



ISSUE 60

WINTER 2024

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# Noticeboard

16 Nov	<b>Killlearn Country Market</b> Village Hall, 11am–4pm. Wreath-making with Max Johnston Basketry.		
19 Nov	<b>Strathendrick Stitchers</b> Christmas Workshop: Blackwork bauble and tartan hearts. Sales table and library will also be available. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. New members and visitors welcome. £3 per session, first visit free. Contact <a href="mailto:strathendrickstitchers@gmail.com">strathendrickstitchers@gmail.com</a> .	14 Dec	<b>West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers</b> Christmas coffee. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am–1pm. New members and visitors welcome. First visit free. <a href="http://weave-spin-dye-glasgow.org.uk">weave-spin-dye-glasgow.org.uk</a>
20 Nov	<b>Killlearn Community Council</b> Meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall Garden Room and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. For the link to join the live stream, email Fiona ( <a href="mailto:fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk">fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk</a> ).	14 Dec	<b>Killlearn Kirk Guild</b> Christmas Coffee Morning. Kirk Hall, 10am–12noon.
21 Nov	<b>The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley</b> Lecture by Julia Marwood, ‘Two Glasgow Boys: George Henry and Edward Hornal’. The Barracks, Stirling, 11am.	15 Dec	<b>Strathendrick Singers</b> Christmas Concert, Killlearn Kirk, 7pm.
21 Nov	<b>Goldern Year’s Club</b> Bingo Evening. Kirk Hall, 6.30pm for 7pm.	18 Dec	<b>Killlearn Community Council</b> Meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall Garden Room and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. Contact <a href="mailto:fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk">fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk</a> .
26 Nov	<b>Killlearn Kirk Guild</b> Guild meeting. Musical afternoon with Gaudeamus (Rejoice) Group. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.	24 Dec	<b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Family Service, 6pm. Carols and Watchnight Service, 11pm.
28 Nov	<b>Drymen &amp; District Local History Society</b> Talk by Alison Cathcart, ‘Imperial Monarchy: James V’s voyage to the Isles’. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm.	25 Dec	<b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Christmas Day Service, 10am.
28–30 Nov	<b>FADs</b> Pantomime <i>The Snow Queen</i> . Menzies Hall, Fintry, Thurs–Sat, 7.30pm and matinee Sat, 2pm. £12 adults, £8 under 18s, under 2s go free. Buy tickets online at <a href="http://fintrydrama.org.uk">fintrydrama.org.uk</a> .	25–26 Dec	<b>Killlearn Health Centre</b> Closed. For help or advice contact NHS 24 on 111.
1 Dec	<b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Communion Service. 10am.	31 Dec	<b>Back Onside Charity Hogmany Bash</b> . Village Hall, 8pm–1am. Adults £30; kids 6–17, £10; under 5s FREE. Contact <a href="mailto:events@backonside.com">events@backonside.com</a> to buy tickets.
5–7 Dec	<b>FADs</b> Pantomime <i>The Snow Queen</i> . Details at 28 Nov.	1–2 Jan	<b>Killlearn Health Centre</b> Closed. Contact NHS 24 on 111.
6 Dec	<b>Strathendrick Film Society</b> showing <i>The Music Man</i> . Balfron High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership fee £30, £25 concessions. Contact Terry Conway on (01360) 440250 or see website to join.	4 Jan	<b>Colourful Killlearn</b> Killlearn Kirk, 10am. Taking down the Christmas tree. Contact <a href="mailto:colourfulkilllearn@gmail.com">colourfulkilllearn@gmail.com</a> .
7 Dec	<b>Colourful Killlearn</b> Killlearn Kirk, 10am, putting up the Christmas tree. Contact <a href="mailto:colourfulkilllearn@gmail.com">colourfulkilllearn@gmail.com</a> .	11 Jan	<b>West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers</b> Zoom talk by Laura Thomas, ‘Indian threads: A weave residency’. 10am start. Contact the secretary ( <a href="mailto:weavers.in.glasgow@gmail.com">weavers.in.glasgow@gmail.com</a> ) for link.
7 Dec	<b>Killlearn Country Market</b> Village Hall, 11am–4pm. Santa’s Grotto 12noon–3pm.	14 Jan	<b>Killlearn Kirk Guild</b> meeting. Killlearn Heritage Trail with Nick Hawkins. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.
8 Dec	<b>Killlearn Kirk</b> Gift Service, 10.30am. Gifts will be donated to Stirling Salvation Army for distribution in the Stirling Council area.	15 Jan	<b>Killlearn Community Council</b> Meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall Garden Room and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. Contact <a href="mailto:fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk">fiona.rennie@killlearncc.org.uk</a> .
10 Dec	<b>Killlearn Kirk Guild and Thursday Club</b> Christmas Lunch. Fintry, 12noon for 12.30pm.	16 Jan	<b>The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley</b> Lecture by Patricia Andrew, ‘Salvador Dali – Deluded and Dangerous or Daring and Different’. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am.
12 Dec	<b>The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley</b> Lecture by Janusz Karezewski-Slowikowski, ‘Going Potty About Comodes’. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am.	16 Jan	<b>Strathendrick Classic and Sports Car Club</b> talk by David Thorburn, ‘Formula 2 and 3 racing cars’. Ross Priory, Gartocharn, 6.45pm for 7.30pm. Contact <a href="mailto:SC&amp;SCC.Sec@gmail.com">SC&amp;SCC.Sec@gmail.com</a> .
12 Dec	<b>Strathendrick Classic and Sports Car Club</b> Quiz night, Ross Priory, Gartocharn, 6.45pm for 7.30pm. Contact <a href="mailto:SC&amp;SCC.Sec@gmail.com">SC&amp;SCC.Sec@gmail.com</a> .	21 Jan	<b>Strathendrick Stitchers</b> Kumihimo braiding workshop. Sales table and library will also be available. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. See 19 Nov for contact details.
13 Dec	<b>The Market before Christmas – a festive evening</b> Village Hall, 5pm–9pm.	23 Jan	<b>Drymen &amp; District Local History Society</b> Talk by Dr Fraser Hunter, ‘War and Diplomacy on Rome’s Northern Frontier’. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm.
13 Dec	<b>Strathendrick Singers</b> Christmas Concert, Kippen Church, 7pm.	28 Jan	<b>Killlearn Kirk</b> meeting. CHAS (Robin House). Kirk Hall, 1.15pm–3.15pm.
		5 Feb	<b>Killlearn Horticultural Society</b> Annual General Meeting. Garden Room, 7.30pm. All welcome.
		7 Feb	<b>Strathendrick Film Society</b> showing <i>The Taste of</i>

## Noticeboard continued

- 8 Feb **Things.** Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership fee £30, £25 concessions. Contact Terry Conway on (01360) 440250 or see website to join.
- 8 Feb **West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers** Talk by Karen Haggis, 'Textile Traditions in Nepal'. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am–1pm. New members and visitors welcome. Contact details at 11 Jan.
- 11 Feb **Killearn Kirk Guild** meeting. In-house entertainment on the theme of St Valentine. B&B sale. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.
- 13 Feb **Strathendrick Classic and Sports Car Club** Programme TBC. Ross Priory, Gartocharn, 6.45pm for 7.30pm. Ross Priory, Gartocharn, 6.45pm for 7.30pm. Contact SC&SCC.Sec@gmail.com.
- 18 Feb **Strathendrick Stitches** Group Project: Pin cushions. Sales table and library. Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. See 19 Nov for contact details.
- 19 Feb **Killearn Community Council** Meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall Garden Room and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. Contact fiona.rennie@killearncc.org.uk.
- 20 Feb **The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley** Lecture by Russell Nash, 'The Men Who Made Menswear'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am.
- 25 Feb **Killearn Kirk Guild** Guild meeting. Sanctuary First Church with Rev. Ruth Kennedy. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.
- 27 Feb **Drymen & District Local History Society** Talk by Eddie Edmonstone, 'Two eminent Scottish doctors – Sir James McGrigor, Surgeon General in Wellington's army in the Peninsular War, and Sir James Wylie, physician to the Tsar of Russia'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 4 Mar **Colourful Killearn** Spring open meeting. Village Hall, 7pm. Contact colourfulkillearn@gmail.com.
- 7 Mar **Killearn Horticultural Society** Whist Drive. Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Entry £4 at the door including tea and cakes.
- 7 Mar **Strathendrick Film Society** showing *One Life*. Balforn High School Theatre, 7.30pm. £5 entry or membership fee £30, £25 concessions. Contact details at 7 Feb.
- 8 Mar **West of Scotland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers** Programme TBC. CE Centre, Milngavie G62 8PN, 10am start. See 11 Jan for contact details.
- 11 Mar **Killearn Kirk Guild.** meeting. Linda More and her friends will entertain us. Kirk Hall, 1.30pm–3.30pm.
- 13 Mar **Strathendrick Classic and Sports Car Club** Club talk by Martin Shelley, 'Restoring an Edwardian Thornycroft tourer'. Ross Priory, Gartocharn, 6.45pm for 7.30pm. Contact SC&SCC.Sec@gmail.com.

If you have dates of events for the spring 2025 issue of the Noticeboard (mid March until mid August), please contact Heather McArthur (07985 082678; [heather.mcarthur1@outlook.com](mailto:heather.mcarthur1@outlook.com)).

## Editorial

### In With The New

Hello and welcome to our final issue of 2024. By the time you get through reading this issue, we will be only a few weeks away from 2025, but before that, it will be Christmas. This issue is what we call our 'Christmas Edition', and inside you will find all sorts of articles giving you ideas for the festive season. I hope you enjoy them and try out some of the suggestions.

Killearn is a vibrant village when you realise the number of clubs, organisations and variety of annual events are on offer. Indeed, the annual Horti Show and the fireworks display attract attendees from far and wide. We see our purpose at the *Courier* as reporting on all of this, keeping our readers informed of what is going on and what is available to them. The feedback we get tells us we are broadly on the right track.

Now, 2025 is going to be an interesting year for Killearn.

This year, we will be welcoming new residents to the village from both the developments at Lampson Road and the old hospital site, where Cala are fairly cracking on building houses. I understand that the footpath down Station Road will be much improved – something that has been needed for ages.

For us at the *Courier*, 2025 is also going to be an interesting year. I mentioned in the last issue that we started in 2005, 20 years ago. Some of our founder members are now in their late 80s and still going strong. However, we cannot count on this good fortune indefinitely. Indeed, it is likely that at least one of our number will 'retire' during the coming year.

Over the years, we have been blessed with fulsome support. Our advertisers have stayed with us. Our cohort of resident distributors who deliver your copies come rain or shine has increased steadily, and we continue to be supported by our regular contributors and to attract new writing. And let's not forget the local photographers, whose artistry contribute such wonderful front covers.

All this is grand and I thank you all, but we need more. We need some new people with fresh ideas if the *Courier* is to continue. We need 'new' blood at the helm. So, if you think you could help out, please contact any member of our group.

In the meantime, sit back and enjoy this issue.

From all at the *Courier*, have a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2025.

Ian

### Cover

Our seasonal cover photo was taken by Peter Wilks on a lovely day in December 2017 and remains his copyright.

## 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).

**Children's Music class:** Garden Room, 2.10pm–2.50pm. Contact [claremondaymusic@gmail.com](mailto:claremondaymusic@gmail.com).

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

**Killearn Bridge Club:** Garden Room, 6.45pm. New members welcome. Contact Gavin Hunter ([gavin.hunter1@gmail.com](mailto:gavin.hunter1@gmail.com)).

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

### WEDNESDAY

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

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

**Bridge Lessons:** Committee Room, 2.15pm–4.15pm from 9 October. Series of 10 lessons for beginners and improvers. Contact Roger Sparkes (01360 440448).

**Lynda Turner School of Dance:** Main Hall, 4pm–5.30pm. Contact Lynda (770390; [geolyn2000@hotmail.com](mailto:geolyn2000@hotmail.com)).

**Killearn Community Council:** Monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of each month. Sept.–June, 8pm, Garden Room. Contact [contactus@killearncc.org.uk](mailto:contactus@killearncc.org.uk).

### THURSDAY

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

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

**Dance with Julie:** Garden Room, 5.30pm–7pm. Contact Julie Symmonds (07496 231913; [jsymmonds36@gmail.com](mailto:jsymmonds36@gmail.com)).

