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CHATTERBOX

No 217 JANUARY 2012

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ASIST
Anti-Social
Investigation Team

Office 8:45am – 4:45pm
Tel: 0141 840 2163

Community newsletter produced by Lochwinnoch Community Council

What's On & Dates for your Diaries

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

Social Events at the Parish Church

This year the Parish Church will be hosting a variety of social events to which we will be inviting our friends in the village to join us.

The first event will be a Murder Mystery Evening on the 3rd February. While details have still to be finalised, we hope you will come a long, dressed in character for a night of mayhem and fun!

Please see next month's Chatterbox and the Village Website for more details.

Councillor Arthur to Stand Down

Councillor David Arthur, SNP, has announced that he is to stand down at the Council Elections next year.



Cllr Arthur said

"It is with regret that, due to personal reasons, I will not be standing for re-election next May. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the communities of Lochwinnoch, Kilbarchan and Johnstone for all the support they have given me over the last four years, and I am pleased to endorse Ken Macdonald as my successor as SNP candidate."

Ken, a retired accountant, has lived in the area for over twenty-five years. Having been very active in the local community and villages he has been involved in several campaigns in support of local residents. He has worked closely with councillors, past and present, for several years.

Ken Macdonald said

"David Arthur will be missed but I look forward to picking up the baton from him and to the challenge of working together with and on behalf of the local communities to create a better Renfrewshire for us all"

Smell of Gas

There have been a number of reports in the past few weeks of a strong smell of gas or methane in the areas of Lochwinnoch, Beith and Kilbirnie, particularly around the A760 near the Hungry Monk, RSPB centre, Lochwinnoch railway station, and the Kerse Nursery on the road between Lochwinnoch and Kilbirnie.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is aware of the problem but can only take action to deal with it if they have the support of members of the public reporting the smell to 0800 807 060.

There have also been complaints about disturbance from a high frequency of bangs from bird-scarers in the same areas which should also be reported to SEPA on the same number.

Kerry Mackendrick

Country Dance Classes

Lochwinnoch Country Dance Classes will re commence on Tuesday 10th January 2012 in the McKillop Hall at 7.30 and we hope to see everyone back, raring to go.

We would love to see newcomers as well, so come and try us... it 's great fun and good exercise!



TCT Raffle and Auction

The Brown Bull 'January Sales' Christmas Auction and Raffle for Teenage Cancer Trust is being held on Saturday 14th January.

Please don't spend too much money at other January sales so you have plenty (!) to spend at the TCT event.

The charity would be very grateful for donations of goods, skills and services for the auction and prizes for the raffle. Please hand in any items to the Brown Bull or to John Delaney.

A great big thank you to Finn Campbell of Castle Semple Rowing Club who took part in the recent Great Scottish Run, and raised £400 in sponsorship for Teenage Cancer Trust.

John Delaney

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year to all our readers, contributors and advertisers.

The Chatterbox Team

Remember, we're always happy to hear from you

chatterbox@lochwinnoch.info

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Regional Park Round Up for January 2012

Happy New Year to All

The Park Authority and Regional Park Staff would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. Thanks to everyone for your continued support of the Park throughout 2011. Here's to 2012!

Get Out and Get Active!

It's that time of year where some of us make resolutions and join the gym... There's no need at Clyde Muirshiel, our outdoor activity courses, seasonal bike & boat hire as well as exciting programme of ranger events, can help you on your way to becoming healthier and happier. With free entry and parking, it has never been easier to enjoy exercise in the outdoors.

Weekly Walks in Lochwinnoch

The Lochwinnoch Community Walk and the Slinky Strollers start back week beginning Monday 9th January for gentle exercise and good chat.

Tinsel Walk a Roaring Success

A grand total of 51 adults (plus a few tots in buggies) took part in the 7th annual Tinsel Walk at Castle Semple Centre, Lochwinnoch. The walkers came from various feeling fitter groups throughout Renfrewshire and nearby North Ayrshire. They spent an hour touring Lochwinnoch, wearing assorted hats and bits of tinsel, treating the villagers to a variety of festive songs. The party then returned to the centre for mince pies and coffee. You can see a selection of songs being sung by the group on our YouTube page, www.youtube.com/clydemuirshiel.

Calling Local Businesses

The Regional Park is looking to put together an information pack for visitors to the area and would like to give them ample choice and information as to what is available. This would cover all aspects of tourism such as accommodation, catering, things to do and see.

If you would like to be included please email us your information to info@clydemuirshiel.co.uk or drop a few leaflets in to your local centre

A Christmas Appeal

A tiny group of local people, Jim and Ian Brown, Norrie Brown from Beith, Naomi Murphy from Dunlop and I have pooled our know-how and skills to build a simple oil burning cooking and heating stove as part of an endeavour to aid people stricken by the earthquakes like those in Turkey where 55,000 are under canvas and very cold. No electricity is needed.

The first prototype to prove the method is up and running in Jim's smithy where it has proved it can get very hot very quickly. At the moment, a fortnight before Christmas we are building experimental parts and searching for ready-made components for Test unit No 2.

The idea is to build a simple burner that will sit in the top of an earthen oven not unlike the one demonstrated by the TV chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall earlier this year. Ours will have the actual oven made with metal covered with earth or any available heat retaining insulation.

