

The Boleskine Bulletin

Issue No. 6
Spring 1999

Awards for Foyers Schoolboy

The prize-winning work of a Foyers teenager was on display at two exhibitions of photographs at Inverness Museum. Sixteen year old Calum Brown is represented in both the 50th Anniversary Exhibition of Inverness Camera Club and the Focus Environment Photograph Competition for Scottish Schools. A local view, 'Inverfarigaig Woods', gained him 1st Prize in the Wildlife and Heritage Category for 15-18 year olds in the Focus Competition. However, this is no first for Calum. Of the seven photographs of his on view covering the last two years of the competition, he has been awarded two 1st Prizes and a 2nd Prize while the remainder received commendations. Calum's father, recalls that Calum has been interested in photography since he was 12 years old when he first became a member of Inverness Camera Club. Although his sights are set on studying astrophysics at university we can expect to see more of his work as his photographs are to be included in a new book on Scottish mountains due to be published soon in Edinburgh.



'THE CAPTAINS COLLECTION'

The year is 1815 and Simon Fraser reflects on his life so far and the songs and tunes which have just been presented to the Highland Society of Scotland.

This is the setting of "The Captains Collection" to be held in Stratherrick Hall on **Wednesday 2nd June** at 8.00pm., is a Highland Festival Production focusing on the story and music of Simon Fraser. The production team include two big names in Scottish theatre and music, Gerry Mulgrew of Communicado theatre and

Johnny Hardie of Old Blind Dogs, Alyth McCormack will be singing accompanied by fiddle, keyboard, pipes and clarsach. If you have no idea who Simon Fraser was, read all about him on page 6. This is a special occasion for the strath, and an opportunity to have a good night out! The BBC will be producing a four part series on the life and songs of Simon Fraser based on this production so please come - support the village hall, find out more about a local celebrity and be part of this world premiere! Refreshments will be available.

Three local jobs gone

This spring regrettably sees the loss of three local jobs. The Foyers Salmon Hatchery is to have one less employee and Scottish Hydro have decided to cut back two employees at the Power Station. Scottish Hydro have offered transfers to the two men concerned, it is however, a loss of three full time jobs badly needed in the area.

'Planning for Real'

Earlier this year 60 people attended in Gorthleck and approx. 30 in Foyers when the Planning Department asked local people to comment on future development of the area. This was the first consultation round for the next 10 year local plan.

There was general agreement on keeping the lochside free of development, the need for better sewage and recycling facilities, the preservation of shops and the protection of farmland and woodlands, however a sharp division of opinion appeared

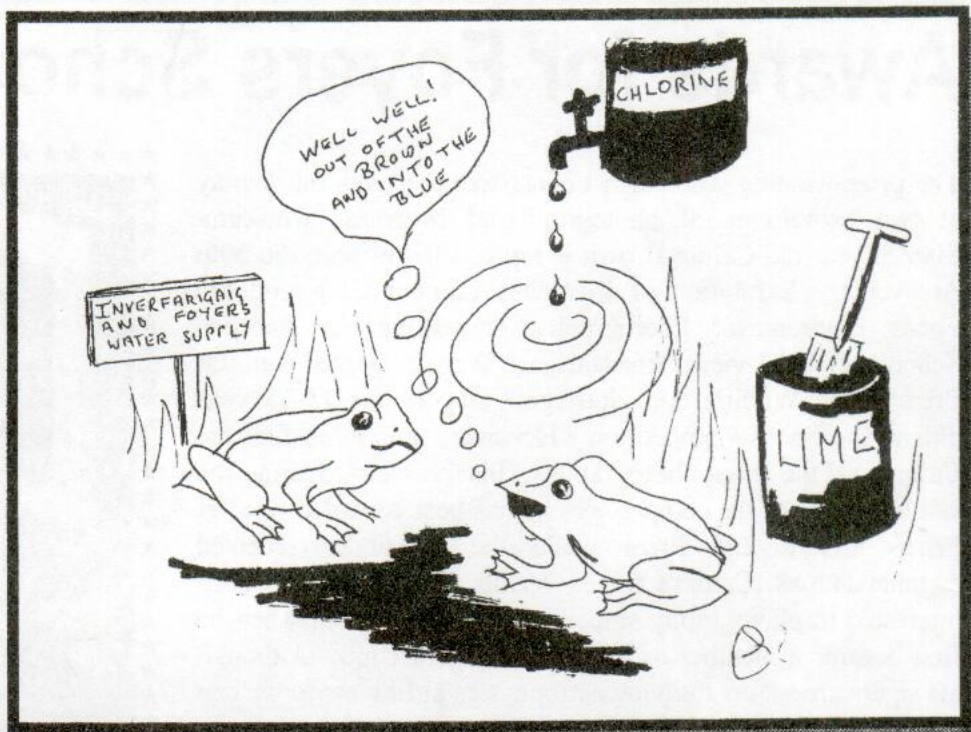
concerning the widening of the roads, with those for and against being evenly divided.

