

Killearn. Courier

ISSUE 63

WINTER 2025

£1





18 Nov	Strathendrick Stitches Christmas workshop. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. Sales table and library will also be available. New members welcome. Visitors £3 per session. Contact strathendrickstitches@gmail.com .	14 Dec	Killearn Kirk Gift Service, 10am. Gifts will be donated to Stirling Salvation Army for distribution in the Stirling Council area. Strathendrick Singers Christmas Concert. Killearn Kirk, 7pm. Raffle and refreshments at interval and collection for Killearn's Advent windows in aid of Shelter. Tickets from choir members, online event booking (Eventbrite) and on the door.
19 Nov	Killearn Community Council meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. For link to join live stream, email contactus@killearncc.org.uk .	17 Dec	Killearn Community Council meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. For link to join live stream, email contactus@killearncc.org.uk .
20 Nov	The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley Lecture by Colin Shindler, 'Sixty Years On – Life in Britain as seen in 1960 films'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am or over Zoom. www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk Killearn Golden Years' Club Family Bingo Evening, Kirk Hall, 6.30pm for 7pm.	20 Dec	Strathendrick Film Society showing <i>Wicked</i> . Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership £30/£25 concessions. Visit strathfilmsoc.org.uk to join.
25 Nov	Killearn Kirk Guild meeting. Killearn Heritage Trail with Nick Hawkins. 1.30pm–3.30pm.	24 Dec	Balforn Community Singers Christmas concert. Balforn Church, 7pm. Tickets available from choir members or Balforn Library.
27 Nov	Drymen & District Local History Society film night. Films of the Drymen area made by Eric Rowley Orr of Lednabra in the 1930s–1950s. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm. www.drymen-history.org.uk	25 Dec	Killearn Kirk Family Service, 6pm, followed by the opening of the Advent window.
27–29 Nov	FADS pantomime, <i>Cinderella</i> . Menzies Hall, Fintry, Thurs–Sat 7.30pm and matinee Sat 2pm. £12 adults, £6 under 18s, under 2s free. For tickets visit fintrydrama.org.uk .	25–26 Dec	Killearn Kirk Christmas Day Service, 10am.
28 Nov	Killearn Malawi Group Grand Ceilidh with the Tàrnach Ceilidh Band. Village Hall, 7.30pm–11.30pm. Tickets £20, available from Doreen (01360 550834), or any committee member.	1–2 Jan	Killearn Health Centre closed. For help or advice contact NHS 24 on 111.
1–6 Dec	FADS pantomime, <i>Cinderella</i> . Menzies Hall, Fintry, Thurs–Sat 7.30pm and matinee Sat 2pm. For tickets details see 27–29 Nov.	10 Jan	Killearn Health Centre closed. For help see above.
5 Dec	Strathendrick Film Society showing <i>Penguin Lessons</i> . Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership £30/£25 concessions. Visit strathfilmsoc.org.uk to join.	13 Jan	West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers Zoom talk by Lucy MacDonald (Arra Textiles), 'Weaving and dyeing inspired by the Scottish landscape'. 10am. To join email weavers.in.glasgow@gmail.com for link.
6 Dec	Killearn Country Market Village Hall, 11am–4pm. See posters for details or contact Megan (dunmoredesigns@gmail.com).	15 Jan	Killearn Kirk Guild meeting. Project – Bear Necessities, Christina Ross. 1.30pm–3.30pm.
7 Dec	Killearn Kirk Communion Service, 10am.	20 Jan	The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley Lecture by Paul Bahn, 'An Introduction to Ice Age Art'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am. www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk
9 Dec	Killearn Kirk Guild Christmas Lunch. Fintry, 12noon for 12.30pm.	21 Jan	Strathendrick Stitches Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. Group Project: Pockets. Sales table and library will also be available. New members welcome. Visitors £3 per session. Contact strathendrickstitches@gmail.com .
11 Dec	The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley Lecture by Vicky Bailey, 'Dingley Dell to "A Christmas Carol" – Charles Dickens and Christmas'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am. www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk	22 Jan	Killearn Community Council meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. For link to join live stream, email contactus@killearncc.org.uk .
13 Dec	Killearn Kirk Guild Coffee Morning. Kirk Hall, 10am–12noon.		Drymen & District Local History Society Talk by Don Martin, 'The last trains to Aberfoyle and Drymen: a personal account'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm. www.drymen-history.org.uk

Noticeboard continued

- 27 Jan **Killearn Kirk Guild** A cycle pilgrimage with Kevin and Linda Clarke. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.
- 4 Feb **Killearn Horticultural Society** Annual General Meeting. Killearn Village Hall, 7.30pm. All welcome.
- 6 Feb **Strathendrick Film Society** *La vie en rose* (in French with subtitles). Balfron High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership £30/£25 concessions. Visit strathfilmsoc.org.uk to join.
- 10 Feb **Killearn Kirk Guild** meeting. Christina Paterson, Convenor of Guild 2024-25 on her visit to Bulgaria for the Bear Necessities project. Kirk Hall, 10am–12 noon.
- 14 Feb **West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers** Four corners: learning and skills sharing through member led activities. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am–1pm. New members and visitors welcome. First visit free. www.weave-spin-dye-glasgow.org.uk
- 17 Feb **Strathendrick Stitchers** Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. Bring your WIPs. Sales table and library will also be available. New members welcome. Visitors £3 per session. Contact strathendrickstitchers@gmail.com.
- 18 Feb **Killearn Community Council** meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. For link to join live stream, email contactus@killearncc.org.uk.
- 19 Feb **The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley** lecture by Mark Cottle, 'Portraits in stone: the great cathedrals'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am.
- 24 Feb **Killearn Kirk Guild** exercise and fun with Yasmin. Kirk Hall, 10 am–12 noon.
- 26 Feb **Drymen & District Local History Society** talk by Ian Newton, 'With Shackleton to South Georgia, Elephant Island and the Antarctic'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 6 Mar **Killearn Horticultural Society** Whist Drive, Kirk Hall, 7pm.
Strathendrick Film Society showing *On Golden Pond*. Balfron High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership fee £30/£25 concessions. Visit strathfilmsoc.org.uk to join.
- 10 Mar **Killearn Kirk Guild** meeting. Is peace between Israel and Palestine possible? The view from a diplomat based in Jerusalem 2020–24, Nick Horne. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.

If you have dates of events for the spring 2026 issue of the Noticeboard (mid March until mid August), please contact Heather McArthur
07985 082678;
heather.mcarthur1@outlook.com

Hello and welcome to our last issue for 2025; we call it our 'Christmas One' to keep us focused on this special time of year. After all, by the time you read this, Christmas will be only about five weeks away with the new year of 2026 not far behind. All of which makes you wonder (well, me anyway) where did the time go?!

As with all issues, we try to keep you abreast of what has been going on in the village since the last issue. We publish the various individual and group submissions which help keep your finger on the pulse of village life. I should like to mention two seasonal activities in particular. Both involve a lot of commitment by the organisers and the willing involvement of volunteers.

The Advent Windows display has grown in popularity over the years, with more 'windows' being 'opened' during December. It makes for very popular viewing. The Christmas Post has been operating for years. In case you don't know what is involved, it gives you the opportunity to have your Christmas cards delivered to addresses within the area delimited by the road signs around village. Simply drop off your cards at 'post boxes' found at various locations (the pharmacy, the Co-op, the Kirk) and leave a monetary donation of your choice. Both these activities raise money for two worthwhile charities: Shelter Scotland and CHAS.

Some of our 'old hand' readers might be wondering why we need to be told all this? Well, it is because of the expansion of the population of Killearn. The 11 houses at the bottom of Lampson Road (now called Lampson Court) are finished and occupied. Ballagan Woods (at the old Killearn Hospital site) has named seven streets honouring former hospital employees. Both of these developments potentially add up to quite a few 'newcomers' and it lets them know they are welcome here and that Killearn, far from being a sleepy rural village, has got a heck of a lot going for it.

From all at the *Courier*, have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ian

Cover

The cover display features images taken by members of the Killearn Natural History Photography group. Members have enjoyed honing their skills at a series of workshops led by local experts Chris Bell and Robert Dunn. If you are interested in attending a workshop or to find out more, please email heritage@kfc.co.uk.

Killearn Village Hall Classes and Clubs

MONDAY

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

TUESDAY

Badminton: Main Hall, 9.15am–10.15am.

Foot Health Clinic: Committee Room, 9.30am–2pm.

Contact Jacqueline Morton for availability (07703 799112).

Littlebuds Music Class: Garden Room, 10.15am–12.45pm.

Contact Clare (claremondaymusic@gmail.com).

Townbreak Stirling: Garden Room, 2pm–4pm. Contact Lesley Milne (www.townbreak.org/contact).

DIY circuits: Main Hall, 6.30pm–7.30pm. (Outdoors)

Everyone welcome to join in. Contact Fiona (fiona.rennie@btinternet.com) or Nick (07860 700928).

Killearn Bridge Club: Club night in the Garden Room, 6.45pm. New members welcome. Contact Gavin Hunter (gavin.hunter1@gmail.com).

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

WEDNESDAY

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

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

Lynda Turner School of Dance: Main Hall, 4pm–5.45pm. Contact Lynda (770390; geolyn2000@hotmail.com).

THURSDAY

Mother Nuture: Garden Room, 10.15am–11.15am. Group for soon-to-be and new mums with babies less than one year. See poster in foyer for group QR code.

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

Lynda Turner School of Dance: Main Hall, 4pm–5.20pm. Pre-school dance class. See Wednesday for contact

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

Traditional Music Session: Monthly, Garden Room, 7.30pm–9.30pm. All instruments, abilities, singers, players welcome. Info available from Jackie (01360 550576).

Line Dancing Class: Main Hall, 8pm–9pm. All abilities welcome. Contact Calum at cjeventsscotland@outlook.com.

FRIDAY

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

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).

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

Ramsay–Riley



Congratulations to Duncan Riley from Killearn and Kayleigh Ramsay from Milngavie who ‘tied the knot’ and were married at the Lochgreen House Hotel, Troon on 6 September. Kayleigh a primary school teacher and Duncan an IT consultant currently reside in Sydney, Australia.

All Change at Killearn Kirk

Rev Stuart Sharp has moved to pastures new. A congregation in Dundee approached Stuart to join their ministry team, giving him a decision to make in turning ‘full circle’ and moving ‘home’ to the city where he was born and brought up – a new chapter in his ministry. Stuart



believes that after seven years in Killearn, and for the past 18 months a linked charge with Strathblane Church, he was being guided to minister a new flock, while always remembering that the flock are also part of the team.

Stuart has inspired us with his preaching and encouraged us to think more deeply about how we live and apply the teaching of the written word into our daily lives.

He brought scripture into the 21st century allowing all to understand how this impacts our lives in the world of today. Stuart introduced a wide range of sources into his sermons which were thought provoking. We have been blessed by his preaching – leavened with humour, and always firmly biblically based.

The church may have a vacancy for a minister, but we are not vacant. Weekly services will still be held at 10am on a Sunday morning and everyone is welcome. Other events and activities will still be happening so pop in and say ‘hello’.

CAROLE YOUNG, SESSION CLERK

News in brief

Not Out of the Woods – Blackwood, which runs Beech House, is looking to sell the former Abbeyfield property, having been put in special measures with the Housing Authority as well as being under financial pressure. They will withdraw services in the next several months, meaning that the remaining residents can stay, but there will be no in-house support. To keep up to date, follow KCC minutes at killlearncc.org.uk.

Changes at Stirling Council – Brian Roberts was appointed as the new Council Chief Executive in October, having served twice as Interim Chief Executive over the last 18 months, first when Carol Beattie resigned in 2024 and then when Caroline Sinclair left post in June this year.

Need Funding? – You might find help by searching the Funding Stirling website, especially the Community Grants scheme, which covers a broad variety of projects, including money for community activities as well as start-up costs and one-off capital or equipment costs. Charities and local community and voluntary groups are invited to apply. The next deadline is 6 January 2026. See tinyurl.com/c2t566sa.

On Their Bikes – Undeterred by a 40-year gap, old university friends, including Sophie Trafford from Balforn, are completing a long-distance cycle from Punta Arenas to Anchorage begun in the 1980s. They are filling in a missing 1,200km where a road in the south of Chile has since been built. They will cycle the total length of the Carretera Austral expecting to finish this month, all in aid of the Epilepsy Research Institute and towards a Maggie's Centre in Forth Valley Hospital. Find out more or donate at tinyurl.com/98as75a9.

Celtic (and Bus) Connections – The line-up for 2026 has been announced, and looks really exciting. But if you've ever hesitated to head into Glasgow to watch a set because the X10 or X10A can be less than reliable at the end of an evening, here's good news. If the last bus (and only this one) fails to arrive or is cancelled and you have to get a taxi home, get a receipt from your driver and attach it to an email to McGills with the date, time and the stop where you were waiting, to get a refund (enquiries@mcgillsscotlandeast.co.uk).



