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# CHATTERBOX

No 176 August 2008  
[www.lochwinnoch.info](http://www.lochwinnoch.info)

**ASIST**  
Anti-Social Investigation  
Team  
Office 8:45am – 4:45pm  
Ask for David McLaren or  
Barrie Anderson  
Tel: 01505 325 030

Community newsletter produced by lochwinnoch publicity committee for lochwinnoch cc

## What's On

*NOTE - Dates/times of some classes may vary during the summer holiday period.*

- **Advice Works** - Tuesdays 10am -12.30, Lochwinnoch Library. \*
- **Kickjitsu for Kids** - Monday nights, Parish Church Hall.
- **Tai Chi for Beginners** - Friday nights, 6.45-7.45pm, The Room, Lochwinnoch Library.
- **Yoga Classes** - Wednesday nights, 7.30pm McKillop Institute.
- **Morag's Keep Fit** Mondays and Thursdays from 7pm, McKillop Hall.
- **Jogging Buddies** - on Wednesday nights, meet at 6.30pm, McKillop Institute. \*
- **Lochwinnoch Community Walks** - Mondays (ex. Public Holidays), 10.30 am at The Cross.
- **Slinky Strollers** - parent and pushchair walks every Thursday at 10.30am, Castle Semple Centre.
- **Meditation/Creativity Classes and Workshops** in August and September. \*
- **Parish Church Bi-centenary Celebrations** - see inside \*
- **Scottish Country Dance Club** 7.30-9.30pm on Tuesday nights at the McKillop Institute, starting on Tuesday 2nd September.

- **Lochwinnoch Choral Society** Choir rehearsals recommence from Monday 1st September. \*
  - **Tuesday 5th August** – Lochwinnoch Community Council meeting at 7.30pm, Guild Room, Parish Church. \*
  - **Saturday 16th August** Councillor Arthur's Surgery from 11.30am at the McKillop Institute. \*
  - **Saturday 23rd August** - Chameleon Club workshops. \*
  - **Saturday 28th August** Fundraising Coffee Afternoon, Lochwinnoch Library. \*
  - **Tuesday 2nd September** - Lochwinnoch Community Council meeting at 7.30pm, Guild Room, Parish Church. \*
  - **Saturday 6th September** - Come and see 'Elvis' Live at Lochwinnoch Bowling Club. \*
- \* *See inside for more details.*

### Editorial & copy for Chatterbox

Let us have your stories, notices, news, information, events & items of interest – either hand-deliver them to the Chatterbox drop-box in the Library or e-mail to: [chatterbox@lochwinnoch.info](mailto:chatterbox@lochwinnoch.info)

### To advertise in Chatterbox

Tel: 07899 746403 or e-mail: [chatterboxaccount@btinternet.com](mailto:chatterboxaccount@btinternet.com)

**COPY DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE IS FRIDAY 29TH AUGUST '08.**



Dan and Irene Morrison, local residents, will celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on Friday 8 August 2008.

Dan was born in Lochwinnoch, Main Street, almost 80 years ago. They met while he was stationed in Irene's home town of Otley, West Yorkshire, during the war and married in Guiseley. They moved to Lochwinnoch and started to enjoy family life together. Margaret was born soon after, then exactly a year later Philip came along, sadly missed. After 15 years and one week wee Irene came into the world.

Both Dan and Irene worked for the local Russell family for many years. Dan, a mechanic to trade, went on to work with Shanks and McEwan, then worked a few years with his son in the local garage business and latterly driving for Southern Coaches in Barrhead. Dan enjoyed his trips with the Barrhead Auburn Singers to Southport and Dan and Irene are now honorary members of the group, sometimes travelling abroad with them.

After the Russell family grew up, Irene worked in the local silk milk in Main Street, then went on to work in St Josephs Nursing Home where she retired from.

Dan and Irene had their first ever holiday abroad 10 years ago with their 2 daughters, and for those who know them, they now go abroad around 3 times a year. In their spare time Dan looks after the clock at Auld Simon, always ensuring the time is accurate and Irene enjoys her trips to the bingo.

Dan and Irene now have 4 grand children and 5 great-grand children.

**Congratulations and a very happy 60th wedding anniversary from all the family.**

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### **Kilbarchan based practitioner scoops National Award.**

Longstanding Local Practitioner of Hypnosis and a founder of Ferringtons Scotland ( est.1998) has scooped yet another National award at the National Conference for Hypnosis UK held in Daventry last month.

Mo Ferrington. Dip. (CAH) HPD. PNL. MNCH. Investor In People Award. CAM Awards winner 2007.

Mo Ferrington, who lives in Bridge of Weir, was awarded the National "Voice of the Year" award 2008 by the National Council of Hypnotherapy. This prestigious award goes to a Scottish Practitioner for the first time, allowing Mo to bring back to Scotland the latest in cutting edge technology in Hypnosis in the form of the Soundboard, which combines voice and music to provide an altogether more relaxing experience for the client.

"This is a great honour for me to win another National award, this time in my own right rather than as a Ferringtons Practice award" commented Mo. "It just made it so Special for me". Specialising in Phobias, Weight control and Stress, Mo has also combined her Hypnosis with the skills of Sharon Duffy BScPOD MChs Podiatrist in the Kilbarchan Chiropody Clinic, for Pain relief.

## **Kilbarchan Chiropody & Ferrington's Therapies**



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

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To arrange an appointment or a free consultation with any of our practitioners please call us now on 01505 705 112.

To use Hypnosis for pain relief, preop in the clinic is an innovative and ground breaking technique. Pain relief with Hypnosis is used in many Dental Clinics but Kilbarchan Chiropody is the first foot clinic to use this technique with 100% success. Pre-op. sessions also apply to hospital and plastic surgery visits.

It was also announced that Mo will address the National Conference 2009 in Cheshire speaking on a subject she well knows " Never Give Up " a talk she frequently gives to local organisations and charities.

By way of celebrating the award Mo is offering a first session free (value £55) for the month of August for readers of Chatterbox. For further information about Mo Ferrington, telephone 01505 705 112 or email: mo@ferringtons-scotland.co.uk or see www.ferringtons-scotland.co.uk

## **LOCHWINNOCH COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

If you want to know more about what's going on in your village and get something done, then come and join Lochwinnoch Community Council.

Meetings are on the first Tuesday, every month, at 7.30 in the Parish Church hall. The next meeting is on Tuesday 2nd September and the speaker will be Mary Ogilvie of Neighbour Mediation Service, Renfrewshire Council. Members of the public are welcome to attend to hear the talk and ask questions.

The CC deals with planning matters, liaises with the police and the SRANI path group and deals with the council on matters relating to roads and pathways. But we could do more if we had more members!

If you have matters to bring up, please either attend a meeting, send a letter to the Secretary at 79 High St or email us at - cc@lochwinnoch.info

### **VILLAGE EVENT PLANNER**

Lochwinnoch Post Office has a wall-mounted calendar, where members of the public can enter details of forthcoming events. Please use this calendar to avoid any clashes when planning dates of events and, of course, to help publicise your events within the village.

### **CHATTERBOX**

You may have noticed that Chatterbox has gone through a period of growth over the past two years and it's all down to you - our readers, writers of articles, our advertisers and sponsors - thanks for your continuing support. Without your input and the financial assistance we receive from our many sponsors, Chatterbox could not survive and we are grateful to you for your loyalty and contributions.

Chatterbox is a free community newspaper, produced and distributed every month by volunteers. The aim of those involved is to produce an informative and entertaining journal for those who live, work and visit in this area. The Editor welcomes all items for possible inclusion but will reserve all rights over them, i.e. the right to shorten, edit or not publish any item. Please note, all views are of individuals and the Editor accepts no liability for editorial errors or statements and claims made in advertisements. Thank you

### **MEDITATION AND CREATIVITY CLASSES**

Creative Art and Meditation Class on Thursday nights, 7th and 21st August from 6:30-8:30pm.

