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# CHATTERBOX

[www.lochwinnoch.info](http://www.lochwinnoch.info)  
No 169 January 2008

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

Community newsletter produced by lochwinnoch publicity committee for lochwinnoch cc

## What's On

See back page for RSPB,  
Castle Semple and Muirshiel  
Centre activities.

- **Advice Works** - Tuesdays  
10am – 12.30, Lochwinnoch  
Library.
  - **Lochwinnoch Historical  
Society** - meet every 3rd Thurs-  
day, 7.3pm in Guild Room of the  
Parish Church.
  - **Kickjitsu for Kids** - Monday  
nights, Parish Church Hall.
  - **Kickjitsu for Adults** - Mon-  
day nights, 7pm, McKillop Hall.
  - **Tai Chi for Beginners** -  
Friday nights, 6.45-7.45pm, The  
Room, Lochwinnoch Library.
  - **Yoga Classes** - Wednesday  
nights, 7.30pm McKillop Hall.
- \*\*\*
- **Monday 14th January 2008**  
Lochwinnoch Community  
Walks resume from The Cross,  
every Monday at 10.30am.
  - **Monday 14th January 2008**  
Lochwinnoch Art Group -  
evenings resume at 7.30pm in  
the Guild Room of the Parish  
Church. \*
  - **Thurs. 17th January 2008**  
Lochwinnoch Historical Society  
meeting at 7.30pm, Parish Church  
Hall. \*

- **Sat. 19th January 2008**  
Councillor Arthur's Surgery  
from 11.30am at the McKillop  
Institute. \*
- **Thurs. 24th January 2008**  
Seniors Forum meetings  
resume at 1pm in the McKillop  
Institute.
- **Sat. 26th January 2008**  
Nearly New Sale, Lochwinnoch  
Bowling Club, Calderhaugh  
Lane, from 10am-2pm.  
(\* see inside for more details.)
- **Mon. 28th January 2008**  
AGM - Lochwinnoch Inter-  
national Aid, 6.45-8pm in the  
Library meeting room. All  
members and supporters are  
invited to attend to hear  
about our work in 2007 and  
help us plan for the future.  
Agendas will be displayed in  
the Library and Cucina  
Minucci.
- **Mon. 4th February 2008**  
Showing of the DVD "Black  
Gold" on why Fairtrade mat-  
ters, starts at 7pm in Cucina  
Minucci. (\*see inside for details.)
- **Friday 8th February 2008**  
Lochwinnoch & Howwood  
SNP Annual Burns Supper,  
venue Lochwinnoch Golf Club.  
(see inside for full details of the  
evening and how to obtain tick-  
ets, etc.) \*

\* *for more details on these events,  
see inside this issue of Chatterbox.*

## Thank you from the Whitehill family

*Dear Chatterbox Readers,*

*A big thank you to all  
of you who supported  
Robert Whitehill with his  
'Tanzania' fund-raising.*

*With all your help,  
we raised  
**£1150**  
which was fantastic!*

*Robert has been able to  
pay for his trip and has  
£350 left over to take with  
him to the Amani Centre in  
Tanzania.*

*This, and any other  
money he raises before  
June 2008, will help buy  
equipment, etc for the  
children who suffer from a  
wide range of disabilities.*

*Thank you very much.  
Robert, Elaine & Robert Jnr.*

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### Editorial & copy for Chatterbox

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

### To advertise in Chatterbox

Tel: 07899 746403 or e-mail:  
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## Lochwinnoch Art Group

Lochwinnoch Art Group resumes on Monday 14th January 2008 at 7.30pm in the Guild Room of Lochwinnoch Parish Church.

The topic for that evening is "Reflections in Still Life" which will consist of a demonstration and informative talk by member Helen Day.

Other demonstration nights are planned by some of the members.

You can also come along and "do your own thing". An invitation is extended to anyone who is interested in art to come along on the evening and meet our members.

You don't have to be a 'Picasso'! We have members with varying abilities. So, why not come along on the 14th and find out what we are about.

If you decide you want to join us, we meet fortnightly from then. There are no big costs involved, we only ask that everyone contributes to our rental costs.

Hope to see you there.  
Christine Brown

## NEARLY NEW SALE

**Saturday 26th January 2008  
from 10am to 2pm**

at

**Lochwinnoch Bowling Club**

**Calderhaugh Lane, Lochwinnoch**

If your wardrobe or house needs a spring clean, please bring along any unwanted clothes and bric-a-brac and help support our event.

If you need help transporting goods to the Clubhouse, please ask for help by getting in touch with Marion Jamieson on  
Tel: 01505 502975.

**'BLACK GOLD'  
Showing of the DVD on why  
Fairtrade matters**

**Monday 4th February 2008  
starting at 7pm  
in Cucina Minucci**

Lochwinnoch International Aid have arranged a special showing of this timely documentary on the grim realities of the coffee trade. We hope to encourage the idea of setting up a steering group, including some young people, to get Lochwinnoch to become a Fair Trade town. Tickets are £3 (including a cup of Fairtrade tea or coffee) from Cucina Minucci or from Dave Mellor (Tel: 843099).

## LOCHWINNOCH COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

The Community Council met on Tuesday 8th January 2008.

Twelve Crimes were included in the December Report provided by Johnstone Police Office. These included drink driving, vandalism, theft, breach of the peace, assaults (one serious), housebreaking, road traffic accident and drinking in public. Extra resources were allocated to the village in the past month, following disturbances and a serious assault. ASIST have served one local youth with a Youth Notice. The next Community Partnership will be in early February.

