamond holding been, say, Q 9 5 3, there would have been 2.5 losers in Diamonds.

Dealer: South Vulnerable: E – W

♠ A 10 6 5 3  
♥ K 10 2  
♦ A 10 7 4 2  
♣ -

North

♠ J 8 4 2

♥ 4

♦ K 8 6

♣ A K Q 10 9

West Z East

♠ K Q 9 7

♥ J

♦ Q J 9 5

♣ 8 5 4 3

South

♠ -

♥ A Q 9 8 7 6 5 3

♦ 3

♣ J 7 6 2

This deal comes from a recent Division 1 match where, unsurprisingly, South opened Four Hearts at all four tables. West passed, leaving the Norths to decide whether to pass or bid a slam. To see how a LTC helped them, first count the losers in the North hand. Did you make it six (♠10, ♠6, ♥10, ♥2, ♦10, and ♦7)? Now note that following standard guidelines for four-level openers, North could infer that South also had six losers, implying 12 losers across the partnership. There is a simple formula for estimating the number of tricks to be won after a LTC: 24 less the number of losers, here 12. So, Norths playing in the match did a quick calculation,  $24 - 12 = 12$ , estimated 12 tricks to be won, and unhesitatingly bid Six Hearts. West normally led ♣A.

How many tricks can South make on this lead?

What is the largest number of tricks that South can make had West led ♥4?

See page 41 for the answer.

## Ballet, Tap, Jazz and Modern Stage Taught to children from 2½ years

Classes are held in the Killearn Village Hall and in the Edmonstone Hall, Blanefield.

The new session will start in the w/c 28 August 2023.

Registration is on Tuesday 22 August in the Edmonstone Hall, 3:00pm to 5:00pm, or send me an email or text message.

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## Killlearn Village Hall News

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Wrestling – who would have thought? It's all in a life in the day of Killlearn Village Hall.

I love it. Imagine someone rings up to ask if they could come and have a look at the Village Hall with a view to hosting a wrestling evening? Wrestling – really? Is wrestling really a thing? And in the main hall? Would it fit? How would it work... and would people want to come along?

Roll on a couple of months – and an extremely organised and committed team from Live Pro Wrestling turned up mid-afternoon to set up an honest to goodness wrestling ring in the main hall... with seating placed all around and everything.



And tickets went like hot cakes. Those with ringside seats had prime views to see performers including Kid Fite, Daisy Jenkins, Shewolves, and BT Gunn, all supplemented by a pop-up bar in the Kitchen Window. The evening was a huge crowd-pleaser, and we're looking forward to the return of wrestling to the hall!

Every day is a school day, and we love learning about new events and new opportunities. Please do get in touch if you have ideas you would like to explore.

And you will no doubt be hearing and seeing photos of the Coronation Tea Party in the village which took place on 7 May, and what a way to bring together a group of local residents on a happy occasion. Not to mention local

## More Coronation Celebrations

---

Another delightful party for senior members of the village was held in the grounds of the primary school. It was hosted by pupils and staff of the nursery and classes of the school on the afternoon of 12 May.

Long tables had been set up, decorations hung and a meal of soup, followed by scones and cakes was served, all prepared by the staff, children and parents of the nursery school.

Before and after the meal we were all invited to visit the primary school 'museum', an exhibition of work by the pupils, illustrating kings, queens and coronations through the ages. There was even a replica of the Stone of Scone – at least we think it was a replica.

The sun shone on the gathering, which blended old and young, and was greatly enjoyed by all.



volunteers coming forward to bake cakes, serve teas, put up balloons, give lifts... it was just amazing. A great example of the community spirit that is alive and thriving within the village. We're looking for our next excuse to host a tea party!

And it's not always an inside event that we celebrate at the hall – we were delighted in April to team up with Julie Symmonds to support her work with the Dance for Parkinson's Group and light up the hall blue for World Parkinson's Day on 12 April.

We're on your doorstep – we're keen to help – come and chat. Or email us at [killlearnvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:killlearnvillagehall@gmail.com).

FIONA RENNIE



## Courier Interview: Beth Taylor

Those who watched *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World* in June will need no introduction to Beth Taylor, who wowed judges and audiences alike to win the wildcard spot and a place in the final.

The mezzo-soprano grew up in Killearn, and attended both Killearn Primary and Balfour High schools before moving to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland via an Open University Diploma in Music. Not to mention work at the local Spar and Burger King in order to make ends meet in true student fashion. Oh, and a stint during the 2020 lockdown at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, cleaning (her agent needed convincing)!

When I spoke with Beth during one of her rare visits to the village, she was quick to remember Linda Riddle, who oversaw music at the primary school, as an early influence, as well as the music department at the high school. She says she was ‘surrounded by people who wanted to give you a chance’. But by far, her earliest and greatest influence was her mother, Chrissy, who not only supported her decision to pursue music, but also made sure, among so much else, that she learned all the words to the Scots poetry for the primary school’s Burns celebrations.

Beth sees the discipline and teamwork involved in music as excellent transferable life skills, and would love to see more children given the chance in school to pursue music in a similar way as they are encouraged to play sport.

Beth was no stranger to music when growing up, with a grandfather who listened to Mahler and a great-aunt who sang, but it’s also fair to say that the classical genre was still something of a mystery early on. Clearly she’s made up for lost time, now including



in her repertoire works from Bach to Wagner via Berlioz. She is confident singing in French as well as German.

Beth regularly takes on ‘male’ roles – it’s a mezzo thing, apparently – and she’s enjoyed stints as Julius Caesar and an entertaining selection of evil kings. The coloratura aspects of her voice were certainly on show as she sang ‘Vorrei vendicarmi’ from Handel’s *Alcina* at Cardiff. Beth admitted thoroughly enjoying simply standing and singing these pieces during the competition. More typically, she would be on stage both singing and acting the parts of the jealous ex-lover, and bashing someone at the same time.

Beth has been a professional singer for five years. The French she enjoyed in school has become her second language, which is handy as she spends the majority of her time performing in Europe, where she notes that the arts are a more accepted part of ordinary life – the German government invites their 18-year-olds to register on a ‘KulturPass’ app to receive €200 to be spent on their choice of cultural activity, including museums, films, theatre and concerts. Beth has also become something of an authority on visas (another useful transferable skill, perhaps).

Interestingly, performing at the Met isn’t Beth’s notion of a career pinnacle. She would like to engage with young people with additional needs, revisiting the sort of work she enjoyed during her time with Paragon Music in Glasgow. In the meantime the next three years will be a flurry of performances and recording.

If you missed the Cardiff programme, you can find it on iPlayer; you can keep up with Beth on [www.bethmtaylor.com](http://www.bethmtaylor.com).

You will have another chance to enjoy Beth’s singing as part of a group of outstanding soloists in Berlioz’s *The Trojans* under the baton of Sir John Eliot Gardiner on 3 September, part of the BBC Proms.

NB

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# The Beer Fest's Super Decade



Hard to believe, but this year we launched the 10th – yes, 10th! – Killlearn Beer Festival on an appropriately cracking day of the year. Previous festivals have experienced everything from dreich grey skies and monsoon-like deluges through to lovely bright days. However this year's weather was absolutely exceptional, from Friday straight through to Sunday.

It shouldn't be lost that while the day itself was a fun one for everyone, the preparatory work, setting up and dismantling of the whole exercise was not insignificant. This year, that burden was reduced considerably with the 18 volunteers to hand, so thanks to all for taking the time out – it was much appreciated.

Given the significance of this being the 10th festival, Beer Meister Barry Moore ensured we had the widest range ever. New and upcoming breweries such as Mosaik, STF and Newt Brew featured, along with a few old favourites such as Windswept, Campervan and Thistly Cross ciders.



Appropriately, this also turned out to be our biggest attendance to date, with corresponding record takings. As usual, the majority of these well-gotten gains, will continue to be distributed to local charities and causes.

Special mention and thanks must again be made to The Old Mill for their generous hosting and support, which is greatly appreciated.

Given the festival is targeted not just to beer aficionados but also as a wider community event, it was great again to see so many local individuals and families in attendance.

So, finally, thanks again for your help, and we look forward to seeing you again next year on Saturday, 1 June 2024.

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## Ice Cream and Tea Parties

How often have you heard city dwellers say that the area where they live has a cosy village atmosphere? The road where our son lives in London has a row of independent shops at one end and at the other end a huge park, with play areas and tennis courts. They are also within easy reach of a library, a church, a school and a pub. It is easy to see why it might be thought of as village. But there is no getting away from the fact that they are smack in the middle of a city. It's as if village life is the default setting for the human family, and everyone likes to think they have it. In Killearn, however, we really do.

There are aspects of village life that are not always admirable, of course. The bush telegraph of gossip is often ascribed to villages rather than towns. The writers of cosy crime fiction depend a lot on neighbourly

familiarity. Is it the vicar or the shop keeper that has murdered the primary head mistress? But there is a communal feeling in villages that towns find a little more difficult to access. In general, we look out for each other, and perhaps that is easier in a small community.

The volunteers who organised the Coronation Afternoon Tea Party in



the Village Hall the day after the Big Event made a splendid contribution to the celebrations. Those invited were mainly those of us who could remember the last coronation, which drew a defining line at quite a high age group. And we had a splendid afternoon. The atmosphere was one of colour and cakes. An astonishing number of people found red, white and blue accessories in their wardrobes, and many of us ate our own body weight in Victoria sponge. The company was good, the chat was excellent, the feeling of camaraderie pervasive.



Then there appeared the collage of photographs of us all, a super souvenir of a super day, distributed freely. I got mine from Fiona when we bumped into each other in the Co-op.

And the whole thing was brought about by volunteers. Killearn is full of them. Look about you at the floral embellishments, the tubs and baskets and patches of garden, ministered to by local residents. I had occasion to meet Helen and Ros, who were planting foxgloves in the plot across from the Co-op on a hot afternoon, when a total stranger approached and offered them each a Magnum ice cream as a thank you. I don't think the lady was local, but she was keen to express her appreciation. Sometimes the kindness of strangers touches the heart. Not only the volunteers are stars.