Creativity Workshop on Saturday 6th September from 9.30am-1.30pm. Nourish your heart and open to your soul's journey through movement, meditation, a creative project, sharing and ceremony. Call Libby for details on Tel: 01505 842604.

## Parish Church Bi-Centenary Celebrations

All are welcome to join in with any or all of the events.

### Sunday 17th August

(note change of date)

Treasure Hunt around the village. Meet at 3pm at the Parish Church for a walk-about Treasure Hunt, followed by a barbecue at the Church. Children under 10 years must be accompanied by an adult. Adult tickets £2.50, children £1.50. Look for posters with details in the village.

### Sunday, 31st August

A service will be held in the Collegiate Church, starting at 3pm.

Worshippers should meet at 2.30pm at Castle Semple Visitor Centre to walk along the cycle track. Transport can be arranged for a small number and must be pre-booked by contacting the Visitor Centre Tel: 842882. There can be no parking in the vicinity of the Collegiate Church. Wardens from the RSPB will accompany worshippers on the return journey after the service.

### Saturday 4th October

Concert in the Parish Church at 7.30pm.

Music over 200 years. Tickets will be available nearer the time.

### Sunday 5th October

Bi-Centenary Service at 11am in the Parish Church. Dedication of the two quilted and embroidered banners by the Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. David Lunan.

### Bi-centenary Exhibition

This will open in the church on 5th October and will be open for visitors at specified times during October; look out for details nearer the time.

We should still welcome more contributions for this exhibition from villagers and others. Pictures, photographs or documents - referring to your family, village life in general or significant events in the wider world outwith Lochwinnoch. Let us know what you have and would be willing to lend. Photocopies of precious pictures or documents would be acceptable. In the first instance, please contact Anne Nicholl (01505 842632) and tell her what you have and roughly what size it is and its date. We can arrange for collection of items ready for the setting up of the exhibition.

The exhibition will move to the Library Room for the month of November. After the close, all items will be returned to the lenders. We look forward to hearing from you.

### Anniversary Cairn

We can still accept donations of stones. The actual building of the cairn is expected to take place in the late summer of 2009.

Sarah  
May  
Bridal



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Nicola Anne and Sophia Tolli.

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[www.sarahmaybridal.co.uk](http://www.sarahmaybridal.co.uk)

### **The attractive killer**

Once again, we are in the Ragwort season. These bright yellow daisy-like flowers grow in clusters on stems about 18 inches high and look very attractive. Do not be deceived. Do not let your children pick them. They can be fatal to horses and other domestic animals if eaten. Ragwort is covered under the "Dangerous Weeds Act 1959" and anyone with any on their land, or councils who allow them to grow in hedgerows, grass verges, etc are, in fact, breaking the law.

For more information, check out the DEFRA website - [www.defra/ragwort](http://www.defra/ragwort)

Apparently, Ragwort has a natural predator; the Cinnabar moth and there are attempts to re-establish this species in the fight to control Ragwort.

**COME AND SEE  
'ELVIS' LIVE**

On

**Saturday 6th September at 8pm**  
at Lochwinnoch Bowling Club

Tickets £8,  
available from Margaret.  
Tel: 01505 843013

Updates and further details will be published in Chatterbox.



**SING, DANCE, LEARN, REMEMBER**

**MUSIC MOVEMENT AND LOTS OF FUN FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN.**

**Every Thursday 10.00am Mackillop Institute from 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008.**

**Contact: Frankie Plater on 01505 612248 / 07812 606388**

## **Councillor Arthur's Report**

The weather was kind and the turn-out of over 40 children a day made for another successful Annual Community Football Camp, which recently took place at Viewfield Park from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July in partnership with Lochwinnoch Space, St.Mirren Football Club, Viewfield Rovers and Renfrewshire Council. It is most satisfying to receive such positive feedback from parents as well as the children. Thanks to all the partners for their help and support and to all the dedicated children who took part in another important event in our community calendar.

One of the highlights and most pleasurable duties of the first half of this year was working with and supporting the staff and children of our Primary School. Not only was over £20,000 raised for the Super-grounds Project under the leadership of Mrs Campbell but also due to the extremely hard work of all the staff, the school received Charter Mark status, which is the government's award scheme for recognising and encouraging excellence in public services. It is also a powerful quality improvement tool focused on customer service and service delivery. Charter Mark is unique among quality schemes in the way it focuses on results - the service that the customer actually receives. Any organisation achieving Charter Mark shows that it is putting its customers first by listening and responding to their needs. My congratulations to Miss Park and her excellent, dedicated team.

Over the last 6 weeks or so, as well as some road and pathway resurfacing work being carried out, the focus has been on cleaning out the road gullies within the village. A private contractor has been working on this issue and I am awaiting a report back on the effectiveness of their work as well as the location of any blockages or damage found. Some gullies prove difficult to get to due to cars being

parked over them or sometimes some are just easily missed. Therefore, if you know of any that have still to be cleaned out then give me a call.

Scottish Water has also responded positively to my several requests for work to be carried out and have been using a CCTV camera down the sewers at various points to investigate the issues raised. Up to now partial blockages have been found and cleared in High Street and Lochlip Road. Work has also taken place to repair leaking mains water pipes.

The steps leading from Semple Avenue to Grahams Avenue have been causing concern for quite some time and although some work has already been carried out, the indications now are that major work may be required to give the required solution. More investigative work is required and should begin in the next few weeks.

My next Surgery is on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August but there is no need to wait for a Surgery if you require my help, you can contact me on 843507 and we can agree a time when we can meet.

**Councillor David Arthur**

Come along and join the fun at **Happy Harminis** classes for pre-school children and their carers.

Classes are great fun where children learn, make friends and develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Frankie started Happy Harminis in January 2005 in the Houston/Bridge of Weir area and in 2007 started a class in Lochwinnoch. She was fascinated by the positive impact that music had on her own two lively boys from a very young age and wanted to share this with other carers and their children.

Using music, rhythm, percussion instruments and a variety of props such as puppets, floaty scarves, a parachute and everyone's favourite "bubble machine", the children learn about numbers, colours, feelings and the world around us. Each child has the opportunity to develop their own unique way of expressing themselves and discovering their own individual talents, whilst learning how to listen to and respect each other.

Frankie is looking forward to seeing new faces as well as old when classes start back later this month.

**As numbers are limited,  
please contact Frankie for a place  
on  
Tel: 01505 612248 / 07812 606388  
or by email at:  
frankie@happyharminis.co.uk**

**You can also visit the Happy  
Harminis web site:  
www.happyharminis.co.uk**

## **Teenage Cancer Trust**

Hello everyone,  
I hope you are all well and making the most of the sunshine!

Karl Jenkins is making another appearance at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Armistice Sunday (Sunday 9th November) with his award winning piece '**The Armed Man**'. As those who have heard his work on Classic FM will know this is an incredibly emotive piece. Coupled with the beautifully romantic Concerto de Aranjuez for guitar by Rodriguez, this promises to be another outstanding evening.

I urge you to get a group of friends together and book tickets quickly. Profits will go directly to building a second Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at Yorkhill. Log on to [www.TeenageCancerTrust.org](http://www.TeenageCancerTrust.org) for more details. A spectacular night out for a most worthwhile cause. I truly hope you can make it and look forward to seeing you there.

Take care,  
Karen

## Lochwinnoch Companion Dog Show Makes its Mark!

In terms of recent history, Lochwinnoch's Gala Day is still very young – just 4 years old! Unfortunately it is on the same day as several other established local shows but I appreciate this is purely down to logistics of the calendar – however it does pose local fete-goers with a hard choice. Nevertheless if you like a good old fashioned village fete, with a friendly atmosphere I think Lochwinnoch's Gala Day is proving hard to beat. The attendance this year was truly fantastic.

