

The Boleskine Bulletin



Issue No. 31
Summer 2005

WILL THE PARTY END?



The Committee of the **Children's Christmas Party**, 2004, held a meeting to discuss the way forward. It was decided that this Committee would disband.

There is an opportunity for a new team to continue this event. Generous donations were received last year and there is a balance of £150 in the Bank. Any future event will require significant fundraising.

If there is no interest in taking this further by the end of August, the money will be donated to the proposed community amenity park.

Margaret Campbell, Treasurer. Tel. 01456 486240

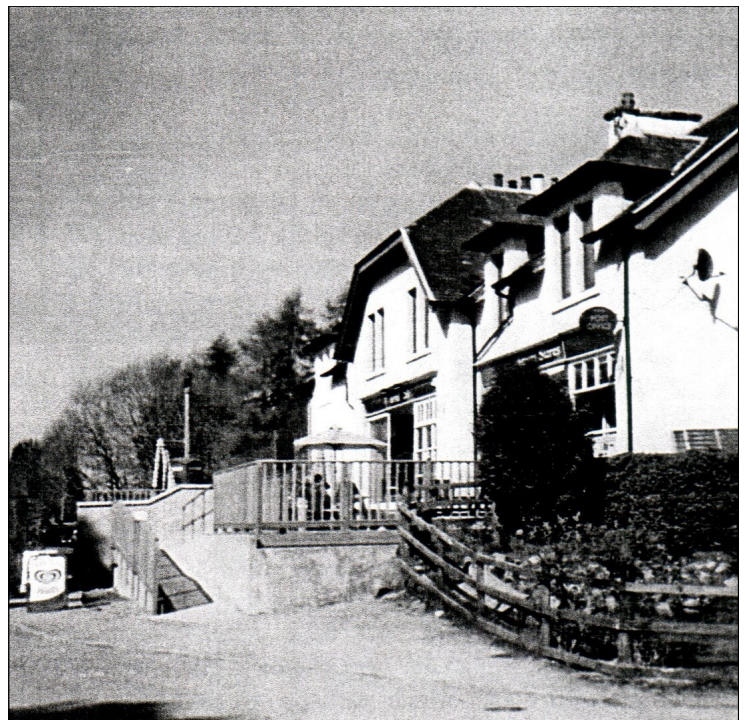
Archaeological Task Force

A team of archaeologists is to arrive in Inverness later this year. It hopes to uncover scores of ancient remains in need of protection as Historic Scotland regards the Inverness area as 'underscheduled' leaving many nationally important sites at risk especially now that so much clearing and development is going on for the building of houses and the associated roadworks.

When the land at Culduthel was levelled in order to build the new Inverness Royal Academy, a Pictish cist grave was found complete with skeleton. Subsequently this worried the builders whenever tools went astray or strange things happened as they blamed it on the disturbance of the grave!

There are so many traces of previous inhabitants in our area and a thorough survey using aerial photographs is to be welcomed.

NEW LOOK SHOP



Police Section

A few issues have arisen since the last Bulletin that I feel are worth mentioning in the interests of all members of the community.

The first is just a general piece of advice regarding people calling at houses in the area. Should anybody answer the door to a person claiming to be from an official body i.e. water, electric, council employees and many others, I would urge you to ask to see some form of identification. All representatives from official bodies should carry an identification badge or some other form of accreditation; asking to see this will NEVER offend the individual and it is a perfectly reasonable request. I drive a marked police car, wear a full uniform and I have been asked in the past to produce my warrant card and been happy to do so.....If it's good enough for me!

With regard to the recent numerous vans in the area selling generators and power tools, the goods are purchased legitimately at wholesale prices and then sold on from the back of these vans. No problem there then but it is definitely a case of buyer beware - there will be little or no comeback should these goods fail to work or break down after a few days. It is always best to deal with reputable companies, even though the temptation is to save a few pounds, it will cost more in the long run.

I would like to thank our two neighbourhood watch co-ordinators, John Willie Campbell for Stratherrick, Gorthleck and Errogie area and Dave Allen for the Whitebridge area for volunteering their valuable time for the community. A homewatch co-ordinator for the Foyers area of the beat has yet to be found - any volunteers?

There have been a number of incidents of minor damage in the Foyers area in recent weeks. I know it is difficult to know what our children are up to all of the time but please be aware of this issue. High spirits spilling over into damaging property will end up spelling trouble for our youngsters.

Wild Flowers in Foyers



There has been a succession of wild flowers blooming alongside the path on the Lower Foyers woodland walk bordering Foyers Bay and the River Foyers. First wood anemones, mainly white but some a pale mauve, bright brassy yellow celandines bordering the path and a clump of white flowering sorrel near the bridge (we used to eat the sour-tasting sorrel leaves when we were children and called them 'soorex'). Then the wild garlic flowered in white profusion and myriads of creamy yellow primroses opened in the grassy glades. Luxurious clumps of marsh marigold appeared in one of the marshy ponds and of course the ubiquitous dandelion (from the French 'dent de lion' - tooth of the lion). In France the young leaves are eaten as a salad.

Then in May, the ground under the trees in places was a sheet of blue as the bluebells flowered. There seem to be more than ever year by year. In Summer, spires of tall pink foxgloves open and attract hosts of bumble bees which are also attracted to pink flowering clover beside the fish farm.

Can there be a more pleasant walk I wonder?

Buddy MacDougall



Glass Recycling

New bottle banks have been placed beside the bus shelter at Lower Foyers. Now locals and visitors don't need to discard their empty bottles in their wheelie bins.