And finally, while on the subject of stars, huge congratulations are due to Killearn's Beth Taylor. I have had the pleasure of hearing Beth sing several times over the years, but you should hear her now! To reach the final of the *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World* competition is a stunning achievement, and she performed magnificently. I don't know if Beth is a volunteer where she lives now – her time must be at a premium and her schedule erratic – but she is certainly a star! JOYCE BEGG

## Thursday Club Welcomes You

The Thursday Club recently received a donation of £500 from the Connal family in memory of their mother Flora (née Ponton), who was a member of our club for many years. Pictured right, Sukyee Tai is presenting a cheque on behalf of the Connal family to treasurer, Alison McDade.

The Thursday Club welcomes village seniors, and hopes you will join them on 14 September from 2pm, at the Kirk Hall for the inaugural social meeting of the year.

The organisers are looking forward to September, and new members are very welcome. Anyone wishing to volunteer for two hours, once a month would be very welcome, too! In each case, please contact Maureen (550743), Pat (550074) or Alison (550155) for more information.



## Tree Dedications on Killearn's Wellgreen

On a bright Saturday in April, a good local crowd attended three unveiling events on the Wellgreen in Killearn.

The late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 was commemorated by the planting of an American maple. The accompanying plaque, kindly donated by Stirling Council, was unveiled by Fiona Glass, a well-known resident of Killearn and editor of the third edition of *The Parish of Killearn*.

The Killearn Trust had earlier planted an oak tree in memory of James Fallas, a long-serving Trustee.

His widow, Mrs. Mary Fallas, was invited to unveil the plaque commemorating his 54 years of service to the Trust. Happily, many of his family were also present for the occasion.

In a further event, the original plaque in memory of the late Queen's Golden Jubilee was re-erected at the golden sycamore tree. This tree had been planted in 2002 by The Killearn Trust. Heather Banks, who had been among the primary school children attending the original ceremony, was present nearly 21 years later to unveil the refurbished plaque.

KAY POLLOCK



Fiona Glass



Mary Fallas surrounded by her family



Heather Banks



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MEMBER



‘The Old Mill’ is one of the best known and favoured places in Killearn today. However, it has only actually been a pub for about 40 years... and the building was never actually a mill!

Over the centuries there have been a number of hostelrys in the village. In the mid 19th century there was the Black Bull, the White Horse (where the Health Centre car park is), and the Wheatsheaf (where Killearn Kids Hub is). The latter two were closed in the 1920s after the successful campaign by the Temperance Movement.

The Old Mill building itself dates from 1774, and for many years was used by the Fairlie family, village carters, who stabled their horses in the area through the archway where the Beer Garden is now. Willie McCready ran the business until it closed in 1924. Miss Agnes McCready then took on the premises as her handloom weaving workshop, where she designed textiles and weaving samples for production by mills in the Scottish Borders.

Betty Shaw (pictured above outside The Old Mill), who has lived in Graham Road for over

50 years, worked for Miss McCready in what is now the bar of our village pub. Betty went to (the old) Killearn Primary School and (the old) Balfron High School and left at the age of 15.

Miss McCready designed the textiles herself and ran the business; Betty was employed to make up the samples on the weaving loom – a job she thoroughly enjoyed.

In those days, Patons the Butchers was next door, where the Mulberry Bush Nursery now stands, and beyond the Toll House was the Doctor’s Surgery (now the vets) and the Post Office.

Betty worked for Miss McCready for five years from 1950, but her wages were only 19s 6d a week (less than £1), so she moved on to become a shorthand typist and earned three times as much!

Betty later worked at Killearn Hospital as a nursing auxiliary, covering two night shifts each weekend, and then at Ballikinrain School, as a night care officer.

Miss McCready closed her workshop in the early 1970s, and the building lay empty before being converted into our much-loved village pub in 1980.

## Do You Have A Favourite Tree?

As we all know, trees are hugely important for the environment. In terms of carbon storage, producing oxygen through photosynthesis and for biodiversity as hosts for other species (oak trees alone support up to 2,300 other species), trees do a lot of heavy lifting. But trees also provide shelter from the elements and from noise and so are important for our peace of mind and wellbeing.

In Killearn we are lucky to have some wonderful mixed woodland in the Glen, in Kirkhouse Woods, in the ‘Big Park’ and throughout the village in gardens, fields and other open spaces.

Do you have a favourite tree? Killearn Natural History Project would love you to send us a photo

or tell us why a particular specimen is important to you. Does a tree remind you of something? Help you unwind? Is it the site of something important to you? Do you just love its aesthetics? Please email [heritage@kfcf.co.uk](mailto:heritage@kfcf.co.uk).

The Killearn Natural History Project is building a new section on the Killearn Heritage Trail website describing what is important or interesting about our local flora or fauna. As part of this activity, television wildlife documentary producer Nigel Pope led a ‘Dawn Chorus Bird Walk’ at 5am on a Sunday morning in May, which was enjoyed by all who took part. As we go to press, the project is planning a bat detecting and a moth trapping session to help our community learn more about our environment and wildlife.





# STRATHENDRICK Classic & Sports Car Club



Having had runs for lunch to Knockderry House at Cove on the Kilcreggan peninsula and Loch Leven's Larder, along with our overnights to Banchory Lodge Hotel on Deeside, by the time you read this we will also have had our annual Car-BQ, together with static displays at Drymen Show, Gartmore Gala and Killearn Village Hall. Taking advantage of the longer days in August, we have a whole day trip out to Glen Coe, and we are hosting a tour of pre-World War II cars that is starting from Dobbies in Stirling.

September sees us going to Strachur on Loch Fyne and another trip to the Scottish Torque Show –




Members cars at Loch Leven's Larder



an interesting mix of cars and aeroplanes in aid of the RAF Foundation – before our last event of the summer programme to Culross.

Our members have a range of cars, ancient and modern, ranging from a 1929 MG M-type to a 2019 BMW M5 135i. So if you would like to join us – and you don't even have to own a car, just an interest in motoring – then please get in touch by email at [SCSCC.Sec@gmail.com](mailto:SCSCC.Sec@gmail.com)

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The five-year period for the Community Council ended in May and a new Council was formed. The new Council comprises Elizabeth Jones (Chairperson), Fiona Rennie (Secretary and Vice-chair), Andrew Donaldson (Treasurer), with the four other members being Hilary McGregor, Heidi Bryce, Caroline Carrick and Michael Bowdidge.

This total meets the required number (seven) and allows for two additional members to be co-opted.

The community and the council would like to welcome Michael Bowdidge as a new councillor – Michael brings a broad interest in research, the arts and working with younger people.

The community and council would also like to thank Jim Ptolomey who has retired as Chair of the Community Council for his longstanding support and to acknowledge the very welcoming and accommodating approach that Jim brought to the role. He made time to listen to everyone and welcomed views from across the parish. We look forward to continuing to work closely with Jim in his other community roles.

Jim would like to thank all members for their support throughout the last five years and wish them well for the future.

There were a few significant issues over the previous term and, leaving lockdown aside, there were changes to roads within the village with the introduction of

20mph speed limits and crossings created at both ends of the village, the debacle of bridges (or lack thereof), the new development at Buchanan Views, a start to convert the hospital site, and the conversion of the former hotel to a flatted development. Broadband struggles have eventually provided improvement and there is, at last, ongoing movement from Openreach.

The new Council will be faced with similar issues in future and of immediate consideration will be the Place Plan and in conjunction with KCFC, the active travel pathways.

Throughout the pandemic we only missed one meeting, having converted to online, and with resumption of normality changed the format to a hybrid meeting, which allows access to all members of the community.

As always, despite there being no further formal meetings until September, the work of the Community Council will be ongoing and action taken as required. The new Stirling Councillors to represent us are Paul Henke, Gerry McGarvey and Rosemary Fraser, all of whom have shown a willingness to become involved with our issues.

We hope everyone enjoys the summer break and look forward to meeting again in September.

JIM PTOLOMEY / ELIZABETH JONES  
FOR KILLEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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## Community Engagement and Reassurance

PC Steven Graham retired from Police Scotland in March 2023. He spent the vast majority of his police service working in this area and will be missed. PC Graeme McNulty is currently the only ward officer and is based at Balfroon Police Office. He can be contacted on 101 or at [ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk](mailto:ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk), however please note that this email address is not always monitored and should not be used for the reporting of crimes or live incidents.

## Killearn Primary School

It has become apparent that the restricted parking areas at the main entrances to Killearn Primary School (Crosshead Road and Graham Road) are not always being adhered to. We require full community support in relation to these zones, otherwise there exists a real safety issue for the children crossing these roads. Please consider parking further away and walking.

## Cyclists

With the UCI World Cycling Championships just finishing, many of us will be inspired to take to the roads on our two-wheeled leg-powered carriages once more. As the nights draw in, be safe on the road.

Make sure your bike is roadworthy. You should be regularly checking your brakes, tyres, chain and steering. It should go without saying that wearing a properly fitting helmet will help protect your head if you come off your bike for any reason.

Many collisions happen to cyclists because car drivers don't see them in time, a problem that is worse at night and when the weather is bad. Make sure both you and your cycle are visible. Wear the right clothing – bright and fluorescent materials by day and reflective materials, such as self-adhesive strips or stickers attached to clothes at night. You'll be much easier to see.

When riding at night, your bike must have both white front and red back lights lit. Also make sure your reflectors, including any amber pedal reflectors, are clean and visible. Using white front reflectors and spoke reflectors will also help you to be seen.

Flashing lights are allowed, but it is recommended that in areas without street lighting that riders use a steady front lamp.

## What if you're involved in a collision with a motor vehicle?

First, get yourself off the road and to a safe place. Second, stay calm. If you are injured, seek medical attention. But if there is a bad injury or the road is blocked, call 999 requesting the police or ambulance attendance.

The driver of a motor vehicle involved in the collision must stop and provide their name and address, and the name and address of the vehicle owner. They must also provide the vehicle registration number (Section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988). If the driver does not stop, note the registration number of any vehicles involved. Take details of any additional witnesses before contacting the police.

If you suspect that an offence has occurred, you should report the incident to the police soon as possible and within 24 hours (call 101 or attend at your local station).