The Companion Dog Show numbers were through the roof compared to previous years with many local children taking part (under parental supervision of course!) which is what local fetes are all about.



In the pedigree classes our Judge Mrs. Susan Gibson (Glendonly) had a quality entry and found her Best in Show in Nicola Ingram's Great Dane Puppy 'Carla'. Just as importantly the Dog Show, together with the ringside collection taken during Liathach Dog Training's Annual Display, raised a record **£251** in favour of the Glasgow branch of the Dogs Trust. Like our Liliash Day sister show at Kilbarchan, the dog show is fully sponsored by the generosity of local businesses so that every penny raised can go to charity. Our grateful thanks to the businesses concerned namely The Brown Bull, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, The Junction, Now & Then and, from Beith, Paws & Claws Pet Shop and McKenzie, Bryson & Marshall, Veterinary Surgeons.

The Liathach Display team included a number of new faces this year, both human and canine, including several very young dogs.

Live locally? Try shopping locally and save on fuel, time and temper in a pleasant village environment with good, old-fashioned personal service.

We have a cornucopia of gift ideas for every occasion plus the perfect finishing touch for an outfit or the home.

Different, affordable and interesting.

NOW & THEN

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**8 Church Street Lochwinnoch O1505 843311**  
Open 9-5 Monday-Saturday and 12-4 on Sundays

All dogs were a credit to their handlers' hard work. We are an amateur Display team open to anyone concerned with Lochwinnoch-based Liathach Club, so controlling a dog in front of a large crowd to give such a polished performance is to be congratulated. I think we could give many a professional display team a run for their money –

### Novelty Classes 2008

Waggiest Tail – Jackie MacKenzie and Addi

Best 6 Legs - Jo Pinder, Jess & Meg  
Dog who Looks most Like Handler - Jackie MacKenzie & Arthur (*very fetching wig, Arthur!!*)

Dog the Judge would most like to take Home – Isla Lawrie & Mabel



but then I am rather biased towards our 2 and 4 legged pack!

Our fly-ball section was very much a training exercise as we had only seriously introduced this sport a few weeks beforehand but I believe the excitement generated by the contest made up for any impawfections!

### Pedigree Classes 2008

Best in Show - Nicola Ingram & Carla (Great Dane)  
Reserve Best in Show - Margaret Simm & Abi (GSP)

Any Variety Puppy (6 -12 months) – Nicola Ingram & Carla (Great Dane)

Any Variety Sporting – Tom Thickpenny & Hogi (Weimaraner)  
Any Variety Non-Sporting – James Jones & Sasha (GSD)

Any Variety Open – Margaret Simm & Abi (GSP)

Best Child Handler (6 – 16 years) – Emma Grahame (11) & Katie  
Best Crossbreed / Mongrel – Laura Rose & Karma  
Best Groomed Dog (assessed by Lochwinnoch-based groomer 'Auntie Jacquie') – Josephine Sanderson & Meg

Please contact Anne Moss on 01505 842367 or [dogtraining@f2s.com](mailto:dogtraining@f2s.com) if you have any queries regarding dog training or behaviour or wish further details about Liathach classes.

*NOTE: Unfortunately last year's winner of the Zanizoe Quaich for the Reserve Best in Show has yet to return it. Obviously this is upsetting for the donor of the trophy, the Gala Day organisers and this year's winner. If you know last year's winner, Mr. Kenneth Williamson with Belle the English Bulldog, please would you ask him to contact us on the number above as he may have changed address / Tel. No. and thus not received our communication. Thank you.*

# LW

## LOCHWNNOC WRITERS

**THE WRITERS ARE ON HOLIDAY IN  
AUGUST - NEXT MEETING  
MONDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER, LIBRARY  
9.30-11.30AM**

*You just never know exactly who's pulling the ale and making up the recipes for the bar meals in your local!*

### LAST CALL by Joyce Allwright

**L**AST CALL PLEASE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. Haven't you any homes to go to!

George Blackmoor, the landlord of the Black Swan, smiled at his customers and started to usher them out of the opened doors.

At last George turned to his son, *Well, Richard, let's start clearing up. I think I'll leave the glasses until tomorrow. There's only a few.*

As he wearily mounted the stairs, the landlord suddenly paused and said, *Richard, I'm getting too old for this trade. When your Mum comes back from the convalescent home, I'm thinking of retirement and you'll have first offer for the Black Swan.*

*No thanks, Dad, it's too much like hard work. I don't mind giving a helping hand when I come home from sea but my ship sails for Malta in the next two weeks.*

*Right,* said George from his bedroom door. *It goes up for sale next month.*

Several people came and looked over the Black Swan but no one made an offer.

Then one Friday morning George was just opening up when into the bar swept a formidable-looking lady, She was closely followed by her companion, a rather feisty young miss who turned out to be her niece.

*La, sir, are you the landlord?* George told them a little about his thirty-five years at the Swan. The older lady said, *Lor, Mr Blackmoor, you don't arf rabbit an' pork a bit funny!*

Then the two ladies asked to look round and were delighted with everything. George thought them rather strange but by their speech they came from London so what could you expect. The sale was concluded and the two ladies settled in. Overnight the Black Swan went from strength to strength.

The police took an interest in the female joint-landlords. The two women had private parties and villagers and outsiders

seemed to greatly enjoy their brand of hospitality .

Handcock, the local police sergeant, told the ladies there should be no more parties after hours. The young niece flashed her blue eyes and tossed her Titian hair: *I cannot see we're breaking the law Sergeant Handcock. We don't charge for liquors to our guests and nothing improper takes place Your wife is one of my guests now and then and I am sure she will tell you it's all above board.*

*That's as maybe, young lady,* said the sergeant. *But the parties stop now. Too much noise in the streets.* Back home he gave his wife another strange look as she bent over the cooker. Recently she was looking a lot happier than you'd expect after their long and often stormy marriage.

**S**oon after this the late night parties stopped and the village went back to its normal quiet self. The two landladies were very annoyed and proceeded to ask discreet questions. One evening Adela swept into the kitchen where her aunt was busy cooking: *Aunt, I've found out who complained about our little parties.*

*Who's the squealer then,* her aunt replied.

*The squire - the one who thinks just because he owns the big house he can ride roughshod over us all.*

In the pub kitchen, Adela's aunt forced her hand across her niece's lips: *Let's not forget careless rabbit brings trouble. We only escaped Newgate through your uncle Mark's invention and now we're safe in this new millennium lark. I don't want to spend any more time in Queen Vikki's prisons.*

Her aunt returned to her baking. Adela watched her and said, *Aunt, your baking exceeds Mrs.Lovett's at her best. Yes, said the aunt, but Mrs.Lovett was damned careless and I do not use human flesh like what she did. She and her partner Squeezer Todd were hung and a merry dance they did on the gallows.*

*I remember it so well. The crowd went crazy jeering and laughing. Serve them ight for being so careless with their ingredients!*

The aunt blessed her old pot and pan's invention which had got them safely into the future with no upsets. A pity the Runners had shot Mark but he should never have been silly enough to engage them with pistols. At least she and Adela were safe. The police officers nowadays were gentle men compared to the Bow Street Runners and the old stocks, the whipping-posts and the prison hulks moored in the Thames.

Yes the criminals nowadays had it easy.. It was a pity she could not take a few of her customers back to her own time just to show them. But Mark's invention could only propel you forward and not back.

Still Adela and herself were safe and soon she would deal with that nuisance the Squire. She would have to be careful, last time the Bow Street Runners nearly caught her and the modern police seemed to have a lot of new-fangled gadgets. Poison was such a delicate business . This time she would be careful, no trace would be found. So Nosey Squire's days were numbered.

