



ISSUE 33

WINTER 2015

£1



Not just any editor... the *Courier* editor



Ian Dickie (left) with out-going Rotary President, Hugh Nelson

Starthendrick Rotary Club recently honoured one of its members for his contribution to the local community and his work with young people. Ian Dickie, Youth Convenor for the Club (and our editor), was awarded the prestigious Paul Harris Fellowship in recognition of his hard work in these areas.

Letters to the Editor

We welcome your letters and emails. Please include your full address (not for publication). We reserve the right to edit letters and emails.

Some of your readers may remember us, we certainly have good memories of Killearn, which we left in summer 2008. The reason I am writing is to say that we do still keep in touch with village matters, as my long-term 'cleaning lady' very kindly brings me her copy of the *Courier* once she has finished reading it. We are delighted to see that the magazine goes from strength to strength – the standard of production and contents is so consistently high – a real tribute to yourself and to all the contributors; congratulations to everyone. We are particularly interested in those aspects of village life with which we were involved: KCFC itself, but especially the Path Group, Strathendrick Curlers, Colourful Killearn and, of course, 'the

Hortie'. All are going strong, which is great to see. In Milngavie, our main involvement is with 'Milngavie in Bloom' (more community gardening, so no surprise there). Ian still plays with Killearn Bridge Club.

News of folk is always good to have, although the obituaries figure rather too many we knew; but this time it was good to see the weddings of children whose parents we remember well.

Regrets for moving? Only that it is not so easy to see the stars, because of the street lights, but a quick trip up to the reservoirs soon puts that right, and as for missing people, it is amazing how many you meet in Tesco!

Faye and Ian Pascoe, Milngavie

I write to express my extreme disappointment at the way the village hall has become a business venture, mainly, and not a facility for easy use by those villagers who contributed financially towards the upgrading of this once well-used space. I do realise that in order to make ends meet there has to be the income and this, to me, points to the fact that there must have been miscalculations somewhere. Our village hall does not seem to belong to us any longer, but relies on 'outsiders' to make it viable.

Isobel M. Brown

Brian Simmers, Chair of the Village Hall Operations Committee, has provided a full response to Isobel Brown's letter on page 4

Editorial

Hello again and welcome once more to another issue of your favourite community newspaper, the *Killearn Courier*.

It's hard to believe that we've been going for more than 10 years. Ten years is a long time and there have been lots of changes in the community, some for the better and some not so much so; on the upside, we have a wonderful village hall and on the downside, perhaps the tremendous increase of cars in the area? (I wonder if the two are connected!)

Anyway, this issue has, as always in our Christmas editions, centre pages full of useful information about what's on offer in and around Killearn. In the rest of the newspaper, you'll find more details of our advertisers. The old favourites are there as well as some new ones and they all have something to offer you; indeed, why clatter off into the melee of Christmas shopping in Glasgow or Stirling when you can get most of what you want on your own doorstep? They all deserve our support and we at the *Courier* thank them again for staying with us.

This is the time of year when everything seems to step up a pace and we find our time being called upon more and more. Nevertheless, in spite of that, this issue will have come through your letter box having been delivered once again by our volunteer deliverers; many thanks to them for their unstinting help which they give so freely.

We are fortunate that we have three selling points in the Village so, while we're in thank-you mode; let's not forget the Co-op, Spar and the Three Sisters Bake for allowing us to display copies of the *Courier*.

Of course, it would be remiss of me to miss out thanking the most important people of all – you, our readers. Thank you for your comments, articles and contributions, all of which makes this your newspaper which we hope you will continue to enjoy.

Inside, you'll find lots of articles, informative, interesting and humorous, so cosy up in a comfy chair in front of a blazing fire with a nice cup of tea (or whatever you fancy), ignore the winter weather battering off the windows and enjoy this issue.

We at the *Courier* wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Happy 2016.

Ian

Cover image, courtesy of Norman McNab ©

Noticeboard

- 14 Nov **West Stirlingshire Friends of Strathcarron Hospice** pre-Christmas Fayre. McLintock Hall, Balfroun, 10am–3pm. Contact Katie Thomson (550712).
- 16 Nov **Strathendrick Rotary Club Meeting**, Killearn Hotel, 6.30pm for 7pm, thereafter every Monday except bank holidays and the fifth Monday of a five Monday month. Contact David Rodger (d.rodger@btinternet.com).
- 17 Nov **Killearn Kirk Guild Meeting**, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Ian Whyte, General Secretary of the Guild.
- 18 Nov **Killearn Community Council Meeting**, Primary School, 8pm.
- 20 Nov **Strathendrick Film Society** showing *Still Alice*. Balfroun Campus, 7.30pm. Contact wn.strathfilmsoc@yahoo.co.uk or Bill Noblett (440210).
- 25 Nov **Killearn Health Centre** closed from 12.30pm for staff training.
- 26 Nov **Drymen & District Local History Society** Talk by Bill Inglis, 'The Battle of Sherriffmuir'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.45pm. All welcome. www.drymen-history.org.uk
- 26-28 Nov **FADs** presents *Dick McWhittington*. Menzies Hall, Fintry, Thurs.– Sat., 7.30pm and matinee Sat., 2pm. Tickets & information from Killearn Pharmacy, Balfroun Library, Fintry Sports Club or Liz Brown (860078). tickets@FintryDrama.org.uk
- 27 Nov **Santa's Woodland Experience**, North Ballochruin Farm. (to 23 Dec) Booking essential. www.woodlandexperiences.co.uk
- 28 & 29 Nov **Edenmill Family Day Out and Food Festival**. Edenmill Farm, Blanefield, 10am – 5pm.
- 1 Dec **Killearn Kirk Guild Meeting**, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Talk on Feed the Minds, Sandra Humphries. Project Evening.
- 3–5 Dec **FADs** presents *Dick McWhittington*. Menzies Hall, Fintry, Thurs.– Sat., 7.30pm and matinee Sat., 2pm. Tickets & information from Killearn Pharmacy, Balfroun Library, Fintry Sports Club or Liz Brown (860078 or email tickets@FintryDrama.org.uk).
- 4 Dec **Rare Malt Whisky Company** Christmas Drinks and Canapés at the Scottish Stove Centre, Croftamie. 7pm – 10pm.
- 4 Dec **Killearn Primary School** Christmas Fair. Village Hall, 6pm–9pm. Adults: £3.50 including mulled wine and a festive nibble. Kids: £1.50, including a visit to Santa.
- 4 Dec **Strathendrick Film Society** showing *Fantasia*. Balfroun Campus, 7.30pm. Contact wn.strathfilmsoc@yahoo.co.uk or Bill Noblett (440210).
- 5 Dec **Killearn Kirk Guild** Christmas Coffee Morning. Kirk Hall, 10am – 12 noon. Baking stall and sales table.
- 6 Dec **Killearn Country Market** Christmas Bonanza with Strathendrick Singers. Killearn Village Hall, 1pm – 4pm. Contact Gwenda Watt (gwendawatt@yahoo.co.uk).
- 10 Dec **Thursday Club** Christmas lunch. Kirk Hall, 12.45pm.
- 11 Dec **Strathendrick Singers** Christmas concert. Killearn Kirk, 7.30pm. Tickets from choir members or contact secretary@strathendricksingers.org.uk
- 13 Dec **Killearn Kirk** Nativity service, 10.30am.
- 15 Dec **Killearn Kirk Guild** Christmas Meal with Table 13, followed by entertainment with Anne Mackay. Kirk Hall, 7.30pm.
- 16 Dec **Killearn Community Council Meeting**, Primary School, 8pm.
- 20 Dec **Killearn Kirk** Lessons and Carols service, 10.30am.
- 24 Dec **Killearn Kirk** Christmas Eve service, 11pm. Carol singing followed by Watch Night service.
- 25 Dec **Killearn Kirk** Family Christmas Day service, 10am. Children are invited to bring one of their presents to show the minister.
- 25 & 28 Dec **Killearn Health Centre** closed.
- 1 & 4 Jan **Killearn Health Centre** closed.
- 7 Jan **Thursday Club** Meetings resume. Kirk Hall, 2pm – 4pm, and thereafter every Thursday. For all over 60s. Contact Peggy Gardner (550558).
- 11 Jan **Monday Music** spring term for children 0 – 5 years starts. Kirk Hall. Contact Clare Cushing (550166) or claremondaymusic@gmail.com
- 19 Jan **Killearn Kirk Guild Meeting**, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Talk on Podiatry, Scott Gribbens.
- 20 Jan **Killearn Community Council Meeting**, Primary School, 8pm.
- 28 Jan **Drymen & District Local History Society** Talk by Dave Harvie, 'War Secrets... from incontinent seagulls to luminous sealions!' Drymen Village Hall, 7.45pm. All welcome. www.drymen-history.org.uk
- 4 Feb **Killearn Kirk Guild and Thursday Club** Joint meeting, Kirk Hall, 2pm. Musical afternoon.
- 5 Feb **Strathendrick Film Society** showing *Cinema Paradiso*. Balfroun Campus, 7.30pm. Contact wn.strathfilmsoc@yahoo.co.uk or Bill Noblett (440210).
- 16 Feb **Killearn Kirk Guild Meeting**, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Talk on Antarctica, Kevin and Linda Clarke.
- 17 Feb **Killearn Community Council Meeting**, Primary School, 8pm.
- 20 Feb **Strathendrick Singers** Musical coffee morning, Killearn Kirk Hall, 10am – 12 noon. Tickets from members or secretary@strathendricksingers.org.uk
- 25 Feb **Drymen & District Local History Society** Illustrated talk by Gemma Wild (Canal Officer – Cultural Heritage), 'Canals by numbers: the Forth & Clyde Canal'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.45pm. All welcome. www.drymen-history.org.uk
- 1 Mar **Killearn Kirk Guild Meeting**, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. St Rollox Community Outreach, Christine Murray.
- 4 Mar **Killearn Horticultural Society** Whist Drive, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Entry £2 including refreshments.
- 6 Mar **Killearn Country Market**, Killearn Village Hall, 1pm – 4pm. Contact Gwenda Watt (gwendawatt@yahoo.co.uk).
- 15 Mar **Killearn Kirk Guild** AGM followed by meal and entertainment by Joyce Begg. Killearn Kirk, 7.30pm.
- 16 Mar **Killearn Community Council Meeting**, Killearn School, 8pm.
- 24 Mar **Drymen & District Local History Society** Illustrated talk by Geoffrey Stell, 'Defending the Clyde, 1914–45'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.45pm. All welcome. www.drymen-history.org.uk

If you have any dates for the March 2016 issue (mid-March until the end of August) of the Noticeboard, please contact Heather McArthur (550137; heather.mcarthur@virgin.net).

Graduation Congratulations



Kieran Irvine, a former pupil of Killearn Primary School and Balfour High School, graduated from the University of Stirling where he gained a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Film and Media, and History. He has gone on to study for a Master's degree at Dundee University.



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VHOC Response to the Letter to the Editor

The Village Hall Operations Committee has provided the following response to Isobel Brown's letter:

The development of the new hall introduced a renovated main hall (with a view) and committee room (recently with self-catering facilities in response to the Monday Club's request) and the addition of club and games rooms aimed at the youth market. These facilities are a major improvement on those in the old hall, we have retained the majority of past users and attracted new ones, and, according to our bookings team, there have been no refusals of any community requests for use of these facilities. So 'this once well used space' is still well used and, we believe, offers 'easy use by villagers' – over 50% of hirers are local. We can always do better and if Isobel has specific examples of the hall 'NOT (being) a facility for easy use by villagers' we would like to know so that we can address the problem. Meanwhile we will continue to work at attracting more hirers of the hall's space and new ideas for its use from Killearn and beyond.

We also provided a café. We assumed the village would want a quality operator irrespective of place of residence (ref. 'outsiders') and in Three Sisters Bake believe we have found one. It's interesting that many other successful businesses in Killearn also rely on 'outsiders' for their viability and it's encouraging to find from discussions with local retailers and hostellers that the increase in customers through the hall's successful café and wedding market has been of benefit to them also.

It's worth noting that on 30 June 2014 the 21-year lease of the village hall between Stirling Council and Trustees of Killearn Village Hall Management Committee would have terminated and the Council would then have negotiated transfer of ownership of the old hall to the Committee/KCFC. The additional costs of ownership were around £15,000 which would have required the income at that time (£12,000) to more than double – an impossible task resulting in a very uncertain future for our hall. The new hall provided the opportunity to cover these additional costs – not 'miscalculations' but intelligent assessment of forecast costs and identification of new sources of income to achieve viability.

Your village hall does belong to you and we want you to use its facilities. Our hard working voluntary operations committee would welcome new members with new ideas for the benefit of the entire community.

BRIAN SIMMERS, VILLAGE HALL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE



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KILLEARN PHARMACY – TUESDAY 9 am - 1 pm
OLD SURGERY BUCHLYVIE – TUESDAY 2 pm - 5 pm

Rotary Honours Killearn Rotapeeps



Rotapeeps past and present, with Rotarians and members of staff

Killearn Primary School started a Rotakids Club in 2013 sponsored by the Rotary Club of Strathendrick. They called themselves Rotapeeps and are chartered as such by Rotary International, which means they are recognised as a club in their own right worldwide in Rotary.