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Photographs Reveal Friendship between Scotland and Malawi

The photographic exhibition held in Killearn Kirk Hall from 12 to 14 September showcased the deep friendship and mutual respect between the peoples of Scotland and Malawi in southern Africa. The exhibition was organised by the Scotland-Malawi Partnership, to celebrate 20 years as the umbrella organisation which represents over 1,300 organisations and individuals in Scotland who work with the people of Malawi.

The 80 photographs were large and vibrant, mostly taken under the African sun. They came from many different organisations, with each having a description of the work they covered and information about the different organisations involved. The display on blue boards was very effective, and the layout drew people into and through the exhibition.

There was a very good turnout, including two classes from Killearn Primary School, whose responses to the photographs were later put up to add to the exhibition. There was a reception on the Friday night, attended by many local dignitaries and interested local people. The attendance over the weekend was excellent, and at times there was a real buzz in the room. This was the first showing of the exhibition, which will subsequently travel to other venues around Scotland.

The Killearn Malawi Group, along with Changing Lives



Computers at Nikhande CDSS



Prizewinners at Nikhande CDSS

Malawi, was very happy to host the exhibition, with committee members present throughout to provide tea or coffee.

KILLEARN MALAWI GROUP

Killearn Malawi Group Annual Gathering

The Killearn Malawi Group (KMG) held its annual gathering on Saturday 13 September. After refreshments, various reports highlighted the work of KMG over the previous year.

Ken Allen spoke about his trip to Malawi in November 2024 and the KMG projects he visited, from Nkhande secondary school in the far south to Kileni schools in the north. He was particularly pleased to find Chrissy Nyirongo, now 90 years old, in her remote village, now looked after by her daughter Rachael. We have supported her work with needy widows and orphans for many years.

Ken also mentioned paying school fees for some students at Nkhande and the work involved in preparing the library to become a computer lab. There was great excitement at the school when 21 computers were delivered.

Now work has started on the girls' hostel we have been fundraising for. Ken thanked the committee for their work, in particular John Shaw and Hilary McGregor, who stood down after many years on the committee.

Sue Beck presented the Annual Report and Accounts, which showed how KMG had raised a healthy sum during the year, with a sponsored walk, a ladies' night and the annual jumble sale. She also explained how KMG had supported our projects during the year.

The accounts were very clearly presented and were approved by the assembled friends. Thanks are due to Sue for the exemplary way she has controlled and explained the accounts over the year.

The meeting approved the appointment of trustees, Ken Allen, Sue Beck, Jenifer Barrett, Gayle

Porter, Judith Robertson, Doreen Snadden and Jenny Wilks. We are a small charity making a big impact!

The next fundraiser for KMG is a St Andrews ceilidh on 28 November in the Village Hall. Tickets £20, available from Doreen (01360 550834), or any committee member. Look out your dancing shoes!



Christmas Trees

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Killlearn Advent Window Trail

As many of you will know, for the past five years residents have run the Advent Windows trail in Killlearn. Each evening during December, decorated and illuminated windows are revealed throughout the village, with the aim of raising money for Shelter Scotland.

The first window to open will be at the Co-op on Monday 1 December at 6.30pm, where you can pick up a leaflet showing the location of the other windows in the run up to Christmas. There may also be some carol singing if we can muster up some musicians and singers! Last year the Guides did us proud.

Everyone is welcome to come along to the openings, revealed daily at 6.30pm, and each window will be viewable from 4pm every evening after its opening, until 1 January 2026.

Watch out on Facebook's Killlearn for All page telling you where we'll be each night, or the posters that will be put up on noticeboards around the village.

We hope you'll enjoy the windows and support the work of Shelter, because this Christmas many people will be struggling with bad housing or homelessness.

Official Shelter collection buckets will be available at each window opening. You can also donate using the QR code or at giving.give-star.com/online/shelter/killlearn-advent-windows-2025. For more information contact us at killlearn.advent.windows@gmail.com.



PAUL SEARLE



Killlearn Christmas Post

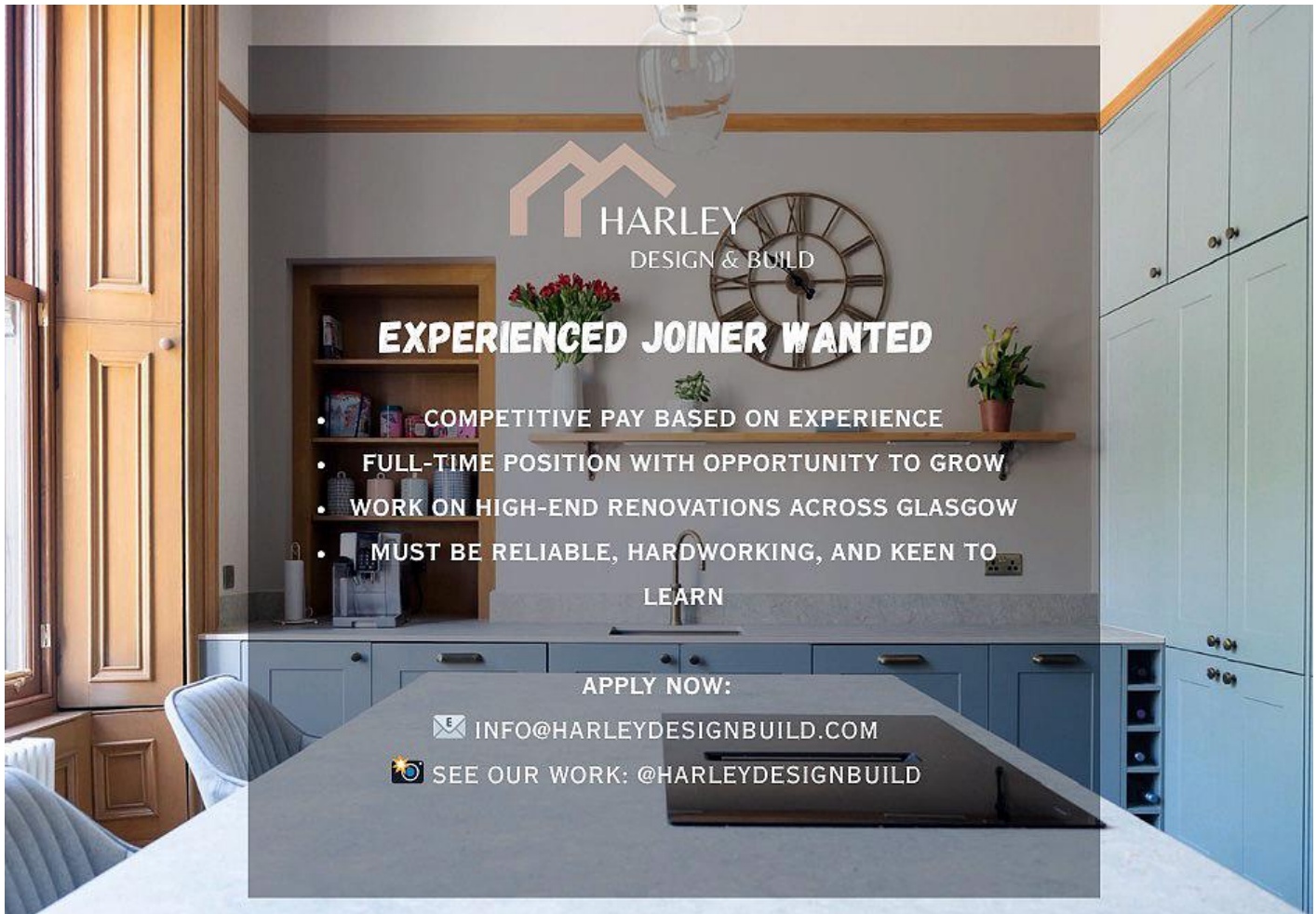
Post your local Christmas cards at
The Co-op
The Pharmacy
The Kirk
from
Saturday 29 November
to addresses within the village.
Please remember to put full name and address on the envelope (no post code required)

Please give generously to CHAS via the collection tins

Final pick ups
Co-op & Pharmacy — 5pm Saturday 13 December
Kirk — 12noon Sunday 14 December

Delivery from 15th December

www.chas.org.uk
Children's Hospices Across Scotland is a trading name of Children's Hospice Association Scotland
Scottish charity number SC 018728



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As 2025 comes to a close, we want to thank our clients, colleagues and community for their trust and support. Here's to new beginnings, beautiful homes, and even bigger success stories in 2026.

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The Met Office’s ‘State of the UK Climate Report 2024’ shows weather records, and extremes are becoming the norm in the UK climate. The report highlights how our climate has warmed steadily from the 1980s in line with the increase of carbon into the atmosphere. The intensity of heat is accompanied by days of extreme rainfall.

My weather centre records daily readings of temperature in degrees Centigrade, wind speed in miles per hour, and rainfall in millimetres. The readings are combined for each month as shown in the table below.

Summer 2025 saw four heatwaves in the UK and there were 15 days when temperatures reached 30°C or higher. In Killearn, a temperature of 31.6°C was recorded on the days of 11 and 12 July.

Summer rainfall has been lower than average but heavier in short bursts. The table shows that a substantial percentage of the rainfall this year has fallen as tropical-like downpours; the most rain recorded in a single day ranging from 20.1mm on 3 June to 39.6mm on 27 March. The highest daily rainfall in any month is shown as a percentage of the total rainfall in that month. In March, for example, nearly 50 per cent of that month’s rainfall fell in a single day.

- The reasons for the hot, dry and sunny weather are:
1. A persistent area of high pressure over the UK
 2. A dry, sunny spring which parched soils, leaving less moisture for evaporation and an increase in atmospheric temperatures
 3. Marine heatwaves – as sea temperatures rise the air passing over warm waters retains more of its heat
 4. Climate Change – the State of the UK Climate Report 2024 indicates that the earth has warmed by 0.25°C each decade since 1980.

The report draws attention to the effect of warming on rainfall, with the UK experiencing more rainfall and this resulting in an increase of flooding.

The Chief Executive of the Met Office, Professor Liz Bentley, commenting on the report, gives a stark warning ‘while long term averages are shifting, it is the extreme heat, intense rainfall and droughts that are having the most immediate and dramatic effects on people and nature. This report is not just a record of change but a call to action’.

Reference: State of the UK Climate Report 2024 published in the Royal Meteorological Society’s *International Journal of Climatology*.
Mike Kendall et al. July 2025
TOM RENFREW

Summary January to September 2025 for Killearn									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Highest Temp	10.7	11.7	17	25.7	26.7	28.1	31.6	29.5	22
Lowest Temp	-6.2	-1.6	-3	0.6	1.1	5.1	7.4	8.3	2.2
Mean Temp	2.9	4.4	7.1	9.8	12.7	14	16.1	15.8	11.8
Days Below Freezing	11	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highest Wind Gust	92	23	31	22	26	27	20	35	22
Monthly Rain	94.7	168.7	82.3	98	93.7	140.7	133.1	123.4	95.8
Average Daily Rain	3.1	6	2.7	3.3	3	4.7	4.3	4	3.2
Most Rain in 24 hrs	26.7	39.4	39.6	32.8	24.6	20.1	37.8	27.4	20.5
% of Monthly Rain	28	23	48	33	26	14	28	22	21
Days without Rain	11	6	19	18	20	7	15	16	6
Cumulative Rainfall	94.7	263.4	345.7	443.7	537.4	678.1	811.2	934.6	1030.4

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

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Horti Annual Show



Best Basket of Plenty



Prize Winning Vegetables



The Hansom Family

More than 800 folk turned up to see the exhibits and entries at Killearn's 159th Annual Show on 30 August. Organised by Killearn's Horticultural Society, this year there were 906 entries, up from last year's record of 866, including flowers, fruit, vegetables, baking, wines, photography, art, craftwork – and lots of Lego.

Chair of the Society, Paul Searle, said: 'The unofficial slogan of the village should be "People Make Killearn", following the fantastic turnout. A huge thanks to everyone who made it such an incredible day, especially our advertisers, sponsors, supporters and brilliant volunteers. This year we had Lego trophies for the winners of an "Item made from Lego". We have a large array of silverware which winners get to keep for a year, and this year we thought it would be fun to have a different kind of trophy for one of the youth classes. It's always lovely to see the smiles on children's faces and so Tag Digital has kindly sponsored three Lego trophies for the nursery, primary and secondary winners.'

A flower sale raised £246 for Strathcarron Hospice and on the Monday after the Show, one of our volunteers took all the leftover items such as the fruit, vegetables, baking and preserves to Drumchapel Foodbank. They were extremely appreciative as, with donations much reduced, they are currently short of everything.

Grant Farquharson, the Show's convener, said: 'Many thanks to the families and individuals who braved the wet weather, to the Country Market stallholders, to Killearn Primary School and the local nurseries, and to everyone who exhibited and attended. I'd also like to thank those who organised, volunteered and cleared up afterwards. Without them all, there wouldn't be a show.'