**S**he tidied her hands and hair and swept into the bar to serve her customers. When she asked what was their pleasure she got the usual complement of winks and suggestive laughter. She smiled and became the jovial landlady once again.

Adela watched her aunt with affection. Back in old London people had spread the rumour that Elvira was related to the Borgias. Sometimes people had wicked tongues.

She smiled to herself and with a toss of her luxuriant red hair began to clear the used glasses from the tables of the now prosperous Black Swan. Out of the corner of her eye she watched the chat show. She had got used to the television and people seemed just as bad and silly as ever. There was no point living in the past.



**AILEEN FERGUSON**  
MSc., FCIPT, MBACP, SMTD  
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## Chameleon Club

Arts & Crafts for kids age  
12/13 and up.

A wonderful opportunity to have fun with art - right here in Lochwinnoch!

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 10am -  
12.00: Mosaics and magnets.

Using mosaic tiles, personalise mirror or picture frames. Wonderful colours available - let your imagination run wild! Then create fridge magnets or badges using Fimo. Dare your parents to display your work on the fridge!

This 2-hour taster workshops will be based at RSPB, Largs Road, Lochwinnoch and will be led by local professional artist, Cait Gould. Workshops are £10 each. Please phone Cait on 01505-842380 or 07845 133 359 or email - [caitgould@googlemail.com](mailto:caitgould@googlemail.com) about a week, or more, in advance to allow for the purchase of materials.

When you come along, you'll have the opportunity to register for the full course (6 sessions) running between September and April. The programme can include, drawing and painting techniques, working with clay, print making, collaging, glass painting, stencilling and more... what would you like to do? Please bring your ideas and suggestions.

See you there!

## THANK YOU

A very BIG thank you to the residents of Lochwinnoch and its surrounding areas, who gave so generously to the recent R.N.L.I. house-to-house collection.

The excellent total of **£1,147.38** was raised.

# The Paper Shop

Church Street, Lochwinnoch Tel: 01505 842337

## EXCLUSIVE 2009 CALENDAR

-- AROUND LOCHWINNOCH --  
FROM PAINTINGS BY ARTHUR G. CARSWELL

7-Day Newspaper Delivery Service, Fresh morning rolls, Milk from the local dairy, Newspapers, Magazines, Stationery, Confectionery, Gifts, Agents for Dry Cleaning, Curtain Cleaning, Ironing, Press only, Alterations and Repairs, Shoe Repairs, Laundry.

## TWO FAMILIES DOOMED BY AN ANCIENT CURSE

THE MacDowalls of Castle Semple and the Houstouns of nearby Johnstone Castle were two of Renfrewshire's wealthiest and most influential families - and they had much in common.

Both are commemorated by memorials in Paisley Abbey. They lived in magnificent mansions, they were related by marriage and they were said to be united by ancient curses.

According to the Judicial Records of Renfrewshire: "William Woodrow, miner in Johnstone, in the year, 1720, cast many curses upon the Houstoun family."

Similarly, the MacDowalls were cursed by notorious warlock Lord Ringan Sempill, who was enraged by their decision to demolish his illustrious ancestors' 200-years-old medieval tower at Castle Semple to make way for a more modern residence in 1727. Uncannily, the fearsome curses on the MacDowall and Houstoun families seemed to be fulfilled.

George Houstoun, the 4th Laird of Johnstone and founder of the town in 1782, married Mary MacDowall, of Castle Semple, in 1788. Mary went to live with her new husband at Johnstone Castle (the ruins can still be seen today) just off the Beith Road, near St Aidan's Church. The couple had 2 children - Ludovic and William.

At the foot of the avenue leading up to Johnstone Castle was the Quarrelton coal-miners' village, which was the scene of an outbreak of smallpox in December, 1781. George Houstoun's mother, Jane Rankine, wrote in her diary that the laird was plan-

ning to evacuate his entire family to live with Mary's relatives in the more salubrious surroundings of Castle Semple House where they would be safer from the scourge of smallpox.

But fate dealt both families a different hand. Mary, who was a beautiful woman and in her early 30s, was stricken down with the terrible disease with all its gruesome symptoms, including raging fever and bodily sores. Sadly, she succumbed to the appalling affliction and died on January 2, 1782, just three months after giving birth to William.

But there were further tragedies to come. In July, 1810, the heir to Castle Semple House - a young man named Day Hort MacDowall - drowned himself in the fishponds just opposite the Collegiate Church in Castle Semple estate, following a financial crisis which led to the MacDowalls selling the estate to the Harvey family in 1813

A few years later, William Houstoun - brother of the last laird of Johnstone, George Ludovic Houstoun - was drowned in a boating accident at Castle Semple Loch in September, 1866. The youth was aged just 18 and he died just 200 yards from where Day Hort MacDowall was drowned.

When I worked as a ranger at Castle Semple Country Park, my homeward route along the cycle path led past the scenes of the tragic drownings.

On dark nights, when rain cascaded torrentially through the trees and the wind howled eerily through Parkhill Wood, the sylvan shadows seemed to echo with the diabolical shrieks and cackling laughter of Lord Ringan Sempill and William Woodrow whose terrible curses brought death and doom to the MacDowalls of Castle Semple and their kinsfolk, the Houstouns of Johnstone Castle.

by DEREK PARKER

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Justgiving sends your donation straight to Teenage Cancer Trust and automatically reclaims Gift Aid if you're a UK taxpayer, so your donation is worth even more.

Thank you for your support.  
**John and the team**

## Lochwinnoch Scottish Country Dance Club

Don't forget to come along and join us on Tuesday evenings, 7.30-9.30pm in the McKillop Hall, Lochwinnoch, starting 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

New and existing members are welcome to join us for an inexpensive night out (with a very patient Scottish Country Danciteacher).

## CLEAN RENFREWSHIRE

This May, Renfrewshire Council launched 'Clean Renfrewshire' - a campaign to encourage local people to take pride in their area and play their part in helping keep it clean. This will be supported by enforcement action against those who break the law by littering, fly tipping, spraying graffiti and allowing their dogs to foul our streets and parks - litter crimes which cost our council tax payers £3 million a year.

The council will also be working in partnership with local schools and businesses to reduce the amount of litter dropped and increase the amount which is cleaned up.

Speaking at the campaign launch in Paisley Town Hall, Council Leader Derek Mackay said:

*"The amount of litter discarded by people in Renfrewshire each weekend - enough to fill 9 refuse trucks - is unacceptable. It is impossible for a local authority to keep the streets of its towns and villages clean on its own. What we need is for the people who live, work and play in Renfrewshire to get involved in our campaign, encourage their friends and family not to drop litter and report other antisocial behaviour - such as fly tipping and graffiti - when they see it. We are investing in keeping Renfrewshire tidy, but we need the full support of local residents if we're truly to make our campaign a success."*

### New Powers for Wardens

There will be a new Environmental Warden Service from October onwards. In addition to their existing duties of tackling antisocial behaviour, dealing with minor neighbour disputes and reporting repairs, etc wardens will also have an enforcement role, issuing on-the-spot £50 Fixed Penalty Notices for litter and dog fouling.

### Litter and Fly Tipping

If you witness anyone fly tipping or discover an unauthorised waste site, please report it to the Helpline - Tel: 08452 30 40 90.

### Problems with Dogs

Animal Wardens patrol Renfrewshire to promote responsible dog ownership, uplift stray dogs, deal with complaints of dog fouling and nuisance caused by stray dogs.

### Community Caretaker pilot

This pilot project is being introduced in South Paisley, where caretakers will maintain open spaces and play an 'eyes and ears' role in reporting graffiti and fly tipping, etc.