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

### FRIDAY

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

**Parent and Baby Wellness Group:** Main Hall, 11.30am–1pm.

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

### SATURDAY

**Killearn Country Market:** Monthly, Main Hall. See posters for more details or contact Megan ([dunmoredesigns@gmail.com](mailto:dunmoredesigns@gmail.com)).

## News in Brief

Killearn Village Hall Operations Committee is always looking for ways to boost income and bring more visitors to the hall, as well as doing more for local residents. The good news is they've boosted their wedding and events advertising through Facebook and Instagram, and updated the website [www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk). Have you got an idea the committee might be interested in? Want to chat about a booking? Email them at [killearnvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:killearnvillagehall@gmail.com).

Are you between 11 and 25? The 2024 Truth About Youth survey is now live online, and it needs you. Fill it in and earn 150 Young Scot Rewards Points – redeem them, and you'll be entered in a draw and have a chance to win a set of Apple AirPods. Closes by 20 December. Find it here: <https://surveys.young.scot/s/3AX81P/>.

The withdrawal of the universal Winter Fuel Payment will impact pensioners who are not in receipt of the Pension Credit, Income Support or Universal Credit. If you qualify for these benefits, apply for them! They are designed to help make life easier. If you are confused about the best energy tariff or unsure how you can make your home more energy efficient, contact one of the energy advisors at Citizens Advice. They are there to help. Visit: [www.stirlingcab.org.uk](http://www.stirlingcab.org.uk) or call 01786 470239.

Well done, Team! Trossachs Search and Rescue have been named one of the Provost's 2024 Stirling Charities of the Year for 2024–25, and will receive a £500 donation from the Civic Fund in recognition of their vital work. The Lord Provost of Stirling, Elaine Watterson, said, 'Trossachs Search and Rescue quite simply save lives...'. Mark O'Donnell, a Trustee of service, said that they do a significant amount of outreach and teaching, including first aid and CPR training, as well as working as a mobile emergency care service. Congratulations to all the members of this valuable organisation.

Don't want the complexity of a full smart phone? The OwnFone device is a mobile phone pre-programmed with up to 12 numbers of your choice, but without other functions. It will roam across networks to ensure the best coverage possible, and comes with a lanyard, so it is always beside you when needed: <https://ownfone.com>.

Let it snow! Stirling Council is looking for residents willing to act as Community Winter Volunteers to give some spare time to clear snow or spread salt along public footways and footpaths in their streets and housing estates. This doesn't replace the gritters and path clearers on the main roads, but does mean that the pathways in, say, the Branziert, the Trees, and Buchanan Views are safe and gritted. More information, with further links, here: [www.stirling.gov.uk/news/communities-invited-to-play-their-part-as-stirling-prepares-for-winter/](http://www.stirling.gov.uk/news/communities-invited-to-play-their-part-as-stirling-prepares-for-winter/).



## Letter to the Editor

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Dear Sir

Building work is underway on four sites in the vicinity of Station Road. Stirling's own Local Development Plan (LDP) is clear and far-ranging. In every case, however, planning requirements contained in the LDP were circumvented and, in one case, Scottish planning laws waived. Each planning application was passed in the face of objections by our Community Council. Had Stirling followed its own legally-binding policies, it is unlikely that these projects would have been approved in their current form.

Many who neighbour these sites feel aggrieved. We are being supported by other local residents who believe Stirling Council have failed us by ignoring their own rules. We simply ask that in future the Council should comply with both their own LDP policies and Scottish Government planning law in an equitable and consistent manner.

We do not wish to see these mistakes repeated, so residents have also signed up to a request that Stirling should engage meaningfully with, and reflect the concerns of, Killearn Community Council whenever it objects. The Planning Authority are meant to be our guardians. They are just not doing that job, and are failing to meet their own legal requirements in a myriad of different ways.

It is a principle in law that a local planning authority should exercise functions in the best interests of the section of the public for which it is responsible. Stirling Council is ignoring this and our community.

We really need your readers' support to protect our lovely village. It is only by weight of numbers that this can be done. To date, we have some 150 supporters, and we need more if this abuse of power is to be curbed. Please email me at [GraemeKnox@aol.com](mailto:GraemeKnox@aol.com) or phone on 01360 550539.

Graeme Knox,  
Station Road, Killearn

## Health Centre News

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As patients may be aware, all vaccines are now done by the Forth Valley Immunisation Team – not the Health Centre. This includes children's vaccinations, flu and Covid boosters, and vaccines such as shingles, RSV and pneumococcal.

Patients will be contacted by letter or text with an appointment to attend a weekend clinic run by Forth Valley Health Board in Killearn Health Centre. This will continue to be the case going forward.

The health board made these changes, and the practice has no control over these appointments and therefore isn't able to change or re-arrange them.

If your appointment doesn't suit you, please contact the Immunisation Team directly on 0800 130 3120 or the number on the letter you receive.

KELLY McDONALD, PRACTICE MANAGER

## Stephenson–Frazer

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A wonderful, happy day was enjoyed by family and friends on 14 September at The Tin Shed, Fintry, celebrating the marriage of Heather Stephenson and Josh Frazer. Heather grew up in Killearn and Josh in Fintry. The couple have made their home in the Lake District.

## Patel–Metcalf

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Corin Metcalfe, who grew up in Killearn and attended Killearn Primary and Balforn High School, has married Riti Patel from Sittingbourne, Kent. The 'legal' wedding was at Edinburgh registry office on 26 August, but was followed in October by three days of spectacular Indian wedding celebrations in Sussex. The couple live in Edinburgh, where Corin is a lawyer and Riti works as an actuary for the consultants EY.



# Killlearn Advent Window Trail



Each evening during December, decorated and illuminated Advent windows will be revealed throughout Killlearn, with the aim of raising money for Shelter Scotland.

The first window to open will be at the Co-Op on Sunday, 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.

Come along to any or all of the openings, revealed daily at 6.30pm. Each window will be viewable from dusk every evening until 1 January.

We hope you 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.

More information on our Google Map <https://bit.ly/KAdWin24> or from our email address at [killearn.advent.windows@gmail.com](mailto:killearn.advent.windows@gmail.com).

PAUL SEARLE



  
Children's Hospices Across Scotland

## Killlearn Christmas Post

Post your local Christmas cards at  
The Co-op  
The Pharmacy  
The Kirk  
from  
**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> 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 Sat 14<sup>th</sup> December  
Kirk - 1pm Sun 15<sup>th</sup> December

**Delivery from 16<sup>th</sup> December**

[www.chas.org.uk](http://www.chas.org.uk)  
Children's Hospices Across Scotland is a trading name of Children's Hospices Association Scotland  
Scottish charity number SC103704

  
'TIS THE SEASON TO BE  
**JOLLY**  
ALL YOUR GIFTING  
NEEDS IN STOCK  
NOW

**KILLEARN PHARMACY AND GIFT SHOP**  
**9AM-1 AND 2.15-6PM (M-F)**  
**9AM-1 AND 2.15-5PM (SAT)**

Please Join Us For  
**Christmas Shopping Weekend**  
Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd  
November ALL DAY  
DISCOUNTS ON ALL CHRISTMAS STOCK





## Colourful Killearn: Tub Triumph and Trouble

Cool and wet – the ‘summer’ weather hasn’t exactly encouraged barbecues or sunbathing. On the positive side, though, the begonias in our planters have loved it! Amazing masses of vibrant red flowers have (almost) made up for the lack of sun. Plus the back-breaking job of watering was kept to the very few dry spells we did get. Bonus!

Planted, weeded, fed and watered by our band of volunteers, the 60 or so planters around the village are enough of a challenge without the extra work entailed in righting upsets – barrels (£50 a pop!) damaged by

manoeuvring vehicles, plants spilled, displays wrecked, barriers broken. Drivers, please be more careful – if you don’t see a barrel or a fence post, you won’t see a small child on a bike!

Seasons move relentlessly onward, and the summer planting will soon make way for preparations for winter and spring. Winter pansies, daffodils and primroses to look forward to.

Donations of time or money are always appreciated. If you would like to help make Killearn colourful, please contact [colourfulkillearn@gmail.com](mailto:colourfulkillearn@gmail.com).

MIKE GRAY



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# The Weather Channel

Just like 2023, we have had a poor summer with a great deal of rain and little sunshine.

The August rainfall total of 212.8mm (8.4in) is the highest monthly total for the past ten years and has led to the Met Office declaring that the summer rainfall across Scotland was the highest since records began.

Temperatures have also been lower in Scotland in July and August, although having personally spent two weeks in the South East of England, I experienced two weeks of very warm and sometimes humid weather.

Just like 2023, the Met Office puts our somewhat inclement summer down to the jet stream, a core of very strong winds about 5–7 miles high, buckling and looping, accelerating the areas of low pressure and heavy rainfall to cross Scotland from west to east.

The jet stream has also been sitting across and even to the south of the UK. And this has meant more frequent

spells of wind and rain interspersed with some bright intervals, but Scotland has mostly felt the effects of a chilly air mass with cool northern winds.

*Courier* readers who wish to find out more about the jet stream should look at [www.westweather.uk](http://www.westweather.uk), a very informative website.

With a slight movement of the jet stream’s position, we may have had an ‘Indian summer’ by the time the *Courier* goes to press. The term does not mean three months of summer weather throughout autumn, but is better described as a warm calm spell of weather for a week or two.

Although the exact origins of the term ‘Indian summer’ is unclear, it is thought to have originated in the United States as a time when Native Americans took advantage of good weather in autumn to hunt and gather in the crops they grew.

TOM RENFREW

Summary January to September 2024 for Killearn									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Highest Temp	11.1	12.1	15.2	16.9	24.8	22.1	24.6	24.8	25
Lowest Temp	-6.2	-4.5	-0.8	-0.9	5.8	4.2	5	6.3	0.9
Mean Temp	3.2	5.6	6.6	8.5	13.4	12.3	14.6	14.1	11.6
Days Below Freezing	14	7	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
Highest Wind Gust	15	24	24	40	19	37	25	26	28
Monthly Rain	119.8	116.4	103	132.7	93	66.5	50.7	212.8	36.8
Most Rain in 24 hrs	43.8	17.3	16.9	24.7	22.4	8.8	13	25.8	7.6
Days without Rain	10	3	6	7	15	7	16	5	18
Cumulative Rainfall	119.8	236.2	339.2	471.9	564.9	621.4	687.9	900.7	937.5

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



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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](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/careers/on-call)





In the previous issue of the *Courier*, you will have read about Killearn's plans for a contribution to the Scotland-wide Festival of Bridge with a whole-day event in September. There was a good

turnout of members on the day who were given valuable tips by Christine Howe, together with the chance to experience RealBridge, the online platform that we use in the winter months. We also had a little tournament.

Following a lot of interest in lessons, including by folk unable to attend on the day, we have set up a series of ten lessons for beginners and improvers, in the run-up to Christmas, with more in the new year. The lessons (which started on 9 October) run on Wednesdays from 2.15pm–4.15pm in the committee room of the Village Hall.

New players are always welcome at the club. If you would like to join us for Tuesday club nights or to get involved in bridge classes, please email us through the contact page of our website.

## No Flamingos on Loch Lomond

Killearn will benefit from the decision taken by The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) to recommend refusal of the Flamingo Land/Lomond Banks planning application.

The campaigners of Balloch and Haldane Community Council (BHCC), Save Loch Lomond and Nick Kempe of Parkswatch Scotland consider the reasons for rejection should be further strengthened to include the following:

- ▶ Climate change – impact of transport and parking
- ▶ Landscape – size and height of aparthotel on the loch shore
- ▶ Impact on outdoor recreation
- ▶ Impact on local amenity

It is the intention of BHCC to continue to work with the Loch Lomond South Community Development Trust (LLSCDT), local communities and Scottish Enterprise within the scope of the Community Empowerment Act Scotland 2015 ensuring that the areas earmarked for development be transferred into community ownership.

The development trust will guarantee that the sites that the developer has earmarked are utilised not just for the betterment of the health and well-being of the local communities and those who visit the area, but to ensure economic regeneration, protection of the environment, biodiversity and the cultural heritage of the area.

Anyone interested in knowing more or helping the various groups with their plans to safeguard this side of the loch from future threats of developments like Flamingo Land, should contact:

Lynne Somerville at Balloch & Haldane Community Council ([info@ballochhaldaneccl.com](mailto:info@ballochhaldaneccl.com)).

