

The Boleskine Bulletin



Issue No. 28
Autumn 2004

CELEBRATING FOUR GENERATIONS

Sadie Hipkin, 6 Park Terrace, Lower Foyers pictured with her daughter Alison, grand-daughter Heather and great grand-daughter Isobel. Sadie was on holiday at her daughter's home in Maidstone, Kent where she had made a wonderful recovery from a bad fall.



LOOK WHAT YOU MISSED!!

For one week in July all trails led to Stratherrick Hall – traditional music trails, that is.

For the first event Gorthleck was one of the stopping-off points on the **Caledonian Canal Ceilidh Trail** for a Family Ceilidh/Dance Evening. With music and dance presented by a superb team of young Highland musicians on a four-week tour of venues around Loch Ness and The Caledonian Canal, a small but enthusiastic audience was presented with a wonderful mix of traditional music, both for listening to and for dancing. With fiddle, accordion, guitar, whistle and bodhran amongst others, these youngsters (and one or two older ones) showed that there is a wealth of talent coming on to follow the current range of musicians playing in the Highlands.

And speaking of the current range of musicians, later in the week Stratherrick Hall was the venue for an evening with **three of Scotland's finest traditional musicians** in an intimate acoustic format. Featuring **Bruce MacGregor** (Blazin' Fiddles) on Fiddle, **Christine Hanson** (Eddi Reader Band) on Cello, and **Jonny Hardie** (Old Blind Dogs) on Guitar and Fiddle, playing many of their own compositions, the audience was greatly entertained with a night of Scottish Music including dancing reels, driving strathspeys, and tender airs as well as general good craic. With music and banter like this it is not surprising that these musicians have risen to the top of their chosen profession, and will continue to enthral audiences for many years to come.

The only sad point about both evenings was the small size of the audiences – **both the musicians and the Hall deserve more support from the community.**

Highlands & Islands Fire Brigade

Recruitment Appeal for local Part Time (auxiliary) Firefighters for GORTHLECK area.

As the Inverness District Officer of the Highlands & Islands Fire Brigade, I am launching a recruitment drive in the Gorthleck and surrounding areas. We need fit and active people, Male or Female, between the ages of 18 and 55 to join our local unit which currently operates out of Foyers.

Due to crew location, the New Fire Station, which was originally to be placed beside our current shed at Lower Foyers, will hopefully be relocated to a suitable site near Gorthleck. A new Fire Engine and a suitable sized Fire Station for your community will be located on this site taking the current auxiliary crew up to Retained status but to do this we need more crew members.

If you live within a 5 minute drive from the centre (the village hall) of Gorthleck and would like to join our local fire crew please get in touch with our local Sub Officer Neil Kirkland on 486283 or call myself, Sub Officer Roger Cormack on 01463 227058 for an information pack or application form. Local training usually takes place on a Monday night and payment is made for all training and for attending incidents.

This is the chance for people to do something that really counts for their local community. There is the excitement and satisfaction of a job well done, and the camaraderie that comes from working in a team in YOUR area.

I look forward to hearing from you soon

Sub Officer Roger Cormack 01463 227058
Sub Officer Neil Kirkland 01456 486283



GREAT WILDERNESS CHALLENGE

This was held on Saturday, 21st August. Based at Poolewe, the runners and walkers assembled at 7.30 am and were bussed to Corriehallie, 2 miles South of Dundonell from where the route wended its way through the Great Wilderness north of Loch Marie to finish 25 miles further on at Poolewe. The weather was glorious with wonderful views of An Teallach and the other Munros. The walk involved two river crossings and a half mile bog into which Eddie plunged up to his backside!

Hospitality was wonderful - the good folk at Carnmor Cottages (midway point) providing hot soup, bangers, Mars bars and a welcome dram!

Sponsorship has been the best ever - between us we have received over £800 so far and the organisers of the Challenge will be adding a further 60% of the amount raised for the benefit of the Highland Hospice. So a very warm thank you to everyone who helped achieve this excellent total.

New Tesco Store

A planning application has been lodged by Tesco to build a new superstore, unit shops, petrol filling station and sites for an hotel and a doctor's surgery on land near the new roundabout on the Dores Road. Whilst admitting that a filling station will be useful to us in our area, it will be a pity that a pleasant green entry into Inverness is destined to be concreted over. Aren't there enough superstores in Inverness?

When God had made the earth and sky
The flowers and the trees
He then made all the animals
And all the birds and bees
And when His work was finished
Not one was quite the same
He said, "I'll walk this earth of mine
And give each one a name"
And so He travelled land and sea
And everywhere He went
A little creature followed Him
Until its strength was spent
When all were named upon the earth
And in the sky and sea
The little creature said, "Dear Lord
There's not one left for me"
The Father smiled and softly said,
"I've left you to the end
I've turned my own name back to front
And called you Dog – my friend"

Author unknown

Apology We send our sincere apologies to Anna Totty for printing her name incorrectly.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

John Campbell (Chairman) Gorthleck 486 240
Tine Butterworth (Treasurer) Gorthleck 486 275
Kenny Fraser Gorthleck 486 220
H Grainger Inverfarigaig 486 ???
Eileen Martin Gorthleck 486 661