To report problems with litter, fly tipping, stray dogs or dog fouling, please phone: 0141 842 4448.

To report problems with litter on roads, please phone: 0141 842 4466.

Or make your report by e-mail to:  
[cleanrenfrewshire@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:cleanrenfrewshire@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

### Will you be a 'graffiti detective' ?

Graffiti removal costs Renfrewshire council tax payers £150,000 a year. Renfrewshire Council and Strathclyde Police have set up a website to help identify vandals who spray buildings with their graffiti signatures or 'tags'. Graffiti images can now be viewed on the Community Website at

[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/graffiti](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/graffiti)

and members of the public are asked to help the police identify those individuals responsible.

The Council's graffiti removal service can be contacted on free helpline no: 0800 389 8623.

For graffiti on property owned by public utilities, here are some useful telephone numbers:

**Adshel** (bus shelters) 01236 8604000

**Royal Mail** (post boxes) 0141 577 4781

**Network Rail** (railway property, etc)

Tel: 08457 114141

**Amey Highways** (road bridges), Tel: 0141 781 6555.

*(This article has been reproduced from material contained in "The People's News" magazine, with the kind permission of Renfrewshire Council's Media Relations Department. Ed.)*



# ST VINCENT'S HOSPICE

Staff, friends and volunteers at St Vincent's have been busy fundraising for the Hospice for many months now. Here is a summary of their very considerable achievements over the past few weeks.

**£250** was raised at the T@Three event on Friday 27th June;

**£370** was raised at the Chocolate and Fancy Goods night on Tues. 8th July; St Vincent's Hospice Summer Fete took place on Saturday 19th July. Fundraiser, Jane Cox said "The Fete was a great success thanks to the generosity of Renfrewshire Council and local garden centres who provided an amazing array of plants, local butchers who donated the barbecue supplies and many others who donated goods or their time to the event. Through their generosity, the Hospice is now **£4,000** better off.";

When Jim Richmond lost a bet with friend Jim O'Donnell, the forfeit was to wear the opposition football strip for a day in his local pub. Friends found out about the bet and joined in to raise **£500** for the Hospice. Fundraiser, Lorraine Valentine said "We are delighted to receive this support from Jim and everyone at Hamish's Hoose from what proved to be a fun day."

## **Golf Day - Friday 29th August**

Join us at Erskine Golf Club for a fun day of golf. £250 per team of 4.

## **Paisley Vision 10k Sun 31st August** **Great Scottish Run - Sunday 7th September.**

Why not get running and raise vital funds through sponsorship. We will give you sponsorship forms and a t-shirt to help you on your way.

**For more information or if you can spare some time to help out, please contact Lorraine or Jane in the Fundraising Team at St Vincents Hospice, Howwood on Tel: 01505 705635 or e-mail us at: [lorraine.valentine@svh.co.uk](mailto:lorraine.valentine@svh.co.uk) or [jane.cox@svh.co.uk](mailto:jane.cox@svh.co.uk)**



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### **ETTA KERR**

The family of the late Etta Kerr would like to thank all those who attended Etta's funeral service and contributed to the retiral collection. It had been Etta's wish that a collection be taken in lieu of flowers and that the monies raised be donated to St Vincent's Hospice.

The sum of £280 has been forwarded to the Hospice in Etta's memory.

Thank you.

### **LOCHWINNOCH COMMUNITY GARDEN**

The "Gardens Open Day" was very successful this year, with some 200 visitors arriving from many areas outwith the village. Many were most impressed with the quality and variety of gardens in our area.

The Community Garden received much praise from visitors, who remarked on the large selection of vegetables and shrubs - not forgetting our very large crop of leeks and onions. (Freshly picked garden peas were delicious too. **Ed.**)

It is our intention to have plant sales at the Community Garden from mid-August, on a Saturday/Sunday, from 1pm to 5pm. Look out for posters with further details.

Following the "Gardens Open Day", we will be making a substantial donation to St Vincent's Hospice within the next few weeks. For further information about the Community Garden Project, please contact Gordon Nicholl on Tel: 842632.

### **LOCHWINNOCH SCOTS GUARDSMAN BRAVERY HONOUR**

Many voices were raised to argue the appropriateness of the Iraq War. Time will provide a more rounded basis for future voices to conclude that debate. But no voices were or will be raised to doubt the level of professionalism and commitment of the members of our armed forces deployed in the conflict and its aftermath.

It is axiomatic that men and women in the forces will display great bravery in such conflicts; they simply could not fulfil their role without doing so. But, occasionally, there are individual acts which require to be recognised as being 'above and beyond' even the highest display of duty. Guardsman Paul McGee of the Scots Guards has received such recognition.

In the July Operational Honours list, Guardsman McGee was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery for his efforts to save the life of a colleague during a night-time operation in southern Iraq. Sadly, Paul's bravery in attempting to save his friend and fellow tank driver's life was in vain and his friend died as a result of the incident. But senior officers were convinced that Paul's heroism should be recognised.

For his mother Anne and sister Kelly, here in Lochwinnoch, the honour bestowed on Paul is a matter of understandable and considerable pride. Paul's reaction has been one of commendable modesty and continued concern for the family of the friend who died. Paul, the community salutes your bravery and congratulates you on the honour.

# GET OOT, GET ACTIVE !



The project known as Get Oot Get Active, began in the summer of 2007 as a youth diversionary initiative involving Strathclyde Police and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The originators of the project were Lochwinnoch's local community officer, PC Andrew Macleman, and Willie Mcleod, a senior instructor with Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, based at Castle Semple Centre, Lochwinnoch.

The central aim was to involve young people nominated by the police in activities at the centre, under the guidance and care of instructing staff. The activities included, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, team building, orienteering, mountain biking, hill walking and others.

Unfortunately, the terrorist attack at Glasgow Airport severely curtailed the initiative and limited it to only two weeks. Both PC Andrew Macleman and Willie Mcleod recognised the value of the project and, over the winter, decided to make it bigger and better.

In 2008 the project has been designed to last for the six weeks of the school holidays. It involves young people in care and includes six residential establishments in Renfrewshire, both children's units and assessment centres. Each establishment has been allocated a week's activities for up to a maximum of 10 young people. All activities are run by Clyde Muirshiel staff. The project has been wholly funded by Strathclyde Police Partnership Fund (9,475), with matching help in kind from Clyde Muirshiel Regional park and the

participating children's establishments.

## The objectives of the project

- to reduce offending by participating young people ,
- to reduce police related incidents at the respective establishments,
- to assist care staff in working with young people in their care,
- to include a vulnerable section of the community,

## remain constant, as do the means to

- encourage responsibility,
- build team work,
- develop self respect,
- encourage the ability to take instruction,
- offer a positive outlook and break the spiral of inaction,
- acquire sporting skills,
- have a healthy lifestyle,

## and above all, to have fun.

The project is currently in its third week and is going splendidly so far with positive feedback from youngsters and staff.

## PC Andrew Macleman says,

" Get Oot Get Active is about having fun and making the right choices. With the Commonwealth Games on our horizon it is important to recognise that sport in all its forms can encourage and develop self respect, teamwork and a positive outlook. Strathclyde Police and Clyde Muirshiel are delighted to work with this group of young people and to enable them to enjoy life to the full and realise their potential. "

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## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

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Johnstone Police – 01505 404000

Johnstone Community Safety  
Office – 01505 404023

Trading Standards – 0141 840 3233

Care and Repair – 0141 812 4111

Renfrewshire Council -  
Tel: 0141 842 5000

Anti-social Behaviour Investigation  
Team (ASIST) - 01505 325030

Victim Support – 0141 887 0328

Nuisance Support & Advice  
Helpline – 0800 169 1283

Crimestoppers – 0800 555 111

**Community Safety Office,  
Johnstone Police Station.**



## The Swan

Folks in Lochwinnoch are lucky. They only have to walk a few yards to set their eyes on one of the most magnificent birds found in nature - the swan.