## Children and bikes

When your child is learning to ride a bike, take some time to teach them road safety skills:

- ☺ Make sure the bike is the right size for your child.
- ☺ Teach your child how to check their bike is safe to use.
- ☺ Make sure your child has a helmet which fits, is worn correctly, and is properly fastened and secure.
- ☺ Make sure your child wears high-visibility clothing, and emphasise how easy this makes it for others to see them.
- ☺ Make sure your child knows which roads they are allowed to cycle on and what hazards they might encounter.

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## From the Wine Shelf: There's Method in It

This month the schools return, the summer comes to an end and the nights start drawing in. That all might sound a little bleak, but for me, autumn is the perfect time to delve into something new.

Have you ever wondered if all the nonsense we talk about wine is based in anything scientific? (Spoiler alert: it is, or at least it should be.) And when we talk of farmyards and sweaty socks, do we know why they are there? (Yes, we do.) So maybe this is the perfect time to decide to jump into the somewhat eclectic world of wine education. But where to begin?

Wine tasting is always better with friends, and in the absence of friends, certainly with a group of amenable strangers. So it is with that in mind that I am suggesting three online ways to increase your own wine geekery over the coming months, or to give as a great gift to someone in your life who would appreciate the challenge:

1. For the more serious studies, the wine trade relies almost exclusively on two bodies, one of which requires employment in service. The other is the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET), which caters to a more broad education, including those not working directly with wine. They host online courses at every level and encourage a very active online community as well: [www.wsetglobal.com](http://www.wsetglobal.com). It should be said that I have opted to moonlight teach for the WSET throughout my career, so I hold what they do in high esteem.
2. For a less formal education, that allows you to try an array of wines with a low price point and commitment, I like [www.bibwine.co.uk](http://www.bibwine.co.uk). They offer monthly tasting boxes with an online tasting which makes it very easy to turn into an evening with friends and snacks!
3. The final company was the hero of lockdown for many, and the owner, Diana, hosted hundreds of tasting events to help keep people sane. This is where you can find bespoke events, personal tastings, and even WSET courses all under one umbrella: [www.wineeventscotland.co.uk](http://www.wineeventscotland.co.uk).

And if you would rather learn more about the history and structure of the many wine regions around the world, two authors have been the gatekeepers of the best books for decades: Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson with the *World Atlas of Wine*, and from Jancis alone, *The Oxford Companion to Wine*.

ELAINE TAYLOR



### Don't Miss *Aladdin*

This year, Fintry Amateur Dramatic Society will be launching into the Christmas season with their hilarious version of the classic panto, *Aladdin*.

The best panto team in West Stirlingshire – hailing from Fintry, Killearn, Balforn, Kippen and beyond – will once again be bringing to the stage an extravaganza of utterly brilliant music and dancing, fantastic costumes and scenery, and huge laughs – as well as the time-honoured Sweetie Throwing and Community Song Audience Challenge!

Written by Gavin Paterson, *Aladdin* features a colourful cast of characters, including Aladdin's mum, Widow Twankey, and his daft brother, Wishee Washee; King Prawn and Queen Sweet and Sour; the incompetent pairing of PCs Me and Yew; our baddie, Abanazar; the Fairy of the Ring – and, of course, one rather troublesome Genie...

The show is directed in the Menzies Hall, Fintry, by seasoned panto pro David Smith, with choreographers Heather and Kirsty Stewart. We're anticipating a sell-out run, so make sure you book early for your preferred performance.

Tickets will be available from October on our website for performances from 30 November to 2 December and 7 to 9 December.

Visit [www.fintrydrama.org.uk](http://www.fintrydrama.org.uk), for full details and where you can also subscribe to stay up to date with FADS news and be notified when tickets go on sale.



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# PRESCHOOLERS in KILLEARN

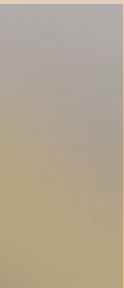
Until late in the 20th century, a common pattern for pre-school children was for them to receive primary care in their homes, but to spend a short time each week in community groups. For the under twos, these groups typically included Mother and Baby or Mother and Toddler. For slightly older children, Playgroup often became the norm, and during the year immediately prior to starting primary school, many children would switch to a nursery school or class. Attendance at periodic classes in dance, music or sports was not unusual.

This was once the pattern in Killearn, too. There was once a Mother and Toddler group and a Playgroup, and both were well-supported. The Playgroup ran three mornings a week during school terms, meeting initially in the building that now houses the pharmacy and later in the Church Hall. Administered by the primary school but physically separate, a Nursery class for children aged three to five

was held in a building, formerly the Victorian primary school, at the top of Main Street. Jumping Beans came periodically to the old Village Hall, providing opportunities for children to join with each other in songs and soft play.

It is tempting to continue with ‘and now this has all gone’ and move abruptly to the present. In one sense, this would be justified for there is no longer a Mother and Toddler group in Killearn or a Playgroup, Jumping Beans continues, but only in Stirling, and the old school that once housed the nursery class has been converted into housing. Certainly, this article will focus on the present, for its main aim is to present the opportunities for preschoolers that currently exist in the village.

However, these opportunities did not emerge out of thin air. They evolved as knowledge and expectations changed, and reference to the past brings this into focus.



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## [PRESCHOOLERS and THEIR CARERS

Mother and Toddler and Playgroup may have gone in Killearn, but there is a **BABY AND TODDLER GROUP**. It meets from 9.30am to 11am every Wednesday in the Church Hall, and new members are always welcome. You don't need to register – just turn up. The group is not actually restricted to babies and toddlers – preschool children of all ages attend. Activities aren't heavily structured, let alone governed by a curriculum; there is simply a rich array of toys and crafts for the children to choose from.

So, is our current Baby and Toddler Group simply an amalgam of the two earlier groups? There are certainly similarities, in that children attend with their adult carers and a key aim is to foster social contact amongst these adults (felt to be especially important post-Covid). Like its predecessors, the adults run the group, taking turns to set up, provide refreshments and clear away.

However, unlike the Playgroup, which had paid play leaders and was, for a time, affiliated to Stirling Council, there is no management structure beyond the adult helpers. Moreover, as another break from the past, it's not just mothers who come along: on the day that the *Courier* visited, there were several fathers and at least one employed nanny.

Similarly, while Jumping Beans no longer comes to Killearn, related opportunities are still on offer.

Clare Cushing runs **MUSIC CLASSES** in Balfron's McLintock Hall on Monday mornings and Killearn's Village Hall on Thursdays.

The mornings are divided into 30- to 45-minute sessions, and children attend one of these sessions in groups of about six. Adult carers come along too, and fostering connections amongst adults is seen as important.

The session which children attend is determined by age (four groups up to school age), with no lower limit: one session is for infants from birth to four months. These tiny babies enjoy their faces, fingers and so on being stroked in time with music, and some of them will even shake rattles or vocalise along with the beat.



Older children sing, march, dance and use basic percussion instruments with the likes of 'The Grand Old Duke of York' and 'Scottish Bluebells'. There is both recorded and live music, with Clare leading the singing or playing her ukulele or recorder. Clare is a professional oboist, and she is also well-versed in the research into infant musicality (e.g., the work of Colwyn Trevarthen at Edinburgh University).

The **TENNIS CLUB** often runs coaching sessions that preschool children can attend: since John McEnroe started at two years of age, it's clearly never too soon to learn to play. At the local club, the coaches do lots of throwing/catching, balance, agility and coordination exercises with the children. They make sure that the children get rackets in their hands and that they play in floor rallies (tennis on the floor) as well as try to hit balls over the net.

## [A FOCUS on the OVER-3s

Turning to the Nursery class, it might no longer be based in Main Street, but it still operates: **KILLEARN NURSERY** now occupies spacious premises (indoors and outdoors) in the primary school's playground, and continues to provide early learning and childcare for children aged three to five for up to five days each week. The nursery remains administratively part of the primary school, but for the past year it has been open from 8am–6pm each day (i.e., for a much longer period than the school). The main reason is that all three- to five-year-olds in Scotland (and a few two-year-olds) are now entitled to 1,140 free hours of learning and childcare, and the extended opening gives parents maximum flexibility over how to use this entitlement.



A corner of the garden at Killearn Nursery



Consistent with the Scottish Government's Early Years Framework, Killearn Nursery regards play as central to how children learn: plenty of time each day is devoted to free play, with staff-initiated activities building on and extending the interests and skills that children reveal through play.

Within this blended approach, progress is monitored and documented to identify achievements and possible next steps, with benchmarking informed by the Curriculum for Excellence, the Scottish Government's current policy for education from ages three to 18 years.



Each child has their own journal which they illustrate with drawings and in which staff document their progress. Given eventually to parents, these journals are shared with the primary school when children make the transition.



Relations with the primary school are very close, not just for administration and staff training, but also for the children: nursery and primary children worked together recently on a project around the King's coronation.

Killearn Nursery is not, however, the only facility in the village available to preschool children once they've reached their third birthday. **OUR LITTLE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM** opened five years ago on Main Street and caters for children aged from 3 to 12. It offers breakfast (7.30am–9am) and after-school clubs (until 6pm) during school terms and will transport children to and from school. It is open from 7.30am to 6pm during school holidays.



Garden area at the Killearn Kids Hub

While the majority of children at present are at primary school, the classroom is registered to take six children in the preschool age range.

Ownership of Our Little Outdoor Classroom changed at the end of June, and it is now known as the **KILLEARN KIDS HUB**. However, the current ethos will continue, which is largely to provide children with engaging and stimulating opportunities for play. As often as possible, the children are out of doors, on Wellgreen, in the playpark or the Glen, or simply in the large garden with climbing frame at the rear of the premises.

## [ALL-ROUND PROVISION

So, children aged three to five are well-catered for in Killearn, but what about the under-threes? Traditionally, all-day provision for very young children would have been unusual in reasonably prosperous communities like Killearn: the expectation was that families here, especially mothers, could and would cover this themselves.

All-day nurseries existed, but they were often located in relatively deprived areas and intended to 'compensate'.

However, much has changed. We now know, for instance, that children benefit from being with peers, and these benefits start before the first birthday. Furthermore, over 60 per cent of mothers of 10-month-olds are now in paid employment, with the figure even higher for three-year-olds. These mothers need all-day care for their children, perhaps especially in Killearn, where employment often means a commute.