Fiona Kirkland (Secretary) Gorthleck 486 283
Angus Fraser Gorthleck 486 650
Lesley MacGregor Foyers 486 404
Sandy MacPherson Torness 01463 751213
Martyn Bateman Whitebridge 486 273

Minute of Meeting 22nd June 2004

Mr Alan Raynor, Assistant Divisional Officer, **Highlands and Islands Fire Brigade**: Foyers fire brigade is currently an 'auxiliary' unit, paid for the training and calls attended but to be upgraded to a 'retained' unit, which would also give the members a retaining fee. Retained unit would have a fire engine (small van type) to carry ladders and equipment and a storage container. In time a proper station will be built but for now a container like one at Beaully will house engine, equipment and small office. Deal to buy land at Lower Foyers fallen through. Plot needs to be near electricity. Suggested Lower Foyers not best position as so far away from most of district covered and makes recruitment even harder (recruits should live within 5 minutes of station). Secretary instructed to write to Firemaster with CC concerns. There is a requirement for 10 fire fighters but only 7 now, so recruits being sought. They will have to undergo a medical assessment and fitness/aptitude test and must be between 18 and 55.

Baxters Loch Ness Marathon: to be held on October 3rd. No contact yet from organisers. SCVO: Mr Houston to attend meeting to get information about Lottery funding. **BT**: There has been recent software upgrade which should help the system in short term. New lines will go via Dores but no number changes required. It will provide ADSL only (not broadband). This normally is available up to 6km from exchange, but trials underway up to 10km. Work is due for completion in summer 2005.

Discrimination Forum: 23rd June Loch Ness Partnership: application for membership and nomination of directors. Agreed to put Mr Dave Allen's name forward. **Ms Alana McFadyen**: request for speed limits and horse warning signs due to the excessive speed of drivers through Whitebridge. Mrs Macrae will request the roads dept. to carry out speed readings which is the first step in getting speed limits in situ. She will also make enquiries about signs. If the Glendoe hydro scheme goes ahead, one of the conditions asked for, is that there are speed limits of 20mph through all the villages.

Treasurer: ordinary account stands at £72.44 and project account at £772.60.

The annual accounts were presented and discussed. Motion to adopt them as correct raised by Mrs H Grainger and seconded by Mr Bateman.

Policing: Letter of welcome and invitation to council meetings should be sent to PC Rimmer.

Roads and Transport: Noted AJG Parcel vans and Dingbro vehicles are driving at excessive speeds. Secretary instructed to write to companies to ask drivers reduce speed. Copy to be sent to Sgt Campbell, Fort Augustus, mentioning hazard of car parked on roadside in Gorthleck, obscuring vision of children playing in the road. Mrs Macrae to source children warning signs.

Water and Sewerage: Existing sewerage systems to be upgraded but no increased capacity: all new houses to have septic tanks. Secretary instructed to write to Scottish Water to ask about proposed Gorthleck scheme, where housing project is on hold until new scheme is in place.

Community Project: Funding has been received, through PRIN, for the first phase of the amenity area in Gorthleck. 50% from CED and 50% from SNH to access field, put in drainage and fencing and do some landscaping.

Renewable Energy/Community Benefit: The CC given update on negotiations for community benefit by HOL. Survey work started at Fort Augustus. No liaison with CC so secretary instructed to write to SSE to ask what happening and copy to Mr Rennilson, Highland Council Planning Manager. Final draft of the Glendoe Impact Study to be presented 2 July.

AOB: Forthcoming meetings: 24th Aug, 28th Sep, 26th Oct, 23rd Nov, 14th Dec

Minute of Meeting 24th August 2004

Highland Wellbeing Alliance: Domestic Abuse Awareness Campaign. Information/posters

Canon: increase of service charge for photocopier to £0.0091 per copy. **Mrs L MacGregor**: out of hours consultation forms for distribution **Neil McKie**: interested in starting ferry Foyers/Drumnadrochit in a historic vessel, with participation and training of local youth/enthusiasts. CC felt that any project bringing business to the area worthwhile and would support it, particularly if local youth involved. Questions raised about piers at Foyers and Inverfarigaig, condition and SSE intent to sell

Foyers pier to British Waterways. Suggested we should be looking at merit of keeping pier within community. SSE should be approached and our interest in pier noted. Alan McIntyre, **RES Dunmaglass windfarm**: the document is ready for consultation. **Albyn Housing Society**: AGM notification. **Highland Drug and Alcohol Action team**: report. Baxters marathon: there still has been no local contact made, i.e. where the start will be, or toilets placed, or roads closure times.. **Inverness Group of Advanced Motorists**: £85.00 for the course. Mr Munro, **The lodges on Loch Ness**: hydro pipes - after discussion by the CC it was agreed that Highland Council should be alerted to the situation of the pipes. Decided that CC would not make a site visit as the members are not engineers and would not be in a position to make informed conclusions about the situation.

Treasurer: Ordinary account stands at £935.92 and the project account at £550.52. £225.00 was transferred from Pa/c to Oa/c to service cheques for BB. Bank service charges on Oa/c £3.54. Deposited Annual grant cheque of £896.13. Grant cheque acknowledged. Copy of annual accounts forwarded to Mr Chris Claridge, HC.

