

Nuisance Helpline
Anti-Social Behaviour
Noise problems
Support and Advice
Every day 9am – 10pm
Tel: 0800 169 1283

CHATTERBOX

No 193 January 2010
www.lochwinnoch.info

ASIST
Anti-Social
Investigation Team
Office 8:45am – 4:45pm
Tel: 0141 840 2163

Community newsletter produced by lochwinnoch publicity committee for lochwinnoch cc

What's On

See centre pages for club activities, village events and classes.

See back pages for Visitor Centre/RSPB events and outdoor activities.

CHATTERBOX

Chatterbox is a free, community newspaper, produced every month on behalf of the Community Council of Lochwinnoch through support and financial assistance from local sponsors and advertisers and distributed 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.

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

To advertise in Chatterbox
Tel: 07899 746403 or e-mail:
chatterboxaccount@btinternet.com

**COPY DEADLINE FOR
FEBRUARY 2010 ISSUE IS
TUESDAY 26TH JANUARY**

There's a real buzz - ard about the place !

RSPB Lochwinnoch Visitor and Publicity Officer, Paula Baker, wrote a wonderful account in her pre-Christmas blog about the hardy buzzard that had been delighting visitors to RSPB Lochwinnoch almost every day.

RSPB Lochwinnoch Reserve Manager, Zul Bhatia – who is well-known for his fine photography – was on hand to capture the moment and has given Chatterbox permission to reproduce one of the photographs he took of this magnificent bird.

Paula wrote - “ When we first noticed the bird, we thought it was a female hen harrier. One of the main distinguishing features of a female hen harrier in flight is a pale rump. It was also flying very low over the reed bed, exactly how we always see the hen harriers. However, we were very wrong! The bird then proceeded to sit in a tree (not like a hen harrier at all!) with its back to us; it's surprising how difficult it is to identify either bird from its back!

Eventually the bird turned around and we realised it was a buzzard, but then we were shocked by how pale it was and thoughts were abound of rough-



© Buzzard Copyright Zul Bhatia

legged buzzard! However, before we let our imaginations run away with us, we saw the bird's legs (rough legged buzzards have feathers all the way down to their feet) and concluded that it was in fact a common buzzard - not that this wasn't just as exciting as it was sitting in a hawthorn tree very close to the centre and giving us a fantastic show.

This all took place in one day, but the next day he/she was back...and the next...and the next. Some days it would be eating worms from the muddy bits of the Aird Meadow, on others eating frogs from the edge of the pond and some days it would just sit in its favourite hawthorn tree. It also gave us some fantastic close up views as it fed on a carcass in front of the visitor centre – as well as the opportunity to take the stunning photograph above.”

MATTHEW NEW & SONS

ROOFING - ROUGHCASTING - BUILDING MAINTENANCE

**Emergency Repairs, Storm Damage
Insurance Work, New Roofs, Flat Roofs
Roughcasting –UPVC Cladding—Guttering
Tel No 01505 843400**



FMB Certificate No 26366





Fairtrade News and Activities

Last month, Nestle announced that Kit Kat is going Fairtrade. This move will kick off in mid-January 2010 and was hailed as a breakthrough for cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast): this will benefit thousands of farmers in Côte d'Ivoire - one of the poorest countries in Africa. These cocoa farmers will receive additional Fairtrade premium payments to invest in long term community and business development projects of their own choice, as well as being paid a Fairtrade price (or market price if higher).

The Fairtrade Foundation website offers you a chance to comment on the announcement and view early reactions to this news which have been very mixed. Some prominent Fairtrade supporters have welcomed it as a breakthrough into the mainstream. Others have suggested that Nestle, as a trans-national company with a particularly dubious record of promoting unsuitable milk powder to African mothers, is using this as a clever marketing device. However, whatever your view of Nestle's motives, Fairtrade is undoubtedly making a difference to poorer farmers across the world as the following account from Cornelius Lynch – the St Lucian who spoke in the village last year – shows.

The view from St Lucia

St. Lucia National Fairtrade Organization, which was established in July of 2000, continues to provide invaluable contributions to its general membership of 1250 Fairtrade Farmers and the communities of the St. Lucia, through the use of the social premium. In 2009 the Organization embarked upon increasing the number of Global Gap Certified fairtrade Farmers. This will ensure that our members are meeting international standards to allow us trading anywhere in the world. Farmers were provided financial assistance to improve on their packing house and to put other infrastructures, such as on-farm toilets, in place. Also technical assistance and training of the various standards were provided by the organization for farmers to achieve certification. The organisation continues to demonstrate its interest in the



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.**

youth of the communities, by investing in their education. This year, fourteen students who did very well in their common entrance were awarded with scholarships for a period of five years.

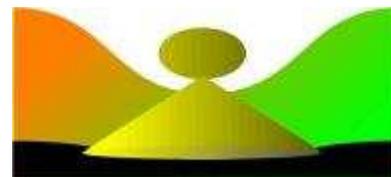
In September of 2009, an entire section of the St. Jude Hospital, which is the second largest Hospital in St. Lucia, was destroyed by fire. Two patients lost their life in the tragedy. The St. Jude Hospital was founded in 1962, holds a capacity of about 400 patients, and is strategically located in the south of the island next to our Hewanorra International Airport. So you could imagine the importance of this hospital. In case of a disaster on the Airport it's the closest point for medical treatment.

The cost of damage to the building and tools and equipments is in the millions. The hospital is presently housed in the sports' stadium which was donated by the government of China. So the entire population is in full solidarity giving whatever amount they can financially, to our government for the rebuilding of the Hospital. Our Farmers' organization also made a contribution of \$50,000 Eastern Caribbean dollars for the rebuilding process.

Plans for 2010

Finally, here in Lochwinnoch, plans for Fairtrade Fortnight 2010 'The Big Swap' are underway. We'll be asking Lochwinnoch folk to swap their usual stuff for Fairtrade stuff; your usual wine, sugar, or oranges for Fairtrade wine, sugar or oranges. Each swap will be proof that the village wants developing world producers to get a better deal. We hope to repeat our Fairtrade stall in the village selling a wide range of goods; a great opportunity to buy some Fairtrade products and help producers in poorer countries make a living for themselves. Offers of practical help with the events would be welcome: **please ring Bob Turner at Tel: 01505 843068.**

Lochwinnoch International Aid



Lochwinnoch International Aid is holding its AGM on

Saturday 23rd January at 11 am in the meeting room of Lochwinnoch Library. All supporters are urged to attend and we'd be pleased to see any new people who would like to join us.

◇ We'll be having a report, illustrated with slides, from Dr Claire McCormack on her sponsored cycle ride in Nepal. ◇ We'll be reviewing achievements over the last year and we'll be planning the next year's fundraising activities. ◇ This year, we will be adopting one particular charity to give support to on a regular basis. ◇ And, we'll be relaunching our recruitment of supporter's standing order donations this year. If people sign up with us they'll be helping a surprising variety of charitable projects throughout the year just by give a small monthly donation.

Recent LIA donations have included £200 for a school in Nepal via Heather Gray's recent visit; £200 to fund repairs to the fire-damaged hospital in St Lucia (see Fairtrade article); and a payment to Mary's Meals made up of the donations received from standing orders and the collecting tins over the Christmas period.

After a couple of mishaps last Autumn, we will be resuming our usual fundraising music events again this year and we ask people to help us by buying their tickets in good time.

You can find out more about LIA through our website - www.lochwinnochaid.org.uk

Councillor Bibby's Report

I would like to wish all Lochwinnoch residents and Chatterbox readers a Happy New Year! If I can help with any matter over the next 12 months please get in touch.

As readers will know the Christmas period provided some heavy snow and cold temperatures. Whilst this may have been welcomed by children wanting to build snowmen I know it did cause very icy road conditions. As a result many vehicles including the Council's bin lorries found it difficult to travel as normal and there were a number of missed bin collections. Unfortunately the severity of this weather at first was not forecasted and I know the Roads and Environment Departments have been working hard since to address these issues. If you are still experiencing problems with your bin collections, please call the Greener Renfrewshire hotline on 0141 842 4448.

I have been contacted by a number of parents concerned about possible changes to school transport provision. Although pupils in other areas of Renfrewshire could be affected, I have received assurances from the Education Department that all Lochwinnoch pupils who currently receive transport to school will continue to do so. There are currently 14 pupils who receive transport to Lochwinnoch Primary and 283 pupils at Johnstone High School. St Anthony's and St Benedict's pupils will also remain entitled to this service.