The class of 2013, and also 2014, decided themselves to support Rotary's 'End Polio Now' campaign and between them they were responsible for around £9,000 being donated to this cause. (For every £1 raised by Rotary in this campaign, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation trebles it.) To raise this huge

amount they organised all sorts of fundraising events, giving much of their own time in doing so. They spread their message across the community of Killearn and beyond, so much so that their efforts were noticed by Rotary and they became the recipients of a Presidential Award which recognises outstanding achievements such as theirs.

The presentation of the award was made in Killearn Primary School on the evening of 29 September by Past District Governor John Waddell and attended by Rotapeeps past and present, as well as parents, Rotary Members, and the Director of Education, David Leng.

The award was accepted by this year's Rotapeeps President, Katie Henderson. Katie and her classmates have already been active, and so far, they have raised £803 for MacMillan Cancer Support. This will be rounded up to £1,500 by Strathendrick Rotary Club.

Ian Dickie, Youth Convenor of Strathendrick Rotary Club, commented that with kids like these we had nothing to fear for the future and would be in good hands. He wished to record his thanks to Primary 7 teacher, Rotarian Ali McLean who has been so enthusiastic over the last three years running the Rotapeeps clubs in her class, and also to the school's Headteacher, Pamela Craigie, for her support.

TID

Rotapeeps Fundraising Santa Dash

Date: Sunday, 6 December
Start time: 10am
Where: Killearn Primary School

This year's group of Killearn Rotapeeps, also known as Primary 7 at Killearn Primary School, are following in the footsteps of the Rotapeeps of the past two years and have come up with all sorts of ideas to raise money for charity. One of these is a Santa Dash round the village.

What's a Santa Dash? It's when lots of children with their families and friends get dressed up in Santa suits and walk, run, hop, skip, or simply meander around a prescribed route. Even dogs wearing Christmas bandanas are welcome.

The route will be well signposted and marshalled, and is deemed suitable by the police. It is about 1.7 miles long, and will start and finish at Killearn Primary School, where hot chocolate and mince pies will be provided for the finishers.

Under the supervision of their teacher, Ali McLean, the Rotapeeps have done all the work themselves, from designing and making posters, finding the best route, to writing letters and other activities.

Their chosen charities are Rotary's 'End Polio Now' campaign (the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will treble any money raised by them), and also a charity which helps the children of refugees.



Anyone wishing to take part will be asked to raise some money from sponsors and will get a Santa suit. Please give them your support.

To find out more, visit the Santa Dash Killearn page on Facebook.

Rotapeeps thank you in advance for your support, and look forward to seeing lots of you there.

TID

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Killearn Broadband Open Day Report

Killearn Broadband Open Day was held on 24 October, with an opening address by Gerard O'Sullivan of Stirling Council and attended by Bruce Crawford MSP, Steven Paterson MP and local councillors. Organised by Killearn Broadband Group (KBG) (sub-group of Killearn Community Council), it focused on when and where Next Generation Broadband (NGB) will arrive in Killearn and other western rural villages.

Exhibitors were: Killearn CC, Ofcom, Digital Scotland, Community Broadband Scotland, STEP and LocustWorld. KCC and KBG had Helpdesks and both Ofcom and LocustWorld gave presentations. About 200 attended and nearly 50 used the KBG Technical Helpdesk to clarify their own situation. Visitors were mostly Killearn residents but others came from other Community Council areas, eg Balfron, Boquhan, Buchanan, Buchlyvie, Croftamie, Gartmore, Kinlochard, and Strathblane/Blanefield.

Fifty per cent of the queries at the Helpdesk related to availability – would they get the NGB service – and also complained about their current speeds and queried whether the new service would be better. Ten per cent were people who already knew that they were on long lines and wondered what would happen for them. Other issues were: When 20%, Benefits 16%, Cost 6%, Faults 5%. People generally had complaints about lack of information from the programme and commented that our efforts to remedy that were greatly appreciated.

Many speed concerns arise not just because rural premises are on long lines but because they are on Exchange Only (EO) connections. Half the village is connected in this way, the other half through the E1 & E3 cabinets. When people were told that they were on an EO connection they were unsure about the significance, and therefore concerned whether they would get NGB at all. About 73% of Killearn premises are close enough to get NGB speeds eventually.

Only a few were aware of www.digitalscotland.org/whereandwhen to check your own connection. It tells you whether Fibre is available to your area and how you are connected to the exchange (directly or via a cabinet) but not how far away you are, which is critical information. Sites such as www.freemaptools.com/distance-between-uk-postcodes.htm will let you enter your postcode and that of the exchange (G63 9RN) to get a distance, though note the difference between line-of-sight (as the crow flies) and 'by land' which is likely to be the actual route your landline follows.

The key question then is – are you within the 'magic' 1.2km (or maybe 1km) of a Fibre cabinet, or the exchange. If you are further than this, then the NGB service will not be offered. The reason is that beyond this distance, the fibre technology is no better than the ADSL2+ technology newly installed in Killearn. This may become the "poor man's NGB" as it has the same reach as previously but doubles the speeds that you will have seen before August, both up and down. You may feel that doubling a very poor speed will not make much difference – and it is still far, far less than the 80Mbps that the advertising keeps talking about!

Everyone wanted to know how the roll-out would work and we provided maps, pictures and a BT training video to explain this. Also to help explain the potential benefits to business, several case studies were provided including local ones.

Solutions for people with long lines were a main topic. This affected 45% of callers at the helpdesk. A list of possible solutions was available and one company invited exhibited their technology: LocustWorld, a provider of a community-led wireless solutions.



So what next?

KBG are investigating what solution(s) offer the best long-term answer to the problem of premises on long lines. Included in this will be possibly interim, alternative solutions such as that offered by LocustWorld. These are almost all collaborative so need community-wide cooperation. Further, we are concerned that the EO roll-out may not be as complete as envisaged, so this will be getting significant attention.

In conclusion: a very successful day, but a lot of work still to do.

All of this information, useful links and more about the work of Killearn Community Council is on the KCC website www.killearncc.org.uk. We will keep you up to date via this and the monthly KCC meetings.

We are very grateful to the following for their generous support: Killearn Village Hall, Stirling Council Connect Fund, iLomond, and Three Sisters Bake.

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Be Cyber Safe

There are the photos that capture a special moment that you will treasure for a lifetime – a wedding, a birthday, the first day at school (and the last day at school), building a lifetime of memories. Then there are those photos that are so embarrassing, it makes you cringe just thinking about them – the ones that your parents seem to parade around every social gathering possible.

Social media is a great way of sharing your life with other people, being able to stay in contact with old friends or with family halfway across the world. Then there are photos that can ruin lives.

When too much of your life is shared on the internet, the consequences can take a turn for the worse. Balfron High School recently had to issue a warning to parents about attacks made on the Instagram accounts of pupils, serious enough to warrant intervention by the police.

Consequences can be even more extreme. In September, a 14-year-old-boy in the north of England was added to a police intelligence database for having sent inappropriate pictures of himself to a girl of the same age he was 'flirting' with over the social media app Snapchat (where 'pictures are being used for talking'). Although the original of the photo 'destroyed' after a short time period, the girl had taken a screen shot and shared it widely enough with other pupils at the school, that it came to the attention of an officer based there, who treated it as the crime of making and distributing an indecent image of a child. It didn't matter that the boy took the photo of himself. The boy's details will stay on the database for ten years – until he is in his mid 20s – when he will have grown up and be regretting his decision even more than he is now, with reports that he has to eat his lunch on his own in the safety of the school library, because of bullying.

It's not clear what happened to the girl who shared the image, but had she been an adult, she might have been charged under the new 'revenge porn' law which came into effect in April. Once someone has put something on the internet it stays there – potentially for ever – for your family, friends, teachers and even future employers to see. It is increasingly common for businesses to carry out a social media search on candidates for jobs to check up on how they present themselves. When the SNP's Mhairi Black was elected to Westminster to represent Paisley and Renfrewshire South, it took only hours for tweets she made in her early teens to hit the headlines.



Most of us can sympathise with her 2010 tweet 'maths is sh**e', but she would probably have preferred the press to focus on her present achievements.

These people may have thought that they were only contacting their friends, people that they knew – but that didn't stop the information from being spread round the internet. The internet can act as an invisibility cloak. Anyone can be behind a keyboard pretending to be someone they are not and say things that they don't mean.

Would you go up to a stranger in the street and start telling them about your drunken escapades, what you had for lunch or handing them photos of your latest pose? No? Well, that shouldn't be any different for social media. JK Rowling has said that the internet can be both a boon and a curse. It's up to you to make sure that you come out on the right side of that divide.

ROSALIE WILLIAMSON



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Killearn Cubs – Up and Running

After a rather late start while the new leaders' paperwork was processed, Killearn Cubs is up and running again, with new leaders Gill Sims and Isabell Conway. The meetings are on Wednesday evenings at Killearn Primary School, at the slightly earlier time of 7.30pm – 8.30pm.



At the moment, we are still finding our feet, on a steep learning curve, and any number of other metaphors you might care to mix, but we plan to be in a position to offer places to more children in January, when we return after the Christmas break. We also have spaces for Duke of Edinburgh volunteers, if anyone is looking for a placement!

We do lots of games and activities, including a trip to the panto this term, and – monsoons permitting – lots of outdoor fun in the summer months, such as bike rides along the pipe track and climbing Dumgoyne. Occasionally, the cubs even learn something. Quite often the leaders do, too. Dumgoyne is much higher than I thought it looked.

Although Cubs is still well supported, unfortunately there are no Beaver or Scout units in the village at the moment, due to a lack of leaders. This is a real shame for the boys as they don't get to experience the full range of opportunities that Scouting can offer. If you feel able to volunteer to lead a unit, we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you would like to get your child involved in Cubs, volunteer as part of your Duke of Edinburgh Award, or find out more about leading a Beavers or Scout unit, please contact Gill Simms (07540 686758, gillsims28@hotmail.co.uk).

The Christmas Post is Back

Sue Beck does many things for Killearn, but possibly the most appreciated has been the Christmas Post, run with the aid of the Guides and the Boys' Brigade.



Following Sue's well-deserved 'retirement', Killearn Senior Section have decided to step up to the challenge. Senior Section is the next step for Guides, run for girls aged 14 to 26 years. We are a relatively new and very small unit, and as such are always looking for fundraising activities for unit funds, so this year we will be splitting the proceeds between ourselves as a Scottish charity and support for CHAS, as in previous years.



As we are very few to be making deliveries, we will have to stress that the delivery area is within the village boundaries only – as defined by the Killearn signs on each approach. Lampson Road will fall within this area. The collection and donation boxes will be put out on Tuesday, 1 December. This year they will be in Killearn Pharmacy and the Co-Op. Collections will be made daily. There will also be a box in the

Church on Sunday mornings. The boxes will be taken in on 14 December, with deliveries being made throughout the month until 17 December.

We hope you will continue to support this fantastic local service, and the local charities it helps. For further information contact Mairi Hillman (551024, hillmanclan@hotmail.co.uk) or Sarah Whitley (551511, whitley_sarah@hotmail.com), Unit Leaders.



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Wishing all families and friends a very Happy Christmas

Abbeyfield News



The Friends of Abbeyfield, Killearn, have been finalising the programme up to January 2016 for the residents so there will be plenty to interest all in the next few months.

Flic Jackson, one of the Friends of Abbeyfield, recently went to the island of Kos to help with the refugees, taking donations of warm clothing. She was quite overwhelmed by the scale of the problem, but found her visit of great interest, having met refugees from many different countries.

Flic plans to give a presentation with photographs about her visit to Kos to the Abbeyfield residents in the near future. She also appeared on the Riverside Show on STV Glasgow, to talk about her experiences of the trip.

On 23 September, the residents commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, following a service in Westminster Abbey the previous Sunday. This took the form of an open discussion with all sorts of memorabilia from that period including a pair of WWII pilot's goggles which one or two of the residents couldn't resist trying on. Two of our residents were in the Women's Royal Air Force at the time and it was interesting to hear of the experiences. Comfort was not



high on the priority list then, and sleeping with pillows stuffed with straw was not ideal.

A cup of tea was enjoyed afterwards and a special cake, baked for the event, featured a Spitfire on top. MM

Ladies' Lunch was Magic for Cancer Research

Culcreuch Castle, Fintry, was the venue when 125 ladies gathered for the second annual Ladies' Lunch run by CRUK Strathendrick Local Committee on Sunday, 4 October. The event raised a grand total of £3,101.50, exceeding last year's fantastic total of £2,934.

This year's entertainment was provided by magician and illusionist, Ryan Davidson, who entertained with close-up magic prior to the excellent lunch, and followed it with a floor show of mind reading which left the ladies gasping in wonder and amazement.