Planning: Foyers Shop - planning granted by Scottish Executive for a house alongside the shop, and decision is final. Mr McCormack made offer for land before taking over shop but no contact since. He suggested may be an interest in community to consider buying land (under the Community Right to Buy scheme) and enter into a partnership with himself. Decided to leave things in the short term to see what happens with sellers: appears to be serious problems if anyone wished to build on the land. Mr McCormack has serious plans to enhance Falls of Foyers Experience but needs extra carparking. Willing to give over his garden if HC will do work.

Policing: Mr Campbell welcomed PC Rimmer into the community. PC Rimmer informed the CC there had been no major issues recently. He was told of wish of CC to get Neighbourhood Watch scheme working and said he will find out details and report back.

Roads and Transport: HC roads dept replied to CC stating that arrows have been painted on the Foyers road but not doing any remedial work to the verge on the bend at Cultie. Mr A Sutherland arranged to meet Forestry Commission along Inverfarigaig Pass road and they identified several trees to be removed before they are brought down by bad weather. This will involve pass being closed for 1-2 days, but they will place notices informing when it will be done.

Water and Sewerage: Scottish Water has been operating a lot of water tankers to the water plant in Aberchalder. Questions were raised as to why this is necessary and concern over weight limit on the bridge and damage to verges. Secretary instructed to write HC, Roads dept and SW.

Community Project: The project has received a donation of £500.00 from the Knockie Trust. The land at Ballochran has been de-crofted. A lease has to be drawn up before work can begin.

Renewable Energy/Community Benefit: Highland Opportunity: update on Community Benefit negotiations. Innogy proposing to include offer of loft insulation as part of CB package. Suggested double glazing and solar panels could be benefit offered to all residents. Debate as to how many households would benefit. Decided to place flier in BB for idea of potential uptake.

AOB: Walking to School: a dedicated member of HC now deals with paths to and from schools. They need to be approached by either the school Head, the PTA or CC. Agreed that Mrs Grainger should speak to members of the school board at Foyers and Mr Campbell should speak to Mrs Cryans at Stratherrick. **Trees along Loch Mhor**: SSE have no objection to cutting down trees along lochside but would stipulate that wood must not be chipped as it would float into their machinery and cause damage. Mr Campbell will speak to land owners concerned and then to PRIN to try to arrange funding. **Loch Ness Partnership**: Mr Paul MacGregor was appointed as a Director. He will report directly to CC on regular basis. **Holiday Homes**: highlighted a large number of homes in area only used for a few weeks each year and there is a housing shortage for local people. Questioned whether anything could be done to stop this trend?? **Doctors Out of Hours**: if an ambulance is called out of hours now, doctor will automatically be called, whereas in new scheme, probably only an ambulance will come. If helicopter is required at night it will only come if there is a dedicated lighted landing area. CC asked to think about it.

Suggested that a community ambulance could be a project for the Community Benefit.

Next Meetings

Tuesday 28th September

26th October

23rd November

14th December

in Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck.

Highland Councillor

Mrs Ella MacRae

01456 751 203

Copper Column!

Firstly may I take this opportunity to thank all members of the community who have made my family and I welcome to the area.

A few words just to introduce myself to you all. I have been a Police officer for nearly 18 years and served that time to date, in Merseyside. I transferred to the Northern Constabulary on 7th June this year and completed a training course in Scottish law. I am married to Helen and have 2 children, Jessica and Katie who are at the I.R.A. and Foyers Primary respectively.

I would like to say how proud I am to have responsibility for policing the communities to which I have been posted. Together with my colleagues from Fort Augustus, Sergeant Davey Campbell, P.C's Liz Mackinnon and Neil Martin, together with Cathy Fraser and Special Constable Les Butterworth, I will strive to continue to build on the good work carried out by my predecessors.

My work, to a great extent, is directed by the communities, and already at this early stage of my time at Foyers, themes of excessive speed throughout the area is an obvious one that concerns many people. I intend to address this and the other issues brought to my attention in the near future.

I will make the community a promise, that you will receive my total commitment to maintain the area's reputation as one of the safest in the Highlands.

Together we can keep the quality of life high; community support and involvement in policing is essential to keep the area the safe place it is to live, work and visit.

I look forward to meeting you all.

Out and About

Many congratulations to Russell & Eileen Bain on the birth of Craig on August 4th, a brother for Hamish.

Congratulations to Annie Colville - 90 years of age on the 9th September.

We wish David & Pat Robinson of Thain Road, Whitebridge a happy retirement in South-West France. David has driven the Whitebridge bus for 25 years and will be much missed.

A happy retirement also to Margaret & Donald Campbell who have relinquished the Whitebridge Hotel to David Murray and Sarah Izzett. We understand that the Campbells will be remaining in the area and we hope they will now have time to enjoy some well-earned leisure.

We were sad to hear of the untimely death of Paul Smith and send our sympathy to his mother and family. (see article)

We welcome all who have moved into the area and hope they will be happy here.

Stratherrick Primary School

I have been asked to write a short piece to introduce myself and it is proving to be almost as difficult as my interview.

I have moved up from Glasgow where I taught for ten years. For the last eight years I have been teaching in St.Thomas' Primary which has a roll of 360. I have taught at all stages of the school and during my time there I was seconded for a year to work on Health Promotion.

I have settled in well to Stratherrick Primary and have been made extremely welcome by both the school community and the local community. I am enjoying my new post immensely and am delighted with the reception I have received from the children.

