

Farewell to Foyers Church



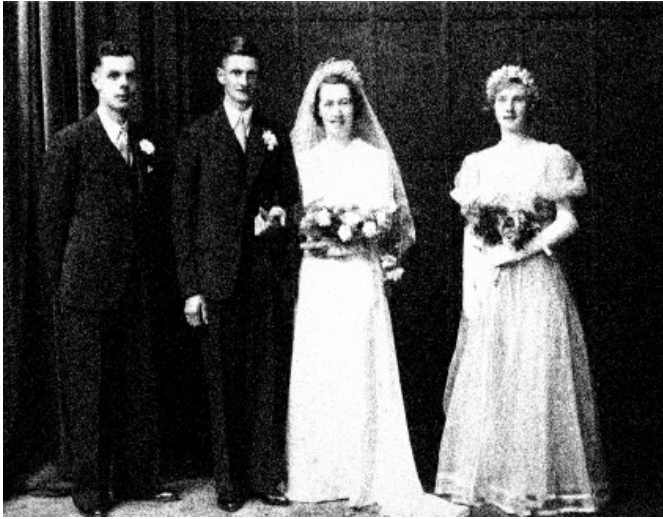
Ronnie Macdonald tolled the bell for the last time at the closing down service held in Foyers church on Friday evening 12th May. Len Cazaly (the locum minister) led the service which was conducted by the Moderator of the Inverness Presbytery, the Rev. Alex Whiteford. The

service was attended by a number of the presbytery some in their formal robes, lending a somber note to the occasion. Many present must have had nostalgic memories of family baptisms, marriages and funerals. Sadie and Jack Hipkin of Lower Foyers were married there on the 5th of June 1940 as were Kitty and Robin Fraser of Gorthleck on the 7th October 1952. (See page 2 for pictures.) The church distinguished by its magnificent wooden ceiling would have celebrated its centenary this year as it was built in 1906.

One wonders what the fate of this building will be.

Correction from last issue please note the Editors email address is peterlcraven@hotmail.com and not as stated in the last issue of the Bulletin.

My apologies for any confusion. Any suggestions for items to be included in future or contributions gladly accepted at this address.



Sadie and Jack Hipkin 1940



Kitty and Robin Fraser 1952

Local Ranger guided walks and events

All walks lead by Katy Martin Inverness and Nairn Senior Ranger

Tel 01463 724312 for information

Saturday 15th July "The Harry Potter Quest" 2.00 – 3.30 p.m.
Maybe you have seen the film or read the book, but have you tried the quest? Meet at Abriachan Forest Trust car park

Sunday 16th July "Life in the Undergrowth" Farr 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

What weird and wonderful creatures live in the undergrowth? Meet at the School Wood car park (Children 8 – 12 years)

Wednesday 9th August "Teddy Bear's Picnic" Farr 2.00 – 3.00 p.m.

If you go down to the woods today, you are sure of a big surprise. Meet at the School Wood car park (Children under 8 years)

Friday 25th August "Fireflies and Phantoms, Abriachan"

As the light fades, animals and plants use special tricks to tempt prey closer.
(Bring wellies)

Toilet paper alert

A Warning to all those with septic tanks – avoid buying thick quilted toilet paper as it clogs up the system ! Stick to buying the old fashioned thin stuff.

COMPANIES ACTS 1985 AND 1989

A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVE A SHARE CAPITAL

**MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION
OF
STRATHERRICK AND FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST LIMITED**

The Company's objectives are contained in the memorandum of association

(a) The promotion, for the benefit of the public, of urban or rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation and in particular in the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council area by all or any of the following means :-

- (i) the relief of poverty in such ways as may be thought fit;
- (ii) the relief of unemployment in such ways as may be thought fit including assistance to find employment;
- (iii) the advancement of education, training or retraining particularly among unemployed people and providing unemployed people with work experience;
- (iv) the creation of training and unemployment opportunities by provision of work space, buildings and/or land for use on favourable terms;
- (v) the maintenance, improvement or provision of public amenities;
- (vi) the preservation of buildings or sites of historical or architectural importance;
- (vii) the provision or assistance in the provision of recreational facilities for the public at large and/or those who by reasons of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social economic circumstances have need of such facilities;
- (viii) the protection or conservation of the environment;
- (ix) the promotion of public safety and prevention of crime;
- (x) such other means as may from time to time be determined subject to the prior written consent of the Inland Revenue Charities Department or any successor body.

To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in particular to conserve and manage for the public benefit community land and related assets in Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council area as an important part of the protection of Scotland's natural environment.

South Loch Ness Tourist Group

After the winter break, the group met for the first time this year at the Dores Inn on March 20th. Twenty-two people were in attendance – an excellent number and a clear sign of the progress that the group has made over the past couple of years.

Much of the discussions centred on the group's main marketing tools - the website and leaflet. The number of visitors to the website continues to grow and the leaflet has been reprinted this year following its outstanding success last year.

The group also welcomed back Lorna Maclellan of the Loch Ness Partnership for her regular update. She informed the group of progress on two major pieces of work, the Loch Ness Trail and road signage around the loch.

Ian Cameron told us a little about the work of the South Loch Ness Access Group in developing a 'Trail of the Seven Lochs' for riders, walkers and cyclists in the South Loch Ness area. If anyone would like more information on the work of the access group or on any of the paths and trails which are being developed, please contact Candy Cameron on 01463 -751251.