The Secretary's Report included, a notification regarding the new SPA for the Regional Park (see inside back page of Chatterbox) and Renfrewshire Council draft decentralisation consultation documentation (more details in Councillor Arthur's report opposite).

Both SRANI and the Sub Group have met since the last report. Phase 2 path surfaces have been re-laid and signage will follow at a later date.

Phase 4, Fancy Bridge to St Brydes, commenced on 26 November 07 and is scheduled to be complete by end February 08. The path has been excavated throughout the whole length, drainage has been installed and surfacing material is in place, with grass reinforcement system to be laid later. The first funding claim has been submitted to CERS.

Ecological survey for the south side still awaits a formal response from SNH who are consulting their Head Mammal Ecologist, and also seeking advice from their Licensing Team. They are also looking for any examples of best practice from similar sites.

The Interpretation Group discussed the copyrighting of the logo and a draft publicity leaflet, to co-incide with the formal opening of the revised Cycle Route 7, is under discussion.

Conservation Statement tenders have been sent out to 6 consultants and Contact will be made with the local historical society to invite input. CMRP have met with the Chief Exec of Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust to discuss possible involvement in future progress.

The next Community Council meeting will take place on Tuesday 5th February 2008 in the Guild Room of the Parish Church. All welcome.

# Councillor Arthur's Report

With the village gradually getting larger over the years it has put a strain on our road sweeper to keep on top of his increasing daily duties. This balance has now been addressed by Renfrewshire Council Environmental Services Department and I'm delighted that we now have two road sweepers, in David Glen and Gordon Logue, attending to our streets on a daily basis.

If you feel that there is an area within the village that requires a little bit of regular love and attention then don't hesitate to stop them with your request or alternatively you can pass on your request to Jim McManus on Tel: 0141 840 6211 or email - james.mcmanus@renfrewshire.gov.uk

I'm sure that you will have noticed that several of the white line road markings have now been repainted within the village. If you feel that other areas of the village require the same then let me know.

Two new signs of 'Unsuitable for HGV's' will shortly be erected. One on Calder Street at the junction of New Street the other at the junction of Calderglen Road and Stepends Road. Hopefully this will prevent the heavy vehicles from attempting this route when advised by their Satellite Navigation System.

Once again the annual New Year's Dance was a massive success and a terrific evening. Thanks again to Julie, Fiona and Laura for organising it and also for raising funds, which this year is being split between St. Vincent's Hospice and Alzheimer's. Thanks also to Margaret and Laura, our McKillop Hall caretakers, who once again volunteered to open up the hall and to Lochwinnoch Community Council for their support.



**AILEEN FERGUSON**

MSc., FCIPD, MBACP, DTM



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**For appointments and enquiries contact Aileen on 01505 843714**

It never ceases to amaze me the amount of money that is raised in the village by individuals and groups. At the recent production of 'The Steamie', Calder Drama Club raised a magnificent £1000 on behalf of Teenage Cancer Trust and the recent Brown Bull Auction raised over £4000 for the same cause. Well done to all for their commitment and participation.

Renfrewshire Council are reviewing their scheme of decentralisation and consulting some 500 community and voluntary groups and community planning partners. The council is also extremely keen to hear the views of local residents regarding these proposals and would welcome your views.

One of the proposals is to reintroduce five Local Area Committees who would have the delegated power to make decisions on agreed delegated budgets. This would mean that Ward 8 would join Ward 7 to make up Local Area Committee 'D' Johnstone and the Villages. By combining the budgets of the Local Grant Boards, Local Action Funds, Community Action Programmes (CRF) and the Neighbourhood Housing Forums, there would be a combined resource of £144,710. It is proposed that the five LAC's be operational in April 2008.

The Draft Scheme of Decentralisation can be found on the Renfrewshire Council website along with a Questionnaire or, if you contact me, then I will post you out a copy of both.

Representations can be made to The Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council, North Building, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1WB by no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008.

We are still being plagued by attempted break-ins and damage at Auld Simon. If you see anyone hanging about Auld Simon that you think shouldn't be there then please report it to the police. This mindless vandalism is affecting our spending to upkeep Auld Simon and its surrounds.

My Surgery is on the third Saturday of each month at 11:30am in the McKillop Hall. Date of next surgery is Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

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**

## **BURNS SUPPER Friday 8th February**

Lochwinnoch and Howwood SNP are holding their annual Burns Supper in Lochwinnoch Golf Club. This year's guest speaker is Alex Neil MSP and the programme for the evening also includes Councillor Celia Lawson, Provost of Renfrewshire and Councillor Derek Mackay, Leader of Renfrewshire Council. This year, 'Cruachan' provides the music. This is a mixed evening and all welcome. Tickets are £17 and are available by phoning Davie on Tel: 843507.

# A Happy New Year from The Parish Church!

*The past is a foreign country;  
they do things differently there.*

L. P. Hartley, *The Go Betweens*

*An optimist stays up to see the New  
Year in. A pessimist waits to make  
sure the old one leaves.*

Bill Vaughan

*Cheers to a new year and another  
chance for us to get it right.*

Oprah Winfrey

Each of us have our own thoughts of New Year; for some it is a chance to leave an awful year behind; for others it is a fresh start, the beginning of the 'new me' when all kinds of resolutions are made which will make life ever more challenging and fun. Whatever your view of New Year, may I wish you one that is full of health and happiness; challenge and contentment.