It was within this context that **MULBERRY BUSH MONTESSORI NATURE KINDERGARTEN AND FOREST SCHOOL** opened 30 years ago, located in the premises that it still occupies on Balfroon Road.



Play area in the Mulberry Bush

Mulberry Bush is a privately-run day nursery, operating from 8am until 6pm, five days a week. It takes up to 71 children from six weeks of age until they start school. The minimum requirement is that children attend for the equivalent of two full days a week, but many attend for three, four or five days. Virtually all of the children's parents are doing paid work, and attendance patterns reflect this.

Like Killearn Nursery, life at Mulberry Bush is child-centred and focused on play, with progress carefully monitored. However, as its name suggests, the ideas of Maria Montessori are a specific influence. Montessori's ideas are multifaceted, but at their heart is an emphasis on children achieving mastery over developmentally appropriate activities that interest them. With reference also to the Curriculum for Excellence, the activities on offer each day at Mulberry Bush are planned with this

in mind. Activities, including those associated with the nursery's 'Forest School Days', take place indoors, in the enormous back garden, and elsewhere in the village.



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**Heron House Early Years** is also a private day nursery. It occupies a converted house on Beech Drive and takes children from two months. It is open from 7.45am to 6pm, five days a week, with a minimum weekly attendance of two days.

While over 80 per cent of its current cohort is in the preschool age group, Heron House also accepts five- to 12-year-olds, running breakfast and after-school clubs during term-time (with more extensive provision during school holidays), and walking the children to and from school. Currently, 10 primary-aged children attend Heron House, typically children who first went there as preschoolers.

Indoor activities at Heron House take place across several well-equipped rooms, for instance four rooms for the under-2s. There is a garden at the rear, and good use is made of the Glen and adjacent fields. Once more, the ethos is child-centred and play-oriented, with the role of adults being one of guiding children forwards on tasks that engage them. Interestingly, Heron House



Play area in Heron House



Garden at Heron House

couples this approach with an emphasis on dialogue, collaboration and social relationships, resonant with principles pioneered in Reggio Emilia in northern Italy, and still written about widely under the Reggio name.

## [CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Preschool children and parents in Killearn can access a rich selection of groups, classes and nurseries, but none of this is guaranteed. A shortage of suitably trained workers in our region can cause staff recruitment difficulties for the nurseries. Moreover, while the provision of 1,140 free hours is a bonus for parents, the funds that providers receive to cover this are not invariably regarded as adequate. Added to this, preschool establishments are now subject to monitoring such as health and safety, and while the need for this is undeniable, the time (and hence costs) it consumes is not always felt to be recognised.

There are challenges. Related factors contributed, for instance, to the closure of Killearn's Playgroup. Nevertheless, we can, for now, celebrate well-equipped and stimulating facilities in our village, informed by the most up-to-date thinking about how children learn and develop.



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# Killearn Health Centre News

## Appointment Update

We continue to offer our patients a choice of either face-to-face or telephone consultations. Telephone consultations have remained a popular choice for patients with conditions which do not necessarily require examination. Simply ask for your preference of face to face or telephone when you book.

## Vaccinations

We would like to remind all patients that Forth Valley NHS Board are now responsible for the administration of all vaccinations to our patient population. This responsibility has transferred from the Practice to the Health Board. It will include the Flu and Covid programme scheduled for this autumn.

We are very sorry and disappointed with this decision, made at Scottish Government level and facilitated by the Health Board.

As a result this does mean that Killearn Health Centre will have no part in the scheduling of appointments or the delivery of the Flu or Covid vaccinations to our patients. Our understanding is that you will receive direct communication from the Vaccination Teams regarding appointments.

If you have any queries regarding any vaccinations, please contact the Forth Valley Vaccination team on

0800 130 3120, or the National Vaccination Team on 0800 030 8013, rather than the Health Centre, as we will have no access to appointment information.

## Mental Health Services for young people aged 12 to 17 (inclusive)

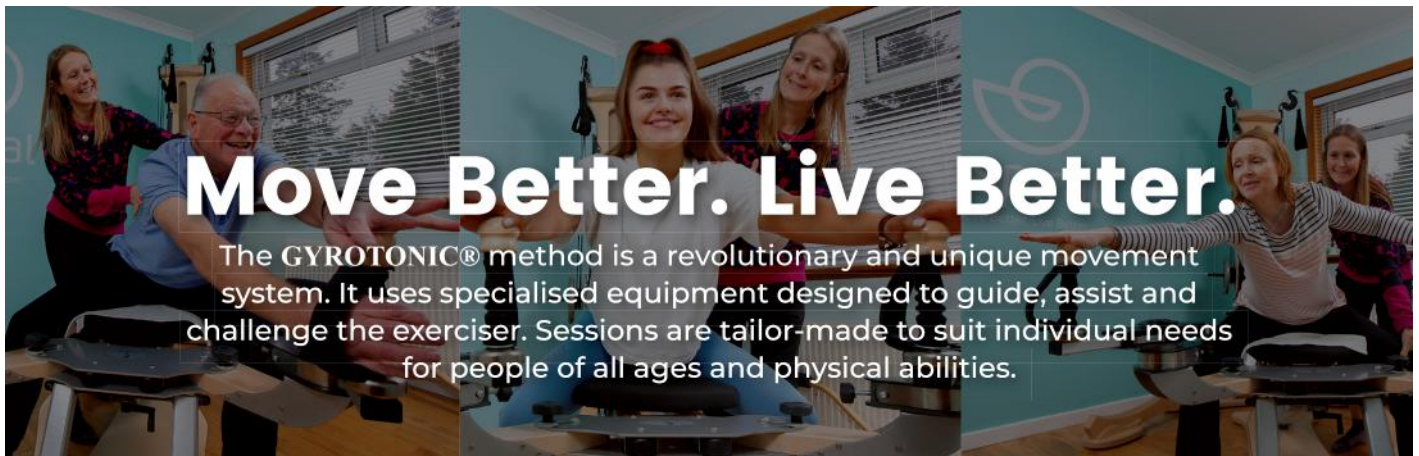
We are pleased to announce we now have access to a Mental Health Nurse, Jane Yule, who offers appointments to young people aged 12 to 17 inclusive. Appointments can be made for issues such as low mood/depression, anxiety, stress, relationship challenges, sleep issues, situational crisis, bereavements and emotional regulation. Please contact reception to book an appointment.

## Staff Update

Dr Maria J. Barroso Relinque left us in early August 2023, to continue her GP Training. She will return to us in August 2024.

Dr Margaret Carey returned to us in August 2023 to complete her final year of training.

We continue to offer Foundation Year training to medical student Dr Rebecca Weislo, who finished her rotation with us in August 2023, while Dr Cameron McCloskey started his Foundation Year rotation in August 2023.



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Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) is delighted to invite applications for the role of On-Call Firefighter within our Aberfoyle and Balfron Community Fire Station.

On-Call Firefighters are a vital part of the SFRS, providing a professional emergency fire-and-rescue service in remote and rural communities across Scotland. We recognise and celebrate the vast diversity of the local communities of Scotland that we serve, and aspire for this to be reflected within our workforce. We encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds, experience and beliefs, who share our values of safety, teamwork, respect and innovation, and want to make a difference in the community, to consider working for us.

On-Call Firefighters undertake a range of activities that contribute to the protection of people and making communities safer:

## Community Activities

Educating the local community on fire safety and carrying out home fire safety visits, delivering fire safety advice and identifying potential risks within the home, delivering important water safety and prevention of wildfire advice.

## Operational Activities

Attending all types of emergencies, such as fires, road traffic collisions, rescue of persons, floods, incidents involving hazardous materials, as well as supporting partner agencies when required.

## Non-Operational Activities

Developing and maintaining skills by attending drill nights, training courses and exercises. No previous experience is necessary, as full training will be provided, but you must meet the following criteria:

- be eligible to work in the UK
- 18 years of age or over (at point of application)
- readily available to attend station within a specified time of an emergency call out
- have a good level of physical fitness, and meet the required standard of vision and colour perception.

The role of an On-Call Firefighter is not a full-time role and if you are employed, you must have the express permission of your employer to allow you to be released for duties. We can help you talk to your employer to explain the commitment required.

You can expect to receive payment for all operational incidents attended and time spent on training nights, courses and community engagement. You will gain new skills and, most importantly, you will make a positive difference supporting the local community.

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## The B Flats – Celebrating 25 Years

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The B Flats is a community choir based in Gartocharn and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. In that time, the choir has performed at numerous events, raised money for charity, and made a positive impact on the lives of its members and the wider community. It was founded in 1998 by a group of friends who shared a love of singing. The choir quickly grew in popularity, and today it has over 40 members. The B Flats perform a variety of music, from classical to pop to musical theatre.

When the choir was founded, one of the key aims of The B Flats was to raise money for local charities. Over

their 25 years the choir has raised more than £41,000 for charities such as Strathcarron Hospice, Maggie's Centre Glasgow, Lomond Mountain Rescue and CentreStage.

The choir meets for rehearsals on Thursday nights, 7.30pm–9pm starting in September and continuing to May, with Christmas and Spring concerts every year.

The B Flats would like to invite all potential new members to their Come and Sing event on Thursday, 7 September, 7.30pm–9pm at Kilmarnock Millennium Hall, Gartocharn. Come along for a chance to try out the choir and enjoy some delicious home baking afterwards.

## Broadband Report

---

As I write this report at the end of June, we have seen some real progress locally.

The school finally had its fibre connection installed. Additionally a number of premises have got the option of an FTTP connection, that can offer speeds of 900Mbps if desired, to replace their poor existing ADSL2 connection. In due course, some others may also be included.

Morrison's Telecoms have been adding additional 'spine' fibre capability for all the local villages which all converge to an aggregation point in Killearn. In addition, preparatory work for connecting individual premises has been done by laying ducting in Rowan Crescent, Napier Road, Balfour Road between King's Mile and Heron's Court, and also outside the Pharmacy and Toll House. Running the fibre cable through the ducting and getting it operational usually takes at least six weeks.

