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# CHATTERBOX

No 228 December 2012

[www.lochwinnoch.info](http://www.lochwinnoch.info)

[www.facebook.com/lochwinnoch](http://www.facebook.com/lochwinnoch)

**ASIST**  
Anti-Social  
Investigation Team

Office 8:45am – 4:45pm  
Tel: 0141 847 3445

Community newsletter produced by Lochwinnoch Community Council

## What's On & Dates for your Diaries

Village events, clubs, classes, etc are in the centre pages

### Lochwinnoch Christmas Lights Switch On

Saturday 1st Dec 6.30pm

LMEG are placing Christmas Lights around the village once again this year. The Switch-On Parade will start at Auld Simon at 6.30pm and finish with mulled wine and mince pies at the Parish Church. We're hoping for another great turn-out this year - whatever the weather! Please feel free to dress up, or dress up your children, in something festive and bring along a torch to light the parade (no naked flames please).

On the night, pet owners please be aware there will be a short burst of fireworks at the end of the parade.

Any donations, large or small, would be much appreciated this year. Donations can be handed in at the Library, the LEAP office, or you'll find red collection boxes in shops and pubs around the village.



**All Good Boys  
& Girls of  
Lochwinnoch  
He's coming  
back!**

Santa's special post box will be at The Post Office on Thursday 6th December.

Come and post your letter to him from 6pm until 8pm and meet Santa when he comes to empty his postbox personally - if he likes your letter he might write back to you, so don't forget to include your address!

Lots of goodies for Mum and Dad to look at to keep them out of mischief while you are posting your letter

**Season's Greetings!**  
The Chatterbox team (Anne, Barbara, Gordon and Marie) want to thank all our advertisers, contributors and readers; Chatterbox couldn't continue without you.

**We wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!**

### Parish Church Christmas Fayre

Saturday 8th December  
10am - noon  
Santa's Grotto  
Tombola

Christmas Hamper  
Christmas Cake Walk  
Usual stalls . . . and lots more  
Live music in Church  
Adults £2.50 Children £1.50

### Carol Service

With Kilbirnie Salvation Army  
In Calder U.F. Church  
On Sunday 2nd December at 7pm.  
All Welcome  
Tea and Coffee will be served



### Choir Christmas Concert

The Christmas Concert this year is on Saturday 22nd December at 7.30pm in the Parish Church.

After the Junior Choir have done their enthusiastic bit, the Senior Choir will be joined, as usual, by members of the Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra. This year the programme includes a very varied selection of Christmas songs and carols including music from the 14th and 16th centuries, songs from the Basque Country and South Africa together with a seasonal reworking of Tchaikovsky.

Fresh from their BBC funded master class workshop expect also a virtuoso input from some local saxophonists.

See you there.

Tickets from the usual outlets - The Brown Bull, Now and Then, The Junction, and Calder Gallery. £7 and £5 concession, including mulled wine and mince pies

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## Mistylaw Medical Practice

www.mistylawmedicalpractice.co.uk

### Flu Vaccination Programme

Flu vaccine is now available and we would encourage all patients in the eligible groups to attend: over 65's, chronic respiratory disease, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease, diabetes, immunosuppressed, pregnant woman and carers. Further information can be obtained at reception. Any patients' outwith the criteria can get a flu vaccination privately at participating outlets e.g. Pharmacies or shopping centres.

### Pertussis

All pregnant patients over 28 weeks are currently being offered Pertussis (Whooping Cough) vaccine – more information and leaflets are available in the waiting room.

### Contact Details

If you change your contact details, particularly mobile telephone numbers, please let us know. All patient contact details are kept confidential.

### Wasted Appointments

In October, 159 patients didn't turn up for their pre arranged appointments with doctors and nurses at the surgery. This adds up to 27 hours of face to face contact with the medical and nursing staff that has been wasted when other patients could have had these appointments. Please, please if you can't make an appointment, telephone the surgery to cancel it so it

can be made available for someone else. Also if you are going to be late for an appointment, let us know.

***The Doctors would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year***

## Post Office Shop

Late Night Opening

Come and see our new arts & crafts range - ideal to entertain little hands on those cold winter days. A range of diaries and calendars now in stock

The shop will be open from 9am until late on 29th November with special offers available. **(The actual Post Office section will however be closed)**



## SVDP Christmas Wishes

The St Vincent de Paul Society in the villages of Lochwinnoch and Howwood, would like to thank all who contributed to the organisation and to wish them a happy Christmas and peace and goodwill for the coming New Year.

The society has in the past year helped the community by donating to: Our Lady of the Wayside Club, which feeds, on average, 80 people a week and provides them with clothing; and to the Rosalee Rondue Club which hosts around 100 physically and mentally impaired young men and women. The drug rehabilitation centre in Greenock, Jericho House, also received a donation as did St Vincent's Hospice. As well as these donations we also sent money to the Pakistan Flood Appeal, Christchurch



## Local Solicitors

### Providing Personal Service

Whether you're buying or selling a home or are unsure of your rights on any legal matter the experienced team at JJ McCosh will provide an individual service from experts with local knowledge.

Partner, and local resident, Ian Briggs is more than happy to consult at your home, and there is no charge for the first meeting.

Feel free to get in touch to speak to our team and see how we can help.

Telephone:  
01294 832112

Email:



info@jjmccosh.co.uk

Earthquake Appeal and the Horn of Africa Appeal.

We are twinned, further afield, with a parish in Buffalo Flats, South Africa, which we support monetarily and also sponsor technical students in their studies in India.

Without your generosity in giving, none of this could be achieved. The group would like to convey our sincere thanks for your generosity and wish you every blessing for this wonderful season.

*Carol Whyte*  
President SSVDP  
paisleydc@ssvpscotland.com



## Renfrewshire RSPB Local Group

The December meeting of the Renfrewshire Local Group of the Royal Society Protection of Birds will be on Friday 7 December at 7.30.

This meeting will be an illustrated talk entitled "Kestrels for Company". Come along and find out more about those birds you see hovering by the roadside. The meeting will be held at McMaster Centre, Donaldson Drive, Renfrew PA4 8LX.



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**Ann Orr**



**May Allen**

## Lochwinnoch in Times Past

Many of us are incomers; that is we were not born in Lochwinnoch and know little or nothing of the village in times past. To help us get a flavour of the village as it was, lively ladies, Ann Orr and May Allen, both born and bred in the village, kindly gave up their time to recount something of their lives.

Both Ann and May started their lives in what we would now consider cramped family accommodation in Church Street and Main Street respectively. They both ponder that what now seems overcrowding didn't seem at all like that at the time, rather just the same cosy circumstances as most other people.

May lost her mother when she was 8 years old and moved in with her older sister and family; she laughs now at the thought of seven people living in a room and kitchen but that was how it was for many then.

Both girls began their education at the "wee school" - now the library. There were two classes and children didn't have jotters but used a slate and pencil - this was very old fashioned even in the 1930s. They remained there under the watchful eye of Mrs McMillan until they were 7 years old and moved to the "big school".

At the time there were only four cars in the village belonging to: the doctor, registrar, chiropodist and lawyer. There were far more people on the street than one sees now. Children played together on the street, workers walked to work in the mills and factories, housewives shopped in the many shops and men met at the cross after work to smoke and solve the world's problems.

Most of the shops on Main Street and High Street have now been converted to homes. When May and Anne were growing up there was an abundance of shops: White's grocers on one corner and Black's grocers on the other corner where Spar and The Junction are now; Jessie Bennett's grocers on High Street; 3 butchers; a Co-op with grocery, drapery and hardware departments; a jewellers; Miss Houston's fancy goods shop; Murray's diary and a shed on Craw Rd where farmer Willie Glen

sold milk from the can. Glenpark was the field where Willie kept his cows and both Ann and May learned to milk them. Ann even had a cow named after her - a real honour.

May and Ann both left school at the normal leaving age of 14. These were hard times and money was in short supply. Ann would have liked to continue her education but family finances couldn't stretch that far. There were plenty of jobs and Ann left school on the Friday and on the Monday started work in the Co-op. After two years, to her surprise, Ann's parents told her they had saved the money for her to attend secretarial college. After her course Ann was employed in Glasgow as an invoice typist.