Paul added: 'It was a great show with a fantastic turnout of entries and visitors. The Society's first show was in 1850 and so it's lovely to see the tradition of an annual show thriving in Stirlingshire 175 years later.'

The Horti's website is: killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk.

PAUL SEARLE



Willy Oswald's Prize Cabbage



Best Craft Exhibit



The Till Family

Scarecrow Competition

Although the weather was threatening rain, the winner of this year's 2025 scarecrow competition was having none of it.

The 'Discrow' presented at the Horti's Annual Show was banging out hits from a music device buried deep in its straw-filled body, thus securing it first place for being a brilliant creation and playing some great tunes. Created by the Calvert Collective, its crow head, 70s moustache and Ozzy Osbourne sunglasses made the judges smile and the atmosphere disco-tastic. It's the second year in a row that the Collective has taken the top prize of £5 – congratulations!

Next to Discrow, 'Colin the Original Scarecrow' was creeping along in a manner that defied gravity but possibly not copyright. Luckily when the owner's granddaughter sent a photo of Colin to M&S they replied: 'Thank you so much for sharing this delightful story and photo with us, your grandma's Colin scarecrow is absolutely brilliant. We're so impressed by her creativity



and love for Colin. What a wonderful way to bring joy to a local competition. Please pass on our warmest wishes and admiration to your grandma, she's clearly a Colin super-fan with a fantastic sense of fun.'

Our third scarecrow was a wolf disguised as a shepherd, with a sheep trying to escape the clutches of the Irn Bru drinking farmhand. Trying to embrace anyone who approached, this scary Mr Wolf wasn't fooling the judges with his welcoming shenanigans, but a huge thanks to Montessori nursery for joining in the fun.

Our last scarecrow seemed to have 'bin distracted' and was searching for his parrot in a garden-waste brown wheelie bin. Being fully aware that birds are not allowed to be disposed of in brown bins, this scarecrow continually searched for his feathered friend in the vain hope that the Council would not empty it any time soon. The judges loved his enthusiasm and hope he is reunited with his chatty friend soon.

PAUL SEARLE

Garden Competitions

Every year, the Horti hosts a competition for the most attractive gardens in Killearn, as viewed from the roadside. A judge views all of the gardens in early May (spring) and a different judge does the same in early August (summer). Winners and runners-up were announced at the Annual Show on 30 August.

Spring Garden

Winner: 19 Birch Road
Second: 22 Birch Road
Third: 28 Harpers Road

Summer Garden

Winner: 26 Branziert Road North
Second: 19 Cedar Road
Third: 7 Buchanan Road

Photos of all of these gardens can be seen on the Horti website: tinyurl.com/kchscmps.

My Garden

The society also runs an online competition in which competitors upload their photographs. Entries and results for Section M of the Show can be seen on the Horti website: tinyurl.com/kchsmx.

The categories are: M1 Hidden Garden (Killearn); M2 Hidden Garden (other locations); M3 Wildlife Area; M4 Hanging Basket or Hanging Pot; M5 A Planter or Container; M6 Inside My Garden Shed.

PAUL SEARLE



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Google
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When the 'Tour de 4' passed through Killearn

Tour de 4 is a brand-new cycling initiative, born from Sir Chris Hoy's vision to change perceptions around stage four cancer following his own diagnosis. Anyone who could ride a bike was encouraged to take part in this mass cycling event held on Sunday 7 September, helping to challenge thinking and raise vital funds for cancer charities across the UK.

An amazing 5,000 participants signed up to be part of a movement that's pedalling towards a future with better cancer treatments and outcomes. They chose from three routes, all starting and finishing at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome: 92km (57 miles), 60km (37 miles) or a family-friendly 1km route. In addition, there was the option to ride a static bike in the velodrome, choosing between 1 and 20 minutes, giving those who might not be able to cycle on the roads the opportunity to participate.



Cyclists entering the village *Photo: Sarah Deas*

As the 57-mile red ride passed through Killearn, crowds lined the streets to cheer them on. Cow bells, air horns and enthusiastic applause erupted when six-time Olympic champion Chris Hoy rode past alongside



Team Killearn: Emily Skinner, Pascal Holt, Damien Wells (visitor), Ian Skinner, Garry Murphy, Jamie Kingsley *Photo: Sandra Beattie*

fellow cycling stars Mark Cavendish, Jason Kenny, Sarah Storey and Dani Rowe, as well as the tennis player Andy Murray.

The event's focus, however, was on the many participants who took part, especially those living with stage four cancer. Every rider was warmly encouraged as they passed through the village.

Huge applause heralded the arrival of Team Killearn (pictured above) as they entered the village. To the crowd's delight they dismounted their bikes to pose for a photo in front of the War Memorial. Many congratulations to the team for representing the village in this inaugural event!

The Tour de 4 charity ride raised more than £2.3 million for UK cancer charities, significantly exceeding its £1 million fundraising target. The money will be shared by five cancer charities: Breast Cancer Now, Cancer Research UK, Macmillan, Maggie's and Prostate Cancer UK.

However, the ride was more than a fundraiser. It was a powerful statement that a stage four diagnosis, while devastating, doesn't define the limits of what's possible. It helped challenge perceptions and inspired hope. So, well done to Chris Hoy for creating what he hailed as 'a truly extraordinary day'.

Around 12,000 men die from prostate cancer every year in the UK, according to Prostate Cancer UK. It affects one in eight men during their lifetime. Following Chris Hoy's announcement last year there was a significant increase in men seeking information on symptoms and a rise in urgent referrals for checks.

SARAH DEAS CYCLING KILLEARN, CO-LEAD
www.cycling-killearn.org @CyclingKillearn



Sir Chris Hoy and Sir Mark Cavendish greet the crowds *Photo: Jane Hunter*



Sir Andy Murray's longest bike ride *Photo: Joanne Bryne*



Elite group arrive in the village *Photo: Sarah Deas*

Our September meeting was dominated by two topics – the Local Place Plan and the proposed closure of Beech House.

The Local Place Plan was in the middle of its consultation phase at the time of the meeting. There was much support for the Place Plan, with the feeling that it stands well as a document of Killearn's identity. However, there were also some robust suggestions, mainly centred around what were felt to be omissions. The value of the countryside was thought to centre heavily around leisure, with insufficient emphasis on the working environment, particularly agriculture and forestry. The value of Killearn Kirk, as a force for good, and as a significant building in its own right, was thought to require more weight.

The survey answers, obtained in preparation for the report, made frequent mention of the need for greater diversity in available housing. Nevertheless, there was also a strong voice requesting a halt to new building, at least until the village has a chance to assimilate the new residents from ongoing projects and judge the effect on our existing infrastructure.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who took the time to answer the initial surveys and then to read and offer comments on the draft Place Plan. The balance of housing needs and the effects of new building and land use were always going to be the subjects of debate. The committee will discuss all the comments received to

ensure that the final document reflects the wishes of the village as closely as it possibly can.

The second topic of concern was the proposed closure of Beech House (formerly Abbeyfield). The current owners, Blackwood, have indicated that they will cease to run it and aim to close in a matter of months. There was a great deal of anxiety regarding this proposal, and we have been seeking clarification from Stirling Council as to what can be done to protect the residents while they remain, and to prevent their having to move should this prove possible.

On other matters, the bridge at Blane Smiddy continued to cause concern, with difficulty seeing the priority signs and frequent flooding highlighted. The feeling was that it is not safe. Stirling Council has reviewed the situation and is satisfied that no more needs to be done, but given the strength of feeling to the contrary, we have asked for further conversation.

As always, I am hugely in debt to the great KCC committee, without whom we could not function. There may be an opportunity for one or two new members to be co-opted in the next few months, and we will publicise this. So, if that might appeal to you, please speak to any member of the committee for more information.

All are welcome at our next meeting, Wednesday 19 November, 8pm, in the Garden Room of the Village Hall, or on zoom.

LIZ JONES KCC CHAIR

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE OLD MILL

Upcoming Festive Events

Saturday 6th December

Wreath Making Workshop 6pm

£50 per person

Hosted by Amy from Blackwoods Studio

Glass of fizz on arrival

Saturday 13th December

Christmas Wine Tasting 2.30pm

£35 per person

Five wines to taste, selection of festive nibbles, with a dram or glass of port to finish

Sunday 28th December

Banksy's Famous Pub Quiz 7pm

New Year's Eve

Bring in the Bells with Karaoke Babs
9pm-LATE

FESTIVE OPENING TIMES

Monday 22nd December
Restaurant 12-6pm Bar 12-11pm

Tuesday 23rd December
Restaurant 12-9pm Bar 12-11pm

Christmas Eve
Restaurant 12-9pm Bar 12-Late

Christmas Day
Closed

Boxing Day
Restaurant 12-6pm Bar 12-Late

Saturday 27th December
Restaurant 12-9pm Bar 12-Late

Sunday 28th December
Restaurant 12-8pm Bar 12-11pm

Monday 29th December
Closed

Tuesday 30th December
Restaurant 12-6pm Bar 4-10pm

Wednesday 31st December
Restaurant 12-9pm Bar 12-Late

Thursday 1st January
Restaurant 12-6pm Bar 12-11pm

Killearn Village Hall – Appreciating our Partners

As a community facility, we rely on our partners and we'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the vital support we get from two local organisations – to recognise the strength of our partnerships with Killearn Trust and the Kitchen Window.

A third Killearn Trust fund was set up specifically to support the Village Hall. That trust was wound up in 2011 when the remaining funds were donated to the Village Hall redevelopment project. As part of that project, Killearn Trust established a long-term

lease with the Village Hall on the Glebe – the land looking out from the café and the Garden Room towards Loch Lomond. We're now working with the Trust on how we might redevelop/landscape that area to create a more open/accessible space to support hall and community activities.

Five years ago, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, the Village Hall entered into partnership with the Kitchen Window to run the café/restaurant at the hall. From brunch boxes to serving coffees from a stall at the front door, that partnership has been on a journey of discovery and adventure.

Our partnership with the Kitchen Window has grown over the years and there is always a will to look for new ideas and ways of working to help support local residents

and visitors to the hall. These five years have seen the growth of our partnership into weddings, parties and family occasions, and we're proud to be able to work alongside Sarah and her team. As a valued partner, Sarah is someone who seeks every day to dig deep and who takes to heart the stories from her customers.

Together with Killearn Trust, the Kitchen Window and all our other friends, Killearn Village Hall will be

celebrating its 200th birthday next year. We're already starting to think about how we might

recognise that landmark and engage the community in the celebrations. We'd certainly like to have some form of fundraising/celebration event to mark this milestone and we're looking for ideas.

We'll keep you posted and no doubt be back with more information – but please come and chat if you'd like to help or would like to suggest an event. We're always happy to hear from you and see you.

As a Village Hall and community facility, what we stand for is bringing local people together, enabling them to meet others and connect through activities, events, exercise, etc. Come and join us — and if you need space for something, just come and ask.

www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk/book

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Badminton at the Village Hall



JOIN US EVERY TUESDAY MORNING

Whether you're new to badminton or an old hand at the game, we'd love to see you on court! All abilities are welcome to join our friendly sessions at the Village Hall.

When: Tuesdays, 9.15am–10.15am

Where: Village Hall

Who: Everyone is welcome –

beginners and experienced players alike

Come along for a bit of exercise, some friendly competition and a good chat.

Just bring yourself – racquets can be provided.

No need to book, simply turn up and join in!

Any queries contact Sue (sbeck89@aol.com).

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Killlearn Heritage Trail

The **KILLEARN HERITAGE TRAIL** continues to prove popular with folk walking the route in person and with those online.

killlearnheritage.org.uk

The **WILD ABOUT KILLEARN** natural history section is proving a success. Four habitats: Garden, Farmland, Moorland and Waterside are complete.

Woodland will be released soon.

killlearnheritage.org.uk/habitats

The Killlearn Natural History Photography Group is enjoying their workshops with Chris Bell and Robert Dunn. A couple of photos are shown below and others feature on the cover of this issue.



Wee Green Social!

A new monthly gathering has begun at the Village Hall: the Wee Green Social. Launched in May, it offers a space to explore a wide range of environmental and sustainability topics.



As the name suggests, it's all about coming together for relaxed conversations that inspire positive change. So far, we've welcomed both local and international speakers covering engaging subjects like climate action, saving energy at home, and recycling initiatives in Stirling.

The Wee Green Social is part of the long-running sustainability group. This new format is a friendly and informal social meet-up. Each session includes a guest speaker, lively discussion over a cuppa, and a follow-up debrief in the Old Mill.

We know that more and more people are concerned about the climate and the environment – so whether you're new to the subject, a long-standing activist or simply curious, everyone is welcome. We'd love to see you there – come along and be part of the conversation.

When: Last Thursday of every month, 7.30pm–9pm

Where: Garden Room, Killlearn Village Hall

Find out more, including details of monthly themes, on Facebook: WeeGreenSocial.