To keep the experiment going we need a supply of fuel. We have collected 12 litres of used cooking oil that has been filtered through a folded sheet of kitchen roll paper held in a plastic funnel permanently close to the frying pan. Spoonfuls add up and oil exchanges of the deep fat fryer add a lot very quickly. Each litre of oil is equal to about two kilogrammes of good coal.

When Jesus was a little chap mineral oil had not been discovered and refined so most probably lamps used lamb and goat fat. Many of the vegetable oils such as olive oil, palm oil, rape seed oil, sunflower oil and others you can all name have all been used for lighting and heating along with whale oil and pork fat.

Waste oil burning has become very common, I filed for a patent in 1954 and that knowledge was made publicly available then. If you go on to YouTube you can see lots of examples, some very good, some awful. But none so far as I can see are designed for mass production, flat pack assembly and offered for our purpose.

We would be helped in our endeavours if oil could be collected in the bottles you bought it in and made available to us. If you would kindly gather 6 bottles or so (alone or between friends) then you'll find me in the phone book and if you call I



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will collect the oil. In any case if you are interested in the progress of our project then call and we'll keep you informed.

Alan Lovegreen

Beith Arts Sunday Concerts

Our November concert was a great success. Coro Alba, a group of professional singers who frequently perform with Scottish Opera, sang well-known arias and choruses to the delight of the large audience. They then performed solos and pieces from musicals. In a popular and fast moving programme they earned every clap of the lengthy applause from every listener.

On January 29th 2012 we have something quite different – a highly accomplished couple of prize-winning instrumentalists playing flute and piano. Yvonne Paterson has earned wide spread praise as a flautist and Scott Mitchell similarly has received accolades for his solo performances and accompanying skills. So it sounds like being another uplifting Sunday afternoon!

All concerts start at 2.30pm and are held in Beith Community Centre, Kings Road, Beith. Pay at the door: entry £8, concessions £6, students and children £1. All are very welcome.



French Visitors March 2010



Marek & Michel show off their hats



Yvonne Paterson & Scott Mitchell,
Beith Arts Sunday Concerts

French Connections & Burns Supper weekend 27th - 31st January 2012

Just as we thought the festivities were easing off, it's nearly time for Scots and their friends around the world to join in celebration of the life and works of our national bard, Robert Burns. To make the occasion even more special in 2012, Lochwinnoch families will be hosting a group of 23 visitors from our unofficial 'twin' French village of Fouquenes, Picardy, in the north of France. Having established

informal but very cordial relations with the people of Fouquenes in December 2007, there have been several exchanges back and forth since then. Some of our intrepid visitors have even been learning to communicate in Scottish English as it is spoken locally: e.g. "How ye doin'?" - "No' Bad!"

Participants in these exchanges have recently been dubbed 'The Locheniesians' by my French counterpart Michel Dubert, to illustrate the blend of cultures from Lochwinnoch and Fouquenes. We have a chance to involve the youngsters, too, since there will be two sisters around 9 and 12 coming along with their parents. Do you have kids of a similar age who know a few words of French, or who would like to learn? Get in touch.

During their weekend visit we will not only be taking in some of the events at Celtic Connections in Glasgow, but also our own local Music Session on Sunday 29th January in the Brown Bull after 8.30 pm.

The highlight of the weekend will of course be the Burns Supper in the McKillop Institute minor hall on Monday the 30th (some places still available; email me for details). With musical and poetic input from some of our twinning group members and possibly also Tony and Jim of Penny Dogs fame, combined with a fine traditional repast of Haggis, neeps and tatties, it's certain to be a memorable occasion for all...in that typically Scottish manner of understatement, it will indeed be "No' Bad!"

So, get ready for the French invasion; dust off your dictionaries, prepare your 'parlez-vous' skills and perfect your Gallic shrug; the **Locheniesians** are coming... If you see a man in a beret in the street, it will probably be...David Mellor!

A guid new year or...Bonne année a tous!

Ronnie McCorrisken
rory905@hotmail.com

The Kelpie's Song

Calder Drama would like to thank everyone who helped in any way to make the Christmas Panto such a resounding success. We would also like to thank the audiences on both nights for their participation and interaction which helped to create such a lovely warm Panto atmosphere. It was obvious from your applause and laughter that this locally orientated story by Franceska Ewart went down well with everyone who saw it.

We would like to wish the People of Lochwinnoch the compliments of the season and we look forward to seeing you at our next Production which should be held during the Lochwinnoch Festival in March.



King Kelpie

Flooding on 29th November 2011



Hayley Douglas



Hayley Douglas

From the Parish Church

*Always a night from old to new!
Night and the healing balm of sleep!
Each morn is New Year's morn come true,
morn of a festival to keep.
All nights are sacred nights to make
confession and resolve and prayer;
all days are sacred days to wake
new gladness in the sunny air.
Only a night from old to new;
only a sleep from night to morn.
The new is but the old come true;
each sunrise sees a new year born.*

Helen Hunt Jackson

This year's Christmas play at the school, angels took us on a journey around the world to see how different countries celebrate Christmas. At the end of the play, one of the angels commented that while each different country had their own traditions, each family also had their unique way of celebrating. Another angel pointed out that in our differences, there was unity in that all people who celebrate Christmas are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, who for Christians is also known as Immanuel – "God With Us". That knowledge that God is with us gives Christians so much strength, especially when facing unknown or uncertain futures.