At the end of March, a number of South Loch Ness Tourist Group members took up the kind offer from Bill Grant for a 'familiarisation' trip aboard his boat the Loch Ness Express. Leaving from Foyers, we headed towards Urquhart Castle before speeding down to Fort Augustus for coffee. Thereafter, it was back up to Foyers – all within three hours so we know why the boat is called Loch Ness Express! We were very lucky with the weather – sunshine and a fairly calm loch and all in all a great time was had by all. Our thanks again to Bill Grant. His service is without doubt another valuable addition to tourism activities on the loch. If you would like to try out the Loch Ness Express phone 0800 328 6426 for more details.

Into April and members of the group got together again at Foyers for the group's 3rd annual 'litter pick-up'. This time we were joined by more local people out with the tourist group which was much appreciated and our warmest thanks to them. After coffee, kindly provided by Tim at the café, we set about our task. Although not quite as bad as last year, there were still some pretty grim patches, particularly around Foyers. However, as lunch time neared refreshments were once again kindly provided by Ella Macrae and by 1.30pm most of us were enjoying a well earned pint in the Dores Inn.

The group will meet again at the end of May.

Graeme Ambrose

Baxters Loch Ness Marathon

Malcolm Sutherland the Event Director for the Baxters Loch Ness Marathon. Writes to tell us that £403,000 was raised for local charities last year. He thanks every body who participated and those who helped as road marshalls and on drink station duties. There are still charity places available for Sunday 1st October 2006 for any budding runners. Contact Tel 0845 8382748 or Email E.malcolm@lochnessmarathon.com

Christian Comment

“Dear Friends” is the manner in which many Christian Ministers have addressed the Community through their Parish News Letters. It is not easy to be a friend to everyone; but it may help us to think of the consequences of not being friends.

We would miss out on the opportunity of being enriched by the other person’s life experience if we do not know them, if we do not try to speak with them. Sometimes people get to the stage when they are not on “speaking terms”. This can lead to family divisions, and may result in hatred, and causing bodily harm. At the worst there is murder, which is so often the case in warfare. There may be tribal conflict, sectarian divisions, and genocide - all because people are not friends.

It should be obvious that we all need to be friends the world over. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christian Church in the cosmopolitan sea port of Corinth, in the first century A.D. about this most important subject. He reminded them that we all shall be judged by God who knows all about us - both our private and public lives. We all have committed sins and need the forgiveness of one another and of God, who in Christ showed us the way when He said on the Cross outside Jerusalem, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”, as He was tormented by those who could be called His enemies. It is not easy to be a friend to everyone, yet by following the example of Jesus Christ, and through the inner strength of His Holy Spirit, and with the encouragement of our fellow Christians, we have to try.

Paul wrote, “We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into His friends.”

(2 Corinthians Ch.5 v.20)

I shall pass this way but once:
Any good thing, therefore, that I can do,
Or any kindness that I can show,
Let me do it now.
Let me not defer it or neglect it,
For I shall not pass this way again. Anon

IN THE COMMUNITY

Obituary

The funeral of Mr. Jimmy McPherson took place at the Roman Catholic Chapel in Whitebridge on Monday, 8th May. In his 87th year, Jimmy, a well-known character, was lovingly attended by his extensive family.

Christian Aid Week (14th - 21st May)

Thank you to all those kind people who donated and collected and counted for this most worth-while work - the total will be announced in our next issue.

Foyers Church

The Inverness Presbytery of the Church of Scotland relinquished its authority over the Church building at Foyers on Friday, 12th May in a formal ceremony starting at

7.00 p.m., ninety-nine years after it was first dedicated for the benefit of the community that has grown up around the new British Aluminium project. It is to be hoped that the building may be retained for the general use of the Community of Foyers, and for Christian Worship as opportunities present themselves.

CHURCH MEETINGS

Church of Scotland

Sunday: 10.00a.m. Boleskine, 11.30a.m. Dores.

Mr. Ian King 01463 751293

Episcopal Church

Sunday: 11.00a.m. Croachy.

Rev. Peter Mosley 01808 521397

Free Church

Sunday: 6.00 p.m. Errogie.

Mr. J. Campbell 01456 486240

Sunday: 10.30a.m. & 4.15p.m. Dores. Wednesday: 7.30p.m.

Mr. D. Fraser 01456 486408

Free Presbyterian Church

Sunday: 12 Noon Farr, every second Sunday: 7.00p.m. Gorthleck.

Mr. E. Fraser 01456 486282

Roman Catholic Church

Sunday: 12.00 noon Whitebridge.

Mrs. Therese Finley. Tel 01456 486747

Inter-denominational Bible Study

Rev. Martyn Bateman 01456 486273

Stratherrick Hall Arts

For some time now Stratherrick Hall Arts Sub-Committee have been using various methods to advertise forthcoming events at the Hall – advertising in the Boleskine Bulletin when time and the printing schedule permits, posters, road-side signs, direct mail, Ness Link web site etc. – but no one method on its own is ideal and many people have been disappointed at missing certain events. We are keen to create a database of those people who wish to be contacted with details of forthcoming events by e-mail or by conventional mail, so if you wish to be notified in advance of events coming to the Hall please fill in your details on the tear-off slip below and return it to:-

Hugh Nicol, Barr A Bhealaich, Ault Na Goire, Errogie IV2 6U

.....
Name.....

Address.....

e-mail address (if preferred)

.....

.....

Tel. no.....

STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL - NEWS

Stratherrick Primary have been very busy this year working on their Eco Schools Project. With money received from SNH and Awards For All, the garden has undergone some amazing transformations.

The first project to be completed was the Willow Structure. Paths and tunnels made from willow saplings lead to a central open area. It will be used as an outside classroom during good weather. It is also hoped to harvest the willow next year to make baskets.