The event closed with a well-supported raffle. Thanks go to the ladies present for their generous and enthusiastic participation as well as to the following businesses for their kind support



and donations: Ryan Davidson, Magician; Culcreuch Castle; Callander Golf Club; Glengoyne Distillery; Endrick Trading; The Lake of Menteith Hotel and Waterfront Restaurant; The Drymen Inn; The Oak Tree Inn; Ground Bean & Bistro; Green Gallery; Falleninch Farm; Edenmill Farm Shop; John Hartson Foundation; Wonderland; Woodland Light Experience; Loch Lomond ROCKS; Kirsty Anderson, KCR Practitioner; McMillan's Kitchen; Fintry Sports Club; Claire Crawford; Café Circa; Briarlands Farm; Flyingbird Designs; The Beauty Room; The Hair Lounge; Skinner's Butcher; Village Holistics; Endrick Blooms; Trilogy Hair Design; Town & Country Design; Jewels Online.

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Strathcarron Hospice Annual Christmas Fayre



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McLintock Hall, Balfron

Adults £2.50, including tea/coffee and cake;
children free

All the usual stalls, especially cake and candy
Santa hopes to visit his grotto

Killearn Horticultural Show 2015

Killearn Cottagers' Horticultural Society held their annual show in Killearn on Saturday, 29 August. The inclement 'summer' weather played a part in the number of exhibits being brought forward, but the later flowering of some varieties brought colour to the benches usually not seen at this time of year. The entry of cut flowers, vegetables, fruit and pot plants showed a slight drop on the previous year. The baking and crafts were also down in numbers, but with a welcome increase in the children's classes. Overall there were more than 800 entries, which was very good. A thank you to all those who entered exhibits.

The Show opened at 2pm with local piper, Ian Sinclair encouraging everyone into the Village Hall with a fine selection of tunes. Inside, Chairman John Phillips welcomed everyone to the 149th Show and introduced BBC Scotland news presenter David Henderson, who opened the Show and presented the trophies to the winners.

The trophy winner for most points in the dahlia classes was John Phillips, with Janice McLaren from Balfron receiving the Blair Trophy for most points in the cut flower section.

In floral art, first-time entrant Phyllis Gilroy won the Robertson Trophy for her posy bowl arrangement. Madge Kennedy won the Floral Trophy for best exhibit. A lovely interpretation of the Mountain and Glens theme won first prize in that class for Sonia Newman.

Drew Watson exhibited a stunning fuchsia hanging pot to win Best Exhibit in Pot Plants and ultimately the Quinloch Decanter for Best Exhibit in Show. Local exhibitor David Houston won the Battison Cup for most points in the section.

Balfron vegetable grower Bill Stewart received no fewer than three trophies for his hard work over the spring and summer. Norman McBean took the Stevenson Trophy for best exhibit in the Veg and Fruit section with a plate of three coloured potatoes.



Across in the Church Hall a mouth-watering selection of baking saw mother and daughter, Wendy and Kim Denton winning respectively the Given Recipe Class along with the McIntosh Cup in the children's classes. The Cuthbert family salver for most points went to Jane McLaren.



Gladys Farquharson carried off a clean sweep in preserves, winning both best exhibit and most points in the section. This year, sloe gin was the chosen flavour to win the best exhibit in the wine, beer and cordials section for Ian Wright.

Marjorie Thomson exhibited a lovely toy elephant for the J. Wright Cup for the most amusing craft entry. An embroidered picture done by Heather Wright was chosen as best exhibit. The Millennium Quaich for most points in the craftwork section went to Elizabeth Hay from Drymen.

A selection of miniature gardens saw Tilda and James Pope, along with Amy Wright, win their respective age groups, with Zoë Laughrey showing the most amusing craft entry and receiving the Society Prize for points in their section.

A good exhibit of photographs saw Di Davies from Killearn making it a clean sweep with both best exhibit and most points. The best exhibit in the art classes was a stunning harp from Robert Beck and Peter Bailey.

It was good to see an increase in entries in the children's classes this year, and in particular, the children from the Killearn nurseries who entered a range of exhibits from floral art to vegetables. It was also lovely to see the paintings from both Killearn Primary and the younger classes of Aberfoyle Primary on display.

A well-deserved thank you to all the helpers over the period of the Show from Thursday to Saturday, in particular the ladies who kept the organisers fed and watered on Saturday.

The full list of results and more photos of the day can be seen on the Societ's website (www.killearn.org.uk/kchs).

Next year is the Horticultural Society's 150th anniversary and we will be celebrating with a bigger show and events throughout the year. Watch out for posters or visit our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/killearnhorti).



Colourful Killearn's Creative Double at the Village Hall

Sometimes one just isn't enough – the effect falls rather... flat. The impact is... low. Height matters!

Thanks to a grant from the Stirling Community Pride Fund, Colourful Killearn has done something about it.

The entrance to our superb Village Hall is now graced by two new flower towers, giving two levels and two metres of horticultural impact to supplement our four existing tubs on the forecourt.

Based on a framework of small shrubs and perennials, underlaid with spring bulbs, the planting will hopefully evolve into a display that will have something at its colourful best in every season.



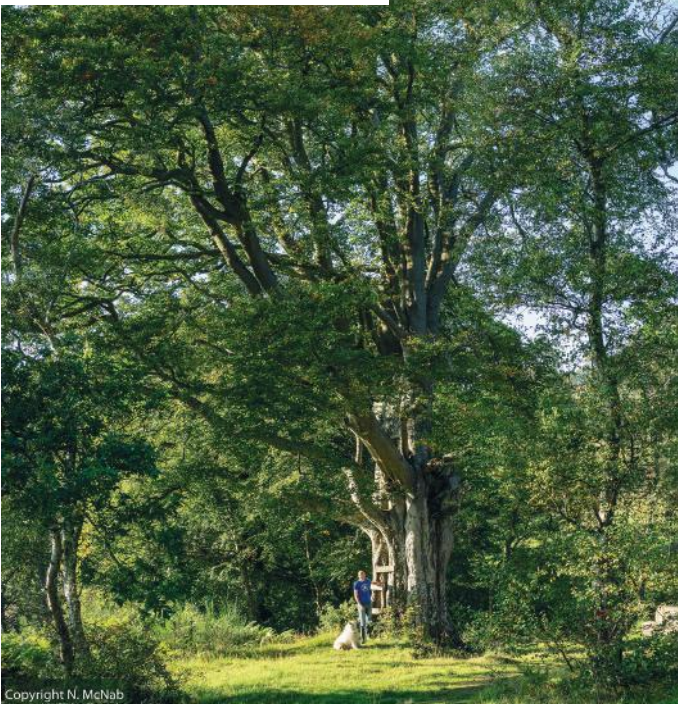
Installations like this take money, and in addition to the funding from Stirling Council, we are deeply indebted to villagers who have contributed to the cost of plants, compost and fertiliser both through individual donations and from depositing their spare change in collection tins located in local shops.

Please keep your donations coming – the more money we can raise, the more colourful we intend to make Killearn.

For information contact Mike Gray (550962 or branzierroad@gmail.com)



A Sick Beech and a Bridge not Fit for a Troll



Representatives of KCC, KCFC and Stirling Council officers recently walked the Glen to gather information for the production of a new management plan. It became clear that some major works will soon be needed. These are the removal of a substantial part of the large beech tree at the foot of the Glen and the removal and replacement of the bridge.

Fiona Melville, Tree and Woodland Officer for Stirling Council, who led the Glen walk, reports: 'The beech tree has a history of failure with the "peeling" off of major branches over the years. The basal area and root buttressing have patches of dead bark and the central canopy is showing signs of dieback, symptoms which are attributable to two serious decay fungi. Decay by *Kretzschmaria deusta* can result in sudden catastrophic failure of the tree, with no warning signs and *Armillaria mellea* decays the roots and eventually kills the tree via xylem disfunction.

The tree is located on the core path, and the presence of these two particularly dangerous fungi, the evidence of previous failure, and size of tree parts which could fail make this tree an unacceptable risk to human safety. Tree works are being implemented which will seek to reduce the risk by removing the "sail" area of the main crown while retaining some lower lateral branches and the main stem of the tree which has important habitat benefits.

The path is closed at this section with signage warning walkers to avoid this route until works have been safely completed. Stirling Council appreciates the support already shown by the local community for this action.

The bridge will soon be removed and we are looking at realistic timescales for replacement given our maintenance team's current commitments. We will keep you posted.'

Up to now, numbers of people walking in the Glen have disregarded the warning signs placed by Stirling Council which advise walkers to avoid these two locations and to choose alternative routes. It is now essential that anyone walking the Glen respects the warnings and avoids the sites of the beech tree and the bridge until the work has been completed.

Laurianne's Raw Cakes



Bonjour, my name is Laurianne Giteau and I moved to Killearn last August. I am a raw and vegan cake maker and recently started my business, Laurianne's Raw Cakes, selling raw vegan treats free from gluten and refined sugar.

I started creating vegan desserts nearly three years ago when I decided to open a blog to share my recipes and photographs. Since I started my blog, I have been a finalist of the Great Vegan Bake Off 2014 & 2015 and opened my small artisan business.

After nearly 12 years living in Glasgow I decided to move to the countryside to

develop my business and get back to my roots. I grew up in the countryside in France and my grandparents were farmers (all four of them!). Food has always been a big part of my life and of my family's. I started getting into raw and vegan food a few years ago. I find this type of cooking really intriguing and inventive. I love the idea that everything you make, even the sweet little treats, is good for you. When making my products, I only use plant-based ingredients such as nuts, spices, dates, dried fruits, raw cacao.

I can deliver locally or you can collect from the Garden Cottage, Herons



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Raw Vegan Christmas Cake available

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Court (Balfron Road) where Jane Wilson successfully ran her Country Kitchen for many years.

I will be attending Killearn School Christmas Fayre on 4 December – come and sample my Raw Vegan Christmas Cake. I am also hoping to start doing the Country Market early next year.

I look forward to introducing Killearn to the joy of raw vegan desserts and hopefully running my business in the area for many years to come! Please get in touch.

I'd love to hear from you:

info@lauriannesrawcakes.co.uk

LG

Golden Girls Plan Another Gala Night

Killearn's Golden Girls, who have raised thousands of pounds in the past for the Paul O'Gorman Leukaemia Research Centre based at the Beatson are organising another gala night on Friday, 5 February 2016 in Killearn Village Hall. The star will be Jim McMail, an international tribute singer whose clients include HRH Prince of Wales, BBC Radio and the Scottish Parliament, to name but a few.

It will be run along the same lines as previous events. Tickets will be available in the near future. For more information, contact Margaret Falconer (Margaret@mwfshoes.com).

The Probus Club of Strathendrick



We are looking for new members. If you are no longer fully employed, then here's something you can enjoy. We meet on the first and third Thursday mornings of each month at 10am for coffee and 10.30am start in Killearn Church Hall. We also arrange golf matches and outings to places of interest.

The speakers for the autumn session are:

- 19 November: Professor Peter Kennedy – Sleeping Sickness in sub-Saharan Africa
- 3 December: Scott Grier – The History of Logan Air
- 17 December: Members' Day

If you would like further information about our activities or wish to join, please contact our Secretary, Russell Kirk (550260), Speakers' Convenor, Alasdair Brown (551715) or Ian Swann, Chairman (770650, ianswann014@btinternet.com).

IS



Killearn Primary Annual Christmas Fair Fundraiser Friday 4 December Village Hall, 6pm – 9pm



Christmas shopping, crafts, refreshments –
a great family evening out

A wide variety of stalls from stationery and jewellery to
local crafts and the raffle – not forgetting a visit from Santa!

Adults £3.50, including mulled wine and festive nibbles.

Children £1.50, including a visit to Santa

Kitchen Table Business

How many of us have thought about putting our hobby or creative talent to good use and make a go of it as a business?

Rural enterprise and 'kitchen-table talent' are expressions that we often hear, so the *Courier* is running a regular feature looking at people in and around Killlearn who have 'gone for it', putting their talent, entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen to the test.

Dumgoyne Soaps is the brainchild of Peggy Brown, a well-kent face in the village and a regular stall holder at the Killlearn Market. As a clinical aromatherapist, Peggy is well qualified to put into practise her knowledge of mixing essential oils to create unique scents that keep satisfied customers coming back.

When asked what prompted her to first make soap, Peggy says an unfortunate incident with a commercially available product made her think that she could make her own – preservative free and with ingredients carefully sourced and meticulously blended. After a lot of trial and error, and a distance learning course on the complex legalities of manufacturing cosmetics, Peggy was ready to go into production. As with all cosmetic products, there is a mountain of paperwork and testing to undertake, and close liaison with our local trading standards officials.


When you see the finished packaged product on the shelves of the Killlearn Pharmacy or Oakwood Garden Centre you wouldn't believe it comes from a utility room in Crosshead Road. It is only available to buy locally or at special events because online marketing proved to be too expensive and the volume of product required was too great. This was, after all, a hobby that took off and it all comes down to time. As well as Dumgoyne Soaps, Peggy's weekly diary includes grandparent duties, two days providing clinical aromatherapy massage to adults with learning difficulties in both Stirlingshire and Glasgow, and two days as a therapist in the Revive Centre in Maryhill for sufferers of MS.



As well as liquid and solid soap bars, Dumgoyne Soaps can also offer bath salts, and are currently trialling face creams. Perhaps in the future, and once she has retired from her therapy jobs, Peggy will be able to follow up the

endless ideas she has for her range of homemade aromatherapy products.

