

# The Boleskine Bulletin

Issue No. 13  
Winter 2001

## DEMOCRACY

### - BY POST!

The recent Community Council election in Stratherrick and Foyers was the only one held in the Inverness area. It was also only one of three postal ballots to be held in Highland Region. In November, elections took place throughout the Highlands but in effect few Councils raised enough nominations to need a ballot and many Councillors were elected unopposed. Not all Councils have their full complement of elected members and some areas have no Community Council at all.

This was the first postal ballot for Community Councils in our area. Not only did we have a very large number of nominees but we had a 67% return of ballot papers. Our returning officer Sandy MacLure recorded 330 ballot papers returned out of the 496 papers sent out. The votes were counted in Foyers by Sandy and Lorraine Fraser.

The postal ballot was also used in Caithness, and Ross and Cromarty as part of a pilot scheme. Jane MacLennan, spokesperson from the Town House, tells us that it is an effort to encourage local democracy and get more people to take part in their communities. A 67% return is comparable to national elections and far in excess of local council elections. The Town House is considering postal ballots as a way forward in the future.

Postal ballot or no postal ballot, the inhabitants of Stratherrick and Foyers can be congratulated on fielding so many nominees. Without that no ballot would have taken place. 15 names were put forward and 10 were elected to serve for the next three years. Because many of the Councillors live in the Gorthleck area the decision has been made to divide the area into different locations - each having a separate representative.

Those elected are as follows:

	Votes	Area of representation	Tel.No.
Tine BUTTERWORTH	171	(Lochgarthside, Garthbeg, Lochbranside)	486275
John CAMPBELL - <b>Chairman</b>	214	(Aultnagoire, Inverfarigaig)	486240
Angus FRASER	187	(Gorthleck)	486650
Kenneth FRASER	180	(Errogie)	486220
Fiona KIRKLAND - <b>Secretary</b>	195	(Aberchalder, Migovie)	486283
Elizabeth MACDOUGALL	210	(Lower Foyers)	486366
Liam MACNALLY	171	(Whitebridge, Dell, Garrogie)	486605
Alexander MACPHERSON	143	(Abersky, Torness)	01463 751213
Eileen MARTIN	139	(Knockie, Killiechoilum, Trinloist, Tyndrum)	486661
Ian NISBET - <b>Treasurer</b>	212	(Upper Foyers)	486233

and those not elected:-

David Allen 107; David Matheson 69; Martyn Bateman 120; Ian Brown 98; Jane O'Donovan 119.

For profiles of our Councillors turn to pages ..... 2 and 3

# OUR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS



*We asked members of the council to provide brief profiles of themselves and some idea of their interests or concerns. This should help you to identify which council member to contact if you have similar concerns (phone numbers are on front page).*

**Tine Butterworth** - Born in 1958 to a farming family in Argyll, Tine has lived in the area for 13 years with her husband Les. They have two children. She currently works as a Marriage Counsellor, has been associated with the Highland Homeless at Christmas Project, Rape Crisis, and The Safe, Strong & Free Project (helping to protect children). Issues of concern to her are homelessness, poverty and unemployment. Tine believes that as a member of the community council she aims to play an active part in supporting families and individuals who may be facing hardship - looking at what lies behind a specific problem and being helpful in solving it.

**John Campbell** - born on Skye in 1934. John was educated at Portree High School and went on to Glasgow University where he graduated with a B.Sc. in Maths. and Physics. He taught in Inverness for 33 years, spending the last 22 years as Asst. Rector in Millburn Academy. Now retired, he is a J.P. and attends bench duty in Inverness District Court. His interests are the church, family, community and shinty - he is the fixtures convenor for the Camanachd Association. He would like to improve facilities for our rural community. Nationally his concerns are education, crime and Christianity. Global warming is a worry to him.

**Angus Fraser** - was born and brought up in Stratherrick. After attending Stratherrick Primary School and the Royal Academy in Inverness he studied in Glasgow before returning to Gorthleck. He established Angus C. Fraser, Contractors, which he still runs with his wife Susan. He enjoys gardening, reading and walking as time allows. His particular interests locally are planning issues and he has concern at the lack of suitable public transport in the area. He would like to see Scotland with a cost-conscious government working for the good of the electorate and wishes that someone could equate the overproduction of food in some countries with the severe lack of food in others.