If it is true that around the world different countries and families are united in different ways of celebrating Christmas, it is especially true for New Year. While some countries and cultures follow a different calendar, the Gregorian Calendar is now accepted at least as the international civil calendar and as such is celebrated around the world. Perhaps it is because New Year is not associated with any particular faith group that it is seen as a truly international festival. Yet each family has its own traditions. When I was growing up, no matter what your plans for the wee small hours after

the bells, new Year had to be brought in at home. At 10 to midnight my father would ensure that everyone had a drink and then we had to stand and hold it, not daring to drink from it until the Big Ben struck the hour of midnight and we had all shared New Year greetings.

As a child I found New Year profoundly moving – I still do. When I was living with my parents, we always either listened to Radio 4 or switched on BBC 1 for the countdown to New Year. I always found the gap between the end of Westminster Chimes and the start of the midnight chimes to be very frightening – what if the New Year didn't come, what would happen if time stood still? As an adult, working for the BBC, I learned that there is always 10 seconds between the two. Yet as we stand on the cusp of a New Year, we do experience mixed emotions do we not? There may well be regrets from the past year, there may well be concerns for the New.

That is why I so like the poem quoted at the top of the page. While New Year is not a specifically Christian festival, it does remind us of the new start we are offered every time we realise that we could have

done something better, made a mistake or have regrets. New Year is a time to put the past behind us and start afresh. However we don't need to wait a whole year before having another opportunity for a fresh start. Each new day, we can try again. That is one of the many comforts of the Christian faith, the promise of forgiveness, the promise that God forgets the past and allows us to begin each year, each day, each moment afresh. That is after all why we make New Year resolutions, we take the opportunity to begin again, to re-order our lives in a better way. Yet we should be careful not to set our sights too high – we are only human after all. Small changes can make a big difference.

As many of you may know by now, this New Year will be our last in Lochwinnoch. The Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley have decided it is time for us to explore pastures new. We will, of course, miss Lochwinnoch – we have made so many good friends here and have had such a wonderful time living and working in the village. Just as we all may have regrets and concerns for the future at the beginning of a New Year, so, as a family, we have regrets and concerns as we face a new start and new future. That said, God guided us to Lochwinnoch and we are confident that God will lead us to a new challenge. As I said at earlier, at Christmas we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God With Us, so we know that where ever we go, God will be with us.

Our prayer for our friends in Lochwinnoch is that you too will know the presence of God this New Year. May God bless you all with peace and health.

Yours,

Christine

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LEAP

Firstly please note that there will be no mini-food -fair in January as stated in Decembers Chatterbox. It will instead be on the 25th Feb, see below for details.

The end of last year was very busy here in Church St, applying to the Climate Challenge Fund for a further three years of funding to continue our work in and around Lochwinnoch, focusing on domestic energy, transport and food. As part of this we would like to thank everyone who has filled in our community consultation survey, it's been a great help, thank you! The findings from the survey and the community consultation are posted up on our website for you to find out more www.lochwinnoch.info/LEAP

This funding will continue our core activity of free home energy checks along with the associated services such as thermal imaging and draught testing which can really help to pin down sources of heat loss and make homes more comfortable. We can help with free impartial advice on a whole range of issues, from insulation to boiler scrappage schemes, support for renewable installations, information on council and government assistance and general hints and tips on draught proofing and cutting energy wastage.

Come and talk to us if you would like to know more about the Governments upcoming Green Deal, designed to cut energy consumption by providing upfront finance for insulation measures, paid for through the energy savings, with a

golden rule that means bills will remain the same or less, and without incurring personal debt.

With the weather turning so much colder and energy prices set to keep on rising, it makes sense to stop your heat leaking back outside. If you are tired of draughts and cold areas call us for a chat- we can send round an energy adviser for a free visit and advice on suitable measures.

November saw two successful Draughtbuster workshops, one in Lochwinnoch and one in Kilbarchan, where local people learned 'hands on' draught-proofing and filling techniques and went off with material to start their own doors and windows. These were relaxed and informative events, all free of charge to participants. These will be running again in January in both villages so please get in touch if you would like to take part.

Our Car Club preparation is approaching its final stages as we negotiate with the council for suitable locations for the vehicles, and tie up the logistics of booking etc. All being well we still plan to launch late March/early April this year. This is a club where members have 24/7 hire access to two efficient vehicles parked centrally, bookable online up to 6 months in advance, or even a couple of hours notice. Similar clubs around the country are saving people anything up to £2000 per year! Get in touch if you are interested in any way.

The third leg of our work is promoting local food interests. There will be no mini market in

December or January, but come February we will get the year off to a bang and our regular mini food fairs under way again with a Pancake Festival on Feb 25th, in our usual place outside the McKillop, from 11-3. We could use all the help we can get, so if you would like to run a stall selling food stuffs (the more local the better), or just help to organise, toss pancakes or play music, then give us a call.

This will be followed by the March event on Sat 29th, tying in with the Lochwinnoch Arts Festival, and a larger Spring Food Festival in May. Again, if you have any bright ideas on making this work better for you and the village we would be delighted to hear from you.

Drop by our office (or give us a call) for friendly help and up to date information. While you are there why not borrow an energy monitor free for a month and keep an eye on exactly how your electricity is being used.



From Muirshiel to Eternity



I am delighted to see that the star-gazing nights at Muirshiel Country Park are still going strong after 32 years.

Along with senior ranger Eric Harley and colleague Iain Brotherton, I was on the team which inaugurated these astronomical odysseys when I worked as a countryside ranger at Muirshiel. The very first meeting took place on June 21, 1989, when the visitor centre comprised just a wooden building linked to a mobile caravan at the foot of the slope

accessing the present-day car park.