The official opening of the Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire Lunch Club (ROAR) will take place in the McKillop Hall on the 21st. This is a positive step and I will be attending to meet older residents to gather their views on this new development.

At the last Local Area Committee of the Council some of the grants I supported included Johnstone High School Computer Club **£4335**, Lochwinnoch Elderly Forum **£1300** and Calder Drama Club **£499**.

My next advice surgery is on Saturday 6th February at 9am in the McKillop Hall. If I can help with anything else in the meantime, please contact me on 0141 840 3653 or by emailing cllr.neil.bibby@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Councillor Neil Bibby

Vanda's Mobile Hairdressing Ladies and Gents.



LOCHWINNOCH, BEITH,
KILBIRNIE and HOWWOOD



25 years' hairdressing experience
Book now for an appointment.

Tel: 01505 842329

GENEALOGY QUESTION

My great, great grandfather, James Storie (b. 1796, m.1826, d.1859) is buried in the Auld Kirk on Johnshill Cemetery. He spent his entire life in Lochwinnoch as a merchant. I am seeking family members to help me with genealogy research. The family includes his wife, Sarah Gillies (b.1800, d. 1873 Woodlands, Milngavie); her parents, Robert Gillies and Agnes Boyd (m. 1796 Lochwinnoch), and James' parents, John Storie (merchant? m. 1785 Lochwinnoch) and Katharine Ballentine (b.1760 Scotland, d. 1847 New York, USA).

My great grandfather was George Corsan Cunningham Storie (b. 1842 Lochwinnoch), married in 1872 in Uphall Station to Jane Bell (b. 1854 Airdrie). George was an engineer in the Clyde shipyards until he and Jane emigrated to Detroit, Michigan, USA in 1880. Jane's parents were David Bell (b. 1825 Glasgow, d. 1888 New Monkland) and Margaret Johnstone (b. 1821 Airdrie, d. aft. 1866).

I am especially interested in finding descendents of Robert Gillies, Agnes Boyd, James and John Storie, Katharine Ballentine, David Bell and Margaret Johnstone. Allied families include Orr, Aitken, Corsan, Cunningham, Wilson and Phillips. I would also like to discover what type of merchants the Stories were, and if they were related to the Stories who were Kirkton Weavers.

If you have any information, please contact me by e-mail at:

jac1230@comcast.net

or by post:

**5575 Villa France Avenue,
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103, USA**

Thank you.

John Canning

Elderly Forum

Our St Andrew's Day lunch at the golf club was very successful, thanks to the delicious food and good service provided by all staff. Our appreciation to all who helped to make the day special including those individuals and local businesses listed who donated raffle prizes for the event.

Douglas Alexander MP

Trish Godman MSP

Councillor David Arthur

La Dolce Vita

Heritage Butcher

Now and Then

Cut and Care

Keystore

Pharmacy

The Garthland

The Bull

The Corner Bar

The Junction

The Baker

Douglas Birkmyre, and all of our members who also donated prizes.

We were delighted with the donation of crackers for the Lunch Club Christmas meal. These really added to the enjoyment and were much appreciated.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 28th January at 1.30pm in the McKillop, following the lunch club. We look forward to what promises to be a most important and informative talk from stroke nurse Ann Gibson at this meeting.

The Tbar resumes on Tuesday 12th at 10am and the ROAR lunch club has its grand opening on Thursday 21st at noon. This will be the official opening event. We expect a good turnout for both.

Contact - **Gordon Nicholl: 842632**

ID PLUMBING + HEATING

- Plumbing • Gas Fitting • Heating • Air Conditioning •
- Domestic and commercial Installation and maintenance

- Oil, Gas & LPG
- Boilers up to 5 year warranty
- Landlord safety inspections
- Under floor heating

Tel/Fax: 01505 843 771 or 07920 762 529



Going Green

Since Renfrewshire Council introduced its new improved recycling service on 9th November last year, 1,638 tonnes of waste has been diverted from landfill.

The collection of recyclable materials including unwanted clothing, aluminium/steel tins and cans, cardboard packaging, corrugated boxes, mixed plastic containers, office and household paper - helps Renfrewshire Council meet the Scottish targets of recycling and composting 40% of all household waste by 2010 and 50% by 2013.

Renfrewshire Council Leader, Councillor Derek Mackay, said -

“I’d like to thank the people of Renfrewshire for adapting to our new scheme so readily and for helping to make Renfrewshire a greener place to be. It’s so encouraging to see that our combined efforts have resulted in such an impressive amount of waste being diverted from landfill.”

Councillor Marie McGurk, Convenor of the Council’s Environment and Infrastructure Policy Board, said -

“To see our new scheme resulting in over 1,600 tonnes of waste being recycled instead of taken to landfill is fantastic and a great credit to households around Renfrewshire. I hope we see even more impressive results in the New Year.”

For more information, call the Greener Renfrewshire Helpline on: 0141 842 4448 or visit - www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/recycling



Hear Here

Renfrewshire Hard of Hearing Support Group

Renfrewshire Hard of Hearing Support Group was formed a year ago to raise awareness, campaign for positive change and to provide support and activities for those of us with a hearing loss. It has been great to see our numbers gradually increasing.

Hearing loss brings problems of understanding in a noisy world. It is an invisible difficulty and other people don’t realise the need to communicate clearly. Sometimes it is easier for us to withdraw and become isolated but we aim to encourage others to overcome these difficulties.

At our meetings every effort is made to make sure we all understand by having a loop system and a text writer available.

There will be no meeting in January and the next meeting will be held in February (date and time to be confirmed) in the Mile End Centre, 30 Seedhill Rd, Paisley. Hope to see you there.

Tel: 0141 847 4950
(for more details)

The Lochwinnoch Mystery Play

Plans are progressing well for the Mystery Play with many different groups in the village agreeing to take part. It is very encouraging that so many people have already agreed to become involved.

As previously announced, rehearsals begin on Tuesday 5th January in the Guild Room of the Parish Church at 8pm.

This is a very different kind of production and, with the exception of the two main characters, the parts are very short. So if you have never tried acting before, this could be your chance to develop new skills. There are also some non-speaking parts.

Below is a list of all the characters – those in italics have speaking parts:

The three wise men:

Will Turner,
Billy Piper
Ian Summer

Zacchaeus
Good Shepherd
A volunteer

Davina
Goliath
Ticket seller

Man with ticket for Ark
Noah

Booking Clerk
Bestman

Mrs Struthers
Mr Struthers

3 wedding guests
The Joiner

Some extra non-speaking
wedding guests

A jester
Issy

Issy’s gang
Phil’s gang

An Usher

Bride and Groom

People to make up the crowd

We hope to involve as many people in our community as possible in this play which has been written for the community.

Having read through the play, it contains some wonderful Lochwinnoch jokes!

Please do come along and share in Lochwinnoch’s own play.

Councillor Arthur's Report

Once again it was great to see such a large turnout from our community for the Christmas Lights switch-on back in early December. It is this support that makes the event so worthwhile. For those who don't know, this is the 3rd year that the lights have been organised on a voluntary basis by LMEG (Lochwinnoch Millennium Events Group) but the whole event would not be possible without the support of our helpers and sponsors therefore my thanks to you all and to my colleagues Carol Gemmell, Graeme Skelton, David McCusker, Duncan Bremner and Sue Richardson for their continued enthusiasm.

Well done to Jamie Lee Stevenson, your reindeer is fabulous!

For a few months now we've had a Thursday lunch club running within the McKillop Hall under the auspices of Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire Lunch Club (ROAR). I have wholeheartedly supported this club since its opening and to which I pop in to frequently to have a natter with those who attend. The meals are excellent, well received and the volunteers who dish up the food are very much appreciated, as are the Social Work Department of Renfrewshire Council and the Renfrewshire Council for Voluntary Services (RCVS) who coordinate the whole thing.

Thursday 21st January will see the official opening of the club and this will be carried out by Councillor Eileen McCartin who is the Convener of Renfrewshire Council's Community and Family Care Policy Board. Peter MacLeod, Director of Social Work, will also be in attendance.

Two weeks before Christmas I was asked "What does Christmas mean to you?" to which I replied, "As well as celebrating the birth of Jesus, Christmas allows us to have that magic day of having the family together, to see the delight on the faces of our children after the weeks of excitement and to reflect on the family members, friends and neighbours who are no longer with us".