## This Month's Problem

The topic this time is to acknowledge the deceptive declarer play, or maybe bluff, from one of the greatest bridge players, Maurice Harrison-Gray. Few hands would have given him greater pleasure than this one from the European Championship held in Warsaw in 1966. With the match against Norway in the balance, GB needed a forceful approach, and the final contract was 6 Clubs. Diamonds had been bid early in the auction, which inhibited a Diamond lead, so West led ♥7, taken by ♥J in dummy. So a helpful start for South, but there was still the problem of how to avoid losing a Diamond and a Spade trick. See the full hands below.

Dealer: West Vulnerable: East – West

♠ 9 7 2  
♥ J 3  
♦ K Q 9 3  
♣ A 10 7 2

North

♠ J 8 6 3  
♥ K 10 8 7  
♦ J 10 4 2  
♣ 3

West Z East

♠ Q 5  
♥ 9 6 4 2  
♦ A 7 6 5  
♣ J 9 6

South

♠ A K 10 4  
♥ A Q 5  
♦ 8  
♣ K Q 8 5 4

Play continued with ♣2 led to ♣Q, followed by ♦8. If West held ♦A the contract was safe, two Spades being discarded on ♦K and ♦Q. However, it was not to be; East took the trick with ♦A and returned ♥4. South won and ruffed ♥Q in dummy then led ♣A and ♣10, isolating himself from dummy's ♦K. On these two trumps West discarded ♥10 and ♦2 to leave this position.

♠ 9 7 2  
♥ -  
♦ K 9 3  
♣ -

North

♠ J 8 6 3  
♥ -  
♦ J 10  
♣ -

West Z East

♠ Q 5  
♥ 9  
♦ 7 6 5  
♣ -

South

♠ A K 10 4  
♥ -  
♦ -  
♣ 8 5

See what happened next on page 19.



## Horti Unveils New Bench

A new bench has been donated to the Village Hall by the Horticultural Society.

Back in 2016, the Horti celebrated its 150th anniversary with a much bigger annual show than usual, with marquees, an orchestra and many local organisations and businesses.

Local tree surgeon Archie Wilson came along with a piece of equipment which enabled visitors to the show to carve their names on to a long piece of wood.



Until recently, the engraved wood was languishing in a garage.

Last year, outgoing chair of the Horti, John Phillips, asked Archie Billet to make the engraved wood into a bench. At the end of June, the new bench was unveiled to committee members outside the Village Hall.

Once a method of securing has been established, it will be sited outside the garden room at the Village Hall.

PAUL SEARLE



Above l-r: Elaine Curran, Mary Fraser, Glenda Asquith, John Phillips, Heather Wright, Grant Farquharson, Jenny Wilks



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## Colourful Killearn: We Remember...

Thanks to exceptionally generous donations from the community, we have been able to speed ahead over the summer with planting plans for our war memorial. Left bare by Council cutbacks, our intention is to generate a bit of a buzz about the monument by filling the beds with pollinator-friendly perennials. Alongside the charity Beds for Bees, we have developed a design that we hope will bring colour and attract insects all year round.

Plants and small shrubs are now getting well-established in the beds to either side of the memorial (well mostly – the deer have had a bit of a nibble), remarkably some even managing to flower this year. These, we hope, will fill out over the next couple of years to cover the beds with flowers and minimise the weeding we have to do.

Soon the seasons will catch up with the temporary (and spectacular) summer display of red and white begonias and pelargoniums either side of the access path. These will be removed to make way for the next phase of permanent planting (funds permitting), which will complement that already in place. Eventually, the final flourish will be to resurface the rather weedy red ash paths to either side of the structure. But that's for another time!

Our autumn work party on 9 November (10am) will be focusing on tidying up the memorial site to present it in the best possible light for Remembrance Sunday the following day. We'd welcome extra hands and would be delighted to see you there! Contact: [colourfulkillearn@gmail.com](mailto:colourfulkillearn@gmail.com).

MIKE GRAY



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## New Landlady, Same Local

There's a new but familiar face at the helm of the village pub. This summer saw Alice and Mark Silverman retire and hand over the lease of the Old Mill Inn to their very capable manager, Courtney Maitland.

Courtney, along with sister Nadinne, had been looking for an opportunity around the west of Scotland, and when the Old Mill came available they didn't hesitate. 'It's a special place,' says Courtney. 'I've worked there so long that the thought of some company coming in and taking away the essence of the pub restaurant and its local charm would not only affect the village, but the people who work in it. We have an excellent team of staff who have been here a long time and the thought of them potentially losing their jobs didn't sit well with me.'

Courtney and her sister hail from Gartocharn and were educated at Balforn High School. Throughout high school and university, studying for her honours degree in business management, Courtney continued to work in the hospitality industry, gaining valuable experience. She came to work at the Old Mill in 2019 and enjoyed the strong team spirit amongst the staff, an ethos that they are keen to continue. It was when she graduated in 2021 that Alice and Mark offered her a management position. It was a perfect opportunity to put her degree to good use while working in a place she truly enjoyed.

Nadinne has her own business, a care agency catering



for care needs both at home and assisting care homes.

The combination of her business experience and her sister's business degree is a good match to work together.

Watching Nadinne build a business from the bottom up and thriving has encouraged Courtney to do the same. The family input goes beyond the sisters, with the extended family offering support and practical help wherever needed – and all for a free pint!

Courtney's partner Ross is also very supportive, and being a former Mill employee and well-known member of the community, can be counted on to lend a hand even if it's power washing the bin shed.

Plans for the future involve more events, entertainment and festivals for all the family. In the meantime, the pub will remain a charming and welcoming place to come to drink, eat, socialise and enjoy being with family, and both human and canine friends.

Having local knowledge of the village and its people provides Courtney with a good understanding of what the pub means to the community. She would especially like to thank Alice and Mark for creating such a special and welcoming community hub and working environment. 'I have never worked anywhere where the staff always give 100 per cent. A massive thank you to the team and to our regulars who have been overwhelmingly supportive with kind words and presents. We want to continue to serve the village and surrounding area and make them proud to call the Mill their local.'

GS







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# Killearn Village Hall – It's All About the People

As we head towards the festive period, it feels like a cheery time to celebrate and be (very) thankful to our team of volunteers who keep the hall running on a day-to-day basis. To Ado, Geraldine, Graeme, Iain, Joanna, Mike and Peter – a huge thanks – much of what you do is behind the scenes and often not seen, but it takes an army to keep all of the cogs running smoothly and we much appreciate your commitment and enthusiasm.

<p><b>Ado</b> is our hall manager – keeping things in order and helping make sure that day-to-day activities are set up.</p>		<p><b>Geraldine</b> is our wedding co-ordinator – responding to enquiries, arranging viewings and keeping in touch with couples.</p>	
	<p><b>Graeme</b> keeps an eye on the cash and payments – making sure we pay our bills and that people pay us.</p>		<p><b>Iain</b> looks after the books – making sure that we record the income and costs on a day-to-day basis.</p>
<p><b>Joanna</b> looks after our bookings – she's the one behind emails and conversations about availability, timings and fitting everything together.</p>		<p><b>Mike</b> is always busy fixing and testing things – keeping things working, inside and outside the hall.</p>	
	<p><b>Peter</b> is our technical expert – the sound system, the audio loop, the website, how it all links together.</p>		

Please put your hands together for our team at the hall.



## And a Really Big Thank You . . .

Brian Simmers has been a Killearn resident for almost 60 years. A former Scotland rugby international, he has always been an active volunteer in charitable organisations, chairing the Yorkhill Children's Foundation and latterly as a board member of Killearn Community Futures Company (KCFC), the charitable organisation behind Killearn Village Hall.

Brian recently retired from the Killearn Village Hall Operations Committee and leaves a legacy of hard work, commitment and very big boots to fill.

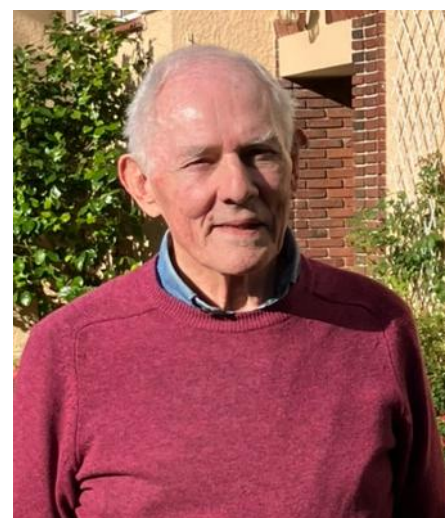
Way back in 2008, the Board of KCFC started work – led by Brian – on plans to develop the Village Hall in Killearn. Following wide community consultation and approval of plans by Stirling Council, Brian led the work to secure funding of over £1.7 million, appointed contractors and maintained management and oversight of the development.

The new hall reopened in 2013 and is still very much at the centre of life in Killearn. Brian remained on the

Hall Operations Committee through the period following the development, guiding the day-to-day running of the hall, as Chair until 2019 and as treasurer over the last few years.

Brian was shortlisted this year in the Volunteering for Sport, Leisure or Culture category at the SVE Inspire Volunteering Awards. Someone else might have picked up the prize, you're always going to be our winner, Brian!

FIONA RENNIE





## More Success at the Horti Show

Despite the dismal summer, Killearn was ablaze with colour at the end of August as the village held its 158th Horticultural Show.

This year, the event on 31 August featured a country market, as well as a multitude of flowers, vegetables, baking, art and craftwork, spread over three buildings, allowing people to show off their wares to more than 350 visitors.

Organised by the Horticultural Society, the Committee have in recent years been encouraging youngsters to get involved in entering the Show. This year there were 238 entries in the under-18s age group and 866 entries overall, up on last year's 852 entries.

We were very pleased to see so many happy, smiling faces on the day. We had a lot of positive feedback at the Show itself and afterwards it's been nothing but positive comments on our Facebook page.

We believe it's important for village traditions like this to continue, but we wouldn't be able to do it without all the amazing volunteers who give their time and skills freely, sometimes for months in advance. We're always grateful for that support.

Many thanks also to everyone who exhibited and attended, especially the school and nurseries, those who organised and volunteered, and everyone who helped clear up afterwards.

The flowers and produce don't go to waste either: a flower sale raised £163 for Strathcarron Hospice and the surplus fruit and veg, jams and baking was taken by one of our volunteers to Drumchapel Food Bank, who were very appreciative. One of the 14 stalls at the country market was run by 10-year old Orla, who was selling bracelets, raising £25 for Strathcarron Hospice.

The online competition centred around 'My Garden' and received more than 40 entries, with photos of the winning entries on display at the show. All results are on the website, with the winners and runners-up named.

It was a great day and it was good to see so many people enjoying themselves.

Photos from the day are on the Horti website: [www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk](http://www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk).

PAUL SEARLE





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## Scarecrow Competition

We loved the creations presented at the Horti's Annual Show scarecrow competition.

The winner – Donald (right), was created by the Calvert Collective. A scarily realistic construction, it seemed he had brought his followers with him as they surveyed him with admiration through the fence (which he did not build).

Next to him, a dragon perching on the fence breathed fire (fake, for health and safety reasons) and wore what appeared to be the borrowed wings of the angelic winner from last year. Obviously hoping some of the luck would rub off on the dragon's scales.



Our third scarecrow couldn't be bothered it seems, to stand and wave at any pestilent collection of corvids, and chose instead to lounge around – unlike its creator, who is always very helpful around the village.

Next to the sun chair occupant was a very grumpy-looking truculent teenage

scarecrow, resplendent in jeans and a bobble hat, who clung to the gatepost in the hope of gaining the crows' attention, rather than doing any work to remove said pesky birds.



And then our fifth crow scarer, with its bubble-wrap head and natty scarf brought a sense of elegance to the fence of ne'er-do-well scarecrows.

Folk commenting on the collection said that each was very innovative in how they had been assembled. But everyone agreed that the winner more than deserved the honour of being stuck in a sheep field while being admired by the occupants. Although there was one request (denied) of the firework committee that he be borrowed for the top of this year's bonfire.

Photos from the scarecrow competition are on the Horti website: [www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk/scarecrow-competition](http://www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk/scarecrow-competition).



PAUL SEARLE



## Killearn Village Hall

2025 brings new beginnings for Killearn Village Hall.

We want everyone to utilise our great facilities. We have spaces that are perfect for weddings, parties, pop up events and more.

It's important to us that we support local businesses, so if you have an idea for an event, we'd love to hear from you.

If you live in Killearn you're entitled to a discount on hall hire and prices start from just £9 per hr.