Next it was the turn of the Plastic bottle Greenhouse. Those of you in the community who donated bottles in our tub at the school gates, or gave them to pupils, must have been wondering what they were for. The children had great fun in March helping to build the green house which used over 1500 recycled plastic bottles. The finished structure is quite incredible and stands about 2 metres high. It is now full of seedlings being grown on for the garden.

A Sensory Garden has also been added with herbs etc having been purchased on a visit to Brin Herb Nursery. The organic vegetable garden continues in our Tyre Garden and the children look forward to eating the produce for school Lunch!

At the end of March, the final piece was added to the garden - a pond. Plants have been put in which hopefully will attract lots of wildlife to the garden. The school has been taking part in the Beechgrove Garden Potting Shed Gardening Competition For Schools. Frieda Morrison has visited the school and the children keep in regular touch with her regarding their work in the garden. The result of this will be announced in June and hopefully all their hard work will pay off with success in this competition.

An OPEN AFTERNOON on FRIDAY 23rd JUNE 2006 from 2.30pm - 4.30pm will allow those of you who are interested to come along and see the garden improvements.

Teas/coffees will be served and there will be a home baking stall (and hopefully some plants for sale). We look forward to seeing you there!

Final Completion of Foyers Sewage works

At last there are signs that the sewage works in Foyers is about to be completed after months of road hold ups heavy vehicle traffic, and general disruption. Laybys and road verges have been badly affected, which hopefully will be restored. (No more smelly septic tanks!!).

Will this scheme be able to cope with further house building and justify the cost of the whole operation??

Glendoe Works May Update

A lot of progress has been made since the last bulletin in March.

Camp: Planning permission was finally granted in mid-April and work has now begun to prepare the site to receive the office and accommodation units at the end of May. The units will be painted in matt brown/beige to blend in with the surrounding area. Water and sewage treatment plants will be established on the site and it is hoped the first staff will be able to move in during July.

Recruitment: Once the camp is established recruitment of local staff can begin in earnest. An initiative by Inverness recruitment consultants Global Highland to run an advert in Polish caused a lot of disquiet. It was done without the knowledge or approval of Hochtief, the main contractor and Global Highland have made amends by running the same advert in English.

Blasting: There have been some complaints and concerns raised by local people about the noise from the blasting operation currently underway, particularly around the tailrace tunnel access road. Preliminary work on this road is complete but blasting has now begun on the tailrace tunnel portal - this is the tunnel from which the water will flow out once it has been through the turbine. It is expected that by mid-June the tunnel will be sufficiently advanced so that the noise of the blasts will be significantly muffled. In the meantime each explosion is preceded by a sequence of 10-second sirens. The first three sirens indicate 2 minutes to go; two sirens indicate one minute; and there is one 10-second siren immediately before the explosives are detonated. Afterwards a single siren is sounded for the all clear.

Blasting is also underway further up into the site to establish the main access tunnel and similar precautions are in force there, however for this location it is also necessary for some weeks to close the B862 as an additional safety precaution.

Cable Laying: Balfour Beatty Power Networks (BBPN) continue to make good progress laying the ducts through which the high voltage cables will be laid to eventually feed the power from the power station up to the substation at Auchteraw. The road works across the A82 have been completed and reinstated, as has the work on the road down to the Kilchuimen Burial Ground. BBPN are doing their best to accommodate particular requests from residents around this area and are mindful of minimising disruption during the holiday season. Work started at the beginning of May for the stretch from the golf course up to the A82 and the target for completion of this section is before the end of May.

Traffic Management: Work to strengthen the verges on the B862 from the village up to the site entrance will begin in mid-May and take around 6 weeks to complete. A manual traffic control system is in place at the first site entrance but fully automatic traffic lights will be installed once the road junction is completed and will be there for the duration of the project.

Site Works: Work is well under way to upgrade the existing estate track and the contract is about to be let for the new section over the hill to complete the road up to the dam site. The permanent substation building is complete with the new transformer expected towards the end of May. Ultimately this substation will take the power out of the new power station but in the interim will be used to supply power into the site and in particular the tunnel boring machine, which is expected on site in late July.

Anyone with questions or concerns about the project should contact **Douglas Gilchrist**, the Community Liaison Officer at **01463741322** or **07732477793** or email douglas.gilchrist1@btopenworld.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

Although I am no longer a resident of the "Bulletin" area having retired as parish minister and moved away from Foyers three years ago, I have been following with interest the debate in your columns and else where, regarding the proposed community buy-out of Foyers Church. Of course, I do not wish to comment on matters affecting my former congregation of Dores and Boleskine beyond the obvious one that continuance of its Christian witness and mission to the whole parish must inevitably be the concern of the whole congregation, and must be addressed by them. I do, however, wish to add my support to those who have pointed out the existence only 2 and a half miles from Foyers of a recently refurbished public hall with excellent facilities, which even so is presently under-used. So is there a need for another similar facility nearby? The answer in my opinion is - Hardly!

I would suggest that the efforts of the community should rather be directed to what can, and has been, the solution to the problem of viability of many a scattered rural community, namely the improvement of local public transport, either by the provision of a community minibus, the expansion of existing bus services or both. This would I think help to make the existing hall at Gorthleck, and many other facilities in the area, within easier reach of the non-car owning residents than at present. Meanwhile my wife Ann and I wish the community of Stratherrick and Foyers nothing but good, and Gods blessing for the future. And long may the "Bulletin" flourish
I am

Yours faithfully
(Rev.) James Christie

Monadhliath Mountains "Preferred area for wind farms!"