May started work at Whitten's Mill where they made woollen and mohair shawls and scarves. The process started with whole sheep fleeces coming into the mill which were then washed, carded and spun into yarn before weaving into cloth. The scarves and shawls were taken by Mr Whitten to North Berwick for sale in a shop there. Whitten's mill was water-powered and the mill wheel is still there on Calder Street on the right hand side after the school.

After two years at the mill, May started as an apprentice at Hunter's furniture factory. Although not absolutely necessary for her job, she and others attended evening classes in Beith to train as French polishers. So May added a second skill to her milking ability.

Of course it wasn't all work. School leavers joined the Youth Club run by Mrs Aitken at the school. They formed Concert Parties and entertained the village while raising funds. Ann remembers her time in the Concert Party raising money to buy the tennis courts which unfortunately were seldom used.

There was Mander's Cinema behind the McKillop Institute where the family (show people) lived in a caravan at the back of the cinema. Mr Mander would appear at the cross ringing a bell to announce "Pathe News is just beginning". Earlier, in the 1920s, the cinema was a tent in Harvey Square showing silent films with a pianist accompanying.

*To be continued*

**Classic Car Show on the shores of Castle Semple Loch on Sunday 21st October. Thanks to Andy Dysart, Mike Holcombe and the pre 67 Fords Owners Club for photographs**



## Muirshiel's Mystic Memories

Bronze and Iron Age communities living in the hills around Lochwinnoch between 2000 and 3000 years ago knew this time of the year as Samhuinn (pronounced 'sa-win'). This means 'end of summer' in their ancient language.

November was known as 'beith' signifying 'birch tree.' The resplendent white bark of the Silver Lady of the Woods, as birch is often known, represented life and light shining on amidst death and darkness during the countryside's season of sleep.

Beith, which is Lochwinnoch's neighbouring town, gets its name from the profusion of birch ('beith') trees in its vicinity.

December, known as 'luis' to our ancient British and Celtic predecessors, was identified with the rowan tree which, even in modern times, is planted in gardens and at house doors to ward off misfortune and keep at bay the evil eye.

Samhuinn was when the veil between the ghostly otherworld and our own was at its most fragile. Our ancestors believed this was when phantoms of the dead emerged from heather-topped burial mounds in the Calder Glen and from the shadow of Misty Law and Hill of Stake to revisit earthly haunts in their mouldering grave clothes.

This horrible host of the dead, known as the Sluath (pronounced 'sloo-ah'), shrieked and screamed like banshees as they wandered long-forgotten landscapes where they lived, loved, worked and died during their earthly pilgrimages.

I frequently sensed their spectral presence when based at Barnbrock Farm which was the headquarters of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park where I worked as a countryside ranger.

The pinewood-circled farm, just off the Lochwinnoch-Kilmacolm road, was surrounded by desolate moors and windswept hillsides. These were studded with rocky remnants of centuries-old homesteads where Renfrewshire's earliest inhabitants lived at history's dawn.

This enchanted landscape, seemingly still haunted by spectres of these men, women and children of earlier ages, pulsated with vibrant earth energy. Its mystic magnetism enshrined magical memories of far-off times when people lived in mud-and wattle huts at nearby



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strongholds like Smeath Hill, Castle Hill, Knockmade Hill and Dunconnel Hill.

During the winter months, which included January (or 'fearn' meaning 'alder tree' in their language), these long-dead tribesmen and women lit huge hilltop bonfires, known as tandles, to drive away winter demons and encourage the dying sun back to its summer haunts and restore life to the countryside.

I have evergreen memories of cycling past Knockmade Hill on dark winter mornings and moonlit evenings to and from Barnbrock. This elongated mound, between Sandieston and Moniabrock Farms, was a Bronze Age homestead then a Celtic Iron Age hill fort from around 1000BC to 100AD.

Archaeological excavations at Knockmade have produced relics of bygone eras such as pottery and ornamental bracelet fragments.

The hill was a twilight zone whose otherworldliness intensified nocturnally with eerie shrieks of marauding foxes and melancholic hoots of courting tawny owls. These resonated across boggy moorlands dotted with conifer plantations and silvered by the full moon and diamantine star-clustered constellations.

Shapeless shadows of dead, living and unborn future generations seemed to roam side by side in that bewitching realm during Samhuinn's sad season of slumber and somnolence.

I often glimpsed grey, ghostly figures spiralling like winter wisps from fern-festooned rocks and rush-robed pastures when I passed Knockmade Hill at dusk and dawn.

Were these just misty vapours rising spectrally from moist stones and

pastures? Or, in the countryside's gathering gloom and silence and stillness, did the Sluath's sombre spirits still wander in creepy columns across a spirit-haunted land once occupied by Lochwinnoch's earliest inhabitants?

*Derek Parker*

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

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### Curiosity

#### Curling Club Trophy Info?

Many years ago, I purchased a whiskey glass in an antique shop in the West of Ireland and it turned out to be a prize (harp trophy) awarded to a certain M. Smith in the season 1995 / 96 of the Lochwinnoch Curling Club.

My curiosity has got the better of me, and I have to know how on earth it ended up in Ireland!! it remains my favourite whiskey glass...

*Peter Roycroft*

*If anyone has information please contact chatterbox@lochwinnoch.info*

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### ROAR Lunch Club Break

The Lunch Club will not be open on 27th December or 3rd January. It's back again on Thursday 8th January.

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**What do you call someone who doesn't believe in Father Christmas?**

A rebel without a Claus!

**If athletes get athlete's foot, what do elves get?**

Mistle-toes!

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## BANISH THE 'WINTER BLUES' WITH TEA, CHAT AND LAUGHTER



With the long dark winter evenings drawing in, Contact the Elderly, the only national charity solely dedicated to tackling

loneliness and isolation among older people, is inviting local residents of Lochwinnoch to join them for a cuppa, slice of cake and lots of chatter each month.

Supported by a volunteer network, the charity organises free monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for small groups of older people, aged 75 and above, who live alone and would appreciate some company on a Sunday afternoon.

Each older person is collected from their home by a volunteer driver and taken to a volunteer host's home for the afternoon. The group is warmly welcomed by a different host each month, but the drivers remain the same which means that over the months and years, acquaintances turn into friends and loneliness is replaced by companionship.

Contact the Elderly's West of Scotland Development Officer, Margaret Oliver, said: "Activities for people aged 75 and above are normally limited to weekdays, so Sunday can be a particularly long and difficult day. We also know that a lot of people, whatever their age, can relate to feeling a bit flat over the winter months. Our tea parties are perfect for brightening up the gloomy months and are a great opportunity to make new friends within the community, to get out of the house and to generally have a good time!"

The group in Lochwinnoch has capacity for a number of new guests to

join and the charity is keen to raise awareness of these openings among the local community.

Lochwinnoch residents, aged 75 and above, who live alone and are interested in joining Contact the Elderly as a guest, or those who would like to refer an older person to the local group, should please contact Margaret Oliver, West of Scotland Development Officer on 01389 605915 or [margaret.oliver@contact-the-elderly.org.uk](mailto:margaret.oliver@contact-the-elderly.org.uk)



## Lochwinnoch SWRI



There is no meeting in December so we wish all members and friends a Very

Happy Christmas and every Good Wish for 2013.

The winners of the October competitions were

### 3 Treacle Scones

1. Elma Richmond
2. Pat Matthews
3. Barbara Milligan

### Cross Stitch Bookmark

1. Katrina Brunton
2. Glenys McKee
3. Roma Gould

As 2013 will be the 60th Birthday of Lochwinnoch SWRI we are keen to contact as many past members of Lochwinnoch Rural as possible to join us in the celebration in April. Details of the party will be announced in due course, but please contact Mrs Gould or Mrs McKee if anyone knows of anyone they think might like to join us.



Lochwinnoch  
Millennium  
Events  
Group

## Position Vacant Want to Help ?

LMEG, Lochwinnoch's funding facilitating group, is looking for a new treasurer. We get involved with many exciting community projects including the green energy group, LEAP; the 'paths' people, SRANI; and of course our famous Christmas Lights!

Come and enjoy being part of a vibrant village group. We meet every month.