As usual on Christmas Eve I went with my family to church to the Watchnight Service where the children of the ABC group reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas. Christmas Day was a lazy day in the house eating too


BOW Design Architect
Tel: 0777 181 3900 • E-mail: mail@bowdesign.co.uk



New Build • Extensions • Conversions • Alterations
for Planning Permission & Building Warrant

much, sipping the odd glass of wine and watching television.

Although I do enjoy the festive season, it is nice to get it over with and get back to normal running.

This was the 10th year of our Hogmanay walk. This year's Walk of Witness started at Auld Simon but, due to the icy underfoot conditions, the whole service was held in Our Lady of Fatima Church. A healthy number attended and after sermon and prayers there was time for a chat over a cuppa, mince pies and shortbread.

February sees Ally Bhatia set off on his volunteered 10 week expedition to Costa Rica and Nicaragua in Central America with the educational development and aid charity, Raleigh International. Ally will be working with the Raleigh International team in various projects, ranging from working in underprivileged communities to gain basic amenities such as clean drinking water to environmental work in and around the area.

Ally is still in need of sponsorship, large or small. If you would like to sponsor Ally, you can either contact him on 01505 843718 or by email at allybhatia@googlemail.com or you can also donate directly to Ally at: www.justgiving.com/allyinraleigh

May I take this opportunity to wish a happy 2010 to the Chatterbox team who make the whole thing a success, to all the Chatterbox readers, to the advertisers and to all our community.

Along with the terrific people that live in our parish, we are very fortunate that we have so many excellent community groups, organisations

and clubs who provide such a vital support and service to so many of us. These are just two of the things that make Lochwinnoch special.

It has been a pleasure working on your behalf over the last few years and I look forward to continuing with my work and support through 2010 and beyond.

My next Surgery is on Saturday 16th January but there is no need to wait for a Surgery if you require my help, you can contact me on 843507 or email me at - cldr.david.arthur@renfrewshire.gov.uk and we can agree a time when we can meet.

Councillor David Arthur

Lochwinnoch Historical Society

Our November meeting had a good attendance to hear Dr Stuart Nisbet telling us about the hidden history of the Macdowalls of Castle Semple. Stuart has written a book on the subject and sold all of the copies he had with him on the night. However you can buy a copy at the Visitor Centre at Castle Semple Loch.

Our next meeting on Thursday 21st January, 7.30pm in the Parish Church sees a return visit from Murray Blair.

**Murray's talk will be -
"Washing Greens"**

As usual tea/coffee, cake and biscuits will be served afterwards for members, new members and visitors. Cost for the evening visit is still £2.

Contact: **Gordon Nicholl Tel 842632**

Latest news from Renfrewshire Trading Standards

Please note - this information was received direct from Trading Standards at Renfrewshire Council and includes news, feedback on detected crimes and warnings about bogus offers and scams. Some of this material related to the pre-Christmas period but there are also tips and warnings about similar scams which may occur at any time of year.

"HIS CHURCH" DONATION FROM TRADING STANDARDS

Renfrewshire Trading Standards launched a local Christmas Campaign on 11th December to promote the message that counterfeiting is not a victimless crime and to appeal for information from the public about people selling counterfeit goods. Recent successes include Operation Timberwolf where we recovered almost **£1,000,000** in counterfeit clothing and accessories; and Operation Angel where we recovered **£250,000** in counterfeit Nike trainers. Jail sentences and hefty fines have been obtained for the offenders and 'Proceeds of Crime' legislation has been utilised to strip them of their ill-gotten gains.

Over £1,000,000 worth of counterfeit clothing, footwear and accessories were donated to the charity "His Church", witnessed by Local Councillor, Marie McGurk, representatives from Environmental Services and members from our partner agencies. "His Church" take donations of counterfeit items, recycle them and give them to worthy causes. The partnership with His Church also saw **food parcels and clothing worth £27,000 being distributed to 25 homeless projects across Paisley, Renfrew & Glasgow**. The Paisley based Homeseekers project and the Christian Growth Centre were among the beneficiaries.

We want to use this opportunity to appeal for information from the public on sellers of counterfeit goods, and to spread the message that counterfeiting is not a victimless crime. Working in partnership with other agencies such as the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency we want to spread the message that "Fakes Fund Crime". If you have any information on the sale of counterfeit goods please call 0141 840 3146.

SCAM WARNINGS

- If you receive a **delivery card** through your letterbox which you do not believe is genuine and which asks you to dial a premium rate number, you can contact Phone Pay Plus (the premium rate service regulator) on 0800 500 212 (Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm) for further guidance.
- Bogus **eCard notification** emails are being sent out to distribute malware. Emails claim that the recipient has been sent an eCard from a "dear friend". The user is instructed to click a link to view the eCard. Clicking the link installs malware that can give the attacker access to the compromised computer. It can also install other malware that can then turn the computer into a zombie that can be used to distribute spam without the knowledge of the user. Be very cautious of any eCard notification emails that you receive.
- **Fake Invoices** from Delivery Services to steal your money - if you didn't buy it, then you won't receive an alert about it. Be very wary of e-mails that seem to be receipts or delivery notifications for stuff you're supposed to have bought. Many ask you to quote credit card details/open the forms. Either can allow a virus or Trojan Horse into your computer to steal your personal information.

- **Christmas Carol and Music/Ringtones Lyrics** - bogus websites are often set up to cash-in on popular searches. So just because you don't know the words to Silent Night or want a Jingle Bells ringtone, it doesn't mean the website offering either via a search engine will be safe. It can lead to adware, spyware and other potentially unwanted programs being installed.

- **Charity Phishing Scams** - hackers take advantage of people's generosity, especially at Christmas, by sending e-mails that appear to be from legitimate charitable organisations. In reality, they are linked to fake websites designed to steal donations, credit card information and the identities of donors.

"FREE" HOME SECURITY ALARM OFFERS

It has been brought to the attention of Trading Standards services throughout Scotland of certain companies offering '**free alarm systems' including 'free installation'**'. The initial sales pitch may include claims that there have been a

a lot of burglaries in the local area and that the alarm systems are part of a free Government scheme for the elderly. This is simply a trick to get a foot in the door. There is **no government scheme offering free burglar alarms** to the elderly. They will also say that you are more likely to be burgled without an alarm system. This particular statement is, of course, true. But, should you decide to have an alarm system installed in your property, shop around. Do not sign up from a cold call, or make a snap decision in your home from a salesman's visit. Always ask for a few days to think about the offer. If you are told that the offer is only available for that day, **your own 'alarm bells' should be ringing!** These 'free' alarm system come complete with a very high monthly maintenance charge, which over the term of the contract you sign, is usually far more than what you need to pay for a decent alarm system. Please inform your elderly relatives and friends of this message, as they are particularly vulnerable to this kind of selling tactic.



STRATHCLYDE
POLICE

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Strathclyde Police -0141 532 5900

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) - 0141 840 2163

Victim Support - 0141 887 0328

Nuisance Support & Advice

Helpline - 0800 169 1283

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

The Strathclyde Police website contains information on all of the local Community Policing Teams, which aims to increase the visibility of the officers within their communities. Take a look at our website

www.strathclyde.police.uk
for contact details of officers in your local Policing Team. You can also e-mail us from this website.

From the Parish Church

*“Que Sera, Sera,
whatever will be, will be,
the future’s not ours, to see.*

*Que Sera, Sera.
What will be, will be.”*

Jay Livingston and Rays Evans

“do not worry about tomorrow,
for tomorrow will bring worries
of its own.

Today’s trouble is enough for today.”
Matthew Chapter 6, verse 34.

As I have said on these pages before, when I was a little girl, I loved all the ritual surrounding Hogmanay. I still do. Still the feeling of anticipation during the 10 seconds between the chiming of Westminster Chimes and the first ‘bong’ of the New Year fills me with excitement and trepidation in equal measure. It is only natural to fear the future, yet one thing we can be sure of is that it will come. Yet we have no power to change what it will bring – yet we do have power over how we respond to the future.

As I write, I am also preparing for our Hogmanay Walk of Witness around the three Churches in our village, beginning at Auld Simon. This year’s theme is God With us. God with us in all times of life providing us with a refuge and strength; God with us, always, even to the end of time; God with us, calling us to respond to God’s love by loving one another. After worship, we will share in tea and coffee, mince pies and shortbread – traditional fare for this time of year. Yet what we do is much more than warm and feed our bodies for, in sharing food together, we become companions.