I love New Year. As a child I believed there was something profoundly magical about Hogmanay. I loved the ritual of cleaning the house until it shone and, while we ourselves didn't have a coal fire, I loved to hear the stories of my grandfather running out with the ashes of the old fire just on the stroke of midnight. There were other rituals too, such as opening the back door to let the old year out and running around to let the new year in the front door. The strangest time for me remains the few moments between the chiming of Westminster Bells and the stroke of midnight. It is only ten seconds, yet in the instant I still feel time stretch; my imagination runs riot, 'What would happen if the New Year never came?' Fortunately, I am still waiting to find out! Even as an adult, I step across the threshold of the New Year with a

mixture of excitement and trepidation, wondering what the future will bring. We are all slightly apprehensive about the unknown and yet there is something satisfying about leaving the past behind.

One of the great comforts of the Christian faith is that the past is in the past. What has happened is gone. Naturally we have to live with the consequences of our actions, yet we will not be punished for past mistakes. The past is gone. Which begs the question 'How do we respond to that wonderful truth?' How do we accept that the past is well and truly behind us? As a child I sat in church one Sunday, trying to figure out why on earth the minister was squeezing all the toothpaste out of a tube. He then invited a child to try and put it back. Of course it is impossible, once it has been used, it is over, it is gone, there is no turning back.

That is both liberating and quite frightening. Once a moment, a second, minute, hour or day is over, we cannot have it back. Yet once it is over, the worries, the fears, the problems it brought are also gone. Nevertheless it would be naive in the extreme to believe that everything in the New Year will be wonderful. As we look forward I am sure each of us will see something looming that we would rather avoid. In the early days of the New Year I was privileged to visit some of our friends from Lochwinnoch in the Royal Alexandria Hospital. No one likes being in hospital and being there at a time of celebration seems to emphasize our need and yet the patients I met all had one thing in common; they knew life was for living, even if they had been told life wasn't going to last very much longer. The strength of character of each person I met was overwhelming and it was

humbling to see how much they wanted to get on with living life, no matter what that may bring in the coming weeks and months; no matter how short life may be.

One of the customs I have come to love in Lochwinnoch is the Hogmanay Walk of Witness. People gather at Auld Simon before walking around each of the three churches, pausing for a moment of reflection and prayer before moving on to the next. At the last church, we not only worship, we share in hot drink, a biscuit and chat. It is a very simple yet profoundly powerful way to end the year and the tea and chat are as important to me as the worship. Indeed in the tea and chat we meet Christ every bit as much as we do in the worship for in that time of sharing, we are holding out the hand of friendship to one another, we are holding out the love of Christ to one another; the comfort of God, as we stand at the threshold of a new and unknown future. As I was leaving the church, the words of Auld Lang Syne were in my head:

*And here's a haun, my trusty fier  
and gie's a haun o' thine;  
we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet  
for auld lang syne.*

Attributed to Robert Burns

In the words of the old hymn,

*I do not know what lies ahead  
the way I cannot see;*

Alfred B. Smith & Eugene Clarke

© 1958 New Spring

yet in this village I know there are people to stand by each and every one of us in joy and in pain for together, along with the God of miracles, we can not only face the future, we can live every moment we are given to the full.

No matter what else 2008 brings, may God bless you with a year full of laughter and friends.

*Christine*

## ARCHIE RETIRES

**Dr Archibald Hodson, BDS,**  
is retiring on 31st January 2008,  
after polishing the village's teeth for  
over 20 years!

He will be missed by many and, any-  
one wishing to leave him a comment,  
can do so in the 'Good Luck Archie'  
book in the Post Office.

After many rumours bounding around  
for the past few months or years even,  
the time has finally come for him to  
hang up his latex gloves and go golf-  
ing, fishing, gardening and walking  
with his beloved collies, relaxing with  
afternoon tea on the lawn ... OK  
we're all jealous now !

He is a wonderful, gentle man and I'm  
sure many of his patients - some of  
whom travel for hundreds of miles  
(yes, honestly) - will be sad to see him  
finally walk away. He is a great em-  
ployer and Betty and I have been hon-  
oured to have worked for such a laid-  
back and kind boss, as I'm sure his  
past employees will agree.

He has travelled the long and some  
would call tedious journey from  
Strone in Argyll to Lochwinnoch all  
these years, yet still maintains it is  
quicker than trying to get to Lochwin-  
noch from Glasgow; he's probably  
right !!

So, whether you are a patient or just a  
friends, go leave him a message and  
let him know it was not all in vain.

The Lochwinnoch Dental Surgery  
shall be taken over by a Dr Helena  
Blessing shortly after some much  
needed renovation work is carried out.  
Further information will be posted  
here as it is received.

**Christine**

## Is There Anybody Out There?

Here is a story I recently  
heard from a very reliable  
source. It will be interesting if  
anyone out there has any  
memories of the incident I am  
about to describe. I do, how-  
ever, recognize that a veil of  
secrecy may have descended on  
the incident and the answer to  
the story will remain a mystery  
forever. A pity.

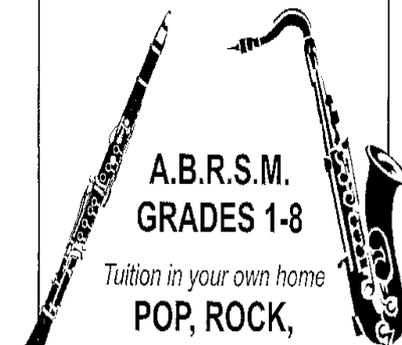
Apparently, during the 1960's,  
the police were called after a  
dazzling, blinding light was seen  
in the hills above the village.  
When the police arrived they  
found the cattle in an extreme  
state of distress, whatever  
else was found - if anything -  
was never revealed.