Unfortunately even though other areas earmarked for new wind farm development have been dropped our Monadhliath mountain area still seems to be one of the main areas chosen for future wind farms. Campaigner David Henderson, a former Head of Industrial and Natural Resources Development within Highland and Island Enterprise said "....the Monadhliaths are a gateway from the south and you are

still going to have a concentration of wind farms there. I took a trip up to the wind farm behind Tomatin and it is massive. That is just a small part of what is going to come, the Monadhliaths are going to be saturated. Super pylons will also be required to carry the energy away from the Region". One shudders to imagine how most of our beautiful views are going to be affected in an area that should have been designated an Area of Outstanding Beauty.

Buddy Macdougall

Comment

A good sign may be the recent decision by the Cairngorm National Park Authority to object to the building of the super pylons through the Cairngorm National Park (as reported by the BBC) although I suspect this decision is not truly final.

See <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/news/>.

Also other objections that have been put in by the involved local authorities (See the BEN pages for details). After all no pylons no use producing the power!!

Dear Friends

On the 21st of April, we held a little party in Stratherrick Hall to celebrate a belated Primrose day, a touch of the Queens birthday and, secretly we had decided our Golden Wedding. A few astute neighbours probed further and, to some, our secret was disclosed.

Since that day we have been told how much the afternoon was enjoyed and been thanked for what we did, but here we would like to say that it was you who made the day. All we did was make it possible for old friends to meet, while we walked around with tea and coffee pots. The ambience and conversations were the product of lovely people meeting, of genuine friendships among the folks of this Strath and a willingness to share each others pleasure.

May we thank you all, both those who attended and those who for varied reasons could not, for the good wishes and congratulations so generously offered, and a special mention to Rosie Kern for producing the music that tempted our old bones on to the dance floor, even the canine guests were lulled by the melodies. It should be mentioned that on that same date so many years ago, Irene carried a bouquet of flowers which were almost replicated by those presented by the Coffee Club.

If we shed a tear, it was through happiness and was perhaps the best gift we could have received from the good people of Stratherrick and Foyers. Thank you all, and many thanks again.

Yours

Irene and West Robertson

SOUTH LOCH NESS HERITAGE GROUP

Speaker at Dores

The next Open meeting of the Group will be on 6 June at Dores Hall at 7.30pm and will be a talk by Mr Malcolm Wield former Forest Manager at Forth Augustus. His talk is entitled "Ancient Woodland of Loch Ness" and promises to be of considerable interest. The Bulletin may not be out in time to be of help to readers, but we shall be displaying posters advertising this talk, around the area.

AGM and Open Meeting

The September meeting will be held in Gorthleck Hall and will be on Tuesday 12 September at 7.30pm. Last year we had one meeting without a speaker but with input from our members and this was much enjoyed as it gave members a chance to talk amongst themselves and to the Committee, about matters which concerned or interested them. We have also received another good collection of old prints of local inhabitants and dwellings which no doubt long term dwellers will remember. We are incorporating our A.G.M. into this meeting, but it really will be of quite short duration. One or two members have agreed to give 10 minute talks on local matters (not too much arm twisting!). We would very much like to see as many local people as possible as all inhabitants of South Loch Ness are automatically members of this group.

December Meeting - Margaret Bennett

We have been fortunate to obtain the well-known speaker, Margaret Bennett for our December meeting on Tuesday 12th at Gorthleck Hall. She is a Scots Folklorist, singer, writer, and broadcaster, very much in demand, so we are lucky to have been able to acquire her for this date. We shall be advertising this event well in advance and hope to provide her with a good audience.

"A Country Called Stratherrick" - New Edition

I am sure people will be pleased to know that the long-awaited second edition of Alan Lawson's book "A Country called Stratherrick" will be collected from the printers around 1 July and those who have reserved copies will be notified then. The book will be available for sale at the September and December meetings. We would like to stress that this is not just a reprint, but a Second Edition which has had additions provided by Alan's sons, and also now includes 23 stunning colour prints and coloured front and back cover. A book to treasure and pass on to one's children. The amount of information which Alan Lawson collected in his preparation for this book is remarkable.

Peat Cutting

Alex Sutherland is the only Stratherrick inhabitant still to be cutting and using peat for fuel. A handful of people from the Group went with him one morning in May to watch the process

The formation of peat is fascinating, involving limited decomposition of the vegetation, restricted by acidity and lack of oxygen, leaving a fibrous end product, compacted over centuries by pressure from above. The rate of formation varies, but is probably not more than 1mm per year. Since peat layers can be metres deep, the

material is often two to four thousand years old. Despite this, the Group saw pieces of branch embedded, at depth, which were still clearly recognisable as birch, showing no more decomposition than if they had been on the surface for a couple of years.

There was a long period, before oil and electricity, and after most of the natural forest of Scotland was destroyed by felling and overgrazing, when peat was a vital fuel source, and in many cases, the only fuel source. Some of the older inhabitants of the area were involved in peat cutting, and the tell-tale signs of peat workings from past centuries can clearly be seen in the heather. (There are good examples on the right of the road heading north out of Errogie, and on the left of the B851 after the junction.)

Thanks to Alex for a fascinating morning. I'm sure that if anyone is interested there could be a repeat performance.