In the next issue we will be looking at another local Kitchen Table business.



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Killearn Health Centre News

Both Dr Greg Cunningham and Dr Andy Lennox rejoined us in August. Dr Lennox will be with us until February 2016 while Dr Cunningham will finish his training with us in August 2016. We extend a warm welcome to our new receptionist, Annmarie Duncan who joined us in August.

Vaccination Programme

- Patients aged 65 or over or in an 'at risk group' are entitled to a one-off pneumococcal ('flu') vaccination. Please contact the surgery for information if you have not had a flu vaccination this year or if you have never had a pneumococcal vaccination.
- Children aged between 2 and 5 on 1 September 2015 and not attending school will be offered the nasal vaccination at the Health Centre.
- If you are pregnant, you are entitled to the flu vaccination at any stage in your pregnancy and the whooping cough vaccination from Week 28.
- If you were aged 70, 71, 72 (DOB 2/9/42 to 1/9/45) or 78 or 79 on 1 September 2015 (DOB 2/9/35 to 1/9/37) and not previously vaccinated, you are entitled to the shingles vaccination. Please contact the surgery. This ongoing campaign will be extended next year.
- Meningitis ACWY is offered to all those who left school this year, all new entrants to university, and those aged under-25 who have not been vaccinated against meningitis C since the age of 10.

Extended Hours

We continue to offer GP and Nurse clinics in our extended hours sessions, with GP and Practice Nurse appointments on a Monday evening and GP appointments on both a Wednesday evening and a Thursday morning.

Remember that you can now book appointments at killearnhealthcentre.com

Christmas and New Year Opening

- Closed: Christmas Day and Monday, 28 Dec (reopen: 29 Dec)
- Closed: New Years Day and Monday, 4 Jan (reopen: 5 Jan)



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The Weather Channel

This poem sums up summer 2015. The promise of April faded, and rain, cloud and little sunshine continued with June, July and August being very disappointing.

It rained and rained and rained,
The average was well maintained,
And when our fields were simply bogs,
It started raining cats and dogs.

Next day 'twas pretty fairly dry
Save for a deluge from the sky.
This wetted people to the skin,
But after that the rain set in.

After a drought of half an hour,
There came a most refreshing shower,
And then the queerest thing of all,
A gentle rain began to fall.

We wondered what's the next we'd get,
As sure as fate we got more wet,
But soon we'll have to change again,
And we shall have... a drop of rain.

As the chart shows, we had a total of 288mm of rain (12in) over the three month period with only 21 days with no rain falling. However, September has been what many have described as an 'Indian Summer', with just over 29mm of rain and a mean temperature of 12.3°C. September has been by far the driest month of the year, with my weather centre showing only six days when rainfall has exceeded 1mm.

October usually sees the end of our summer and signals autumnal weather. John Keat's poem *To Autumn* captures the season in its first line: 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness'.

Late autumn and early winter are when we notice mists and sometimes fog. The term mist is used in meteorology when visibility is reduced by suspended water droplets, but is still one kilometre or more. Reference to fog in general weather forecasts indicates a visibility of less than 200 metres. Fog forms when the air near the ground is cooled from below to such an extent that condensation takes place. Radiation fog (with which we are mostly familiar) is most common in autumn and after dark as the ground cools. It occurs when there is a clear sky, still air and sufficient moisture.

TOM RENFREW

Half-Yearly Summary for Killearn (2015)									
Killearn 2015	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Highest Temp	11.9	5.9	20	26.7	23.5	28.7	28.5	27.9	25.4
Lowest Temp	-4.1	-2.1	-2.1	-1.6	-4.4	4.4	5.2	7.4	5.1
Mean Temp	3.6	4.6	5.7	8.6	9.8	13.6	14.6	14.9	12.2
Days Below Freezing	8	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Highest Wind Gust	34.9	21.3	37.4	20.6	49.4	18.3	19.0	21.3	17.4
Monthly Rain	139.8	74.4	110.1	40.8	107.1	69	129.6	90.3	29.1
Most Rain in 24 hours	34.5	11.7	17.1	13.2	19.2	22.5	20.4	15.3	6.6
Days without Rain	5	4	11	15	10	7	4	10	18
Cumulative Rainfall	139.8	214.2	324.3	365.1	472.2	541.2	670.8	761.1	790.2

Temperature in °C, rainfall recorded in mm, wind speed in mph



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Nicola Moncrieff

From the Archive – James Norval Paul, A True Local Hero

The Archive Group has been investigating the World War I soldiers named on Killlearn War Memorial. A lot of information has been found about those with a Killlearn connection who served and returned afterwards. This article, the first in an occasional series, concerns James Norval Paul, who lived much of his life in Killlearn and served with distinction.



James Paul was born in early 1881, probably at Gargowan Lodge in Kilmarnock. The Lodge is on the Gartocharn Road at the southern entrance to the Buchanan Estate. It is likely that his father, Robert, who was a gamekeeper, worked on the estate. Robert and his wife Annie (née Norval) had 10 children, James being the seventh. In the 1891 census, the family were at The Quinloch. The

1901 census shows the family together in Strathblane. They were probably still at The Quinloch, but the census does not specify their house name. In the latter census, James is also listed as a gamekeeper.

James married Jane Hamilton in Quarter, near Hamilton, on 21 February 1908. Their first child, Jeanie Hamilton Paul, was born

on 19 May 1908 and their first son, Robert Paul, was born on 2 June 1909. Another son, William Paul, was to die aged only three on 28 April 1916. By the time of the 1911 census, they were living at Blairgar, below the Pipe Track Road, and James was gamekeeper to Sir Archibald Edmonstone of Duntreath. Their neighbours, the Marshall family at Easterton, were to lose one son, Andrew, during World War I, while another son, William, became a prisoner of war in June 1918.

James enlisted in the reserves on 11 December 1915, possibly in anticipation of conscription for married men which was introduced in June 1916. At enlistment, his vital statistics were given as height, 5ft 9ins; weight, 143 lbs; and chest expansion, 38 ins. It was noted that he had an upper denture. He was called up for active service with the Scots Guards on 1 August 1916. After initial training, he was posted to France on 23 January 1917, and in July trained as a Lewis Gunner.

The *London Gazette* of 11 January 1918 carried a notice that James had been awarded a Military Medal at the Somme on 26 October 1917. On 15 October 1918, he was wounded by gunshot in his left chest and buttock at Cambrai in France. After treatment at a field ambulance station and field hospital, he was repatriated for treatment in Merry Flats War Hospital, Govan five days later. The *London Gazette* of 13 May 1919 announced that he had been awarded a Bar to his Military Medal on 18 October 1918 – an important day for him as he was also supplied with a new denture! He was discharged fully fit at the beginning of March 1919. His total service was two years and 218 days, of which one year and 271 days were spent in France. His service sheets states 'Nil' against entries on the conduct sheet and 'Nil' under the number of times drunk.

Our next information on him is, sadly, his death in a motor accident near Tulliallan Castle on 20 February 1958, aged 77, the day before his golden wedding anniversary. By this time, he and Jane were living in Kincardine and, although the funeral took place there, his interment was in Killlearn churchyard. Jane was also buried there following her death on 12 January 1970, aged 89. The gravestone, which also commemorates their son William, can be found about the middle of the lowest level next to the slope.

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Woodland Experiences

Woodland Experiences is the realisation of an idea forged long ago in the head of Kenny Hendry, owner, director and woodsman at Woodland Experiences. Kenny planted a mixture of broadleaves and conifers 25 years ago on the family farm in Balfroon Station, with the aim of having productive woodland that focused on Scotland's native tree species.

Contrary to what one might expect, owning and managing woodland does not simply involve planting the trees and leaving them to it. It takes knowledge, care and hard graft, and it is Kenny's passion for his living and breathing charges that have him working all the daylight hours summer and winter. Whether managing the woodland tracks, coppicing, removing invasive plants, thinning the woodland or maintaining the waterways, he can always be found in the thick of it.

Kenny's enthusiasm and extensive knowledge is evident. He is always happy to take the time to talk to anyone that wishes to learn about the living and breathing woodland, flora and fauna. He is omnipresent at the Woodland Experiences – doing last-minute checks, overseeing things to ensure they run smoothly, and guiding visitors within the woodland.

It was the arrival of grandchildren that charged his imagination with the idea that Santa could come to visit the woodland every Christmas, and the enchanting Santa's Woodland Experience was born in 2014. Atmospheric and full of Christmas promise, with twinkling lights and a hand-built log cabin for Santa, the event was a sell-out success. Kenny strives to ensure the

experience continues to be as memorable and magical as he can make it.

Kenny then had an inspired idea to show his woodland as a magical space that would be awe-inspiring to adults and children alike by enhancing and showcasing the natural beauty already there. The best way to do this would be through the creative use of lighting and, after long discussions with top-notch professionals NL Productions, the idea gathered momentum. Having previous experience with some impressive projects, the company felt the setting definitely had something to wow visitors and agreed to take on the job. The resulting Woodland Light Experience looks set to be simply stunning.

For 2015, the theme of the light show is 'ALIVE' and each subsequent year the show will have a new creative focus. Kenny said, 'It is, simply put, an opportunity to see the trees and woodland as you have never seen it before. The aim was to bring this environment to life for our visitors so they can get a real sense that all around them is "alive" as they walk through the trails. Trees are the lungs of the earth; they are living and breathing, constantly growing and changing with the seasons. Then there are the animals, insects, birds and perhaps even the creatures of our imagination that dwell in the forest, too. I wanted to capture that, and the lighting does give that sense of something alive and magical with the trees.'

Woodland Lighting Experience: 12 – 25 November
Woodland Santa Experience: 27 November – 24 December

Visit www.woodlandexperiences.co.uk for bookings.



Where Did All These Cars Come From?

Is it just me, or is there an awful lot of traffic in the village? How often does one get to the junction at the top of Station Road and wonder if one is going to be able to turn right on to the main road before tea time? Who are all these people driving about, impeding my right of way round the village? I've been here more than 40 years, after all. There must be perks that go along with that.

It was quite a different world in the days of the old photographs of Killlearn, the ones in the 2000 calendar that we still have on our wall, for decorative and sentimental reasons. There are several carts in the photos and one petrol pump, but only one car, circa 1916. It is a large and swanky model, picking up passengers outside the Black Bull, possibly to catch the train at the bottom of Station Road. Lesser mortals would have had to go by cart, or Shanks's pony, but it must have been a fair hike. You can't help feeling that these people from the past would be totally bewildered by the plethora of cars currently congesting our village roads. I'm fairly bamboozled myself.

And what will it be like if 'The Powers That Be' decide to build more houses, to fulfil our share of the massive national shortfall of affordable homes? In an affluent village like ours, 50 houses might well mean 70 cars. You'd have to take your tea with you if you wanted to get out at the top of Station Road.

There are some cars it's always a pleasure to see, of course. There's nothing cheerier than the parade of classic models that

occasionally tootle through the village on a sunny morning. You might even find yourself humming the tune from *Genevieve* as they sweep past. I'd be quite happy to give way to them, whatever junction they're approaching, or even just to wave from the pavement. They're charming, aren't they, and they make you smile.

You do hear people talking of the old days when you could play in the street because there was so little traffic and of course, it was true. Nowadays you can't even get out of your own driveway if you live near the school, because so many people park to drop their children off rather than walk round the block with them. It must be maddening. And there's certainly no way any child could play in the middle of Graham Road nowadays. You'd be picking up your football every 10 seconds, if you weren't mown down first.

We don't even need the cars half the time. You only have to remember days of heavy snow, when people who don't actually have to travel any distance decide to walk. Not only does that inspire a spirit of camaraderie among the natives, but also it's lovely and quiet.

Talking of snow, the festive season is on the horizon, and the words 'white' and 'Christmas' are being mentioned. Everything looks so much better with a coating of snow, before it goes mushy. Even vans and buses can look quite fetching with a white lacework draped over the top. And then there's that other conveyance, the magical one that everyone hopes to see on Christmas Eve. No one minds Santa's sleigh making its appearance, at any junction at all. Happy Christmas, everyone.

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Classic Car: Bentley Turbo RL

Classic cars and sanity are not frequent bedfellows – my case was no different. My first classic foray in 1987, was into a rather tired Mark 2 Jaguar which evolved (expensively) to concours and then into an international classic rally car. It was joined by a '65 Volvo 122S which we built for the classic Monte Carlo – less crazy in terms of repair costs! There followed a lovely convertible XJS, an '85 twin-cam Morgan (for hill climbs), another Jaguar – I always developed them. The more sporting the cars became, the more they sat in the workshop between events.

Comfort and performance beckoned, however. I started thinking about a Bentley – a 1950s R-type. Closer acquaintance with one convinced me that getting one up to standard would involve mammoth cost, and eventually I went along to look at a 1970s T2, a very nice sensible car. So we bought a 1996 Bentley Brooklands.

We enjoyed the Brooklands enormously, learned its idiosyncrasies (including a very suspicious electronic alarm system which regularly attempted to arrest me), while driving it was accompanied by a certain wayward feel, a vagueness in the suspension and steering. The best policy with classic cars is always buy the best you can find – it's much cheaper.