It could have been the notori-  
ous ball lightning or something  
concerned with electricity py-  
lons, or indeed something unex-  
plained - who knows?

What would be interesting to  
discover is whether or not  
anyone else remembers the  
incident?

If so, please leave a note in the  
Chatterbox envelope in  
The Library.

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**Richard Mulhearn**

**0781 460 7135**

## Lochwinnoch Historical Society

The Historical Society's first  
meeting in 2008 will be held on  
Thursday 17th January at 7.30pm  
in Lochwinnoch Parish Church.  
The speaker will be Professor  
Raymond A. Thomson, who is  
acknowledged to be one of Brit-  
ain's leading experts on Brass  
Band history.

Professor Thomson will give a  
powerpoint lecture on the history  
of the Brass Band movement in  
Victorian and Edwardian Scot-  
land and Renfrewshire. Using  
photographs, musical extracts,  
instruments and other sources  
from between 1850 & 1930, he  
will demonstrate that the brass  
band is one of the most significant  
cultural achievements of working  
class people. Non members pay  
£2 for the evening to include tea  
and biscuits. Annual member-  
ship is £8. For more informa-  
tion contact Gordon Nicholl on-  
Tel: 842632.



**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. Email: alexandermp@talk21.com  
or come to one of my advice surgeries.

## “LOCHENYOCH MATTERS” WHAT’S IN THE NAME?

Last year, Adrian Tharme presented his research into the origin and meaning of the place-name Lochwinnoch to the Historical Society. Over the years, local historians have presented their thoughts on this, but there remained a pervasive acceptance that the name derives from a little known saint, Winnoc. The village web site “Lochwinnoch Info” offers an explanation that connects the name to St Winnin (as in Kilwinning), which no local historian has ever advocated.

So Chatterbox asked Adrian to reproduce excerpts from his research to give newer residents an insight into this aspect of local history and to open up his view on the origin and meaning to the wider scrutiny and challenge of longer-term residents.

In this issue, Adrian asks whether the name might have been originated by the Celtic people who created the Kingdom of the Britons of Strathclyde. In the second instalment, he looks at the evidence that the source was the Gaels who arrived in this area around 400AD. The following issue outlines his case against the name being derived from either St Winnoc or St Winnin. And in the fourth part, he will put forward what he concludes, after detailed research, to be the origin and the meaning of the name, Lochwinnoch.

*We'd suggest you wait till after the final part before raising questions and challenging his conclusion. There'll be a bottle of Single Malt for the best contribution received to the debate! Ed.*

## WHAT’S IN A NAME

By Adrian Tharme

Less than two generations ago Lochwinnoch was a largely self-servicing village. The days of self-sufficiency had long gone but most needs could still be provided for by resources within the village. There were 4 bakers, 4 butchers, a fish shop, 8 or 9 grocers some with delicatessens, drapers, shoe shops and cobblers, a sizeable Co-op presence in both High Street and Main Street, several sweet shops, gents and ladies outfitters, 2 paper-shops, 3 garages one of which had a new car showroom, taxi and bus hire, a blacksmith, builders and joiners and plumbers yards, a painter’s shop, a cinema, a furniture and a soft drinks factory, a dairy, two working farms (actually within the village!) a Foyle’s library shop.....and much more. In fact, you could still have your coffin made and funeral arrangements carried out by a village firm!

As elsewhere in the country, social trends dictated that the village of the 1950’s and 60’s would develop into the dormitory town of today. Still a fine place; but one with a quite different character.

However, in the context of this investigation into the origin and meaning of the place-name “Lochwinnoch” there is a further significant difference between then and now.

Today we use a fully anglicised version of the name in both the written and the spoken form. LOCHWINNOCH has been the accepted spelling for over a hundred years. Prior to that there is evidence of over 60 different spellings. But the name is now invariably pronounced LOCHwinnoch or LochWIN-NOCH (stress on the capital letters) both of which reflect anglicisation.

However, in the village of the late 1950’s and 60’s, the pronunciation stressed the final element in the name i.e. LochwinNOCH and, still in quite common usage, was the old local dialect pronunciation Loch-en-YOCH. Those born and bred in that village environment still refer to each other as Lochenyochians.

The study of the origin and meaning of place names (TOPONOMY) attaches primary importance to the earliest known spelling and the earliest known local pronunciation. But before determining these for Lochwinnoch, there is one fact to be cognisant of. The name Lochwinnoch was originally attributed to the loch, not to a settlement. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the name of the loch was changed to Castle Semple Loch. “Lochwinnoch” as the name of a settlement did not appear until the Kirkcoun Lochwinnoch developed around the site of Auld Simon after the Reformation.

Investigating the origin and meaning of LOCHWINNOCH requires us to go very far back in history. Archaeological finds near Nervalstone and Nether Broadhouse farms attest to the existence of Stone Age Man in this area but we sadly know nothing of his language so the investigation cannot start here.

The Bronze Age hordes found at Gavilmoss Farm confirm that the area was populated during the Early and Late Bronze Ages, from approximately 2300BC to 500BC, by very early Celts. It is probable that a form of Pictish was spoken here at that time but, as there is no certainty, we cannot start here either.

The Iron Age, from about 500BC, is the era we can use as our start point for we have evidence in the Dunconnel and Knockmade hill forts that Iron Age Celtic peoples populated the area AND, importantly, we know a great deal about their language.