Our first speaker was Robert Law of Renfrew District Astronomy Society and he fulfilled a pivotal role in the success of the star-watching sojourns. Robert lived in Foxbar, Paisley, and Iain and I collected him and his giant telescope in the park Landrover before meetings.

Because it was midsummer and clear till after 11pm that introductory night, our first real outdoor session took place a few weeks later on August 12 when the days were shorter. That was the night of the Perseid meteors and within the space of an hour we saw dozens of these small fragments popularly known as shooting stars illuminate the nocturnal neighbourhood.

Meteors are tiny fragments of frozen gas and dust which flare up brightly for just a few seconds when they come into the Earth's orbit. They literally live and die in a blaze of glory.

Watching this dazzling display of celestial fireworks from the Fank Road at the entrance to the park confirmed the belief that our star-gazing voyages would be among the highlights in the Muirshiel calendar of events for years to come.

A few nights later, on August 16, we staged another event to include a lunar eclipse. This occurs when the moon enters the dark shadow of the Earth then assumes an amazing coppery-red colour. This scintillating spectacle can last for several hours so I and a few other sky-watchers stayed up all night watching it.

Subsequent events delivered a wide range of heavenly delights too

numerous to mention. Among many attractions on view were the luminous rings of the giant gas planet Saturn; the glorious Galilean moons of its larger brother, Jupiter; Venus, the brightest object in the night sky apart from the moon; and Mars, the red planet with its rust-coloured surface.

Watching the giant Halle-Bopp comet, with its massive streaming tail of glowing gas and dust, provided memorable moments. So did the cosmic drama enacted night after night in the celestial canopy by the giant constellations which are all named after heroes and heroines of classical mythology and which mirror their valorous deeds.

We saw Orion, the mighty hunter, battling the Serpent; Perseus rescuing Andromeda from the clutches of the sea-monster, Cetus, while her parents, Cassiopeia and Cepheus looked on aghast; and the winged horse, Pegasus, soaring into the night sky.

We saw new stars being born in a hazy, dusty cloud known as the Orion Nebula while at the other end of the spectrum we watched the aged star, Arcturus, fourth brightest of all the stars, drifting towards the end of its life.

Its destiny is to swell grotesquely as a red giant then discard its outer layers of gas into space before diminishing to a small star of immense density known as a white dwarf. Then it will cool down and vanish into the darkness of obscurity and eternity.

It was fascinating to realise that these same stellar sights which we witnessed in the night sky were likewise witnessed thousands of

years earlier by Bronze and Iron Age communities who lived at places like Smeath Hill, Dunconnel Hill, Knockmade Hill and other prehistoric sites on the moors around Muirshiel.

Even more incredible was the fact we were contemplating our own history in the grandiose galaxy of the cosmos. Our universe was formed some 20 million years ago by a huge cosmic explosion caused by the heating, cooling and expansion of vast dust and gas clouds.

The atoms, molecules and chemical components of our bodies and the planet on which we dwell originate from the debris of these cataclysmic explosions. We are the sons and daughters of the universe. We came from the dark distant depths of time and space.

In the far-off future, some 4600 million years from now, these tiny particles of our mortal remains will drift back into that vast sea of space when our own small section of the universe, like Arcturus and all the other stars and planets, vanishes into the blackness from which it emerged.

On these Muirshiel star-gazing nights, we contemplated the beauty, majesty and splendour of the heavens and their luminaries from which we emerged - and the bright bourne to where we shall return.

Like the little wizened urchin of the film, E(xtra) T(errestrial), we looked towards the skies and echoed his poignant farewell to his friends - "I am going home."

Derek Parker—Derek worked as a countryside ranger at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park from 1985-99.

THREE CHURCHES INN

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Lunch Menu—12pm—5pm

Evening Menu—5pm—8pm

What's on for December

Karen, Martin and the staff would like to wish our customers all the best for 2012





Lochwinnoch Community Library

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Mon, Tues, Fri, Sat

10am- 1pm & 2pm-5pm

Wednesday

2pm-5pm and 6pm-8pm

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which? **Lochwinnoch 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.

READ DISCOVER LEARN Renfrewshire Libraries have teamed up with the BBC to provide [First Click](#), a beginners computing course aimed at people aged 55 and over.

Groups are small and friendly and you will meet other beginners just like yourself. By the time you have

completed the course you will be able to:

- understand desktop and icons
- use a mouse
- use a keyboard
- know about the internet
- keep safe online
- send and receive email
- understand computer jargon

The next course at Lochwinnoch

Library is due to start soon.

Other, more advanced online courses are available to library members and can be accessed at home or in the library :

- ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence)
- Driving theory test with Theory Test Pro
- Internet Safety Course
- Life in the UK test or British Citizenship test

Why not pop into Lochwinnoch Library and find out more.



Lochwinnoch Library Bookbug Rhymetime
Starts again 10th January
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. There are five different limited edition certificates to collect. So start collecting now – it's never too early or too late to join your local library... and it's FREE!