Many of you will have ended the old year or begun the new with a dinner party; a time when friends come together to share hopes and dreams for the future, and often lay to rest that which needs to be forgotten. In so doing, so much more is going on than merely sharing chat and sustaining our bodies; in so doing, diners become companions. The word companion comes from two Latin words ‘com’ - with and ‘panis’ - bread. When we share a meal together, when we break bread together, we become companions, not just for the moment, but for the journey of life.

Our companions in life are important to us; they are the people who will help us when life is hard and the people with whom we celebrate when life is good. Yet the symbolism of the dinner party does not end with our companions; think of the food we share, think of the ingredients that we mix and blend to create a dish that is often fit for a king. Who would have thought that oranges and tomatoes would blend together to make soup? What about chocolate in your beef stock? Believe me it makes a wonderfully rich gravy. Then there is the contrast of chilli ice cream, which amazingly tastes fantastic. Even if you are not so adventurous with your cooking, think of the way different vegetables come together to make a rich broth. Without one of them the flavour is diminished. So it is with our dinner companions – all are needed to bring flavour to life, both the sharp and the bland, the rich and the spicy, the gentle and comforting. We need all kinds of people in our lives to celebrate the good and stand with us in the harder times; we need all kinds of people to challenge us when life is a little too easy and comfort us when we need a moment of rest.

So when we sit together to share a meal with a friend in the familiar surrounding of our home, or stand and share a cup of tea and a piece of shortbread with a friend from Church, or sit at a banquet with people we have met for the first time, we share more than food, we enrich each others lives and together, whatever the future holds, we know we can face it.

This New Year, I am going to try and follow the advice of Jesus of Nazareth and try not to worry about tomorrow. This New Year I will try to remember the wisdom of Jesus who asked, “can any of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your span of life?” I know the answer is no, so this Hogmanay, as the ten seconds between Westminster Chimes stretches towards the chiming of the New Year, I will do my best to anticipate the New Year, knowing that whatever will be, will be.

May God bless you with lives filled with companions and bread enough to share, this New Year and always.

Yours

Christine

Rev. Christine Murdoch

J QUINN & SON MEMORIALS

Personal Service &
Quality Guaranteed



New Memorials
Additional Inscriptions
Cleaning & Renovations

42 MAIN STREET,
KILBIRNIE
Please Call 01505 685 455

Monday & Friday 10am-5pm,
Tuesday-Thursday 10am-2pm
Saturday 10am - 1pm

LOCHWINNOCH GOLF CLUB

Burnfoot Road
Lochwinnoch

(01505) 842153

**BECOME AN ASSOCIATE
MEMBER TODAY!!**

SPECIAL OFFER

**JOIN AS AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER
TODAY FOR JUST £15 AND GET £10
WORTH OF FOOD AND DRINK
ABSOLUTELY FREE**

**ASSOCIATES GET FULL USE OF OUR
CLUBHOUSE FACILITIES...**

**EXCELLENT CATERING
SKY SPORTS AND ESPN ON
THE BIG SCREEN
WONDERFUL VIEWS
HIRE OF THE CLUBHOUSE**



What's On

(Regular clubs, classes and local groups)

- **Healing and Creativity Workshops & Classes.** For details or to book a place, please Tel Becky: 0141 8816700 or Libby on: 015105 842604.
- **Lochwinnoch Community Walks** - Mondays (ex. Public Holidays), meet at 10.30 am at The McKillop Inst.
- **Lochwinnoch Playgroup** - For under 5's, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.30-11.30am at the McKillop Institute.
- **Lochwinnoch Toddlers** - Mondays and Wednesdays from 9.30 - 11.30am, McKillop Institute.
- **Lochwinnoch Gymnastics Club** - For primary school-age children every Monday, 5-8pm at the Annexe. Phone Coby for details on: 0772 9051615.
- **Lochwinnoch Writers Group**—Monday mornings from 9.30-11.30am in the Library.
- **Advice Works** - With effect from 11th January, surgeries will take place on MONDAYS 2pm-4.30pm at the Library. *
- **Morag's Keep Fit** - Mondays and Thursdays from 7pm, in the McKillop Institute.
- **Lochwinnoch Choral Society.** Rehearsals on Monday evenings, Parish Church/ Hall. Juniors 7-7.30pm, Intermediates 7.30-8.30pm and Seniors from 8pm.
- **Club Latino** - weekly Merengue, Salsa and Mambo classes for adults on Monday evenings at Lochwinnoch Bowling Club from 8.30-9.30pm. Details from Hazel on: 07812 023343.
- **Lochwinnoch Art Group** Meet fortnightly on Monday evenings, 7.30pm, McKillop Inst. *
- **Keep Fit - Improving With Age classes**, every Tuesday from 10am-11am at the Annexe building in the Park. (See separate notice.)
- **Drop-in T Bar - Lochwinnoch Elderly Forum.** Every Tuesday and Thursday from 10am-1pm, McKillop Inst. For details, Tel Reta: 01505 842054.*

NOW & THEN

Sue and Colin Nicholson of Now&Then would like to say a huge thank you for all the support they received following the two recent floods they experienced in the shop. When the Spar store, situated above them, suffered two burst pipes in ten days during the frosty weather, Now&Then took the brunt of the deluge and was forced to close on both occasions - the last time for the entire day of Christmas Eve.

"Having to close on Christmas Eve was particularly devastating for us", said Sue, "Not only because it is usually the busiest day of the year but also because we were conscious that we were letting people down. We know that a lot of villagers depend on us for last minute gifts and bits and pieces."

"Colin and I were, however, really touched by the overwhelming goodwill shown to us. We had so many offers of help to clear up, towels to mop up with, gifts of food, cakes, chocolates, cards, sympathy and good wishes. We were very moved by this and can't thank everyone enough. It just shows the advantages of living in a tight-knit community.

It will take us a little while to get the stock levels back to their normal, bursting at the seams, proportions - but it's very much business as usual."

Gifts Cards Jewellery Leather Home

- **Baby and Toddler Rhyme-time** - every Tuesday, from 13th January, at 2.15pm at Lochwinnoch Library. *
- **Linda Margaret School of Dancing** - Tuesdays from 4pm-8.45pm, McKillop Institute. For details, Tel: 0141 581 9104.
- **TaeKwon-Do** Fitness and Self-defence classes for youths and adults. Tuesdays from 5-6pm, McKillop Institute. For details Tel: 01259 210716.
- **Lochwinnoch Scottish Country Dance Club** Every Tuesday, from 7.30-9.30pm, McKillop Inst.
- **Jogging Buddies** - Wednesday evenings. Meet at McKillop Inst. at 6.30pm. For details, Tel: 0141 887 1357 or 07947 763704.
- **Girls Brigade - 1st Lochwinnoch Company** Wednesday evenings from 6pm-9.15pm at the Parish Church Hall for various age groups.
- **Boys Brigade - Anchor Boys and Junior Sections** meet on Tuesday nights and Company Section on Friday evenings, Parish Church Hall.
- **Yoga Classes** - Wednesday evenings - 2 classes - at 6pm & at 7.30pm, McKillop Inst. Yoga, breathing practice, intro. to meditation. Tel Mary: 01505 842877. *
- **Happy Harminis** - Fun for pre-school children. Thursdays from 10am-11am in the McKillop Institute. Contact Frankie Plater for details: 01505 612248.
- **Slinky Strollers** - on Thursday mornings (details on back page).
- **ROAR Lunch Club** - every Thursday at 12 noon at the McKillop Institute. **Please Note - the last sitting is at 12.15**
- **TaeKwon-Do Little Tiger Cubs.** Classes are for 3-5 year olds, held on Thursdays from 4.15pm-5pm at McKillop Inst. Tel: 01259 210716 for details.
- **Calder Drama Club**—Thursdays, from 8pm-10pm McKillop Institute.
- **Scottish Slimmers** - Thursdays, 7/7.30pm, McKillop Inst.
- **Lochwinnoch Pre-School Gymnastics** (for children from 18 mths to 5 yrs). Fridays, from 10.15am - 1.45pm at the Annexe. Further details from Coby on Tel: 0772 9051615.