Of the 16 or so Iron Age Celtic tribes who migrated to Scotland from their origins in Central Europe, it was the DAMNONII who settled here. This tribe eventually became a part of the Kingdom of the Britons of Strathclyde with its capital in Dumbarton.

The reason we understand the language of these Britons is explained by the following story recorded by the monk and scholar Nennius in his “Historia Brittonum” written around 828AD. When the Romans arrived in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, they chose to manage this area by a series of arrangements with the indigenous tribes.

One of these “foederati”, as the agreements were known, was with a chief of the Strathclyde Britons called Cunnedda. He agreed to help the Romans defend part of the west coast from incursions by the Irish “Scotii”. He moved his tribe to north Wales to provide protection from these attacks and that area was named after him. It is still known today as Gwynedd. The Britonic language which Cunnedda took with him to Gwynedd changed very little over the subsequent centuries and is almost identical to Archaic Welsh. And it is this which is used to investigate the Britonic origins of Scottish place names, particularly those within what was the Kingdom of the Britons of Strathclyde. Lochwinnoch is such a place.

It would seem reasonable to suggest that the Britons would name the geographic feature of greatest importance to them in their daily lives. For the loch was a source of food, a means of transport, a resource in the production of iron, and for farming. Their language, Britonic, was dominant in this area for about 1000 years and we have evidence of other local place names of Britonic origin :-

**CALDER** = CALEDWYR = THE HARD WATER  
or CELL-DWR = THE WOODY WATER

**MAICH** = MAIG = SUDDEN TURN IN COURSE

**BELTREES** = BEAL TREF = SUNNY HAMLET

**LOCHER** = LLWCHR = BURN THAT FORMS POOLS

**RENFREW**=RHYN FFRWD=POINT IN THE CURRENT  
or RHEINN FFRIW = FLOWING STREAM

Each of these Britonic names has a much later Gaelic equivalent. When the Gaels arrived in the area they borrowed these names and amended them to suit their own linguistic inclination. But the true origin is Britonic.

No previous research has examined the possible Britonic origins of the name “Lochwinnoch”. However, one of the foremost authorities in this field, William Oxenham, author of “The Welsh Origin of Scottish Place-Names”, agreed to do this research. These are his findings for a possible origin in the Britonic language.

**LOCHWINNOCH** =  
LLWCHYN-UWCH = UPPER LITTLE LOCH or  
LLWCH TYN UWCH = LOCH OF THE UPPER FARM

Interestingly “LLWCH” can also mean “flooded fields” or “land prone to flooding” and we know the descriptive accuracy of this!

This is a tentative start to the investigation, not a definitive origin or meaning of the name “Lochwinnoch”. In the next issue of Chatterbox, the investigation will move forward to the next major migratory group, the Gaels, and what influence they may have had on the meaning of the place-name “Lochwinnoch”.



## Thanks for your support from Calder Drama Club

Calder Drama Club would like to thank everyone who came along and supported the club's recent successful production of “The Steamie”.

As a result, £1000 profits will be donated to the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Thanks to -

Cut and Care Hairdressers  
Wilsons Bakers, Main Street  
The Paper Shop, and  
Margaret and Laura at the  
McKillop Hall  
for selling tickets for the show.

Thanks to all those volunteers who make things run smoothly on the production nights - we couldn't do it without you!

We hope everyone will come along again and see our Spring production on 17th and 18th April 2008. Details will be issued in due course.

Anyone wishing to join the club and assist either on or off stage, should come along to the McKillop Hall when we start rehearsals again on Thursday 10th January 2008 from 8pm to 10pm.

# CINEMA PARADISO

The wonderful foreign film, "Cinema Paradiso", had a special resonance for Lochenyochians. A theme of the film was the importance of the local cinema in the lives of residents of an Italian village. It was a very similar story in Lochwinnoch for generations of locals.

On Calder Street, in the ground now occupied by Coopers Yard, our very own "Cinema Paradiso" once stood. It was owned and managed by the Manders family and officially called the "PALACE". To everyone in the village, though, it was affectionately known as "Johnny's".

The story of how the village cinema came into existence goes much further back. The Manders, who brought "Hollywood to Lochwinnoch", were a branch of a travelling circus family whose story is told in "The Illustrated & Descriptive History of Manders Menageries & Shows" published under the auspices of the Fairground Society. By the 1830's James Manders had built up three businesses, the "Royal Menagerie", the "Grand Star Menagerie", and the "Royal Waxworks", all of which toured the UK. A popular exhibit of the latter was a tableau of the Last Supper, which was contained in its own box-van. In 1899, moving pictures were added to the waxworks exhibition; the first showing was at the Newcastle Christmas Fair. The show was then renamed "Manders Royal Waxworks & Edison's Electric Animated Pictures". And the man who introduced this exciting innovation was John Manders; the "Johnny" after whom the Palace Cinema would later become affectionately known.

Johnny brought the show to Lochwinnoch after the end of the First World War.

The tent, in the photograph which follows, was set up in the area now occupied by the War Memorial in Harvey Square and an era of cinematic entertainment for the village began.



Johnny, his wife Polly and their sons, Johnny, Jimmy, Tommy and Billy decided to make roots here and end their involvement in the travelling tradition. They built the Palace Cinema on the site in Calder Street in the early 1920's. The Scottish Screen Archive held in the National Library of Scotland records this as 1923 but Fulton Barclay, employed as a projectionist in the early days and today living in Dalry, suggests that it may well have been earlier than that.