Wedding hire starts at £1,600 with the main hall accommodating 120 seated guests (more for dancing!) and the beautiful garden room has enough space to seat 30 guests at tables, 50 seated theatre style and up to 60 standing. Message us to arrange a tour [killearnvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:killearnvillagehall@gmail.com)

More on our website:

[www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk)



# Killearn Malawi Group Annual Gathering 2024



This was the first in-person Annual Gathering of the Killearn Malawi Group for five years, and though it was a small number of Friends of KMG who met, we had a fascinating meeting, with interesting speakers.

The KMG Annual Gathering is an opportunity to share with our Friends the work which the KMG Committee has done over the financial year 2023–24. After initial refreshments, there was a report on our work from the Chairperson, Ken Allen, and the presentation of our Accounts by our Treasurer, Sue Beck. The Friends present also re-elected the eight-strong committee.

Kevin Simpson of Malawi Fruits was the main guest speaker, and his illustrated talk about the work of Malawi Fruits was very encouraging. This Scottish-based charity provides small solar powered pumps which enable farmers to irrigate fields even in the hot season and give them a year-round income.

Another project is to install polytunnels, allowing farmers – mainly women – to grow, harvest and sell produce year round. Both these schemes boost people's incomes and improve their standard of living. The ensuing discussion showed that the audience was very engaged in what Kevin had been telling us.

The year 2023–24 was one of consolidation for KMG. We continued to raise money for our main project, helping the community at Nkhande Community Secondary School in the south of Malawi to build a girls' hostel to improve their chances of continuing in

education. Because of currency devaluation and ensuing inflation, it's proving very difficult to get an accurate estimate of the cost of the work, and estimates are needed before we can apply for grants. However, we built up our funds last year mainly through the successful jumble sale. This financial year, we are already raising excellent amounts.

We sent out money to Malawi in December to buy sacks of maize to be distributed to needy families in the southern region, because there were terrible floods in 2023 from storm Freddy. Crops were severely damaged, and there were again food shortages. This year (2024), the problem has been drought. We make a small contribution to what is increasingly becoming an annual problem, without doubt the result of climate change.

We continue to send out knitted baby clothes and wool, knitting needles and other craft goods to northern Malawi in containers organised by the Bananabox Trust, with whom we work closely. We also support Chrissy's Meals in northern Malawi.

We were also pleased to welcome Dr Kondwani Chidziwisano, who spoke to us from Malawi by Zoom. We heard how members of the management committee from Nkhande School had visited another school last year to see how they ran their hostel. They have already been making the bricks for the building. Kondwani also talked about the school fees for needy students, which amount to about £45 a year, which we're hoping our Friends will commit to. We will welcome Kondwani back to Killearn in October when he is in Glasgow for a conference. We are very grateful to Kondwani for all the work he does in Malawi on our behalf.

KMG is a small charity (SC043555) which makes a big impact in the communities with which we work.

KEN ALLEN



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# The Press Gang Report

Hello Killearn! Killearn Primary School have been busy learning so many new things and we want to share our school work with you!

**Primary 1:** We have been working on the sounds S, A, T, P, I and N, and the number five – we are going to check our P6 buddies' work for number fives. Scarlet has enjoyed crafting a forest and she also likes to do art! Finley likes coming to school and playing with his friends.

**Primary 2/3:** We have been preparing our work about Kenya, Africa, for assembly, as well as collecting food donations. P2/3 are also making African jewellery and harvesting apples to make a delicious apple crumble to eat and enjoy! We have been drawing Minions and doing cool and creative patterns in art. Hamish likes learning about Africa and playing with his friends. Alex loved picking apples and making a scrumptious apple crumble, and Leili likes doing Minion art and learning about Kenya.

**Primary 3:** We have been doing spelling and enjoyed drawing our self-portraits! Lucie said, 'We are learning to use and log into our Chromebooks.' P3 are doing art based on a story called *The Dot* written by Peter Reynolds. They are also doing human rights as their current topic. We have been learning about responsibility and how it is important to be responsible! Harvey likes learning about literacy and even and odd numbers in maths.

**Primary 4:** We have been busy learning about Fair Trade Fortnight and we have had lots of fun doing half numbers in numeracy! P4 have also been reading *The Reluctant Dragon* written by Kenneth Grahame. Penny enjoys reading *The Reluctant Dragon* and she likes to read in her free time. Noah likes sports such as netball and basketball in PE.

**Primary 5:** We have been learning about farms, harvesting and food. P5 have been busy as bees baking, making butter and cinnamon French toast. Jack said, 'I have enjoyed doing PE and landscape art.' We have been rounding to the nearest thousand. Dottie likes doing health and wellbeing, and she had fun making butter. Ivy has loved doing maths (subtracting and sumdog games) and the class charter. We have been doing French with Mrs McCormick, and we have also been doing writing in literacy.

**Primary 6:** We wrote a non-chronological report about polar bears, and in health and wellbeing, we learned about resolving conflict in friendships. Emily said, 'I like the book about Richard III, *King in the Car Park* in Bug Club.' Carla enjoys doing maths and Ian has had lots of fun doing invasion games!

**Primary 7:** We have taken on many new responsibilities such as House Captains, Sports Squad, Pupil Council, Learning Ambassadors, Tech Team and, of course, the Press Gang! We have been doing work based on a book about Scotland's Highland Clearances called *The Desperate Journey*. It's been lots of fun making crofts out of plasticine and sketching Dunrobin Castle. Sammy said, 'I have liked doing art with Mrs McCormick, and lacrosse has been lots of fun.' Isla has enjoyed hockey, and Xander's having fun being a house captain.

We hope you have enjoyed this article!

THE PRESS GANG (Freya, Saorlaith, Nandini and Saul)

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## Bridge by Zorro

**Solution to the problem on page 10**

Harrison-Gray now played the remaining trumps and West had to decide his two discards. He could not believe that declarer had cut himself off from dummy's Diamonds and so held on to ♦J and ♦10. This meant parting with ♠6 and ♠3, hoping that East held ♠Q X X.

The remaining four tricks were now won with South's Spades and an impossible slam was made by a brilliant pseudo squeeze. In the other room the final contract was 5 Clubs just made giving a big swing to GB.

[With acknowledgement to *The Daily Telegraph Book of Bridge* and GCH Fox for his choice of hand and notes.]

Z



## Wheelie good fun!

On cold, dark November days it is hard to remember if we ever had a summer. But we were lucky with at least one gloriously sunny day for 'Killearn by Bike' – a fun day of led rides for children of all ages. Everyone had a wonderful time, with new skills acquired and confidence boosted. A huge 'thank you' to Scott Kennedy, Active Travel Officer at Balfron High, for organising the games and leading the rides.

The day started with a session for five- to nine-year-olds, who enjoyed bike-specific games in the primary school playground. Everyone got a turn at leading the group, giving them all a chance to be independent while learning important aspects of riding in a group.

After a mandatory Haribo break, we headed off on our adventure around Killearn. We cycled up Ibert Road – a short, mostly traffic-free road with a small hill to navigate. The hill was a challenge for the younger cyclists, but they felt a massive sense of achievement when they arrived at the top. Then we had a nice ride through the woods, stopping for a break at a tree swing, before heading back to the Village Hall to be reunited with parents.



After a short lunch break it was time for the older group (10 to 16 years). We headed back to the primary school, but only for a brief time for some races to earn Haribos. This was a chance for the leaders to observe riders and make small improvements before heading out. With the sun well and truly shining, we started off with a super-fast descent down Drumbeg Loan and onto the West Highland Way. After opening many cattle gates, we stopped at Killearn Station where the group had a chance to find a Geocache.

From there we had a fun, winding ride along to Gartness, the midpoint of the ride. When we got there, we learned a fun fact about the small village from another Geocache – Gartness was a hot spot for mathematical innovation back in the Victorian times – who knew! The ride was uphill for much of the way back to Killearn, but they weren't afraid of the challenge and got it done with little fuss.

With some of us low on energy, part of the group decided to find a quiet spot to sunbathe, while others took the opportunity to learn new bike skills. And before we knew it, time was up and we peddled back to the Village Hall to say goodbye and tell parents stories of achievements from the ride.

Thanks again to everyone who came along, keep your eyes peeled on Cycling Killearn's website and Facebook/Instagram for more events!

[www.cycling-killearn.org](http://www.cycling-killearn.org); @CyclingKillearn

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## AGM Report

In the spirit of KCFC – the AGM held in the Village Hall on Tuesday, 22 October, was a friendly soirée, with updates on working group activities during the year and a reassurance that, although day-to-day times are hard for the Village Hall and others, the forecast looks more optimistic.

It was heartening to see around 30 local residents, and thanks to all who continue to support the organisation.

The meeting welcomed Iain Somerville as the new Company Secretary and Jan Thompson as a new director. Jan has taken on the role as Chair of the Paths Group and we very much want to help support Jan and his colleagues as the plans start to move into a more detailed phase, although as always, funding permitting.

Thanks also to MJ and Liz, who made sure that everyone was served with tea or coffee as well as a selection of biscuits following the meeting.

For more information about KCFC, and download an application form, please visit: [kcfc.co.uk](http://kcfc.co.uk).

And if you are interested in getting involved or learning more about KCFC and how you might be able to help, please contact us c/o [secretary@kcfc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@kcfc.co.uk) and we can put you in touch with contacts in the working groups ... there is always something/someone needing your help.

FIONA RENNIE

Every year, the Horti hosts a competition for the most attractive gardens in Killlearn, as viewed from the roadside. A judge views all the gardens in early May (spring) and a different judge does the same in early August (summer). The winners (pictured below) and runners-up were announced at the Annual Show on 31 August. Photos of all these gardens can be seen on the Horti website: [www.killlearnhorticulturalassoc.co.uk/spring-summer-gardens-2024](http://www.killlearnhorticulturalassoc.co.uk/spring-summer-gardens-2024).

## Spring

1st – Spittal Cottage, Station Road

2nd – Suilven, Drumore Road

3rd – 6 Harpers Road, Beech Drive

Two gardens were Highly Commended by the judge:  
6 Lettreburn, Drumbeg Loan, and 1 Birch Road.



## Summer

1st – 28 Birch Road

2nd – The Square

3rd – 38 New Endrick Road



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## Fields of Gold

It is tempting, is it not, to rhapsodise about autumn, about the colours, and the scents, and the vague sense of melancholy even on a perfect day. However, since John Keats did it so much better than anyone else, one is left with the practicalities rather than the poetry. When the telly starts advertising school uniforms, you know certain expenses are about to raise their heads. New school shoes are a must in most households. Little kids sport them with pride, the bigger, blacker and shinier the better, while their older siblings insist on designer trainers or nothing. I may be out of touch on the finer detail, but I do remember the excitement of early days and smart shoes. What I find harder to process is how quickly these same enthusiastic children arrive at the top end of school and are sitting their Highers. How did that happen? How did we not notice?

On the subject of fields of gold, the Harvest Festival service has changed quite a bit in recent years. Gone are the days when the church chancel was filled with a display of fruits and vegetables grown in local gardens, lots of sheaves of golden corn, and the communion table laden with enticing aromatic home-made breads. That was before the choir pews were rearranged, when there were two stalls on either side of the chancel, filled with good to moderate singers. It was usually the alto pew that was nearest to the sheaves of corn, or possibly barley, which meant it was also nearest to the resident corn mites. Not content with marching along the tops of the pews, these same mites often travelled via the altos themselves. Only the fact that they were in a religious setting inhibited the ladies from divesting themselves of at least their top layer of clothing. People still contribute to Harvest Festival by bringing tinned and packaged foods, which are not quite as artistic as the old displays, nor as infested, but are a good substitute.



Another seasonal celebration that has changed for some is Hallowe'en, where the emphasis on trick or treat is in danger of overtaking the Scottish tradition of the children earning an apple or chocolate bar by performing a song or a poem. I was once asked by a Canadian in Montreal if we had Holloween [sic] in Scaatland [sic]. I wanted to ask her who she thought invented it, till I remembered that All Saints' Eve has a long Christian and European history.

By the time Remembrance Sunday comes along, the commercial Christmas season is well under way. But people still want to halt the juggernaut, to pause to reflect on the armed forces, and to remember the names on the war memorial. It is always so touching to hear those names read out. And wasn't it a brilliant idea to take some of those names for the roads in the Buchanan Views estate? So thoughtful.

By the time December comes, everyone's attention is focused on Christmas, starting with the Advent windows. And what a charming tradition that is

turning out to be. After that,

it's all the usual, much treasured events: school plays and parties, shopping in all the villages, Christmas lunches and dinners, and maybe even the odd dinner dance – another stalwart of past days.