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Broadband in the Trees Estate



Folk may have seen Openreach at work in Beech Drive. BT engineers have been installing a fibre 'spine' down Beech Drive and fibre branches down the side roads. They have then been interconnecting these to make a full-fibre service available within the whole Trees estate.

The work is ongoing and requires connection into the local 'aggregation' point at the Buchanan Monument as well as back-office work to update the availability database. Hopefully towards the end of the year, using the postcode checker should show that full fibre (ie FTTP) is available to order for these premises.

Full-fibre speed options range from about 40Mbps (down) and 10Mbps (up) to 1,000Mbps in both directions, depending on the package you choose, ie cost. This is a minimum of five times better down, and 10 times better up, than speeds that premises in the Trees might currently be getting. This enhancement adds another significant portion of full-fibre broadband to the village.

DOUG ASHWORTH

Killearn's Pagoda

Have you wondered why Killearn appears to sport a pagoda? There isn't a new Buddhist temple in the village; storm Eowyn in January dislodged a stone from high up on the southwest corner of the Kirk's spire. Fortunately, the wind was so strong that the stone was carried away from the church and landed on the north side, doing no harm.



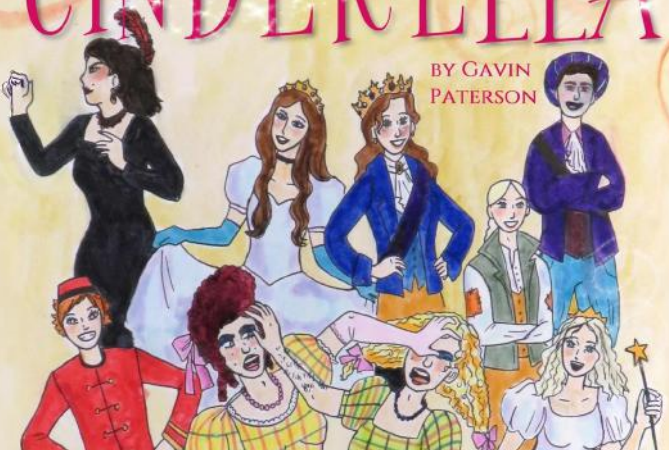
This event necessitated immediate repairs to the spire to ensure that there was no danger of further falls. Repairs and restoration work are being carried out by expert stonemasons from specialist conservation company, MC Heritage Group. When the scaffolding comes down, Killearn Kirk will be looking her best.

PW


presents

CINDERELLA

BY GAVIN PATERSON



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Travels in India – Finding Karma

karma [ˈkɑːmə] *noun* the doctrine of inevitable consequence; destiny or fate

Back in 2015 my wife, Jackie, and I travelled extensively in India. We were fortunate enough to spend six weeks teaching English as volunteers, in McLeod Ganj in the foothills of the Himalayas, the adopted home of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

We taught mostly Tibetan refugees in groups, held conversation classes and tutored young Buddhist monks and nuns, one-to-one. As with many voluntary activities, we learned as much as we taught – we gained as much as we gave. A highlight of this trip – indeed our whole lives – was that the Dalai Lama was 80 years old and his birthday was being celebrated in the neighbouring village, with Bishop Desmond Tutu. We were invited and shared some of His Holiness' birthday cake along with Tibetan schoolchildren, devotees and these two iconic, world statesmen.

Three years later we decided to return to McLeod and spent another four weeks there, teaching English. On this occasion my tutee was a studious young monk named Karma. We worked together four or five sessions a week discussing culture, society, traditions, English vocab and grammar and the Buddhist writing and teaching of the Dalai Lama. All too soon, it was time for us to bid farewell to Karma and our other students and friends and return home. Karma was moving on to Karnataka – a major Tibetan community 2,000km away in the south of India. Jackie and I had not been back to India since, until this year, and Karma had not been back to McLeod either.

In June this year, we embarked on another Indian adventure: from Amritsar, up through McLeod Ganj and Manali to Ladakh – a beautiful, dry, mountainous land on the edge of the Indian Himalayas. On adventures like this the journey itself – a road-trip of over 800km through

spectacular landscapes – is an essential part of the experience. When we reached Leh, at the end of our tour, we planned a trek (over a 4,900m high pass!) through the craggy peaks of the Hemis National Park.

En route, having arrived back in our much-loved McLeod, we were strolling into town to revisit some of our favourite haunts from our earlier stays. We stopped to inspect the singing bowls and mandalas in a shop window when I felt a tap on my shoulder: 'Nick, is that you?' Yes, it was Karma! We could not believe it!!! It was absolutely astounding.

After all that time away – and neither of us having been back to McLeod for seven years — by complete coincidence we meet on the street entirely by chance! Fate? Fortune? Karma? It was wonderful to see our companion again, catch-up and renew our friendship.

Three weeks later we completed our tour in Ladakh, but unfortunately, just as we were about to embark on our trek through the wilderness, Jackie felt unwell and decided to stay behind as I departed with our guide. She was disappointed to miss out on this element of our sojourn – but fortune interceded once again ...

His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, was due – on the occasion of his 90th birthday – in Leh to deliver some teachings. Lo-and-behold, his cavalcade from the airport was driving right past the end of the road where we were staying. Feeling better, Jackie joined crowds of excited, friendly local people waiting patiently for hours for a glimpse of their spiritual leader. And as he drove past he waved – Jackie was sure it was to her. Was it karma?

NH

Images:

Top: Nick and Jackie with Karma; Middle left: McLeod Ganj; Middle right: Nick on the trek; Bottom: Dalai Lama motorcade



Your Local Fire Station Needs You

We expect the siren and blue lights to dash through the village when help is needed, whether it's a property fire, road traffic collision (RTC), wildfire or even someone injured in the Devil's Pulpit. But what does it take to make that happen?

Balfron Community Fire Station operates with on call firefighters rather than with the full-time or 'whole-time'

firefighters who are based in bigger, urban stations. On call firefighters commit to a certain number of hours per week and usually have another job. Duty hours are not fixed, and an app allows firefighters to log off duty easily, fitting their service hours around other work and family commitments. Two of Balfron's crew commanders are already whole-time firefighters elsewhere and fit the local service around their full-time shifts. All carry a pager and when it goes off, they get to the station at any time of day or night.

At this stage they don't know what the incident is or whether it will turn out to be a false alarm. The station automatically comes to life; the lights come on, and the all-important printer produces instructions for the incident, all in time for the crew to arrive.

It takes a minimum of four to crew a turnout: driver, officer in charge and two firefighters. If the numbers drop below, then Balfron cannot attend, and a more distant station will cover. Last year Balfron had 77 turnouts. On call firefighters must live/work within eight minutes of the station when on duty and as people move out of the area or circumstances change it alters the number of available personnel. This has happened in Balfron which currently sits at seven firefighters, occasionally making it difficult to maintain a minimum crew. A few more community-minded people would make a big difference.



There are currently no Killearn Parish residents in the team.

All firefighters are well trained, taking three years to achieve competency. Training is ongoing whether during a Tuesday evening drill or a specialist weekend training session. It includes the use of breathing apparatus, specialist cutting equipment for RTCs – you can even gain a LGV licence through the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The firefighters of Balfron Station are a dedicated group and when asked why they do it unanimously answer that it's mainly out of a sense of community service. In addition, there is the camaraderie of being part of a team, the excitement, the adrenalin and the physical fitness level that must be maintained.

Watch Commander Gary Scott who has 26 years' service adds that challenge is also a big part of the job; firstly finding the incident which isn't always easy in a rural area where

addresses and locations are not precise, then assessing and deciding what action to take to deal with the incident effectively and safely.

Worst type of call out: grass wildfire because it's extra hot wearing full firefighting gear. Most unusual call out: rescuing a Harris hawk from a tree!

The number of call outs for fire stations has generally reduced over the years due to

greater levels of safety in the home and workplace, improvements in road safety, and education of risks. To this end, fire personnel work with other agencies such as police, roads, local authorities and schools, for example giving talks to school pupils in advance of bonfire night.

On call firefighters must be over 18 with no upper age limit, as long as a physical fitness test is passed. It is not gender specific, indeed Balfron had a woman firefighter for many years. If you think you could be part of our community fire service more information is available at firescotland.gov.uk/careers/oncall.

There is a charity clothing donation container at the fire station in aid of the Fire Fighters Charity which gives rehabilitation and well-being support to firefighters and their families. Your local fire station really does need you.

GS



**We are recruiting
ON CALL FIREFIGHTERS**

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is the largest fire and rescue service in the UK and the fourth largest in the world.
For info on how to apply, visit: www.firescotland.gov.uk/careers/on-call





The report in this issue outlines several contrasts in the club's activities over the summer and provides some highlights of the winter programme.

The July and August runs contrasted modern machinery with much older ones as our typical runs via devious scenic routes took us to the Kirk O' The Lochs restaurant at Tarbet, a picnic run to Glenfarg near Perth, and the George Hotel in Inveraray – all excellent and very hospitable venues. The picnic event also included a collection of cars while other runs were made specifically to visit other collections of cars (Morris Leslie), buses (Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust) or military vehicles and aeroplanes (Scottish Torque Show).

Members' modern machinery was on show at our excellent Car-BQ, now becoming something of a tradition, where we raised over £800 for charity and again were lucky with the weather.

In contrast, we organised another tour to visit pre-WWII vehicles. This again started from the Wallace Monument, driving less well-travelled roads through Fife for lunch at Loch Leven's Larder (another excellent venue beside the loch with walks and maybe gliders), before heading back to Stirling and the prize-giving. On which subject, our members took three prizes in the Three Lochs Classic run organised by the RSAC that hosts a wide variety of entrants and therefore classes. Our winners were first in Vintage (1919-1930) class with a 1930 Aston



Tour for Pre-WWII vehicles
Photo: Kathleen Coubrough

Martin International, first in Class 5 with a 1965 Mini, and second overall with a 1936 SS Jaguar 1.5 litre saloon.

With the summer programme complete, we can now look forward to what's in store over the winter as we meet at Ross Priory for evening meals and talks. Highlights already planned are: A Nut and Bolt Renovation of a Bentley, Drag Racing, and another regular – the Quiz Night.

For more information and to read the monthly club magazine, *Overdrive*, visit our website (www.strathendrickcarclub.uk). New members are always welcome, with or without cars. Email the club secretary (SCandSCC.Sec@gap-group.co.uk).

DOUG ASHWORTH



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fsb⁸
MEMBER

Warming Up Winter: Wines to See You Through the Festive Season

As the nights draw in, our palates naturally shift towards wines that bring comfort, warmth and a touch of indulgence. The festive season isn't just about one big meal – it's a series of moments: fireside chats, impromptu gatherings and those quiet evenings when the tree lights glow and the world outside feels hushed. So, let's talk about wines that make these moments special.

The Joy of Winter Whites

White wine in winter? Absolutely! But think texture and depth rather than zesty summer spritz. A white Burgundy or a well-made Chardonnay from South Africa or California offers richness without heaviness. These wines have a creamy, nutty character that pairs beautifully with smoked fish, soft cheeses or even a simple roast chicken on a chilly evening. If you prefer something aromatic, an Alsace Pinot Gris or a dry Riesling brings spice and stone fruit notes that feel wonderfully festive.

Reds That Hug You Back

When it comes to reds, winter calls for generosity. A Rhône blend – Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre – offers layers of dark fruit, pepper and a top note of herbs. These wines are versatile, equally at home with hearty stews or a plate of charcuterie. For something truly comforting, try a Barolo or Barbaresco from Piedmont – elegant yet powerful, with those signature notes of rose, tar and truffle that feel like a winter walk in the woods. If you're after value without compromise, Portugal's Douro reds are a treasure trove – ripe, structured and often underpriced for their quality.

Sparkle Beyond the Obvious

Champagne is a classic, but the world of sparkling wine is vast and exciting. Crémant from France, Cava from Spain, or an English sparkling wine can deliver finesse without the Champagne price tag. For something a little different, try a sparkling red Lambrusco – dry, frothy and perfect with festive nibbles.

Sweet Endings and Fireside Sips

Winter is the perfect excuse to rediscover dessert wines. A glass of Sauterne with a wedge of blue cheese is pure magic, while a late-harvest Riesling or Tokaji offers honeyed sweetness balanced by acidity. And let's not forget fortified wines – a tawny Port or a nutty Madeira is like wrapping yourself in a velvet blanket.

Top Five Bottles £20 and Under

(Perfect for festive sipping)

- Faustino Rivero Albariño – crisp, citrusy Spanish white. £16.50
- Sturmvolken Riesling – green apple and honeyed notes. £8.25
- Vite Colte Barbera d'Asti – plush Italian red with baking spice warmth. £20
- Three Choirs Stonebrook – English white with tropical fruit. £11
- Crémant de Loire (Taste the Difference) – elegant sparkling alternative. £13

Shop locally – support independent Scottish businesses

- Cockburns of Leith (Edinburgh) – Scotland's oldest wine merchant
- The Scottish Gantry (Stirling and Edinburgh) – curated wines and tastings
- Valhalla's Goat (Glasgow) – boutique wines and seasonal gems
- Made From Grapes (Glasgow) – organic and natural wine specialists
- Luvians (Cupar and St Andrews) – independent icon for fine wines and whiskies

ELAINE TAYLOR

Sugar Cookies

If you come from a German family like mine, then Advent is the best excuse there is for ramping up cookie production. These sweet rich biscuits can stand on their own sprinkled with a bit (more) sugar or be decorated to fit any occasion. Invite the clan: everyone loves decorating cookies!