Reasonable expenses will be covered. Call David McCusker on 01505 842223

## Historical Adventures Youth Theatre

### Drama Classes at the McKillop Institute

Every Wednesday

**Juniors (5-8 years old)**

**4.30-5.30 p.m.**

**Seniors (9-14 years old)**

**5.30 p.m.-6.30 p.m.**

Historical Adventures Ltd. is a highly successful theatre company that prides itself on getting the best out of our Youth Theatre pupils by developing and encouraging their performing skills that in turn help them to be confident individuals, meet lots of friends and generally have a lot of fun.

We put on at least two major performances per year: the end of term summer show which takes place in June and our pantomime in December. We also offer the chance for your child to take part in our school holiday programs (Easter, Summer and October week) with subjects which can range from Circus Skills to Murder Mysteries.

All of the tutors are professional actors who are fully enhanced disclosure checked (PVG checked).

For any enquiries or to book a place in our class for your child please contact us on 07812 437 559 or at [david.ororke@historical-adventures.co.uk](mailto:david.ororke@historical-adventures.co.uk)



## Believe and Achieve Positive Thinking Group

I run a Positive Thinking Group in Kilbirnie, the group has been established since May 2012 and has proved extremely successful enhancing individuals lifestyles.

We meet every 4th Wednesday in the Bridgend Community Centre Kilbirnie. Our next meeting is Wednesday 12th December 2012, 7-9pm Cost £3.50

For further info telephone Andrea on 07890181769

## Tridecaphobia

Spare a thought this New Year for all the tridecaphobics out there: those people who have an irrational fear of the number 13. They're in for a rough time next year and may not be celebrating. 2013!



## Lochwinnoch Art Group

How quickly the year has gone! We only have one more meeting in 2012 and that will be held on Monday 10th December. It is important that all our members try to attend as information concerning our January 2013 exhibition, "Art In the Park", will be available. We shall also be taking a closer look at the drawing of trees in Charcoal & Pastel that evening.

As usual we shall be in the Space Room of the McKillop Institute between 7.30pm - 9.30pm.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas!



## Christmas Tree what's the origin?

We all know the story of how the angel/fairy got to the top of the

Christmas tree but where did the Christmas tree come from?

The short answer is that nobody seems to know the exact origin but the custom of bringing green boughs and trees indoors in December goes back more than two thousand years.

The Egyptians, Romans and Druids all treasured evergreens and at the time of the winter solstice, in December, brought boughs into their houses as a symbol of enduring life.

Some early Christians adapted the tradition to symbolize Jesus' birth, death on The Cross (tree) and resurrection (everlasting green). This was very controversial at the time, Christian leaders complained that too many fellow-Christians had copied a Pagan practice, opposition to the Christmas tree intensified and in the third century the early Christian Church strictly prohibited the decoration of houses with evergreens.

The Christmas tree tradition died out for many years and is believed to have re-emerged in Germany almost 1,000 years ago when St Boniface, who converted the German people to Christianity, was said to have come across a group of pagans worshipping an oak tree. In anger, St Boniface is said to have cut down the oak tree and to his amazement a young fir tree sprang up from the roots of the oak tree. St Boniface took this as a sign of the Christian faith. It was not until the 16th century that fir trees were brought indoors at Christmas time.

There is a legend that the protestant reformer, Martin Luther, was the first to adorn Christmas trees with lights.

## CHATTERBOX

*Chatterbox is produced and distributed on behalf of Lochwinnoch Community Council, with support and financial assistance from local sponsors and advertisers.*

*Lochwinnoch Community Council welcomes all items for possible inclusion for publication in print, web or audio format or any way as thought appropriate by the editorial team*

*All views are of individuals. The Editor accepts no liability for errors or statements and claims made in submissions.*

While coming home one December evening, the beauty of the stars shining through the branches of a fir inspired him to recreate the effect by placing candles on the branches of a small fir tree inside his home.

The Christmas tree was brought to Britain by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert from his native Germany. The famous Illustrated News etching in 1848, featuring the Royal Family of Victoria, Albert and their children gathered around a Christmas tree in Windsor Castle, popularised the tree throughout Victorian Britain.

These days, about 8 million Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year, while in the United States between 35 and 40 million trees are sold during the Christmas season. Artificial Christmas trees are mostly produced in the Pearl River delta area of China.

## Merry Christmas!

*This year I will not be sending Christmas cards but would like to wish all my friends a Very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.*

*Dan Morrison*

## THREE CHURCHES INN

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## What's on at the Inn

- 1st of December live music with the Penny Dogs
- 31st December Hogmanay party with Gamble and Drever starts 10pm till 3am tickets on sale now £7.00

Festive menu available from 1st December  
2 course meal £14.95 , 3 course meal £18.95  
There are still a few spaces for Xmas day dinner for bookings please call 01505 843854.

*Karen and Martin and all the staff would like to wish you all the very best for the 2013*



## Lochwinnoch Community Library

Opening Hours:

**Mon, Tues, Fri, Sat**

10am- 1pm & 2pm-5pm

**Wednesday**

2pm-5pm and 6pm-8pm

**CLOSED THURSDAY**

**Lochwinnoch Library will be closed over the Christmas & New Year period as follows :**

**The library closes at 2.30pm on Monday 24th December and re-opens 10am Friday 4th January**

We are happy for you to stock up with your reading material to cover the holiday period. Items borrowed after 27th Nov. will have a return date of Monday 7th January.

Remember you can renew and reserve items online at -

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

If you don't already have a password to access this, the library staff will be happy to set one up for you – ask the next time you are in the library.

All of our online information resources will be available as usual on the website.

**We would like to wish all of our customers a very**

**Happy Christmas & Guid New Year**

**We look forward to welcoming you to the library in 2013**

### Services available:

- Free Broadband Internet
- Free document Shredding facility
- Photocopier & printer (15p per black & white copy)
- Fax (Charge depending on UK or Overseas destination)

### New Titles

**Patricia Cornwell: The Bone Bed**

In Alberta, Canada, an eminent palaeontologist disappears from a

## Lochwinnoch residents – your local Councillors Chris Gilmour and Derek Bibby are here to help.

If you have a problem or an issue, come to our surgery at the McKillop Institute on the 1st Saturday of every month at 9am.



### Contact Chris:

Email:

[cllr.christopher.gilmour@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.christopher.gilmour@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

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

Phone: 07534148427



### Contact Derek:

Email:

[cllr.derek.bibby@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.derek.bibby@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

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

Phone: 07534156007

dinosaur dig site, and at the Cambridge Forensic Center, Kay Scarpetta receives a grisly communication that gives her a dreadful reason to suspect this may become her next case. Then, with shocking speed, events begin to unfold.

A body recovered from Boston Harbor reveals bizarre trace evidence hinting of a link to other unsolved cases that seem to have nothing in common. Who is behind all this? And whom can Scarpetta trust? Her lead investigator, Pete Marino, and FBI agent husband, Benton Wesley, are both unhappy with her because of personnel changes at the CFC, and her niece Lucy has become even more secretive than usual. Scarpetta fears she just may be on her own this time - against an enormously powerful and cunning enemy who seems impossible to defeat.

### Dennis Lehane: Live by Night

Joe Coughlin is nineteen when he meets Emma Gould. A small-time thief in 1920s Boston, his task is to tie her up while his accomplices loot the bank she works in.

But Joe falls in love with Emma - and his life changes forever.

That meeting is the beginning of Joe's journey to becoming one of most feared and respected gangsters. It is a journey beset by violence, double-crossing, drama and pain. And it is a journey into the soul of prohibition-era America...

### Kate Morton: The Secret Keeper

During a party at the family farm in the English countryside, sixteen-year-old Laurel Nicolson has escaped to her childhood tree

house and is dreaming of the future. She spies a stranger coming up the road and sees her mother speak to him. Before the afternoon is over, Laurel will witness a shocking crime that challenges everything she knows about her family and especially her mother, Dorothy.

Now, fifty years later, Laurel is a successful and well-regarded actress, living in London. She returns to the family farm for Dorothy's ninetieth birthday and finds herself overwhelmed by questions she has not thought about for decades. From pre-WWII England through the Blitz, to the fifties and beyond, discover the secret history of three strangers from vastly different worlds - Dorothy, Vivien, and Jimmy - who meet by chance in wartime London and whose lives are forever entwined.