This term the school is doing a local interest study which will be included on a CD Rom titled The Secret Side Of Loch Ness. We are working in partnership with other local schools as part of an enterprise project.

Finally, I am still house hunting in the area so all suggestions would be gratefully received.

Angela Cryans



Mary Campbell

Children, staff and parents at South Loch Ness Nursery bid a fond farewell to inspirational Playleader Mary Campbell who retired from the post at the end of June.

Mary, who lives at Loch Bran, has been a guiding force at the Nursery since she started in 1996 and parents and children from across the years came to visit her at the Nursery on her last day.

She was already a well known face when she took on the job at the Nursery – she and husband Alex ran the Foyers shop for 11 years after coming to the Highlands from Glasgow.

The Nursery presented Mary with an engraved quaich, flowers and a cheque with cash collected from families from nursery, the primary schools and from local individuals. The children presented their own gift in the shape of an ornamental teddy bear for Mary.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Nursery,” said Mary. “The wee things that the children do have brought me as much enjoyment as I hope I’ve brought to them. They are so natural and unaffected - they are wonderful to work with.”

On the last day of term Mary also paid tribute to the staff and parents she had worked with over the years. She said her plans for retiral include having time for family visits, her craft work and gardening.

Mary commented that it seems amazing that she still gets ‘hellos’ from children she once taught at nursery and who are now ready to go to high school. It’s no surprise that there are many families thankful for the time and effort she has put in over the past eight years and all wish her well in her retirement.

The Bachelors Wish

One female companion to soften my cares
Two thousand a year to support my affairs
Three dogs and a gun when to sport I incline
Four horses and chaise to indulge me and mine
Five jolly companions with whom to make merry
Six dishes each day with six glasses of sherry
Seven beds in my house for my friends at their leisure
Eight something's or other to add to their pleasure
Nine pounds in my pocket when cash I require
These favours are all that on earth I desire, And a
Passport to heaven when from earth I retire .

Scott Morrison

Is this Democracy?

The democratic process seems to be in question in our area. Farr Community Council and a large number of local residents were overwhelmingly against a paint-ball activity proposed for an area near Farr Loch but have been over-ruled by area planners.

In Foyers a Scottish Executive planning inspector over-ruled decisions by the Local Community Council and Highland Council in granting permission for a private house to be built on a site designated in the Local Plan for expansion for

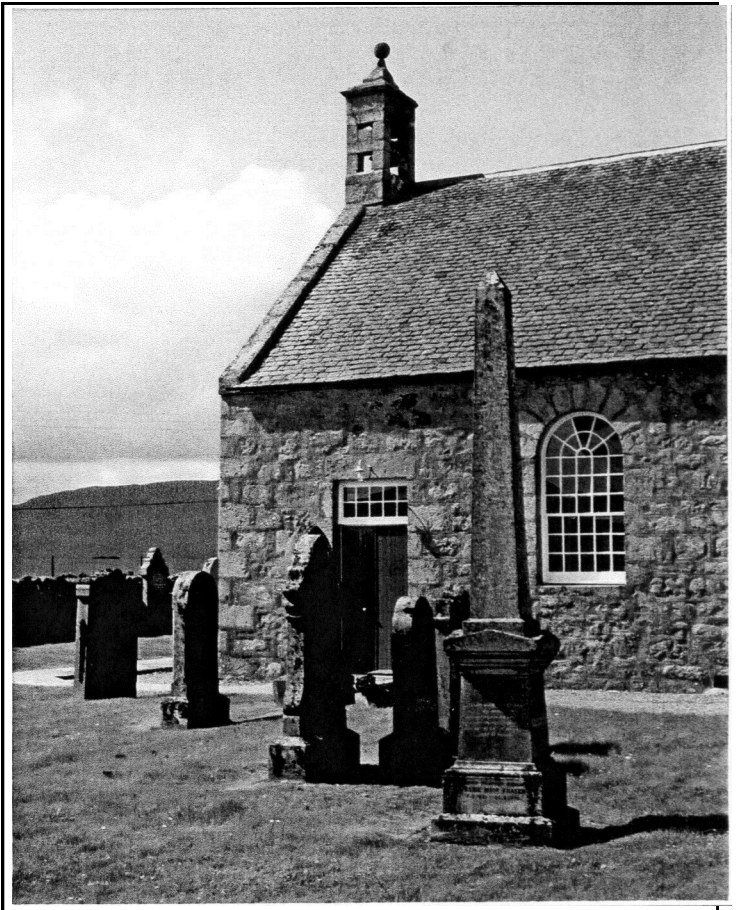
Paul Smith

Everyone who knew Paul was shocked to hear of his sudden death at the age of 56, in his home at Glenlia on Sunday 15th August where he lived with his mother, Joy. He was a staunch shinty supporter and had played for Boleskine team in his younger days. He was a familiar figure walking around the village of Foyers and to and fro to Boleskine House where he acted as caretaker. He was a real character and will be missed by many.