Two rather innovative ideas were put forward, the re-introduction of a ferry service on Loch Ness and a golf course on Foyers Mains farmland!

and more plans

FOREST FOR SCOTLAND

The Community Council is to be setting up a small sub group to reply to a consultation paper 'Towards a Scottish Forest Strategy' issued by the Forestry Commission. The council is anxious to get opinions from residents about this important subject. Limited copies of the consultation paper can be had from Foyers Post Office or from members of the Community Council. Anyone interested can respond to the C.C. or directly to the Forestry Commission by 31st July.



*Cartoon prize winner
Sally Reed*

and in the Forest - abandoned cars!

This winter the area was blessed with dumped cars. one abandoned by Trinloist early in the winter, and another by the river between Whitebridge and Foyers. By the river the forestry fence is down and the area is festooned with broken glass, old tyres and beer cans. Both the Forestry Commission at Fort Augustus and the Police report the problem in hand however both cars remained an eyesore over the Easter holiday. Whose responsibility is it? April each year is National Spring Clean month. The Community Council receives information on how to participate in Scotland's largest environmental campaign and anyone can get involved from community groups and schools to individuals. Grants are available. Should a clean up take place each spring giving our visitors and ourselves pleasant places to sit, walk and picnic during the summer? Not only are there dumped cars but litter by the loch side, abandoned black polythene from winter feeding of cattle, and litter in lay-bys around the area.

Community Council

The Community Council meets each 4th Tuesday of the month alternately in the hall at Gorthleck & Foyers Power Station at 7.30pm. Meetings are open to the public. Forthcoming dates are: April 27th - Foyers, May 25th - Gorthleck, June 22nd - Foyers.

Our community councillors are:- John Willie Campbell (Chairman)- Gorthleck 486240, John Joyce (Secretary) - Whitebridge, Lorraine Fraser (Treasurer) - Foyers, Angus Fraser - Gorthleck, Elizabeth MacDougall - Foyers, John MacPherson - Torness, Christine Smith - Foyers, Kenny Fraser - Gorthleck, Sandy MacLure - Gorthleck, Hugh Nicol - Aultnagoire.

Our local councillor is Ella MacRae who can be contacted on 01463 751203

Planning applications received by Highland Council since the last Bulletin: Ivan Macdonald, Maurlynd, Inverfarigaig for erection of a house. Jane O'Donovan, Norbu, Gorthleck for erection of porch on back of house & new access.

Fatality at the Falls

A tourist visiting the Falls of Foyers suffered a fatal heart attack climbing up the steep incline beyond the viewpoint. Peter Hirst (aged 65) from Wakefield in Yorkshire, was touring Loch Ness as part of a coach party which stopped at the Upper Fall. An attempt by Dr Leslie Mackintosh to resuscitate Mr Hirst was unsuccessful. It is understood that he had retired early from his job as a postman due to ill-health. Mrs Hirst and her sister waited for the arrival of the police in the home of Mr. Ian Hyslop of Foyers Store who also opened his premises to serve tea and coffee to the rest of the party, a kindness which was recognised in the letter of thanks he later received from Mrs Hirst. There is no indication at the top that the path to the Upper Fall is extremely steep, a situation which resulted in a bad asthmatic attack by a young woman visitor last summer who needed medical attention. When contacted, a spokesman in the office of the Highland Council Ranger Service commented that people should use their own judgement when walking in the countryside. This does seem to be in conflict with the leaflet produced by the Ranger for Guided Walks around Loch Ness which does grade the level of difficulty of walks.