Dates for your diaries

- **Saturday 9th January** – Krafty Kids class 10am-11.30am at Space Rooms, McKillop Inst. Tel Katharine on: 01505 844944.
 - **Saturday 16th January** – Councillor Arthur's Surgery from 11.30am, the McKillop Institute. *
 - **Monday 18th January** - Lochwinnoch Art Group meeting at 7.30pm, Lesser Hall, McKillop Inst *
 - **Wednesday 20th January** - Lochwinnoch SWRI meeting at 7.30pm in the McKillop Institute. *
 - **Thursday 21st January** - Official opening of the ROAR (Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire) Lunch Club at McKillop Inst. at 12 noon. *
 - **Thursday 21st January** - Lochwinnoch Historical Society meeting 7.30pm in the Parish Church hall. *
 - **Friday 22nd January** - Art in the Park Exhibition, Castle Semple Visitor Centre. (See back pages of Chatterbox for more details.) *
 - **Saturday 23rd January** - Lochwinnoch International Aid (LIA) AGM at 11am in the meeting room of Lochwinnoch Library. *
 - **Saturday 23rd January** – Krafty Kids class from 1.30-3pm at Space Rooms, McKillop Inst. To book, Tel Katharine on: 01505 844944.
 - **Sunday 24 January** - Beith Arts Guild Concert in Beith Community Centre at 2.30pm. *
 - **Saturday 6th February** - Councillor Bibby's Surgery at 9am, the McKillop Institute. *
 - **Saturday 13th February** - Blitz Ball in the McKillop Inst from 8pm till late. *
- * For further details about these events and activities, see separate notices inside this issue of Chatterbox.

VILLAGE EVENT CALENDAR for 2010

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 to hold events and to help publicise your own events in and around the local area.

Lee McKinlay Holistic & Beauty Therapies

Swedish Massage
Aromatherapy Massage
Reflexology
Facials

Waxing
Eye Treatments
Manicure
Pedicure

*A Mobile Service to promote Relaxation
Gift Vouchers Available*

Telephone 07854 715625

LOCHWINNOCH ART GROUP

The Art Group meets again on Monday January 18th in the McKillop Institute at 7.30 pm. Everyone welcome.

January 22nd sees the opening of Art in the Park, again at Castle Semple Visitor Centre. See back pages for more details.

We hope to have the artist and Tutor, Neil MacDonald, back with us on March 1st to demonstrate landscape painting. Not to be missed if you have not seen Neil's demonstrations before.

**Christine Brown
(Chairperson)**

BEAT THE BLUES Have a blast at the Blitz Ball !

Lochwinnoch Choral Society is running a Blitz Ball on **Saturday 13th February** from 8pm till late at the McKillop Institute, Lochwinnoch.

Dance the night away to a 17-piece swing band. Dress up in wartime costume. Eat spam sandwiches to the sound of Glen Miller.

Look out for posters for more details soon – and get your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

LOCHWINNOCH SWRI

The next meeting is on - **Wednesday 20th January 2010**, when our guest speaker will be local poet Jim Carruth.
The competitions are: Carrot Soup and a Favourite Teaspoon.

Beith Arts Guild Sunday Concerts

Following the truly superb concert in November, our January concert will be very different in content but not in quality.

It will be on -

**Sunday, 24th January
at 2.30pm**

**in the Community Centre,
King's Road, Beith**

when Philip Contini and his Be Happy Band will entertain us with popular Italian music, which will certainly brighten our lives during the dark days of winter!

All are welcome to our concerts. The price is £8, concessions £6, children £1, all payable at the door. Refreshments are provided at the interval, and everyone is very friendly.

Details of the remaining concerts for this season may be seen on our website www.beitharts.org

MARY LAIDLAW'S Yoga Classes

Classes will resume in the New Year on Wednesday 6th January 2010.

Two classes will be held on Wednesday evenings - the first class at 6pm and the second class at 7.30pm. Classes will include yoga, breathing practice, introduction to meditation.

There are spaces available in both classes. If you would like to join us, contact Mary on: **01505 842877**.

VOODOO CURSES AND CASTLE SEMPLE'S JUMPING COFFINS

by
Derek Parker

It's a long way from the island of Barbados in the West Indies to the Collegiate Church on the shores of Castle Semple Loch at Lochwinnoch.

Yet both places are inextricably linked by dark diabolic deeds with similar sinister sources. Haunted by phantoms from the gloomy crypt. Troubled by ancient voices from unquiet graves.

Turn the cosmic clock back to a Barbadian summer day at Christ Church in 1943. The Caribbean island's Freemasons are entering the burial vault of Sir Ewan MacGregor, an illustrious Brother.

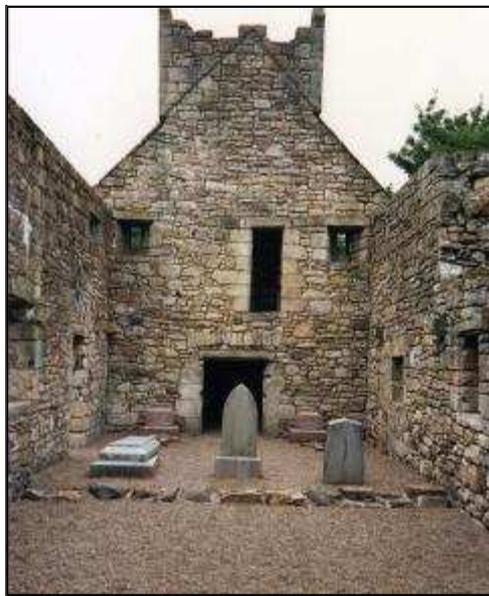
Inside the same tomb had been buried the body of Brother Alexander Irvine, who introduced Freemasonry to Barbados before his death in 1841. The seemingly impenetrable crypt is built with thick stone and sealed with a sturdy brick door.

Then horror of horrors. As the Sons of Light enter the musty, darkened vault, they are confronted with a macabre spectacle. Sir Ewan's lead-lined coffin stands on end, blocking the doorway. Not lying on the tomb recess plinth where it was originally placed.

Equally dramatic is the absence of the body or coffin of Alexander Irvine. No one has been in the hermetically-closed crypt for years. The seal is unbroken. What happened? Were demonic forces at work in the sacred sanctuary? Had Satanic powers shifted the corpses. Was it all down to voodoo, a Caribbean spirit religion whose vampire-like, black magicians, known as bakas, transform themselves into ravenous creatures roaming the island in search of dead cadaverous bodies to devour?

What happened at Christ Church wasn't the first recorded instance of the 'jumping coffins' phenomena. There had been several reports of the desecration of vaults at the church since the early 19th century.

Travel back across the Atlantic Ocean to the sleepy little village of Lochwinnoch around the time of the terrifying discoveries made at the tomb of Sir Ewan MacGregor and Alexander Irvine



It's the late 1930s and the villagers are in shock. Mysterious marauders with evil in their hearts have broken into the underground burial vaults below the nave of the ruined 16th century Collegiate Church, close to the site of the former Castle Semple House.

Graves have been mutilated, coffins hacked open and bones and skulls strewn among the rocky remnants of Lord John Sempill's medieval church.

Many villagers feared black magicians and devil-worshippers were at work. Others blamed the atrocity on ghoulish grave-robbers looking for jewellery buried with the bodies of the wealthy dead who once lived at Castle Semple House.

Whatever the explanation, it was a grisly scene with over-turned tombstones, bone-bleached skeletons grinning grotesquely from among the rubble and flesh-bare ribs protruding from the subterranean crypt. It was a vision of hell in what, a day earlier, had been a sylvan sanctuary.

"I saw the bones but wasn't aware of their significance because I was just a little girl at the time," one local lady told me when I worked as a countryside ranger at Castle Semple countryside park.

"My dad was the minister at Lochwinnoch Parish Church. He officiated at the re-consecration of the graveyard when the bones were put back in the ground. It was a terrible time and those of us who remember the desecration will never forget it."

Following the re-interments, the burial vault was permanently sealed. But what happened that day at the Collegiate Church shared eerie parallels with the 'jumping coffins' phenomena in the West Indies.

Not just because of the appalling scenes of desecration and the vampirish violation of holy ground at both sacred sites. But because of the Macdowall family of Castle Semple connection.

From 1727 until 1813 the Macdowalls owned Castle Semple House and estate. They made their fortunes from overseas merchandising - particularly the Caribbean sugar trade. They were also involved in the slave trade - and that's where much of the wealth which enabled them to build Castle Semple House came from.

The Macdowalls were leading lights in the Glasgow West Indies business community. But 1794 was a disastrous year. The Carib War ruined business and much of the sugar crop was destroyed during the conflict. The abolition of the slave trade in 1807 was yet another nail in the coffin.

Almost overnight, the Macdowalls were in deep financial debt. In July, 1810, one family member, Day Hort Macdowall, drowned himself in the fish ponds just opposite the Collegiate Church. It seemed the dramatic decrease in his family fortunes tormented him into taking his own life.