Book Reading Club

The club was formed just after the last edition of the Boleskine Bulletin and has been a very happy venture. We meet usually on a Monday afternoon for a couple of hours and just talk about the book we have read, whether we enjoyed it, etc. Then we discuss our next choice. The idea is to make us pick up books which perhaps we wouldn't necessarily read, and hopefully find a few authors which will

become firm favourites. It is not meant to be a highbrow literary group, just friends enjoying a good read. We number four at the moment and feel the Group would benefit from one or two more members. Please do join us if you feel you would care to.

Jean Marshall, 01456 486758. jem@care4free.net

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

John Campbell (Chairman) Gorthleck 486 240
Tine Butter worth (Treasurer) Gorthleck 486 275
Ken Fraser Gorthleck 486 220
Helen Grainger Inverfarigaig 486 231
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 22 February

Falls of Foyers: Mrs Maxwell (Highland Council Planning and Development Service) informed the CC that land around the falls was managed by the Planning and Development Service. They have a small budget (£150-200) per annum and seek grants. The woodland is heavily used by visitors and therefore they can get grants from the Forestry Commission, up to 85% as a one off as well as some maintenance costs. There is a need to ascertain what is needed at Foyers e.g. cutting back rhododendrons, pruning trees for H&S reasons, pathway improvements, seating. This will be done through a consultation process and a management plan will be developed. There has already been an idea locally to floodlight the falls. This could be brought into the consultation process so that the 'big' picture can be seen and any work required planned for now. The floodlighting will not be covered by FC grants. Mr McNally asked about getting a path on the other side of the river re-instated. Mrs Maxwell thought this could be quite likely, although they will be more concerned with the land on the shop side of the river as they own it. She would bring it up with the Access Officer. A consultation meeting was arranged for 15 March 2005 at the Waterfall Café, 3.00 - 8.30pm.

Correspondence: Canon - unique parts for the photocopier will not be manufactured after 2006. Agreed not to change the machine until forced to do so. NHS-OOH services - any complaints should be sent to Dr Roger Gibbins, Assynt House, Beechwood Park, Inverness, IV2 3HG. RES - Environmental Impact Statement for consultation. Falls of Foyers floodlighting - Mrs Young was unaware of the event (notices were in the shop, but not elsewhere so that the event would be kept as 'local' as possible) and is strongly against permanent floodlighting. No decision has been made. The combined consultation with HC will allow everyone to make views known. Foyers ferry - a charitable company has been formed. Mrs L MacGregor agreed to be the representative on the board for the CC. Mr Neil Ellis - request to remove bottle banks to stop further road damage. Secretary instructed to contact Mr Hume, recycling officer to discuss. Mr McCormack informed CC that most damage was caused by water and that he had offered to help with the cost of repairs as delivery vehicles will continue to use it.

Treasurer: Ord. acc. £122.47, cheques issued Canon £39.42, Feis £50.00. Deposit £9.45 from photocopier. Project acc. £1200.52. Mrs Macrae told CC to expect a £2000 plus cheque from her for the project.

Planning: Dhuhallow, Errogie - alterations to both to form accommodation; a planning condition will be road widening. Glenlia Farm, Foyers - refurbishment of cottage and barn conversion to form dwelling house.

Roads and Road Signs: Mr John Taylor and Mrs Macrae to travel roads to check conditions. Mrs Macrae will speak to Education concerning gritting Foyers School road. Verges along Killen road have been improved.

Water and Sewerage: Scottish Water/Gorthleck Sewerage works - the position of the works has been moved down the field by about 30m. If the objections from nearby houses are removed, work should start within 4 - 6 weeks. Scottish Water/Foyers Sewerage works - plans are going out to the landowner imminently. Work should start within a couple of months. Mr McCormack strongly objected to the timing of the roads works which will coincide with Easter holidays and the beginning of the season.

Community Project: SNH have agreed to give funding, conditional on signing of the lease. The project was told to expect another £500.00 from Mrs Macrae.

Renewable Energy and Community Benefit: Glendoe hydro scheme - even although the environmental statement claims that there will be virtually no traffic going through the Strath, it is feared that this will not be the case. More local traffic will be inclined to use it rather than the busier A82, as will traffic coming from the A9. Secretary instructed to write to highlight concerns.

AOB: Mr N Stoddart asked that the bin lorries could collect Garrogie's bins at Garrogie, rather than all the bins having to

Minute of Meeting 22 March

Correspondence: BT - In response to comments made regarding the removal of payphones, BT have decided on the following action: Removal - Knockie road end, Inverfarigaig, Dores, Croachy; Cashless (can use BT charge card, 0800 reverse calls, other pre-paid calling cards, or operator services) - Torness, Dunmaglass, Gorthleck, Lower Foyers, Whitebridge; Retain payphone - Erroglie, Foyers. Mr D Bradwell - Photocopies have grey background. Photocopier engineer to be called. Highland Council - all agenda papers can now be viewed on-line at www.highland.gov.uk RES - the grid connection outlined in the EIS is not part of current planning application. Any future proposals as to best method of connecting to grid will be detailed to CC. Lonsdale Forestry - meeting at Whitebridge Hotel, Wed 13th April 2pm to discuss Whitebridge Estate wood plan.

Treasurer: Ord. acc. £50.47, cheque issued for £72.00, hire of Stratherrick Hall; project acc. £3200.52, cheque for £2000 deposited from Highland Council for Community Project.

Planning: Conversion of derelict farm buildings for letting cottage - Glenlia Farm, Foyers

Roads and Road Signs: The drains opposite the Medical Centre have been dug out and contents left at the side, which then gets washed back in. Jock has been out voluntarily on a couple of days. This highlights the real need for a road man.

Water and Sewerage: Gorthleck - planning is almost through and the land almost acquired. Work should start after Easter. Foyers - the site at Lower Foyers has been designated in the local plan since 1996 as the site for a new sewerage works. The owners feel that this is not an appropriate site and negotiations have come to a halt. Scottish Water are speaking to SNH, SSE, HC to look for an alternative site. Compulsive purchase could be a last option. Scottish Water are obliged to get the new works up and running by the end of the year therefore, as the pipe route will not be affected, work should still start after Easter.