There are concerts and pantos all over the villages, especially our own much valued and anticipated Strathendrick Singers' concert in Killearn Kirk on Sunday, 15 December.

Whether you're having a peaceful and lovely Christmas on your own, or with friends, or with an excited family, have a super season. And who knows, the fields of gold may even turn to sparkling white.

JOYCE BEGG



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# Christmas Jumper Decorations



Everyone loves a Christmas jumper, right? Of course, we do.

Well, here's your chance to bling up your tree (or wherever you fancy) with lots of mini jumpers.

There are tons of examples online, especially Pinterest, should you need inspiration!

## What you'll need

- Felt, any colour
- Needle and thread for attaching bling and sewing up, plus making a loop hanger
- Sequins, beads and buttons, mini pom-poms, mini decorations. Think shiny!
- Stuffing: polyester filling, cotton wool, tissues – whatever you have to hand
- Optional: pipe cleaners or garden wire for making hangers



Cut out a template to the size and shape that you want. Use this one, or make templates with sleeves at the side and make mini pipe cleaner or garden wire coat hangers. You can even have the arms out straight and string them on to bunting!



Cut two felt shapes for each jumper (for front and back), or one double sided piece (fold across the neck). If you use one piece, very carefully cut a little slit along the centre of the fold line. Be careful not to cut right across!



Decorate with a variety of felt cut outs, beads, sequins and stitches – let your imagination go wild.



Sew round the edge with overlap or blanket stitch leaving the neck open to add padding. Then sew up the neck or put a strip of matching fabric into the opening to hold the stuffing in.



Thread on to loop hanger, your bunting rope or insert your pipe cleaner hanger.

Merry Christmas from Strathendrick Stitchers (and thanks, Heather, for the tutorial)!





## Christmas recipe: Florentines



**These elegant biscuits combine the best of the season: luscious dried fruits, nuts and chocolate. It's also child's play to make them gluten-free or vegan.**

**These aren't your normal biscuits, so my advice is to bake them one sheet at a time until you understand what happens. If the first attempt results in chocolaty, fruity and nutty chunks, it'll still taste good.**

**The second attempt? Perfection! Makes 16–18.**

### Ingredients

- 50g butter (or vegan plant butter)
- 80g soft light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons plain flour (or plain gluten free flour)
- 80g flaked almonds, toasted and cooled\*
- 50g glacé cherries, roughly chopped\*
- 30g mixed peel\*
- Pinch of salt
- 100g chocolate (dark is traditional)
- ¼ tsp coconut oil (optional)

\*You can use any mixture of fruits and nuts. Think of stained glass windows, and you've got the idea.

### Method

- First, pre-heat the oven to 180C/160C fan.
- Line three large baking sheets with greaseproof paper or baking parchment.
- Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.
- Add the fruits, nuts and peel to the butter and sugar mix, and combine gently.
- Using a teaspoon (really!), spoon small amounts on to the prepared sheets, at least 10cm apart. The dough is very stiff, and will sit up in a lump. Aim to place no more than six on each sheet.
- Bake one sheet at a time for about 10 minutes, taking each sheet out half way through and flattening the centre of the mixture slightly with a teaspoon.

- Take them out after the 10 minutes. They will have spread even more, so quickly reshape the edges to restore a pleasing round shape.
- Cool completely on the baking trays. Once absolutely cold, use a palette knife to separate them from the greaseproof paper and carefully place them upside down on a wire rack. They are fragile at this stage.
- Meanwhile, melt your chocolate, including the coconut oil, if using. Do this in a small pan over hot water or quite slowly in the microwave (beware not to scorch the chocolate). Stir the melting chocolate to better incorporate the oil. Keep checking and stirring if using a microwave. Take the chocolate off the heat when it's liquidy and stir until completely smooth.
- Using a teaspoon, spoon some chocolate on to the back of each biscuit, smoothing the chocolate out almost to the edge. Do this with each the biscuit, one at a time.
- After about 10 minutes, drag a fork through the chocolate in a wavy pattern. This makes the Florentines look very fancy and Christmassy.
- Leave them for about an hour so that the chocolate is fully set, and then store them, separating layers with greaseproof paper, in an airtight tin.

Theoretically, these will keep fresh for a week. I've never known them to last that long.

Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year when it comes.

NB



## Christmas Crackers



Christmas crackers are a traditional Christmas favourite. They were first made around the mid-1800s by Tom Smith, a London sweet maker. He had seen French sweets (almonds wrapped in pretty paper) on a visit to Paris and he tried selling something similar in England with which he also included a small motto or riddle. But they didn't sell very well.

Legend has it that while sitting watching the sparks and cracks from his log fire, he thought it would be fun if his sweets and toys could be opened with a crack when their wrappers were pulled in half.

And so he bought the recipe for the small cracks and bangs in crackers from a fireworks company called

Brock's Fireworks and went on to launch his new range which he named 'Bangs of Expectation'! The company built up a big range of 'themed' crackers and also made crackers for special occasions like Coronations. The British Royal Family still has special crackers made for them today!

According to the Guinness World Record, the world's longest Christmas cracker measured 63.1m by 4m and was made on 20 December 2001 by the parents of children at Ley Hill School and Pre-School, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. The biggest Christmas cracker pull was done by 1,478 people in Tochigi, Japan, on 18 October 2009. These must have caused a bang and a half!



## Christmas Cards – why not make your own?

Rising postal charges and low-cost e-cards have made the sending and receiving of Christmas cards increasingly rare. This is a shame, as one of the pleasures of the approach to Christmas is opening cards from old friends, or relatives that you only hear from at this time of year. The joy is enhanced if there is a personal message, but the greatest pleasure is felt when the card is homemade, because you know that thought and effort has gone into its production.

The picture shows just a few of the cards we have received over the years, and as you can see, they need not be works of art. A card can be just be a sketch, pasting cut-outs from old cards or using one of the many different craft techniques that you might like to try. There are many great ideas on your computer, the site Pinterest being just one of many.

What about the sky-high price of stamps? If local, deliver by hand or better still help CHAS by using the excellent Killearn Christmas Post (see page 6). If not, it is only once a year, and you can bathe in the warm glow knowing the pleasure it gives the recipient.

Go and buy some blank card and get cracking!



PW

## The Festive Wine List

Selecting the perfect wines for the festive season is a lovely way to enhance the Christmas spirit. For a start, a robust red wine such as a merlot or cabernet sauvignon from the Colchagua Valley in Chile pairs perfectly with the breadth of flavours in a traditional Christmas dinner. These wines are complex yet affordable, thanks to the perfect growing conditions. As the evening progresses, a lighter pinot noir can be a good option for Christmas cake and board games. For a white alternative, the broad appeal of a versatile chardonnay from New Zealand or South Africa can complement both the white meats and vegetarian options.

When it comes to bringing in the New Year, sparkling wine is a must. Cremant offers a budget-friendly alternative to Champagne and is equally festive, with a host of regions in France producing excellent examples.

Throughout the season, mulled wine is a staple – perfect for the cold winter evenings, warming from the inside out. Preparing it at home with a base of an affordable red wine infused with spices like cinnamon and cloves can become a new family tradition. It's also a wonderful way to use any leftover wine from the previous evening – should there be any, of course.

The key to selecting wines for the Christmas season



is to start with what you personally enjoy, then throw in consideration for Great Aunt Maude, and balance quality with value from countries and regions that offer really enjoyable wines at affordable prices. This ensures that the wines not only complement the meals, but also contribute to the festive atmosphere, making each glass a celebration of the season.

Happy holidays and a toast to good health and cheer!

ELAINE TAYLOR





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**SATURDAY,  
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Dear Residents of Killearn,

I had such a great time visiting Killearn last year, I decided to come back and do it all again!

The elves are already excited to hear what ideas I bring back to the workshop this time!

Megan tells me she'll be making all the arrangements, so I just have to make sure I don't forget my hat! You'll find all the information on the KCM website - see you on 7th December in Killearn Village Hall!

*Santa Claus*

[killearncountrymarket.co.uk](http://killearncountrymarket.co.uk)

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

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## [ KILLEARN'S NATURAL HISTORY – DID YOU KNOW?



### Killearn is currently right on the boundary between red and grey squirrels

The red squirrel is our native squirrel species in the UK, but across large parts of the country it has been driven out by the larger, more aggressive grey squirrel that was introduced from North America in the late 19th century. Their spread was greatly facilitated by people moving them around – one of the worst offenders being the 11th Duke of Bedford, who gave them to friends and encouraged their release.



The grey squirrel not only outcompetes the red, but also carries a virus that is deadly to reds, but not to greys. Of the UK's red squirrels, 75 per cent are now in Scotland, with the majority being in the north. But following efforts to redress the mistakes of the past and control the grey squirrel, reds are spreading south and slowly replacing the greys, possibly also because pine martens (which have also spread southwards) find it easier to catch grey squirrels. Killearn is now on the boundary between the reds and the greys, but the latter are still by far the commonest species across the Central Belt.

The excellent website [scottishsquirrels.org.uk](http://scottishsquirrels.org.uk) has maps showing the distribution of sightings each year of both species. Reds tend to frequent wooded and rural areas (now including Killearn Glen and Kirkhouse Wood) and greys are more common in gardens and suburban areas – probably because they are less shy! Why not visit the website to see the spread south along the Blane Valley year on year? More importantly, record your own sightings of either squirrel species.

This is a really good example of a citizen-science project, inviting people to log sightings in order to gather data. It's a great way to get a lot of information from a wide geographical area. For statistical trends to be significant and the picture to be representative, substantial numbers of entries are needed and because the red squirrel tends to be more popular than the grey in the public's perception, their sightings may be more likely to be reported. None the less, the presence of particular species – and changes in their distribution over time – is very valuable information, helping track shifts in distribution and abundance that might be due to changes in climate, habitat, farming and gardening practices and the like.

The Killearn Natural History project plans to promote a local citizen-science species recording scheme after the launch of its website next year.

### Dinosaur plant

Did you know that there is a plant widespread around Killearn that is almost unchanged since before the time of the dinosaurs – and that inspired our local mathematician to invent logarithms?

Horsetails (sometimes called Mare's Tails) are curious plants that look a bit like pipe cleaners or tiny Christmas



trees. The commonest species are the field horsetail (found in scrubby areas) and the water horsetail (found in damp ground, including the banks of the Endrick). These remarkable plants are referred to as 'living fossils'. They have a more primitive method of reproduction, producing spores rather than seeds, and have a much higher silica content, which makes them rough to the touch. Horsetails provide food and shelter for many other species, and people have long used horsetails for scouring and in herbal medicine.

It is claimed that the mathematician John Napier conceived of the idea of logarithms when looking at how the branches of the 'leaves' of a horsetail become closer and closer together towards the tip. Napier lived at Gartness for most of his adult life, so it's possible that the horsetails of the banks of the Endrick were the ones that inspired him, although he didn't publish his idea for logarithms until he'd moved back to his birthplace, Merchiston Tower in Edinburgh, which was his family's castle and which is now part of Edinburgh Napier University.

Horsetails have extremely deep roots and can survive for very long times even when covered with light-proof material, so they are almost impossible to get rid of from lawns or flowerbeds. Perhaps it's best just to sit back and enjoy them, waiting either for mathematical inspiration or the return of the dinosaurs...

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# Telephone calls in the near future: the Digital Switchover

---

Following previous articles, a little further information has become available about the changes being made to the telephony infrastructure by BT Openreach, which some service providers are calling 'Digital Voice' (DV). This change affects all landlines in the UK and affects specifically your telephone service. Any internet service you have should be unaffected, as the standard option that most people will be changed to is using the internet service you already have – Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP).

BT advertises better telephone features for users, including 3-way calls, blocking nuisance calls, Calling Line Identity service, being able to divert a call from your landline to another number, better call quality and the voice messaging service (1571). Some of these features may also be available from other service providers.

In the short term, when folk renew their contracts or switch suppliers, they will now be switched over to one of two options within the new service. However, despite informing them about it happening, the supplier's staff may not explain the full implications of the change to the customer.

After Ofcom intervened, BT staff should now be more sympathetic to those not wanting to change to the new service in the short term, especially if you register with them as being over 65 or otherwise 'vulnerable' in some way or have (for example) a Medicare alarm. In the longer term, your service provider will inform you with a few weeks' notice, that the change will be happening, at which point you will need to decide how to cope with it.