Ingredients

150g (5 oz) butter | 150g (6 oz) caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla | 1 medium egg | 4 tsp milk | 1½ tsp baking powder | ¼ tsp salt | Edible decorations; icing sugar; gel pens; food colouring (optional)

Method

- ★ Preheat your oven to 375°F/190°C (170°C fan).
- ★ In a large bowl, cream the butter, sugar and vanilla.
- ★ Add the egg and milk, and beat until well combined.
- ★ Sift together the dry ingredients, and blend them into the creamed mixture, beating between each addition until the mix is light and fluffy.
- ★ Divide the dough in half. Cover and chill in the fridge for at least an hour. (Alternatively, wrap it in freezer paper or a couple of layers of grease-proof paper and pop it the freezer; defrost, cut out and bake up to a month later.)
- ★ On a lightly floured surface, roll out thinly: 3–4mm (1/8inch), and cut out shapes.
- ★ Transfer to an ungreased baking sheet and decorate with sugar or any colourful sprinkles you have to hand.
- ★ Pop into the oven for 8–10 minutes until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack then decorate and store in an airtight container.
- ★ Make a glacé icing (coloured icing is festive), then apply thinly to the cookie using a palette knife. For the more artistically inclined, paint brushes and gel pens come in useful here, too. Add sprinkles. There's decorating inspiration galore online.

Wherever your decorating adventures take you, do enjoy yourself and have a very happy Christmas.

NB

Festive Mittens

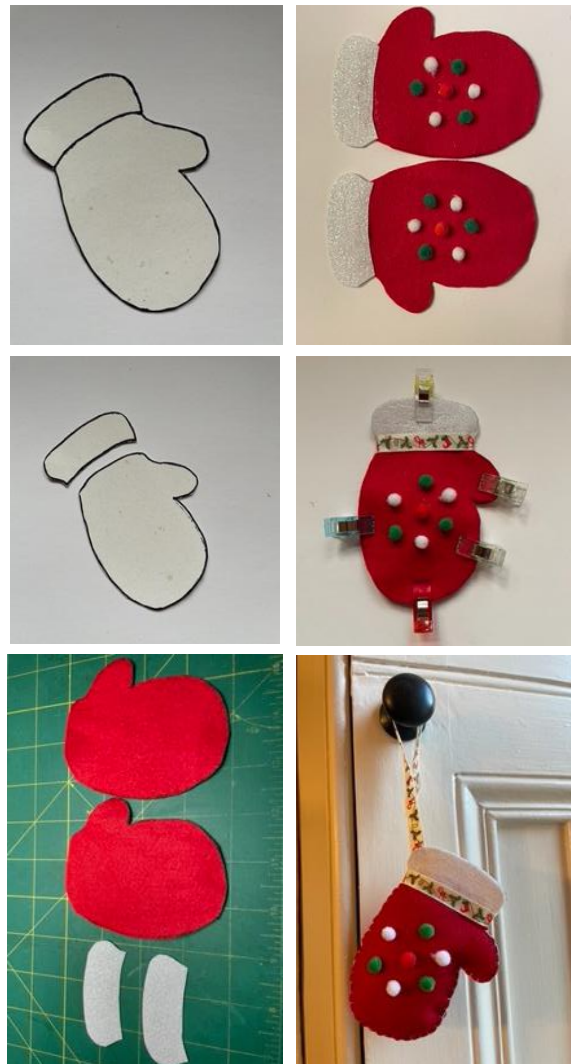
These are quick and fun to make. Don't feel you need to stick to the usual holiday colours, either. How about a blue mitten with silver or white decorations? A black and white one with shiny beads would be very elegant. Scandinavian motifs like stars and snowflakes or tiny trees look great on these mittens. There are zillions of ideas online, too.

What you'll need

- ★ Felt or Christmas fabric in two colours (I used glitter felt for the cuff, which is stiff)
- ★ Scissors (for both paper and fabric)
- ★ Thin cardboard (card from a cereal box is perfect)
- ★ Pencil or pen
- ★ Bling: embroidery thread, small buttons, ribbon, rickrack, tiny pompoms, beads, sequins
- ★ Embroidery thread for attaching bling and sewing up mitten
- ★ Stuffing: polyester filling, cotton wool (optional)
- ★ Fabric glue (any glue that dries 'clear'; Prym or UHU work well; even Pritt Stick at a pinch)
- ★ Pins or clips and a sharp sewing needle
- ★ Matching ribbon (maximum 25cm total length) to create a loop hanger
- ★ Optional: tracing paper; glitter felt for the cuff

What you do

- ★ Transfer the design for the mitten with cuff to the cardboard, and cut out the template. The original was 12cm x 8cm (at the thumb). Carefully cut the upper cuff section away from the body of the mitten.
- ★ Using the templates, draw the outlines on your material. Cut out two shapes for each mitten and cuff (for front and back). Cut carefully just inside the line so as not to leave any marks from your pen or pencil on your felt.
- ★ Assemble your bling and decorate your mitten. Decorate both sides!
- ★ Attach the cuff to the mitten. You can sew it on with a simple back stitch or any of a number of exciting stitches (fly stitch or buttonhole, for example). I glued mine, because I was using a stiff glitter felt, and glued 14cm of ribbon around the join. If you use glue, start and finish your ribbon on the thumb side.
- ★ Once your mitten is decorated and cuff attached, pin or clip it together, wrong sides together. Start to sew the two sides together, beginning below the cuff, and going around the thumb and right over to the other side. I used buttonhole stitch in a contrasting colour.
- ★ When you get to the left side of the cuff, attach your hanging ribbon to the back piece with a few tiny stitches.
- ★ Stuff your mitten by carefully separating the two sides of the cuff and filling the pocket you made stitching the two sides together. Don't forget the thumb!
- ★ Once you have attached your ribbon and the mitten is filled to your satisfaction, continue stitching around the cuff, finishing where you started. Tie a tiny knot, and bury the tail by pulling your threaded needle through the mitten to the other side and snipping the thread. The thread will be lost inside the mitten.
- ★ If using glitter felt, first tack the ends of your hanging ribbon together and glue it inside the cuff; then complete the mitten by gluing the top and side of the cuff together.



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All Things in Season

Although it's always sad to see the back of summer, especially the one we had this year, there is something satisfying about the way the seasons come round. This year, we had true summer temperatures, still bearable though rising, and then we got caught still wearing summer clothing while the temperature dropped. Rose hips and brambles appeared in succession, mists and mellow fruitfulness abounded, the days got shorter and the nights longer. But there is still time for a moment of reflection, to think back on what we have already enjoyed this year, as all the autumn activities start up again.

Before the summer actually began, and even before the last edition of the *Courier*, there were the events like the 10k run, involving the younger citizens. And for the senior denizens there was the Spring Tea Party. I'm not sure why all the tea parties have been so successful. After all, people are just sitting at long tables in the Village Hall having tea and cakes. There is no mystery about it. But these afternoons have been hugely enjoyable. There is something about seeing people you have known for decades all gathered in the one place, smartly dressed and raring to go, that gladdens the heart. And that's before you start on the quality of the baking and the kindness and efficiency of the staff – all volunteers. It was just a terrific afternoon. It always is. And then months later, at the beginning of autumn, our memories are jogged with the arrival of a photograph of the event, or rather a great many photographs all assembled in one collage. What a charming souvenir! My only reservation is that, while I personally have appeared more than once on previous collages, this time I am represented by the sleeve of my blouse. Which is probably a good thing.

Then there's the Flower Show. When was the last time any of us saw a show as splendid as that? Weatherwise it

wasn't particularly brilliant. But the rain didn't stop the people exhibiting under the tents in the car park, and it didn't affect the number of people queuing to get into the church hall. Such was the pressure on the tearoom that there was no lingering after your tea and cake had been consumed. No one felt pushed into leaving, but common sense dictated that everyone should be served before people came back to collect their entries.

And what a number of entries! Both the church and the Village Hall were packed with contributions, in every conceivable category. The craft work for a start was staggering. The children's offerings in several categories were fantastic. The flowers and vegetables were breathtaking. They usually are, but there was something special about this year. We had John's superb dahlias and Graham's perfect vegetables to show us how it should be done, but there were lots of people having a go.

This year, there were so many families and young people at the show that it was truly heart warming. There was a wonderful buzz about the whole thing. The Horti's future looks assured.

It was the day after the Flower Show that I first heard mention of the Advent windows. Neighbours were discussing designs and colour schemes. It was a tad on the early side, perhaps, but time does fly by, and one must look forward.

At the time of writing, autumn has begun, and Christmas seems a long way off. But it isn't. It really isn't. These same little families who came to the Flower Show will soon be walking round the village in December, admiring the Advent windows, and looking forward to the Big Day. Happy Christmas, when it comes.

JOYCE BEGG

Autumn

The day is closing down, open the doors of night.
The Summer sun is fading, and with it goes the light.
The birds too are silent, and the leaves hang limp and still,
They've lost their dewy greenness, the Autumn air is chill.
But there are compensations for the dying of the year,
We draw the curtains cosily, perhaps a fire to cheer.
We are not slaves to garden, we do not mind the rain,
The social seasons starting, we meet our friends again.
There always is the promise there will be another Spring,
With woods awash with bluebells, and swallows on the wing.

So so not grieve for Summer with its heat and gaudy bright,
Enjoy each season as they come and greet them with delight.

JW

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From the Archive — The Blackburns of Killearn House (Part 2)

This article looks at the children of John Blackburn, excluding the eldest son, Peter, who was dealt with in Part 1 (Courier, Issue 60) and the youngest son, Hugh, who will be the subject of a future article.

Although the children were all born before the move to Killearn House, the family spent a lot of time there enjoying the countryside.

The second son, Colin, was educated at Edinburgh Academy, Eton and Cambridge before joining Lincoln's Inn where he was called to the bar in 1838 aged 25. He then progressed through various judicial appointments in England and was made a Law Lord as Baron Blackburn of Killearn in 1876. He retired in 1886 and died in 1896. He purchased the estate of Doonholm near Alloway around 1850. Isabella, the elder of John's two daughters, lived with him in London and at Doonholm.

The third son, John, became a major in the 85th Regiment. He and his Irish born wife, Maria, had at least six children. One of their sons, Lewis, served in the Royal Navy including in World War 1. He was a captain at the Royal Navy Reserve base in London where he died from natural causes early in 1916 aged 59. One of their daughters, Grace, married the 82-year-old Earl of Wemyss in 1900 when she was 42. He died in 1914, and she survived him by 32 years.

Andrew, the fourth son, and his Scottish wife Elizabeth had only one child that we can trace. This was a daughter called Effie, whom we will return to later in the article.

The fifth son, Robert, and his English wife Frances had at least seven children. These include an unlikely-named daughter called Ethelred. Their son Robert was to follow the example of his uncle Colin and become a Scottish Law Lord. He married Lady Constance Bowes-Lyon in 1893, a daughter of the Earl of Strathmore. They both lived to see her Bowes-Lyon niece, Elizabeth, become queen to George VI.

The younger daughter, Helen, married Major Robert Fergusson of Kilkerran in Ayrshire. He served in the Rifle Brigade and the Royal Ayrshire and Wigton Rifles. Sadly, Helen died of typhoid fever aged only 37, while staying with her brother Hugh at Roshven in Moidart. Her three children were brought up by Colin and Isabella at Doonholm. The younger son, John Fergusson, married his first cousin Effie, the daughter of Andrew. In 1922, John became one of the executors to his cousin and cousin-in-law, the younger Peter Blackburn.



Helen's daughter, Lucy, also had royal connections as she was a Lady in Waiting to Queen Victoria's youngest daughter Princess Beatrice. Lucy's husband was the deputy governor of Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, where the princess had a summer apartment. Lucy's elder daughter, Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, became a professor of botany at Birkbeck College in London. From 1918–19 she was commandant of the Women's Royal Air Force and from 1939–1941 she was director of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, with her sister Lucy Pratt-Barlow as her deputy for both postings.

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Thomas Graham Library, Strathblane



The Thomas Graham Community Library is the product of a partnership between Strathblane Community Development Trust (SCDT) and Stirling Council. It is the first community-council partnership to deliver library services in Scotland – a blend of charitable and donor finance, community enterprise and local authority expertise. It is believed to be the UK's first new public library building to be funded by voluntary donation in recent times. It replaces the village's previous library facility, a dilapidated 40-year-old portacabin.