An extract from "An Account of the Kirk of Boleskine" by the late Alan Dawson

Christianity came to this area with the Celtic missionaries of the 6th and 7th centuries. Cummein, Abbot of Iona gave his name to Kilchuimen (Fort Augustus) and to the hill at the crossing from Glendoe to Stratherrick - SUIDE CHUIMIN (Cummein's Seat). St. Moluag or some of his followers founded a chapel - CILL MO-LUAIG at Ballagan near Inverfarigaig. Beside the river there are plots of ground known until recently as CROIT MOLUAIG (Moluag's Croft) and CROIT-AN-SAGAIRT (the Priest's Croft). The farm at Antfield near Dores takes its name from being the site of an ANNAID (or Mother Church).

Later the area came within the diocese of Moray as the Church of Rome extended into the Highlands in the Middle Ages. The parish of Boleskine may have been formed at this time around the 13th century. The lands of Foyers and Boleskine were held in feu from the Bishop of Moray until well into the 17th century. There must have been an earlier church near to where the present Boleskine Church is, for the locality was called DRUIMTEMPLE (the ridge of the Church). The Graveyard at Boleskine Church is still called Drumtemple which can be very confusing for newcomers to the area.



The name Boleskine has various derivations. One is BOTH FHLEISGINN (hut or house of the willows), another is BOILE EAS CEANN (the furious cascade's summit - the Falls of Foyers) or the commonest BAIL O'SCIONN (the township above the ocean - great water - Loch Ness).

A succession of Ministers took charge of the parish and it was a thankless task involving travelling the area by foot or on horseback in all weathers. Thomas Houston (1648 -1705) was noted as having to contend with a notorious wizard - AN CRUINAIR FRISEAL (the Fraser Crowner or maker of circles, as wizards do) who had raised the bodies in the churchyard and Thomas had to make haste to lay them to rest again. He also had to deal with Lochaber Robbers, "armed with naked swords and dirks" who raided the area and stole cattle.

Under the ministry of Thomas Fraser (1713 - 1766) after the Battle of Culloden, a funeral was in progress at Boleskine Kirk which was in the old Boleskine graveyard near the present Boleskine House, when one of the mourners foolishly seized a loaf of bread from a passing military wagon and threw it to some dogs. Shots were fired by the troops to scare the locals and the bullet holes can still be seen on one of the gravestones.

General Wade constructed a road to facilitate the movement of government troops entailing much rock blasting and the building of a bridge at Inverfarigaig which unfortunately has been allowed to collapse. Wade stayed in a wooden hut roughly where the former Foyers Hotel now stands.

It was during the ministry of Patrick Grant (1770 - 1800) that both church and manse were moved from Boleskine to Drumtemple where the present church stands. A

description of the old Kirk at Boleskine by Bishop Forbes who visited it in 1762 "...the poorest edifice of any kind I ever looked upon as is also the Manse. The Church-yard is quite open without any walls where you see plenty of human Bones above ground and the Floor of the Kirk is overspread with them.....Dogs are seen carrying away the human Bones in their Teeth.....the Manse is a low pitiful thatched House without one bit of Glass in the Windows having Wooden Boards or Shutters".

During the ministry of Donald Chisholm (1840 -1857) occurred the Disruption in 1843 when Ministers gave up their churches and manses to form the Free Church of Scotland. A Free Church was built at Errogie and many families forsook the old church to attend. The division caused much bitterness and ill feeling in country parishes and the Established Church struggled to survive.

When the British Aluminium Co. set up its factory at Foyers in 1895, a considerable village grew up. A school was built and in 1906 the present Foyers Church was built together with a manse (the roof of the church was beautifully constructed resembling the bows of a boat). Unfortunately at present the Foyers Church bell is only heard once a month for the combined services.

The congregation of Dores and Boleskine Parish are now awaiting the appointment of a new Minister following the retiral of Rev Jim Christie.

Perhaps Fr. Paul Bonnici could give us details of the establishment of the R.C churches in this area.

Buddy MacDougall

Christian Comment

A good painting, be it in oils, watercolour, pastel, acrylic or some other media will give most of us great pleasure. Some of us may even attempt to paint a picture ourselves and begin to appreciate the difficulty of obtaining a good result and the wonderful work of the great artists.

When we look around us at the variety of colour in nature throughout the seasons and especially in the Autumn, we can be amazed at the breathtaking beauty that we see. Who can we praise for this handiwork? The believer in God can say with the writer of Psalm 19 in the Bible "How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what He has done!"

If we have come to know this Artist for ourselves - as we can through Jesus Christ - then it will be our pleasure to praise Him, Sunday by Sunday.

A special opportunity is planned for a United Harvest Praise Celebration on Sunday, 26th September at 3 pm in the Stratherrick Hall to which everyone is welcome. There will be an opportunity to make a Gift for Christian Aid.

1895

Extract from "A Medley of Memories"

By the Rt.Rev.Sir David Hunter Blair, Bt., M.A.

"Another local event to make some stir at this time was the threatened desecration of the romantic Falls of Foyers, immortalised by Burns, by the establishment of an aluminium factory at the foot of the gorge. As the scheme entailed not only swallowing up the falls themselves in huge steel pipes, but also hacking down beautiful beech-trees fringing the loch, and blowing away with dynamite the face of the birch-clad hill above, there was natural dismay in many quarters at the prospective devastation of one of the fairest spots in the Highlands. Some of us protested in the newspapers (the Daily Chronicle was the only London paper which would open the question) : and I appealed for support to the National Trust for Places of Natural Beauty, which certainly seemed the right body to take up the case; but the Devonshires and Westminster and Roseberys and Lubbocks who were on the trust were unable or unwilling to use their influence, and nothing was done.