What a superb bird, the last word in elegance, with its flowing, aristocratic neck, beautifully shaped body and magnificent plumage it is surely one of the wonders of the natural world.

When Hollywood publicists wanted to find a way to describe the beauty of Audrey Hepburn they likened her to a swan. Poets and musicians frequently extolled the beauty of the swan.

W.B Yeats in his famous poem Wild Swans at Coole wrote:

*'Their hearts have not grown old;  
Passion or conquest, wanders  
where they will,  
Attend upon them still,  
But now they drift on the still wa-  
ter,  
Mysterious, beautiful'*

The German poet Rilke wrote in his poem The Swan:

*'The swan falls into waters, which  
receive him gently  
and as though with reverence and  
joy  
draw back past him in steams on  
either side  
infinitely silent and aware,  
of his full majesty and ever more  
indifferent, he condescends to  
glide.'*

The Finnish composer Sibelius named one of the themes in his Symphony No 5 the 'swan hymn'. He was inspired to do so after seeing sixteen swans fly in formation above his house.

At the time he wrote: 'one of my greatest experiences, Lord God, what beauty.... The swans are always in my thoughts and give splendour to my life. It is strange to learn that nothing in the whole

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world affects me – nothing in art, literature, or music – in the same way, as do these swans’

Unfortunately, swans share their world with ‘us’ so they have to face dangers not of the animal kingdom. They can become ensnared in carelessly discarded fishing lines, they get poisoned occasionally from dumped waste material; lately, it was reported that a family arrived at the loch and attempted to capture a swan and bundle it into their car. Fortunately they were prevented from doing so by irate passers-by. But it was an unwelcome development. Swans mate for life and if one of the couple is harmed or dies the remaining swan can decline rapidly.

Finally, one of the best poems ever written about the swan; it was written in 1610, as a madrigal, by the composer Orlando Gibbons. When you read the last line you can’t help thinking of things like Big Brother and the Jeremy Kyle Show:

*'The Silver Swan who, living,  
had no note  
When death approached,  
unlocked her silent throat.  
Leaning her breast against  
the reedy shore,  
Thus sung her first and last,  
and sung no more:*

*'Farewell, all joys! O death,  
come close mine eyes;*

*More geese than swans now  
live, more fools than wise.'*

## It Makes You Laugh

A couple of weeks ago I watched with amazement a news item where scientists strapped a great big poly bag on the back of a poor cow to measure how much methane it emitted. You see, there is a view that it is not we humans who are responsible for global warming, it’s all these cows quietly chewing away at the cud that are the real problem.

This theory, of course, glosses over the fact that some cities in this planet are so polluted by car fumes that it is almost impossible to see your hand a metre away from your face. The upcoming Olympic Games will be the first that have ever been played in a dense poisonous fog.

Walk around the country roads of this village and you see in microcosm that the problem is us - we, man, homo litterlouts that are the real problem. There is hardly a foot of road that is not scarred by some human detritus, most of it deposited from cars, vans or lorries.

Much of the rubbish (apart from the fridges, carpets and the odd three piece suite) is in supermarkets bags and could quite easily be dumped in a domestic bin. The psyche of someone who drives into the countryside with a poly bag full of rubbish and dumps it at the side of a country road is something that scientists should apply their minds to, though I think it would need someone with a brain the size of Einstein and Freud combined to come up with an answer to that particular puzzle.

Then if you look at the rest of the world there is hardly a spot, including the most hostile environment that has not been soiled by the hand of man, mainly in pursuit of money.

So what I would say to the scientist and government officials is get off the cows’ backs and look to yourselves. There is probably more hot air comes from poncy officials and dodgy scientists than ever came from a cow’s rear end.

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## From the Parish Church

*God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.*<sup>1</sup>

*We're all going on a summer holiday  
no more working for a week or two.  
Fun and laughter on our summer holiday,  
no more worries for me or you,  
for a week or two.*<sup>2</sup>

It's not often that I begin with a quote from the Bible, yet there is a lot of wisdom in this short verse. The example of God resting on the seventh day is reinforced in the Ten Commandments where we are advised to, "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."<sup>3</sup>

Hebrew word "shabbat" literally means a time of rest. If we understand the giving of the Ten Commandments as a gift from a loving God, rather than prohibitions from a great tyrant in the sky, we realise that the sabbath is a gift of rest. At university, our Biblical Studies lecturers used a three word mantra, "Context, context, context!" In other words, we shouldn't just take our favourite verses from the Bible and quote them without reference to the chapter or indeed book in which they appear. The verse which introduces the gift of the Ten Commandments reminds the Israelites, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."<sup>4</sup> For a people who had been subjugated under the yoke of enforced labour, the reward of rest was a prize beyond all measure.

In early Christianity both the sabbath (Saturday), as a day of rest and the Lord's Day (Sunday), a day of rejoicing for the resurrection of Jesus, were observed. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, these observances were united and since then most Christians have celebrated Sunday as the day of resurrection and of rest. However, some attempts to "keep the sabbath holy" have appeared ridiculous in the extreme. Even Jesus himself was accused of "breaking" the Sabbath, for healing a man with a

withered hand, which begs the questions, what is this time of rest for? Is it for doing nothing, ignoring the plight of our fellow human beings in the process, or is it time for relaxation, an opportunity for spending time with our nearest and dearest, a time to recharge our batteries? One of the beauties of the Jewish faith is the emphasis on family – everyone belongs to a family and on Jewish feast days, including the sabbath, families gather together and the home is the centre of the celebration. All well and good if one rubs along with their family, I'm sure it must be closer to purgatory for those who do not!

Yet there is something beautiful about the Bible advising us to take time out. Life today is very fast. Many shops are open 7 days a week, many mothers (myself among them) work full time and days off become a time of catching up with necessary household chores. This is when the wisdom of the sabbath, of resting comes into its own. If God needed to rest, how much more so do we? How much more do those of us who work full time and, in our 'spare time', try to run a home plus all the other myriad things with which we are involved, need to rest. Some of us are lucky in that we can usually find some time in the week to stop and take a rest – maybe not for a whole day, but for a couple of hours at a time. That is why I believe holidays are so important. It doesn't really matter if you are able to go away or not, for a time of rest and relaxation, a time to catch up with nearest and dearest, really does make a difference to our health and well being.

Wherever you go, whatever you do this summer, may God bless you all with blissful, divine rest.

Yours,

*Christine*

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2. 3. All Bible quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup> Written by Bruce Welch & Brian Bennett

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 2.8

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 2.2

## Lochwinnoch Library

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### TEAM READ

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For further details contact -  
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[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries)

### FUNDRAISING COFFEE AFTERNOON

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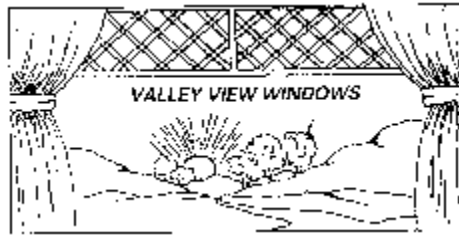
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## Lochwinnoch Choral Society

The village choir will start rehearsals on Monday 1st September 2008.

All rehearsals are in the Parish Church in Church St, Lochwinnoch.

The Junior Choir rehearsal is from 7pm to 7.30pm in the Church Hall; The Intermediate Choir rehearsal is from 7.30pm to 8.30pm in the Church Hall; and the Senior Choir starts rehearsals at 8pm in the Church.