New book titles for January

Tom Clancy: Locked on— Although his father had been reluctant to become a field operative, Jack Ryan Jr. wants nothing more. Privately training with a seasoned Special Forces drill instructor, he's honing his skills to transition his work within The Campus from intelligence analysis to hunting down and eliminating terrorists wherever he can - even as Jack Ryan Sr. campaigns for re-election as President of the United States. But what neither father nor son knows is that the political and the personal have just become equally dangerous. A devout enemy of Jack Sr. launches a privately funded vendetta to discredit him by connecting the presidential candidate to a mysterious killing, in the past, by John Clark, his long-time ally. A shadowy mercenary team is dispatched to capture the former Navy SEAL.

Rita Bradshaw: Break of dawn—A brave woman finds the courage to stand up for what she believes in.

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England, a young woman struggles to make a respectable name for herself as an actress on the stage. Things aren't easy for women - particularly for those who want a career, freedom, independence and a chance for their voices to be heard. It takes a brave heroine to fight against the tyranny of men and to triumph in the end.

Kitty Neale—Will she ever find a home where she can belong? Jennifer Lavender was a lonely child. She always felt like second best and desperately craved her parents love. When Jenny learns she was adopted everything falls into place. But her dream of finding her real family can never be fulfilled - her mother died alone giving birth. Now a grown woman, she attempts to fill her void by marrying Marcos. For a while she feels loved, but when the police show up at their door Jenny realises that her marriage is not what it seemed. Destitute, she is forced to move away and start again.

Debbie Macomber: 16 Lighthouse Road—Fans of heart-warming small-town stories will be delighted by close-knit little Cedar Cove, Washington, just a ferry ride from Seattle -- but a world away from big-city life. Don't get the idea that this is a sleepy little town. The local paper may only come out twice a week, but there's plenty happening every day.

The citizens of Cedar Cove are full of life, longings, and surprising secrets. The resident of 16 Lighthouse Road is Olivia Lockhart, the judge presiding over

the local family court.

She has just handed down a controversial decision to prevent naval officer Ian Randall and his wife, Cecilia, from pursuing their divorce.

She plans to give the young couple time to work on their marriage in the wake of their infant daughter's death -- whether they want it or not. Between Olivia and her outgoing mum, Charlotte, there's not much that happens in Cedar Cove that goes unnoticed.

As you meet their family, friends, and neighbours, you'll see new loves blossom, marriages on the rocks, relationships on the mend, secrets revealed and old wounds healed.

Contact the Elderly

Contact the Elderly is looking for more volunteer hosts and older people to join their three Renfrewshire Groups. We have groups covering Erskine, Paisley and Lochwinnoch.



Contact the Elderly aims to relieve the acute loneliness and isolation of people over the age of 75 who live alone, need a bit of help getting out and about, and do not have the support of family nearby, by organising monthly Sunday tea parties for small groups within their local community. 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.

Our friendship groups provides a great opportunity for both older people and volunteers to make new friends within the community, to get out of the house, and to generally have a good time! Perfect for those looking for ways to brighten up a weekend.

Anyone over the age of 75 who lives alone, needs a bit of help getting out and about, and doesn't have the support of family nearby, who are interested in joining one of our groups, please contact the Development Officer – details below.

We need volunteers hosts who are willing to welcome a small group of local elderly people into their home for a tea party, just **one or two afternoons a year**. Hosts must have easy access into their homes and a downstairs toilet. Contact details below:

Margaret Oliver

West of Scotland Development Officer (01389) 605915
or email
margaret.oliver@contact-the-elderly.org.uk



Community Consultation Survey Results Now Available

Visit our new Facebook page, or go to www.lochwinnoch.info/leap and click on the link. Alternatively pop in and see us.

Places available on our free Draughtbuster workshops in January and February—get in touch!

Contact: leap@lochwinnoch.info, phone 842 530, pop into The Hub, 22 Church Street

What's On

Regular clubs, classes and groups

- **First Friday of Month**—Semple Tones host an open mike session at Lochwinnoch Golf Club. Come along, don't be shy
- **Healing and Creativity Workshops & Classes.** For details or to book a place, please Tel Becky: 0141 8816700 or Libby on: 015105 842604.
- **Lochwinnoch¹ Community Walks** - Mondays (ex. Public Holidays), meet at 10.30 am at The McKillop Institute.
- **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 McKillop. Phone Coby on: 0772 9051615.

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Tue-Thur 10am-2pm
Sat By Appointment