Community Project: Still awaiting lease agreement. Offer letter from SNH received and accepted.

AOB: Recycling point - HC intend to upgrade the recycling facilities in Foyers and Gorthleck, but a new site is required in Foyers as present site is not big enough. The turning area opposite the church and the large area opposite the medical centre were suggested as potential sites.

Minute of Meeting 26 April

Correspondence: Falls of Foyers consultation - only given a couple of days to review, so Secretary to notify HC of delayed response. R&R Urquhart - copy of objection from Coignafearn Estate. Fire Brigade - consultation update. Highland Fuel Poverty Awareness and Consultation event - 6th May 2005

Treasurer: Ord. acc. £50.47; project acc. £3200.52. There is an invoice for Loch Ness Partnership membership fees - £10.00. Munro and Noble invoice for £763.75 for drawing up lease. This is rather more than expected so extra funds have to be found - fundraising and may approach the Knockie Trust again.

Planning: Outline planning for formation of new access and two single house units on land to south of Whitebridge. Outline planning for a 1.5 storey house on Moor of Knockchoilum, Whitebridge. Detailed plans for 1 ¾ storey detached timber frame house at Knockbeg, Whitebridge.

Policing: There are more incidents of fly tipping at Glendoe and along the Vennel. Anyone seeing those responsible should take note of the registration number and report it to the Police.

Roads and Road Signs: The 'unofficial' layby just above the Lodges on Loch Ness entrance is badly pot-holed. The drain at the Allt Kirk bridge was dug out and contents left at the side, therefore being washed back in. The retaining wall was damaged.

Water and Sewerage: Secretary instructed to speak to Scottish Water to determine what work they are planning to carry out and how it will affect our plans for the community project.

Community Project: The lease has been completed. The secretary will speak to Mr Bill Forest about possible changes of work required that we have already been given grants for.

Renewable Energy and Community Benefit: Need for a bank account to be set up imminently. Letter from Mr Brian Wilson in the P&J. Mr S Reed felt that the CC should respond to his comments about the objections to the Dunmaglass wind farm. He agreed to draft a letter and pass it to the Chairman.

Highland Councillor Mrs Ella Macrae 01463 751 203 Ella.macrae@highland.gov.uk

Is Errogie the Centre of the Highlands?

On the other side of the road from the wooden bungalow (Rowan Cottage) on the Pass of Inverfarigaig about half a mile from Errogie corner is a small uneven hollow in the ground. It lies between the tarmac and the dense stand of spruce and lodge pole pine forest, which have grown up since the late 1960's.

50 years ago it was an area of open moor with only a few birch trees and one stand of Scots pine, which became surrounded by the new plantation until it was felled out some 10 years ago. A little further down the hill in from the forest road you can still make out the old peat moss, which provided some of the best peats locally for the residents of Gorthleck

The whole area around the upper part of the Pass has undergone a dramatic change over this time from open moorland to predominantly dense forest plantation and I have family photos and paintings going back to the 1930's which show a completely different scene. The recent felling between Rowan Cottage and Aultnagoire has been a very welcome return to the old landscape.

As a child I used to play in the water filled pond of the old quarry which has now become so infilled and overgrown by moss and trees as to be virtually unrecognisable. The story I have from my father's aunt is that this site was selected as being the geographical centre of the Highlands from which stone was cut in order to provide a memorial to those in the Highland regiments who fell in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of the First World War. The old quarry face can still be made out under all the moss as well as the various drill holes which were made in the typically solid Stratherrick granite slab, presumably as part of the operation.

I don't know of anyone else living who has this story and I sometimes wonder if there is a piece of Stratherrick standing on the other side of the world at that landing spot in the Dardanelles where so many soldiers from the north of Scotland met their end. If there is such a connection, I would welcome and help any efforts to free the old site from its overburden of vegetation and self seeded spruce trees and perhaps provide a plaque or information about its purpose. Perhaps the Heritage Society and the Forestry Commission as landowners could take this forward?

I would also like to mention for younger readers that the distinctive crack in the roadside rock just below Rowan Cottage was known as the Fairies Door and who can tell what lies behind that entrance! And finally, and this is not for the squeamish, the very old and gnarled pine tree set against a rock outcrop on the other side of the road is reputed to contain the skeleton of a clan chieftain's son who was tied up and used for bow and arrow target practice by his enemies and left there. The tree then gently grew up around him and absorbed his bones into its trunk.

Out and About

We are glad to report that Joe Chisholm has now left hospital. Sadly though, he and Hannah have left the area to be with her sister in Invergordon (see letter). We wish them every happiness and better health in their new home.

Iain MacAskill is recovering from his recent hip operation and we are delighted that he can get about again free from pain. May he continue in better health.

Many of you will know Dolly, Jill Cooper's 92 year old Mother. Sadly, Dolly recently had a fall and has a badly swollen and bruised knee causing her much pain. We send her our love and all good wishes for a speedy recovery.

We understand that Mr & Mrs Finnis from Essex have purchased the Dell Estate and we welcome them hoping that they will enjoy living amongst us.

Good wishes to Helen Rybak recovering from a broken leg.

Joyce Wills has had a successful hip replacement and we hope she will soon be out and about again.

We welcome any newcomers to the area since our last issue and hope that you also will be happy living in the area.

Frank Searle

Frank Searle, who was a familiar figure to locals in his caravan beside Foyers Pier in the seventies and eighties, has died recently in Fleetwood, Lancashire.