### Kate Mosse: The Citadel (Languedoc Trilogy, book 3)

Set during World War II in the far south of France, CITADEL is a powerful, action-packed mystery that reveals the secrets of the resistance under Nazi occupation. While war blazed in the trenches at the front, back at home a different battle is waged, full of clandestine bravery, treachery and secrets. And as a cell of Maquis resistance fighters, codenamed CITADEL, fight for everything they hold dear, their struggle will reveal an older, darker combat being fought in the shadows. Combining the rugged action of LABYRINTH with the haunting mystery of SEPULCHRE, CITADEL is a story of daring and courage, of lives risked for beliefs and of astonishing secrets buried in time.

### Forthcoming titles:

- Tom Clancy: Threat Vector
- Joy Fielding: Shadow Creek

- Victoria Hislop: One Cretan evening
- Karen Rose: Did you miss me?

**which?** WHICH is now available for reference at Lochwinnoch Library. Access to WHICH reports are available online from library computers only. If you require this service, a member of staff will log onto the site for you. A monthly magazine is also available for reference.



Lochwinnoch Library Bookbug  
Rhymetime

Every Tuesday at 9.30am

Come along and join in the fun

Suitable for children aged  
birth – 4 years

Bookbug's Library Challenge is a free programme that encourages children aged birth to four to discover and enjoy their local library.

On their first visit to the participating library children are issued with the Bookbug's Library Challenge collector card. Every time they visit the library the collector card will be stamped, and your child can exchange four stamps for one of our beautifully illustrated Library Challenge certificates.

Your child's name will be written on the certificate to encourage them to feel proud that they have become members of their local library.

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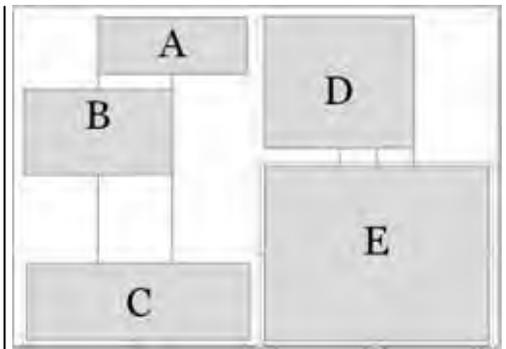
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- Standard size advert – 5cm x 13cm (or 13cm x 5cm) layout - £30 per month.
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- Half page advert – 20cm x 14cm (or 14cm x 20cm) layout - £90 per month.
- Full page advert – 20cm x 28 cm - £180 per month.

Please e-mail

[chat-advert@lochwinnoch.info](mailto:chat-advert@lochwinnoch.info)

for further information.

**NEW!** collection of Language courses on CD @ Lochwinnoch Library

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## Craft Class Display

The Elderly Forum Craft Class will display the work of its members on Tuesday 11 December 10.30am-3.30pm in the McKillop Hall.



**£15 Reduced Car Club Membership  
ends 31<sup>st</sup> December**

Contact Diane Dunn, Car Club Coordinator to take advantage of this offer

[diane@myleaproject.org](mailto:diane@myleaproject.org)

or phone 842 530

## What's On

### Regular clubs, classes and groups

- **Advice Works**—At the Library by appointment only. Contact 382328
- **Bokwa Fitness** — Masonic Hall, Thursdays, 7—8pm. Places limited. Contact Rachel on 07795 100231 or 503362
- **Boys Brigade**—Anchor Boys and Junior Sections meet on Tuesday nights, Parish Church Hall.
- **Calder Drama Club**—Thursdays, from 8pm-10pm McKillop Institute.
- **Calder UF Church**—Food for Thought. Last Monday of the month 7.30pm in church hall
- **Children's Drama Workshops**—Thursdays in McKillop Hall 5-8yrs 4.30-5.30pm, 9-12yrs 5.30-6.30pm Tel: 07814 699127 Email: rocketyouththeatre@gmail.com
- **Drop-in T Bar**—Lochwinnoch Elderly Forum. McKillop Institute, 10-12 noon .
- **First Friday of Month**—Semple Tones host an open mike session at Lochwinnoch Golf Club,
- **Girls Brigade**—1st Lochwinnoch

Company, Wednesday evenings from 6pm-9.15pm at the Parish Church Hall for various age groups.

- **Healing and Creativity Workshops & Classes**—For details or to book a place, please Tel Becky: 0141 8816700 or Libby on: 01505 842604.
- **Jogging Buddies**—Tuesday evenings. Meet at Lochbarr Football Club at 6.30pm. For details, Tel: 0141 887 1357 or 07947 763704.
- **Keep Fit—Improving With Age classes**—every Tues from 10-11am at the McKillop. Tel 842136 for info..
- **Kiddies Ceilidh Club**—Traditional dancing for you and your little ones. Thursday 9.30am McKillop Institute
- **Knit @ The 19th at the Golf Club**—Monday 10am-12 noon (or longer), all levels and learners welcome.
- **Krafty Kids**—will be running again on Sat 1st September open to all Primary School Children 1.30pm until 3pm in the small Parish Church room. For bookings telephone Katharine Billany on 01505 844944 or 07947 075622 The 1st of 7 sessions.
- **Liathach Dog Training**—(pre-booking necessary). Anne Moss, Tel: 01505 842367, e-mail: dogtraining@f2s.com
- **Linda Margaret School of Dancing**—Tuesdays from 4pm-8.45pm, McKillop Institute. For details, Tel: 0141 581 9104.
- **Lochwinnoch Art Group**—Meet fortnightly on Monday evenings, 7.30pm, McKillop Institute.
- **Lochwinnoch Choral Society**—Rehearsals on Monday evenings, Parish Church/ Hall. Juniors 7:15-8pm, and Seniors 8pm-9.15pm.
- **Lochwinnoch Community Walks**—Mondays (ex. Public Holidays), meet at 10.30am at The McKillop Institute .
- **Lochwinnoch Gymnastics Club**—For primary school-age children every Monday, 5-7pm at the McKillop. Phone Coby on: 07729 051 615.
- **Lochwinnoch Playgroup**—For under 5's, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.30-

11.30am at the McKillop .

- **Lochwinnoch Pre-School Gymnastics**—(for children from 18 months to 5yrs). Fridays, from 10.15am - 1.45pm at the McKillop. Further details from Coby on Tel: 07729 051615.
- **Lochwinnoch Toddlers**—Mondays and Wednesdays from 9.30 - 11.30am, McKillop.
- **Lochwinnoch Writers Group**—Monday from 2-4:15pm in the Library. Contact 873581
- **Morag's Keep Fit**—Mondays and Thursdays from 7pm, in the McKillop Institute.
- **Positive Thinking Group** Meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday in the Bridgend Community Centre Kilbirnie. Our next meeting is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012, 7-9pm Cost £3.50 For further info telephone Andrea on 07890 181 769
- **ROAR Lunch Club**—every Thursday from 11.45am PROMPT at the McKillop Institute. **Please Note - ONLY ONE SITTING.**
- **Scottish Country Dance Club**—Every Tuesday, from 7.30-9.30pm, McKillop Inst.
- **Sequence Dance Class**—Every Wed 7.30-9.30 at Bowling Club
- **Slinky Strollers**—Thursday mornings
- **Scottish Slimmers**—Thursdays, 7/7.30pm, McKillop Inst.
- **TaeKwon-Do**—Fitness and Self-defence classes for youths and adults. Tuesdays from 5-6pm, McKillop and Thursdays from 7pm-8pm at Lochwinnoch Primary School. For details Tel: 01259 210716.
- **Youth Drama Classes** at the McKillop, Every Wednesday Juniors (5-8 years old) 4.30-5.30 p.m. Seniors (9-14 years old) 5.30 p.m.-6.30 p.m. Contact David: 07812 437 559 or at [david.ororke@historical-adventures.co.uk](mailto:david.ororke@historical-adventures.co.uk)
- **Zumba**—Mon 6.30-7.30 Lochbarr Centre, Wed 7-8pm McKillop Inst Sat 10-11am Lochbarr Centre
- **Zumbatonic for kids**—Fridays 4-7 yrs 4 - 5 . 3 0 p m 8-14yrs 5.30-7pm, Lochbarr Centre