Work has also been done near Baptiston Farm and towards Dumgoyne running overhead fibre. Several properties along the Fintry Road, at the western end, have been contacted by Morrison Telecoms doing survey work and they indicated that fibre will be coming within the next four to five months. It's not clear whether this work will extend to the Killearn end of Boquhan or Ballochruin Road where further activity has been seen. Enquiries have also been made to residents around The Square and down Main Street by BT Openreach regarding re-utilisation of overhead connections to provide fibre using existing poles (in contrast to underground ducted cabling). FTTP connections should then be possible to those premises.

FTTP connections have just become available to premises in G63 9RF, G63 9ND, G63 9NE, G63 9RL

(all Main Street), G63 9LG (Drumbeg Loan), G63 9NB (Kirkhouse Road), G63 9NL (Balfour Road), G63 9PA, G63 9PB (Napier Road), G63 9RZ (Rowan Crescent), G63 9SQ (Birch Road). Do be aware that some premises on these postcodes are not showing as having an upgraded service yet for some reason.

The Branziert remains the one large unimproved area of the village. In part, this may be due to the 'moratorium' on major groundworks following the significant renewing of road and pavement surfaces there some years ago. This has prevented new ducting being laid and has initiated discussions about going overhead on new poles.

Equally, I have no news of improvements to the low-numbered Main Street premises, although I see work is currently underway there, too.

As I write, the DigitalScotland website postcode checker is not working, but the BT Openreach Fibre Checker is. You can check the availability to your own premises there, although not when it will arrive, if fibre is not currently an option.

If your premises has a name as well as a number, there may be two addresses to choose from and the results may differ, so check both entries. Also, when you try to order a fibre connection, your ISP's sales database might not reflect the Openreach infrastructure database, as there are delays between physical connectivity, Openreach's enquiry database, and any ISP sales database all getting into alignment.

DOUG ASHWORTH  
CHAIR, KILLEARN BROADBAND GROUP

# Sunshine, Smiles and Superb Summertime Tennis

As we welcomed the long summer evenings, Killearn Tennis Club has been increasingly busy. On the court, we've hosted a number of friendlies with visiting sides from Nuffield, Milngavie and Strathblane. It has been brilliant to field mixed, women's and men's doubles teams, all enjoying some competitive tennis and the equally important social side. While Nuffield's men's team proved too strong for our chaps, our women's team and a mixed doubles team achieved victories.

The Open Day on 20 May saw over 250 people visit through the afternoon. Kids and adults all enjoyed the taster coaching session, 'Liveball' and the ball machine was a popular activity. George Douglas kept guests fed, showing some deft culinary skills at the BBQ. It was fantastic to see so many smiles on a balmy Saturday, and we would like express our thanks to the community for the support. We are delighted to welcome a number of new juniors, adults and families as members to the club.



Open Day

Off the court, ClubSport Stirling (CSS), in partnership with Scottish ClubSport, held an awards ceremony on 24 April to recognise the outstanding work and impact of local volunteers within Stirling's sport club network. Our club President, Gillian Johnstone, was nominated for her voluntary contribution to local sport, alongside fellow Stirling volunteers. Congratulations to all!



The coaching team



Killearn mixed doubles v Strathblane Friendly

Through the summer the club will continue to be busy. Our coaching team (10 out of Tennis) are running an open summer schedule for junior coaching camps through the school holidays, in addition to the regular coaching programme. Juniors and adults coaching can be easily booked online and is suitable for beginners and experienced players, with members qualifying for a discount – [www.10outoftennis.com](http://www.10outoftennis.com) for more. Our Club Championships will run through the summer, with singles and doubles men's and women's competitions, as well as mixed doubles.

This year we will be running a finals day on Saturday, 3 September, during which we will also be running an open Juniors tournament, and hosting drinks and a BBQ. Members and guests are welcome to attend whether you are entered as a competitor or not.



Gillian Johnstone at the ClubSport Stirling Awards

New branded caps and polo shirts are available to purchase from Steven McQuilken of 1st Class Trophies & Awards ([1stclasstrophiesawards@gmail.com](mailto:1stclasstrophiesawards@gmail.com)).

The Club would like to express grateful thanks to Roger Broad for the donation of tennis rackets belonging to his late wife Judy, who was a popular, long-term member of the Club.

As always, *Killearn Courier* readers are welcome on the courts. Visit [www.killearntennisclub.org.uk](http://www.killearntennisclub.org.uk).

RONI, GILL, GEORGE, LAURA, PHILLIP, JAMIE AND SHAUN

# Sunshine Graces the 2023 Killearn 10k

More than 180 runners started and finished the Killearn 10k on Saturday, 3 June, and delighted organisers described the event as their best ever. Both the Mile and the 10k were bathed in glorious sunshine throughout. Entries for the 10k, supported by main sponsors West Homes, sold out in less than 24 hours in December. And there was plenty of enthusiasm in the air on the day, with smiling faces everywhere, before the start in Killearn Park at 11am. A committee member said: 'A lot of hard work all year round goes into putting on the event, but it all seems worthwhile when you see so many people getting so much enjoyment from it.'

A sold-out field of more than 200 ran the Killearn Mile. Mums, dads and kids enjoyed the fun run together and had a ball.



The elite runners set a blistering pace despite the heat, and barely 15 minutes had passed before news filtered back to amazed organisers that male race leader Steven Lamb of Bellahouston Road Runners had already reached the half-way point.

Steven duly came home in an amazing 34:36 to smash the course record, looking like he'd been for a gentle two-minute jog as he cruised over the line. Although the

current route has only been in place since 2022, it was a truly amazing time.

Last year's winner, Finlay Finlay of Garscube Harriers, was two minutes behind in second place (36:47). Another Bellahouston Road Runner, Lewis Roberts (37:10), took third.



The quality of the performance put in by the winner of the female race, Catriona O'Donnell, is summed up by the fact she was seventh in the entire combined field. She won in 40:30, followed in by Bellahouston Road Runners' Rhona Fraser (43:57). Angela Irving (44:55) claimed third.

Catriona also took the prize in the female veterans over 50 category. G63 male winner Stuart Bradnam made the overall Top 10, too, finishing eighth in 40:44.

The other category winners were: female over 70, Ann Lister (74:58); female under 20, Sarah Lawrence (60:31); male under 20, Christiaan Lamb (53:07); female over 60, Geraldine Barnett (69:39); male over 60, Brian Andrews (50:06); male over 50, Colin Hughes (40:30); female over 40, Rhona Fraser; male over 40, Finlay Finlay. Senior female (19-40), Hannah McAuley (46:00); senior male, Steven Lamb.

The G63 prizes for local runners went to Hannah McAuley and Stuart Bradnam, and the hotly contested race within a race among the 10k stalwarts of Killearn Football Club was won in fine style by Matthew Anderson (47:47). Our thanks to UK Athletics chair and Killearn resident Ian Beattie for presenting the prizes.

10k day, however, is about much more than elite winners and trophies. The event is intended, in a small way, to be a force for good in the community, promoting the benefits of an active lifestyle and providing a



Female race winner Catriona O'Donnell accepts her prize from the chair of UK Athletics, Killearn resident Ian Beattie



Male race winner Steven Lamb with 10k race director Kerri McPherson



G63 male winner Stuart Bradnam receives his prize



celebration for the village to come together and enjoy. It's a credit to Killearn and its community spirit that more than 70 people turned out to help stage the 10k and Mile in various capacities, and that so many others came along to the park to take part or cheer the runners on.

The runners had tough conditions to cope with in the heat, but local residents helped them out by setting up a couple of impromptu water stations on the route. There was even an improvised shower to cool them off, thanks to one kind soul's garden sprinkler.

After the race, organisers said: 'We know our runners love the 10k. They tell us so, and it's easy to see from how much they enjoy coming here.'

'The Mile is an absolute joy. It's priceless seeing how much the kids enjoy it. This year's race was superbly

organised by Jackie Hawkins and was easily the best Killearn Mile ever.

'There are so many people to thank for making the 10k and Mile such a wonderful success: our brilliant runners, committee, marshals and helpers; the people of Killearn for supporting the event so well; and our sponsors, West Homes, the Old Mill Killearn, Arnold Clark, A Total Clean, Cameron House on Loch Lomond, Killearn Pharmacy and S. Mac Joinery Solutions.

'Active Stirling play a key role in the Mile and Trossachs Search and Rescue provide first aid cover in the park. Thanks, too, to Killearn Brownies and Scouts for their help on race day.

'We can't wait until we all come together to run again in 2024.'



Kids start the Mile

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# Curling Sweep Up

The 2022/23 season was completed with several external successes and enjoyable final club competitions which helped to bring together the new members of Strathendrick.

Unfortunately, we also lost two long-term members of the club in former President Walter MacGowan and former Ladies President Elspeth Murdoch. Tributes were paid to them at the Annual General Meetings.

The Mixed Club Spring League was again closely fought. Fiona Glass's team of Rita Harris and Richard Barker pulled clear of John Macfarlane's and Paul Mosley's teams by 2 points in the final round of matches.

Fiona Glass won the Club's Points competition with Gill Smith second. This was played within the Stirling Curling Group Points.

The Closing Bonspiel was played for the first time since 2019, and resulted in a win for John Macfarlane's team of Gill Smith, Richard Kingslake and Andy McKinnell. This was followed by a light supper at Fintry Sports Club.



Paul Mosley presenting the Closing Bonspiel Trophy to Richard Kingslake, John Macfarlane and Gill Smith

The Ladies Section completed the Rowan Salver league with an easy win for Sally Macfarlane's team of Jane Weir, Kay Bidwell and Anne MacKay. The final Lomond Quaich league was won by Viv Taylor's team of Jane Weir, Gail Pain and Sue Scordia by +1 shot from Sally Macfarlane's team.

The Ladies Closing Bonspiel was played by six teams. Three teams tied on 3 ends each with Katherine Kelsey, Kay Bidwell and Penny Evans winning by +2 shots. Easter eggs were drawn for and won by Gillian Kingslake and Jean Leitch.

In external fixtures, the Club won the Province Forest Hills 'B' League by 2 points having won all their matches. The Club also beat Gargunnoch to win the Low Road trophy in the Province Knockout.