My key advice remains – for any supplier, not just BT – talk to them and ask what they plan to do to maintain your services regarding this changeover. Hopefully this and previous articles, will give you sufficient background to have a meaningful conversation with them. We have also collated both general and supplier-specific information on the KCC website: [www.killearncc.org.uk/kbg-killearn.html#digvoice](http://www.killearncc.org.uk/kbg-killearn.html#digvoice). For BT customers the new information is:

- Customers who have only a telephone service – BT will still encourage you to take on an internet service, even if it's just to cover the telephone aspect. Your existing equipment should still be usable.
- If the customer doesn't want to do this, BT will convert their existing phone line to be a Dedicated Home Phone Service (DHPS), and there will be no changes within the premises. This alternative option is only a temporary measure until 2030.
- BT may also accept a postponement of any change, but only until January 2027.

The alternative is to rely totally on a mobile and give up your landline.

For customers who already use an internet service, the change may be fairly simple. BT, EE, Sky and Zen all appear to be taking a similar approach, although a new router may be required if your present one does not have the type of socket required. This should retain your existing landline number. Vodafone may also be taking this approach.

Plusnet's approach is to focus on a cheap internet service, since many customers do not feel the need for a home-based phone and have already changed to using only a mobile for telephone calls. If a home-based phone is still desired, then a separate VOIP contract can be started, and possibly the existing landline number retained.

TalkTalk/Tiscali appear unclear as to their approach to the changeover at present. Virgin has not been checked currently as they may not have any customers in this area.

For BT, EE, Sky and Zen customers who use the internet and have only one telephone or a set of cordless phones, the effect of the change will only be to plug the phone, or base unit of the cordless set, into the back of the hub using the socket marked UK phone. If you don't have this socket, BT will either provide a new router or they will offer you an adapter.

If you use your phone line for a Mex Alarm or Home Security, your service may already have changed you over to a mobile-supported connection. If not, talk to them.

Another key point is that the revised system is plugged into your own electrical supply. You will be providing the power to make the service work. Although BT have a power supply unit (PSU) available to provide temporary back-up power for their equipment in case of a power cut, make sure that you have a contracted, charged, mobile phone available as a backup. BT now has a hybrid phone set available, the Motorola FW500, which uses the landline, but automatically switches to the mobile network in the event of a power cut.

Complications should only arise in three broad instances: if you use extension wiring to enable multiple handsets, if the router is located away from the most frequently used handset, or if you have 'other equipment' connected to the landline. 'Other equipment' might include a self-contained answering machine or a stand-alone ringer unit. These will need an adapter. It is possible to connect extension wiring into the back of the hub, but BT won't guarantee that it will work as before. However, they will provide one free Analogue Telephone Adapter (ATA) that connects on to your internal WiFi. Up to five of these adapters can be supported.

Some people use BT Call Guardian to screen incoming calls. This should still work, but do check with the BT Helpline.

If you want fuller information, please look at the KCC website (see above) or contact us via KCC or KCFC.

DOUG ASHWORTH  
KILLEARN BROADBAND GROUP





## Community Engagement and Reassurance

PC Matt McCammon is the Ward Officer for the Forth and Endrick area. He is based at Balfron Police Office and can be contacted at the office, on 101, or at [ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk](mailto:ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk). It is recommended that this email address is used by the local community for email contact, however this should not be used to report crimes.

## Road safety

A driver has been charged and reported for dangerous driving on the A875, Dumgoyne, after overtaking another vehicle onto ongoing traffic and colliding with another vehicle. Fortunately, only minor injuries were sustained. A driver was arrested for refusing the roadside breath test and thereafter refusing to provide a specimen of breath at the custody suite. The driver was charged with the offence and held in custody to appear at court the next day.

## Anti-social behaviour

Vandalism has been recorded after a brick was thrown through a living room window of a property. Enquiries are ongoing.

## Scams

There has been an increase in frauds recently within the Forth and Endrick ward, particularly those that target older residents. Do not give any personal information (name, address, bank details, email or phone number) to organisations or individuals before verifying their credentials. Always question unsolicited calls, texts or emails requesting such personal or financial information. When in doubt, contact the company directly using a known email or phone number – and not using the number given or the phone on which you received the suspect call.

Please report all scams to Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000, Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm or online at [consumeradvice.scot](http://consumeradvice.scot), which has a live chat service.

## Fraud

A fraud is being investigated after money was paid to a company for refitting a church with an audio/visual system and thereafter failing to provide the equipment or return the money. Enquiries are still ongoing.

An attempted fraud has been recorded after a resident was contacted via Facebook messenger by an unknown suspect purporting to work for RED driving school, offering to be their driving instructor and requesting three months' payment upfront. Fortunately, the resident recognised this as a scam and refused to send money.

An older member of the community was contacted via text message by someone purporting to be her son who asked her to help him pay a bill due to their phone being 'broken'. Unfortunately, the victim provided her bank details and £439.96 was taken from her account.

The suspect made an attempt to withdraw further money, but this was blocked by her bank. Happily, her bank has reimbursed the stolen funds.

If you have been the victim of fraud, please report it to Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

## Theft

There has been an increase in theft by housebreakings reported in some of the villages in the Forth and Endrick area. We urge residents to be ever vigilant and contact the police should anyone see anything suspicious.

Please remember to follow basic home security rules and make it harder for thieves:

- Use timer switches on lights and radios to make it look as if your home is occupied.
- If possible use secure lighting at the front and back of your property.
- If your house is fitted with an alarm, then use it.
- Ensure all doors and windows are secure when you leave and when you go to bed.
- Use a good quality lock on any garden sheds and outhouses, and make sure all garden tools and ladders are locked away when not being used. Don't give the thieves the tools to break into your house.
- Make a note of all makes, models and serial numbers of expensive items in your home.
- Create a free and secure inventory of all your personal property at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).

We appreciate any calls in relation to suspicious persons or vehicles in your neighbourhood. Please do not hesitate to contact us on 101 if you observe anything suspicious as these types of reports are taken seriously and your report may assist us with any ongoing enquiries.

Follow us on social media for useful information and updates:

[www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision](https://www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision)

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for policing is of an organisation  
focused on safer communities,  
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With our summer and its mix of weather behind us and with nights drawing in, we are looking to our winter programme of dinner and talks at Ross Priory starting in November. This year we have speakers telling us about a career in the motor business, Formula 2 and 3 racing cars and restoring an Edwardian tourer, as well as a quiz night.

These will lead up to our AGM in April and Drive-it-Day, where there will be another opportunity to raise some funds for charity in conjunction with a special day out. As well as supporting Strathcarron Hospice, reported in the last *Courier*, we were able to make a donation of £400 to CHAS to help them with Rachel House in Kinross as a result of our Car-BQ.

July concluded with a run round the Fintry Hills, returning to the Sports Centre for pizzas. Fintry seems to be another place with a microclimate – we drove through low cloud and drizzle while all around was perfectly dry! In September we took a scenic route to the Lobster Pot in Blackness, also home to the ship-shaped castle which featured in *Outlander* as Fort William.

The summer events conclude in October with a short run for a guided tour round the Riverside Museum in Glasgow – somewhere almost on our doorstep, but apparently a place some of our members have never explored. Our website gives you an idea of the variety of our events, and now includes some videos as well as lots of photos, copies of our e-zine *Overdrive* and the coming programme of activities.

You don't actually need a special vehicle to join us, just an interest in motoring in general. If you'd like to join in, email to [SC&SCC.Sec@gmail.com](mailto:SC&SCC.Sec@gmail.com).

DOUG ASHWORTH, SECRETARY



## Scams of the Issue

There don't seem to be any new scams to report, just revised flavours of existing ones.

One old favourite is an email asking for help to buy a voucher. The inability of the sender to do it themselves has taken on some new guises – blaming laryngitis, for instance, or being unable to understand the store's website. This type of message appears genuine because it has come from real folk who you know, seemingly from their real email address. However, your friend's email account has been compromised.

One variation has been preceded by a very innocent email simply asking for a reply to check that their email is working properly. The scammer is just looking for a reply that they can then follow up with the real 'hook'. If you get one of these emails, the best approach is to be healthily sceptical, even if it looks genuine and innocent, and phone the person to check what's going on.

As always, be very cautious of any cold calls purporting to be 'BT', 'Microsoft', or a financial company. They won't be. All these thieves want is your money

DOUG ASHWORTH

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## Community Council Report

The new season commenced with our meeting on 18 September, and the committee returned bright eyed and bushy tailed, ready for the new challenges.

We are delighted to welcome Natasha Houchin, who is our new planning associate, taking over from Jim Ptolomey, who stepped down at the end of last session.

As usual, planning makes up a great deal of our current business. The Cala development is now well underway. The first houses have been released for sale, and the first occupants are expected in spring 2025.

Likewise, the Rural Stirling Housing Association houses on Station Road are under construction, and the kits should be up by the time this goes to press. Details of houses available, and contact for enquiry, will be on the KCC website.

In addition, Stirling planning officers have offered the KCC committee a meeting to discuss their recent decision making. We are aware of concern in the village that residents' views are not sufficiently considered, and we are keen to understand the process more clearly, the better to represent the village views. We have taken them up on this offer, and will shortly be in a position to report back regarding this.

In more positive news, the long awaited footpath along Station Road, linking the new Cala site to the village, now has a start date of Monday, 18 November. This should finally make pedestrians safe on Station Road.

Another success was a special meeting held by our local police constable, Matt McCammon, in August. This was convened in response to ever increasing reports of fraud and scamming, both on the doorstep and by phone or

text. Matt did a fantastic job of highlighting the risks and helping us to help ourselves. The meeting was extremely well attended and much appreciated, and we would extend many thanks to Matt for all his work.

The local place plan should come to a conclusion by the end of the 2024/25 session. The initial survey produced a wealth of information, and we are extremely grateful to all who took the time to complete it.

It will be followed by a much shorter, but more focused, set of questions. These will aim to determine which aspects of the village are most valued in terms of green space and opportunities. It will also explore the perceived need for new housing, and how that should be achieved, while keeping the village as a vibrant and welcoming place to be, and without sacrificing those aspects which give Killearn its character and identity. Once again, we really need as many views as possible, in order to present Stirling Council with a report which accurately reflects the views of the community, and we will be very grateful for each and every response.

As always, we would welcome as many as possible to the monthly meetings, the third Wednesday of every month, either in person in the Garden Room of the Village Hall, or by Zoom.

Our minutes and updates will appear on the KCC website ([www.killearncc.org.uk](http://www.killearncc.org.uk)), where you will also find our email ([contactus@killearncc.org.uk](mailto:contactus@killearncc.org.uk)) to get in touch with whatever concerns you.

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

LIZ JONES, CHAIR, KILLEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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## From the Archive – The Blackburns of Killearn House (Part 1)

The story starts with brothers James and John Wedderburn, who fled to Jamaica when their father was executed after his involvement in the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. They returned home wealthy men from the proceeds of their sugar plantations and slavery. In 1774, James married Isabella Blackburn, the daughter of a Glasgow merchant and heiress to her mother's estates in Fife.

This probably inspired Isabella's cousin, John Blackburn, who was 18 in 1774, to follow in the Wedderburns' footsteps by also going to Jamaica. He too returned a wealthy man, sometime before 1810. Although he left behind a number of mixed-race descendants, he made financial provision for them. He also freed all his slaves before he returned, enabling some to settle in Nova Scotia. In 1811, he married Rebecca Gillies, the 23-year-old daughter of a minister, purchasing the Killearn Estate three years later. Instead of living in the old Place of Killearn, they built a new house on the other side of the Blane, having demolished Croy Leckie house to provide materials. The new house was probably not complete until after 1821, as the older children were born in Bonhill.

John and Rebecca had a family of six boys and two girls. The family moved to Edinburgh during school terms, to allow the boys to attend The Edinburgh Academy, and it was there that they became good friends with the grandchildren of James and Isabella Wedderburn.

In 1838, their eldest son, Peter, married Jean Wedderburn and in 1849, their youngest son, Hugh, married Jemima Wedderburn, the water colourist noted for her nature studies and country scenes.

John Blackburn died in 1840 and Peter, took over the estate. Peter and Jean had an even bigger family than his parents – eight boys and five girls. Following a short career in the Life Guards before his marriage, he subsequently was a JP, a Deputy Lieutenant and an MP for Stirlingshire for ten years. He was active in the promotion of development of railways.