**Some activities may cease during holidays, please check**

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## Upcoming Events

- **Thurs 29, Fri 30 Nov Calder Drama present "The Rainbow Bird"** a new play by Franceska Ewart. The action is centred on the Lochwinnoch RSPB Centre where there is trouble brewing between our feathered friends and the local inhabitants; only the restoration of the Rainbow Bird to its rightful place as ruler of Birdland can save the day.
- **Sat 1 Dec—Lochwinnoch Christmas Lights Switch-on parade** starts from Auld Simon at 6.30pm. Please feel free to dress up, or dress up your children, in something festive and bring along a torch to light the parade (no naked flames please).
- **Sat 1 Dec—Ladies Night** at Lochwinnoch Golf Club. Cocktails and canapés. Gift ideas for Christmas. Come along, let your hair down and dance the night away! Tickets from the Golf Club Tel: 842 153
- **Sat 1 Dec—Live music** from The Penny Dogs at the Three Churches Inn.
- **Sun 2 Dec—Festive Farmers Market**, Castle Semple Visitor Centre 11am-2.30pm. Info and booking: tel 842 882 Ex20
- **Sun 2 Dec—International Tree Dressing Day** Muirshiel Visitor Centre 1-3 pm We invite you to help us decorate a tree or two in the Country Park. Pick any tree and make it festive! Info and booking: 01505 842 803
- **Sun 2 Dec—Carol Service with Kilbirnie Salvation Army** in Calder UF Church, 7pm. Tea and Coffee.
- **Wed 5 Dec—RSPB Twilight talk: African Adventures** by Lochwinnoch reserve manager, Zul Bhatia 7.30 - 9pm Booking essential as spaces are limited. £5 or £2 for RSPB members. Tel 01505 842663 or email lochwinnoch@rspb.org.uk
- **Fri 7 Dec—RSPB Candlelight Winter Guided**

**Walk** 5-7pm. Hear stories about the reserve's history and experience wildlife in a unique way. Booking essential. Tel 01505 842663 or email lochwinnoch@rspb.org.uk Cost: £4 or £1 for RSPB members.

- **Fri 7 Dec—Renfrewshire Local RSPB Group meeting**, talk on "Kestrels for Company" 7.30pm at McMaster Centre, Donaldson Drive, Renfrew PA4 8LX.
- **Fri 7 Dec—Stargazing** at Muirshiel Country Park 7-9pm. Theme: Legacy of the Apollo Missions. Book your FREE place now by calling 01505 842 803. If the weather is not suitable for outdoor star gazing there will be an indoor presentation.
- **Sat 8 Dec—Parish Church Christmas Fayre** 10-12noon, Adults £2.50, Children £1.50
- **Sat 8 Dec—TCT Christmas Auction** in The Brown Bull – come along and snap up a bargain.
- **Sat 8 Dec – Sun 3 Feb Photographic Exhibition on Tour**, Muirshiel Visitor Centre, 11-3pm (weekends only). A display of prize winners and entries from the 2012 'Capturing Creativity in Clyde Muirshiel' competition. More info: tel 01505 842 803
- **Tues 11 Dec—Craft Class Display of Work** 10.30am-3.30pm, McKillop Hall.
- **Wed 12 Dec—Festive Tinsel Walk** meet Castle Semple Visitor Centre 11am. As part of Renfrewshire Walking Network the Rangers will be leading a circular 5.0Km/3.1mls walk around the streets of Lochwinnoch. Wear a bit of tinsel or a festive Christmas hat to get in the mood for the carol singing along the way. Refreshments provided at the centre after the walk. More info and booking tel: 01505 842 882 Ex 20
- **Sat 15 Dec—RSPB Festive Fun!** 1-4pm Christmas capers

and crafts for the kids. Mince pies and mulled wine for the adults. Plus, a special guest appearance from our very own Father Christmas. Cost: £4 or £1 for RSPB members.

- **Sat 15 Dec—Natural Decorations and Food 4 Nature** Greenock Cut Visitor Centre 1-3 pm. Join the Rangers to make your own individual Christmas Decorations from natural materials and help our feathered friends out too with bird feeders for your garden. More info: tel 01475 521 458 booking essential.
- **Sat 15 Dec—Christmas Dance** at Lochwinnoch Golf Club. Book now! Tel: 842 153
- **Sun 16 Dec—RSPB Birds for Beginners: Wonderful Winter.** An introductory gentle guided walk to look at the reserve's winter wildlife, providing hints and tips along the way. Cost: £4 or £1 for RSPB members
- **Sun 16 Dec—Natural Christmas Decorations** Castle Semple Visitor Centre Three 1 hour sessions at 11.00am, 1pm & 2.30pm. Get into the festive spirit with the Rangers making decorations using natural materials. Please book as numbers are limited. Tel 01505 842 882 Ex 20.
- **Sat 22 Dec—Lochwinnoch Choral Society Christmas Concert** 7.30 pm in the Parish Church.
- **Mon 31 Dec—Hogmanay Party** at the Three Churches Inn with Gamble, Gamble and Drever starts 10pm till 3am tickets on sale now £7.00



T C T  
Christmas  
Auction

Don't forget the TCT Christmas Auction on Saturday 8th December in The Brown Bull.

You can help the charity by snapping up a bargain or you could donate your special gifts or talents.

See you there!

G	A	R	N	D	E	E	N	S	I	G	K	E	U	G	C	D	K	P	I	O
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## ChatSearch—Christmas

BATTERIES	CAROLSINGERS	CHRISTMASCAKE
CHRISTMASLIGHTS	CHRISTMASPARTY	EXCITEDCHILDREN
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INDIGESTION	LEFTOVERS	MINCEPIES
MISTLETOE	PRESENTS	QUEENSSPEECH
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## RSPB Lochwinnoch Reserve

- Wildlife viewing all year round
- Nature trails and hides
- Visitor centre open 10am – 5pm daily
- Superb RSPB shop
- Wildlife feeding stations and tree-top tower viewpoint

### Events December 2012

#### Wednesday 5th—7.30pm - 9pm Wednesdays with Wildlife - Twilight Talk: African Adventures

Lochwinnoch reserve manager, Zul Bhatia, gives us his yearly talk about Africa.

Booking essential as spaces are

limited. £5 or £2 for RSPB members

#### Friday 7th— 5pm – 7pm Candlelight Winter Guided Walk

Join the reserve team for an extra special experience, a guided walk by candlelight. Hear stories about the reserve's history and experience wildlife in a unique way. Booking essential as space is limited.

Cost: £4 or £1 for RSPB members.

#### Saturday 15th - 1pm - 4pm Festive fun!

Christmas capers and crafts for the kids. Mince pies and mulled wine for the adults. Plus, a special guest appearance from our very own Father Christmas.

Cost: £4 or £1 for RSPB members

#### Sunday 16th - 10am – 12noon Birds for Beginners: Wonderful Winter

Make the most of the cold, crisp days ahead as we take you for an introductory guided walk to look at the reserve's winter wildlife, providing hints and tips along the way.

Walk description: Ideal for beginners, gentle pace along reserve footpaths. Suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Key species we will look for: Winter ducks such as teal, pochard, wigeon & tufted ducks. Woodland birds.

Suitable for: Beginners to experts in birdwatching. General interest in wildlife. Families. Pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Cost: £4 or £1 for RSPB members

#### Access for visitors with disabilities:

Our visitor centre, toilets, nature trails and viewing hides are accessible to wheelchair users. We have large print versions of some of our leaflets and always welcome feedback on how we can make our events more inclusive. We aim to make our events programme suitable for all. However, if you have any special requirements and wish to speak to us about them in advance, please feel free to get in touch.

Lochwinnoch

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## Ringing the changes for LEAP

It was always planned to expand LEAP into the other villages we serve and so, slightly earlier than scheduled, in December we will be opening a new office in Bridge of Weir. The new drop in centre is on Main Street, (for those of you who know Bridge of Weir, next to the Shimla Cottage), and we are in the midst of painting, panelling and

carpeting to get ready for opening. If you have friends in Bridge of Weir, please let them know we're coming!

As well as offering our usual free impartial advice, free home energy checks and draught testing, as part of the expansion we will also be taking the Car Club to Bridge of Weir. We have been in negotiation with the Council and have been given a parking space in the main Livery Walk car park, where another Ford Fusion will be sited for use by Bridge of Weir members.