One of the highlights of the season was playing the delayed Balyarrow Trophy against three other clubs founded in 1846. Strathendrick won the latest match in 2017, so hosted it in the National Curling Academy. Strathendrick won again with 7 ends and more shots up than Falkland.

Strathendrick Ladies hosted the Winnock Shield, which was inherited from West Stirlingshire Ladies. This is an invitational bonspiel to raise money for charity. Some £450 was donated to Strathcarron Hospice.



Fiona Glass and Jane McLaren with their Winnock Shield teams

Jane and Kim McLaren were in the Stirling team which came second in the national ladies competition for the Henderson Bishop Trophy.

The Mixed Club held an Annual General Meeting in April at the Gargunnoch Inn while the Ladies held their AGM in the Inn at Torbrex following the Closing Bonspiel. Curlers of the Year were Fiona Glass and Deborah Macken respectively. For the Mixed Club, Bob Glass finished his term as President and was succeeded by Gill Smith. Paul Mosley became Vice-President.

For more information about our curling activities, please visit [www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk](http://www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk). We are a very friendly club and, post-Covid, hope to run some social events. Our curling standards cater for all ranges of abilities, so if you are interested and want some exercise in a friendly atmosphere, contact Tony Flisch (860580) or Gill Smith (550726), or visit our website.

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# Strathendrick Win Scottish Rugby's Community Club of the Season!

To top a fantastic year for the Fintry club, Strathendrick has been awarded two outstanding accolades.

SRFC's Head of Junior Rugby, Steven McCooey, was presented with Glasgow Warrior's 'SP Energy Networks Community Hero Award' at the pro club's black tie Annual Awards ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow. Steven has been at the heart of many of Strathendrick's recent initiatives, including outreach work with primary schools, coordinating Mini, Midi and Balfron High School coaching and fixtures, developing Girl's rugby, and starting community boot and food banks at the Sports Club.

Then in June, Strathendrick was awarded 'Community Club of the Season' at Scottish Rugby's Community Recognition Awards at Murrayfield. The club has men's senior 1st and 2nd XV's, five Midi/Youth teams, six Mini teams, three Girl's teams, Women's Touch Rugby, Strength and Conditioning, and Tartan Touch. The club raised funds for local hospices through the Mini's Charity Tournament and the 'My Name'5 Doddie' charity at the Annual Dinner, with guest Rob Wainwright. Not bad for a small club in rural Stirlingshire!

To top the season, the U18s went on tour to Sweden and won the Viking Cup in Gothenburg, and the U20s completed their much-anticipated tour to Upper Hut in New Zealand in July.

As rugby fans look forward to the World Cup in France this autumn, Strathendrick plans to build on its great foundations developing the sport for seniors,



SRFC U18s win the Viking Cup in Sweden



Strathendrick is awarded Community Club of the Year

juniors, girls and women in the coming year.

New members are always welcome. For information see: [www.strathendrickrfc.com](http://www.strathendrickrfc.com).

## Killlearn Football Club News



It has been a good season so far for team Killlearn FC. Competing at the top end of the league and progressing in the cup tournaments has been the reward for a very committed group of players, coaches and management.

The full squad has contributed so far and has been needed – covering injuries, work commitments and holidays. Having a mix of players of all ages is also great to see, and we continue to attract young Killlearn players into the club, auguring well for the future.

We have been delighted by the support at the games, helped, I'm sure, by the wonderful early season weather (and lack of midges!), combined with the positive performances from the team. It is very much appreciated

and makes a big difference.

Off the field we continue to get involved as much as we can in the local community. Once again a large team of players, coaches and supporters took part in the Killlearn 10k. We nominated a charity close to the club's heart this year, Alzheimer Scotland, for

our fundraising and were overwhelmed with the support received, raising over £1,500. Thank you to all who supported the lads both on the day and in contributing, it means a lot to us and our wider football family.

We are looking forward to the second half of the season, and with a bit of luck, finally getting our hands on some silverware.

Our annual golf outing and prize-giving will again be held later in the year. Details will be communicated on our social media sites.

Have a great summer and hope to see you all at the 'Field of Dreams' sometime soon!

KILLEARN FC COMMITTEE



## Robert Johnstone Beck (Rob) 1948 – 2023

Rob was the first child born to Jimmy and Betty Beck; two younger brothers and a sister made up the family who grew up in Milngavie. Proving an able pupil at school, Rob went on to Glasgow University where he studied civil engineering. He began his career as a consulting engineer, working for Babbie, Shaw & Morton, before moving to construction with Lilley, and then to Kelvin Construction Co., Mowlem, and finally Carillion before retiring early.

Rob and Sue met in 1979 when attending a Ski Party Leaders Course and they married in 1980. They settled first in Bearsden, but Rob's engineering work necessitated several moves – to Aberdeenshire, then to Shetland, then a return to Bearsden before they came to Killearn in the late 1980s. By this time they had a family – Michael, Andrew and Jennifer – arriving two years after the move – and became very integrated into Killearn village life.

Rob's chief pleasure was to be active outdoors and he shared his enthusiasms – cycling, hill walking, kite-flying, skiing and sailing – with his family. He was immensely practical, enjoying taking engines to bits and rebuilding them, working with wood and constructing a great range of items, among them musical instruments and boats, as well as a house extension – truly a master of DIY. Family holidays were usually camping and sailing trips, often around Scotland and sometimes abroad. During these he passed his many practical skills on to his children. With Sue active in Girlguiding, Rob was an unofficial



and honorary Girl Guide and he would often accompany the local unit on camping trips abroad.

He also had a keen interest in local history and was a member of the Drymen Local History Society, served on the committee and attended a number of Scottish Local History conferences.

Some 20 years ago, Rob was diagnosed with Parkinson's. He met this challenge with a quiet determination to keep going for as long as he was able. He continued at work for a time, before taking early retirement.

He kept as physically active as possible, cycling when he could and walking often. He started to walk regularly with his friend, Jimmy, and before long others had joined them. The group became the Wednesday Walkers. Exploring the local area on foot provided the exercise he needed, and sampling the local coffee shops gave the opportunity for plenty of socialising. Rob loved these outings.

Seeming a fairly reserved personality, nevertheless Rob possessed a strong sense of purpose with a quiet confidence which enabled him to see any plan through to its successful conclusion. These qualities, together with a marked sense of humour and a notable ability to laugh at himself, endeared Rob to all who knew him. But it was his family – his wife Sue, his children and his grandchildren – who loved him and valued him the most and, when he reached the end of life, could cherish the memories he left them.

SB/BP

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# Norma Emily Shirley Forrest 1937 – 2023

Norma was born in Redditch, Worcestershire, the first child of three in the family of George and Lola Lowe. Soon after her birth the family moved to the Holmes Farm, Longnor, Derbyshire, where she grew up. She attended Westwood Hall Girls High School in Leek, and then moved on to be a boarder at Trinity Hall, Southport. Here she made many friends and developed a love for music, becoming so proficient on piano and organ that when she left school, as well as continuing her own studies, she was able to give lessons herself. She also kept the accounts of the farm and later moved on to a secretarial college in Manchester. At the end of her course she was appointed to the staff of the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board, working on the appointment of examiners.

In 1958, Norma was bridesmaid to her great friend, Christine Barker, and it was at this event she became acquainted with the best man, Ronnie Forrest. By 1962 their relationship flourished, and they married and made their home in Killearn, moving into a newly built house in Branziert Road North. Here their family – Shirley and Stuart – were born and spent their early years until they moved to the Old South Manse in Balfon. During the academic term, Norma worked as a secretary in the University of Stirling's Department of Physical Education until, when the new Killearn Health Centre was opened, the late Dr Hector Campbell asked Norma if she would come to work as part-time secretary/receptionist. This gave her the chance to work within her own community,

which she did for the next 20 years. She just loved the job, valuing the contact it gave with the other staff and with her own community, and her warm and welcoming presence was much appreciated by all with whom she had contact.

Norma was a valued member of Killearn Kirk, playing the organ whenever needed for services and the piano for Guild meetings. She was also part-time organist at Gartmore and Buchlyvie church services, a driver for Meals on Wheels and the Good Neighbour Scheme – very much a contributor to the life of the community. In 1983, Norma and Ronnie moved to Lampson Loan, and this became the family home until the final years of their lives.

The loss of Ronnie in 2020, together with her own declining health and some time spent in hospital, clarified that additional care was needed. Norma latterly moved to Edinbarnet Nursing Home where her family were grateful for the care she received as she came to the end of her life.



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# Walter MacGowan 1944 – 2023

Walter was born and grew up in Firfield, Gartness Road, the only child of John and Janet. He attended Killearn Primary and Balfron High schools, and had a wonderful childhood growing up in the village, getting up to mischief with friends and his cousin, Kenneth Barclay. Aside from his many sporting interests, he was a loyal member of the Boys' Brigade, where he gained his Queen's Award and later became an officer.

After leaving school, Walter took employment with Brownlee & Co, timber merchants in Glasgow, whilst also working at the family sawmill in Killearn on a Saturday with his father and cousins, Johnnie and Iain MacGowan.

Walter married local girl Rosalind Jessiman in 1969 in Balfron Church, and soon after they moved together into Rosebank on Station Road. This was a home from home, as Walter's grandparents had lived there when he was growing up. Walter and his father built the 'new' Rosebank in their evenings and weekends, and this became a much-loved family home where Walter spent the rest of his life.

The arrival of children John and Kate completed the family, along with the many dogs and cats who graced the house throughout the years.

Walter was an integral part of the Killearn community and made many lifelong friends through his involvement in so many local organisations. From the BB, Killearn FC, tennis and badminton clubs in his youth, he was a member of the Round Table, Strathendrick Curling Club and the Horticultural Society, and a founding member of the Strathendrick Singers, where he sang for 30 years until Rosalind hung up her baton as conductor.

His biggest sporting love was golf, being a member of Strathendrick Golf Club as a young boy and then of Buchanan Castle for over 60 years.

Later in his career, Walter joined his friend, Phillip Pain, in running Cairn Conservatories, where they travelled the length and breadth of the country building conservatories, based latterly at Killearn Mill at the site of the family sawmill.