More news of the Group in the next Bulletin. Have a lovely summer

Jean Marshall



Alex Sutherland shows a piece of birch branch from the drying peat

Slicing the top layer of peat with Alex's home made tool



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

AIDS HELP LINE: Freephone 0800 567123 Open 24 Hrs
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (AA) Open 24 Hrs confidential service, charged at local rates. Tel 08457 697555 Scottish service office. For information on meetings etc. Tel. 01412 262214

ALCOHOL COUNSELING (INVERNESS) Tel 01463 220995 Free confidential one to one counseling for anyone 16 years and over who is worried about their own or someone else's drinking.

BROOK HIGHLAND 77 Church St Inverness Tel 01463 242434. Sexual Health Advisory Service for young people under 25 years old. Contraception, pregnancy testing, infection testing and counseling available.

CHILDLINE Tel 0800 1111 Free confidential advice for children and young people 24 Hrs a day.

CHILDLINE SCOTLAND (BULLYING) Tel 0800 441111 Free advice Mon to Fri 3.30p.m. To 9.30p.m.

CITIZEN ADVICE (Inverness) Tel 01463 235345

CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE Tel 01463 713741

SEXUAL HEALTH Highland Sexual Health outpatients Raigmore Hospital Tel 01463 704202 All ages, free, confidential, **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** Contraception including emergency, pregnancy testing, diagnosis/treatment of infections and HIV, Postal condom service.

SAMARITANS 66 Tomnahurich St Inverness Tel 01463 713456 Also Tel 0345 909090 charged at local rate. All branches offer 24 Hr service.

DRUGLINE SCOTLAND Tel 0800 776600 Free 24 Hr confidential advice on drugs.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL Tel 0345 002005 Emergency number for homelessness and repairs after 5.00p.m.

SOCIAL WORK HOTLINE Tel 08457 697284 calls charged at local rate 24 Hr service

VICTIM SUPPORT Tel 01463 710806

RAPE AND ABUSE LINE Free confidential listening support Call free on 08088 000123 every evening This line is answered by women. Call free on 08088 000122 This line is answered by men both lines open 7.00p.m. till 10.00p.m

FAMILY MEDIATION HIGHLAND Tel 01463 712100

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

John Campbell (Chairman)	Gorthleck 486 240	Fiona Kirkland (Secretary)	Gorthleck 486 283
Tine Butterworth (Treasurer)	Gorthleck 486 275	Angus Fraser	Gorthleck 486 650
Kenny Fraser	Gorthleck 486 220	Lesley MacGregor	Foyers 486 404
Helen Grainger	Inverfarigaig 486 231	Sandy MacPherson	Torness 01463 751213
Eileen Martin	Gorthleck 486 661	Martyn Bateman	Whitebridge 486 273

Minute of Meeting 28 February

Correspondence: Consultative Draft - Highland Council Access Strategy 2006-2011. Forestry Commission - Introducing the 2007 Great Glen Mountain Bike Trails. Highland Environmental Network - Saturday 11th March at Kirkhill. An Arainneachd. Association of Scottish Community Councils - membership. It was agreed to re-subscribe (cost £15.00).

Treasurer: Ord. Acc: £49.57. A cheque for £250.00 was issued to the secretary for expenses. Project Acc: £3323.21.

Planning: The planning application for Cameron at Gorthleck was passed by Inverness Planning committee.

Policing: Only one reported crime this month - the ladies toilet at Foyers was broken into over the Christmas period.

Fire Brigade: The community fire safety leaflet drop has been suspended in favour of knocking on every door to ascertain if advice is required. Mr Kirkland requested that Mr Campbell send a letter to the Chief Fire Officer to find out when the new unit will be in situ.

Roads and Road Signs: 'Twenty's plenty' - traffic surveys are being carried out. Aldourie has been done and Mrs Macrae will chase Gorthleck and Foyers.

Water and Sewerage: Mrs Macrae will try to follow up new contacts as she has not had a satisfactory response from Scottish Water regarding the water supply. Mr Fraser received a letter but has been unable to speak to the person he was directed to. The secretary has had no response.

Community Project: The sub-group have met twice to move forward with the project. Play equipment has been decided upon and the professional advice from an architect in Inverness has been sought.

Renewable Energy and Community Benefit: Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust - 5 Nomination forms have been submitted. Five being the required number to serve on the Trust, there is no need for an election. The secretary was instructed to contact Munro and Noble to clarify how to take it forward. Negotiations - there was a meeting with HC chief solicitor to find out if SSEs offer would duplicate other energy efficiency schemes. No firm advice was given but it was noted that our negotiating position is weak as SSE are not obliged to give anything to the community. There was a meeting with SSE to ask for a relaxation of the strings attached to this offer but with no agreement reached. There is to be a further meeting with SSE and the percentage split with Fort Augustus is still to be determined. It was unanimously agreed that Mr Alex Sutherland should be co-opted as a member of the CC to carry on negotiations as an official representative on our behalf.

Liaison Group - Mr Campbell attended the meeting and was told that the planning application for the camp had not been passed, owing to objection. This means a delay of 6 weeks. Scottish Water have declined the application for water so they will have to bore for water for the camp.

AOB: Avian Flu - Mr M Elgar-Bond suggested the need for disinfectant for the hall car park to prevent the spread of the virus. It was agreed that this was not required at the moment but the secretary was instructed to suggest that she contact the Provision Veterinary Officer, Mr Charlie Moir, Longman House, Inverness to get information on what may be required.

Sixth form education - concern was raised by the recent news that Advanced Highers and intermediate courses are to be cut in a cost-cutting exercise by Highland Council. It was felt that students are already at a disadvantage compared to students with A levels, therefore any reduction in the provision of courses would be detrimental. The secretary was instructed to write to Mr Bruce Robertson, Director of Education, to express the concerns.