In the era of "silent movies" an accomplished pianist was needed to play the film score. The Manders found a musician with the necessary talent here in the village. Mabel Lunney, a Cockney lady married to a local man, was employed to provide the musical accompaniment.

The photograph below shows the original building on Calder Street. The projection room was accessed from within the foyer but stricter fire safety rules resulted in an external staircase access being built. This was the only major change to the cinema.



A link to the family's past was in evidence up till the 1950's. One of the magnificently carved wooden caravans for which circus folk were renowned was parked in the area behind the cinema and was the home to Polly Manders, Johnny's wife.

She had been a trapeze artist and had found settling in one location difficult. To help in the transition she lived in the caravan.

On her death the caravan was burned in accordance with the tradition of travelling circus people. However, one of the wooden panels is known to have been removed before the fire was lit and may well still be in the possession of someone living in Lochwinnoch today.

Of the four brothers it was 'young' Johnny and Billy who were most involved in the running of the cinema. Sadly Johnny died as a result of an accident and from then till its demise Billy and his wife Polly put huge efforts into maintaining the entertainment facility for the village.

Just as in "Cinema Paradiso", the Palace provided wonderful evenings of entertainment for the village with full programmes of Pathe News, cartoons, travelogues, B films and main attractions. A printed programme of forthcoming films was available from local shops and posters advertising the 'big films' were displayed outside the cinema and on various sites throughout the village. For over three decades the Palace played to capacity audiences and really was the entertainment fulcrum for villagers of all ages.

The impact of television on cinema attendance began to be felt in the early 1960's and to offset this bingo was introduced on some evenings. For a while this helped cross-subsidise the film shows but eventually even this failed to make the business economic.

Sadly the "Palace" closed in 1970 and the last film shown was Circus of Horrors. The site was sold to the local Coal Merchants, George Patterson & Sons and then demolished to make way for the Cooper's Yard housing development.

To Lochenyochians of the cinema era there was only one name which should have been used by the Council for the site. And that was Manders Place. It would have been a worthy tribute to a family which had made such a huge contribution to village life for over 50 years.



## PERSONAL SAFETY ADVICE

### AT HOME



- Never answer the telephone by giving your number.
- If you receive a suspicious telephone call and are asked for personal details, ask for the caller's identity and contact number so that you may return the call.
- Under no circumstances should you give any personal details over the phone. *Never* give your PIN number or security number on the reverse of the card unless you have called the number and are sure of whom you are speaking to.
- Secure your home before retiring to bed for the evening ensuring all windows and doors are closed and locked.

### LEAVING YOUR HOUSE (Home Security)



- Secure windows and doors.
- Consider lighting timer switches, especially if you are not returning until the hours of darkness.
- Close blinds, etc at night and when you are out.
- If the house has an alarm, set it!

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### OUT AND ABOUT



- Don't take short-cuts through dark alleys, or across waste ground.
- When walking alone, walk facing traffic to avoid cars pulling up behind you unnoticed.
- If possible carry a personal attack alarm.
- If you have a mobile phone keep it to hand in a pocket etc. Have a 999 speed dial, make sure that it is charged and in credit, record your IMEI number in case of loss or theft.
- Before using your mobile phone, look around first to ensure it is safe.
- Use a security lock code on your mobile phone.
- Carry your bag close to you, if someone grabs your bag, don't fight to keep it, let it go you could get hurt.
- Carry as little in the way of valuables as possible.
- Try to carry your keys in your pocket.
- Don't take lifts from strangers.
- Stick to well lit main paths.
- In parks etc keep to recognized footpaths.
- Remember personal stereos don't allow you to hear traffic or someone approaching from behind.



### USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Strathclyde Police – 0141 532 5900

Johnstone Police Office – 01505 404000

Johnstone Community Safety Office – 01505 404023

Trading Standards – 0141 840 3233

Care and Repair – 0141 812 4111

Renfrewshire Council – 0141 842 5000

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

Victim Support – 0141 887 0328

Nuisance Support and Advice Helpline – 0800 169 1283

Crimestoppers – 0800 555 111

### **Community Safety Office Johnstone Police Station**

### **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.

# THE DROWNING OF MARY CALDWELL

by Derek Parker

It was a dark winter night in the year 1767 when the Castle Semple and Barr Lochs were not separated - as they are today - by the causewayed road which links Lochwinnoch with the present day railway station and Hungry Monk Hotel.

Both formed the larger Castle Semple Loch, which was also known originally as Loch Winnoch. The only route to the Glenhead, Auchengowan, Beltrees and Auchengrange areas of the parish was across a flimsy wooden footbridge, which spanned the River Calder and a narrow neck of the mere between Lochwinnoch and what is now the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Reserve.

In these days most of the area was under water and part of extensive reed-fringed wetlands, which reached all the way from what is now Low Semple towards modern Kilbirnie. It was a time before the Macdowalls of Castle Semple House embarked on their vast land reclamation project, which involved the drainage of the marshlands, the construction of long canals, the building of sluices and erecting new stone bridges across the Rivers Calder and Black Cart.

The drainage programme included

the laying down of the present road, which linked the north and south ends of the parish and led to the separation of what became Castle Semple and Barr Lochs. On the opposite side of Castle Semple Loch from Lochwinnoch was Lochside House, which was inhabited by the well-to-do Caldwell family who had an attractive daughter named Mary. Like most young women of her age, Mary enjoyed socialising and attending dances and social evenings in Lochwinnoch where she was always the belle of the ball.

