

CHATTERBOX

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What's On

- **November 14th**
Super Musical 'Superb Concert' given by Paisley Musical Operatic Society in the Parish Church Hall at 7:30pm. Tickets £4:00, children £2:00.
- **December 21st, Sunday, St Winnoch Singers, Xmas Concert, Parish Church, Tickets £5 (£3) Family £12, on sale soon (Junction, Brown Bull and members)**
- **January 1st 'New Years Day Dance', McKillop, Dance to 'Freedom', bring your own bottle, tickets £8.50 on sale early Dec. (Junction and Brown Bull). Tel 07940915065**

Path Round the Loch

Building a path around Castle Semple Loch might look like a simple operation. Decide where the path is to go then walk a flock of sheep round the area to create the path. That's the way it was done in the past.

Not now. Before the first clod of the path is laid you must form a committee to discuss the plans for the path. The committee must include all interested parties. Then you must

pay someone to produce a feasibility study on where best to site the path.

When the study is complete the next stage in the process is a serpentine consultation exercise where everyone and their aunty get a chance to put their opinions on the path.

The first step in the consultation process took place on Monday, October 27 in the McKillop Institute. Mr. Ross Anderson, who wrote the feasibility study, put forward in a clear, professional manner the outline of the study he had just completed.

The path, according to the wide ranging study, is more than just a path. It could be a vehicle to regenerate the entire village. It will attract tourism and extra income to local businesses.

It will make life easier for train travellers by providing a hassle free walk from the village to the station. Improved access to the station for disabled travellers is included in the plan as is the provision of a pelican crossing at the station. Access to the Peel Tower and the Collegiate Church will be improved.

A representative from the RSPB had some reservations. Opening up the area around the loch could have implications on wild life in the area. Birdwatching could be disrupted from time to time, however, on balance the RSPB welcomed the path. One speaker outlined his shock at the proposal to remove the railway embankment that isolates Gates Road from the cycle path.

No doubt other reservations will emerge in the near future but on balance, according to the meeting on Monday, most people welcome the scheme. The cost to complete the project is estimated at £4.2 million. A large sum, but one that Mr. Anderson believes can be raised from the various agencies around that provide funds for regeneration.

A copy of the plan has been lodged in Lochwinnoch and Howwood libraries, if you want to read it, and it is weighty, you can read it in either of these libraries. It will also be available on the Lochwinnoch website. A brief leaflet giving information on the plan is also available.

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Auld Simon's Column

Watcha cock! How are you me old pearly kings and queens? I've just returned from London. I entered a competition and won second prize, two weeks in London. I missed the first prize. It was one week in London.

Odd place London. The first person I saw when I got off the train wore a pink suit, (jacket and mini skirt), black patent leather shoes with matching handbag. Nothing unusual in that you may say, but the person wearing this gear had a big moustache. From the neck up it was a man.

Of course, in terms of attracting potential partners, dress like this opens more doors than the conventional arrangement.

After a few hours in London you discover why MPs are so pompous. They conduct their business in surroundings that make the McKillop look like a doll's house when the majority of Londoners travel like anchovies in dank subterranean tunnels.

I was glad to get home. The first thing I noticed was that Darcy and Wipey were like a couple of bird cages. I think Mrs. Simon forgot to feed them.

Of course, she is preoccupied with rendering vast improvements to her abs, pecs and buns. I have to confess, though I wish she would work on her cheese scones. They do need improving.

The latest apparatus Mrs. Simon has in her armoury of fitness gadgets is a set of vibrating pads she attaches to her muscles to tone them up. When they are working at full power she looks like she's sitting on a sewing machine. Ah, but she is happy.

Next time she goes out I'm going to have a go at the pads. If I'm not around next month you'll know I've been scrambled.

Have a good month.

Auld Simon

Cookery Today

Hello Darlings

Isn't Autumn a super season? The trees are a work of art, and I love frost on the leaf and early darkness. And isn't it super to come home, slip into something comfortable, sit at the fire and knock back some dark, red wine.

In matters of food, I call autumn the season of soft fruits and hard squashes.

It is also the season of spicy soups and steaming puddings, mulled wine and red flannel drawers - avoid trying to eat the latter, though. Unfortunately, not all of us know what to do with the bounties of autumn. The other day I was in the fruit shop when a delightful young lady held up a butternut squash and asked: 'What on earth does one do with this?' Darlings, you could have knocked me down with a vanilla pod.