The choir is open to everyone and we have a no audition policy. The only criteria is that you enjoy singing. Our aim is to have fun making music and over the past few years we have managed to do just that. We have performed the Armed Man and the Requiem by Karl Jenkins, in the Royal Concert Hall, with the composer conducting. These were fantastic occasions for a small village choir. Singing with other choirs and a full professional orchestra was tremendous. It gave the whole choir a real buzz.

Earlier this year we performed Carmina Burana in Oran Mor along with 'The Sirens of Titan'. This is a Glasgow choir that has the same philosophy as us. (i.e. have fun while singing). We performed to a full house and even managed to get a four star review in the Glasgow Herald. We got an extra star for the great atmosphere and feeling of the performance. This was our second joint venture with the Titans; we sang in a play about the building of the Kibble Palace written by Dave Anderson. The play was to mark its recent renovation and was performed for five nights in the Kibble Palace itself. Again this was great fun and most of the choir managed to sing in at least some of the performances. We hope to continue in this vein in the coming year. We will start rehearsals

for our Christmas concert in September and then work on our spring concert, which we hope will be part of the Arts Festival at the end of March.

We are also planning for another joint venture with the Sirens of Titan later next year.

The choir is primarily about having fun singing and we would welcome anyone who enjoys singing to come and join us. As I said, we do not have auditions, everyone is welcome. So please come and join us. If you are new to the village it is a great way to get to know people. You can just turn up on the night or e-mail myself for more information.

The choir would also like to say a big thank you to Susie Lamont who retired as Junior and Intermediate Choirmaster at the end of last season.

Susie has put in a fantastic amount of work over the years and has been a tremendous inspiration to all of us and the performances of the Junior choirs at our concerts have always been greatly enjoyed. Susie has retired to concentrate on her private teaching and we all wish her well in the future.

We are fortunate to have Laura Sands taking over as Junior and Intermediate Choirmaster this year. Laura is in her final year at Glasgow University where she is studying music. She plays the flute and the piano and comes from a family with a long tradition in singing.

Meg Brown is continuing to help with the Junior choirs and I am sure that they will continue to make singing fun for the juniors and keep up the high standards that Susie brought to the concerts.

**For more information contact**  
**Jimmy Anderson at:**

**[jimmyandeileen@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jimmyandeileen@tiscali.co.uk)**

## The Sax in Lochwinnoch

Lochwinnoch has probably more saxophone players (and guitarists) per head of population than any other village of comparable size. I can, with the minimum of thought, count at least six. All are fine players, if not all are up there among the greats like Charlie Parker and John Coltrane. This article, though concentrates on one of the village saxophone players, namely Mr C. Maestro C maintains he has been around since the saxophone was invented and looking at him it's hard to disagree with him. He had an illustrious career playing with the greats of the entertainment world (so he says) after serving his apprenticeship in the Glasgow dance halls sweating in the pit with Benny Daniels at the Plaza and Colin Mason at the Locarno.

However, as if in response to a cry from his various audiences, he suddenly stopped playing altogether. For years in the wilderness the music business got on without Mr C; it flourished while Mr C sat in his rocking chair and whittled away at the odd stick or two.

Now after a long absence from the polished bell Mr C has chopped up the rocking chair, put aside the whittled twig and has taken the instrument up once again. 'He sounds like a fox in heat,' one of his neighbours said. 'Never heard anything like it in my life,' another joined in.

I think, though, it's good to see someone in the late winter of his life returning to do something that was such an important part of his early life. You know, most people decline because it's their minds they fail to keep in trim. You might not want to play the saxophone when you get older – though why not? – but everyone should work to keep the mind shining and in pristine condition.

Although there has been no secret filming, no dark clubs, no whips, Mr C, who has read this article, says he intends to sue. We await his lawyer's letter. (I'll check the insurance! Ed.)

# SRANI Heritage Consultation

As you may remember from previous issues, **Land Use Consultants** (LUC) has been working on the development of a Conservation Statement for the former Castle Semple Estate. This process has involved documentary research, archaeological investigations and engineering surveys of the surviving features. They can now present their findings to you.

A fascinating picture of the development of the estate has emerged, highlighting the relationships between the various owners of Castle Semple with significant historical events across the world.

The built heritage features themselves represent a 'hidden treasure' which are currently to some extent obscured from view or inaccessible to the public. The Conservation Statement aims to identify potential ways in which features can be stabilised, enhanced and, where desirable, restored. Some options that LUC have suggested are outlined below.

## Why is Castle Semple important?

The significance of the former Castle Semple Estate is the product of the interaction between a range of factors

### Historical:

- Sempill family were nationally significant figures during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- The three William Macdowalls were internationally important trade magnates, agricultural improvers and early industrialists;
- The 18<sup>th</sup> century built heritage and designed landscapes are products of wealth generated by slavery – a topic that has only recently been given the attention it deserves in a Scottish context;

### Architectural:

- Around half of all the sites on the estate are Listed Buildings, and some are particularly fine examples of their type – notably the Collegiate Church and Garthland Bridge (both A-Listed);



*Lochwinnoch residents -  
Can I help? If so, please don't  
hesitate to get in touch.*

**Douglas Alexander, Lochwinnoch's MP**

**Write to: 2014 Mile End Mill, 12 Seedhill Road, Paisley, PA1 1JS  
Tel: 0141 561 0333. E-mail: dalexandermp@talk21.com  
or come to one of my advice surgeries.**

### Architectural (continued):

- The designed landscape features constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century are relatively early, indicating how 'modern' and fashionable the estate was at the time;

### Archaeological:

- The Peel Tower is a nationally significant monument and may stand on earlier features;
- The intricate drainage infrastructure on the estate (including the works surrounding Barr Loch and Aird Meadows) are unique and – although not glamorous – highly significant;
- As the policies have been out of cultivation since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they have far higher archaeological potential than more intensively farmed areas;

### Natural Heritage:

- The study area is an attractive scenic landscape, is renowned for its communities of bird and wetland species, and is a haven for other wildlife, but few people realise that the areas which contribute to this landscape and biodiversity value are actually man-made;

### Social:

- The 1930's smallholdings represent the first stirrings of the sweeping social and political reforms which took place after the Second World War – and are a relatively rare survival in western Scotland;
- The value of the estate as a resource for leisure, recreation and education is one of its most important aspects – and what is driving the SRANI project!

### What is the Conservation Statement proposing?

LUC are making a number of recommendations to highlight possible ways to enhance the historic environment of the area, including:

- Stabilising the Peel Tower;
- Restoring the fish-ponds and cascades (ornamental waterfalls) close to the Collegiate Church;
- Restoring the 19<sup>th</sup> century ice-house and 18<sup>th</sup> century grotto;
- Improving the landscaping and planting to enhance the setting of historic features;
- Providing access and interpretation facilities for selected sites

However, we want the community to be at the heart of the project and, therefore, we need your help and input to refine our proposals to make sure these make the most of the features and landscapes you value.

### What can you do?

We hope to hold the second consultation event to outline the draft proposals at the Castle Semple Centre on Wednesday 20 August (times to be confirmed prior to the event). This will be a valuable opportunity for you to see what could be done with the historic environment, and make suggestions and comments on where you think they could be improved.

We also want to know what you think is really important about the area and what aspects of its history interest you. Keep an eye on the Lochwinnoch community website for forthcoming information or contact the SRANI Officer on 01505 842882 ext 25 or e-mail: [srani@clydemuirshiel.co.uk](mailto:srani@clydemuirshiel.co.uk)

## TILTING AT WINDMILLS by Derek Parker

As one who worked as a countryside ranger at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park for many years, I know just how much this majestic unspoiled landscape, with its rare birds, wildflowers, geological features and archaeological sites, will be desecrated forever by grotesque, noisy, environmentally-intrusive wind farms which transform earthly paradises into ecological and spiritual wastelands.