- **Lochwinnoch Writers Group**—Monday from 2-4:15pm in the Library. Contact 873581
- **Knit @ The 19th at the Golf Club**— Monday 10am-12 noon (or longer), all levels and learners welcome.
- **Advice Works**—At the Library by appointment only. Contact 382328
- **Mother & Baby Yoga**—Classes start back on the 1st November Every Tuesday 10 to 11am at the McKillop £18 for 5 wks advance booking or pay £4.50 pw (Suitable for babies 6wks to 8 months)
- **Morag's Keep Fit**—Mondays and Thursdays from 7pm, in the McKillop Institute.
- **Lochwinnoch Choral Society.** Rehearsals on Monday evenings, Parish Church/ Hall. Juniors 7:15-8pm, and Seniors 8pm-9.15pm.
- **Lochwinnoch Art Group**—Meet fortnightly on Monday evenings, 7.30pm, McKillop Institute.
- **Keep Fit - Improving With Age classes**, every Tues from 10 -11am at the McKillop Institute.
- **Drop-in T Bar** - Lochwinnoch Elderly Forum. Every Tuesday from 10am-1pm, McKillop Inst. Reopens 10th January. For details tel Rita 842054
- **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 and Thursdays from 7pm-8pm at Lochwinnoch Primary School. For details Tel: 01259 210716.
- **Scottish Country Dance Club**—Every Tuesday, from 7.30 -9.30pm, McKillop Inst.
- **Jogging Buddies**—Tuesday evenings. Meet at Lochbarr Football Club 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, Parish Church Hall.
 - **Yoga Classes**—Wednesday evenings, McKillop Inst. only 1 class 7-8:30pm. call 842877 to book.
 - **Happy Harminis**—Fun for pre-school children on Thursdays 10am-11am, McKillop Inst. Tel: Frankie : 01505 612248.
 - **Slinky Strollers**—Thursday mornings
 - **ROAR Lunch Club**—every Thursday from 11.45am PROMPT at the McKillop Institute. **Please Note - ONLY ONE SITTING.**
 - **TaeKwon-Do Little Tiger Cubs.** Classes for 3-5 year olds, on Thursdays from 4.15pm-5pm at McKillop Inst. Tel: 01259 210716
 - **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 months to 5 yrs). Fridays, from 10.15am - 1.45pm at the McKillop. Further details from Coby on Tel: 0772 9051615.
 - **Liathach Dog Training** (pre-booking necessary). Anne Moss, Tel: 01505 842367, e-mail: dogtraining@f2s.com
 - Monday Kilbarchan' 10am Int/Adv class 11am —Juvenile class
 - Tuesday Kilbarchan 5.30 & 6.30pm - Puppy Course
 - Wednesday Kilbarchan 6.30pm - Puppy Course 7.30pm - Juvenile class 8.30pm—Int / Adv class
 - Thursday Beith 8.00pm - Dog Club (Int/Adv)
 - **Calder UF Church** - Food for Thought. Last Monday of the month 7.30pm in church hall
- Some activities may cease during holidays, please check**

Upcoming Events

- **Sat 7 Jan—RSPB Young Volunteers Group**, 11am-4pm, at the reserve, booking essential
- **Sun 8 Jan—Parent and Toddler Church (PATCh)** for under-fives, parents brothers and sisters. Parish Church Hall, 3 pm, lasts 35 mins approx.
- **Mon 9 Jan—Lochwinnoch Community Walk** meet at McKillop Hall, 10.30 (except holidays). Come along for wee bit of exercise and a good chat. For info tel 01505 842 882 Ex22.
- **Thurs 12 Jan—Slinky Strollers** The first parent and pushchair walk of 2012. Get to know your local area and other new parents. Meet at Castle Semple Visitor Centre, 10.30am, allow 1 to 1.5 hours. For more info tel: 01505 842 882 Ex 22.
- **Fri 13 Jan—Star Gazing Evening**, Muirshiel Visitor Centre, 7-9pm. An evening with our friends from the Coats Observatory in Paisley at one of the few dark sky sites in Renfrewshire. Indoor lecture if the weather is unsuitable for viewing. Info and booking: tel 01505 842 803
- **Fri 13 Jan—Open mic** will be held on the 2nd Friday of this month An evening of music and song, fun for all the family! Set menu available with a complementary glass of wine! £10.95, Lochwinnoch Golf Club, tel 01505 842 153
- **Sat 14 Jan—TCT Raffle and Auction at the Brown Bull.**
- **Fri 20 Jan - Tue 7 Feb—Art in the Park Annual Exhibition** of traditional and contemporary works by Lochwinnoch Art Group. Some works are available to purchase. Castle Semple Visitor Centre, 10am – 3pm
- **Fri 20 Jan—Burns Supper** at Lochwinnoch Golf Club: Burns' songs from Pauline Vallance, Ceilidh Band and Dinner, £20, booking essential (01505 842 153). Family tickets available.
- **Sat 21 - Sun 22 Jan RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch - Birds for Beginners, 1-4pm**
- **Sat 28 Jan—Zumbathon in aid of St Vincent's Hospice** in

Johnstone Town Hall 10am-1pm. £12 registration fee and optional sponsorship. For info contact Lorraine on 01505 705635 email: lorraine.valentine@svh.co.uk

- **Sat 28 & Sun 29 Jan RSPB Binocular and telescope demonstration**, 10am - 4pm
- **Sun 29 Jan—Country Craft Demonstration** with the option to try yourself. Muirshiel Visitor Centre, 2-3pm Info and bookings tel 01505 842 803.
- **Sun 29 Jan—Frosted Sculpture Walk - Part 1** Castle Semple Visitor Centre, 1.20-3.30pm Come and collect natural materials on a short walk and then arrange them to make an ice sculpture. Info and bookings tel: 01505 842 882 Ex 20
- **Sun 29 Jan—Beith Arts Concert**, Yvonne Paterson, flautist and Scott Mitchell, pianist. Beith Community Centre, Kings Road, Beith. 2.30pm. Pay at the door: entry £8, concessions £6, students and children £1.
- **Sun 29 Jan—Music Session** in the Brown Bull with our French visitors, 8.30pm.
- **Mon 30 Jan—Burn's Supper**, with French visitors, music and poetry, McKillop Hall. Contact Ronnie McCorrisken: rory905@hotmail.com

- **Fri 3 Feb—Murder Mystery Evening—** Parish Church social evening of murder and mayhem. More info later.
- **Sun 5 Feb—Frosted Sculpture Walk - Part 2** Castle Semple Visitor Centre, 1.30-3.30pm Hang up some of the sculptures you made last weekend around the country park and take some home as well. More info and bookings tel: 01505 842 882 Ex 20.
- **Sat 25 Feb—Pancake Festival**, outside McKillop Hall, 11-3pm

Knight Saves Damsel



Irene Conway is a victim of the recent bad weather. She fell while crossing the icy road and has a broken shoulder to show for it. It could, however, have been much worse were it not for the quick intervention of Ronnie Brown.