His exhibition of newspaper cuttings and photographs of the Loch Ness Monster in the extension beside his caravan was a useful source of information to tourists. The pier area at that time was quite lively with its boat café with accompanying chairs and tables on the pier and decorative tubs of flowers; and cruise boats for hire.

Frank was an avid Nessie watcher (usually accompanied by a devoted "girl Friday") making forays out on the Loch in his boat and he published a book "Nessie: Seven years in search of a Monster" in 1976. However, when his photographs were denounced as hoaxes by rival Nessie hunters he left the area in 1985.

Christian Comment

Choice is a great privilege, which for some people is just a remote idea. Food, friends, government, holiday, housing, location, medication, occupation, religion - most of us enjoy these benefits and many work to make such choices available to others. A good proportion of our own community voted in the recent General Election - and there were those who could not make up their minds - and some who could not be bothered.

Is it the same about faith in Jesus Christ? Some have chosen to follow Him - others are undecided - and some do not bother. Does it matter? We all have to face the fact of Death about which we have no choice. Jesus went through the experience of Death and then showed Himself to be alive in a new resurrection manner returning to Heaven to prepare a place for all who will follow Him. To be sure of our place in that secure home, we must choose to trust in Him now. As King David wrote over 3000 years ago in Psalm 23 :- "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."

CHURCH MEETINGS

Church of Scotland

Sunday: 10 am Boleskine, 11-30 am Dore.

Rev. J. Buchan 01463 713114.

Episcopal Church

Sunday: 11 am Croachy.

Rev. Peter Mosley 01805 521397.

Free Church

Sunday: 12 noon Farr, 6 pm Erroglie.

Mr. J. Campbell 01456 486240

Free Church (continuing)

Sunday: 10-30 am & 4-15 pm Dore. Wednesday: 7-30 pm.

Mr. D. Fraser 01456 486408.

Free Presbyterian Church

Sunday: 12 noon Farr, every 2nd Sunday: 7 pm Gorthleck.

Mr. E. Fraser 01456 486282.

Roman Catholic Church

Sunday: 12 noon Whitebridge.

Rev. P. Bonnici 01320 366451.

Inter-Denominational Bible Study

Christian Aid

Thank you to everyone who collected and donated during Christian Aid Week. £31 was given at the Easter Praise in Stratherrick Hall. A Harvest Praise is planned for Sunday, 2nd October at 3.30 pm.

South Loch Ness Heritage Group

The Group held a "General Meeting" on May 11th to discuss projects and the future direction of the Group. Previous meetings all had major speakers, and it was felt that not enough time had been available to raise new matters, or discuss priorities for the Group. We did not expect a big turnout for this sort of business meeting, so it was gratifying when about 25 people turned up and we had a very constructive evening.

Some time was taken considering possible topics for future meetings, and speakers to deliver the presentations. We were helped with extensive information from the Fort Augustus Group, who have a few years of experience for us to benefit from. Interest was shown in looking into scheduling talks on geology, archaeology, the history and function of the Forestry Commission, Gaelic place-names, the Caledonian Canal, and several other topics, including re-visiting some that we have already covered. If anybody can suggest other topics, or, perhaps more importantly, people to speak on the topics, please get in touch with any member of the Group management.

There was also extensive discussion about development of the Group's website (www.southlochnessheritage.co.uk). It was agreed that this site had a great importance in that it could put us in touch with people worldwide with historical connections to this part of the world, hopefully giving a new dimension to the Group's activities. Contributions are invited, however small, on any topic contained in the wide spectrum of "heritage". The beauty of the website format is that it can be built piecemeal and refined at leisure, not like a book which has to be perfect before being sent for printing. So don't be shy about sending us your piece, whether it be a little piece on the history of some aspect of your community or of your family, or perhaps a photograph or an anecdote.

Probable major aspects of the website will be: a correspondence page, a photo gallery, a list of place names with translations from the Gaelic, details of SSSIs of the area, and links to Statistical Accounts, the Highland Family History Society etc.

One of the themes that was returned to several times during the meeting was the way individuals could contribute to the preservation and archiving of heritage material. It is important that people do little research projects into something that interests them, which may be just talking to an elderly neighbour and writing down some of his memories. It is these small things that go to making up the big picture, and much of it will be lost very soon.

The next Meeting will be in Gorthleck on September 13th. Following his very popular presentation last year, Alister Chisolm has agreed to do a follow-up, but at this stage it is



Greyfriars Bobby

Mid the rugged Scottish Mountains lived a shepherd long ago,
Tending sheep whatever the weather, whether rain, wind or snow.
He was tired but never lonely, though he roamed both far and wide
For his doggy, faithful Bobby, never left his side.

Chorus,

When men boast of their honour, of their faith and loyalty,
Let us think of Greyfriars Bobby who could be as true as he.

But the shepherd growing older, suffered great infirmity
And although he fled to Edinburgh there to die in poverty,
But the faithful Bobby followed, only instinct was his guide
Till he found his ailing master, then he never left his side.

When they buried Bobby's master, still he never left his side,
By the grave in Greyfriars Churchyard, Bobby watched until he died.
And the Edinburgh folk in wonder, as such faith is rare to see,
Raised a statue in the city to the doggy's memory.

And today, man views his neighbour with interest and hate and fear,
Cold suspicion, dark ambition, seem to worsen every year.
Will the day be ever dawning when all men shall brothers be?

Who's who in this photo of Boleskine School in the sixties?

We don't have all names but can link some faces to their parents:

Sadie Chisholm's 3 – back row middle, middle row 3rd from right and left front.

Kitty Fraser's 2 – back row right, front row 2nd from right.

Sybil Ross's 2 – middle row, 2nd and 3rd from left.

Cathie Stoddart's – front row 2nd from left and who are the others we wonder...?

Many thanks to Rose Fortune for the photo.