It's business as usual in our other locations; we'll still be pleased to see anyone that would like our help at the Hub in Lochwinnoch at 22 Church Street or at the drop in facility in the Old Library Centre, 9 High Barholm in Kilbarchan or email the team at [info@myleaproject.org](mailto:info@myleaproject.org)



### Car Club - £15 Membership coming to an end

As reported in earlier editions of Chatterbox, the special offer of £15 membership for the Car Club must unfortunately now come to an end. The last day for a £15 membership will be 31 December 2012. If anyone has been thinking about joining the Club but has put it off, now is the time to take advantage of the reduced membership fee.

For further information about the Car Club, please see our website [www.myleaproject.org](http://www.myleaproject.org), call Diane on 01505 842530, or drop into the Hub at 22 Church Street, Lochwinnoch.



### McKillop Hall Acoustics

I'd like to find out who would be on board trying to help fix the acoustics of the McKillop?

Having organised a few musical events in there it has become apparent that the acoustics are not the best and for the money that is charged to hire the hall (another topic all of it's own!) think something should/could be done with no added expense to the hire.

Is anyone on here able to help in any way or know of any funding available within local councils? There is supposedly an entertainment budget/funding available but there has to be a business plan of sorts as far as I'm led

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to believe.

In my opinion, all we would really need to improve the hall ourselves is heavy drapes of some sort along the walls and back wall and possibly on the ceiling.

I'm only dipping my toe in at the moment but if I thought this would work then our wee village hall could turn into a crackin' music venue!

Does anyone have any thoughts on this?

*Laura (Brown Bull)*

### Childcare Places available at LOSC



We have a spaces available at Lochwinnoch's Out of School Club's Breakfast and the After School Club.

The Breakfast Club runs from 07.35am to 09.00am and is £3.35 a session. The After School Club runs from 3.00pm to 6.00pm. Its £7.00 per day to 5.00pm and £10 to 6.00pm. LOSC also runs holiday clubs.

To find out more about LOSC see our website:

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

To book your children into LOSC phone LOSC's Manager Nan Keenan 07757 801 042

Or email Louise the clubs administrator on: [louiselosc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:louiselosc@hotmail.co.uk)

Please pass this message on to anyone you think might be interested. LOSC is a Not for Profit Charity organised by parents for parents, staffed by childcare professionals.



### Teenage Cancer Trust Auction

Well it's that time of year again that John and myself hold the floor and hope that you come along to help raise funds for TCT on Saturday 8th December from 9pm onwards. As always the raffle will run slightly longer to give everyone a chance to buy tickets.

#### Items for auction so far include...

- A cruise in a boat (up to 6 people) for a day in April. Destination weather permitted with lunch provided by The Brown Bull
- 3 Golf clubs that have been donated by Megan Briggs who was Women's Scottish Champion in 2010.
- 2 tickets for March for the Mods (24th March 2013)
- A Dolls House
- Joinery work from Chris Grabham
- 2 Tickets for T in the Park
- The famous sack 'o' tatties
- 2 Tickets for The Royal Albert Hall (March)
- Another cruise for up to 6 people from Largs to Rosyth in a 32ft Cabin Cruiser with a fish supper from Zavaroni's thrown in (may provide a bottle of Irn Bru)
- Tickets to Ayr Race Course...numbers to be confirmed
- A painting from Sandra Fowles....Daylight in Harris
- A photograph from Diana Finn

To name a few .

We accept anything up to last minute so don't be shy! Get in touch :)

*Laura*

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Find us just off the Largs Road on the outskirts of Kilbirnie opposite the Kilbirnie Place Golf Course. Open 7 days 'til late. Telephone Greta on 01505 683338. Post code for Sat Nav KA25 7LQ.



### Cllr Andy Doig

I was pleased to be able to attend the last meeting of the Lochwinnoch Playground Improvement Group. LPIG are a very committed group of local parents who wish to campaign for the upgrading of the playpark area next to the Annex in the village, and at the last meeting there was an excellent presentation from a company which specialises in providing playpark equipment. This provided a very comprehensive draft view of the great potential which exists for creating a new playpark to benefit the children in the village, and overall help to build a better and brighter Lochwinnoch. I would also ask villagers to support the LPIG carol singing fundraiser which is on 15th December, see Chatterbox for further details.

My plans to upgrade Lochwinnoch War Memorial are continuing apace and on 5th November I organised a site visit with council officers and constituents to examine in detail how we could best proceed. As a consequence ideas are being considered by the Council as to how the Memorial can be improved and I look forward to these coming to fruition as soon as possible. On 6th November I attended Lochwinnoch Community Council and one of the issues under discussion was the fact that soon a new Renfrewshire Local Plan would be formulated. One of the issues which the Plan considers is the question of the Greenbelt around villages like

Lochwinnoch, and I feel the Greenbelt is important in preserving Lochwinnoch as a distinctive community.

Christmas will soon be upon us and I would like to publicly thank all those individuals and groups who do so much to keep the fabric of community life alive in Lochwinnoch all the year around with their efforts, these are too numerous to mention but it is the continual efforts of various community and campaign groups which make Lochwinnoch such a vibrant village. I also want to say that serving Johnstone North, Kilbarchan and Lochwinnoch, as your Councillor since my election has been a great privilege and a pleasure, and I want to wish all my constituents and their families a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year in 2013.

I very much want to make myself available to local residents in Lochwinnoch but please note my Lochwinnoch advice surgery on Wednesday 26th December will be cancelled as it falls on Boxing Day. However, I am available any time of the day or night, in an emergency, to constituents who can call me on 07534 148224, or e-mail me at

[cllr.andy.doig@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.andy.doig@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

*Yours Sincerely*

*Cllr Andy Doig (SNP)*

### Elderly Forum Tbar Break

The Tbar will be closed from 18th of December and reopen on Tuesday 6th of January.

### Re-visiting the motor car

When I was a lad motorcars were so rare that school boys would stand at cross roads gathering registration numbers and manufacturer's names, just as others stood on railway stations and collected engine numbers and names.

To give you some idea of how scarce vehicles still were in 1939 let me tell you how my school chum and I had set out on his motorbike early one morning from Wimbledon to be in Salisbury for breakfast. As we were crossing Salisbury plain we lost the main driving chain and did not realise it was not there for over a mile. We walked back, found the chain lying in the road like a dead snake and carried it back to the bike. But we had no means of joining the ends. On that long walk we had not seen another motorcyclist or a car in half an hour. While we pondered, a motorcycle and sidecar stopped, the driver pushed up his goggles and called over to ask what was wrong and could he help? He produced a two ounce tobacco tin and in there, packed in oily cloth were spare linkages for all of his chains and cables. He gave us the correct one and the loan of a tool to fit it. When he left he told us that the first thing we must do when the shops open is to get a kit the same as his and another for spare lighting bulbs and ignition things. We did that for each of our machines until we stopped driving motorcycles. I still remember that Good Samaritan's number: BXA760.

By the time the 1939 war was over most of the pre-war cars were worn out and new ones had not rolled off

the production lines. Lots of people had never tried to drive a car and those who had tried could not buy one, this was very nearly impossible.

In 1945 for newcomers to driving, steering in a straight line needed a good deal of practice. A generation had grown up without a pedal car. New to many was learning things like how to change gear and keep your eyes on the road at the same time. The gear leaver stuck up through what we called a gate: slots machined in a metal plate to form a capital letter H with a little N attached. One had to learn to move the gear stick around this shape without looking. You still do it but the ways have been smoothed. Then for some of the older cars you needed to learn to double de-clutch. What was that?

It was how you changed gear with a crash box that had no synchromesh gears as you have now. You are driving along and need to make a gear change, to a slow count you

- 1) Lift right foot off
- 2) put left foot in
- 3) move gear stick to neutral
- 4) lift left foot up
- 5) put right foot in if you were changing down, pause if you were changing up
- 6) push left foot in
- 7) move gearstick to chosen gear - up or down
- 8) lift left foot up
- 9) ease right foot down to match engine speed to road speed.