Teething Troubles with new Taxi Service

A local pensioner ran into difficulties recently when using the new subsidised taxi service. Seeing that the service was operated by Culloden Taxi Service she assumed that the service would cover runs to Inverness and so she took a taxi to Raigmore Hospital, only to be charged nearly £20. Happily her plight was brought to the attention of the Rural Transport Officer in Highland Council who arranged a refund. A spokesperson for Highland Council said that the rural public transport provision was not ideal due to limited resources, but that the new taxi service was a real attempt to meet a local need. Whether the timing and the areas covered are ideal or meet the needs of those living locally remains to be seen. There is some doubt as to whether local people were adequately consulted over this new service. Questions have also been raised as to why the contract did not go to someone local.



Specials Wanted

Special Constables are required to boost the numbers of volunteer policemen in the area. Constable MacLeod at Foyers explained that both men and women are needed. A uniform is provided plus expenses. These specials are invaluable in assisting the police locally. Anyone interested should contact Sgt. Henderson at Fort Augustus. Constable MacLeod also informed the Community Council recently that Fort Augustus was now the command centre for the new Inverness West Rural Sector. This sector will cover both sides of Loch Ness including Drumnadrochit (previously included in the Beaulieu sector).

 * ".....good fairy" ? *
 * The Royal Mail would like *
 * to thank the "good fairy" *
 * who cemented a paving slab *
 * in front of the post box at *
 * Aberchalder road end. In *
 * response to a letter from the *
 * Community Council *
 * someone was sent to *
 * photograph the problem *
 * raised by the community, *
 * only to find that someone *
 * had solved the problem *
 * before the Royal Mail could *
 * get there. *



Don't be Late!

It was reported recently to the Community Council that an elderly resident of Foyers had had the Sheriff's Officers at the door because of arrears of Council Tax. There is no shame in this. It can happen to anyone who is not aware that Highland Council takes an uncompromisingly strong line on those who do not pay on time. You do not even have to miss payments for this process to start, you have only to be late in paying by as little as a week. If an instalment is not paid by the 1st of the month a reminder is sent. Two reminders in one tax year are allowed. After that a Final Demand for the whole bill is sent. This has to be paid within 7 days, if not a Summary

Warrant from the Sheriff's Office is sent with 10% added to the bill. If this is not paid the amount can be deducted from wages or goods can be taken from the house to cover the bill. If you are unfortunate enough to have missed the pay-by date three times and a Final Notice arrives for the whole amount and you cannot afford to pay it, do not despair.

Any help you need with Council Tax matters, whether it is a Final Demand or a Summary Warrant, can be had from the Citizens Advice Bureau, 103 Academy Street, Inverness. Open 10-1pm Monday to Friday. Tel: 01456 235345

South Loch Ness Playschool

Thanks to the creation of the S.L.N.P, which has been running successfully for the last six weeks, the hall has become a hive of activity full of wonderful new equipment, tables, chairs, books, arts and crafts, music and physical activity. The Education Department have made numerous visits to assist progress. Quality Assurance Reports are on display for parents to view, highlighting the efforts of Playleader Mary Campbell and her assistant Belinda Sanderson. All involved would like to thank the parents, children and the Hall committee for their support. The Playschool is free for children in their pre-school year for 5 sessions a week. The current changes concerning the pre-pre school year are not yet available.

Contact Jane Ricketts 486225 or Catriona Fraser 486287 if you would like information. Our AGM is to be held in the village hall on **Thursday 29th April 7.30 - ALL WELCOME!** We also have an open morning 10.00 - 1.00 pm on **Tuesday 25th May** - please come along!