In one of the largest non-equity community fund-raising exercises to be carried out in Scotland, finance totalling £1 million was secured from more than 270 private and charitable donors, mostly local residents, to meet the full capital cost. The principal donor was the late Angus Graham of Ballewan. The building has been named the Thomas Graham Library in memory of Mr Graham's Glasgow-born great-great-uncle, Professor Thomas Graham, who was one of the world's leading physical chemists of the 19th century. The family are descendants of James Graham who was minister at Killearn Kirk and arranged the construction of the Buchanan Monument.

In November 2022, the state-of-the-art hub building of around 208 square metres, incorporating an advanced net zero-carbon renewable energy system, was completed. It hosts a spacious library (40 per cent larger than the one it replaced) and community rooms that are designed to enable flexible delivery of a wide range of events, functions, programmes and activities.

After surveying residents of Strathblane, Blanefield and the surrounding villages in southwest Stirlingshire, we realised that there was a lot of interest in attending courses for adult learning in a local setting, for which the library community rooms were ideal. In collaboration with Strathclyde University's Centre for Lifelong Learning, we have been hosting courses in a wide variety of subjects over the last two years. These have included modern languages, primarily Spanish and Italian, art history, philosophy, genealogy (family history), political geography, etc. Courses typically run for two hours over 10 weeks at various times of day and days of the week,

depending on demand. Occasional day seminars and taster sessions are also on offer.

If there is anything else that people would like to study in the sociable, accessible setting of the library, please email us (info@thomasgrahamlibrary.com). Do include the times and days that suit you best. What we can offer will depend on sufficient demand and securing available tutors.

Courses already scheduled for spring 2026 can be viewed on the myell.strath.ac.uk website, under 'Thomas Graham Community Library'.



**STRATHBLANE
HERITAGE**



Greetings to our Killearn Colleagues!

We'd be delighted to welcome you to any or all of our 2026 talks, held at Strathblane Village Club at 7.30pm.

For further information, please visit strathblaneheritage.org.

2026 PROGRAMME

19 January– Doon the Watter

Alastair Balfour recaptures in film and photos the golden age of Clyde steamers from the 1880s to the 1950s, when many thousands of Scots families took to the West coast resorts and beaches for their annual holidays.

16 February – Campsie Capers

Dr Bob Sharp, educationalist, author and mountain rescue specialist, presents an illustrated history of the Campsies as one of Central Scotland's most popular locations for walking, climbing and skiing.

16 March – AGM plus The Lands of Lennox

Professor Richard Oram of Stirling University tells the remarkable story of the Earl of Lennox and the large slice of Western Scotland – including the Blane Valley and the Campsies – that he received from King William in 1124.

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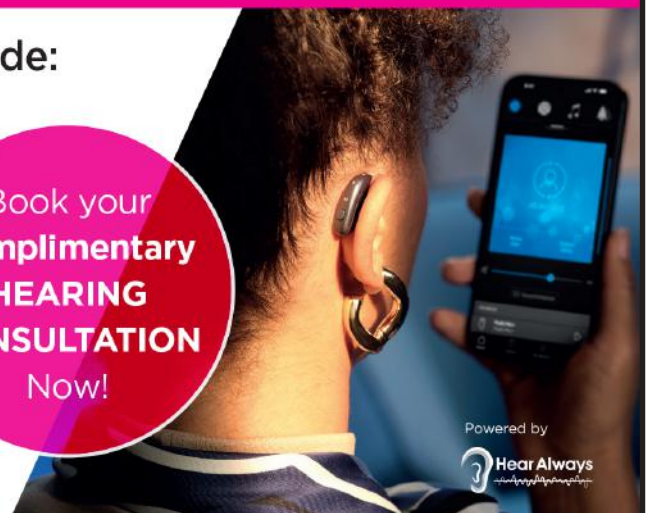
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Scam Alert

It comes not entirely as a surprise that we have had a couple of reports of scams recently. The first relates to Digital Voice and the other to a scare call supposedly from BT. A member of the *Courier* production team was a target of the second scam.

As we've said in the past, BT or other service providers will NOT cold call you to say that you have Internet issues. Cold callers are scammers. We hope you will have heard about the switchover to Digital Voice which BT are currently implementing (see *Courier* Issues 50, 59 and 61). They will introduce it to you via a written communication, maybe a postcard or as part of a contract renewal letter.

The other scam involves calling you to alert you that 'your IP address is visible, and your computer needs to be fixed'. They'll usually claim to be from BT (or another Internet provider), Apple or Microsoft, and try to win your trust before pushing you to make changes to your computer or other equipment. It's the usual underlying trick of using 'tech speak' to scare and persuade a victim that there's a problem, thereby getting them to do something to their devices.



The truth is that your IP address is just like your postal address but for your Internet connection. If you want to make any communication over the Internet, then your IP address needs to be known. It must be visible so that websites and apps know where to send the information you've asked for. That's completely normal. Most of the time, especially at home, there's no need to hide your IP address. The main time you might want to do this is when you're on public Wi-Fi, for

example in a café or airport, and especially if you might be doing a financial transaction. In those cases, using VPN software is a good idea because it hides your IP address and keeps your data secure.

When a stranger calls you out of the blue and tells you that you need to change settings on your computer or router, you should treat this as a big red flag. A genuine service provider will never do that, so the safest response is to hang up. The *Courier* member who was targeted did not hang up immediately – the caller was very plausible. It was only when he declared his name to be 'Frank Watson' while clearly a non-native English speaker that the red flag waved too strongly to be ignored.

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Strathblane	Strathyre	Stronachlachar	Tyndrum	

Further new build developments are being planned for Killearn, Balmaha and Tyndrum. 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

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Game, Set and Match

A busy spring/summer season of tennis kicked off with a very successful open day. This drew lots of new members to our wonderful club which, thanks to our committee, had been given a little face lift inside.

Pictures, paint and club-coloured bunting adorned the walls to welcome everyone to our Wimbledon warm-up event at the end of June. A little social tennis was rounded off with strawberries and cream!

Both our men's and women's team (pictured top right) finished off their fixtures in the Central Summer Scotland leagues. We have had a bit of a hiatus from competing over the years, but under captains, Gillian Johnstone and John Forshaw, we headed into battle against various local clubs.

Our men came seventh in their league, with two wins over Linlithgow and Livilands. They were unfortunate to lose some very closely contested matches with Dunblane, Falkirk and Cumbernauld. Congratulations go to John Forshaw for achieving fourth place in the individual player standings of the league. Well done El Capitano!

Our women's team was hot out of the blocks with four wins, one draw versus our local rivals from Strathblane and two closely contested losses. An overall third place in the league with only two and four points between us and the first and second spots means it's all to play for next year.

Congratulations go to four members of our women's team, who were all in the top 10 player standings of the league: Heather Maxwell at number one, Gillian Johnstone, our captain, at number three, Alex Stuart at number five and Natalie Kemsley at number 10.

Thank you to all team members who competed, drove and prepared match teas, a great first year back in the leagues and lots of banter along the way.

Coach Shaun Tulloch had his kids' camps running throughout the summer and the club championship games have all been played. Our winners (some of whom are pictured right) were honoured at a rather wet Sunday club championship celebration. Ladies Singles Champion: Alex Stuart (1); Natalie Kemsley runner-up

Ladies Doubles Champions: Alex Stuart and Heather Maxwell (2); Karen Crocket and Jan Biggart runner-up

Mixed Doubles Champions: Alex Stuart and David Fulton (3); Heather Maxwell and Keith Kemsley runners-up (4)

Mens Doubles Champions: Keith Kemsley and Bill Gray (5); Philip Pain and George Douglas runners-up (6)

If you are looking to get involved, coach Shaun offers kids' and adults' coaching weekly at the time of writing. Please don't hesitate to contact us or you can use our newly installed pay-as-you-go box at the entrance to the courts if you want to turn up and have a try.

Information on the club and memberships is available at clubspark.lta.ork.uk/KilllearnTennisClub and any future events will be shared via Facebook and on our Instagram @killlearntennisclub.

For professional and affordable coaching, all year round, contact Shaun Tulloch at www.10outoftennis.com.



Curling – Lead Stones

We had a difficult start to the season as essential work was being carried out on the rink in Stirling. We expected play to start in the week commencing 15 September but just days beforehand it was put back a week. The good news is that play started on 22 September.

The Mixed Section was not due to start until 29 September, so they were unaffected, but the Ladies Section lost their opening bonspiel.

The Mixed Section was due to play two double round leagues with four teams. One round runs up to the end of November, and the second one will start at the end of January and last until March. At present we only have three teams for our December and January league which would mean three sessions with a single match. We are hoping to get more players to make up another team, even if this involves players from outside Strathendrick Curling Club.

The Mixed Section started with the President vs Vice-President competition which forms their opening bonspiel. The result was very close with the sides tied on seven ends. The Vice-President won with

two shots up while the President was two shots down. The Ladies Section is due to play four single round leagues with six teams in each. We have an extra six members from Dollar Ladies Curling Club joining us this season which has enabled us to expand our leagues.

Strathendrick will be taking part in Province competitions which were due to start in October and include an away day at Kinross.

We also have a team entered for the Indoor Grand Match and will have played at Lockerbie on 15 November.

The Ladies Section had a couple of enjoyable summer events with golf or a walk followed by lunches at Buchanan Castle Golf Club and at Katy Rogers' Courtyard Café in Fintry.

The contacts for Strathendrick Curling Club are Jane Weir (07900 555906) or Gill Smith (01360 550726) or look at our website at strathendrickcurling.org.uk.

New members would be welcomed by both the Mixed Section and the Ladies Section.

GS



Paul Mosley, President and Louisella Mosley, Vice-President with the trophy

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Celebrating 50 Years in Business – 1975–2025



The 2025 Forth and Endrick Football season was a challenging one for the team as we looked to introduce a number of new players to the squad and, as a result, our form over the season was a bit erratic.

In the league we finished in the bottom half, well below our expectations. However, we did rally in the cup competitions reaching the semi-final of the Tom Yuill trophy, narrowly defeated on penalties in the Cameron cup by finalists Deanston and going out to eventual winners, Aberlour Villa in the Scottish Cup.

On a positive note, it was great to welcome new players to the village team, as well as giving opportunities to a number of our younger teenagers, who will be the core of the team in the future. We still needed to rely on some of our 'veterans' at times during the season and well done to all of those who dug out the boots to help when needed.

Off the field we continue to flourish as a club, with brilliant support from our community. Whether that was for the team at games, generous donations for our charity fundraising or investment from our valued sponsors, the backing we receive from everyone is very much appreciated by all at the club.

This was best reflected at our 40th Anniversary golf day in August. Held at the wonderful Killin Golf Club, we saw a record number of players and supporters attend, with many 'well kent' faces from past years joining our current players for what was an amazing day. Benji West was the winner of the coveted Hughie Russell Trophy, having played 'the round of his life' on what was a glorious day in the Perthshire sunshine.



It is sometimes difficult to predict what can happen on the pitch, but as a community club it's great to see the togetherness and camaraderie off it!

We look forward to 2026 with our usual 'glass half full' attitude and would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone in the Killearn community all the very best for Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

See you all back at the field of dreams in April!

ALL AT KILLEARN FOOTBALL CLUB

Scottish Schools Mountain Bike Championships

On 23 September the Scottish Schools Mountain Bike Championships were held at Comrie Croft and were hosted by Morrison's Academy. On the day, I went up to Comrie Croft with three other pupils from Balfron High to participate in the racing.

There were three age categories, from S1 to S6, with each category being split by gender. The whole event had over 100 Scottish schools participating (that's nearly a third of all Scottish schools!) and almost 500 students partook in the event! All Balfron riders were in the S3/S4 boys' category, and our race wasn't until the afternoon. However, we got a chance to practise a lap in the morning.

As all age categories were out on the course at the

same time, there was a lot of congestion and accidents between multiple riders. Thankfully all the accidents were minor. The start of our race was delayed due to somebody having parked on the start line!

The course was cross-country, meaning that there was a mixture of up and downhill with one lap being around 3km. While Balfron didn't quite get the result we were hoping for, the whole day was fantastic and lots of fun.

Charlie Aldridge also made an appearance as an alumnus of Morrison's Academy. If you don't know, he is a world-class mountain biker with a very full trophy cabinet!

Overall, the event was a success and Balfron are hoping to attend next year!

ROBERT HANCOCK

The Killearn 10k and Mile Returns in 2026!

Killearn's favourite community sporting day is back!

The Killearn 10k will take place on Saturday 6 June 2026, bringing runners, spectators and the whole community together once again for a fantastic day. The event will feature the popular Killearn Mile, followed by the scenic 10k route, renowned for its stunning views and the warm village atmosphere that makes this race so special.