What do you do with a butternut squash? It may appear hard and unyielding from the outside, but delve into the bright orange flesh and you enter vegetable heaven. The best way to cook this gem of au-

tumn is to slice it down the middle, coat the flesh with butter and a sprinkling of brown sugar and bake it in a medium oven until the flesh is soft.

You can also cut it in two, spoon out the flesh and boil it like a potato. Splendid!

Feliciti Fishslice

Thank You

Morag Thow wants to thank all those who attended her charity birthday party in the Golf Club. The total raised came to £1,050; this went to Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Rowena Murray raised £250 by having a hair expertly cropped by Margaret Dolan.

Don't forget the charity ceilidh in the McKillop Institute on Saturday, November 22. Tickets are available from all the usual outlets and cost £6:00.

A big thank you to all who supported the Tea Party at the library in aid of Alzheimer, Scotland. The total raised was £185:50.

The Paper Shop

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Sportsman's Dinner

Enjoy entertaining speeches, a dinner and drink at the sportsman's dinner in the golf club on Saturday, November 29 at 7:30pm.

Speakers are Jim Leishman of Dunfermline FC, snooker coach, Hugh Brown and cricketer Sandy Strang. Tickets cost £20:00 and are sold in aid of Calderglen FC. Call 843164 for more information.

Letters

'Dear Lochwinnoch, My family and I would like to thank the community and people of Lochwinnoch for the friendship you showed us during our time in the village. Arriving with a sick child, not knowing anyone, or what lay ahead was very scary. But the warmth of welcome you extended to us was fantastic and led to making an enormous task so much easier.

If I felt low the friendly chatter I encountered on my errands in the village lifted my spirits and boosted my morale. Should we ever return to the UK, Lochwinnoch will definitely be our first choice for a place to stay. We have now settled into our home in Kenya and all the children are at school, nursery or playgroup depending on their age. The four boys are all away from home until 3:30pm - bliss!

I must close by saying that Malcolm is now fully recovered and thank you again for your kindness and warmth. Alison, Mark, James, Malcolm, Charles, Roan and Shela.'

'Dear Stamp Savers

I am writing to thank you for collecting used stamps for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf.

This charitable organisation relies on public donations to raise funds to train dogs to assist deaf people. The dogs are trained to warn their owners of imminent danger and to steer them away from risky situations.

Further information on the charity can be obtained from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People The Grange Wycombe Road Saunderton Princes Risborough Bucks, HP27 9NS

Thanks again for your support and keep collecting your old stamps Della Frost'.

This is a letter from some disgruntled friends.

Dear Ed,

'We write to express our concern and disappointment with your report on the dumping of old car tyres on the Glenlora Road (Chatterbox, October Issue).

This despicable action was surely deserving of greater prominence and, indeed, an exhortation for investigation by the police.

There are approximately 100 old tyres discarded at the side of the road and on the grass verge, plus a further number in the small copse adjoining the road.

Such numbers suggest that this is more than an anti-social act by an individual. Rather it indicates illegal dumping by a commercial enterprise - and it warrants police investigation.

Unless action is taken to identify the culprit is it not likely that further dumping will take place either here or on another of our delightful country roads?'

G. McGee, J. McManus, A. Graham, A. Tharme, R. Courtney, D. McAllister.

The police were informed of this

dumping and are investigating. They also intend to increase patrols in this area.

Gardening and Historical

The next guest speaker at the Lochwinnoch Gardening Group on Monday, November 10 is George Neil who is an expert on begonias.

Visitors to the meeting are encouraged. The visit costs £2:00, however, the annual membership fee of £10:00 covers all meetings, garden visits and guest speaker's visits.

Why not give the group a try, meetings are informal and you will always learn something whether you are a tyro or an expert. Meetings take place in the Museum at 7:30pm.

The next meeting of the Lochwinnoch Historical Society is on Thursday, November 20, 7:30pm in the Parish Church.

The guest speaker is John Gallacher MA. His subject is Christmas Customs and Traditions from Around the World.

John is an informed and entertaining speaker who is always welcome by the society. Why not come along and be entertained. Annual membership to the society is £6:00, evening visits cost £1:50 - this includes tea, coffee and biscuits.

Lochwinnoch The Village Website

Latest News

Keep up to date with local news by reading the 'Latest News' section on the village website. News headlines are listed on the front page.

Photo Gallery

The photo gallery is constantly updated to give you fresh views from around the village. If you have any photos that may be of interest to others please e-mail them to me or send them to me.

Local Walks

A local walks section will be online soon..... details will be posted on the home page

You can contact the team by

E-mail barbara@lochwinnoch.info

Or in writing, drop into website dropbox in the local library

RSPB

At Lochwinnoch RSPB Nature Reserve the first waxwing of this winter was seen on Friday 24th October. In fact this is the first waxwing to be reported within the central belt of Scotland so far this winter!