Stratherrick Hall Update

The AGM was fairly well attended this year. After the business was completed, tea and biscuits appeared followed by a lively debate on whether or not we should celebrate the millennium, the question was unresolved but it was decided to follow up the discussion after Easter. If you have any suggestions contact Janet Sutherland on 486641 or Fiona Kirkland on 486283.

The hall committee are now tackling the problem of the missing public entertainment licence. An architect has been engaged to tackle the complex issues of accessing funding, once this has been secured, he will co-ordinate the work involved. If substantial funding is accessed the committee hope to upgrade the facilities offered in the hall over and above the requirements of the licence.

For information contact Hugh Nicol on 486350

Out-of-School Childcare

An Out-of School Care Childminding Network has been set up for the benefit of parents with children who may require after school care. The Network will provide a Vacancy List of Registered Childminders in the area. A spokesperson for the Scottish Childminding Association said they were trying to encourage childminding provision in rural areas. The Association provide training and support for those wishing to become registered Childminders with informal sessions and Preparation courses being provided.

For further information on Out-of-School Care or Childminding training, contact Mary Applegate or Katy Adam of the Scottish Childminding Association on 01463 715545

Foyers Church Hall

Improvements are being carried out on the Foyers Church Hall. The kitchen is to be refurbished with new units paid for substantially by the Guild Branch who have raised funds over a long period. The main hall is also to be redecorated with the help of volunteers.



The hall was built about ninety years ago and is an attractive example of the corrugated iron structures used at the time. The church and hall were then owned by the United Free Church who sold them on to the Church of Scotland under the ruling that no alcohol was to be imbibed or sold on the premises!! At the time it was difficult to book the hall as nearly every night it was used by different groups such as the Girls Brigade, Boys Club, Choir practice, Men's group, Women's Guild, Badminton players and Sales of Work. Now the hall is mainly used by women. The

Womens Guild and the WRI, but it is hoped that the refurbishment will encourage wider use.

Gardening notes

I spend hours during the winter months reading endlessly through seed catalogues, dreaming of vast colourful displays which will be the envy of all who see them - some hope! I usually only produce more weeds than usual, but each year I set about growing plants, and get an enormous amount of pleasure from anything I grow. Now is the time to get going, and although most seeds are bought these days from colourful displays in supermarkets and garden centres, it is really too warm and dry in those places and better results are obtained from seeds bought direct from their producers. I like to try to save my own each autumn, if the weather has been kind enough for them to ripen, and I store these over winter in a paper bag or small envelope put inside a screw-topped jar in the bottom of the fridge. This seems to work well for the vast majority of species growing in this country. More about the many 'specials' another time.

Maureen Evans.

People News

Nonagenarians in our midst

Our congratulations are sent to two local residents who have recently celebrated their 90th birthdays - Best Wishes to **Bert Rich** of 'Faerieburn', Foyers (28th February) and **Fergus Fortune** of 'Phoenix', Errogie, (19th March).

Mrs Barbara Baker, formerly of Glenlia Foyers has settled happily in Sheringham, Norfolk where she is nearer her son and daughter. She is indulging in her hobby of swimming as she has a pool close by while the library is just opposite, reading being a favourite pastime.

Laurie Chattington and Gordon Rule from Stratherrick School, took part in the recent Inverness Music Festival, both singing beautifully and doing very well in the Vocal Solo Competition for 7 years and under. Gordon gained 1st place and Laurie, who had the daunting task of starting off the competition that day, came third in their class.