Following a sale of the business, he spent his final working years in the nurseries at Oakwood Garden Centre, where he was very content tending to all the plants. An avid gardener all his life, this was the perfect retirement job.

A loyal friend and family man, Walter welcomed son-in-law Robert when he married Kate in Killearn Kirk. The subsequent arrival of



his beloved grandchildren, Anna, Cameron and Archie, brought great joy, and provided comfort following the devastating loss of son John to a sudden heart failure in 2008. Walter and Rosalind played an integral role in the lives of the grandchildren: babysitting, picking them up from school, and taking huge pride in their achievements and humour.

Walter was diagnosed with a blood disorder in 2021, but bore his illness without a fuss, and died peacefully at home with Rosalind and Kate by his side. His friendship and good humour will be missed by all who knew him, most especially by his devoted family.

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# Ronnie MacDonald 1942 – 2023



Ronnie was the second son of Alec and Janette MacDonald and was born and brought up in Bishopbriggs. As a youngster he was in the BB for many years and sang in the Kirkintilloch Choir.

When he left school he worked in several insurance companies, learning the business from the roots and working his way up through the ranks, gaining experience as a loss adjuster and a surveyor and becoming an assistant director. He then, with some colleagues, established his own company of MacDonald, Reid Scott. He was also a non-executive director of several companies, contributing his experience and help in their development.

He and Annette met at a jazz concert in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, and discovered their homes were actually very close to each other. Mutual attraction led to their marriage in 1964. They lived in Lenzie for a while before moving to Drymen and finally to Ballikinrain, the last move being just a few metres within Ballikinrain grounds. A daughter, Julie, and a son, Grant, made up their family and their family holidays were frequently spent sailing or caravanning around Scotland.

Ronnie was a man with many interests and the energy to explore them. He bowled at Fintry and curled at Stirling with the local club. He was a member of Buchanan Castle Golf Club and Loch Walton Fishing Club and was involved for over 30 years with the Drymen Show, of which he served as president for a time.

Always a keen gardener, he produced record-sized marrows which he exhibited and for which he regularly won prizes at the Killearn Horticultural Show. He bred and trained gun dogs and had some champions with these in field trials.

He kept a classic car, a Triumph Renown, and was a member of Strathendrick Car Club, with whom he participated in local rallies.

With so many interests, Ronnie had many friends in many walks of life and was much respected in his business life and his social life. He was eminently approachable – a fair man and a peacemaker who would always be ready to give help when needed, and who had a store of tools and bits and pieces available to fix anything when required.

He could be something of a joker when appropriate, especially with a whoopie cushion, and was renowned for his enthusiastic use of Post-its!

He was diagnosed with cancer a year ago and, although he responded well to treatment at first, he had to live with the knowledge that his life would be limited. As he came to the end of his life, his family were so grateful for the support and care given them by Strathcarron Hospice, and they celebrate the fact that Ronnie's life left so many good memories for so many people.

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# Kenneth Hugh Parsons 1940 – 2023

Hugh Parsons was a well-known and greatly loved Killearn character. He was born in Bearsden, was widely known in Balfron where his business was based, but spent much of his life at Moss Cottage in the Blane Valley. He was much respected for his skills in joinery, and loved for his gentle and amiable personality.

Dyslexia was an unknown term in his childhood and his early school years were something of a trial as he struggled with the business of learning. Later he went on to Gordonstoun and his other many skills were given the chance to flourish, among them the pipes, which he played by ear.

It was with his hands that Hugh's talents became apparent and after he left school he won prizes at Stow College of Building. He became a joiner's apprentice in a big Glasgow building firm where he learned his trade, and most particularly he learned to respect and love the wood with which he worked and which he handled with immense care and precision, his work giving him great satisfaction.

In the early 1960s he set up his joinery business in Balfron and this became his life's work. It was accepted that his paperwork would be in a perpetual muddle, that his workshop, not always watertight, was hardly a pristine, organised space, but his bench and his machinery were kept immaculately, and should anyone dare to touch his big saw, Hugh would erupt in a mighty roar.

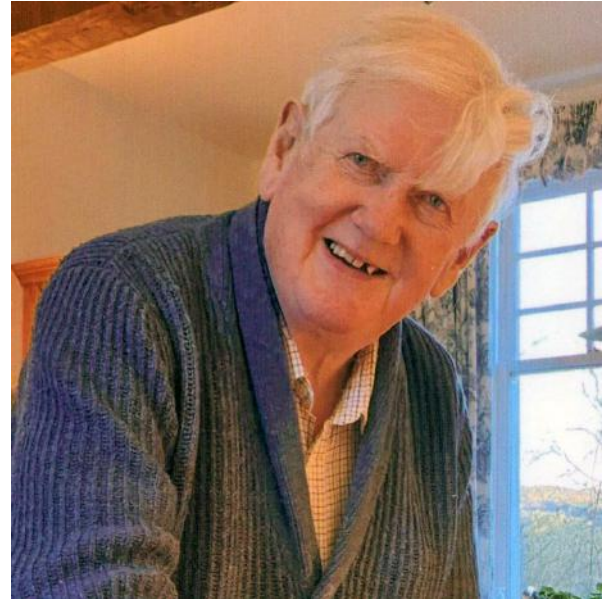
Despite his apparently chaotic surroundings, Hugh could always find immediately what he wanted down to the smallest brass screw. He may not have been the speediest to complete a task, but the quality of his work was legendary. 'Mr. Nearly Done' was an epithet conferred on him by a close friend, and most folk who consulted him for his joinery skills would soon realise that a swift completion of the task would be unlikely.

After 30 years his work on Moss Cottage is still not complete!

Outside his work, Hugh had a number of interests, one of which was music. He never learned to read music, but could sit at the piano and be able to give a very fair rendering of a tune just heard; he could do this on the harmonica, too, but it was the pipes that were his true love and playing with the Strathendrick Pipe Band. He learned a new tune by watching and then copying the fingering of other players on the chanter and that way was quickly up with the rest of the band, his ear telling him if his companions ever tried to trick him.

He joined an art class and an upholstery class, at both of which he worked slowly but meticulously, but cookery eluded him. It was the Dodgers Club, consisting of ex-pipers that met in a local coffee shop which was his special interest and provided him with an outing in latter years.

He had a store of knowledge about a variety of subjects, he loved tinkering with things, taking objects apart to see how they worked and putting them together again afterwards. An innocent question would elicit a lengthy and somewhat tedious answer covering all possible facts from which he could not be hurried or diverted.



An enquiry about directions from one place to another would inevitably bring forth a response filled by references to all points of the compass.

Asking Hugh a question might find his listeners becoming frustrated while they awaited the end of the discourse, yet they would be filled with laughter at his telling of the story.

Hugh was his own man – a gentleman – with his own way of doing things, his own way of exploring the world, and his own inimical way of dressing in his very traditional tweeds and highly polished shoes.

Exasperating though his ways may at times have been, he loved and was dearly loved by his two sisters, and cared for until the end of his life in the original family home. BP

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## Robin Ogg

It was with sadness that the *Courier* learned of the recent death of Robin Ogg, formerly of Station Road, Killearn. Robin and his wife Lorna played an active role in village life for many years before they left to live in France.



## Maureen Griffiths 1945 – 2023



Maureen Griffiths was a strong and fiercely independent woman whose life experiences could well fill a book.

She was born in 1945 to parents, Archie and Jo, and had an elder sister, Annette. She was very young when her parents moved from Largs to Callander, and it was here that she was educated at the primary school and at McLaren High School.

On leaving school she read mathematics and geology at Glasgow University. After graduating she went on to build a career as a geophysicist, working for several oil companies and in a number of countries: France, Lebanon, Libya, UAE, Australia, China and the US.

She faced the challenges of a woman working in countries where women's liberties were severely restricted and where men dominated the workplace. With strongly held opinions and always ready to speak out, she must have made a unique impression wherever she went.

She had several good friendships which lasted a lifetime and these companions would speak of her loyalty and her generous nature, her kindness and consideration for others. With the companionship of these friends she would travel, often to far-flung places, although she would also frequently journey alone.

When in China on one occasion she watched as the terracotta warriors were being unearthed. On another occasion at a social gathering she discovered she had been chatting to Formula One racing driver, Jean Alesi. There was a certain appropriateness in this, as she was known to be a fast driver herself and on occasions would feel it diplomatic to stop en route for a prolonged spell lest others found out just what speed she must have been driving to journey from the south of England to arrive in this part of Scotland in such a comparatively short time.

When her working days were over, she retired to live in Kew, but returned to Scotland in order to be closer to

her ageing mother, who was still living in Callander at that time.

Maureen made her home in Killlearn, where she bought Shepherd's Cottage, living at first in a caravan on the site while this derelict building was being renovated. During this time she took a building and construction course at college to ensure the project was being correctly managed! She made firm friends with her builder, her neighbours and the local shepherds.

She joined the local Curling, Golf and Cycling clubs, volunteered with Meals on Wheels, worked for Citizens Advice and took great pleasure in watching the wildlife that came to her garden.

A woman of great knowledge and wide experience, Maureen, or Mo as she was known to many, had a lively mind and great physical and mental energy.

She was staunch friend and a considerate neighbour, and will be much missed by those who had known her and appreciated her many qualities.

BP

### Bridge by Zorro

#### Solution to the problem on page 10

South can easily make all 13 tricks after the lead of ♣A. After ruffing the lead in dummy and throwing a second Club on ♠A, South can twice cross-ruff Spades and Clubs to dispose of the remaining Clubs. Once all the losing Clubs have gone, South can ruff back into their hand with a Diamond (now safer than a Spade), draw trumps, and claim the remaining tricks.

If West leads ♥4, the situation initially looks more challenging, for now only two losing Clubs can be ruffed in dummy. However, 13 tricks can still be made, given that both defenders hold four Spades. The lead should be won in dummy, with the next six rounds as follows: ♠A and Club discard, Spade ruff, Club ruff, Spade ruff, Club ruff, Spade ruff. This sequence draws every Spade from West and East, allowing South to play their ♦3 to dummy's Ace and throw their fourth Club on North's remaining Spade.