All very, very smooth, no noise from the gears, no over racing of the engine or slowing up of the car. Getting around that gate was quite a job at first. The bigger and slower the engine the slower you have to count because the flywheel has to slowdown and it takes longer to speed up, Just as a pianist lifts hands shoulder high so you lift your knees and not just your ankles. Not something for today's F1 cars because of the fast timing, not something for your car unless you really want to enjoy yourself, you will need to think and practice if you want to have a go. There are plenty of opportunities on the back road to Howwood. It is a process that now and again can still be very useful. The time may come when you need

to drop down a gear fast to get out of likely trouble; a handy skill to learn.

In 1946 I returned to the UK having had a motorcycle for over a year. That had to be left behind. I had been involved in a driving school and had the ability to drive any vehicle then around, including steam railway engines. Within days I had spent all of my demob money on a motorcycle like the Salisbury one. Travel time to work was halved. Like lots of other people I had come from a situation where vehicles were lying about in the desert, engines could be found and collected. The Ford V8 was very popular, the idea was to build cars around surplus Ford engines and some interesting designs evolved; so did some ideas for steam cars but the petrol engine was less of a worry and started more or less instantly. In back yard workshops, one-off designs of cars evolved that could go like the wind but carried no passengers and this carries on in kit car form until this day.

Tea break talk was all about cars; how to get one, where to put it, who would teach who to drive and who would go out with the learner for practice. Driving Schools were almost unknown.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s from one car in a road of fifty houses soon there would be four or five and garages appeared on spare plots of land. Houses had not previously been built with garages. If you had a garage pre-war it was usually a wooden shed at the bottom of the garden unless of course you were landed gentry and the car went where the coach and horses used to be.

How different from now when you drive round and round and can't find anywhere to park. Now both cars and engines stop at traffic lights and then smoothly restart

again. Drivers have no idea where the engine is or how it works; they have never seen it and as for checking the oil and putting some in, you can forget that. The whole thing will keep going without you worrying about it until the next service day.

Long, long gone, are the days when before you set off you made sure that you had maps and a torch, the spare tyre was pumped up, your tyre levers were handy, the puncture repair kit was full up, your tool kit was complete, the car jack and its handle were in their proper places. You had spare oil, water and petrol, at least one tyre inner tube, rags to clean your hands and an old coat to lie down on, if need be, and of course some food. The expedition to see parents, a day of driving away, could set off.

Quality cars came with all these extras in designed storage places.

You did not expect to get home without using at least one spare tube. You would have definitely repaired any punctured tube.

You certainly never thought that one day a lady with a nice voice would talk from a box on the dashboard and tell you that in fifty yards you will arrive at your destination.

I am waiting for a box and a lady to shout stop when I am about to do something daft or something daft is about to be done to me. I went out the other day just for practice and found myself in three bad situations in half an hour. The lesson I learnt in those thirty minutes was that I should beware of the car coming out of the sun. If you are looking west in the evening you need to know. Take your time and be safe. Also be a good driver and let the other fellow make the odd mistake by giving him some room.

*Alan Lovegreen*

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## Lochwinnoch Playground Improvement Group

The Lochwinnoch Playground Improvement Group (LPIG) are working enthusiastically towards raising the funds we require to realise our ambition. We hope to provide an interesting and contemporary play and meeting area within the village. Please visit

[www.lochwinnochplayground.org.uk](http://www.lochwinnochplayground.org.uk)

to find out all about us, our progress and complete our online survey.

Last month, we asked the pupils of Lochwinnoch Primary School to design our logo. We were delighted by the response to our competition and posted the entries of the 3 finalists on our website, where villagers had the opportunity to vote for the winning entry.

Congratulations to our winner, Evie Livingstone, who won a £20 voucher to spend in Little Now & Then. The runners up were Gregor McFadzean and Bethany Dickson of P7. LPIG would like to thank Little Now & Then for donating the prize and all the pupils of Lochwinnoch Primary for their fantastic response to our competition.

If you fancy getting into the festive spirit, please come along to the McKillop Hall on Saturday 15 December at 11.00am to sing some Carols with us and enjoy some complimentary winter warmers.

Our next public meeting will be held upstairs in the Brown Bull, Main Street, Lochwinnoch at 7.45pm on Wednesday 5 December 2012 and then on the first Wednesday of every month thereafter. We look forward to welcoming along anyone wishing to support our project.

## My Second Mother

A flurry of snapshots illuminating times, places, people and moments flashed instantaneously through my mind. One time, one place and one person form a distinct image and impression upon me. In the winter of 1974, Pat Brockway, my Mum's best friend, began to profoundly touch and alter my life.

I arrived with my mother, Jean, and brother, Simon, after an eight hour plane ride from Toronto to an ancient and distant place, Scotland. We were greeted at Glasgow airport by Pat. At that moment, this woman and this land were foreign to me. Yet in the years to follow, Scotland would become my home and Pat became my second mother.

Pat had opened her heart and her home to my family. In retrospect, Pat's transition from living alone to having a family brought her interesting challenges and intense happiness. Pat learned to be a mother to me. She shared the frustration and joy that comes from parenting a curious eight year old girl whose imagination ran wild, unless it was tempered by the guidance and love of an adult.

At times, Pat grew unintentionally frustrated by my childish schemes. One dreary morning, I had a spark of genius. Pat's beloved dog, Tangle, had just died. So, I took Pat's cat, Meron, for a walk. I thought I was helping and not hurting Pat or Meron. I dragged that elderly cat on a dog's leash. Poor Meron was infuriated until she could free herself from my tyranny. Meron ran with the devil at her heels as far as she could to get away from me. Shameful burning tears ran down my face, when I told Pat what I had done. Pat was angry, but I was quickly forgiven when the cat arrived home the next day, no worse for wear.

Another gift Pat gave me was my love of animals. After her beagle, Tangle died, there was a void in our home. So Pat drove my brother and I to the local cat and dog home. When we arrived, excited puppies barked as they stormed their cages to be the first ones to look longingly into the eyes of someone who would free them. Instantly amidst this chaos, there two black and white puppies who met my longing gaze. I knew those dogs would be mine. I begged and pleaded with Pat. She gave in and quickly announced that we



would take both puppies home.

As a district nurse, Pat regularly visited the homes of her patients within the boundaries of Lochwinnoch and beyond. My life during school holidays became full with my daily visits with Pat. While we drove along isolated roads to our next destination, my two dogs, Dale and Chip, would run intensely excited behind our car for their daily exercise.

One of my favourite places to go with Pat was to visit the Greenleaves (sic), an elderly couple, who lived just on the outskirts of the village. I was fascinated by the crumbled ruin of what I believed to be a castle in their backyard. Each time we went there, I ate shortbread and was permitted to hold their Victorian doll that usually sat upon a seat in their living room.

Another elderly woman Pat introduced me to was Miss McDonald. She lived at the end of the High street. I often went to visit her after school. She was one of the first people in the village to treat me with kindness and comfort. During my early days in that village, I still missed my friend and my life in Canada. Miss McDonald seemed to comprehend my loneliness. She kindly told me, that in time, I would find my footing and my place upon Scottish soil.

The favourite times, I spent with Pat were in the kitchen or in the garden. When it was time to bake, I was allowed to stir the batter and taste it before it was cooked. My mouth waited in anticipation for the final product. Then, there were the times that we spent in the small garden, where we watered or tended her plants.

But now I know that the greatest gift, Pat gave me was the knowledge and security that my mother loved me even after her death. There were few people that I could talk to after my mother died. I was only 16 when that tragedy happened. Pat was one of the few people that I could share my sorrow with. She had loved my mother as much as I had. Jean was her best friend. Pat had devoted her life to caring for her best friend who was dying. There was no way that I understood that sacrifice as a child.

I visited Pat when I was seventeen only a few months after my mother died. Pat sensed that I was fragile, broken and empty. She held me while I cried endless tears. She rocked me

back forth in a mother's embrace as she tenderly stroked my hair. Her words were calm.

Pat said, "I know how much you miss your Mum. I miss her too. She is here with you, Naomi even though you cannot see her. She will be a part of your life forever."

How can I express what her kind words meant to me? Her impact was profound.

My mother's voice is always inside my head. She speaks to me in my moments of sadness and triumph. Her words are simple but touch my heart in ways that are truly hard to express. All she says is, "Naomi, I love you. You know that whatever happens you have the strength to endure. Your kindness and compassion will see you through the darkness of winter and the joys that warm summer day brings."

To me, Pat was my second mother filling the void and emptiness that my mother left when she died. Pat devoted her life to my mother and gave us the greatest gift: a home and love.