Care of the Elderly - Mr S Reid is concerned that the reduction of Council care provision will be detrimental to society. He agreed to draft a letter in protest at the proposed closure of homes in Inverness.

Foyers Church - at the meeting with Keith Gibson, the need for parking was highlighted if the church is used as a community facility. Mr Bateman contacted the Forestry Commission who own the land opposite and they agreed that they would give land to be used for car parking. There has been no contact from the Church of Scotland with details of cost, when it will go on the market etc.

Bogbain Farm - after further discussion, a vote was taken and it was agreed that a short letter be sent to Highland Planning stating that, although the area is out with our area, the CC were concerned by the proposed development.

Minute of Meeting 28 March

Correspondence: Highland Council housing transfer proposal. Whitebridge Service Bus - Mr & Mrs Tweedlie sent a letter stating their lack of confidence in the school service run by Rapsons Coaches. Mrs C Fraser reinforced the general feeling amongst parents as to the unreliability of the service. It was felt that the driver living on the other side of the Suidhe was a problem, as the road over the Suidhe is often in a poorer condition than the road from Whitebridge to Inverness. A lack of communication from Rapsons means the children may be waiting for at least 20 minutes in freezing conditions. On some days the bus has been late, resulting in children missing it as they have waited the allotted time and gone home. Phone calls to Rapsons are generally not answered until after 9am to find out what is happening. It was suggested that Rapsons could call someone at the beginning of the route to alert them to the situation and calls could then be made by parents down the line. Secretary instructed to write to Rapsons and copy the letter to the IRA and Highland Council Education. Highland Council Education - Mr Bruce Robertson, a position statement in reply to letter sent about Advanced Highers, stating that the decisions lay with each school and the curriculum would not be finalised until after Easter. Discussion suggested that courses had already been cut, not just Highers. It was felt that there would be difficulties with timetabling if the idea of running courses between schools and the college were to go ahead.

Treasurer: Ord. Acc: £69.74. (£41.50 Old Age Pensioners Christmas fund, £28.24 CC) A payment of £21.37 was made to Canon for the photocopier. Project Acc: £4733.64. Mrs Macrae gave £1410.00 from her Discretionary fund.

Planning: Mr & Mrs Tweedlie - house in grounds of Birchwood, Errogie. There were no objections. Mr & Mrs Cameron raised an objection to proposed house on the Bank at Glenlia, Foyers. It was agreed to look at the site before the next meeting and a decision made when the plans are submitted.

Fire & Rescue Service: ADO Graham Robertson – Remit, fire safety. The Fire Service is becoming more community based. Through Integrated Risk Management Plans, they assess individual areas and the way the community is made up. They compare this with the historic fire calls so that the fire service personnel can be given the most suitable training. It is hoped that fires can be prevented rather than the Service just reacting to calls, therefore it is necessary to speak to people in their own homes. A form is used to ask simple questions and receive information about the house. The questions are not probing, but help to guide the advice given. Fire alarms may be installed if necessary and, if deemed appropriate, new equipment may be given to replace old, dangerous appliances. Mr Campbell had not received a reply to his letter asking about the new unit. Mr Robertson apologised and said that he would try to find out. Mrs Macrae said that it had gone through planning but it may be held up in 'estates', and she will check. _

Roads and Road Signs: Twenty's Plenty - still working through the system. A speed check is in place at Errogie. Consultation with school boards / CC's etc will start soon. Permission has to be received from Scottish Executive. It is hoped that they should be in place by the end of the year.

Water and Sewerage: It is thought that the reason for the restriction on connections to the water supply is owing to Scottish Water not having the correct licence. They are abstracting more water than legally allowed. Licensing agreements are to be changed to SEPA late in the year. This is now classed as a restricted area and any plans that have not got full planning by August 2005 will not be connected. Scottish water are not commenting on any plans that HC pass to them, therefore HC are not in a position to refuse planning on the grounds of no water, which will undoubtedly cause problems in future months. The secretary was instructed to write to Mr Danny Alexander.

Community Project: The proposals for the amenity area have been passed to the architect, who is currently working on the plan.

Renewable Energy and Community Benefit: It is necessary to call an AGM to pass the information and reins over to the new Trust. It was agreed that this should be held on Tuesday 18 April, at 7.30pm in Stratherrick Hall. Mr Martyn Bateman and Mrs Helen Grainger agreed to be representatives for the CC.

Liaison Group meeting: 29 March. Mr Campbell will bring up the question of jobs for locals as it seems that a lot of the employment is being given to a foreign workforce. Also HQC vans are using this side of the loch in the mornings rather than the A82.

AOB: Foyers Footpaths - work has been done on the footpaths to Lower Foyers. Foyers Church - suggested selling prices were given out by the Church of Scotland: £185,000.00 for the manse; £85,000.00 for the church; £45,000.00 for the tin hall.

Minute of Meeting 25 April 2006

Correspondence: Canon - informing the CC that parts for the photocopier could be obsolete if it broke down. It was agreed to keep the existing copier while it is still working. Fire Brigade - in response to the letter from the CC. Forest Enterprise asked that the new unit be re-sited as it was on an existing pathway. The delay has meant that new tenders have to be sought. It is hoped that work should commence in May or June. Loch Ness Partnership - there are to be changes to the structure of the Partnership, now being made up of 6 major businesses rather than all the representatives that were on previously.

Treasurer: Ord. Acc: £69.74 (£41.50 is the OAP Christmas fund). Project Acc: £4183.21 (a cheque was issued in respect of planning permission and consultancy fees for £550.43).