**DOES
ANYBODY
KNOW WHAT
THE
COMMUNITY
PROJECT IS?**

The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Stratherrick

Father Paul Bonnici traces the History of this church from the records of The Scottish Catholic Directory over the past 150 years.

The history of the Catholic Church at Stratherrick can be traced as far back as 1858. The Scottish Directory for 1858 states that Stratherrick was, 'attended from Fort Augustus, 12 miles distant'. There was a 'Public Service every fourth Sunday at eleven o'clock'.

It continued 'Here there is neither Chapel nor Chapel House. Divine Service is celebrated in a Catholic farmer's house. This rising Congregation comprises about 80 souls. The want of a chapel is very much felt. No charity could be better employed than in assisting to build one.'

Ecclesiastically there was an anomaly here because Fort Augustus is listed under the Western District and looked upon as part of what is now the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles and Stratherrick is listed under the Northern District under Torgoyle in Glenmoriston, which is on the other side of Loch Ness.

Four years later the same publication gives the name of a Rev John Macdonald as the resident priest at St Peter's, Fort Augustus, now the old convent opposite the golf course, a mission which had been going on since 1842.

It also states that a mission was also established at Stratherrick in 1849 and gives the name of Rev Allan Maccrae, ordained in 1861 as its priest. It continues 'Public service at half past eleven o'clock on two consecutive Sundays, the Clergyman being about every third Sunday at Glenmoriston'.

'Alex McDonell Esq., late of St Anne's Mount, Lasswade, has defrayed the entire cost of building the Chapel and Chapel house here. The charitable contributions of our other kind benefactors have been applied towards covering the expense of other buildings and enclosures connected with the Mission property. The number of Catholics is about 100'.

The year 1878 saw a change in the ecclesiastical landscape of Scotland by the restoration of a Scottish Catholic hierarchy after the Reformation.

The Catholic Directory for 1879 describes how the new bishop of Aberdeen celebrated Pontifical High Mass at Fort Augustus, now part of the newly restored diocese, on 16 October 1878 where a portion of the buildings of the Benedictine Monastery and College was opened.

The entry for Stratherrick shows a congregation of 130, and the Rev Alexander Bisset, ordained in 1864 as the pastor. Glenmoriston was now being served by Rev Coll Macdonald at Fort Augustus.

The Directory also gives the Mass times on Sundays as eleven o'clock and on holidays at ten. There was by now a day school 'conducted by a certified mistress'.

Several years later Stratherrick Church gets another mention in the Scottish Catholic Directory. This was to record the death of Father Charles Thain who died on 11 August 1956. It said:

'Fr Thain spent twenty six years ministering to some seventy or eighty Catholics scattered over a wide area of moorland and hill in the wilds of Inverness-shire - such, in a sentence, was the priestly life of the Rev Charles Thain, DD, who died suddenly as the result of a heart attack in his house at Stratherrick. To those who knew the district it might have seemed that Father Thain's undoubted talents were wasted in that remote outpost of the Diocese, where nothing very much happened apart from the routine succession of the seasons. But that was never Father Thain's way of looking at things. He loved his Highland parish with every fibre of his being, and he would not - except of course under obedience - have willingly changed places with anybody. Seldom or ever did he go outside its boundaries but within the parish itself there was not an activity in which he did not play a leading part. He identified himself completely with the interests of the people among whom he worked; and his prestige was no less high among the non-Catholic element in the population than among his own flock - a fact of which there was abundant evidence at his funeral'.

Today the Catholic community of Stratherrick meets for Sunday Mass at 12 noon every week. There is a weekday Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6.30 pm.

Come and learn from the best wildlife experts in the Highlands.

B.E.N. has secured funds for a two-year wildlife recording project.

Our funding has come from the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (B.A.P.), which is supported by Highland Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Leader Plus and the European Union. There will be a chance to learn more about different species; how to recognise them, how they adapt in their varied habitats, how we are dependant on them, and how the things we do affect their very survival.

Waders of a different kind

On our first outing, in April, we learnt about the groups of birds known as waders. Stuart Benn of the RSPB explained how to recognise curlews, oystercatchers, lapwings, sandpipers and snipe. We were able to see them preparing to mate and rear young. Stuart was keen for us to record when we saw nesting pairs and if young were successfully reared. By the end of June we should have some records to send to him. Lets hope we can repeat the recording at the same time next year. Due to changing farming practices (wet lands have been drained extensively in the last 20 years) numbers of these birds are declining. Cold wet springs and the presence of gulls and crows, that eat the eggs and the young, are also serious problems.

The Highland Biological Recording Group are keen to encourage more people to note down what they see. Not just the animals but the signs which they leave. By keeping records more can be learnt about the distribution of our wildlife and how we can protect it. For example, in our area, very little is known about small mammals – the mice, the voles and the rats.

Latrines and all

In May badger latrines, squirrel eating habits and pine marten droppings were some of the things we learnt from Ro Scott of the Highland Biological Recording Group. In the morning Stratherrick Hall was the host to a large number of stuffed exhibits with badgers, foxes, stoats, weasels, mice, water voles, wildcat and more. After some slides showing local mammals and how to recognise them, we spent the afternoon in the forest. Here we found many signs of the healthy badger population along with plenty of evidence of our red squirrels. Discarded pinecones were everywhere, but..... we had to recognise the difference between cones eaten by squirrels and cones eaten by cross bills. Can You?



Come to a Field Day. Join in recording. Learn more about the wildlife around you. There is a wild flower day on Sunday 19th June, a grasses and wildflower day on Sunday 9th July, butterflies on Sunday 24th July and a fungi weekend on 17/18th October. Numbers may have to be limited.

If you would like to take part Please contact Rosemary on 486 612 or Jane on 486 355 for details.

COMPOSTING..... B.E.N. is at it again!.....only £5 for a bin.