**Ken Fraser** - has lived in Stratherrick all his life. After the Royal Academy he went on to Agricultural College in Aberdeen before returning to help run the family farm along with his father. His particular interests are anything to do with the countryside - in our own locality trying to maintain its character and traditional pursuits. He enjoys sports in general including field sports.

**Fiona Kirkland** - "I was born in North London (don't tell anyone) and moved to Hexham when I was 11. I did a degree in Hotel Management at Leeds Polytechnic, completing a year's industrial release in Cowlumbridge Hotel, Aviemore - what an eye opener that was!! At the end of my course I started as a Management Trainee in the Inverness Thistle Hotel, then the Mercury and worked up to the position of Senior Assistant Manager directly responsible for Personnel and Training and Liquor, although I was involved in every department at some stage. After seven years I decided on a change, doing bed and breakfast from home (briefly) before getting involved in working locally - in the pub at Whitebridge, at Stratherrick School and occasionally at Wildside Lodges. I enjoy trying new things, from soap making to flying in a microlight and experiencing new places. I would like to see more of the community become involved with local issues and activities."

**Liam MacNally** - was born and brought up in Stratherrick. Having worked, played and studied he is now self-employed working at fencing, stalking, stonework and horses. Liam is interested in horses, wildlife, photography and philosophy. His main concerns are housing, litter and countryside education.

**Buddy MacDougall** - was born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Of Scottish parents, she was educated in Fife but moved to Bengal when she married her husband Stewart - a tea-planter. They moved to Rhodesia, returning to Scotland in 1976 to run the Foyers Hotel until 1989. Buddy has been a member of the Community Council on and off for about fifteen years. During this time she has kept issues on the environment and conservation to the fore. When not engaged in community issues Buddy likes walking and gardening.

**Sandy MacPherson** - was born in Stratherrick and attended school in Boleskine before being one of the first intake when the new Stratherrick School opened. He went to Inverness Royal Academy and has since gone into the family farm. Sandy is one of the new members of the Community Council and is going in with his mind open to whatever affects the general welfare of the community.

**Eileen Martin** - "I was born in GlenBrein, Ardoch, (during a snow storm!) and brought up in Whitebridge, leaving home when I started my nurse training in Inverness in 1984. Presently I am a staff nurse in the Paediatric Unit at Raigmore. I am currently involved in improving services/education for young people with mental health problems and work closely with those who have eating disorders. I am involved with various charity organisations for children including the "Sunshine Holiday Fund for Children" which enables ill children and their families to have a holiday and, more recently, with "Kool for Kids" which raises funds for the children's ward at Raigmore. I am chairperson of Stratherrick PTA and have been for 2-3 years. I am interested in maintaining/improving facilities for young people in our area; this may be through after-school clubs, etc. where information is available on various topics such as health, career, etc. Nationally and globally - working towards world peace is important."

**Ian Nisbet** - Born in 1942 in Northern Ireland but brought up in Greenock, he trained and qualified (in 1965) as a Chartered Accountant and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. Since 1966 he worked as an Accountant and General Manager in the Retail Motor Industry both in Greenock and various locations in England and Wales. He and his wife Flora have been married for 33 years and have four children. In 1996 he and Flora bought the shop and Post Office in Foyers. His interests are - playing golf (he says - badly), food and drink (he says we would never guess!) and travel if time would allow.

**All Community Council meetings** are open to everyone and the minutes of each meeting will be displayed on the notice boards throughout the area as well as in the Foyers shop. See back page for dates.

## Community Council snippets

A letter of support has been sent by the Council to the Highland Movement Against Water Fluoridation in response to a request by them.

The Council has given assurances to Mrs. Ella MacRae that they fully support her view that building in the countryside should continue when appropriate. The new local plan is coming up for review in 2001. Tighter planning controls on rural development are being considered by Highland Council.

A letter has been sent to the Roads Department highlighting the recent accidents in the area due to icy conditions. The Council are concerned that the government's decision to cut 'gritting' on rural roads in favour of trunk roads could cause further accidents.

When approached by a B.B. reporter, one local resident brought up these two issues:-

**Road hazards** - The C.C. could be pro-active with the roads department in identifying and rectifying potentially dangerous places in the area of Whitebridge. (Maybe a reply from one of the Councillors could be forthcoming -ed.)

**Planning** - In view of the short time the C.C. has to respond to planning applications, could it keep a watchful eye on proposed developments before they come to the planning application stage? In this way the C.C. would have time to consult the views of those affected by new proposals and would have responses ready. This could mean they would have to have regular consultations with the residents of the area. (How about that for an idea? -ed.)