Planning: Application for a house at The Bank, Glenlia, Foyers. Mr and Mrs Cameron and Mr T Williams informed the CC that they are objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- a) it is contrary to the local development plan
- b) it has already been refused by Highland Council. The main change made is that there will be some trees planted as screening but there have already been many cut down
- c) it is probably the first of up to three houses on the site, as Mr Rybak has refused a Clause 75 (which limits a development to one house)

The CC agreed to back their objection. Secretary was instructed to write to the Planning Department.

Roads and Road Signs: Whitebridge School Bus - the bus was 25minutes late recently, not related to the weather. Exams have started and it is imperative that children get to school on time. Some parents are making alternative arrangements to ensure that they do. The bus is coming from Fort Augustus again and it is foreseeable that construction traffic could delay it. Parents have phoned the education department and the school, again with limited response. It was decided that the CC should ask for a meeting with Mr Bruce Robertson, Director of Education, to discuss the contracts as there have been no replies to letters sent last month. Glendoe Hydro Scheme - there appears to be traffic using this side of the Loch: HQC lorries and water tankers transporting water from Loch Ashie, as well as other 'white van' traffic. Mr Campbell will be meeting representatives of Glendoe at the Liaison meeting on Wednesday 26 April and will discuss the subject.

Water and Sewerage: Scottish Water – ongoing.

Community Project: Mr Nicol spoke to Mr Campbell about getting the lease drawn up for access from the hall car park. Agreed to ask him to tell his solicitor to go ahead. A meeting of the subgroup was arranged for 4 May to discuss funding.

Renewable Energy and Community Benefit: The AGM of the Trust was held on Tuesday 18 April. Mr Campbell and Mrs Kirkland resigned and the new directors of the Trust took over. They are: Mr Alex Sutherland (Interim Chair person), Mr Paul Higham (Interim Treasurer/ Secretary), Mr Mark Houston, Mr Willie Fraser, Mr Martyn Bateman, Mrs Helen Grainger, Mr A Holt. Forms were filled in for Companies House, it was agreed that a business plan should be drawn up to support the application for charitable status. There will be ongoing publicity to notify the community of what is going on. The next meeting will be held on 2 May.

AOB: Foyers footpaths - the upgrades have been completed.

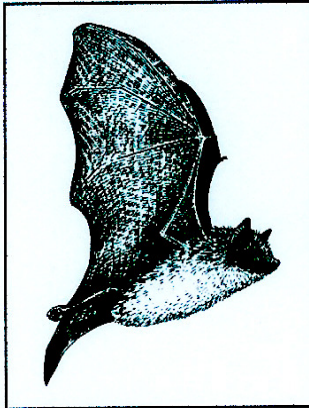
Next meeting: Tuesday 23rd May

Highland Councillor
Mrs Ella MacRae
01456 751 203
ella.macrae.clr@highland.gov.uk

The Wildlife Recording Group has been busy during the last few months - learning more about

Bats – and fascinating sounds

- an evening with Steve Austin listening to bats and learning to identify the species by hearing the different sounds they make for echo locating and feeding. Several of the group are keen to have their own bat detector. You may see individuals strolling slowly along the local pathways at dusk with faces upturned to the sky and wearing headphones but they are not listening to the Top 20 !!



Birds – out with an expert

- a privileged few experienced a great day bird listening, not bird watching, in the company of wildlife expert Kenny Taylor. We concentrated on birdsong to identify our birds even when they cannot be seen in the leafy trees. It certainly taught us to use our ears more than our eyes and even to leave the binoculars in their case!! Sounds, previously unheard, were suddenly oh so obvious. Lets hope we will now be able to lengthen our lists of birds present in the area.

and collecting records on

Squirrels

- preparing for the national squirrel survey by measuring out transects (a strip of land 30m x 1m) in a number of places in the forest between Dores and Foyers. Three times this year, the transects (called feeding cone transects) will be scrutinized for cones that have been stripped of their seeds by squirrels, the number of cones will be counted and an estimated number of squirrels present can then be calculated. A better knowledge of the habits and population size of the red squirrel will help to protect them from the advances of the grey squirrel. The grey is now as far north as Aberdeen and expanding

rapidly bringing with it the squirrel pox, which is fatal to reds.

Annual Wader Survey

- The annual wader survey has got underway. Following on from last year's successful study we hope to repeat the survey each year to establish the numbers of breeding pairs within the Strath. By watching the behavior of birds such as curlews, lapwings and oyster catchers it is possible to estimate the numbers of breeding pairs of each species. Waders are nationally in decline due to the drainage of wetlands throughout the country.

Moths – an exciting find

- Two moth traps are being circulated within the group. Tom Prescott of the Butterfly Conservation Trust gave a session on moth handling and identification, (subsequently followed by safe moth release). Moth trapping is a totally absorbing pastime and should carry an addiction warning!! Tom had asked us to watch out for the Barred Toothstripe until now rare in the Highlands, although one had been recorded in Dores in the 1996. However, we were pipped to the post by 4 expert moth-ers who set their traps on the night of 28th April 06, in the Pass of Inverfarigaig. A Barred Toothstripe was caught!! Rosemary Holt followed this up in her garden a few days later. Very exciting. Several more have been recorded in Dores and Abriachan. The moth community is thrilled. What a pity we were not the first to find one!! It is only by recording species present that it is possible to establish populations present.