Nature repaired, as her manner is, in the course of the years some of the worst of the ravages; but the factory remained, an eyesore. The absurd theory that the works would prove a benefit to the neighbourhood by giving employment, as was said, "to hundreds of natives", was disposed of by the simple fact that there were not "hundreds" of natives in the entire district, and of the small number of inhabitants not a sixth part were employed in the new factory. This may ultimately have become a financial success - I believe it did; but the chief effect locally of dumping down the works at that particular spot was to drive permanently away from one of the most charming little hotels in the north the regular visitors, whose prolonged residence was universally admitted to be of real benefit to the district."

Letters

I write this in reply to your request for Monster sightings - with some reluctance for I have only discussed these matters with my family and close friends. My father, whilst on leave from the Lovat Scouts in 1916 had a sighting near Urquhart Castle. Then 30 odd years ago, en route to Inverness, my sister, nephew and I saw a black shape with a long neck and head with a considerable wash behind it in Urquhart Bay. But when we reached a lay-by, we could see nothing. Then on a sunny morning in July 1979 when the loch was flat calm, I was rowing on the other side with my husband. When we were in mid loch, I suddenly saw what appeared to be an upturned boat just beyond Foyers Point. I handed the binoculars to my husband who said he was looking at a black shape like an upturned canoe and handed the glasses back to me. Shortly after the object submerged and we both agreed we had not been looking at a freak wave but the back of a living creature. And so we agreed with the late Sir Peter Scott and the naturalist Gerald Durrell that there may be a small breeding herd of these creatures which has survived for centuries in the loch.

Kay McGee, 36 Scarba Drive, Glasgow

A few days ago we had a visitor to the Mill at Wester Aberchalder. He was on holiday from Warrington and had traced his maternal ancestors back to the Mill where in 1881 his GGG Grandfather - John Patrick McKenzie was recorded in the census as being a meal miller. He had 9 children and died in 1884. 3 of the children went to Liverpool sometime between 1881 and 1889, one of them (Jane Eliza McKenzie) the direct ancestor of the visitor- Stuart Butcher, however 6 of the children may have stayed around here. In the 1881 census he is living in Wester Aberchalder with a second wife - the first one having died - and 5 of the children, the 6th not yet born. One of the daughters (Jane Eliza McKenzie) was living and working as a general servant at the Errozie Inn where John MacTavish was the head of the household, and, one son was a farm servant at Avoch. Stuart sent me copies of photos of the mill he had which date back to pre 1920 but has now raised lots of questions; who owned the mill at the time, who were the subsequent millers and estate owners, when did the other mill cottages disappear? Does anyone have any knowledge of the history of the mill.Etc...?.

Phone Wendy at the Old Mill - 486392



Boleskine Environmental Network

B.E.N. is a local group with an interest in environmental issues affecting the local area.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF

B.E.N. is sponsoring a year-long study of **Loch Bran** by pupils of **Foyers School**. Supported by a biodiversity grant from the Partnership for Rural Inverness and Nairn (PRIN), the project commences this August and will culminate in a published report and an exhibition at Foyers School next summer.



Loch Bran, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is renowned for its varied population of dragon and damselflies and its rich combination of bog, fen, woodland and water. The study, of the loch and its immediate surroundings, will involve supervised site visits throughout the year and has the support of Scottish Natural Heritage. The children of Foyers School will record and analyse information and images of the loch and its wildlife under the guidance of Katy

Stirling, the Countryside Ranger, members of B.E.N. and others with expert knowledge of this kind of habitat. Foyers School head teacher, Maureen Brown, and B.E.N. would be most grateful for any historical information about Loch Bran that readers might be able to supply. What, for instance, is the origin of the old track that runs through a ford beside the existing road and through the peninsula that separates the two lobes of the loch, terminating somewhere to the north in the present forestry plantation? Old maps indicate that it dates back at least to 1878. --- (Foyers School tel.no: 486 612)



For further news about this exciting project, watch this space - and the Foyers School Supplement to the next Boleskine Bulletin!



The Biodiversity Grant provided by PRIN for the Foyers School project is part of funding available to communities to promote biological diversity. This means the richness of nature or variety of life. Our community could get further funding for any project which aims to:....

- Improve and maintain wildlife habitats – monitor changes taking place
- Help people to understand the countryside – through interpretation, wildlife hides, environmental events, school activities etc..
- Resolve problems – clean-up campaigns, action against mis-use of land etc....

also ...recycling

Funding can be found from different sources for community schemes.

If you care..... would like to become involved, know of something that needs doing. Got a brilliant idea for a community project?! Then come along to the next AGM of BEN where all schemes, projects and dabbling for funds will be discussed.

Waterfall Cafe - Friday 12th November - 7.30pm

Compost Bins...going, going....gone

Anyone still requiring bins from BEN will have to be quick! There are three left, at the bargain price of £5. Phone Heather on 486 774. When those have gone....bins should be obtainable through the Council but don't expect a quick response as they have been flooded with enquiries. Price will be around £10. Contact Andy Hume on 01349 868 614.