## Planning Applications since last B.B.

24.11.00: Mr. W. Mackenzie, for two house sites and upgraded road surface to Park Terrace, Foyers.

8.12.00: Mr. & Mrs. Millar, alterations and extension, The Mold Mill, Wester Aberchaldar, Gorthleck; Angus Fraser-dwelling house, Site 2, Tom A'Mhoid, Gorthleck; Robert Burnett-dwelling house, Site 1, Tom A'Mhoid, Gorthleck.



## Snow White and the Twelve ..... Marmalade Miners?

At their Christmas concert, the children of Stratherick School performed a rather different version of "Snow White". All in verse, the scene was set (and beautifully painted) in the land of Tutonia, whose principal export was marmalade mined by twelve little people. Their song "Dig diggy dig dig dig dig dig" got everyone's feet tapping! A fine performance was given by the narrators and the dancing animals (P1-3), while P4-7 gave excellent and very funny renditions of the main characters which included a walking, talking mirror! This (of course) was really a handsome prince bewitched by the evil queen. Wonderful songs, scenery and acting. Two Christmas hampers raised over £100 for PTA funds.



## Nursery School Robbery

One Friday morning in early November, South Loch Ness Nursery teacher Mary Campbell was horrified to discover that the new wooden "stepping stones", kindly donated by Forest Enterprise had been stolen from the nursery school garden. "The rounds of wood were very heavy and could only have been moved by an adult, presumably with a car" said Mary, who is very angry and upset at the theft. "The logs had only just been delivered and were being greatly enjoyed by the children on Thursday morning. Then on Friday they were gone. There was no mistaking that they were part of our play equipment". The nursery committee is now considering whether to replace the stepping stones. If they do, they will be sure to anchor them against petty thieves.

On a brighter note ... Heather Parrott, Secretary tells us that parents and relations were well entertained (and pelted with "snowballs'!) at the nursery school concert. Refreshments had been carefully prepared by the children and teachers, and everyone had presents (beautifully made) from under a lovely tree. Many thanks to staff and children.

## KUK SOOL WON 2000 A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

In May Kuk Sa Nim the Grand Master came to Inverness. A black belt testing was held, the first of two testings in front of the Grand Master, for two Whitebridge students Cathleen Cameron and Gordon Rule and four Fort Augustus students John O'Neil, Alan Cooper and Richard and Ben Thorpe. In June, Gordon and Iona Rule took part in the UK Championships in Norwich. Iona competed at White belt level and came fifth in techniques out of over fifty competitors. Gordon, who was competing at Brown belt level, came home with a Silver medal in sparring. In October Gordon and his instructor KSN Ian Cameron - 2nd Black belt - took part in the World Championships in Houston, Texas. Both came home with three medals each, which included Gold for Ian in sparring.

## Mystery photograph (1949)...



*Who, why and  
where?*

*Photo: W.  
MacKintosh.*

# The Falls of Foyers -

## *Scotland's First Major Environmental Controversy?*



**The Falls of Foyers** once enjoyed an international reputation. Boat trips from Dores ferried Victorian tourists along Loch Ness to witness their splendour. Celebrated by the poet, Robbie Burns, they became the focus of a major environmental dispute in Scotland. Prominent Victorians, including John Ruskin, campaigned against plans by the British Aluminium Company to extract water from the Foyers River to power a new smelting plant – the world's first large-scale hydro-electric scheme.

As part of their BT-sponsored project, the children of Foyers School have researched this late-Nineteenth Century controversy. They are examining and rehearsing the arguments of the supporters of the scheme as well as those of their opponents. Some extracts are included, *overpage*...

## BOLESKINE BULLETIN SUPPLEMENT by Foyers School

### *The Falls of Foyers Debate, continued...*

But first, the poet, Robert Burns, who penned these lines as he stood beside the 165 foot lower Falls of Foyers in September, 1787:

*Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,  
And viewless echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.  
Dim-seen, thro' rising mists and ceaseless showers,  
The hoary cavern, wide surrounding, lowers;  
Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,  
And still below the horrid caldron boils.'*

### **Other Admirers**

Described by a Professor Wilson, the Fall was '*...the most magnificent cataract, out of all sight and hearing, in Britain...*' And a famous travel-writer, Dr E.D. Clarke, considered that it was finer than that of Tivoli and inferior only to the Falls of Terni. Nevertheless, The County Council of 1895 favoured British Aluminium's scheme as a source of much-needed employment for the people of the district. The matter was raised in the Westminster Parliament in March that year. A.C.Norton, MP for Peterborough, asked the Secretary for Scotland, whether he was aware of a proposal by a public company, '*...to destroy the Falls of Foyers on Loch Ness: and if so, will he take prompt measures to prevent the destruction of what is of national interest, especially to tourists?*'