His relative and business partner, James Macdowall, died a year later, allegedly from a drink-related illness. Another relative, Hay Macdowall, died tragically around the same time. The governor of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean, he was on his way home to rescue the impoverished Castle Semple estate with a cargo of pearls worth thousands of pounds when he was drowned.

Alexander Macdowall, another family member, died during a sea voyage. While John Macdowall, born in 1759, was dead before his 30th birthday. By 1813, the illustrious Macdowall era at Castle Semple was over.

Several deaths in such a short time. It seemed that a curse hung over the heads of the Macdowalls. Soon tongues were wagging. All the deaths seemed linked with the family vicissitudes in the West Indies, where the

old voodoo religion held sway and where strange tales of 'jumping coffins' were first recorded.

Because of their involvement in the West Indian slave-trade, many people believed that the dark spirits of voodoo had plotted the family downfall.

It's certainly easy to imagine the bakas in their grotesque animalistic guises roaming the countryside around Castle Semple House and the Collegiate Church at dead of night. And you could be right in thinking that the family really were cursed.

Back again to that dreadful day in the late 1930s when the Collegiate Church burial ground was vandalised.

"We saw estate-workers carrying small lead coffins from the disturbed ground. We thought they contained the bodies of young children," one Lochwinnoch resident told me.

"But no. We were informed the coffins were filled with the bodies of pygmies. We don't know where the workers put the coffins. Maybe back in the crypt. Maybe they buried them in Parkhill Wood which was part of the Castle Semple policies.

"Forever afterwards, we always spoke about these 'pygmy coffins.' I can still see them in my mind - nearly 50 years after the graveyard was so horribly desecrated."

It is believed that the 'pygmies' were slaves from the West Indies sugar plantations brought by the Macdowalls to work as servants at Castle Semple House. Dressed in red coats, white waistcoats and breeches, with powdered wigs and smiling, black faces, they served guests at banquets and social events at Castle Semple House. That was the fashion at country mansions in 19th century Britain.

But the tragic events which befell the Macdowalls continued unabated. Even the women of the family were doomed. On January 2, 1782, Mary Macdowall, wife of George Houston, the Fourth Laird and founder of Johnstone, died of smallpox at the family home at Johnstone Castle at an early age. Her beautiful features were ruthlessly ravaged by the disfiguring disease.

Then, on February 2, 1839, another Mary Macdowall, daughter of the same Day Hort Macdowall who drowned himself at the Collegiate fish-

ponds, died at Glentyan House, Kilbarchan. The first wife of Captain James Stirling, of the Royal Navy, she was aged just 37. Her grave can be seen in Kilbarchan West churchyard.

Parapsychologists say that devastated graveyards and chains of tragic events - such as those which took place at Christ Church in the West Indies and the Collegiate Church at Lochwinnoch - could be the result of psychokinesis.

This is when intense emotions like the desire for revenge or grieving for one's homeland can generate powerful psychic forces, capable of shifting heavy objects like tombstones, disturbing the contents of graves, and bringing death and destruction to people who have caused offence to individuals or groups.

Is this what happened at both sites? Or were more sinister powers working to bring about the downfall of the Macdowalls?

The bakas, or demonic spirits of voodoo, for example. Seeking revenge for the exploitation of slaves expatriated from their Caribbean homelands by their masters and consigned to years of exile in places like Castle Semple.

The story of ill-fated Castle Semple House had a bizarre sequel. On the evening of June 24, 1924, a raging glow lit up the Midsummer Night sky. The big house, which had stood in all its glory for nearly 200 years, was a blazing inferno. It could not be saved. It was burned to a shell. It is said that the fire was caused by a nest built by a black crow blocking a chimney.

The crow, an avian incarnation of death and darkness, was sacred to the practitioners of voodoo. Midsummer Day is also venerated by followers of old nature religions like voodoo because it marks the turning point of the sun from light to darkness in its annual solar journey. Was all this merely a weird coincidence?

Or was the fiery finale in the drama of the great mansion built by the Macdowalls with their West Indian wealth the last revenge of the demon bakas of voodoo on the wealthy family who bore their curse?

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

TEENAGE CANCER TRUST News



The Brown Bull TCT Auction took place on Saturday 12th December when a total of **£3,545** was raised. The raffle will be drawn on 4th January and John and I will let you know the final total later.

Thank you to all involved in buying and donating to the Auction. It always amazes me that this little village is exceptionally generous when it comes to charity and helping others.

Laura

Barmill Community Association

Line Dancing Class (beginners)

Re-starts on Sunday 10th January from 7pm to 8.30pm. £2 per class.

Art Classes

Classes re-start on Monday 11th January at 7.30pm in Barmill Community Centre. £2 per class.

Tai Chi Classes

Re-start on Thursday 14th January from 7.30pm - 8.30pm in the Community Centre.

For more information, contact Jean: 01505 502521.

IMPROVING WITH AGE

Keep Fit Class HELP! HELP! HELP!

"Helps" to reduce blood pressure, control cholesterol, control weight, reduce risks of strokes, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, well-being, improve sleep, confidence and seriously improve your social life!

Classes are held every Tuesday from 10am-11am at Lochwinnoch Annex in the Park. A fully qualified instructor is in attendance and classes are for males and females so, don't be shy, come and join us. **For further details, Tel: 01505 843393.**

SAVE YOUR REGIONAL PARK News

www.saveyourregionalpark.com

North Ayrshire Council's Planning committee meeting on 15th December 2009 refused the Kaim Hill application for 5 turbines above Fairlie. SYRP also addressed the meeting in support of the Planning Dept's recommendation to the Committee that this application should be rejected.

North Ayrshire Council's Planning committee have done it again to Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park – the second application for Millour Hill windfarm, the extension to the already constructed Wardlaw Wood windfarm, Dalry, was given the go ahead at the Planning meeting on 15th December 2009.

North Ayrshire refused Community Windpower's first application for the 6 x 410ft/125m high turbines as recently as at their January 2009 meeting. This resulted in Community Windpower Ltd's appeal to the Scottish Government against the decision followed by the lodging of a second application, exactly the same as the first. The December Planning committee meeting, attended by 10 Councillors, voted 5 each for and against the granting of the planning application and Cllr Elizabeth McLardy (Dalry & West Kilbride), as Chairman of the committee, used her casting vote to support the recommendation of the Planning Department officials, resulting in the application being granted.

North Ayrshire Council, in November, accepted a new Landscape Capacity report which had been prepared by two Consultant Landscape Architects. Among other things, this suggested that Millour Hill 2 was a logical and acceptable proposal, bearing in mind the Reporter's arguments and the result of, the Kelburn PLI. They also made it clear that there was no more room for large scale windfarms in the North Ayrshire section of Clyde Muirshiel. Only one Councillor had voted

against acceptance of this report.

SYRP had accepted an invitation to address the December Planning committee for ten minutes on the Millour Hill 2 application, after which the applicants were allowed to speak. Robert Maund and Nigel Willis provided a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of SYRP concentrating on two main aspects. Firstly, the importance of protecting the park which, according to Visit Scotland, was responsible for generating a £67.5 million contribution to the local economy in 2008 and secondly, the exceedingly poor record of Community Windpower Ltd in their existing Wardlaw Wood windfarm, their safety record, the fact that they had ignored many of the conditions of consent and allegedly generated highly questionable letters of support in exchange for gifts of free light bulbs, pens, pencils, badges and free parties at Wardlaw Wood windfarm.

While it was pleasing to receive the support of 50% of the Planning committee, against the advice of the Planning officials, we ended up losing out with the casting vote and this results in yet another part of Clyde Muirshiel becoming visually very unattractive to look at from the Garnock Valley and far beyond from the east and south. When completed alongside Wardlaw Wood and the consented but not yet constructed Kelburn windfarm, it will result in a major cumulative impact as far as most people are concerned with 26 turbines in a block. NOT WHAT PEOPLE EXPECT TO SEE IN A REGIONAL PARK.

Though confirmation has not been received yet, it is assumed that the Public Local Inquiry (PLI) for Millour Hill 1, arranged for April 2010, will not take place.

SYRP Parliamentary Petition

The Petition Committee will hold a round table discussion on 12th Jan 2010. Kenneth Gibson MSP for Cunninghame North plus representatives of SYRP, and both the Environment and Planning Depts of the Scottish Government have been invited to attend. There will be a full update in our next Newsletter.