Renewable Energy Schemes

Very little has happened over the summer months in our area. The monitoring masts proposed for Dunmaglas have been approved by Highland Council. The Glendoe hydro and the River E hydro have still to be decided by the Scottish Executive. No further planning applications have been submitted. For an update of the situation join our email list at: odonovan_jane@hotmail.com and come to the B.E.N. A.G.M. 12th November. -7.30 -Foyers

Access to our Natural Heritage

People are being encouraged to enjoy Scotland's countryside and wildlife in a responsible way through the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which has established new rights of 'responsible' access to land for outdoor recreation. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, developed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and to be published later this year, defines what is 'responsible' behaviour for both recreational users and land managers. It has been produced after extensive consultation with a wide range of interest groups and individuals. It is therefore disheartening that on several occasions this summer visitors and locals have been challenged while walking around Loch nan Lann at Knockie. These 'local' walks are part of our heritage and to be confronted while out for a walk is not in the spirit of the new access legislation. At Culachy, near Fort Augustus, BEN was able to instigate a dialogue between Highland Council and the estate regarding the blocking of the ancient track leading to the Culachy waterfall. However, Highland Council were unable to persuade the estate to reinstate the track. The

estate has agreed to permit access along the side of the fence on the edge of the river gorge but there is no defined path and the route could be dangerous for young children and older people. Eventually this access will become disused - as only those fit and able will manage the effort of fighting through nettles, bracken and slippery slopes.

Wildcats

The Mammals Trust UK say that the Scottish wildcat has interbred so extensively with the domestic cat that it is now critically endangered. The report claims the population to be as few as 400 pure wildcats living in the north of Scotland. As a result, Bristol University Mammal Research Unit has begun a project to investigate the degree of hybridisation.. Any carcasses of dead cats, domestic as well as wildcats, can be reported and collection arranged. A few details are required: the date the cat was found; the location; and the circumstances surrounding the death (e.g. was it killed on a road). If you have internet access go to www.scottishwildcats.co.uk and click on 'wildcat folk' for further details. The situation is so critical that calls are being made to re-evaluate the conservation measures and the legal protection afforded to the wildcat if it is to be restored to the Scottish countryside.

Winter Training Events

PRIN (Partnership for Rural Inverness and Nairn) are running the following training events this winter: Community Communication and Newsletters; Waste Management - What Communities can do; Self-Build - How people can fund and build their own homes.

Contact Gillian Kidd at PRIN on 01463 724213

175 Years Ago - Waterspout

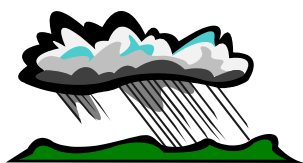
We are indebted to a Reverend Gentleman for the following memento of the late storm: In Stratherrick, in the vicinity of Gortuleg, the sky being very much clouded at the time, there was seen a column rising from a lake, apparently attracted by a cloud overhanging it.

The column appeared quite flexible and was visibly agitated by the wind.

It continued vibrating between the cloud and the lake for six or seven minutes, when it was gradually absorbed by the cloud, which was very dark and apparently near the surface of the earth.

In about ten minutes, the cloud expanded and descended in a fall of rain unprecedentedly heavy, by which the burns were instantly swollen and the fields flooded.

As the column had when first seen the appearance of a drawn sword, the terrified peasants were unanimously of the opinion that it portended war, either from the Papists or the Turks.



Courier 2.9.1829



Two Definitions of a Committee

1. A committee is a group of people who individually can do nothing, but together decide that nothing can be done.
2. A committee is a cul-de-sac into which ideas are lured and then quietly strangled.

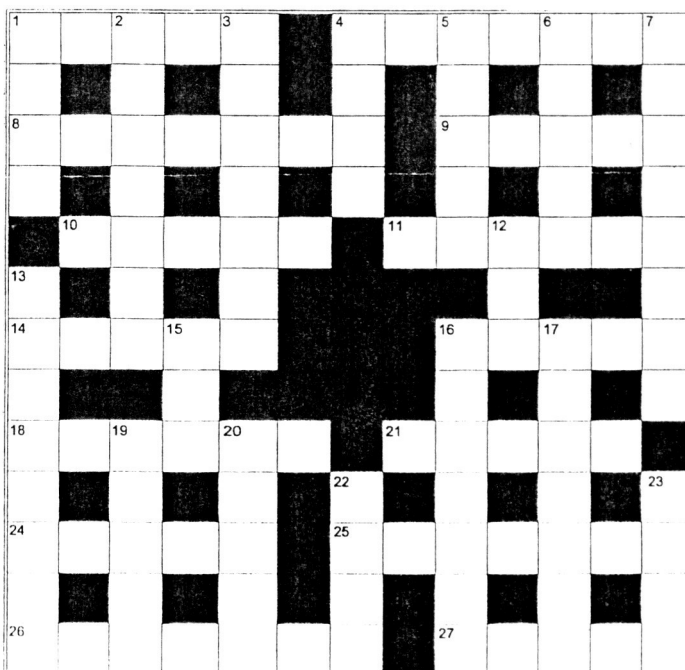
Heritage Group Wildlife Talk

The Heritage Group are presenting an illustrated talk by Mr Derek McGinn on the Wildlife of Stratherrick which should be of great interest, it will be held on Monday 22 November, either at the Waterfall Café, Foyers or the Dores Village Hall. For information please contact the Secretary, Jean Marshall, Comeraich Wester Muirnich. 01456 486758.