Composting is a great way to do something positive for the environment – less waste goes into landfill and you'll make something really useful to nourish your garden. If the weather's hot and dry (we can only hope!), the compost "sponge" retains soil moisture; if it's cold and wet, the plant foods in compost help growth along and the microbes in compost help suppress plant disease.



B.E.N. has already managed a successful scheme to distribute cut -priced compost bins to local residents over the last couple of years and recently Highland Council launched a number of waste reduction initiatives. Fortunately for us they have just supplied B.E.N. with 40 more composters for distribution. These bins normally retail at £39, but are selling for just £5. This is likely to be the last such scheme for a while, so please take advantage of it.

Composting is easy!

"Composting is an entirely natural process and anyone can effortlessly transform kitchen scraps and garden waste into useful compost."

Place your compost bin in a sunny position, not too much of a trek from the kitchen, and on well drained soil. Your composter will absorb heat from the sun - the hotter your composter the faster contents will be broken down. If you loosen the ground a little underneath this helps worms and soil bacteria to get into the bin. Always keep the lid on your composter.

Anything of living origin can go in your composter: potato peelings, garden weeds, apple cores, tea bags, scrunched up newspaper, shredded bills, eggshells, grass mowings, coffee grounds, prunings from

shrubs, orange peel, tatty shaws, dead flowers, onion skins etc. Avoid: nappies, brightly coloured or shiny card/paper, cleaning fluids or garden chemicals, glass/metal/wood, or meat (raw or cooked). The trick with compost is to get a good mix of ingredients – wet and dry, soft and tough, nitrogen-rich and poor. If you have a lot of grass mowings, this will help the compost to heat up (a sign of success!) but avoid thick layers – try to mix the mowings in. Empty ice cream containers (with lids) are useful for temporarily storing kitchen scraps in the kitchen and carrying these to your composter.

Still waiting for that compost?..... The compost is ready when it looks brown, crumbly and odourless. Compost can happen quickly (in the summer), or take seemingly ages! (in the winter) If you're not in a hurry, no problem! If you want to speed things up activate the composting process with any of the following: grass clippings, nettles, comfrey, dung, pet bedding or the traditional household solution: urine - just pee on it!

HAPPY COMPOSTING!

You can collect your Composter from: Deborah Haddon, Torness, 01463 751387;
Sylvia Young – Foyers, 486434 ; or Heather Parrot – Errogie, 486 774

Please ring to arrange a pick up and remember to bring £5 cash with you.

Boleskine Environmental Network

Foyers School Supplement

SUMMER EDITION
2005



Primary 1 and 2 children on their recent day of adventure at Aigas Field Centre near Beaulieu.

We had to walk through the trees in the rain. We went pond-dipping in the rain as well. We found a tadpole and a dragonfly nymph. We had to lean so we didn't fall in. Mia Chattington, P2



Bats in Our Belfry!!!

We invited Scottish Natural Heritage and our Countryside Ranger to investigate our resident family of 14 brown long eared bats. They live in the School loft and seem happy with the accommodation.

Expanding Our Horizons...

Thanks to a school roll that is due to increase to 19 this August, Foyers School will be eligible for an additional, part-time teacher.

Grateful thanks to all those of you who have generously contributed Tesco vouchers to enable the school to purchase additional IT software and/or hardware.



Back to the Iron Age

Inspired by our possible discovery of a crannog in Loch Bran, Primary 4-7 children spent a day out at the Loch Tay Crannog Centre which features the reconstructed Iron Age loch dwelling pictured above. The visit provided an opportunity to try out prehistoric fire-making and other techniques. Our ancient ancestors must have been a lot better at it than we were!



Left: The island in Loch Bran that might be the site of an ancient crannog.

Foyers School Supplement

It was a warm, sunny day in May. Loch Bran was coming to life again after the long winter. Insects were buzzing around



...on our hats...



All of a sudden we saw scores of damselflies, drying out their wings in the sunshine. They flew all round us.....

..... They landed on our hands...



... and even on our noses!

Foyers School Makes Scientific History....?

In our last issue we reported finding a caddis fly larva in Loch Bran with three white, 'egg-like' spheres.

We contacted the Natural History Museum in London but they didn't know what the spheres were. They told us to contact Dr. Ian Wallace of Liverpool Museum.

He said that although he had spent 30 years studying caddis he had never seen anything like it! He thought the spheres might be parasites, but he didn't know what of.

Later, we found a caddis fly with only one white sphere. This caddis was green and had yellow and black stripes on its head. Dr. Wallace told us that it belonged to the Phryganeidae family of caddis.

We are still trying to find out what the spheres might be!

Daniel Macdonald

Foyers School Exhibition

A Year in the Life of Loch Bran

will be held in the School hall from

Saturday, 25th June to Thursday, 30th June

Every afternoon, 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm

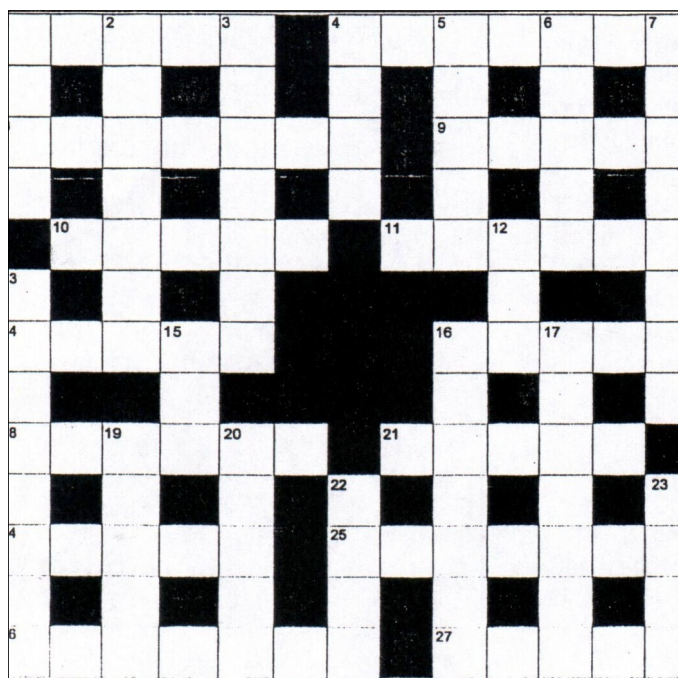
ALL Welcome Admission FREE



A Year in the Life of Loch Bran is a biodiversity project funded by the Partnership for Rural Inverness and Nairn
And sponsored by the Boleskine Environmental Network