### **Parliament gets involved**

Dr. Macgregor, (Inverness) suggested there were two sides to the issue. In view of the scarcity of '*public works and factories in this part of Scotland*' it might be more desirable to encourage the scheme, '*so that some employment might be found for the people in the locality...*' Commenting, a few days later, on the Scottish Secretary's unwillingness to set up an enquiry into the affair, Dr. Macgregor asked, '*Assuming that the County Council of London sought to divert the River Thames into another channel, would it not form a legitimate case for Parliamentary enquiry, the principle being the same?*'

### **The growing lobby**

At its height, the controversy involved thousands of people, from scores of different organisations, from all parts of Britain. A meeting of Inverness County Council was interrupted by frequent outbursts of laughter at the identities of some of the many petitioners defending the Foyers Falls. They included such unlikely names as *The National Home Reading Union, The Wilmslow Cycling Club, Birmingham Central Literary Association and the Unity Church of Bolton, Lancashire*. Unsurprisingly, many of the petitions were from bodies with more orthodox environmental credentials; *The Alpine and Climbing Clubs of London; The Ruskin Society of Glasgow* as well as numerous *Field Clubs and Naturalist Societies* and the relatively young *National Trust*.

### **The dispute becomes international**

By July 1895 the dispute had acquired an international dimension. The Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs responded to an enquiry by the British Government, sending a report on damage caused to plants by the escape of gases at an aluminium factory in Neuhausen. That complaint had been upheld, though others had been rejected.

### **Then and now**

Most people probably associate the 'environmental lobby' with the latter part of the Twentieth Century. Yet the scale of the controversy over British Aluminium's proposal to draw water from the Falls of Foyers suggests that environmental concerns could achieve national prominence when Britain was still the most heavily industrialised nation on earth. And the central issues, then as now; economic development v. environmental protection. Foyers pupils will stage a re-run of the Victorian debate to gain insight into the forces which have shaped our society and our landscapes.

**STOP PRESS:** Foyers School's new kitchen is now fully operational. Pictures will be featured in our next issue when the new school fence and gate have been completed.



## SPRUCED UP HALL GETS OFF TO GOOD START

On Saturday 4th November about 150 people came to the opening of the refurbished Stratherrick Hall. Hugh Nicol, chairman of the hall committee, was delighted at the turnout of so many who supported and showed their appreciation of the hard work which has gone into the project. Before asking Mrs. Grace MacGillivray to officially open the hall, he explained that the National Lottery Grant of £155,000 had been primarily to meet the requirements of the public entertainment licence, but that several important extras had been purchased with the grant. The hall now boasts a grand new set of stacking chairs (with soft seats!), a set of banqueting chairs, new folding tables, card tables, a portable stage, and a folding screen at the back of the hall to encourage as wide a range of events as possible. The kitchen equipment has been upgraded while new lighting and a cosy feel to the place should now make the hall a pleasant venue both for

private functions as well as those organised by clubs and other groups.

The evening was officially opened by Mrs MacGillivray who has had a long association with the area, for many years running the Gorthleck shop with her husband Angus. She gave a lively speech recounting some of the characters and past events which had taken place in Stratherrick Hall. The scene set and with a seemingly endless supply of Bucks Fizz, the evening gathered pace. Demonstrations were given by the Country Dance group and the Keep Fit ladies; singing by Ed. and the Girls; fiddle playing by the hall's architect Doug. Stuart of Inverness Fiddlers and a piece by Hugh MacNally on the button box accordion. Throughout the evening the band 'Fire in the Bog' provided lively dance music and in a quieter moment the band's fiddle player broke away to accompany his father, also on fiddle. Hugh Nicol

gave a demonstration of step dancing. There was a time for reflection when Francis Abbot managed to sufficiently subdue the exuberant children in the gathering, at least long enough to allow her to recite some of her late husband Ian's poetry.

Stovies were ably produced by the hall committee using the new stoves and the giant colander to strain the tatties. Ingredients - half a sheep from Knockie and potatoes from Gorthleck Mains. If this wasn't enough, the raffle to buy a new keyboard for the hall raised £220 (one prize being the other half of the sheep) and the silent auction raised a massive £700. Graham Chattington from Torness is now the proud owner of a large shed. Entrance to the opening had been free to everyone so, as the Treasurer Jane O'Donovan said, "the old furniture and odds and ends have paid for a grand evening".