Peter's eldest son, John, did not live with the family once he was grown up, and was boarding in the Highlands in the 1881, 1891 and 1901 censuses. This suggests that there were problems which prevented him taking on the estate. Instead the second son, James, who was a barrister by profession, seems to have run the estate along with his mother.

James died in 1893 followed by his mother in 1897. James' third son, Peter, then took over the estate until his death in 1922. He was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Artillery and married Charlotte Whitelaw in 1883. There were no children from the marriage. He was often away from Killearn and the house was let for a period around the First World War. He remained active in the community, however, serving on the School Board and the Parish Council. Peter also gave the site for the War Memorial to the village.

In 1922 the estate was inherited by his sister Helen's eldest son, Curtis Lampson, as there were no descendants from any of his brothers.

The inscription in the Old Kirk graveyard is of interest.



Peter Blackburn of Killearn born at Levenside Dumbartonshire 31st December 1811  
Died at Killearn 20th May 1870  
Lieutenant in the 2nd Regiment of Life Guards, Justice of Peace, Deputy Lieutenant and Member of Parliament for the County of Stirling  
One of the Lords of the Treasury under Lord Derby's administration  
Member of the Kirk session of Killearn Parish and Representative Elder from the Presbytery of Dumbarton.  
Jean Wedderburn, his wife, born 7th August 1818 died 8th May 1897

ALL KILLEARN ARCHIVE



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## Return of the 10k



Killearn's most anticipated event of the year is back!

The Killearn 10k will take place on Saturday, 7 June 2025, promising another fantastic day for runners, spectators and the entire community.

The 2025 event will once again include the Killearn Mile, the perfect lead-up to the scenic 10k route, known for its beautiful views and welcoming village atmosphere.

We're always grateful for the generosity of local businesses that continually support our event.

We'll be reaching out soon, and if you're interested in getting involved, contact us at [info@killearn10k.com](mailto:info@killearn10k.com).

Places for 2025 will be released on Thursday, 5 December and as always, they are expected to sell out fast. If you're keen to take part, don't delay signing up. We recommend you join the Killearn 10k Facebook group for reminders and race information.

Stay tuned for more details, and we look forward to seeing you on the start line!



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## Double Celebration: Centenary and Club Championships!

On Sunday, 8 September, Killearn Tennis Club welcomed guests to a special celebration to mark our centenary year and prize-giving for the 2024 club championships. There was a fantastic turn out on a beautiful day, with plenty of bubbles and pater off the court, and sociable tennis on the court throughout the afternoon. A special thanks to John Leonard, a long-term member and dedicated player at the club, who presented the championship winners and finalists with their prizes.

### 2024 Club Championship Results

**Mixed Doubles Winners** – John Forshaw & Jan Biggart

**Runners Up** – Keith Kemsley & Heather Maxwell

**Ladies Singles Winner** – Alex Stewart

**Runner Up** – Christina Young

**Gents Singles Winner** – John Forshaw

**Runner Up** – Jamie Kingsley

**Gents Doubles Winners** – Keith Kemsley & Jamie Kingsley

**Runners Up** – Bill Gray & Lewis MacKinley

**Ladies Doubles Winners** – Heather Maxwell & Alex Stewart

**Runners Up** – Gail Pain & Laura Hart

Thank you everyone who took part in the tournament and to those who came along to support the Centenary Celebration. With the success of the day we are planning more social events over the coming months.

It is fitting that in the centenary year the club is continuing to flourish, and we have seen a number of individuals and local families become new members this year. We are delighted to announce that the club has been awarded a grant from Clackmannanshire and Stirling Environmental Trust towards a sustainability project to upgrade the clubhouse, and the planning application was approved.

Work will begin in October and includes re-cladding the clubhouse in an eco-friendly material to improve the environmental performance of the facility. Together with the recently upgraded floodlights, this clubhouse improvement will ensure that everyone can continue to enjoy the club for years to come and energy usage will significantly reduce. The club committee would like to thank Darran Crawford, from Linearchitecture, who provided brilliant advice and submitted the planning application on our behalf. We will keep members and the local community posted on progress and look forward to the completion of the refurbishment. For information on the club and memberships please visit: [clubspark.lta.org.uk/KillearnTennisClub](http://clubspark.lta.org.uk/KillearnTennisClub).



Above: l-r John Leonard and George Douglas, Jan Biggart and John Forshaw with their Mixed Doubles prize



Above left: John Leonard (left) and George Douglas with Ladies Champion Alex Stewart  
Above right: Heather Maxwell (left) and Alex Stewart celebrate becoming Ladies Doubles Champions



Above left: Gents Doubles Champions Jamie Kingsley (left) and Keith Kemsley (right) receive their prize from John Leonard.  
Above right: President Roni Gray (left) and Secretary Natalie Kemsley with the Centenary Cake

JAMIE KINGSLEY



## Killearn Football Club News



On the footballing front, we ended the season without a major trophy, unfortunately. Although we tried our best across the season, we fell short of the levels needed to compete with the strongest teams. The boys will go again next year with hopefully some better luck on the injury front, and a few new players will help us get closer to silverware.

However, the club spirit and support remain strong, as was seen at our recent golf day with over 30 players and supporters travelling to Tillicoultry GC to compete for the coveted Hughie Russell trophy.



This year's champion was Stuart Macdonald, who beat Chris Jewell (2nd) and Stuart Ashworth (3rd) in a very competitive field. Joe Corcoran had the pleasure of winning the Booby Bunnet, and the team of Kris Buchanan, Jamie Anderson, David Cameron and Campbell Maxwell were victorious in the Texas Scrambled 9-hole shoot out.

Thanks go to our sponsors, The Old Mill Inn and kit supplier VSN Sport, for their support of this brilliant day.

We would also like to give an end of season thanks to everyone who has supported the club this season, and we look forward to seeing you all back at the Field of Dreams next spring.

KILLEARN FC COMMITTEE

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# Strathendrick Wins Club of the Year 2024

At an annual dinner in Perth in September, Strathendrick RFC was awarded ClubSport Scotland Club of the Year 2024. This is a remarkable achievement for a rural Stirlingshire rugby club, and reflects the outstanding development work done and commitment made by many people over a number of years.

The Club now runs:

- 7 Mini teams (Primary School age)
- 5 Midi / Youth boys' teams, in close collaboration with Balforn High School
- 4 Girls' Youth teams
- 2 Senior Men's teams
- 2 Women's teams (touch and contact)

The 1st XV is currently top of the Arnold Clark West Region League Division 2, with healthy numbers attending training on a regular basis, and the 2nd XV is currently top of the Arnold Clark West Region Reserve League Division 2.

The Midis play in the Inspiresport West B Schools Conference, and the junior boys' and girls' teams have enjoyed character-forming tours across the UK and abroad.

The Minis train and play regular tournaments on Sundays. The fitness, health, well-being and social benefits for hundreds of people – young and not so young – from our community derived from rugby and our associated activities are tremendous.

These achievements were recognised last year by the club winning a number of accolades, now complemented by this latest award recognising Strathendrick as one of the most progressive and best run sport clubs in Scotland. Our playing and coaching strength has never been

stronger and, due to membership numbers, Scottish Rugby's backing, and the support of our community and sponsors, SRFC is in a healthy position.

It was fitting that in the 50th year of Strathendrick's foundation, Ian McVean, Club Secretary and one of the original members of the of the rugby club, was there in Perth to enjoy the occasion and receive the award.



Pictured above l-r:  
Jeremy Pemberton-Piggot – former President SRFC,  
Gregor Kennedy – Midi & Youth Convenor. Lynne Seaton – Child Protection Officer & Women's Coordinator, Ian McVean – Club Secretary, Gary Heron – Club Treasurer, Steven McCooley – Head of Rugby P1-U18



## Curling – Lead Stones

As mentioned last autumn, we are at present struggling with numbers, particularly in the Mixed Club. Many of you will have seen the floor curling game at the Killearn Horticultural Show and seen how much fun everyone was having. Perhaps you could consider giving curling a go?

The Mixed Club are scheduled to play two double round leagues with four teams. One will be up to the end of November and the second one will start at the end of January and last until March. Unfortunately, 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 find enough players to make up another team, even if this involves players from outside Strathendrick CC.

The Ladies Section have four single round leagues with five teams in the first, second and fourth leagues, and four teams in the third league in January. The Ladies started with a well-supported practice session. To begin, we got used to being on the ice after six months and then we played a bounce game

swapping positions.

This was followed by the opening bonspiel which was won by Rosemary Miller's team of Katherine Kelsey, Jean Leitch and Norma Thornton who won 5 ends out of 6.

The Mixed Club started with the President v Vice-President competition which forms their opening bonspiel. The result was a decisive victory for the Vice- President, Paul Mosley, by 10 ends to 4.

Strathendrick have decided not to play in the Forth & Endrick Province A League this season due to other commitments. The first two external matches gave mixed results. We failed to defend the Area Knockout competition by losing in the first round, but won our first match in the Province B League.

The contacts for Strathendrick Curling Club are Tony Flisch (01360 860580), Jane Weir (01360 850411) or Gill Smith (01360 550726), or look at our website at [www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk](http://www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk). New members would be welcomed by both the Mixed Club and the Ladies Section.



## Sheila Catherine Rennie 1946 – 2024

Sheila was born in Kyleakin, Skye, in 1946 to parents Mary and Charles Stephenson. The second oldest of four children, Sheila's childhood consisted of many moves due to her father's job in the armed forces. However, their family finally settled in Blanefield in 1959, where Sheila joined Balfon High School. In 1965, she met her beloved husband, Michael Rennie, and they married in 1966 at Strathblane Kirk. They then moved to Rennie's camp, Fintry Road, where they had two children: Denise in 1967 and Stephen in 1968. They found their forever home and settled on Graham Road, Killearn, in 1969.

Sheila took great pride in being part of the local community, as seen in her many years working in Killearn Co-op, the Fruit Shop and



latterly at Cherrybank Dental Surgery in Balfon. She also enjoyed her time on the Killearn Community Council.

Sheila's passions in life were all things nature, poetry (she had some published) and crafts, particularly knitting and crocheting. She was always making something, including homemade wine (plenty of stories on

that one), and her family. Her family were everything to her.

In 2003, Sheila was diagnosed with cancer. She fought courageously and strenuously for the last 21 years. Despite her medical battles, she never let it obscure her core values – her faith, her generosity and selflessness, her passions and her love. She always had time for her friends and family, and any wandering animal that came to their garden.

Sheila was an incredible wife, mother and grandmother to Rebecca, Jennifer, Eliza, Molly and Morag, and great grandmother to Emily. She was an amazing family member to all, and a fantastic friend to all. She will always be remembered for her kind and huge heart, and will be sadly missed by many.

THE RENNIE FAMILY

## William J Dick BA (Hons) PhD 1946 – 2024

William Dick – 'Billy' – was born to John and Elizabeth Dick on 27 August 1946, and he grew up in Castlemilk, the son of a coal miner. Encouraged by his parents, he became the first in the history of his family to go on to higher education. He would become the first student at Strathclyde University to complete a PhD in geography and was awarded the Geography Medal. While at Strathclyde, he met Christine MacLean, and they were married on 26 August 1972. They moved to Killearn in 1978 to start their family.

They found a welcoming community, with many other young families who were arriving at the same time. It's a place they loved so much that they were still here 45 years later, with friendships spanning generations of children and grandchildren.

Bill was proud and supportive of his children, Duncan and Louisa, and grandchildren, Dani, Thea and Julia.

Generations of students benefited from his teaching at St Modan's High School. The family were deeply moved to see the many tributes from his ex-pupils – he had a genuine gift for teaching with humour and empathy.

He continued to help students with his thoughtful and sensitive stewardship as chief examiner of Standard Grade geography, and with the many, and award-winning, textbooks he wrote. He was instrumental in the new build of St Modan's as PFI coordinator. There is a generation of teachers whom he counselled and negotiated for as an EIS rep, and he was a supportive member of Balfon High School Board.

There are also all the dances, football games, Burns suppers and parties he organised in the village, often entertaining with his guitar and his singing.

He died suddenly in August, at home in his beloved Killearn. He was loved, and he is deeply missed.

THE DICK FAMILY



## Hazel Goodwin

News of the death of Hazel Goodwin on 6 October has been received by the *Courier*. Hazel was born in Liverpool in 1930, and 14 years ago, she and her late husband came to stay in Killearn with their daughter and son-in-law, Sue and David Dunaway. Hazel was a lover of crossword puzzles and a stalwart of the Thursday Club. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

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## Norman Thompson 1946 – 2024

Norman was born in Windsor where his father was serving in the Life Guards regiment of the Household Cavalry. He was an only child and attended Windsor Grammar School. He was sports mad, readily admitting in later life that he spent more time playing sport than studying! He was introduced to horses at a young age by his father, and there began a lifelong love of these animals.