The hills above Lochwinnoch, which form part of Clyde Muirshiel Park and where these turbines are planned today enshrine a unique, sacred spirit which whispers soul-stirring tales of half-forgotten communities who lived, worked and died in these silent solitudes throughout the ages.

Among their attractions are seemingly boundless heather-mantled morasses, rocky crags, sparkling streams, rush-robed pastures and dark conifer forests which provide homes for rare lizards and beautiful birds like curlews, golden plover, skylarks, ravens, hen harriers, merlins and peregrine falcons

Colourful wildflowers like orchids, cloudberry, bog asphodel, sundew and butterwort proliferate in ancient realms studded with prehistoric burial chambers and standing stones where New Stone Age and Iron Age communities chanted paeans of praise to the gods and goddesses of the pagan pantheon thousands of years ago.

One Midsummer morning, around three o'clock, I stood on the summit of the Misty Law during my time as a ranger at Muirshiel Country Park, waiting for the sun to rise on the long-est day of they year.

At first, I feared I would be disappointed as the last shades of darkness disappeared like dark shadows from the lonely landscape. The hills were shrouded with fog and visibility was reduced to about 200 yards. Through the gloom, I could see what looked like small grassy knolls all around me, veiled with fog. In reality, these 'knolls' were the peaks of hills more than 1500 feet high whose slopes were hidden by the fog.



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**Amanda's looking for new recruits!**

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The Kickjitsu Kids Academy is enrolling beginners this term, don't miss out! Enrolment night is Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August

I am hoping some more local children would like to try Kickjitsu so I have made spaces for new students age 6 + to come along and try a session anyone quoting Chatterbox will get their first class for only £2.50 - that's 50% off!!

Kickjitsu classes consist of a variety of concepts with the foundation being the Martial Art itself and all other concepts learned complement this, i.e. gymnastics, self-defence, citizenship, yoga, brain gym and even my games complement the whole system.

If anyone wants further information, please get in touch with Amanda on 07961 934606 or e-mail me at [kickjitsu@aol.com](mailto:kickjitsu@aol.com)

The melancholic songs of golden plover echoed through the mist and now and again I could see the grey, ghostly forms of giant moth-like hen harrier birds of prey soaring and gliding phantom-like across the mist-mantled moors. All the glory and wonder of the natural world, along with the sacred spirit of the hills, which has sanctified the hills since time immemorial, was encapsulated in that memorable moment when all time seemed like an eternal instant.

To me, it is unthinkable that parade-siacal places like Clyde Muirshiel Park, with their awesome tranquility, serenity and peace, should be destroyed by the wind turbines which Lochwinnoch poet Betty McKellar described so eloquently as "great white phantoms three times as high as cathedral spires with bleach-bone limbs exposed and dry thriving in skeleton forests."

The prime purpose of wind farms like that proposed for Clyde Muirshiel Park is to provide massive income for land-owners and wind farm companies which will receive about £500,000 annually - nearly half of it in subsidies paid by all of us through

rising bills levied by electricity suppliers, which will buy energy from these turbines at nearly twice the normal price then pass them on to us, who are their customers. It is a fact of life that all the energy generated by wind farms will not close down one single conventional power station. In fact, more gas, nuclear and coal-powered plants would have to be built to provide back up when the wind is not blowing and the environment-destroying turbines cannot produce electricity.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is one of Renfrewshire's great natural paradises. Do we want it scarred forever by giant turbines bristling like soulless spines on a lifeless, gigantic porcupine? As one who worked at the park, I would urge the people of Lochwinnoch and the surrounding villages to work together to protect its marshes, meadows, moorlands and mosses from ugly wind farms by writing to their councillors, MSPs, MPs and MEPs voicing their objections.

I pray that ours will not be the generation that stood by idly and allowed Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park to be sacrificed at the altar of Mammon, the god of money. **Derek Parker**

# News & Events at RSPB, Muirshiel, Cornalees & Castle Semple Centres

- **Junior Activity Weeks** - running till Friday 15th August at Castle Semple Centre. Five activities, over 5 half days for kids, every week. Booking essential, Tel: 01505 842 882, Ext 20.
- **Nature Notes** - running till Tuesday 12th August. A summer programme of nature inspired activities, led by our Rangers, every Tuesday at 1pm at Muirshiel Centre.
- **Wednesday Wildlife Watch** - running till Wednesday 13th August. Activities for all the family at Muirshiel, from 1pm every Wednesday.
- **RSPB Lochwinnoch Photographic Competition**. Friday 8th August is the deadline for entries to the competition. Saturday 16th - Sunday 31st August—10am-5pm, view entries and vote for a winner in each category.
- **4th, 11th and 18th August - Minibeast Mondays** from 11am-4pm at RSPB, Lochwinnoch.
- **Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th August** - Wildlife Discovery Wander from 12noon - 2pm, and Optics Weekend from 10am—4pm both events at RSPB Lochwinnoch
- **Sunday 10th August - Pirate Day** (see across for details).
- **Thursday 14th and Friday 15th August - Paddle Power Passport for Kids** at Castle Semple Centre.
- **Wednesday 20th August** - Second SRANI Heritage Consultation (see inside for details).
- **Saturday 23rd August** - new date for Bird Ringing Demonstration from 7am—10am at RSPB Lochwinnoch. Tel: 01505 842663 to book in advance.
- **Friday 29th August**, (8pm till late) **and Saturday 30th August** (10am-12 noon) - Bat and Moth Nights at RSPB Centre, Lochwinnoch. Tel: 01505 842663 to book in advance.



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(10 mins from Glasgow Airport on A737)

- **Saturday 30th August - Core Paths Plan** drop-in session from 11am to 4pm at Castle Semple Centre. Last opportunity for members of the public to view the plan and make responses to Renfrewshire Council.

### ARE YOUR THURSDAY AFTERNOON'S MEANINGLESS?

Rangers at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park are in need of volunteers on Thursday afternoons in August.

Based at Castle Semple Centre, the volunteers would learn some practical outdoor skills, conservation work and more about the wildlife of the park while keeping fit and being part of a team.

Some of the tasks that the team will tackle include restoring the maze in Parkhill Woods, bashing bracken and Himalayan Balsam and repairing Sluices and Paths.

Volunteers should be over sixteen years of age. Gloves and tools are provided – as are tea and biscuits. To find out more, please phone the rangers. Tel. No. 842882.

### AHOY YE LANDLUBBERS!

There be goins-on a plenty at Castle Semple on Sunday, August the 10<sup>th</sup>. It be Pirate Day, wi' doubloons, pieces 'o eight and other booty on offer.

At this free event, families are invited to test their skills rowing on the loch, finding the message in the bottle, walking the plank, decoding maps, looking for treasure and other tasks.

There will be competitions to find the most realistic looking pirate and who can best talk like a pirate so start practising me hearties and look out that old silk scarf and eye patch.

The top prize will entitle the winning team to a day with Regional Park staff doing watersports and exploring the golden beaches of the area. For further details phone Castle Semple Centre. Tel No. 842882.

Chatterbox is produced for the Community Council of Lochwinnoch through financial assistance by Lochwinnoch Community Council and local sponsors and advertisers. The editor welcomes all items for possible inclusion but will reserve all rights over them. All views are of individuals. The editor accepts no liability for errors.

### VISITOR CENTRES

#### OPENING HOURS AND CONTACT DETAILS

**Castle Semple Centre** Open daily, 1000-1700 hrs Tel: 01505 842882

**Cornalees Centre** - Open daily, 1100-1600 hrs from April to October.

(Toilets open daily.) Tel: 01475 521458

**Muirshiel Centre** - Open daily, 1100-1600 hrs from April to October.

(Park and toilets open daily.) Tel: 01505 842803

**RSPB Reserve** - Reserve is open at all times; the Visitor Centre is open daily from 1000-1700 hrs. Tel: 01505 842663.