## THE LADIES WALKING GROUP

continues to meet most weeks, wearing the hills and dales down! Maureen Evans, one of our keenest members, has moved to join her family in the south but before she went we had a farewell trip to Brodie, one of our favourite outings. Pictured above is the group taken in the restaurant after a walk round the grounds.  
*Rose Fortune*



## CRAIGDARROCH HOSTS THE STRATH SENIOR CITIZENS

A happy afternoon was spent by 46 of us at Craigdarroch Hotel where we were treated like royalty by Kate, Dave and the staff. We did justice to a superb Christmas Dinner, after which Mrs Mary Campbell, Aberchalder, presented Kate with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation. Grateful thanks to the Knockie Trust for financing this pleasant meal together and thanks to all the staff at Craigdarroch. *Rose Fortune*



## Obituary

### George Smith Allan

George Allan of Oakbank, Inverfarigaig died suddenly at his home on the 6th December at the age of 66. He had been unwell for some years. He suffered from angina and was due to be admitted to Raigmore Hospital later in December for an angiogram. He died in his sleep during an afternoon nap in a chair after a visit to Inverness that morning.

George, who was born in St. Monance, Fife, married a local girl from Inverfarigaig, Isobel Mackintosh. They came back to live in the area nine years ago to help look after Isobel's mother Frances, a one-time post mistress at Inverfarigaig. At the time Mr Allan had been a security guard but previously he had been a policeman in Glasgow for many years. He was a DIY enthusiast who was known by many outside Inverfarigaig through his membership of the Bowling Club at the hall. He is survived by his wife and three children. The eldest son lives in Wishaw, a younger son in Kent and a married daughter in Germany.

## News from the Friends of The Telford Centre

At their recent A.G.M. the Friends of the Telford Centre elected their new chairperson Mary Cameron from Invergarry, a long serving committee member. Fellow office bearers are: - Treasurer: Marigold MacLennan (Invergarry); Secretary: Pat Bell (staff); Asst. Secretary: Christina Smith (staff); Vice Chairperson: James MacKerron (Drumnadrochit). Elected as committee members: Bob Riddle, Catriona Morrison, Neil Lafferty, Mina Beaton, Ken Anthony, Joyce Munn, Bert MacLennan, Sadie Hipkin, Kit Cameron, Hamish MacDonald, Marv Dale, Anne Steptoe, Brian Steptoe.

This strong team will work together to raise funds to improve the welfare of both the residents and day care users of The Telford Centre. Sadly Highland Council are unable to fund the little

essentials which enhance the facilities at the Centre. Over the years the Friends through their fund-raising efforts have provided financial assistance for many projects - Summer and Christmas parties, a loop system for the hard of hearing, garden furniture, a storage shed, a ride-on lawnmower, essential repairs to the greenhouse, and the extension and improvement of the slabbed area and pathways. Funds are still needed for the ongoing transformation of ground previously owned by the housing department, the provision of a deer fence to protect future planting of shrubs and trees, and a high quality portable gazebo where those enjoying the good summer weather can seek privacy and shelter. This will become a pleasant and enjoyable garden feature for all at the Telford Centre and its

neighbours.

The friends will have to continue much needed fund raising and we will again adhere to what we know works best for us - like the annual quiz competition which can attract about 16 teams from far and wide. Present holders of the shield are Glenmoriston. Our main fund-raiser, however, will be, courtesy of Edna and Linda, our famous great value 'Dinner Evenings with Light Entertainment' which people book tickets for months in advance. As one wit commented....Mrs Bucket's candlelit suppers have nothing on the Friends' fund raising dinners.

**MISS THEM AT YOUR PERIL**  
If you are not a member of the Friends Please join now. Annual fee £1.00  
Jim MacKerron (Vice Chairman)



### Keep Fit

Would anyone like a keep fit session in the hall after Easter? Like last year's but hopefully even more fun. Contact Iris on 01320 366235 or Heather on 486426 if you are interested. We need at least 8 people to make it viable.

**SOUTH LOCH NESS NURSERY ENROLMENTS** will take place in early February. All 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to a free nursery school place. To register your child for the session 2001/2002 or for information, contact Heather Parrott (486426) or Mary Campbell (486460).



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