.Any queries about the work of the Group etc. to either Hugh MacNally, The Manse or the Secretary, as above.

Across

- 1 Is this the punishment tree? (5)
- 4 Night-time activities of students (7)
- 8 No one did this on Alcatraz, allegedly (7)
- 9 Before tonight (5)
- 10 Eat but don't grow with onions (5)
- 11 Royal Marine turns the fruit to get ready for war (3-3)
- 14 Is this where we find musical palms? (5)
- 16 From sea to saucepan, it all starts with this (5)
- 18 If it ain't this, don't fix it (6)
- 21 Sounds like we didn't turn left in the dark (5)
- 24 This function could give fresh air to your PC (5)
- 25 Sounds like the postie is on the wrong track perhaps (4-3)
- 26 This roaring stud could end up in the singles arena (2-5)
- 27 The end of the ledger could be lost over this (5)



Down

- 1 Busy pot fillers (4)
- 2 Menacing snake does this (7)
- 3 Covers the enclosures by chance (7)
- 4 Soap stars in a lather (4)
- 5 Say something about the madman losing his head (5)
- 6 This country has luck now? (5)
- 7 Bean for a drink to make you thin perhaps (4,4)
- 12 Millions are around in a field of corn (3)
- 13 Block out the sun with a roof over your head (8)
- 15 An empty well could cause a blot on the landscape (3)
- 16 In pursuit of the right answer (7)
- 17 A tree in the morning caused embarrassment for Edward (7)
- 19 The key does it for you (5)
- 20 Did the newspaper vendor know Oliver? (5)
- 22 Woody perennial perhaps (4)
- 23 You pay your money, you take your chance (4)

by DM - answers will appear in the next issue.

Canadian Dancers visit Gorthleck

Scottish Country Dancing in our Hall is getting more and more popular with visitors from other dance groups in the Inverness and surrounding areas. The pleasant drive into Stratherrick and the nice ambience of our refurbished hall as well as a warm welcome are proving to be a great attraction. So on the 8th September they brought us a party of some 20 Canadians who had come all the way from Vancouver for a short stay in Inverness and a good time was had by all.

Our little group based on Stratherrick Public Hall tries to meet every Wednesday at 7.30 pm and is now led alternately by Hugh Nicol and Judith Borup who aim to practice dances in the programme of forthcoming rallies at other venues. All dances are walked through until all members are confident that they can do them. It is good fun and also good physical as well as mental exercise.

What a pity that there are not more local residents participating. We need at least 8 people present to do most of the dances and at times meetings have to be cancelled because members are unavoidably away. Hence, new members are desperately needed. All are welcome, even those with 2 left feet !! Just come along and see.

For more information you can contact either Hugh Nicol 486350, Judith Borup 486464 or Lorraine Fraser 486427.

Boleskine Bulletin Distribution

Every household in the district should receive a free copy of the Bulletin which is produced four times a year. Please contact Buddy MacDougall (486366) if for any reason you have not received your copy.



Hall Charity Donation



The sum of **£40** was raised from donations and sale of refreshments at the Ceilidh Trail and Bruce Macgregor concert in the Hall recently and was given to Oxfam for the Sudan Appeal

Thank you.

Family Ceilidh

Catriona Spink is holding another "Family Ceilidh" on 1st October – 7-30 till late. The band is "Fiddling with the G-string".



Bar, Refreshments, Raffle, Win a bottle games. £5/£3 a ticket. Family £12.

A night out for all the generations.

Clearing up the Clearances

Both **Aberdeen University Talks** in the Hall this time are about the Clearances. On Tuesday 26th October at 7-30 Andrew Ferguson presents "**The Wicked Generation**" – Fact or fiction? Necessary or unavoidable? Fuelled by greed and racism? - or economics? Which is right?

The second talk will be on 22nd February.

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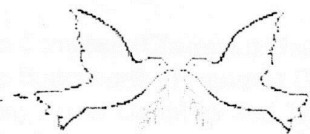
Mon & Thur: 9 – 3-30 pm

Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat: 9 – 1 pm

Boleskine Bulletin A.G.M.

The Annual General Meeting of the Boleskine Bulletin will be held in Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck on Tuesday, 9th November 2004 at 7.30 pm

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| Whitebridge | 10.30 – 10.40 |
| Gorthleck | 10.50 – 10.55 |
| Errogie | 11.00 – 11.10 |

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Events at Stratherrick Hall

Toddlers Group - Wednesdays 10.30 - 12.30

Yoga classes - Tuesdays 10.00 - 11.30, Thursdays 7.00 - 8.30

Tel. Sylvia on 486434

Country Dancing - Wednesdays 7.30 - 9.30

Thursday 16th September 8 pm - "For the Islands I Sing"

George Mackay Brown. Splinter Productions

Sunday 26th September 3 pm - Harvest Songs of Praise

Friday 1st October 7-30 till late - Family Ceilidh

Tuesday 26th October 7-30 - "Wicked Generation"

Aberdeen University Talk

To book the Hall 'phone Judith Borup on 01456 486464

We keep the notice board outside the hall up to date with other local events.
See also local website www.errogie.supanet.com and click on Stratherrick
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Next issue: December

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