ST VINCENT'S HOSPICE

Johnstone Lights

Renfrewshire Council again donated a marquee to St. Vincent's to enable us to raise funds in the community during the switching on of the Christmas Lights. In the marquee we had various Christmas stalls as well as a Christmas Café and Santa's Grotto. A total of **£1,400** was raised. This event took place the day after the launch of our Rebranding. It was an excellent opportunity to have the new hospice banners on display and great feedback was received from the public.

Lunch With Santa

We ran this event on Sunday 29th November and 6th December in the Barn Tea Room with over 56 children attending over three sittings. Although this is not a great money spinner (profit of **£300**), it is helping to raise the profile of the Barn Tea Room. There has been great feedback from this event and it is certainly something we will do again next year.

Light Up A Life

The lighting of our tree was a great success on Sunday 29th December with approx 300 people turning out for the service. At the time of going to press, we had brought in **£16,700**, however, we do tend to continue to receive donations for this until the end of the year.

Use the links below to keep up-to-date with hospice events.

www.bebo.com/StVincentsHospice
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=124230589015, and
twitter.com/StVincentsHosp

or
Contact: Ashley Moran and Lorraine Valentine at St Vincent's on Tel: 01505 705635 or e-mail: Ashley.moran@svh.co.uk

Lochwinnoch Library

New books for January

Robert Goddard: Long time coming

In Antwerp in 1939, a Jewish diamond trader flees Nazi Europe, leaving his priceless collection of Picasso paintings and diamonds with a friend who takes them to London. The boat he flees on sinks, leaving no survivors. Fast forward to 1976 when his penniless family tries to track down the missing paintings. A classic thriller with Goddard's trademark plot twists.

Clive Cussler : Spartan Gold

Thousands of years ago, the Persian king Xerxes the Great was said to have raided the Treasury at Delphi, carrying away two solid gold pillars as tribute. In 1800, Napoleon Bonaparte and his army stumble across the pillars in the Pennine Alps. Unable to transport them, Napoleon creates a map on the labels of twelve bottles of rare wine. And when Napoleon dies, the bottles disappear.

Treasure hunters Sam and Remi Fargo are exploring the Great Pocomoke Swamp in Delaware when they are shocked to discover a World War II German u-boat. Inside, they find a bottle taken from Napoleon's 'lost cellar.' Fascinated, the Fargos set out to find the rest of the collection. But another connoisseur of sorts has been looking for the bottle they've just found. He is Hadeon Bondaruk - a half- Russian, half-Persian millionaire. He claims to be a descendant of King Xerxes himself. And he wants his treasure back.

J.D. Robb : Fantasy in death

They were best friends, driven by one shared vision - to rule the world of virtual reality games. Cill, hard-edged and beautiful, Var and Benny, brains and business acumen, and Bart, the genius behind the idea. Their newest invention, developed to transport the player into a fantastical virtual world, is just about to be launched. Then, suddenly, Bart is found brutally killed, defeated by their own game. Their close-knit group is torn apart.

Who could have engineered a virtual death with such devastating consequences? Even Eve Dallas, New York City's most cunning investigator, is hard-pressed for an answer. But as she digs deeper, peeling back layers of secrets, revenge and misplaced allegiances, she realises with growing dread the depth of the killer's master plan. And she knows his game is far from over...

Coming soon

Jill Mansell : Take a chance on me
Anne Bennett : The child left behind
Tami Hoag : Deeper than the dead
Quintin Jardine : Blood red

Renew and Reserve

at

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries

Library members can view, renew and reserve their library loans online. All you need to get started is your library membership number and a password.

If you don't have a password just ask at any library.

Baby & Toddler Rhyme time



At Lochwinnoch Library
every Tuesday from
12th January at 2.15pm

FREE Computing Class for Complete Beginners

Would you, or someone you know, like to learn to email and surf the Internet? Classes are held at **Lochwinnoch Library**:
Wednesdays 9.30am – 11am
The course lasts for 5 weeks.
For details **Tel: 01505 842305**

Book Sale

Saturday
16th

January
10am – 1pm
2pm-5pm

ADVICE WORKS

**Surgery at
Lochwinnoch Library**
From 11th January 2010
Every Monday
2pm – 4.30pm

We can provide advice about entitlement to benefits. Advisors can help fill in claim forms and advise on welfare benefits and money problems. We can check you are receiving all the benefits due to you.

We can provide expert advice on a wide range of debt related topics eg. Credit Card , Mortgage arrears, Council Tax, etc

OUR SERVICE IS FREE, CONFIDENTIAL AND OPEN TO ALL RESIDENTS OF RENFREWSHIRE.

NORMAL LIBRARY OPENING HOURS :

Monday, Wednesday and Friday:
2pm-5pm & 6pm-8pm
Tuesday and Saturday: 10am-1pm
and 2pm-5pm
Closed Thursday.
Tel: 01505 842305

PARKHILL WOOD

Another Reader writes

Gentlemen,

I understand that there is talk of cutting down certain trees in Parkhill Wood because it is said that they are not native to these parts. That may be but could I put a point of view to you?

When the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research purchased Howbery Park on the Thames at Wallingford in 1949, the main drives into the property were lined with mature trees. The Ministry of Works, on taking over the site, cut those trees down and immediately destroyed one of our reasons for purchasing the property. Little did they realise that the world famous horticulturist and implement inventor Jethro Tull had been based there more than 100 years before.

In 1956 Mr Bill Baker, a dental surgeon in Wallingford, set about planting trees all along the river banks on both sides of the Bridge. I was one of Bill's volunteer team. We took advice from Kew Gardens and scoured south England for trees and over a two year period changed the landscape. In subsequent years the entire Town was planted with trees. Local people paid to purchase the trees and we put their names on plaques as inducements to get funds.

Down the years, land owners have created parks and woodlands for their grandchildren to enjoy and harvest. The trees they planted quite often came from far distant places as they sought to have at least one of every kind that would grow. Most well-known arboretums work on this basis.

I suggest that policy is the one for Parkhill.

Another process we adopted was to use willow for stakes on the basis that if a tree failed to establish itself the stake was sure to take. If the desired tree lived then the willow would have a ring of bark removed.

We had one school master in our team and he soon had youngsters planting trees to a well thought-out plan but those same children also collected seeds and learnt how to care for them and when and how to plant them which is something your organisation would surely succeed in doing. We also made a point of growing bushes and of having our own nurseries where we grew trees and shrubs from cuttings.

I have a splendid variegated Poplar that I started from a cutting here in Lochwinnoch. It grows in one of two borders of many kinds of shrubs, cuttings of which are all over the district now. You can have as many cuttings as you can take.

**Alan Lovegreen
Lochwinnoch**

Sky at Night Lochwinnoch

January 2010

Geminid meteors put on a fabulous display last month with rates 20% higher than forecast.

THIS MONTH'S METEORS:

Quadrantids: Named after an old constellation Quadrans Muralis now part of Boötes. The peak is due around 7pm on 3rd January but is very short, lasting a matter of hours, so, you need to be out earlier and stay a little longer to be sure. The radiant, though visible all night, is very close to the horizon during evening but at its highest near dawn. The Moon may also interfere. Hourly rates may be in excess of 120 and occasionally more but they are difficult to observe in towns. They are fast and usually bright. The downside is the weather which has been cloudy in past years.

MOON

The Moon is New on the 15th and Full on the 30th January.

PLANETS

Mars - rising in the east by 6.30, will reach its closest approach to Earth on 27th January when it will be just under 62 million miles [99million km] distant. On the 29th it will be at opposition, that is, on the opposite side of Earth to the Sun. The red planet's disc appears quite large. To its right are Betelgeuse in Orion and Aldeberhran in Taurus. Together they make a splendid sight throughout the winter months. On the 27th they are joined by a near full moon - magic.

Saturn rises next, about 10pm. Look for Leo and the left hand star of the triangle, Denebola. Saturn is next left. Saturn's rings have passed their edge-on period and opening up once more. Need to wait until October 2017 for them to be fully open though, a memorable sight.

Jupiter is still visible in the west but is set by 7pm.

More on the village website.
Visit www.lochwinnoch.info

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

The Village Website
www.lochwinnoch.info

Lochwinnoch Weather Live

There is a new addition to the village website. The web team have been busy over the winter raising funds to buy and install a village weather station. It is now live giving access to live weather data including rainfall, wind speed, direction, temperature, barometric pressure. It will also build up a historical record of lochwinnoch weather which will be available online. It should provide useful information to a range of users within the village including Clyde Windsurfing Club as well as other loch users.