A big thank you to our sponsors. We're delighted to welcome Cala Homes as our headline sponsor for 2026 – a perfect fit, and we hope many of their new residents will join in this community day. A big shout-out also goes to the Old Mill, West Homes and Killearn Pharmacy whose ongoing support is at the heart of making the Killearn 10k such a success year after year. Important date for your diary: Race entries will be released on Thursday 4 December 2025. Last year, places sold out in just two hours – so if you're keen to take part, don't delay!

For the latest updates, be sure to join the Killearn 10k Facebook group, where you'll find sign-up reminders, race news and community updates.

Finally, a big thank you to our team of marshals, whom we celebrated at the end of the summer (see photo opposite). If you'd like to join the team and get involved behind the scenes, or if you are a business looking to get involved, we'd love to hear from you – just drop us a line at info@killearn10k.com.

We can't wait to see you on the start line in June!







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‘Running Up That Hill’



Young Florence Skinner from Killearn is achieving outstanding success in distance running – most recently becoming the Scottish U15 hill running champion.

But Florence’s love for running began back in Killearn Primary School, doing the daily one mile run round the playground, that so many KPS pupils, parents and teachers will be familiar with. Florence enjoyed the regular exercise, found that she had a talent and taste for running, and so her journey began.

The school entered Florence into Scottish primary schools’ cross-country races where she won through to the championships. She joined Garscube Harriers to help develop her stamina and technique and enjoy more

competition. She also swims with the Balfron Barracudas.



Moving on to Kelvinside Academy, she competed in sprints as well as distance events and she now holds age-group school records for 100m, 200m and 1500m! But endurance races are her speciality, and she enjoys hill, cross-country, road and track running.

This year Florence has completed all eight national hill running league races. At the Suidhe hill race championships she entered the open competition and, at the age of 13 she was the third fastest woman, the second fastest U17 female and the fastest U15 girl! Remarkable.

Well done, Florence. The *Killearn Courier* will watch, and report on, your progress with great interest!

NH



Jennifer Malley, BSc(Hons), RCPod, hpc registered,

**11 Main Street,
Killearn, G63 9RJ.**

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Rugby Round-Up: Strathendrick Celebrates Its Half Century

Back in 1975 Strathendrick RFC was founded by Bobby Telfer, along with other students and staff from Balfron High School. They played matches at the (old) High School, Endrick Bridge in Balfron and Aberfoyle before settling at Fintry Sports Club.

Since then, the Club has developed steadily: after the men's 1st XV, a 2nd XV was started, then some years later Minis followed by Midis – and most recently women's and girls' teams.

The club to flourish with 17 regular teams; hundreds of players; dozens of coaches and volunteers; with widespread support throughout the community – especially from parents and sponsors.

On 6 September, the Club celebrated its 50th anniversary with a hugely successful festival: a great win over old rivals Oban Lorne RFC, a mass guard of honour and an aerial photo of Club members and supporters on the pitch (see above), as well as children's entertainments, a band and a bar.

The club continues to thrive: the 1st XV, having won promotion last season, are (at the time of writing) sitting top of West Division 1; the 2nd XV (a blend of 'more mature' and developing players are doing well); the Midis boys teams are playing in the Schools' Conference – with teams at every age group; the Minis are enjoying festivals and fixtures; the women are playing both Touch and Contact Rugby and the girls have three regular teams.

If you would like to give rugby a try – why not come and give it a go?

www.pitchero.com/clubs/strathendrickrfc/



Aerial photo courtesy of Andrew Gorman

STRATHENDRICK RFC
50 YEARS IN THE MAKING
FIND YOUR TEAM

Monday
Senior Women's Touch 7-8pm

Tuesday
Senior Men's Contact 7.30-9pm
U16 Boys - 6.30-8pm
U18 Boys - 7-8pm

Wednesday
Senior Women's Contact 7.30-8.30pm
P7 Boys 6-7pm
S1 Boys - 6.30-8pm
S2 Boys - 6.30-8pm
S3 Boys - 6.30-8pm

Thursday
U10, U12, 14, 16, 18 Girls - 6.30-7.30pm
Senior Men's Contact 7.30-9pm
U18 Boys - 6.30-8pm

Sunday
Minis (P1-P7) 10.30-11.30am
Training at Fintry Sports Club/ Balfron High School
PLEASE CHECK WITH COACHES FOR LOCATION

Ruth Menzies Field Fintry G63 0YA
@strathendrick_rfc f Strathendrick RFC www.strathendrickrfc.com

Building for the Future at Balfron Golf Club

Balfron Golf Club has recently completed work on their new clubhouse, providing an excellent resource for members, visitors and the local community. Over two years in the planning, the clubhouse replaces the original building, which had provided basic facilities since 1994, the date in modern times when the club opened.

The club benefited from partial funding for the project: a sizeable grant towards the construction costs was received from Sports Scotland. The building will be named as 'The Tom Paul Memorial Clubhouse' in recognition of the very generous support from the Paul Charitable Trust – funds from which will go towards furnishing the facility.

In addition, the club received contributions towards the installation costs of an air-source heat pump and solar panels from Local Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland. By using renewable energy sources, the aim is to provide a net-zero building that will be available for use by residents in the nearby villages as well as members.

The new building has a large lounge/dining area plus



a fully equipped kitchen, as well as toilet and shower facilities. There are changing rooms for ladies and gents and a separate locker room for use by the very large junior section (over 100). The building also has disabled facilities and dedicated disabled car parking plus ramp access. Outside seating is also available with views of the first tee, the 18th green and the spectacular surrounding countryside.

Mary Fallas 1927–2025

Mary was born on 9 October 1927 on the Isle of Lewis. Her parents were Donald and Christina, and she had two older sisters, Kirsty and Kathy. Later the family was joined by two younger brothers, Kenneth and Ian, and a little sister, Kitty Joe, who unfortunately died at a very young age. At primary school Mary took part in the choir, coming back with her sister with a trophy from the Mòd.

In 1948, Mary applied for a position as assistant housekeeper to a family which meant leaving the island and making her home in Blane field. She was given the opportunity by the family to attend a domestic college in Glasgow, where she honed her cookery skills. She even became a member of the Glasgow Tigers Club, and she loved going to the speedway.

While working at Blane field House, she met and fell in love with Jim. They were married for 66 years until his death in March 2021. They had three children, Ann, James and Thomas, and in 1959 they all moved to Killearn.

When the children were older, Mary started working again, caring for people who needed a little respite. She became relief housekeeper at Abbeyfield House, enjoying looking after the people there. She loved village life, joining the Young Wives' group and the Guild. Her many interests included dancing, theatre visits, cookery, crosswords, and knitting.



Mary welcomed Jane and Fiona into the family as daughters-in-law, and Gordon as son-in-law. William, Simon, and Fleur were the next generation to come into the family fold. She dedicated her life to her family and helping others when needed. She was a faithful wife, friend, and carer. She had strong spiritual beliefs which gave her comfort throughout the years.

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Looking for Someone?

The Courier website has a list of the names of anyone who's obituary has appeared since the first edition in Spring 2005.

Go to tinyurl.com/courobitt and follow the instructions.





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Christopher Gabriel Riches 1952—2025

Born on 25 March 1952 in Cuddesdon, Oxfordshire, Christopher was the youngest child of Bishop Kenneth and Katharine Dixon Riches.

The family moved north to Lincoln in 1956, and Christopher grew up in a household defined by love, learning, faith, and service, characteristics which defined his entire life. When not away at school – at the Dragon School in Oxford and then at Marlborough College – he started to build up his love of books and antiques.

In 1970 Christopher started university at Manchester, after a summer spent working at a bookshop in Dublin where he formed a deep love of Irish literature and music, interests he passed on to all his family. At Manchester, he made lifelong friends, and most importantly met Catherine. Their partnership brought so much to all those who knew them and has been an example to his sons. Christopher and Catherine met at a third-world justice leafleting event, and this cause continued to be a passion of Christopher's; he was involved in later years with the Coach House in Balmore and then Gavin's Mill in Milngavie.

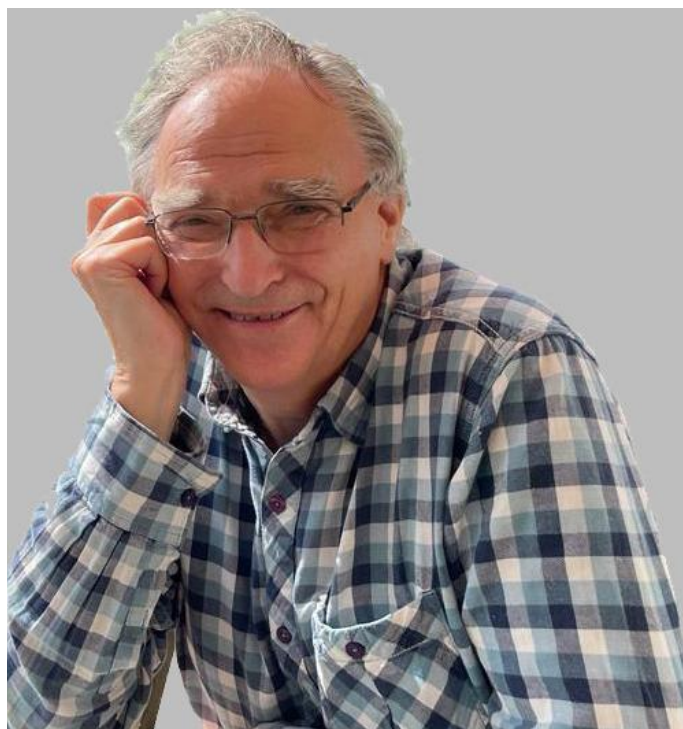
After university, Christopher worked at Penguin Education, then in 1974 he moved to Oxford to work with Oxford University Press. From 1976 to 1981 he was based in OUP's Hong Kong office, publishing school textbooks and English language books for the Far East market. While living in Hong Kong, Christopher was involved in amateur dramatics and the Anglican cathedral. In 1979 he married Catherine, and they returned to Hong Kong for two years, making memories which lasted for decades.

After those exciting years, Christopher and Catherine returned to Oxford, where Christopher took up a new role in reference publishing at OUP. They bought their first home and celebrated the birth of three sons, James (1982), Nick (1984) and Sam (1988). Christopher became treasurer of the University Church, and his sons used to help count the collection.

In 1989 Christopher moved to Glasgow to lead a team in reference publishing at Collins, and the family moved to 27 Main Street, Killearn. Christopher and Catherine transformed this house into a welcoming and comfortable place filled with love, with a glorious garden which Christopher much enjoyed.

The family enjoyed life in Killearn and worshipped at St Mary's Episcopal Church, Aberfoyle for many years, with Christopher again serving as treasurer for a few years. He published many books, among them the *Collins Gems* – enjoying explaining how an entire book could be printed on a single sheet of paper! While chair of Killearn School Board, he was involved in the school's rebuilding.

In 2006 Christopher started working for himself, gaining expert knowledge in a wide range of topics such as Canadian history, ancient maps of Scotland, and the *Dandy* and *Beano*. At this point, he and Catherine began worshipping in Glasgow, at



St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. There were many happy times as three wonderful daughters-in-law, Kate, Jenny and Sarah, were welcomed into the family, followed by grandchildren Noah, Elsie, Electra, Jack and Micah..

Christopher and Catherine travelled widely, holidaying in various parts of Europe, as well as visiting James, Kate and family in the USA, and Nick, Jenny and family in Eswatini and then in Malawi, in addition to many happy visits to Sam and Sarah in London. Christopher enjoyed retirement in Killearn, spending time with the Killearn Heritage group and All Killearn Archive group, playing a significant part in the production of the history panels around the village. He was always finding ways to serve, right up to the end of his life.

Obituaries in the *Courier*

We welcome the obituary of anyone who has lived in the area or has had a close local connection with it.

To request an obituary to be included in the next edition, email courier@kcfc.co.uk giving your contact details and the name of the deceased.

We may even approach you if the editorial team know of a death in the area.

You may provide a pre-written obituary or you can send the details you would like to be included in the obituary and one of the editorial team can write a draft for you to change or approve. A photograph is always welcome.

The *Courier* reserves the right to edit the obituary.

All obituaries published in the *Courier* are available online. Details are given on the facing page.