RE-CYCLING

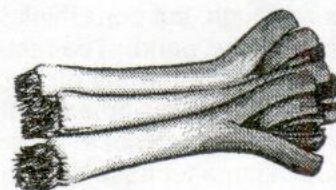
Judging by how the cards were played at the "Planning for Real" meeting in February, re-cycling means a lot to many local people. But the Council hasn't made it easy. Having provided a bin for bottles (rarely emptied), it is in the wrong place for many of us. If placed on the Inverness side of Gorthleck, folk going to town could drop off their empties on the way instead of having to make a special (non-green) trip to Whitebridge. Re-cycling has had negative publicity recently, particularly in remote areas such as the Highlands where transport costs are high and distances to markets are great. Although this is true for paper (currently valued at £0 per tonne!!), materials such as glass, textiles, aluminium and ferrous metals (i.e. tin cans!) are well worth re-cycling in our area, and give a longer life span to our rapidly filling landfill sites. The local schools have already taken the initiative to recycle aluminium so how about organising a tin can re-cycling scheme locally? The only one at present is on the Longman (where you can also take your cardboard, bottles, textiles, motor oil etc.).

If anyone is interested in getting rid of tins locally, 'phone Heather on 486426.

Spring Greens

Ever wish you didn't have to go to town just to buy fresh veg? Are you tired of supporting a supermarket economy or buying greens from the other side of the world? In the wake of GMOs and organophosphates and with a feeling of spring in the air, maybe it's time to supply organically produced fruit and veg ourselves. If you already grow veg, perhaps there are times when you have a glut of lettuces or too much soft fruit to cope with. Ever had lots of carrots but no muck to spread in your garden? There may be green-fingered folk amongst us who would grow more if they knew they could sell it. Could we organise a day a week during the growing season to buy or exchange garden produce?

Offers, ideas and suggestions please to the next issue of BB, or phone Heather on 486426.



PRESS RELEASE

FOREST ENTERPRISE

Plans for the year ahead.

Felling Activities

Restoration of native woodland at Inverfarigaig Gorge:

The broad-leaved woodland occupying the deep ravine at Inverfarigaig is one of the best preserved examples of semi-natural ancient woodland in the north of Scotland. The area was underplanted in the 1960s with conifers, which are now being removed as they threaten to shade out the broadleaves. All footpaths will be re-instated after felling.

Knockie: Similarly felling to restore the native woodland along the East shores of Loch Ness, near Knockie will be carried out. This SSSI is the largest area of native broadleaved woodland in the Fort Augustus Forest District, extending to 7 miles along the shore of the loch.

Balnagarline: The clearance of a wind damaged section of the forest will occur, and will be completed before December '99.

Erchite: Clearfelling has now finished at Erchite until 2002. Felling since 1993 has improved the landscape, especially when viewed from the popular tourist route along the A82, and has generated good quality timber and local employment. Several historically interesting areas, such as the site of an ancient chapel, can now be seen.

COMMENT

Living as we do in such wonderful natural surroundings, it is not surprising that topics relating to 'nature' frequently appear in Newsletters; not without controversy one notes, but this provides a healthy stimulant. However, it is also noticeable that a bias of outlook appears to exist between old and new countryside residents. Like it or not, it is a general truism that indigenous rural dwellers world-wide, living and working in close contact with nature in all its many wonders and complexities, have learned to take as normal many manifestations of nature, and the struggles of the natural world which many urban cousins find unacceptable and even appalling.

If one chooses 'not to eat meat, nor to wear a fur hat' - fair enough; but don't think this will do anything to alter or save the world. The fact is that the workings and wonders of the world (through Mother Nature) are based upon, indeed governed by the principles of a predatory system, and refusal to believe or accept this will do nothing to alter its reality - and believe it or not, this predatory system forms the foundation of survival and sustainability to all species, flora and fauna. This is not a licence to kill callously or wantonly: quite the opposite, but it is an integral part of life, albeit that all life should be treated with a sense of wonder and reverence.

Therefore it fills me with trepidation when I hear pontificating would-be conservationists declaring that one species or another should have total protection and immunity no matter what, at the expense of others. Where a species is endangered it becomes necessary and laudable to protect. But once that species is no longer endangered it should be returned to the 'fold' of the norm. Knowledgeable conservationists know it is vital to care for every species of life in this unstable world, but this does not necessarily mean sacrosanct immunity to every individual specimen, even if protected. In the Scottish dimension, pine martens, geese, and seals come readily to mind, where no escalation of numbers is ever enough for urban bureaucratic minds but that is not conservation.