There have been other early reports of this highly coloured bird over the last few days in the Northern and Western Isles and sightings off the sea at Fife Ness. This points towards a possible invasion, so please keep a look out for any starling-sized birds scoffing berries from trees. Waxwings have an obvious crest, and a yellow tip to their tail.

Even non-birdwatchers get excited about these distinctive, colourful, famously approachable birds. They usually offer people opportunity to appreciate their sandy plumage with a full crest, black bib, yellow tipped tail feathers and white wing markings. Even the little red waxy tips to the secondaries can often be seen very well.

The distinctive trilling call of the waxwing has been likened to the sound of blowing a broken whistle with a pea in it.

In winter waxwings feed in tight flocks in what amounts to a 'feeding frenzy'. The whole flock may spend a great deal of time at the top of a tall tree, calling loudly, then, as if at a signal, they descend 'en masse' into a bush full of berries, feed like crazy for a few minutes. Then they return to their treetop vantage point. In those few minutes they can completely strip part of the bush and sometimes leave another part of the bush totally untouched.

The waxwing is a partial migrant. Some birds travel south to Eastern and Central Europe during winter.

Numbers during winter in Northern and Eastern Britain vary from a few dozen in many years to several thousand in an 'irruption' year. Numbers arriving in Britain are determined by the crop of Rowan berries in Scandinavia. Waxwing numbers visit this country in extremely variable numbers. Some years hardly any appear, other years such as the winter of 1995/96, thousands turned up, some in flocks of over 500 birds.

To help determine numbers this year could you please phone the reserve with any possible sightings on 01505 842663.

Feed the Birds

'Feed The Birds Day' set up to lend a helping hand to winter birds With the chilly days of Autumn upon

us our thoughts may turn to spending time beside the fire or a warm meal, but what about the birds? Saturday 25th October is the RSPB's first, national Feed The Birds Day, when the Society aims to encourage people to start feeding the birds in their garden to help them endure the harsh winter months.

RSPB Scotland is running a series of events on Feed The Birds Day for people to find out more about the wildlife at their back door, and how to help birds survive the winter. On Sat 25 and Sun 26 there will be tips given and activities going on at Lochwinnoch Reserve from 12-2pm. An information pack has also been produced on how to help in RSPB's new Feed The Birds Day. For further information on events in Scotland, go to our website at: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/scotland/events/index.asp>. For more information about Feed The Birds Day, go to: www.rspb.org.uk/feedthebirds or call hotline 0870 601 0215 (calls charged at national rates).

1) The Population Status of Birds in the UK, Birds of Conservation Concern: 2002-2007, is a publication produced by the leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK. A total of 247 species have been assessed and each is placed onto one of three lists - red, amber or green. Forty species are red-listed, 121 are amber-listed and 86 are green-listed.

2) Some species are more prevalent than others in gardens according to the environment people live in. For example, yellowhammers are more likely to visit gardens in rural areas in close proximity to farmland.

3) House sparrow numbers fell by a staggering 62 per cent between 1972 and 1996 with an estimated loss of 9.6 million birds - a figure equivalent to the human population of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Source:

The Population Status of Birds in the UK, Birds of Conservation Concern: 2002-2007).

RSPB's TOP TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER GARDEN BIRDS

1. Introduce a bird table and high calorie seed mixes. The feeder can be used to put out kitchen scraps such as animal fats, grated cheese and soaked dried fruit.
2. Put out hanging feeder for black sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts, sunflower-rich mixes or unsalted peanuts.
3. Ensure a supply of fresh water every day, If it is very cold, use tepid water but DO NOT use any antifreeze products.
4. Supply apples and pears for black-birds, song thrushes and other members of the thrush family.
5. Food bars or fat hung or rubbed into the bark of trees is a great help for treecreepers, goldcrest and many other species.
6. Put up nest boxes to provide roost sites for the smaller birds. They will then be used for breeding later.
7. Plant berry-bearing plants in your garden, such as hawthorn, rowan, holly, cotoneaster and berberis.
8. Leave wild, weedy or shrubby areas in the garden that provide a natural seed source, natural cover and a supply of small insects.

E-asy E-mail

You can now receive basic Internet instruction at the Library. The instruction will be enough to allow you to surf the net, send and receive e-mail from friends and relatives.

Courses last about an hour and are given by the friendly staff at the library. To reserve a place please call 842305

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