I'm not suggesting that North should have bid seven Hearts, not six. South was, after all, lucky with the Spade break. Rather, the point is that through the LTC, North could pinpoint a cold slam with hands that, between them, contained only 18 points. The LTC has many other uses, but guiding towards slams with highly distributional hands (and a trump fit) is certainly one of them. A clear but comprehensive guide to using the LTC can be found in Ron Klinger's 2014 book *Guide to Better Acol Bridge*.

Z

# PRIZE COURIER CROSSWORD

Set by PeeWit

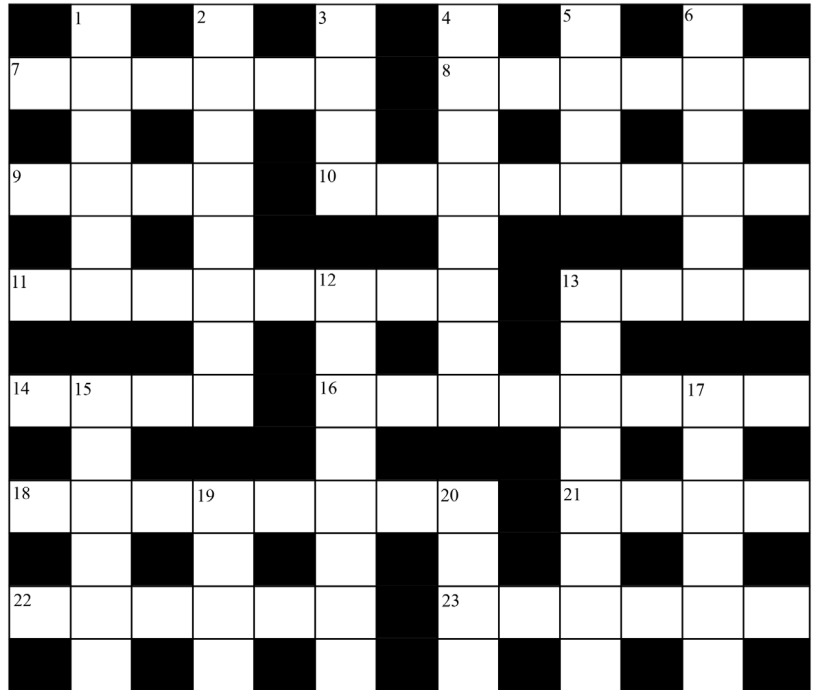
Our prize for the Prize Crossword is a Family Ticket to the Theatre Royal or the King's Theatre, Glasgow, subject to availability and restrictions on certain days. Our prize for the Children's Prize Codeword is a £10 voucher to spend at the Co-op. Entrants must be 12 years old or under. The *Courier* would like to thank the Ambassador Theatre Group for its generosity in providing the prize for one of our competitions.

## ACROSS

- 7 Irishman gets religion for meeting of the dead (6)
- 8 You cannot harm our body wearing this (6)
- 9 In by ten – no eight! (4)
- 10 Don't need Miss around for these helpers in church (8)
- 11 Make safe the number below your bank card (8)
- 13 The fuel of French motorhome (4)
- 14 Cobbler's ultimate tool (4)
- 16 Agitated sister to the artist is a poet (8)
- 18 Advert can go round (8)
- 21 Sounds like the place for a bargain for travel at sea (4)
- 22 Put aside with end of places to park (6)
- 23 Fuel in my Mercedes Benz old car (6)

## DOWN

- 1 African knows, yes, topless man! (6)
- 2 In a short month hospital department is x-rated (8)
- 3 Start to look everywhere north and south with this? (4)
- 4 Planes are coming down at tops of stairs (8)
- 5 Birds bemuse at heart (4)
- 6 A noted film director is within taut European rules (6)
- 12 Rip plush something that is slightly coloured (8)
- 13 Getting ready to put this on salad (8)
- 15 Creature found around Manila (6)
- 17 Odd toadish vocal Maori told to be patient (6)
- 19 Baby – a country! (4)
- 20 Steal a note then wear this (4)



Solution to the last crossword: Across: 1 gunfighter; 7 fumbled; 8 rides; 10 oust; 11 egg-timer; 13 debunk; 15 eggcup; 17 baguette; 18 itch; 21 eaten; 22 Ryanair; 23 hysterical.

Down: 1 games; 2 Nile; 3 indigo; 4, 19 Heritage Trail; 5 endemic; 6 affordable; 9 Shropshire; 12 internet; 14 bigotry; 16 starrer; 20 talc.

Winner of the last crossword: Martin Walkinshaw, Killearn

The letters in the lights starting top left make four words which are part of the social life here. Find them and they are the solution; either email or write the four words on a piece of paper and send it to the *Courier*. Can you find these four words somewhere in the *Courier*? Instructions how to enter are given in the box below.

## Children's Prize Wordsearch

Find 10 words in the wordsearch grid that are trees. Eight of the words are: alder, elm, hazel, hornbeam, juniper, oak, poplar and willow.

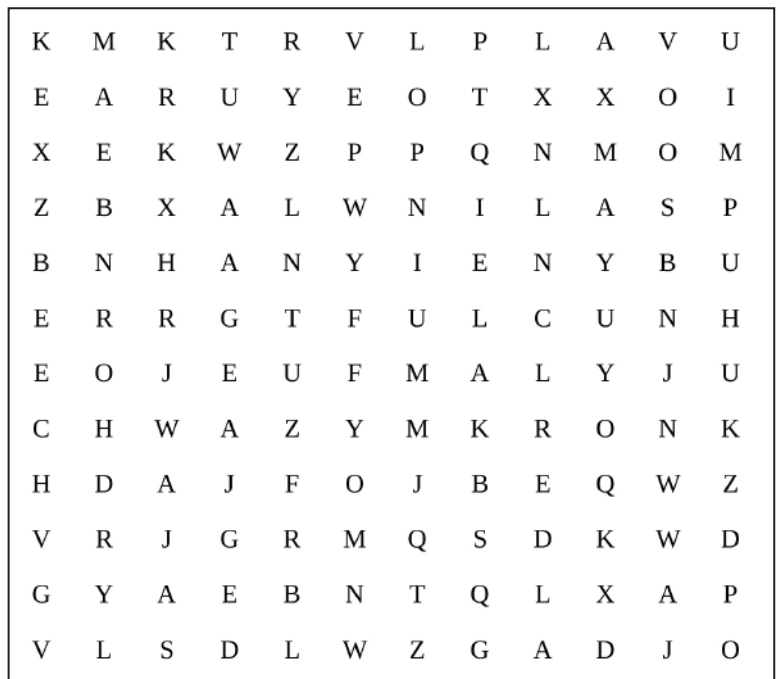
Can you find the other two? Write them down and post or email your answer to the *Courier* for a chance to win a £10 voucher which you can spend at the Co-op.

Please give your name, age and a contact address or telephone number. Entrants must be 12 or under.

Instructions for sending it are given in the box below.

Good luck to all the contestants.

PEEWIT



Well done to the winner of the last wordsearch:  
Claudia Toal, age 10

We urge everyone who tries our competitions to send in an entry – it's easy! Winners are selected at random from those received, so everyone has a chance to win.

Email your solution(s) to [peewit@kfc.co.uk](mailto:peewit@kfc.co.uk), or drop it in the postbox outside the Village Hall before **2 September 2023**. Remember to give your name, address and a contact phone number. Children, please give your age.

# Start of the Summer

Many people have been commenting that insect numbers so far this year have seemed relatively low. Indeed this was picked up by the BBC *Springwatch* programme, which gave worrying descriptions of birds struggling to feed their young due to a lack of insect food. I have myself certainly noticed a reduction in moth trap catches this spring, in terms of both numbers and variety.

It was, therefore, especially pleasing – indeed reassuring – to look out the window one sunny morning in mid-June and spot a fledgling Redstart in the garden. While these are not exactly ‘garden birds’ – they are associated with deciduous (mainly oak) woodland – they have occasionally turned up in and around the house, often at this time of year. They must be nesting nearby, probably in a tree cavity.

The Common Redstart belongs to a large family of insectivorous songbirds that includes wheatears, other chats and thrushes. Many of its closer cousins are similarly colourful and restless birds with scratchy songs and loud, clicking calls. Its most characteristic feature, however, is its rusty-red tail that constantly quivers, making it seem almost out of focus at times, and is the origin of its name (‘start’ is a corruption of the old Anglo-Saxon word for ‘tail’: *steort*).

Over the next few days, it became apparent that there were in fact two juvenile birds in the garden. Both were being regularly fed insect and slug snacks by the parents, mainly the adult female that honed in on their begging



calls. But despite me edging a bit closer to them at times, their general skittishness and constant flitting about meant that they were always tricky to photograph – and results were not great!

Redstarts are migratory birds, leaving us in the autumn for the long journey back to Africa. While they are here, keep a look out for them in suitable habitat in and around the village. They are always a real treat to see, and their presence a good indicator of diversity in our local woodlands.

MARTIN CULSHAW



## Do you need an affordable home ?

Rural Stirling Housing Association aims to support local communities by providing quality homes at affordable rents for families, couples and single people in housing need.

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|           |            |              |                |
|-----------|------------|--------------|----------------|
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| Balfron   | Drymen     | Kinlochard   | Stronachlachar |
| Buchlyvie | Gargunnoch | Kippen       | Tyndrum        |
| Callander | Gartmore   | Lochearnhead |                |
| Deanston  | Killearn   | Strathblane  |                |

Further new build developments are being planned for Killearn, Balmaha, Croftamie, and Drymen. Please let us know if you want to live in a village that is not listed above. Information on local housing need and demand helps us to plan. For a downloadable application pack please visit our website [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk).

Rural Stirling Housing Association  
Stirling Road, Doune FK16 6AA

01786 841101  
[enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk)  
[www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk)



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Anyone wishing to contribute to the winter edition of the *Courier* is reminded that it will be distributed on 18 November 2023.

Advertisements and artwork should be sent to us by Friday, 22 September 2023.

Contact: Gwen Stewart (01360 550856).

Contributions and letters to the editor should be in the hands of the editorial team by Friday, 22 September 2023.

Please send them to:  
36 New Endrick Road, G63 9QT or

Email: [courier@kefc.co.uk](mailto:courier@kefc.co.uk)

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