CHRISTMAS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD *Set by PeeWit*

ACROSS

- 3 Aid or maybe something to listen to (5)
 4 Evil old woman hangs without directions given (3)
 7 Harmful elf, hospital abandoned, broke this camera (4-5)
 8 Pull this creamless biscuit at 11 (7)
 11 Charms its organisation at this season of the year (9)
 14 Part of a play sounds as if it has been observed (5)
 15 Been sued? What followed was inside (5)
 16 20 24 Greeting heard when bells ring out (5,3,4)
 18 Investor in plays could be top of the tree (5)
 24 See 16
 25 Cut breakfast cereal when you say 'goodbye' (7)
 26 Brother wears a lemon kimono inside (4)
 27 Secret police inactive period is curtailed (5)
 28 Happening in seven topics (5)

DOWN

- 1 Artist in conflict before a short break (6)
 2 Vocalist who makes sewing machines (6)
 5 Weeding tool used in tulip land (5,3)
 6 Know-it-all is a very clever mule (8)
 9 Comments from top football teams (6)
 10 Young Tom wearing outfit after nine (6)
 12 Dancer Fred on a flight with a drug (7)
 13 Recovers from man sowing around
 start of meadow coming back (7)
 17 Group of wolves get ready for their holiday (4)
 19 Coming or going it's always midday (4)
 20 See 16
 21 Set five round if you are feeling joyful (7)
 22 Now is the time for a gift (7)
 23 No room here at 11 (3)

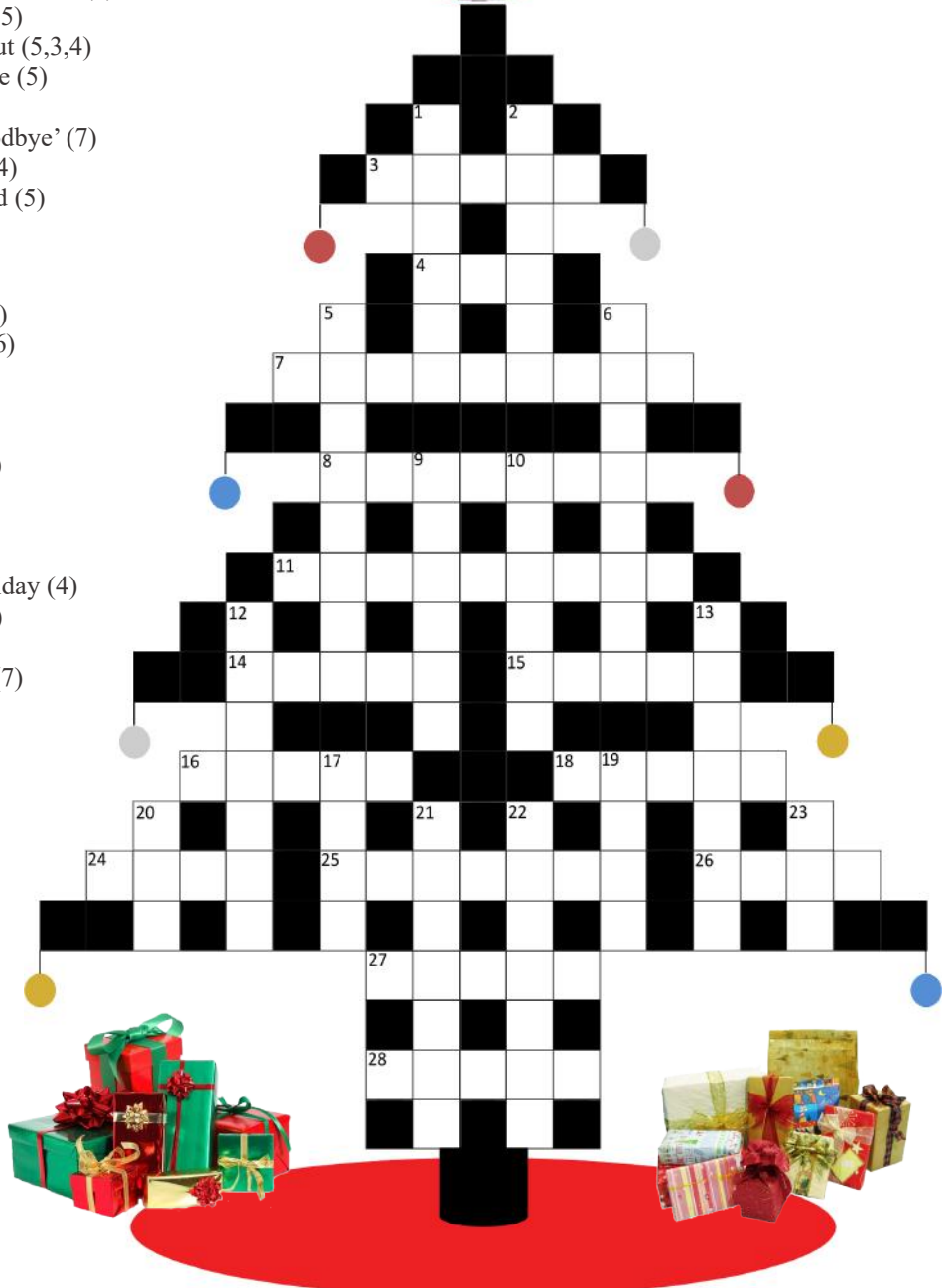
Solution to the summer crossword:

ACROSS: 1 attachable; 6 apse;
 9 destroyers; 10 Aldi; 10 bankrupt;
 12 supermarkets; 15 Sainsbury; 17 Tesco;
 18 teach; 19 Morrisons; 20 experimenter;
 24 maid; 25 first stage; 26 Lidl;
 27 adolescent

DOWN: 1 Asda; 2 task; 3 circumspere;
 4 azyme; 5 Lord Mayor; 7 Palmerston;
 8 emits noise; 11 prettinesses; 13
 isothermal; 14 misapplied; 16 unnummed;
 21 nasal; 22 café; 23 pest



Peewit wishes all the solvers of the puzzles a very 16, 11 and all good wishes for the 20, 24.



SUDOKU

Fill in the blank squares so that upon completion, each row, each column and each block contains all of the numbers from 1 to 9.

9		8	2	4				
	7		3	9	5			
	4	5						3
2	8		1		9		6	
							3	1
4	1							
8		1				3	9	
	2	9		1	8			
7					2		5	8

	14		4
12			
		10	
13			

MAGIC SQUARE

Rule: Place the numbers 1-16 once each so every row, column and both diagonals sum to 34.

I have given you some numbers to start you off.

Spot the Difference – Just for Fun



Can you find 12 things that have changed in the right-hand picture? Good hunting!

Wordsearch

Find 14 words in the wordsearch grid that are associated with holidays. The words are: beach, camping, cruise, excursion, flight, hotel, passport, pool, postcard, safari, swimsuit, tourist, travel, vacation.

G	N	O	I	T	A	C	A	V	R	S	R	X	L	S
A	M	P	B	E	A	C	H	N	L	W	N	A	B	E
U	Y	T	C	P	A	H	N	Z	C	J	X	S	Z	T
Y	M	J	R	M	O	S	E	S	L	E	V	A	R	T
Q	Y	H	P	O	B	S	C	S	G	V	N	Q	T	T
N	R	I	J	Y	P	O	T	X	I	Z	S	H	W	L
H	N	C	U	I	T	S	R	C	Q	U	B	E	Y	N
G	O	Y	Z	U	H	I	S	T	A	S	R	T	V	K
B	I	W	K	V	X	N	U	A	H	R	C	C	Y	H
A	S	S	F	Z	T	T	S	S	P	G	D	F	K	O
I	R	E	U	M	X	A	A	I	M	J	I	W	M	P
V	U	W	L	D	Z	S	F	G	G	I	G	L	N	S
Y	C	H	O	T	E	L	A	D	I	T	W	T	F	L
R	X	F	O	T	O	U	R	I	S	T	H	S	A	Y
U	E	F	P	N	B	V	I	P	R	R	Y	Y	Q	P

Word Pyramid

Find all the words in the pyramid. You do this by starting at the top of the pyramid. The first two rows are already given. You have to find the word on the next row. This word must contain all the letters from the previous row plus one extra letter. The letters don't have to be in the same place in the word. A clue for the word is given.

a

a s

A mineral spring

Vegetables

Memory loss

Aircraft

Breed of dog

Word Square

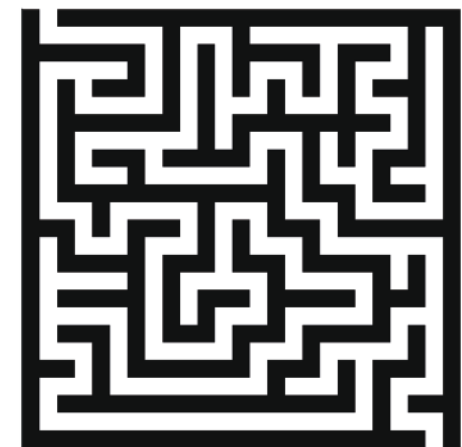
The square contains four words defined in each row. These words are the same both horizontally and vertically. Enter the words in the grid.

Fighter Planes

Returned Sound

Those People

Unspecified Amount



Maze

Find your way from the top entrance to the bottom exit.

Killearn Christmas Market

Festive cheer comes to the village when on Sunday 6 December, Killearn Village Hall will again transform into a bustling hub of community spirit and creativity as the much-loved Killearn Country Market returns for its annual Christmas Craft Fayre. A highlight in the village calendar, the market brings together local artisans, makers and producers, offering a unique opportunity to shop for one-of-a-kind gifts while supporting home-grown talent.

This year's event promises something for everyone: stalls brimming with hand-crafted treasures, festive crafts to keep the children entertained, and even a free seasonal photo booth to capture those special holiday memories. With its warm, welcoming atmosphere and a wide variety of stalls, the market is more than just a shopping trip – it's a festive gathering for the whole community.

So, whether you're hunting for the perfect Christmas gift, looking to enjoy a family day out, or simply eager to soak up the seasonal cheer, the Killearn Christmas Market is the place to be.



Balfron Christmas Concert

As the nights draw in, the Balfron Community Singers are busy rehearsing for one of the village's most beloved traditions – their annual Christmas Concert.

The three choirs – our youngest Tiddlers, the spirited Middlers and the seasoned voices of the Bigglers – have been working hard to bring together a programme full of festive sparkle. Their music promises to fill the hall with joy, laughter and the kind of Christmas cheer that warms even the chilliest of winter evenings.

The concert also carries the spirit of giving, with a charity raffle supported by generous donations from local businesses and neighbours alike. It's an evening that celebrates not only music, but the strength of our community.

So gather your family, bring your festive spirit and join us in Balfron Church from 7pm on Saturday 20 December as we welcome the season in song.

The Balfron Community Singers can't wait to share Christmas with you



Solutions to the Puzzles by PeeWit

The solutions to the puzzles on pages 40 and 41 are to be found at tinyurl.com/kcsol63.

Have you read the magazine and finished all the puzzles? Don't despair, as well as all the answers, there is a concise crossword and a Family Christmas Quiz for you to try on the website.

PeeWit would love to hear if you like the puzzles in this edition. Some readers have expressed a desire for a concise crossword, so an online one has been included with the solutions as an experiment. If popular, then we might find space in the magazine. Contact peewit@kcfc.co.uk.



A Deer for All Seasons

This summer, I photographed a beautiful buck roe deer on the outskirts of the village while it fed lazily, semi-concealed in buttercup-filled grassland. As well as plentiful food, it seemed to be relishing the heat of the day, licking the air while insects buzzed around its russet summer coat. I wondered if it was old enough and wise enough to appreciate that this wouldn't last; that in six months' time it would be a much barer looking field that hosted a colder, hungrier, more exposed deer working hard to survive the winter.

The seasonal changes, familiar with them as we are, still manage to elicit surprise with every cycle. As nature and the landscape adapt from one to the other, there's always that single moment that jolts us into appreciating the full transition into the next season with all its recognisable attributes as regards light, colour, temperature or just something in the air.

Winter is no exception. Notwithstanding what the calendar tells us, it is a season that creeps up on us, hidden by the last remnants of autumn until that day when the mask slips and a different kind of cold, a different kind of sky, confronts us and triggers a sombre reality check. It is then that we look around and see – really see – that just about everything rooted to the ground is bare or seemingly dead. The lush greenness of summer is long gone, the golden brown autumn hues also now a memory.

While watching my serene roe deer, something about him reminded me of the very beautiful, touching and, in its own way, comforting film 'The Life of Death' by Marsha Onderstijn. If the seasons are symbolic of our journey through life, then winter surely represents our later years – and even death itself. Yet simultaneously there is much to counter this morbid view. There are some very obvious signs of life in winter. We see our small birds, fluffed up and fighting for space at feeders, fuelling



up to endure each bitter night. We hear skeins of geese flying back and forth between fields around the village. And our mammals become that bit tamer, more likely to be seen during the day or standing out against the snow as they too search for food.

We also take comfort that winter is not the endpoint. An inexorable segue into life-affirming spring awaits us. While climate change is undoubtedly blurring some lines of seasonal change, there are thankfully still distinct shifts in temperature, light and nature's responses to which we can look forward. Those snowdrops are just around the corner.

MARTIN CULSHAW

Killearn Courier
is published by Killearn
Community Futures Company



Anyone wishing to contribute to the spring edition of the *Courier* is reminded that it will be distributed from 14 March 2026.

Requests for advertisements should be sent to us by Friday, 23 January 2026.

Email Gwen Stewart (advertising@kcfc.co.uk).

Contributions and letters to the editor should be in the hands of the editorial team by 23 January 2026.

Please send them to:

Killearn Courier, Killearn Village Hall, Balforn Road, Killearn, G63 9NL or email courier@kcfc.co.uk.

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