That particular night in 1767 Mary had arranged to meet some of the local lads and lasses at a dance in the Strands Inn, a well-known Georgian hostelry in Lochwinnoch. She was accompanied on the short journey from Lochside House to Lochwinnoch by her mother, brother, fiance and a manservant. Mounted on horses, the small group made its way along the track through the Lochside Woods - now part of the RSPB Reserve - and down towards what are now the bridges across the Macdowall lades.

It was a wild, wet night; the rain was pouring down and the wind howled eerily through the trees. Through the gloom, they could just make out the village lights on the other side of the loch where they looked forward to spending a convivial night with their friends dancing, singing, listening to fiddle music and cheery conversation.

The water levels at the loch and around the mouth of the River Calder had risen dramatically because of the torrential rain. But, by keeping to higher ground, the group managed to reach the wooden footbridge spanning the loch and river at their narrowest points. Tragically, they weren't aware that the wooden supports of the bridge had been battered by the raging torrents of the turbulent River Calder.

It was only when they were halfway across the bridge - whose planks were virtually swamped by the fast-flowing water - that they realised the danger they were in. No one knows if the horses panicked or if they lost their footing on the slippery slats. In the confusion - punctuated by the terrified neighing of the horses and the screams of the travellers - Mary Caldwell and the manservant plunged headlong into the spate-filled waters. They were swept away in the raging flood while the mother, brother and fiance could only look on in anguish.

The agonised screams of the drowning daughter, sister and wife-to-be haunted them forever and their minds were scarred until the end of their days by the horrific events which unfolded before their very eyes that terrible night. Mary's body was recovered from Castle Semple Loch some time later and she was buried in the old churchyard at the foot of Johnshill, close to the Strands Inn where she and her family hoped to have such a happy time.

Her grave can still be seen today. And, it is said, if you ever visit Castle Loch on a moonlit night, you will see the phantom figure of Mary Caldwell, dressed in all her finery, gliding across the silvery waters where her young life ended so sadly more than 200 years ago.

**Derek Parker**

(Derek Parker worked as a countryside ranger at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park from 1985 to 1999)

"It's about connecting people with information and connecting people with people"

The Village Website  
[www.lochwinnoch.info](http://www.lochwinnoch.info)

**RSPB Webcam...** [www.lochwinnoch.info/webcam/rspb](http://www.lochwinnoch.info/webcam/rspb)  
The RSPB webcap is online again capturing images every few minutes from a feeder at the centre.

**Business Directory...** [www.lochwinnoch.info/business](http://www.lochwinnoch.info/business)  
The business directory has been upgraded to make it even easier to use. If you have a business in the village make sure you have a listing in the online business directory. Just create an account and add a description, contact details etc. A standard listing is free!

**Website Statistics...**  
The village website continues to attract a remarkable number of visitors with August reporting 16,000 visitors viewing a total of 120,000 pages. That is a 20% increase since January 2007. The website hosting package has been upgraded to provide more storage space, higher bandwidth and improved capacity for future developments.

e-mail [barbara@lochwinnoch.info](mailto:barbara@lochwinnoch.info)

## Special Protection Area designated at CLYDE MUIRSHIEL REGIONAL PARK

On Friday 14 December 2007, Scottish Government ministers announced the designation of a 'Special Protection Area' for the moorland core of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, recognising the concentration of breeding Hen Harriers. This is the highest level of wildlife protection in the UK. It is based on European Commission legislation and there are 140 'Special Protection Areas' in Scotland. Only 10 of these are designated for Hen Harriers specifically.

The designation of a 'Special Protection Area' highlights the importance of the natural environment and the uplands of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The area covered extends from Muirshiel Visitor Centre over Duchal Moor to Cornalees Visitor Centre and Leap Moor and includes Burnt Hill and Waterhead Moor in North Ayrshire. This puts Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park's core moorland area on a par with Ben Nevis, the Isle of Rum and ancient woodlands in the Clyde Valley in terms of habitat value for wildlife.

Charlie Woodward, Regional Park Manager said

*" This is great news for Hen Harriers, the habitats and the people who visit the 8900 ha core area of the Regional Park. Hen Harriers are a very rare species, on a par with Golden Eagles. There are just over 600 pairs of Hen Harriers in the UK, most of these are in Scotland. The Regional Park has on average 10 -12 breeding pairs, this is 2% of national numbers. Last year the same area was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and some funding came with this to the farmers and land managers. Now the SPA designation should ensure the area is protected against inappropriate development.*

*Having the SPA set up within a Regional Park brings additional benefits to visitors.*



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*As there are no recreational restrictions within this designation the Regional Park will continue to provide visitor facilities and access for outdoor activities.*

*We will be interpreting our wildlife to visitors and raising awareness of the fragile moorland ecology. Increasingly our internationally protected landscapes are being recognised for the benefits they give in areas like health and well-being, tourism and community regeneration. This designation should ensure these benefits continue and can be enhanced."*

The walks and trails within the Regional Park remain open throughout the winter. Muirshiel and Cornalees Visitor Centres are open every weekend. The Ranger Service at either location can provide more information on the Clyde Muirshiel Hen Harriers. The most exciting time to see Hen Harriers is in the spring when the male harrier can be seen 'skydancing' over the moors trying to attract a female partner for the season. Muirshiel Visitor Centre will be providing a range of TV viewing opportunities; an exhibition, guided and self guided walks come spring and early summer 2008.