We must recognise that nature can be benign and beautiful, harsh and ugly, lovingly constructive, and devastatingly destructive, and we share and are all part of this scenario. Better we learn to interact and work with nature's immutable laws and rules than to think we can alter the natural world with petty unnatural impositions.

H. MacNally

THE KNOCKIE COLLECTION

"The Airs and Melodies peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles" edited by Captain Simon Fraser was one of the first books to record the repertoire of a Highland musician. Mainly acquired during the period 1715 - 1745, The Knockie Collection, as it became known was first published by Fraser in 1816, again in 1874 by the Gaelic Society of Inverness and recently in 1982 by Paul Cranford of Cape Breton Island. This book and its author have an international reputation and yet ironically there is virtually no knowledge of who or what he was in Stratherrick. Captain Simon Fraser was born at Ardachie near Fort Augustus in 1773. He moved to Errogie and lived in the house which preceded the present Errogie House in what is still known as Old Errogie.

The house was destroyed by fire in the 1950's although part of it was later incorporated into the present building. For most of his life however, until his death in 1852 he was a tenant of the farm of Knockie, occupying the original part of the much later shooting lodge and hotel which now occupies the site.

He was an accomplished performer on the fiddle and it was said that no one could make the instrument speak Gaelic so beautifully. The music he played was handed down to him by his father and grandfather who were both cattle dealers. They made use of Knockie as a staging post for the annual droving of animals from the far north and west towards the big trysting fairs at Crieff and Stirling. He was not unfamiliar with the trade himself hence his nick-name, Sime Birdag, or Sharp Simon. The bargaining and dealing process would be a preliminary to exchanges of song and dance and in the editor's own words "business being finished, and

the glass in circulation, the best song would naturally be called for before the company parted".

The Cape Breton connection has led to the book once again being available in this country with, more recently in 1996, Simon's son Angus' later collection of Scottish Gaelic Airs published in Skye by Christine and Alasdair Martin. (Alasdair has both Foyers and Aultnagoire connections). The Knockie collection is of interest to non musicians for it has copious footnotes upon the 230 tunes. These provide a fascinating insight into everyday life and events in Stratherrick and further afield over the last 250 years.



Alex Sutherland

N.B. Highland Festival
Wednesday 2nd June
SEE FRONT PAGE

Countryside Ranger Guided Walks

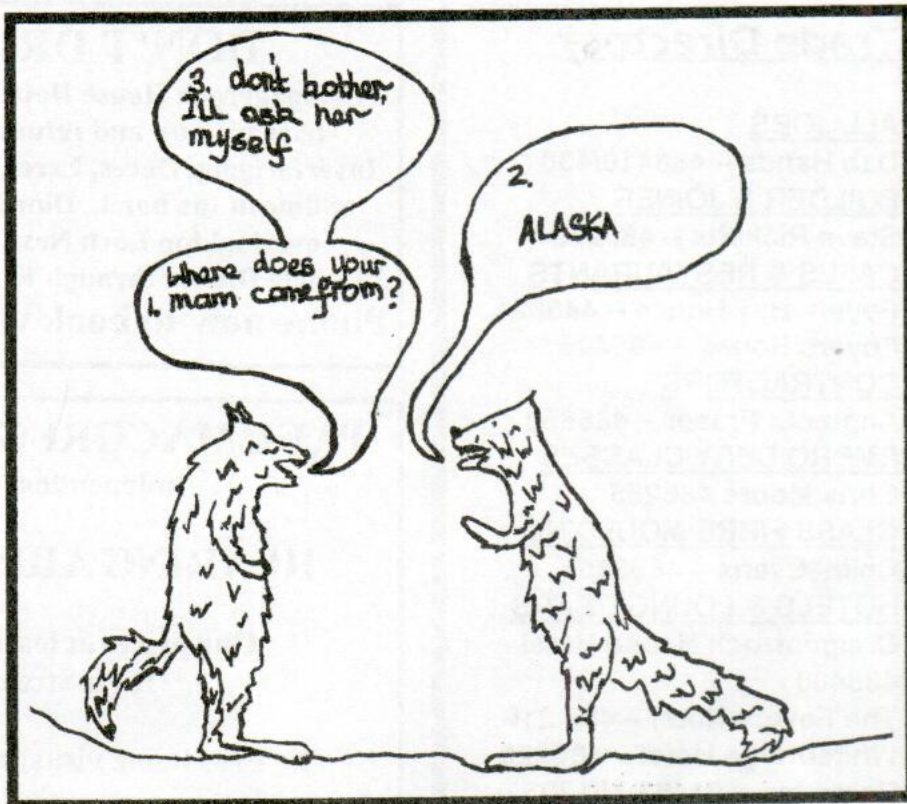
Wednesday 19th May, 2-4pm
Investigate Inverfarigaig. Meet
in the Inverfarigaig Visitors
Centre car park.