Aged 18, Norman followed his father into the Life Guards and was stationed in what was then Malaya, and also in Hong Kong for three years.

On his return to the UK, Norman transferred to the Royal Corps of Transport (now the Royal Logistics Corps). Then followed a series of postings: Southampton, the Mediterranean, Dubai and Northern Ireland, where he was stationed in the Maze Prison, and then to Glasgow as Adjutant with the TA for two years. There he met Fiona, and they were married in October 1977. They lived in seven different addresses across Germany, England and Northern Ireland in their first ten years of marriage. Kenneth was born in 1981 and Helen followed in 1985.

In 1987, they moved to Glasgow where Norman took up a role in the MOD building in Brown Street. After all these years of moving from place to place and living in Army quarters, they decided it was time they bought their own home, and this is when they moved to Killearn, close to Fiona's parents.

As the years went on, Norman's role became essentially HR. He was in charge of around 4,000 soldiers' postings and continued to serve until his retirement in 2012.

Norman was always fastidious about his appearance, right down to his shoes, which would be beautifully polished. He was a DIY enthusiast and acquired many gadgets. After his retirement, he continued his interest in anything military, watching Trooping the Colour and Garter Day in Windsor every year. He had eclectic tastes in music, ranging from jazz, to '30s and '40s music,



to traditional Scottish music. He was a very keen follower of sport, from rugby to cricket to horse racing.

He was a man of few words – a listener rather than a talker. He loved parties with family and friends as many photographs with a glass in hand will testify! He had a very dry sense of humour and always had a twinkle in his bright blue eyes. He was a true gentleman, always very considerate and polite, loving and loyal to family and friends.

Sadly, Norman was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2012, but he faced his difficulties and challenges with strength and good humour. Such fortitude was also apparent earlier when he faced the tragic loss of his son Kenneth in 2009.

With help and support from family, friends and neighbours, and carers from Home is Best, Norman was able to stay at home until this Easter, when he moved into Westerton Care Home for the final months of his life.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY



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# Prize Christmas Crossword *Set by Peewit*

Our prize for the Prize Crossword is a Family Ticket to the Theatre Royal or the King's Theatre, Glasgow, subject to availability and restrictions on certain days. Our prize for the Children's Prize Codeword is £10. Entrants must be 12 years old or under. The *Courier* would like to thank the Ambassador Theatre Group for their generosity in providing the prize for our crossword competition.



## ACROSS

- 1 Drink at the start of tiffin. (3)
- 3 Funny taste is a condition (5)
- 6 See 1d
- 8 For example about a mountain in France for a place in Cumbria or maybe an apple (8)
- 9 See 1d
- 10 3a ends in new island (6)
- 11 Eliminated clean place to sleep (8)
- 12 Piccadilly say, a place of travelling performers (5)
- 15 I met rage about to go away (8)
- 16 What rats are wearing on their head (5,3)
- 19 Brezhnev, a day hidden in a desert (6)
- 21 He went to war sounding like a great ape (8)
- 22 Use endless milk mixed with this breakfast cereal (6)
- 24 Get supple branch with hesitation (5)
- 25 Fuel company needs a short push for a drink (8)
- 26 Accommodation for 12a can be big! (4)
- 27 Give way, sounds like why I led about (5)
- 28 Title found in Irishman going north (3)

## DOWN

- 1d, 6a, 9a This 12a performer can tip leg over earthwork (9,6)
- 2 A disbeliever loses 100 when free from infection (7)
- 3 Seduction between bridge partners causes them to faint (5)
- 4 See 18d (7)
- 5 Two lads get together in this era (9)
- 6 Bap at the pub protects you if your vehicle turns over (4,3)
- 7 Gave a gift before Easter Day starts (9)
- 13 Unwelcome sin, virtue is made up (9)
- 14 Clever cars decked in holly (9)
- 17 12a performer has a small drum held up by an accountant (7)
- 18,4, 12a performer, state without end, prize eater sadly (7,7)
- 20 I swerve around those watching (7)
- 22 Lamented small motorcycle (5)
- 23 Incompetent person who didn't win (5)

## How to Enter

Solve the crossword and place your solution in the postbox outside the Village Hall together with your name, address and a contact phone number. Alternatively, if you don't want to cut it out of your *Courier*, count the number of times the letter 'y' appears in the grid and email to [peewit@kfc.co.uk](mailto:peewit@kfc.co.uk) with your name, address and a contact phone number. In case you want to solve the crossword over the holiday period your entries should be in Peewit's mailbox by 5 January 2025.

## Sudoku

### Sudoku Rules

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.

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

### Solution to the last crossword:

#### ACROSS

1 panacea; 8 futures; 9 seminal; 10 Octavia; 11 elder; 13 intestate; 15 community; 18 mimic; 21 housing; 22 erotica; 23 rodents; 24 testers

#### DOWN

1 passe; 2 nomad; 3 contributions; 4 afloat; 5 status symbols; 6 Pravda; 7 estate; 12 ludo; 14 taxi; 15 cohere; 16 mouldy; 17 ingest; 19 maize; 20 clans

The four letters were: **J, K, Q, W**

Winner of the last crossword competition:  
**Sue Beck, Killearn**



## Children's Prize Wordsearch

Find 10 words in the wordsearch grid that are associated with Christmas.

Eight of the words are: decorations, mistletoe, nativity, presents, Santa, shopping, tree, turkey

Can you find the other two? Write them down and post or email your answer to the *Courier* for a chance to win £10 for you to spend.

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

Instructions for sending it are given in the box below.

Good luck to all the contestants.

*Peewit*

We urge everyone who tries our competitions to send in an entry – it's easy! Winners are selected at random from those received, so everyone has a chance to win. Email your solution(s) to [peewit@kcfc.co.uk](mailto:peewit@kcfc.co.uk), or drop it in the postbox outside the Village Hall before **5 January 2025**. Remember to give your name, address and a contact phone number. Children, please give your age.

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

Well done to the winner of the last wordsearch:  
Laura Gingles, age 12, Killearn

## Children's *Spot the Difference* – Just for Fun

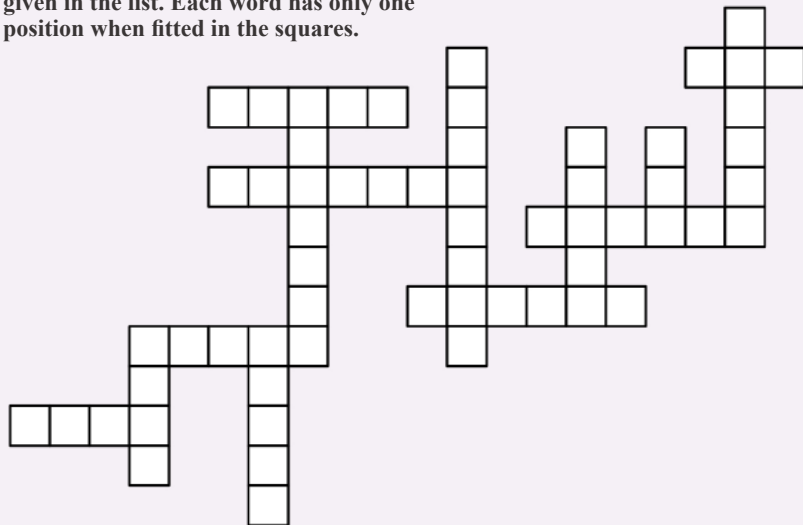


Can you find 10 things that have changed in the right-hand picture? Good hunting!

## Children's Puzzles – More Fun

### WORD FIT

How to play: Fill the grid with the words given in the list. Each word has only one position when fitted in the squares.



3 letters

cat  
dog

4 letters  
lion  
mink

5 letters  
mouse  
sheep  
tiger  
whale

6 letters  
badger  
jaguar  
monkey

7 letters  
giraffe  
warthog

8 letters  
hedgehog

Solutions may be found at: [www.kcfc.co.uk/admin/puzzles60.pdf](http://www.kcfc.co.uk/admin/puzzles60.pdf)

### MATHS SQUARE

	+		-	8	5
-		+		+	
	-	2	-		2
+		-		-	
6	-		-	1	0
8		1		10	

#### Fill in the missing numbers

The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 9. Each number is only used once. Each row is a maths equation. Each column is a maths equation.

### CHILDREN'S 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 4.

1			
	3		
	1		
		1	4

### WORD ROUTE

R START				
		E		
		K END		H
		S		
		Y		

How to play: solve the clues and place the answer one letter at a time in a spiral. The last letter is the first letter of the next word and is given in the grid.

- Reindeer with a red nose.
- Christmas decoration.
- Another name for Christmas
- Santa's helpers.
- Santa's bag for presents.



#### Do you need an affordable home ?

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

We currently have over 670 rented houses and flats. Around 40 of these become available for rent each year. At present we have properties in the following communities:

Aberfoyle	Doune	Killin	Strathyre
Balfron	Drymen	Kinlochard	Stronachlachar
Buchlyvie	Gargunnoch	Kippen	Tyndrum
Callander	Gartmore	Lochearnhead	
Deanston	Killlearn	Strathblane	

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

Rural Stirling Housing Association  
Stirling Road, Doune FK16 6AA

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



providing affordable homes: sustaining rural communities

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Stirling Carers Centre



Bench seat (Killin)



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Further details visit our website news and events page:

[www.rsha.org.uk/community-donation-fund/](http://www.rsha.org.uk/community-donation-fund/)



Providing affordable homes: sustaining rural communities

Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849  
Rural Stirling Housing Association is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 No. 2376 (s)  
Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator HAL232



# Egrets, I've Had A Few



I will never forget the first time I saw a Little Egret. It was August 1991, hot and sunny, and I was exploring the Dorset coast. On arrival at Arne RSPB reserve, a noticeboard list of recent sightings included an egret on the pool in front of the hide there. Having not anticipated such a special guest, I could barely contain my excitement as, entering the hide and slowly opening the shutter, I gazed in awe upon my first elegant, plume-sporting, gleaming white Little Egret.

Back then Little Egrets were still scarce in Britain. In fact, they had only recently been demoted to something less than an official 'rarity' in the country. However, something had started to happen a couple of years before I saw my first one. Having been afforded better protection across the Continent, the species had recolonised northern and western France, and its range expansion did not stop there. From 1989, egrets began turning up in England much more frequently and in greater numbers, not just in the south, but further north as well. They also hung

around for longer and bred (in Dorset) in 1996 for the first time. Five years later there were 100 breeding pairs in the UK. Nowadays there are well over 1,000 pairs with over 10,000 more birds wintering here from the Continent. They have completely colonised England and Wales in the last 30 years and have something more than a foothold in Scotland.

I spotted my first Killearn Little Egret on the Endrick in December 2020. Although initially just a distant white dot, I knew what it was right away, its punctilious patrolling of the riverbank a pleasing confirmation that it was not just another discarded piece of white polythene. Closer inspection revealed a long-necked, white wading bird (smaller than a Grey Heron) with long black legs ending in bright yellow feet for stirring up small fish from rivers, marshes and ditches. Such prey is then dispatched with the bird's long dark bill. In fact, everything about Little Egrets is long, including in the breeding season when they sport two additional elongated nape feathers. It is these plumes, previously imported to Britain for decorating women's hats, which led to the creation of the RSPB in the late 19th century in an attempt to ban the practice and protect what was then a threatened species.

Despite their northwards march probably being linked to global warming, these beautiful birds make a pleasing addition to our local avifauna. There has been a small Little Egret flock at RSPB Loch Lomond in recent months, while this summer not one, but two, egrets (pictured) frequented fields around the Endrick/Blane Water confluence. I have watched them seemingly seek the company of our resident Grey Herons who, perhaps still rather unfamiliar with such exotics, appear perplexed by their new entourage!

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 on 14 March 2025.

Advertisements and artwork should be sent to us by Friday, 24 January 2025.

Contact: Gwen Stewart (01360 550856).

Contributions and letters to the editor should be in the hands of the editorial team by Friday, 24 January 2025.

Please send them to:  
36 New Endrick Road, G63 9QT or  
email: [courier@kcfc.co.uk](mailto:courier@kcfc.co.uk)

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## Glengoyne Distillery Christmas Shopping Event

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