Moths

**Join.....Tom Prescott of the
Butterfly Conservation Trust**

Thursday 27th July 8.00pm
an evening talk with slides

Friday 28th July 9am
see what we have caught overnight

***“discover the many shapes, colours and
hues of this amazing species”***

Stratherrick Hall

Highland Council's Renewable Energy Strategy. How it will affect us

At the end of 2004 Highland Council, besieged with green energy applications and fed up with a lack of guidance from the Scottish Executive on how to deal with the applications for wind farms and hydro electric schemes in the area, decided to go ahead and write its own energy policy. It was not an option for the Council to do nothing or to "opt out" of its position as planning authority as the developments would simply have been approved by default.

The Council set up a Renewable Energy Working Group and engaged consultants to prepare a draft policy, which was then taken around the Highland area in a series of road shows. Some 562 responses were lodged to the first draft that contained 11 "preferred areas" where there would be a general presumption in favour of applications provided that they met other detailed conditions, such as amenity, access points, and reinstatement.

Following consideration by the Councillors the 11 target areas have now been reduced to 3 – East Sutherland, East Ross, and the Monadhliath mountains which are bounded on their northern fringe by Stratherrick and Loch Ness. These locations are seen as being capable of accommodating multiple wind farms in the manner of potential "wind parks". So, the prospect of further planning applications for such developments is very likely in our area with more of the present and ongoing disturbance and damage to roads and other infrastructure.

The strategy has been driven by the entirely arbitrary targets, which the Government has set for reductions in Co2 emissions and renewable energy installations to be achieved by 2020. This has been backed by exceptionally generous payments to the developers behind the "industry", the land owners

and their agents who are lining up to get their snouts in the trough which is being fed from the surcharge on our electricity bills! Power saving, and small scale micro generation of power, is taking a very small back seat in the overall scheme of things and the modest payments to the Community Trusts are a miniscule proportion of profits.

'the prospect of further planning applications for such developments is very likely in our area'

The only real delay on the horizon to this exploitation of our local environment and damage to our tourism industry is the potential delay to upgrading the Beaulieu to Denny transmission line caused by a potential public local enquiry but I have a suspicion that this will be steamrollered through by the Government with a minor under-grounding concession near the Cairngorm National Park.

Don't however let the above in any way diminish your objections as the schemes come along, watch out for the public notices, attend the public meetings, push for damage limitation, and always remember that a government that can't even organise a dental service is teetering on the edge of its competence when trying to get its head around an issue as complex as green energy and its many interactions.

A. Sutherland.
Chairman B.E.N.

- *All four local authorities (Stirling, Clackmannanshire, Perth & Kinross and Highland) affected by the Beaulieu Denny electricity power line upgrade have now objected to the proposals for 600 'mega' electricity pylons over 137 miles.*
- *Highland Councillors agreed that they should lobby the Scottish Executive, the UK Department of Trade and Industry and Ofgem to release extra funding to allow SSE to underground the line in four particularly sensitive areas. The authority also wants to continue talks with SSE to avoid or shorten the eventual public enquiry.*
- *2006 is the last summer you will be able to see the River E in its natural form. Take a walk up this delightful river as work will be starting on the hydro scheme later in the year. Like the river Feichlin a large percentage of the water flow will be diverted down a pipe away from the rivers course.*

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“Scot of the Anarchic”

A celebration of the literary talents of Iain Crichton Smith

This is a new drama from Splinters Productions who brought the hugely successful George Mackay Brown’s “For The Islands I Sing” to Stratherrick Hall last year.

Paying a compelling and affectionate tribute to one of Scotland’s best-loved literary figures, these village dramas are by turns moving, hilarious and uplifting, and showcase Iain Crichton Smith’s talents as storyteller, playwright and poet, along with his unique vision of Highland life and culture. We meet a host of fascinating characters: Sam Spaid, Mrs Napoleon, Jimmy the Magician, One-Eyed Angus, Timoshenko, ‘Captain’ Kenneth John and most delightfully eccentric of all Murdo – the author’s alter ego – a kind of Scottish Don Quixote tilting at the 20th Century!

Crichton Smith’s themes range from exile and loneliness to stoicism and final redemption, and always tempered by his distinctive off-beat humour.

**Friday 7th July - 8.00 p.m.
Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck**

Due to circumstances beyond our control this event was postponed from 3rd June

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Advance Notice

The Grappelli Tribute

Gypsy Jazz in the Hot club of Paris Style (1930s)

Tim Kliphuis, Dutch gypsy jazz violinist of international fame (played with Les Paul, Fapy Lafertin, Martin Taylor, etc.), will be at Stratherrick Hall on **Saturday 18th November** with a trio from the renowned Edinburgh-based hot club band, Swing 2006. Tim’s spirit and style very much resembles that of the late Stephane Grappelli – a virtuoso violin playing with a love for melody. This will be a swinging evening, so mark it in your diary now!

“Stephane Grappelli’s style is alive and well in the hands of Tim Kliphuis”

Nigel Kennedy

Stratherrick Hall

Bowls - Tuesdays 7.30-9.30pm. Phone 486653

Toddlers Group - Wednesdays 10.30a.m. - 12.30

Youth Club - Fridays - 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Yoga Classes - Tuesdays - 10.30 a.m. - 12.00 phone 486434

Watch the notice board for details of the community trust meeting

To book the hall ‘phone Judith Borup on 01456 486464

See the notice board outside the hall for other local events

See also local website <http://scottish-cottages.co.uk/hall.htm> and click on Stratherrick Public Hall

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Heather Campbell
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heather_pixie@hotmail.co.uk Tel. 07783433843

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Would anyone with property available for long term let in and around the Fort Augustus area please contact Mr David Kerly, Hochtief's commercial manager on:

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Email - david.kerly@htglendoe.com

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