ACROSS

1. Not as many as before (5)
4. Live, work and eat together (7)
8. Viv and Al join together to bring back an old story (7)
9. These aborigines lived in Sri Lanka (5)
10. Hole made by a doctor not feeling well (5)
11. You don't need this when buying a house (3,3)
14. This fox is carrying a load to his American home (5)
16. Is this the kind of turf grown on the moon? (5)
18. Lacking intensity (6)
21. Sounds like a headdress is taking advantage (5)
24. He who dares to mess up could finish the book (5)
25. Journey of risk (7)
26. The red mare is living a fantasy (7)
27. Make an effort (5)



DOWN

1. A shout to the golfer in front (4)
2. Is a part of the sea beginning to weaken with this colour? (7)
3. Sounds like a javelin and many would be needed to get past this (7)
4. Make one with the telephone (4)
5. You sometimes need this for your furniture (5)
6. If it's not over then it could be this (5)
7. Make sure the money is correct (8)
12. The answer could also be no (3)
13. The stage before fruit (8)
15. Deer come hound (3)
16. You may need this if you spend all your money (7)
17. Could this ancient Roman stand high in a church? (7)
19. Not asleep after the funeral (5)
20. Poems for a racecourse (5)
22. Could be above (4)
23. Posted perfume one hears (4)

Letters

Joe came out of hospital after a period of six months. We are leaving Inverfarigaig and going to live in Invergordon. I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their kindness not only to Joe but to myself. For all the cards, gifts, hospital visits and the lifts back and fore to see Joe. To the Rev John Buchan for his comforting prayers and to Rev Derek Brown and Fred MacCreadie for their unfailing visits.

To those who visited Joe regularly (too many to name individually) my grateful thanks. If anybody is in the Invergordon area, please come and visit. Thank you all again,

Hannah Chisholm

Northern Lights

I have had this article in mind for some time and only perchance learned that you have a newsletter and wondered if you could include my writings.

On my weekly business trip between Inverness and Fort William, I usually use the A82 but on some occasions I return via the B862. One evening, when at the viewing point between Fort Augustus and Whitebridge I was aware of a bright light shining ahead. I couldn't see exactly what it was or where it was coming from - could it be a "northern light"? The brightness in fact reminded me of Cape Canaveral where I was fortunate enough to visit once.

When approaching Whitebridge I could see then that in fact it was not a "northern light" but just a very imposing floodlight on a new house. Do people moving into the Scottish countryside not consider the impact that is created. There is a vast difference between living in the rural Highlands than in the suburbs of a city which I feel they may simply not understand, respect or even care about. Is this what has become of our beloved Highland idyll? Please have a little more consideration for others. People have lived in these beautiful glens for years and have managed perfectly well with a welcoming light at the door.

Does nobody value the sight of wonderful stars in a dark sky anymore? Light pollution ruins the countryside, affects wildlife and is the curse of the 21st century. Why do people choose to move to such lovely rural areas and then spoil it by installing their own version of suburban street lighting? I have not given my address just in case a light may shine on me!

E. T. MacKenzie

The Highland Council Countryside Rangers Guided Walks

Wednesday, 13th July. Teddy Bear's Picnic at Farr. 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm. Family Event. Meet at the entrance to Milton Wood, Farr, (Grid Ref. NH 676 315) Come and find Teddy Bear's friends. This event is for accompanied children under 7 years old. Bring outdoor clothes and a mini picnic.

Saturday, 23rd July. Birding for Beginners. 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. 3 km/2 miles. Meet at South Kessock turning circle, Inverness, (Grid Ref. NH 655 472). This is the easy way to recognise birds in the garden and on the seashore. Binoculars will be useful.

Friday, 26th August. Bat Walk, Inverness. 8.00 pm to 10.00 pm. Family Event. Bookings only on 01463 724312. Bring a torch and dress warmly. Bat detectors will allow you to get up close and personal to these fascinating creatures.

Saturday, 27th August. Things That Go Squeak in the Night, Farr. 8.00 pm to 10.00 pm. Family Event. Bookings only on 01463 724312. We investigate the shy woodland animals.

Saturday, 10th September. On the Glacier Trail. 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. 5 km/3 miles. Family event. Meet at the Forestry Commission lay-by, Littlemill, Strathnairn (Grid Ref. NH 703 370). Discover esker ridges and kettle holes - features the glaciers left behind. Learn about Littlemill's hidden landscapes with the

South Loch Ness Tourist Group

The winter months have been a busy but also very successful period for the group. We have continued to grow in membership and completed our two major marketing projects.

Firstly, we now have up and running a vastly improved website for our members. Designed by Andy Holt and with financial assistance from INE and Highland Council, the site is placed very high in all the top search engines and therefore certain to deliver business for members. All members of the SLNTG have a listing on the website – www.lochnesswelcome.co.uk which also provides some information on the wonderful scenery and flora and fauna which can be seen in the area. Any business in the area which is not currently a member of the SLNTG is invited to take out membership and benefit from this excellent marketing tool.