*Naomi Harrison, Vancouver*

*You can read more of Naomi's memories of her childhood in Lochwinnoch on the village website.*



**Jean Harrison**



**Naomi Harrison**



**Pat Brockway**



**Pat's Home**

## LOSC Committee: first meeting of new session

LOSC's AGM saw a number of changes in the committee with long serving members standing down and several new ones joining up. The new line up's first meeting took place at the start of November upstairs at the Brown Bull (thanks Laura).

New members are: George Baillie (LOSC's new Treasurer), Ann Gow, Elaine Livingstone, Helen Lusk and Jane Masterson. They join existing members Vivienne Young-Taylor (Chair), Paul Cameron (Vice Chair), Lorona Watts (Secretary), Susan Baillie and Bronagh Cassidy.

This year Morag Dunlop and Tamsin Groom stood down after 5 years' service and we would like to thank them for their work on behalf of the Committee. Tamsin will continue her role of the club's Child Protection Officer. Items on the agenda included arrangements for the children's Christmas Pantomime and interviews for new bank staff. If any parents feel that they would like to help out on the

committee don't be shy just say to Nan next time you are in. We always need help and there is plenty to do and plenty we would like to do to make the club better.

Parents and carers who use LOSC and want keep up to date with the club's activities can log onto LOSC's website

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

The site's calendar gives details of upcoming events, holiday clubs. You can also get updates by following LOSC on Facebook.

**Please note: There are a few spaces for new children at LOSC's breakfast and after school clubs. If you are interested please contact Nan Keenan 07757 801042**





# Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

## 2012 Photographic Competition Winner Announced!

Douglas Nicholson of Greenock has won £250 in this year's 'Capturing Creativity in Clyde Muirshiel' Photographic Competition with his image 'Waterside Cottage'. Regional Park Manager Charlie Woodward said "the judges felt this was a strong image, enhanced by presenting the picture in black and white. The eye is drawn to the cottage focus of the photo by the lines of the roadside and the horizon. The variety of cloud formations provides extra interest". You can see this and a selection of images in the exhibition, on display at Muirshiel Visitor Centre from 8th December.



**Winner: "Waterside Cottage" by Douglas Nicholson**

## Parkhill Wood Improvement Works

Construction of the Johnshill/Parkhill circular path started in November and will continue on into December. There will be delivery of materials, path work, replacement of fencing and Rhododendron removal, access is restricted. Please be aware and respect signage in place at the entrances to the wood, some may be closed or have limited access on construction days. Information will



**Preview Evening**

**Ewan Donnachie and Rebecca Greig**

be posted at the Visitor Centre and the three entrance points (Blackditch Bay, the East End/ Collegiate Church and at the Johnshill car park).

## New French Intern Arrives in the Park

The Clyde Muirshiel staff is pleased to welcome Aglae, joining us from university in Lille, Northern France. Aglae is studying Environmental Education and wants to become a Ranger. She is getting some very varied work experience at the Park working with Branching Out, school groups, assisting in the café & Park promotion. Aglae is staying locally and will be with us until January.

location got off to a bang with a spectacularly clear night on Friday 26th October. Over 50 people were treated to great views of the moon, constellations and other night sky features over some tasty hot chocolate. Thanks to STV weatherman Sean Batty & weathergirl Sian for predicting the clear skies!

## Warm Winter Tidings this Christmas

Get out and about this Christmas holiday in Clyde Muirshiel, all



## Stargazing Continues at Muirshiel Centre

The Winter Stargazing Evenings at the Regional Park's dark sky



**Making Christmas Decorations**

tracks and trails at our sites will be open daily. Castle Semple Centre will be open daily 10.00 – 16.00 hrs. with Muirshiel & Greenock Cut opening at weekends 11.00 – 15.00 hrs. Castle Semple will close at 14.00 hrs. on 24th December and reopen at 12.00 hrs. on 26th December. On behalf of the Park Authority and all Regional Park staff, we wish you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### Volunteer Opportunities

If you are looking for a great way of meeting like-minded people, getting out and active, or are keen to learn a range of new skills, the Regional Park can help. We have a Thursday programme underway at Castle Semple, look on the Park's volunteer page for more details or contact the Rangers at the Visitor Centre.

## Events

### Sun 2 Dec—Lochwinnoch Festive Farmers Market

Enjoy the lochside location as you purchase fresh produce and drinks from local suppliers. Stalls inside and out.

WHERE: Castle Semple Visitor Centre

WHEN: 11.00 – 14.30 hrs.

MORE INFO: tel 01505 842 882 Ex20 & bookings

### Sun 2 Dec—International Tree Dressing Day

We invite you to help us decorate a tree or two in the Country Park. Pick any tree and make it festive!

WHERE: Muirshiel Visitor Centre

WHEN: 13.00 – 15.00 hrs

MORE INFO: 01505 842 803 & bookings

### Fri 7 Dec—Stargazing Evening

Join staff from the Coats Observatory in Paisley at our dark sky site. Tonight's topic will be 'Legacy of the Appolo Missions'.

Indoor lecture if poor weather.

WHERE: Muirshiel Visitor Centre

WHEN: 19.00 – 21.00 hrs

MORE INFO: 01505 842 803 & bookings

### Sat 8 Dec—Sun 3 Feb Photographic Exhibition on Tour



*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.

A display of prize winners and entries from the 2012 'Capturing Creativity in Clyde Muirshiel' competition.

WHERE: Muirshiel Visitor Centre

WHEN: 11.00 - 15.00 hrs

(weekends only)

MORE INFO: tel 01505 842 803

### Wed 12 Dec—Festive Tinsel Walk

As part of Renfrewshire Walking Network the Rangers will be leading a circular 5.0Km/3.1mls walk around the streets of Lochwinnoch. Wear a bit of tinsel or a festive Christmas hat to get in the mood for the carol singing along the way. Refreshments provided at the centre after the walk.

MEET: Castle Semple Visitor Centre

WHEN: 11.00 hrs.

MORE INFO: tel 01505 842 882 Ex 20 & bookings

### Sat 15 Dec Natural Decorations and Food 4 Nature

Join the Rangers to make your own individual Christmas Decorations from natural materials and help our feathered friends out too with bird feeders for your garden.

WHERE: Greenock Cut Visitor Centre

WHEN: 13.00 - 15.00 hrs

MORE INFO: tel 01475 521 458 booking essential

### Sun 16 Dec—Natural Christmas Decorations

Get into the festive spirit with the Rangers making decorations using natural materials. Please book as numbers are limited.

WHERE: Castle Semple Visitor Centre

WHEN: Three 1 hour sessions at 11.00 hrs, 13.00 hrs & 14.30 hrs

MORE INFO: tel 01505 842 882 Ex 20 & bookings

*Booking essential for all events, contact the centre to book your FREE place*

## Fall Ball Ceilidh

The Fall Ball Ceilidh in November was another great success with 80 people attending the event in Lochwinnoch Golf Club for an evening of foot stomping and whirling.

The music was provided this year by The Clamjamfrie Ceilidh Band, a group of musicians from Lochwinnoch and Kilbarchan. They played a great selection of reels and gave everyone a very enjoyable evening

[www.clamjamfrie.com](http://www.clamjamfrie.com)

Over £300 was raised for the young people heading off on expedition to Nepal next summer, and £100 for Help for Heroes.

Thanks to 'Served to a T' for the excellent bacon butties at half time.

The Golf Club was an excellent venue. Watch out for the next village jig.



## Twass the Night before Christmas

Twass the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,

In hopes that St Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.

And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tinny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!

"Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! On, Cupid! on, on Donner and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.  
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack.

His eyes-how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,





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And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly!

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself!  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk.  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose!

*Clement Clarke Moore (1779 - 1863)*

### Editorial and Copy for Chatterbox

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

Electronic submission with full colour pictures are preferred.

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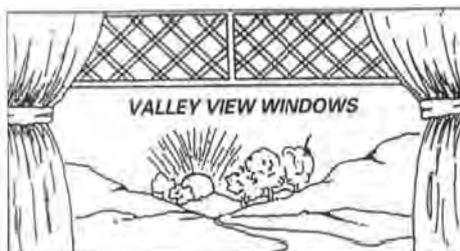
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