So, after about a year of ownership, the Brooklands went back to Hanwell's in London from whom we bought the present L 100 LDG. This is a 41,000-mile, 1995 Bentley Turbo RL, which spent a substantial part of its life on an estate adjacent to Windsor Castle, covering an average of 2,000 miles a year.

The 'turbo' refers to the 6.7l turbocharged V8, which provides thunderous acceleration and mid-range performance, but still with low speed docility. Having Bentley's 'performance' suspension setup, it does not wallow like a Rolls-Royce, but learning to handle it is an interesting experience, and very different from other cars.

Internally, the comfort level is incredible and nothing else gives quite the same feeling of well-being as one is cosseted in a sea of sand-coloured hide and walnut. The 'L' refers to a 100mm lengthening in the rear passenger area, enabling the rear heated seats to recline. Very enjoyable, and greatly appreciated.

During Strathendrick Classic Car Club events, our Bentley has to perform on our local back roads. For a 5.5m car this can be a choice



between proceeding slowly, with multiple point turns, or occasionally more briskly by 'getting the tail round' with the throttle – the latter being infinitely more enjoyable. At other

times, in deference to its beautiful coachwork, it is not driven – it simply purrs and proceeds.

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Christmas

Enjoy Christmas preparations and be amazed at what you can find to buy for Christmas. Here's a taste of what's on offer

Chocolate galore – it wouldn't be Christmas without it. The **Co-op** has chocolates to suit everyone, from coins for the stockings to after dinner delights.



Looking for the perfect gift? Gift Vouchers now available for **The Old Mill**. Call 01360 550068 or email info@theoldmillkillearn.co.uk. The Old Mill wish all of their customers a very Merry Christmas.

Three Sisters Bake is getting into the festive spirit with a Christmas hamper wrapping station, plenty of mince pies and seasonal baking, as well as a fantastic deal on their Festive Lunch Specials menu (2 courses for £12). For larger groups or private evening bookings, please contact info@threesistersbake.co.uk



It's cold outside and the thought of Christmas shopping is just too much. Take the weight off and let **The Bakers & More** look after you with hearty homemade soup, filled rolls and energising cakes. Merry Christmas from all at **The Bakers & More**.



Buy a locally grown tree from **Edenmill**, and either see Santa for free or receive a free undecorated wreath.



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Make your home look wonderfully festive. Among the treasure trove of gifts at **Wonderland in Balfon** are these traditional decorations, starting from 99p, and stag candles £2.85.



A brand new collection of homewares inspired by original watercolours painted by local artist **Iona Buchanan**. www.ionabuchanan.com Facebook and Pinterest as **ionabwares**

in Killearn



festive events in our village. You'll be
and do in and around Killearn this
what's on offer. Merry Christmas!

Sally Walkinshaw, Killearn-based ceramic artist, specialises in hand-building stylised birds as well as beautiful wheel-thrown pieces.

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D. MacDonald Butchers were recently awarded GOLD for their traditional steak pies and SILVER for their new beef and beer pies at the Scottish Craft Butchers Awards.

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The warming glow from candles is synonymous with Christmas. These stylish candle holders from **Town & Country Designs** are a beautiful addition to your home this winter.



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or call 07894 018130 for further information.



Nothing says Christmas like a bespoke wreath created by the wee elves at **Endrick Blooms**.

Coordinating table centres available to add a touch of extra festive sparkle.

Kate Langley is a local artist specialising in portraiture. So, if you're after a special present this year, contact her at kateatbearside@aol.com or phone 07971 529485 for a chat.



Quirky cushions that bring a smile to your face and brighten any sofa. tinyurl.com/woolcush, Facebook or call **Gwenda** on 07876 028764.



There are a number of special events to visit before Christmas. Fun for all the family at *Edenmill Farm* and *Santa's Woodland Experience*. For those wishing to get into the Christmas spirit, try *Christmas Drinks and Canapés* hosted by the *Rare Malt Whisky Company*. Details in their advertisements.

Wine for Christmas Dinner

On Christmas Day, food is the main event and wine is very much the support act. These are a few suggestions that will ensure that what you drink enhances what you eat, without trying to steal the limelight.

To start

Smoked salmon has fast become the most popular choice for Christmas Day. This is a medium-bodied food with unique smoked fish flavours and an oily texture, which gives a few things to consider when selecting a wine.

For oiliness you need acidity, both champagne and chablis would be very good choices. An alternative is to match the oiliness rather than to balance it, and the very beautiful Alsace Gewurztraminer is a stunning option.

The main event

Christmas isn't Christmas without turkey, although not so long ago it really was the preserve of the wealthy. In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Bob Cratchit had a goose before Scrooge bought him a turkey. Turkey remained a luxury right up until the



1950s when refrigerators became commonplace.

How you eat your favourite festive bird is important because this very much influences what to drink with it. Turkey does not have a strong flavour and is very low in natural fat.

For your choice of wine, this means something with a prominent flavour, but not too many tannins, which need fat to balance them out. A perfect choice is a full-bodied white from Western Australia, Rhone

or Burgundy. If you want to go for a red, then opt for a softer style such as a beaujolais cru, New Zealand pinot noir, or a good quality Californian zinfandel.

If there is room left over

Christmas pudding works perfectly with the similar flavours that can be found in the lighter styles of tawny ports and rich Madeiras. Both wines go very well with rich chocolate desserts, too, if you are going for a less traditional option.

ELAINE TAYLOR

The Rare Malt Whisky Company

If you had asked Lesley Henderson five years ago what her experience with whisky was, she would have said she had tried it once on a 'Pub Golf' night out with the Glasgow University Cheerleaders. In every bar visited, a different drink had to be ordered, and so when the whisky round came up Lesley recalls saying, 'Give me the cheapest whisky you have and mix it with a lot of diet coke.' Fast forward five years and Lesley has just launched her own business specialising in unique, rare bottles of single malt Scotch whisky.

Lesley takes up the story: I must credit local distillery, Glengoyne, for igniting this love of Scotch malt whisky. I worked part-time as a tour guide at the distillery alongside studying at the University of Glasgow. However, it was not until my graduation last year that I considered the possibility of a career in whisky. At the end of the summer last year, with a whisky-loving father behind me (I hasten to add), I decided to start something on my own. Appropriately, on the ferry to Islay we began brainstorming to find a name for the business. With the rough premise of selling exclusive, limited edition bottles of

An advertisement for The Rare Malt Whisky Company. It features a bottle of Glenmorangie whisky and a glass of whisky. The background is a dark, warm-toned image with a glowing effect. Text on the image includes: 'Malt Whisky, Mulled Wine and Mince Pies!', 'Join us for Christmas Drinks and Canapés at The Scottish Stove Centre in Croftamie on the 4th of December from 7pm until 10pm £17pp', and 'Please call 01360 550 482 or email lesley@theraremal whiskycompany.com'. There are also small icons of a whisky glass and a mince pie.

whisky, we came up with The Rare Malt Whisky Company.

Our website launched on 9 April 2015, and at the moment we have around 30 individual bottles for sale. These range from very smoky Islay malts and heavily sherried drams to unusual maturations, such as a port-matured Springbank. All the bottles are in some way unique, and most are individually numbered. However, we are not simply an online shop. The Rare

Malt Whisky Company also holds various whisky tastings and whisky pairings. At the moment we are teaming up with the Scottish Stove Centre to host a Christmas Evening on 4 December.

We hope to see you at some of our events in the near future.

In the meantime, visit our website theraremal whiskycompany.com

Sláinte Mhath!

Business Blether Means Networking

Business Blether was founded to help businesses in the Loch Lomond National Park area to network effectively, without having to travel to main cities. Networking meetings are a mixture of 'drop in and out' coffee meetings. Business Blether is co-hosted by Carrie-Anne Williams from Buchlyvie and Jan Ferguson from Balloch.

We incorporate lots of interesting features into the meetings, such as speed networking and speakers, and provide the opportunity for local businesses to showcase themselves to other attendees. The aim of Business Blether is to provide business owners with a regular opportunity to meet and network in local, easily accessible venues. Meetings are free and informal, allowing business owners to network in a friendly and relaxed environment.

Business Blether is aimed at business owners working within the following areas of West Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire: Bearsden, Milngavie, Strathblane, Blanefield, Croftamie, Balloch, Gartocharn, Drymen, Killearn, Gartmore, Kippen, Aberfoyle, Balfron, Buchlyvie, Fintry, Thornhill, Callander and Helensburgh.

We generally meet on the third Thursday of every month, and attendees are welcome to pop in at anytime between 9am-10.30am. For more details visit our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BusinessBlether or contact Carrie-Anne (07584 291639 or info@businessblether.co.uk).

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KCFC Community Action Plan – The Way Forward

The Community Action Plan (CAP) has been completed and delivered to all households in and around Killearn (thanks to our *Courier* deliverers), and now the important thing is to ensure that it is used. The Plan provides a framework for future action that can be taken to make improvements to life in Killearn.

What is to be done and who is to do it? – the answer lies with you

The group, who spent much of the past two years exploring local opinion, searching out the population's aims and aspirations, finished their task with the publication of the CAP. Now, as a village, we must look towards the process of implementation. This will start by setting up a new group which will involve residents and representatives from various establishments – businesses and social organisations in the village, as well as a partnership with Stirling Council, and with the providers of services that we depend upon. KCFC will provide the support to future ventures and will work in cooperation with Killearn Community Council.

Members of KCFC board will launch the Implementation Group and for a short time will steer the group, but it is essential that other interested residents join this small nucleus to examine any potential projects for viability and then recruit others so that a larger group can take forward plans for improvements.

During the course of last year's survey, and at the launch

of CAP, several people indicated their interest in becoming involved. If you were one of these people, you may already have been contacted personally; if not, and you would still like to be involved, please get in touch via KCFC. A range of skills and interests can be used and the more who are willing to volunteer, the more manageable the 'work' will become.

Almost everyone these days has a busy life, but it's often the people who are already very busy who involve themselves the most in voluntary activities. Many of the current volunteers are in the older age range and it is essential for the continuing wellbeing of village life that other, younger people now start to take over some of their activities.

Pages 5, 6 and 7 of the Community Action Plan are particularly relevant. Ask yourself if you can play a part in the life of your community by offering your services to the new CAP Implementation Group.

Contact us at KCFC by:

- a note in the letter box at the Village Hall
- email to kcfc.co.uk
- email to mandbpell@yahoo.com
- phone to Brenda Pell (550328)

We look forward to hearing from you.

BP

Killearn Community Futures Company AGM

Around 70 residents turned out to the AGM of Killearn Community Futures Company on 22 October to listen to the presentation of the company's business and view an interesting display of the Working Groups. The minutes of the previous AGM and the accounts for the current year were adopted. Daye Tucker and Heather Wright had signified their wish to resign as directors and tribute was paid to both for their many years of service to the company. Leaders of the Working Groups updated their reports and were available to answer questions from the floor. Almost all group leaders invited interested listeners to offer their services as the Working Groups would all welcome additional volunteers. The Village Hall was the focus of interest for the meeting and the chair encouraged any who had concerns to raise them.

Several people voiced their complaints in an orderly way. Brian Simmers, Chair of the Village Hall Operations Committee, responded and explained their management approach and clarified certain points about which there appeared to be some misunderstandings: all bookings are dealt with solely by the

Operations Committee; over 50 percent of users are local; self catering is encouraged and the new fitments in the Committee Room were installed to facilitate this. Several speakers expressed their pleasure with the Village Hall and it was pointed out that the spin-off from visitors to the Three Sisters Bake coffee shop benefited other local businesses as well as providing employment for local people.

Surprise was expressed that none of the concerns raised had been brought to the attention of the Operations Committee or the Board of KCFC until this meeting and the public was earnestly requested to contact the Operations Committee in writing at info@killearnvillage.co.uk in the event of any dissatisfaction connected with the Village Hall; if anyone wants to hold an event/function in Killearn Village Hall they should make their enquiries to Michael Pell or Joanna Donaldson who always endeavour to meet potential clients' requests. Bookings may also be made through the Village Hall website www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk

At the end of the meeting tea, coffee and biscuits were served.



Photo courtesy of Duncan Caratacus Clark

Empowering Local Communities

Stirling Council is rolling out a new project which focuses on empowering communities to make decisions about services in their local area. Council colleagues want to introduce ways in which local residents can work collaboratively with the Council, local businesses and partner organisations to create new and improved ways of delivering services specifically tailored to their needs as a community.

Four different areas in Stirling have been chosen to take part in the 'Community Test Site Projects' and one of these groups is Strathblane, Balfron and Killearn. Representatives from the Community Council and KCFC attended a workshop in August, called 'This Place Matters'.

Stirling Council is now beginning to test solutions to local issues, including more collaborative ways of providing services in rural areas which suit the communities. The Council also plans to provide a link officer for each 'test' area to act as the main point of contact for each community.