Ronnie ran to get Irene's husband and together with neighbours Tommy and Liz Gray, stopped the traffic until Irene could be moved from the road.

Irene wants to thank Ronnie and everyone else who helped.

January Chatsearch Answers on page 19

V	T	E	T	S	G	B	V	I	S	I	T	O	R	S	N
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Elderly Forum

The Forum office bearers and members wish to thank all who contributed to make our St Andrew's Day lunch at the Golf Club a very enjoyable afternoon out.

- The Golf Club for the use of the club house for the afternoon.
- Liz Callaghan and staff of Done TO A T for the excellent meal, great presentation and friendly service.
- Willie McKenna (KARPAUL) for providing great music for the dancing.
- Finally to all those listed below who contributed prizes for the raffle.
 - Lochwinnoch Motors
 - Councillor Davie Arthur
 - The 3 Churches Inn
 - The Brown Bull
 - The Corner Bar
 - Key Store
 - Heritage Butcher
 - La Dolce Vita
 - Cut and Care
 - Now and Then
 - Penmans
 - J. Wilson - baker
 - The Junction

plus Forum members and others who handed in prizes.

A special thank you to Brian Plommer of the Post Office for a very generous cash donation.

The next Forum meeting is on

Thursday 26th January at 1.30pm. Mary McCulloch head of the podiatry service will be our guest speaker.

The Tbar resumes on Tuesday 10th at 10am and the Lunch Club on Thursday 12th January at 11.45am.

Gordon Nicholl

LADYMOOR WIND FACTORY
ACTION GROUP



Save Your Regional Park Update

Windfarm & Industrial development in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Approved/Constructed
Ardrossan - 15 turbines, 2 of which in the Regional Park
Wardlaw Wood, Dalry - 6 x125m (410ft) turbines
Kelburn, Fairlie - 14x 100m turbines, several visible from the A760
Millour Hill, Dalry - 6 x125m turbines

Refused or Withdrawn
Corlic Hill 1, Greenock – 22 turbines refused in 2007 but suspicions that area is being surveyed for a new application.

Leapmoor, Inverkip and

Wemyss Bay – application for 10 turbines withdrawn.

Glenlora Anaerobic Digester, Lochwinnoch – refused.

Kaim Hill, Fairlie - 5x125m turbines refused.

Wings Law, Kilbirnie – 24x125m turbines refused and appeal withdrawn.

Glenlora Turbine, Lochwinnoch – 1x85m (280ft) turbine, refused.

Waterhead Moor, Largs – application for 29x122 m (403ft) turbines, withdrawn.

Under Discussion or Lodged Skelmorlie Windfarm - proposal for 21 or 16x3.5 MW turbines, under discussion.

Corlic Hill 2, Greenock – Thought to be preparing to lodge application for 15 turbines.

Blackshaw Farm, Kilwinning – interest in 15x130m turbines adjacent to the Ardrossan windfarm.

Kelly Mains, Wemyss Bay – 1x55.6m (184ft) turbine in the Regional Park

National Offshore Wind Turbine Test Facility, Hunterston, Fairlie –

application for 3x 198.5m (651ft) turbines, these are experimental and supposed to be for 5 years only. Although they are outside the Regional Park they would have a devastating effect on the view from CMRP.

Multi-Fuel Power Station and associated infrastructure, Hunterston, Fairlie – A mainly coal fired power station with (unproven) carbon capture (starting at 25% and hopefully increasing)

Getting married? SHOOT YOURSELF!

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 07711 917560
 07545 348502



resulting in serious emissions from the 200m (656ft) chimney over the entire CMRP and local population. For campaign info see <http://conchcampaign.org/index.html>

Kenneth Gibson MSP's Proposed Private Bill 'Protecting Scotland's Regional Parks Bill' SYRP's Petition to the Scottish Parliament in 2009 received cross-party support and Kenneth Gibson MSP for Cunninghame North agreed to promote this Bill.

In June 2010 he had sufficient MSP backing to proceed to a first stage debate hope to take place the following autumn or winter. The election got in the way but Mr Gibson reported in February 2011 that a deadline for getting a Bill through Parliament had been missed but he hoped to re-present post May, all he needed was 18 MSP signatures.

At a meeting between Mr Gibson and SYRP in September 2011 Mr Gibson explained that Scottish Civil Servants had decided that the Bill would fall foul of the reservation of the generation of electricity of the Scotland Act and therefore was outwith the legislative competence of the Scottish Government! That is to say that electricity generation legislation is reserved to Westminster. SYRP is researching to see whether there is any way around this.

Save Your Regional Park
www.saveyourregionpark.com



St Vincent's Hospice

Christmas Fayre, Saturday 12th November 2011

Everyone here at the Hospice would like to convey their deep felt thanks to all our supporters who turned up on Saturday 12th at our Christmas Fayre. This year turned out to be our best year yet raising a fantastic £3,650 for the hospice.

Thanks to the generosity of our



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supporters from donations, volunteering on the day or coming along on the day and grabbing a few early Christmas bargains it all helped in raising such an amazing sum for the hospice.