Wednesday 2nd June, 2-5pm
Loch Duntelchaig. Meet in the
car park off the Easterton to
Dunlichity road (grid ref:
NH647 321

Tuesday 6th July, 6.30-
8.30pm Falls of Foyers. Meet
in the car park by Foyers shop.

Thursday 8th July, 2-4pm
Beach combing, Dore. Meet in
the Dore Inn car park.

Thursday 15th July, 2-4.30pm
Wandering in Wade's
Footsteps, Fort Augustus. Meet
at Lower Culachy, just off the
Ardachy Road. (grid ref:
NH377 074)



Moti Parrott

MUSICAL TRADITIONS of the CALEDONIAN CANAL

Mairi MacArthur is looking for **SONGS, TUNES, VERSE, STORIES, LORE**, connected with the canal and Lochs of the Great Glen, or with the many sorts of craft that have sailed this waterway over the past 200 years. This project is part of a European-wide scheme called 'HISTORIC CANALS - LIVING WATERWAYS'. It aims to boost leisure and tourism along this famous and popular route.

If **YOU** can help fill in this picture, please contact Mairi on Tel/Fax 01463 242384

Christian Aid Week May 1999

The usual house to house collection will be made. Anyone who would like to help, please contact Martyn Bateman. 486273.

Crossword

Thanks to all those who entered the crossword competition, there were 3 completely correct. Dulsie MacCaskil drew the winner out of the hat at the Hall AGM. Jim Cameron of Whitebridge was the lucky winner. Answers: Across: sassenach, dore, emu, linseed, x-rays, driven, oaf, even, in, ask, me, team, rite, boon, each, radii, an, blab, rib, plaice, total, atishoo, emu, judge, refinance.

Down: saline, sane, eden, adder, hew, dux, reason, soften, delegate, unseen, domicile, id, eat, imbibe, regret, oil, abated, hi, become, chaff, lion, thin, lee, cur.

Don't miss...
 Stratherrick School's summer sale
 Saturday 12th June 2.30 p.m.
 Gorthleck Hall

Trade Directory

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Foyers House – 486405

CONTRACTORS

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HOTELS & LOUNGE BARS

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486400

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Whitebridge Hotel – 486226

Dores Inn – 01463 751203

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or 01456-486400

NATIVE TREE NURSERY

Jane O'Donovan – 486355

PICTURE FRAMING

Hugh Nicol – 486350

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The Foyers Store – 486233

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WAX PICTURES

Betty Brailsford – 486254

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Next issue July

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Sandy Maclure, Gorthleck 486435

Frances Abbot, Whitebridge 486645

Jane O'Donovan, Gorthleck 486355

Rory Robinson, Inverfarigaig 486669

**Thanks to Ray Cooper
for the printing**

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

Craigdarroch House Hotel in Foyers now offers a free Chauffeur drive pick up and return service for local customers, Foyers, Inverfarigaig, Dores, Erroglie, Gorthleck & Whitebridge, who wish to dine at the hotel. Dine by candlelight in the only 4 Star Hotel overlooking Loch Ness, choice of menu's from £14.50 for a 2 Course Dinner through to £29.50 for a 4 Course A la Carte Dinner
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