Gillian Taylor, Stirling Council's Customer Development Manager, Special Projects, said, 'We know that a "one size fits all" approach doesn't work when it comes to localised issues, which is why we are keen to hear from those living in each area to learn what they really need, and how they feel the services they receive could be improved and tailored to suit them. We want to challenge traditional service delivery and these "test sites" will be a mechanism to explore new ways of doing this.'

Poet's Corner



Autumn

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

So do not grieve for summer with its heat and gaudy bright;
 Enjoy each season as they come, and greet them with delight

JW

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Home Security

Police Scotland Sergeant David McNally, based at Balfron, has a message for residents in the areas he covers. He advises that housebreakings and thefts have increased in previous years in West Stirlingshire with the onset of darker evenings and encourages householders to make every effort to protect their property. Between now and Christmas, Officers from Balfron and Callander will be patrolling residential areas in the late afternoons and early evenings with a view to discouraging anyone intent on criminal activity.

Sergeant McNally asks that if anyone sees anything suspicious please call the police immediately. In an emergency, call 999 or to report a crime call 101. TID



Can you Help a Family?



Start-Up Stirling, the charity which runs Stirling's three Food Banks has launched its Christmas appeal, hoping to raise

£5,000 to provide Christmas dinners and food throughout the festive season for all the families who use the Food Banks.

The charity welcomes your donations of food, toiletries and other essentials as well as money. To see what would be welcome visit tinyurl.com/susdonate

To donate or find out more, visit their website startupstirling.org.uk or 01786 561027 TID



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Sunday Paper Delivery Under New Management.

Sandy and Tom Carey have taken over the Sunday paper round in the village.

They would like to thank current customers for their support and are happy to accept new business.

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Diary of a Gap Year



After telling people that I'm taking a gap year, the follow-up question is understandably guaranteed to be, 'So what are you going to do all year?'

In my experience, if you're a gap-year kid, you have to be doing something pretty worthwhile to justify dodging studying or working for a whole year. I've always intended to go to university. I love the idea of it – the freedom, the socialising, while spending each day working

towards a prestigious degree in a subject you genuinely care for. However, personally, I was exhausted after studying so hard during high school. I was itching to get away, to explore and to expel some restless energy before burying myself in textbooks again.

I have always loved travelling. It's an opportunity to meet new people, experience other cultures and learn new languages. As much as I adore Scotland, growing up in a small village was a little restricting, and I found any excuse I could to explore new places. So while all my friends started preparing for university and began their summers full of holidays and festivals, I boarded a plane and headed for Malaysian Borneo where I spent the first 10 weeks of my gap year volunteering for the sustainable development charity, Raleigh International.

As scary as it was flying out of Glasgow and across several continents, it was the best decision I have ever made. The two and a half months I spent living in the Malaysian jungle were honestly the most inspiring and valuable months of my life. I was faced with new challenges every day, building my confidence, my resilience and my adaptability. I had three separate three-week phases: a project within a rural community, an environmental project, and an intense, relentless trek. I spent each phase with a different group of volunteers, meaning I was able to meet and get to know people from all over the world. We all experienced each other's best and worst days – there's no doubt that the friends you make on Raleigh really do get to know the true you.



There were moments we all came across, when we were carrying our 36th bag of dry cement, or when we had been walking up the same, steep jungle path for four hours carrying 25kg of kit in our rucksacks, or even when we were bandaging our bleeding legs from the mosquito bites, when we thought, why are we doing this to ourselves? We could be on a beach right now, lying in the sun without a care in the world. There were countless times where we all just shouted to no one in particular, 'Why did I sign up for this?!'

But we didn't need anyone to shout back the answer, because we all knew why we were there. Not only were we helping the amazing communities we were working with, or helping to preserve the breath-taking environment we were living in, but we were also becoming mentally stronger each day, and more driven to continue the work we were doing in order to help raise awareness of our shared concerns all over the world. It made us not only appreciate where we came from, but also appreciate the beauty of the nature around us, whether the Campsie Fells near my Scottish home or the gorgeous rainforest I called home for 10 weeks.

I'll admit, when I boarded the plane to come back in September, I was distraught. As much as I had missed my friends and family after almost three months of little to no contact, I was leaving new friends that were as good as brothers or sisters to me, and a new place that I could call home. I could say that never again will I have to sleep in a hammock or on a bamboo floor, wash in rivers and waterfalls, deal with scorpions and poisonous centipedes in my bed, hand-mix concrete in the midday sun, or spend days on end living through real-life, tropical rainforest storms, but knowing me, I'll be heading back to the jungle as soon as can.

After only three months of my gap year, I knew I had made the right choice in not going straight to university. I was so happy for all my friends making fresh starts at uni, moving to new cities and making new friends, but before I knew it, I was back on a plane, heading off to start my next adventure. At the moment I'm living and working in Spain, attempting to improve my Spanish, while earning money to pay for my travels around other South-East Asian countries early next year.

There are a hundred and one things you can do with a gap year, and played right, it can never be a waste of your time.

NATASHA WILSON

Walkers Spring in your Step



Active Stirling offers many opportunities for people to get out and enjoy the fresh air in their local communities. The Stirling Walking Network has more than 24 led walks each week catering for all levels of fitness. The following walks are particularly relevant to those living in and around Killearn.

Killearn and Blanefield Health Walk – Thursdays, 2pm. Free

- Short walk of up to 45 minutes. Suitable for those who are looking for a social, gentle walk. Routes vary each week.

Rural Community Walk – Thursdays, 11am. Cost £1.25

- Walks last up to one hour and are at a gentle to moderate pace. Routes vary each week around the Western Villages.

‘Walk Forward’ Community Walk – Cost £2.25

- Walks are tailored for fitter walkers who can walk for approximately two hours at a good pace and can tolerate rougher ground with inclines.
- Walking routes vary each week throughout all Stirling communities.

Rural Nordic Walking – Wednesdays, 1.30pm – 3pm. Cost £3

- Nordic Walking uses specially-designed poles to enhance your natural walking experience.
- Walking around the Western Villages.
- You will be given training on technique before coming along to the walks.

Otago Strength and Balance Class

The Otago strength and balance class in Killearn is now very popular with more and more people realising the benefit of taking part in a weekly class that focuses on strengthening ‘key’ leg muscles and on improving balance. Otago is a gentle, fun, easy-to-follow class, designed specifically for older adults in order to prevent falls in later life. We get great feedback on the positive differences it makes to participants in their day-to-day lives. Classes are on a Tuesday morning at 10am–10.30am in Killearn Church Hall. Please note there is no class on the last Tuesday of every month.

For more information about the walks or the Otago classes, please see our walking brochure at www.activestirling.org.uk/Walk-About-Stirling or contact Tricia Cumming (07557 439111; cummingp@activestirling.org.uk).



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STARTERS

- Freshly made soup of the day, served with daily breads (v)
- Homemade smoked mackerel pate served with rough outcakes
- Three Sisters Bake chicken liver parfait served with house bread
- Salmon and beetroot brushetta

MAINS

- Turkey Club Sandwich
triple decked turkey, lettuce, tomato, stuffing, brie and cranberry
- Festive quiche of the day served with 2 deli salads
- Memphis style pulled pork with bbq sauce on homebaked foccacia
- Three Sisters Bake mature Scottish cheddar macaroni cheese served with toasted house bread (v)

£12 for 2 courses

Sample Menu – our festive dishes will be subject to change on a daily basis

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Killearn Tennis Club News

Despite the weather, the summer of 2015 has been another busy and successful period at Killearn Tennis Club with many members out on the courts, braving the elements.

As soon as the Summer League matches finished, the Club Championship matches began in earnest and the Committee started organising the annual charity fundraising event.

In October, we held a coffee morning in the Church Hall in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. As well as an impressive display of mouth-watering cakes baked by members and friends, there was a tombola and a raffle. The Committee was overwhelmed and delighted by the support from local villagers who attended the event, and the grand sum of £756.50 was raised on the day. The Committee would like to thank members and friends who baked, donated prizes and supported on the day. A huge thank you also goes to all local businesses who so generously donated prizes to the raffle and tombola.



The Junior Championships took place in September. The games were all fiercely contested and were almost as exciting as the recent Davis Cup semi-final. In the Under-16 Championship, Sean Curtis was the winner, with James Girven, runner up. Scott Forbes and Sarah Gibb played an epic match in the Under-12 Championship final and after hours of nail-biting tennis, Scott eventually won the match. Thanks must go to Hannah Pickford, the Head Coach, for organising these championships. The Senior Championships are still taking place, and no final results can be reported at present.



Despite the nights drawing in, the courts are still available for play. Autumn League matches are currently being played against other clubs within the Stirling area. Coaching is also continuing at the following times during the autumn and winter months:

Wednesday

- Girls' Tennis: 4pm – 5pm
- Team Training: 5pm – 6pm
- Adult Coaching: 6.30pm – 7.30pm

Friday

- P1 & 2: 4pm – 5pm
- P3 & 4: 5pm – 6pm
- P5 & 6: 6pm – 7pm
- P7+: 7pm – 8pm

Contact Hannah Pickford (hannahpickford@hotmail.com) to book a space or find out more details about coaching. For membership information, please contact Elaine Henderson (Elaine_hen11@hotmail.com). Find us on Facebook and Twitter, or visit killeartennisclub.org.uk

SB

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Rugby Roundup



Strathendrick RFC based in Fintry is the local rugby club for Killearn. Strathendrick is a Positive Coaching Scotland accredited club with vibrant and growing Mini and Junior sections. Our season runs throughout the school term, with some of our teams touring during May. We have already built relationships with teams in England, Wales and Ireland, making plenty of friends along the way.

Mini Rugby

The club provides opportunities for boys and girls from our local primary schools to participate in our Mini section. Our season is a mixture of weekly training sessions at Fintry, and festivals at our neighbouring clubs. Our aim is to introduce children to rugby, develop their skills, and aid their learning and understanding of the game through fun and inclusive sessions. We field teams at P1–P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7 levels, where Killearn is well represented.

Children in P1–P3 are introduced to 'touch' rugby. Our P4 children are



introduced to full contact rugby in a safe and controlled environment. Once their skills have been harnessed we attend friendly festivals, competing against several teams on a weekly basis. P5 children play the same rules as the P4s and act as mentors to their fellow club members. P6 and P7 teams utilise uncontested scrums and some kicking, getting themselves prepared to progress to the Midi section.

Junior Section

From a playing perspective, Strathendrick's Junior Section has merged with Balfron High School. We field teams at S1/2, S3/4 and Under 18. Please note that players who live in the area, but attend other high schools, will be made most welcome. The Junior section helps players transition from Mini to Senior rugby through a programme of technical instruction, encouragement and pure enjoyment of the game. They are coached by former players who have earned the relevant coaching qualifications as well as the professional school PE staff. With some funding from the SRU, we have built good facilities and have games most weekends throughout the season.

A Modern Apprentice, Ciera Campbell, has been appointed at Balfron High School specifically to support the Junior Rugby teams and, along with the school PE staff, is doing sterling work. Strathendrick year coaches also work in close in partnership with the school to make sure all aspects of training and match support are covered, developing core skills, disciplines and values in young people which should help them in all aspects of life – not to mention playing and socialising with a great bunch of mates.

At the S1/2 level there are still age grade laws which apply to ensure that the games are safe, while helping the players develop their skills and fitness. This team, which contains a relatively high proportion of Killearn boys, have played a number of fixtures and are already making a mark in their circuit, winning most fixtures, but more importantly, playing with enthusiasm, enjoyment and sportsmanship.

In S3/4, the game gets a bit more intense, and the players are starting to develop the first elements of strength and conditioning as well as game skills. Age grade safety laws still apply, and the boys are having a blast with a number of key wins and really competitive games.



Under 18 has had the fewest fixtures this season, mainly due to player time conflicts. Nevertheless, they have already demonstrated that they are a formidable side. We are looking forward to more from this team.

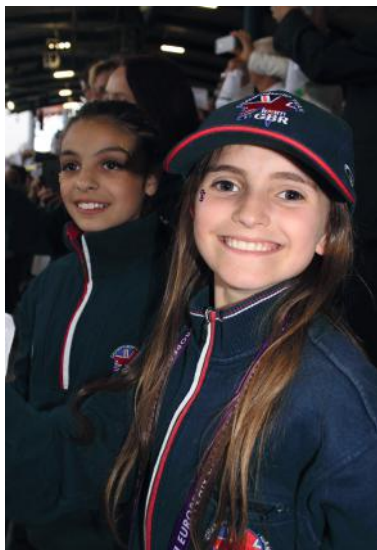
Our club prioritises a family atmosphere, but also encourages parental involvement – from coaching, flipping burgers and pouring out juice to cheering from the sidelines.

For more information contact:

Minis: Iain Sommerville (07879 607202, iain.sommerville@lomondlodge.net)
Junior Rugby: via school PE department or contact Ed Sansom (07785 7775408, ed.sansom@ewm.co.uk)

Visit our website: www.pitchero.com/clubs/strathendrickrfc and our Facebook page.

Equestrian Vaulting TEAM GBR Call up for Killearn Girl



Eleven-year-old Katie Henderson from Killearn was called up to the Great Britain squad at the European Equestrian Vaulting Championships last month.