The second marketing project which we have just completed is the design and printing of a leaflet which lists all the major attractions and places of interest

on the south side of the loch. Again this has been achieved with the assistance of Highland Council and INE. The leaflets have recently been distributed amongst all the member businesses and to the Tourist Information Centres at Daviot, Inverness, Drumnadrochit, Fort Augustus and Fort William. If anyone else has a suitable outlet and would like a supply of these leaflets, please contact me on the number below.

In April we also undertook another very successful familiarisation tour for members of staff from the Tourist Information Centre in Inverness and Lorna MacLennan, General Manager of the Loch Ness Partnership. The tour covered the whole of the south side and pointed out the main places of interest, as detailed on our new leaflet. Thanks also to Tim at the Waterfall café in Foyers for providing lunch.

And finally, you may have noticed that B852 between Foyers and Dores is now almost litter free! Members of the SLNTG and other welcome volunteers

Bus Times

WHITEBRIDGE-INVERNESS

Mon-Sat

Whitebridge 07-35
12-30

Gorthleck 07-45
12-40

Errogie 07-49
12-44

Torness 07-58

Inverness Acad 12-53B
08-40

Inverness Bus 13-25
08-50

13-35

Mon-Fri

Sat

Inverness Bus 10-30
15-15

Inverness Acad 17-10
10-40

15-35
17-20

Torness 16-17B

Errogie 11-21
16-16

18-01
Gorthleck 11-25

16-20
18-05

Whitebridge 11-35
16-30

18-15

B-via Torness when reqd.

FOYERS-INVERNESS

Mon-Fri Sat

Up. Foyers 0755 1250 1623 0900 1320

L. Foyers 0800 1255 — 0905 1325

Inverness 0853 1340 1710 0950 1410

Inverness 1155 1515 1743 1230 1743

L. Foyers 1240 1605 1828 1315 1828

Up. Foyers 1245 1610 1833 1320 1833

D&E GORTHLECK-INVERNESS

MWF TTh SD SH

carried out a litter pick up event in the middle of April and successfully cleared the verges from Foyers to Dores of an astonishing 100 black bin bags worth of rubbish. Unfortunately the litter louts do not respect our natural environment and there are already some signs of rubbish on the verges. On behalf of the SLNTG I would like to pass on my thanks to all the volunteers and also to Cllr Ella McCrae who provided very welcome refreshments along the way and a drink at our final destination at the Dores Inn.

*Fiona & Graeme Ambrose, Evergreen,
INVERFARIGAIG, IV2 6XR*

Who is this demure young nurse pictured here with the late Donald Williamson of Errogie Old Manse?



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

AIDS HELPLINE: Freephone 0800 567123. Open 24 hours.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (AA): Open 24 hours, confidential service, charged at local rate.

Tel. 08457 697555 Scottish Service Office. For information on meetings, etc. Tel. 01412 262214.

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

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

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

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

CITIZENS ADVICE (Inverness): Tel. 01463 235 345.

CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE: Tel. 01463 713741.

DEPRESSION ALLIANCE: Tel. 0131 467305. Mon. to Fri. 10.00a.m. to 3.00p.m. Offers information and support for those with depression, their family and friends.

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

FAMILY MEDIATION HIGHLAND: Tel. 01463 712100.

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

HELP THE AGED: Tel. 01315 516331. Seniorline: Tel. 0808 800 6565.

KIDSCAPE BULLYING HELPLINE FOR PARENTS:

Tel. 01717 303300. Mon. to Fri. 10.00a.m. to 4.00p.m.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLING (HIGHLAND): Tel. 01463 712888 for appointment. Professional individual and couple counselling for those in intimate relationships. Strictly confidential service.

PARENTLINE: Tel. 0345 567800. Helpline for parents under stress. Mon. to Sat. 10.00a.m. to 4.00p.m. Answer phone service outside office hours.

RAPE AND ABUSE LINE: Free, confidential, listening support. Call free on 08088 000123, every evening 7.00p.m. to 10.00p.m. This line is answered by women.

Call free on 08088 000122, Mon. and Wed. 7.00p.m. to 10.00p.m. This line is answered by men.

REACH OUT HIGHLAND: 34, Waterloo Place, Inverness. Tel. 01463 711585. Confidential information on sexual health. HIV counselling and testing.

SAMARITANS: 66, Tomnahurich Street, Inverness. Tel. 01463 713456. Also Tel. 0345 909090, charged at local rate. All branches offer 24 hour service.

SEXUAL HEALTH: Highland Sexual Health, outpatients Raigmore Hospital – Tel. 01463 704202. All ages – free – confidential – no appointment necessary. Contraception including emergency, pregnancy testing, diagnosis/ treatment of infections and HIV, postal condom service.

SOCIAL WORK HOTLINE: Tel. 08457 697284. Calls charged at local rate. 24 hour service.

VICTIM SUPPORT: Tel. 01463 710806

WOMEN'S AID, INVERNESS: Tel. 01463 220719. Offers information, support and temporary accommodation for abused women and their children.

Tine Butterworth

Stratherrick Primary

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

1.Fewer 4.Commune 8.Revival 9.Vedda 10.Drill
11.Dry rot 14.Laden 16.Astro 18.Weaker 21.Avail
24.Reads 25.Venture 26.Dreamer 27.Exert

DOWN

1.Fore 2.Wavered 3.Ravelin 4.Call 5.Mover
6.Under 7.Exaction 12.Yes 13.Flowered 15.Elk
16.Advance 17.Tribune 19.Awake 20.Epsom
22.Over 23.Sent

Demure young nurse on page 11 is Rose Fortune –
who we also thank for the photo.

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See the notice board outside the hall for other local events.

See also local website <http://www.scottish-cottages.co.uk/hall.htm> and click on
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Next issue: September
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