\* \* \*

**Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park  
is managed by  
Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority  
- a Joint Board of  
Scottish Natural Heritage,  
Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and  
North Ayrshire Councils.**

See the back page of Chatterbox for opening hours, contact details and further information about the local Visitor Centres in the Regional Park.

## Sky at Night Lochwinnoch 2008 January - February

### Quadrantids Meteor Shower -

1st - 5th of January 2008. The peak is on the 4th between 12.30am and 6.30am. Rates could be as high as 120 per hour. Fortunately the Moon is nearly 'New' and should not interfere. Look for the constellation Bootes in the east. Light pollution may be a problem.

**The Moon** is 'New' on 8th January and 'Full' on 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

**This month's constellation is Leo – the Lion.** Above the Braes by 8.30pm, Leo is easily picked out by the sickle or reverse 'question mark' and to the left of this, a triangle. The principal star is Regulus - alpha Leonis – a multiple star system. Regulus is a relatively young star 3.5 times more massive than our Sun. It takes just under 16 hours for one rotation compared to our sun, which takes 25 days. Only two other stars are closer.

**The Moon** is 'New' on 7th February.

**The Full Moon on Thursday February 21<sup>st</sup> is also a Total Lunar Eclipse.**

Between 0300 and 0400 hours the Earth's shadow begins to take a bite out of the Moon. When the Moon is totally in the Earth's shadow, there is just enough sunlight 'bent' around the Earth to cause the surface of the Moon to appear rusty red. During the eclipse, the Moon is just below the star Regulus, in Leo, while to the left is the planet Saturn. Great photo opportunity.

(See the back page of Chatterbox for Muirshiel Star Gazing Nights.../)

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

- **Sat 12th/Sun 13th January**  
Get ready for the Big Garden Birdwatch. Come along to the RSPB Centre, between 11am and 4pm, and find out what's involved and how to take part in the UK's Annual Survey on 26th/27th January.
- **Tuesday 15th January 2008**  
Late Night Shopping and a Movie at Lochwinnoch RSPB Reserve. Shopping from 5pm - 7.30pm and premiere of the brand new RSPB film "Waterlands" from 7.30-9pm. To book for the film, Tel: 01505 842663.
- **Thursday 17th January 2008**  
Slinky Strollers - parent and pushchair walks resume from Castle Semple Centre, every Thursday at 10.30am.
- **Sat 19th/Sun 20th January**  
Wildlife Wander and Optics Weekend from 12noon to 2pm at RSPB Centre. To book, Tel: 01505 842663.
- **Sunday 20th January 2008**  
Food for Feathered Friends  
Make bird feeders and seedcakes to help winter birds. From 1.30-3.30pm at Castle Semple Centre.
- **Thursday 24th January to Wednesday 13th February**  
Art In the Park Traditional and contemporary work by Lochwinnoch Art Group on display at Castle Semple Centre 10am-4pm daily
- **Friday 25th January 2008**  
Star Gazing Night at Muirshiel Centre from 7pm-9pm. To book a place, phone: 01505 842803.
- **Sat. 26th January 2008**  
Art Class Taster Session with local artist Kate Lilley, covering watercolours, pastels and charcoal using wildlife and nature as themes. For more information, prices and to book Tel: 01505 842663.
- **Sunday 27th January 2008**  
Conservation Volunteers  
Do a bit of healthy outdoor work to keep fit and help the natural environment. At Muirshiel Centre from 1-3pm

## VISITOR CENTRE WINTER OPENING HOURS

**Castle Semple Centre** Open daily from 1000-1600 hrs from October to March. Tel: 01505 842882 for opening hours over Festive period.  
**Cornalees Centre** - Open 1030-1500 hrs weekends only until March. (Toilets open daily.) Tel: 01475 521458  
**Muirshiel Centre** - Open 1100-1500 hrs weekends only until March. (Park and toilets open daily.) Tel: 01505 842803  
**RSPB Reserve** - The Reserve is open at all times; the Visitor Centre is open daily from 1000-1700 hrs. Tel: 01505 842663.

## NEW YEAR STAR GAZING NIGHTS AT MUIRSHIEL COUNTRY PARK

The winter season of star gazing and night sky activities will be continuing at Muirshiel Country Park, near Lochwinnoch on the specially selected dark sky evenings of Friday 25 January and Friday 22 February as well as the not so dark sky evening of Friday 14 March.

In January 'Mars' will be in the spot light, in February 'Mini Messier Marathon' and come March 'Saturn'. The star gazing evenings run from 7pm until 9pm and are being run jointly by John Pressly of the Coats Observatory in Paisley and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

John said -  
*"Muirshiel Country Park provides easy access to one of the last remaining areas of sky free from light pollution in this part of the country. The orange-glow of street lighting.*

*hides a great deal of stars and makes viewing many objects near impossible. When you get away from this glare the night sky becomes an incredible sight, with many hundreds more stars visible - it's one of the best free shows you could ever imagine! Muirshiel provides a fantastic opportunity for visitors to come along and experience the wonders of the night sky as they should be seen."*

The excitement of seeing all these stars in the dark skies above Muirshiel is dependant on the weather. In the event of poor weather there will be an illustrated talk on the same theme.

This event is FREE. Please come dressed for being outside with warm clothes, hats and gloves and bring a torch. Do bring binoculars if you have them. Please let the organisers know if you plan to come, especially since space within the Visitor Centre is limited.

Please telephone 01505 842 803.

**Chatterbox is produced for the Community Council of Lochwinnoch through financial assistance by Lochwinnoch Community Council, Renfrewshire Council, sponsors and advertisements. 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.**



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