Katie was selected as reserve for the GB squad at the week-long competition, staged at Aachen in Germany, and has become one of the youngest children to be chosen for a national sports team.

Equestrian vaulting is gymnastics performed on the back of a cantering horse. The horse is controlled by a 'lunger', and it canters in a circle in an arena. The sport is thought to have started over 2,000 years ago, and over the centuries it was used to train cavalry riders. The modern discipline is now very popular across Europe, where it's used to introduce children to equestrian sports.

Katie starting vaulting when she was six, after seeing a display at the Drymen Show by the Riders of the Storm stunt team. For the last few years, she and her sister, Sally (9), have been training hard with Wee County Vaulters, based near Tillicoultry. This small club is run by the Eccles family, who between them have won an amazing array of European and World Championship medals. Joanne Eccles is the reigning world champion, winning Gold at the World Equestrian Games in Caen, France, in 2014. Her younger sister, Hannah, won Bronze in the inaugural Pairs competition at the same event. Katie was delighted when she was offered a place to train with them in the Scottish Equestrian Vaulting Team (SEVT) in 2014.



After outings in Saumur, France, and in Moorsele, Belgium, SEVT were selected to represent Great Britain at the European Championships in Aachen this summer.

Katie travelled to Germany as team reserve. Her role was team 'flyer' – she's the one who gets lifted up high by the other vaulters, who are standing or sitting on the horse as it canters around. Katie says that's exactly what it feels like – flying! The team comprised Hannah Young (a coach at the local Balfron Gymnastics Club), Andrew McLachlan (currently ranked in the top ten world male individuals), Rebecca Norval, Harry Cox, Lisa Mercer and Kerry Brylka.

Katie had a fantastic time in Aachen and, although she did not get to compete this time, she had a wonderful experience, and was able to cheer on all her team mates from the 'Kiss and Cry' area where the coaches usually stand.

The popular sporting event was covered live on German television. A strong German team took the gold medal, but the Team GBR did themselves proud and showed that this relatively young group of vaulters (aged between 11 and 19) will be one to watch in years to come. Andrew McLachlan, Hannah Eccles and Hannah Young also represented Team GBR in the Individual competitions and Andrew paired up with Rebecca to compete in Pairs.

There's no doubt the experience Katie gained during her time in Aachen has inspired her to aim high, and her goal is to win Gold at the World Equestrian Games in 2018 or 2022. She loves the way her sport combines the grace of dance, with the excitement of a horse sport. Both Katie and Sally have found it's really accessible to children with or without any gymnastics or horse riding experience.

Anyone interested in trying equestrian vaulting can contact John Eccles of Wee County Vaulters (johnaeccles@btinternet.com). If you are more of an armchair fan, YouTube contains a wealth of videos, including Joanne Eccles' Gold-winning routine at the World Equestrian Games in 2014.

Killlearn Football Club News

Season 2015 turned out very much like the previous year, with the team doing very well, but just missing out on winning any silverware.

In the Leslie League, the team finished runners-up four points behind the winners, Drymen Utd. Of the 22 league fixtures, 14 were won, four drawn and four lost; the team scored 57 goals and conceded 23, for a total of 46 points.

Despite two good wins at the end of the season against the league's top teams, Balfron and Drymen, poor performances with an understrength side in the middle of the season resulted in the final league placings.

Progress in the Association Cup Competitions was not as good, with failure to reach the final stages of both the Margaret White and Telfer cups. All hopes were on a Cameron Cup success. After a 4-1 victory away to Fintry, the team faced local rivals, Balfron Rovers, in the semi-final played at Drymen. Ten minutes before the final whistle, things looked good, but the concession of two needless penalties late in the game saw our opponents win the match and go on to win the Cameron Cup after defeating Drymen in the final.

Team managers Ian Cameron and Hugh Russell have introduced several youngsters to the team during the season and their performances augur well for the future. Overall, when all the players were available, Killlearn were a very good team – just needing a few more players to ensure a stronger team can be fielded over the holiday period.

Off the park, 15 players took part in the Hoolie 10K Run with Stuart Macdonald recording the fastest time of 43.32, and 30 members took part in the annual golf outing at the end of September. This year's event took place at Beith Golf Course. A good day was enjoyed by all, with Zander Russell winning the cup.

The Club would like to thank all who supported the team during the season, especially with cancellations and venue switches, due to this summer's weather.

A Players' Night will be held shortly to present this year's Player of the Year and other trophies. There will be a full report in the spring edition of the *Courier*.

DB

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Community Sports Pavilion

This is a Killearn Community Futures Company project and we hope to have our new pavilion ready for spring 2016. The pavilion will consist of three changing rooms, 13 shower heads and toilet, which will be open to the public during daylight hours. The pavilion will be available to any sports group in Killearn who wishes to use it – indeed it is a condition of getting one of the grants that the pavilion is made available to all!

The pavilion will be situated in the area at present occupied by the see-saw and the swings as shown in the picture on the right. Both of these will be relocated by Stirling Council to an area opposite the enclosed playpark roughly in line with the flying fox. Before applying for planning permission we made two presentations to meetings of the Killearn Community Council who gave their support. An updated report on access and traffic was made to the KCC meeting earlier this month.

The project is costing in the region of £70,000, and to date we have raised £65,000, with one or two grant claims to non-local trusts outstanding. We have found that our successful applications so far have been from funders who know the village and appreciate that a community sports pavilion will be a great asset: The Paul Trust, The Arnold Clark Organisation, Clackmannan and Stirling Environment Trust, Killearn Trust, The Caram Trust, The Endrick Trust, Stirling Council, The Hoolie, the Rotary Club and, of course, Killearn Football Club, who have saved £13,000 over the years towards the project. We would be most grateful for any offers of financial support from members of the community towards the project.

The park is owned by Stirling Council who have agreed to lease the area of ground required to house the pavilion to KCFC at a nominal rent. Killearn Football Club have offered to maintain the pavilion on behalf of Killearn Community Futures Company.

Earlier this month, with the help of The Grand Plan, we verbally agreed a Site Traffic Management Plan with Stirling Council, shown below together with a drawing of the pavilion on the right. Fencing of 22.5-metre radius will enforce a tree protection zone for the ancient oak tree. Some trees and shrubs will need to be moved; these will be replanted in an appropriate position.

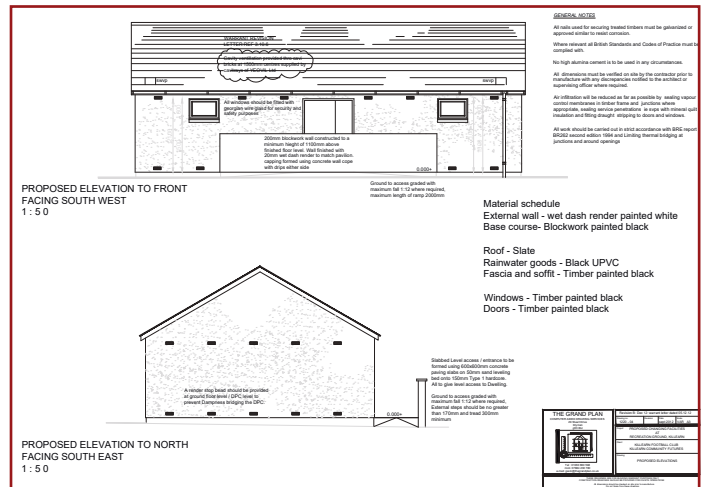
You will see from the Site and Traffic plan that deliveries will be via the Birch Road spur outwith school arrival/leaving times and there will be no parking of construction traffic there. There will be a temporary hard-core path diversion of around 25 metres to avoid the pavilion compound which will be fenced off. It should be emphasised that all stores and works will be fenced, and the area off limits to unauthorised persons. A single trench carrying



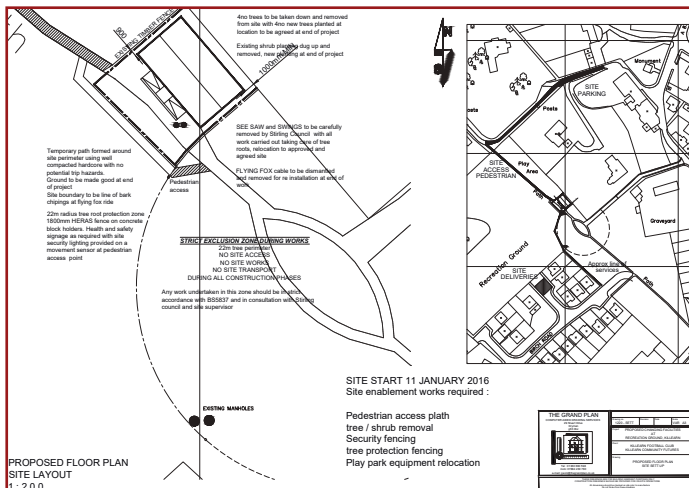
Site of the new pavilion

water and electricity is shown on the plan. The builders' private cars will be parked in the Killearn Hotel car park.

We plan to have the area ready for construction by the end of this year and plan to start construction on 16 January with completion planned by Easter. BOB BALLANTYNE AND BRENDA PELL



Drawings courtesy of Gavin Bruce and The Grand Plan, www.thegrandplan.co.uk



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Curling – First Stones



The 2015/16 curling season for Strathendrick Curling Club got underway in September for both the main club and the Ladies Section.

The main club started the season with the traditional President v Vice-President bonspiel. The result was a good win for Vice-President Sandy Park over the President Donnie MacDonald. The bonspiel was followed by drinks at Stephen and Pauline Holden's new house.

This year we are playing an eight-team league up to Christmas and a seven-team league after Christmas. All matches will take place on Tuesday afternoons.

The Ladies Section had a very successful training/practice session with a coach before the season started

properly. Everyone who took part felt they had learned something of benefit. The Ladies Section played their opening bonspiel at The Peak with six teams. Rosemary Miller, Heather Burns and Roz Gibson were runaway winners with six ends. Second place was much closer, with Rita Barth, Sally MacFarlane and Maureen Royston scoring four ends and plus five shots, just pipping Rita Harris, Isabel Robertson and Norma Thornton who scored four ends and plus four shots.

The Ladies are playing a four-team double round robin on Thursday mornings up to the end of November, and a five-team double round robin from

December to March.

The Club will be involved in the usual Province games against other local clubs, and in October we have two teams playing in the fourth Indoor Grand Match. One team is going to Elgin and the other will be at The Peak.

Off the ice, Tony and Lorna Flisch hosted a barbecue at their house and prize-winning garden in August. At the beginning of September, we had our annual Texas scramble and general knowledge quiz at Buchanan Castle Golf Club. The weather was good, but we only managed four teams of three for the golf. The winners were Fiona Glass, John O'Neill, and Dennis Pattenden. We had a few extra people for the supper and quiz, which was won by Richard Kingslake, Bob and Fiona Glass, Donnie and Mary MacDonald, and Gill Smith.

Some of our Ladies Section were guests at the West Stirlingshire Ladies Curling Club outing at Muthill Golf Club. The course was very attractive and the weather lovely until the heavy rain arrived. Our own Fiona Glass was in the winning team.

We are keen to recruit new members to the club to keep up the level of competition. The club is friendly and sociable, and ideally suited for those who are retired or working part-time. It's also much better exercise than you expect and certainly makes sure the winter passes quickly.

If you would like to have a go at curling contact Donnie MacDonald (01389 830442) or Gill Smith (550726), or visit www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk





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WEDNESDAY – Balfron (am), Killlearn (pm)

Killearn Curling Pond

Many Killearn villagers know that there is a pond somewhere down Drumore Road. But do they know that it is a curling pond or do they think it's just an old, neglected, weed-choked stretch of water? As far back as 1849, an entry of 12 January in the *Stirling Journal* records the existence of Drumore Pond also known as the Killearn Curling Pond. Further research is needed to explore the early history of the area, although we know that a brick and tile works was situated at the pond for some years in the mid 1800s, as illustrated on the right in the 1861 OS Map.

The pond plays host to the Strathendrick Curling Club which is one of the oldest curling clubs in Central Scotland. It was formed on 10 December 1846 and later admitted to the Royal Caledonian Curling Club in July 1847. However the history of curling goes back long before that. It is believed that curling originated in Scotland in the 16th century, and may have been an evolution of the game of quoits, but played on ice. The Smith Museum in Stirling has within its collection a curling stone that is known to date back to 1511, found during the draining of a pond in Dunblane. Furthermore, in the earlier days, places for curling were probably more wild in nature where use was made of already established expanses of water, which would involve a far bit of travelling to get to, instead of the more recent purpose-built village curling ponds which were much nearer.