Thanks to "Kieran Turner - aerial and satellite installation" for his support with installation, and to Clyde Windsurfing Club for contributing towards the purchase of equipment.

www.lochwinnoch.info/weather



Record Numbers Take Part In Tinsel Walk 2009

A record 112 walkers took part in the Annual Tinsel Walk; a gathering of walkers of the Renfrewshire Walking Network. Groups came from as far afield as Erskine, Paisley, Linwood, Bridge of Weir and Johnstone. They include over a dozen walk leaders. There were even 4 mothers pushing buggies from the Lochwinnoch Slinky Strollers group.

Organiser Senga McLeod had printed song sheets and the group gathered in several locations during the walk through the village of Lochwinnoch and belted out numbers such as 'Jingle Bells' and 'We Wish you a Merry Christmas.'

Senga and Clyde Muirshiel Ranger John Webster, alternated as choirmasters, with Access Officer Kate Cuthbert, aided by Paisley Rangers Judith and Margaret leading the choir through the '12 days of Christmas.'

The café at Castle Semple was temporarily closed but staff made alternative arrangements and everyone was treated to a hot drink and mince pie or other savoury dish to end an eventful day.

Gryffe High Jazzes up The Farmer's Market

The Christmas Farmer's Market at Castle Semple certainly went with a swing on Sunday 6th December.

Gryffe High School Jazz Band played two sets which were very well received. The band, conducted by Andrew Laird, were only formed in 2009 and this was their venture on tour. The dozen students ranged from S1 to S6 with the majority being from the upper school.

"This has been the best market that I have ever attended" said market trader Grant, from Green Gove Vegetables.

"We were very pleased with the day" said Anne Ritchie, Head of the school's Music Department. "The group had a collecting bucket, with students encouraging the audience to donate and we raised almost £60 to go to Yorkhill Children's Hospital".

Clyde Muirshiel Regional park staff were also pleased with the new attraction, especially the foot-stomping version of 'Jingle Bells', which finished the sets.

"The band really added to the atmosphere of the day" said Assistant Park Manager, David O'Neill "and we'd love to have them back some time".



Art in the Park 2010

The Annual Lochwinnoch Art Club Exhibition at Castle Semple Centre opens on Friday 22nd January at 10 a.m.

This year's productions of traditional and contemporary works in acrylics, watercolours and mixed media styles with landscapes, still life, realism and abstract gives a wide range of interest to everyone.

Charles Woodward the Regional Park Manager said "This is a fantastic opportunity for local artists to display, and sell, their works to the public. Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority are delighted to once again host the annual Lochwinnoch Art Club Exhibition, and hope to do so for many more years to come".

The exhibition will be on show each day in the Visitor Centre until Tuesday 9 February. Entry is FREE. All the works are original and available for purchase and collection at the end of the exhibition.

If you have an interest in art, then why not make a New Year's resolution to join the Lochwinnoch Art Club, for more information about the club please talk to the members who will be staffing the exhibition or call Castle Semple Centre on 01505 842 882.

RSPB LOCHWINNOCH

Wildlife viewing all year round, nature trails and hides open at all times, Visitor Centre open from 10am-5pm daily, Bird Feeding Station and Treetop Tower, daily activities for families, school holiday activities, drinks, snacks and a superb RSPB Shop.

For bookings and information, Tel: **01505 842663**
or e-mail us at: lochwinnoch@rspb.org.uk
or visit: www.rspb.org.uk/scotland

Keep up to date with the latest RSPB gossip.

Find us on Facebook:
Search 'RSPB Lochwinnoch', click on us and receive regular updates.

Follow us on Twitter:
at <http://twitter.com/RSPBLochwinnoch>

Subscribe to the RSPB Lochwinnoch Blog!

For weekly updates, visit:
<http://blogs.rspb.org.uk/lochwinnoch/default.aspx>
and subscribe using the RSS link.

What's On at RSPB, Muirshiel, Cornalees & Castle Semple Centres

- **Monday mornings - Lochwinnoch Community Walks** - start again on Monday 11th January and every Monday (ex. Public Holidays). Meet at 10.30am at The Cross.
- **Thursday mornings - Slinky Strollers walks** (for parents & pushchairs), start again on Thursday 14th January - meet at 10.30am at Castle Semple Centre.
- **Saturday 31st October - Sunday 10th January 2010 - Homecoming Photographic Exhibition** at Castle Semple Centre. Final few days to view the entries from the Homecoming 2009 competition during opening hours at Castle Semple Centre, AND
- **Saturday 16th January to Sunday 28th February** - the Homecoming Photographic Exhibition transfers to Cornalees Centre. Open for viewing during Cornalees Centre weekend opening hours. *
- **Saturday 9th January** - Come along to the January Sales and pick up a bargain at the gift shop, have a walk and a hot drink at Castle Semple Centre - all month!
- **Sunday 10th January - Beach Clean** at Lunderston Bay from 1pm. Come and help the Rangers clear the litter off the beach after the winter storms. Many hands make light work.
- **Thursday 14th January - Evening Twilight Talk:** Greenland, The Iceberg Trail at RSPB Centre, Lochwinnoch. For details and to book a place, Tel: 01505 842663.



For All Your Garage Door Needs

**Garage Doors . Remote Control Openers
Installation . Repairs . Spares**

FREE ESTIMATES

0141 950 1423 GLASGOW

FREE SURVEYS

01505 842176 AYRSHIRE

FREE INSURANCE REPORTS

01786 820130 STIRLING

**The Cross, Lochwinnoch PA12 4DB
(10 mins from Glasgow Airport on A737)**

- **Friday 15th January - Stargazing Evening** (or indoor lecture if weather is poor) at Muirshiel Centre, 7pm-9pm. Booking essential as spaces are limited. Tel: 01505 842803.
- **Thursday 21st January - Coffee morning** from 11am-1pm at the RSPB Centre. Join us for a hot drink (Fairtrade tea and coffee), friendly chat, wonderful views and wildlife. Cost £2.
- **Friday 22nd January to Tuesday 9th February - Art in the Park Exhibition** of traditional and contemporary work by Lochwinnoch Art Group, open daily between 10am and 3.30pm at Castle Semple Centre.
- **Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th January - Get Ready for the Big Garden Birdwatch**. An opportunity to learn about the RSPB's biggest and most popular bird survey event, involving over half a million people! (The Big Garden Birdwatch takes place on 30th and 31st January.)
- **Wednesday 27th January - Conservation Volunteer Session** Start the new year as you mean to go on with regular exercise and healthy fresh air. At Muirshiel Centre, from 1pm for 2 hrs.
- **Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st January - Optics Weekend** from 10am - 4pm at RSPB Centre, Lochwinnoch. Choose from a wide range of competitively priced binoculars and telescopes, free expert advice available all week-end.
- **Sunday 31st January - Shadow Puppet Making** and then perform in a short play. From 1pm-3pm at Cornalees Centre.

VISITOR CENTRES

NORMAL OPENING HOURS

RSPB Reserve

The Reserve is open at all times;
Visitor Centre open daily, 10am-5pm.
Tel: 01505 842663.

Castle Semple Centre

Open daily from 10am-4pm
from 25 October to 29 March 2010.
Tel: 01505 842882.

Cornalees Centre

Open weekends only from 11am-3pm
from 25 October to 29 March 2010.
Tel: 01475 521458

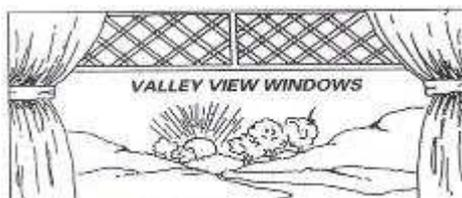
Muirshiel Centre

Open weekends only from 11am-3pm
from 25 October to 29 March 2010.
Tel: 01505 842803

ESTABLISHED 1989

21 YEARS IN BUSINESS AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS GO ON AND ON ...

**UPVC WINDOWS AND DOORS
MAINTENANCE FREE UPVC
ROOFLINE AND FULL
WINDOW REPAIR SERVICE
HINGES, LOCKS AND MISTED
AND BROKEN GLASS REPLACED.**



**OUR PRODUCTS ARE INSTALLED
IN OVER ONE HUNDRED
LOCHWINNOCH HOUSEHOLDS.**

**Contact - PETER McGARVEY
Tel: 01505 614654**

UPVC DOORS FITTED FROM £430