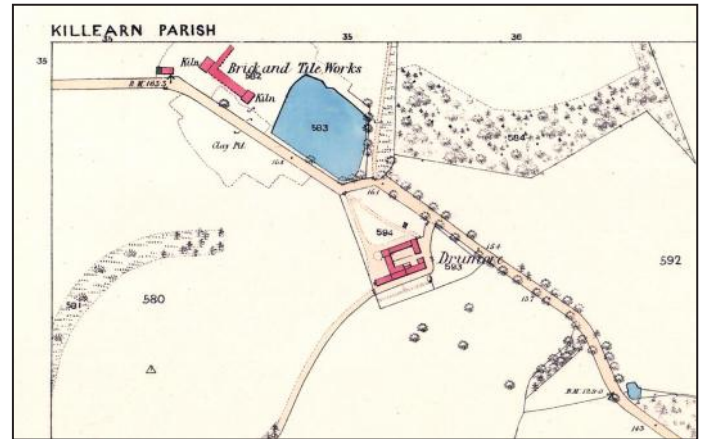
The pond was within the boundary of Drumore Farm which was latterly owned by David and Jean Clark. Ownership of the pond has now been transferred to The Clark Trust. However, it often remains a stopping off point for those taking part in the Curling Club's Millennium Meander every New Year. For many years, the walkers were greeted by David and Jean Clark who provided copious amounts of hot nibbles as well as a warming glass of Scotland's National Drink, a tradition many participants hope will continue.

Each year, in the late autumn, works are carried out at the pond to ensure it is in good condition to allow curling to take place, should a cold weather snap come about and the ice becomes thick enough to bear the weight of the curlers. When that happens, someone always finds out and the bush telegraph alerts curlers. Before you know it, curling on the pond is in full swing with barbecues going and curries being on offer.

Every year, the water level is dropped by the opening of the dam sluice thus allowing easier access to the reeds which are trimmed back. The pond is then flooded and the cut reeds float to the surface and are removed.

In recent years, renovation work has been carried out at the pond; the building, with its pigeon holes for the storage of curling stones, was re-roofed. The pond itself was dug out due to silting up. The Scottish Stove Centre generously installed a wood burning stove and flue. An award from the Scottish Woodland Trust meant that 400 trees were planted around the pond, the cemetery and other nearby sites which will help regeneration in the area and hopefully improve biodiversity.

So, when you are out for a stroll and walk past the pond, stop and have a look, there's more going on there than you imagine. Volunteers are welcome and plenty of projects are in consideration to improve the pond and its environment for the club, community and wildlife. Contact duncanclark1@mac.com



Drumore Curling Pond - a painting by Jean R Clark



Betty Smith 1928 – 2015



Betty Smith was born and initially brought up in Mexico, where her father worked in the oil industry. Her first language was Spanish, taught by her Mexican nanny. With her younger sister and parents, she would travel to England and back, often on oil tankers. Aged seven and six, the two children were sent to boarding school in England, dependent on the care of grandparents and aunts during the school holidays. It was a childhood lacking a conventional family home life, but full of travel and unusual experiences.

Her education was disrupted by the war – her early career was in nursing in the

London Hospital and, although this was cut short, she was already showing her potential teaching skills by lecturing her fellow students in anatomy. Marriage and her family followed, with some teaching experience in an English village school. In her spare time she followed her love of literature and performed in local dramatic group productions.

But it was when she and Dai, now with a family of three sons and a daughter, settled in Killearn that she gained a degree and teaching qualifications and Betty realised her life's calling; she became a highly respected teacher at Balfron Primary School and then Headteacher of Buchlyvie Primary School.

Betty was well known throughout Killearn and the surrounding area not only because of her teaching but also because of her open and friendly personality. She was deeply involved in her community, serving for many years on the Community Council as treasurer and delivering Meals on Wheels. She was a stalwart member of Killearn Kirk where she was active in the Guild. She also took on and ran the Thursday Club. Indeed Betty and the Thursday Club were synonymous, with Betty managing the smooth running of

the rotas and activities, arranging the outings and creating a warm atmosphere in the club.

A lady of great generosity and empathy, she was always quick to give – whether it was a donation or a sympathetic ear or a prayer. Her faith was simple, but profound; her 'dear Lord' was with her all the time. From this belief stemmed her joy in the natural world which she saw as a gift of God's creation. She saw the best in everyone and, although she spoke her mind with a disarming frankness, she was never critical of anyone and, despite sorrows in her own life, she always managed to face the world with a smile and was full of gratitude for any little kindnesses she received while herself giving so much to so many.

She was a devoted and affectionate wife and mother to her children and a proud grandmother to her numerous grandchildren.

She died suddenly in the south of England. She will be greatly missed in Killearn, which had been her home for so long. Her funeral service was in Killearn Kirk on 1 August, and she was buried next to her beloved Dai in Killearn Cemetery. BP

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June Winifred Todd 1942 – 2015



Born to James and Hannah Ward and sister to Alastair, June grew up at Broadgate House and adjacent farm in Strathblane. She married, at 18, the first love of her life, John Dawson, and by 1966 they were parents to Simon and Abi.

Broadgate Farm was the happiest of places for any child to grow up – a constant hub of activity, acting as livery stable for many local residents' ponies, as well as the Dawson's own menagerie. It was simply the best of times – horse shows, Pony Club camps, memorable parties were all the order of the day. The pinnacle of June's equestrian career came in 1976 when she qualified for the National Horse Show at Olympia with her beloved steed, Peveril Purpose, returning home to Broadgate as the winner of Best UK Mountain and Moorland Horse.

John passed away suddenly in November 1977, leaving June a widow with two young children. However, in April 1988 she met the second love of her life, Mike Todd. Mike's reflections of his 28 years as June's soul mate was of fun holidays in the sun and in their beloved Fife. One Christmas, Mike presented June with water-colour paints as she had casually mentioned she'd like to give painting a go. No one could predict the enormity of success that followed: more than 1,000 paintings sold, many of which adorn the walls of local residents. In August, one of

the doctors caring for June asked her if she used to paint. With her eyes twinkling she replied, 'Yes, indeed I did.' 'Oh wow!' was the response, 'I have one of your paintings in my house, it's my favourite possession!'

June's grandchildren were asked to describe their Granny: 'She was like no other person, fashionable, funky, always wearing bright colours and huge designer glasses; the house was full of her laughter as we shared stories of what we had been up to!'

Last year things took an unexpected turn when she underwent an amputation. This introduced her to others in the same situation, where they found companionship and support. June's family can never thank the team in the Western General Hospital enough for their support, along with Matthias and Gwen from the Killearn Health Centre.

However, June's creativity continued to bubble through poetry, a wonderful way to express her feelings and share her latest thoughts and dedications.

June is now at peace. She was the most amazing mum, wife, granny and friend.

AB

Alistair Paterson 1917 – 2015

The death occurred in July of Alistair Paterson, the eminent neurosurgeon, whose world-wide reputation was largely earned by his work at Killearn Hospital. He and his wife, Elspeth, who predeceased him, lived for some time in Killearn, and both will be remembered in this area. His distinguished career took him all over the world and he will be regarded in medical circles as one of the major influences on the development of neurosurgery in this country.

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Our prize for the *Children's Christmas Wordsearch* is a £10 voucher from Spar. Entrants must be 10 years old or under.

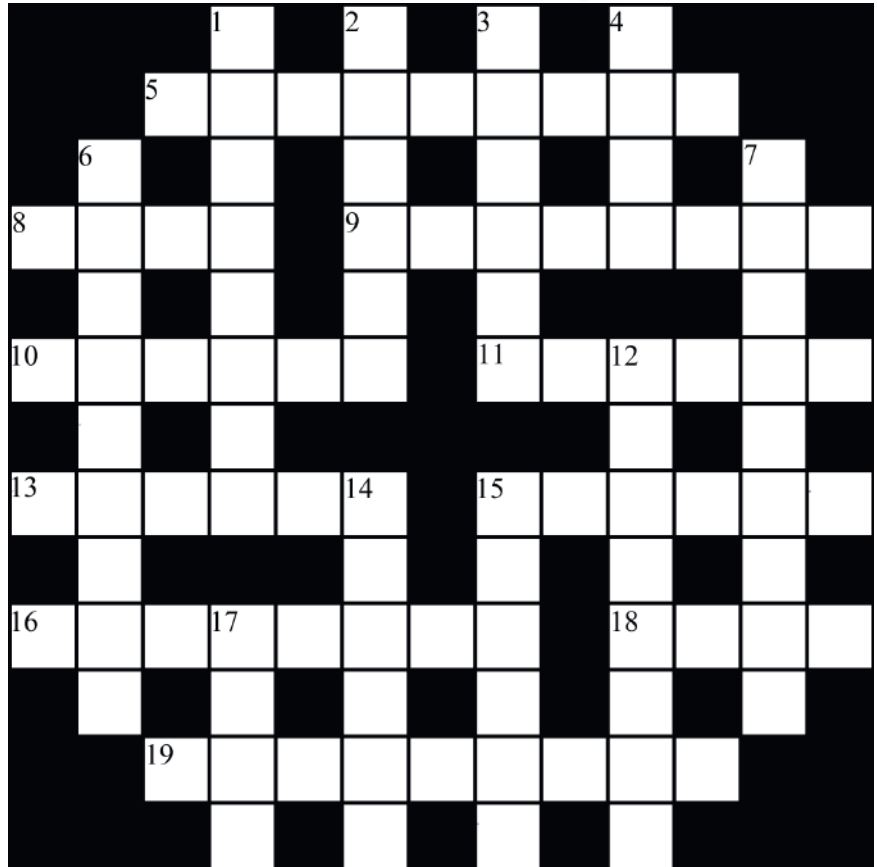
Complete the crossword and place it in the box in Spar or in the postbox outside the Village Hall, with your name, address and a contact number before **Sunday 29 November 2015**.

ACROSS

- 5 No ho for two men at this festival (9)
- 8, 10 Art portion put up at 5 (12)
- 9 Breeding pie greed (8)
- 10 See 8
- 11 Officer sect is supernatural (6)
- 13 Assist altered period of inactivity (6)
- 15 Appraising seaman (6)
- 16 Hesitation in chasms pulled at 5 (8)
- 18 Joker arrives at 5 (4)
- 19 Singular underwear nothing said at 5 show (9)

DOWN

- 1 The beheaded Conservatives give rise to ideas (8)
- 2 Fasten leg to fix neckwear (6)
- 3 Workshop boss followed by ten (6)
- 4 Loud noise from 16 (4)
- 6 Leave river for something new (9)
- 7 Transport black ships (9)
- 12 Tiger has a crest in the crypt (8)
- 14 Arranged seat is ideal for a rest (8)
- 15 Continue summary (6)
- 17 Cleaner has tea on the run (4)



Name Phone

Address

Solution to the last crossword

Across: 1 animal; 4 awful; 8 actor; 9 elapsed; 10 our fate; 11 noble; 12 restoration; 16 sushi; 17 thunder; 19 put it on; 20 space; 21 doser; 22 stodgy.
Down: 1 Amazon; 2 internet sites; 3 aorta; 4 against; 5 fast broadband; 6 ladder; 7 celebrating; 13 Twitter; 14 isopod; 15 greedy; 18 upset.

Winner of the last crossword: Mike Gray, Killearn.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

The wordsearch grid contains twelve words associated with Christmas. Eleven of the words are *carols, decorations, holiday, mistletoe, pantomime, parties, present, pudding, reindeer, tree and yuletide*.

Solve the wordsearch by finding all twelve words.

Which word is missing from the list?

Write it below (or on a separate piece of paper) with your name, age and contact details and post it in the box in Spar for a chance to win a £10 voucher to spend in Spar.

The words are hidden in any direction, across, up and down and diagonally, forwards or backwards.

Name

Phone Age

Address

Missing Word



Last competition winner: Alistair Gingles, aged 4

Orchid You Not!

Some of Nature's spectacles are easy to find, others require a bit of research – or even a tip-off. Recently, I was fortunate enough to hear about a site for Frog Orchids near Killlearn and subsequently tracked them down.

These small, yet distinctive, plants are one of our scarcer orchids. Preferring grassy alkaline soils, quarries and roadside verges, they have a widespread, but local, distribution across Scotland. Their flowers are on show from late June until early September and, with a bit of imagination, can be seen to resemble miniature frogs with outstretched hind legs.

For those who have only a passing interest in natural history, it may feel harder to develop enthusiasm about such things compared to the more 'obvious' mammals and birds in our area. But the more you look, the more you'll want to look. It's amazing how interest, skills and knowledge can develop, especially when so much wildlife is on your doorstep. However, some orchids are very inconspicuous compared to their wildflower neighbours, so it does take a bit of practice.

We have several species of orchid in the area, all of which rely heavily on lack of disturbance and the preservation of specific habitats. Unfortunately orchids have disappeared from previously reliable locations because these fundamentals haven't been maintained.

If you are interested in making a difference from a conservation point of view, I can recommend occasional volunteer work at Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve where Lesser Butterfly Orchids grow. This beautiful, but declining, species becomes



threatened when birch scrub is allowed to spread unchecked, so volunteers can make a big difference in clearing areas and ensuring that the right habitat is maintained.

MARTIN CULSHAW



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Anyone wishing to contribute to the *Courier* spring edition is reminded that it will be distributed on 12 March 2016.

Advertisements and artwork should be sent to us by Friday 29 January. Contact Gwen Stewart (01360 550856) or Gillian Sims (07540 686758).

Contributions and letters to the editor should be in the hands of the editorial team by Friday 29 January. Please send them to:

36 New Endrick Road, G63 9QT or
email: courier@kcfc.co.uk

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