Forthcoming Events

Zumbathon Charity Event, Saturday 28th January 2011

We're doing it for 3 hours!!!! Back by popular demand its Zumbathon time in aid of St Vincent's Hospice.

Join the party on Saturday 28th January in Johnstone Town Hall 10am - 1pm. £12 registration fee and optional sponsorship.

For more information contact Lorraine in the Fundraising team on 01505 705635

Love Is All Around

Due to popular demand the **Lochwinnoch Mystery Play** is back! "Love Is All Around" will take place in the village during the afternoon of Sunday 25th March. There are many parts to be filled – most of them small parts and lots of behind the scenes help is required. If you can help in any way, please contact Christine Murdoch on 843484 or by email: rev.christine@btinternet.com. If you would like to take part in anyway, come along to our first rehearsal in the Church on Tuesday 7th February at 8.15pm.

Below is a list of all the

characters – those in italics have speaking parts:

The Radio Reporters:

Adam Hope - Radio reporter
Eve Faith - Radio reporter

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.

Christine

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Contact Greta Logan on Tel: 01505 683338

Email: greta@thestirrupcup.com www.thestirrupcup.co.uk

West Bankside Farm, Geirston Rd, Kilbirnie, KA25 7LQ

Just opposite the Golf Course on the Largs Rd

Pawsitive Action Volunteers Needed

Hello Everyone,
I would like to take this opportunity to
introduce Pawsitive Action.

K9 CHAT is our business: Dog
Grooming; Dog Training.

In April 2010 we founded:

Pawsitive Action Volunteer Group,

Our aim is:

Encouraging & Supporting Responsible
Dog Owners.

Our next meeting is:

Thursday 19th January, 7pm

We are members of Scottish Canine
Consultative Council, Dunbartonshire/
Glasgow Council and through them we
received our Dog Training
Certificates. We got introduced to our
Country Rangers and soon we were on
a journey to help them bring
educational awareness to the
public. Next we were networking with
Renfrewshire Council, Parks and
Recreation Dept and began to help in
our surrounding areas.

To date, for next year, we have 8
commitments Parks/Gala Days and we

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

Electronic submission with full
colour pictures are preferred.

To advertise in Chatterbox

Tel: 01505 842632

chatterbox@lochwinnoch.info

**COPY DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY IS
TUESDAY 17TH JANUARY**

are looking for volunteers to help
with the events.

On request we assist our Rangers and
Park Wardens, we bring our marquee
to each site and bring updated
educational information regarding
dog ownership directly to the public
and we address:
Outdoor Access Code; Lambing/
breeding season; Ground Nesting
Birds; Dog Fouling issues; Laws;
Training advice; Getting your dog
under control when out and about;
Health & Exercise; Grooming; and
Litter.

Many dogs have died due to glass,
rusty cans and the like and many
others have had injuries from litter
but remember this, we can get our
dogs to a vet but our wildlife is not as
fortunate, they suffer in pain and
die. Please Don't Litter.
We highlight any and all dog related
issues and offer help and advice. Part
of what we do is bring our dogs with
us and go for a group walk and as we
meet other dog owners we give them
a free doggie bag which contains
information, dog poo bags and
treats. What makes us different: we
have no authority and we are dog
owners who have a chat with other
dog owners and during the
conversation we bring awareness of
Pawsitive Action's aims and
encourage them to attend the
marquee if they have any
questions. (We also sell some toys to
help with our fund-raising)

We have been sitting on a committee
for the last year helping with the
following groups: RC Parks & Rec;
Rangers; Local Access Officer;
Farmers; Estate Managers; and so far
we have agreed to assist 4 times per
year for the next two years and
bring our marquee to problematic
areas and help promote our Parks
Welcome Responsible Dog Owners/
Walkers. In addition we attend
Muirshiel Visitor Centre, Castle
Semple and Greenock Cut Visitor

Centres.

Last October we attended a meeting
with the senior Ranger at Finlaystone
Country Park and they have asked us to
organise a Pawsitive Action Day on
April 1st. This will entail, contacting
other dog groups, vets, rescue centres,
and the like to create family/dog day
out. As well as advertising...contacting
the local news media, printing out
flyers and distributing them out to
where people will see, creating
activities where the family and their pet
dog can participate.

One of the many problems that have
been brought to our attention is the
amount of Dog Walking Services that
are now springing up
everywhere. With all types of groups
you have those who create problems for
others and Dog Walking Services are
not immune to this.
We have now been approached by
Louise McAlister, All About Dogs,
Renfrew, to network with them and
help promote responsible dog walking
services and addressing issues of
concern. The main issue is controlling
all dogs in their care which includes:
releasing them from their vehicles,
picking up after them and stopping the
dogs worrying livestock and
recalls. We are also highlighting other
issues of concern for
example: insurance, experience, first
aid and CPR, individually harness/
caged etc.

Please contact us if you can help and
offer some of your time it would be very
much appreciated.

Our next meeting is: **Thursday
19th January, 7pm**

We will be starting a new beginner's
dog training class on Sunday 8th
January, 2012 so please contact us to
reserve a place as there are only a few
remaining.

Wishing you and your family pet(s) a
Happy New Year.

Jacquie and Tony
www.k9chat.co.uk

Faeries

Willow looked up to the grey sky, fixing her hat. She loved coming here, the peace and quiet of a thousand lifetimes ended. Sometimes she would go to her father's grave and kneel; talk to him, clear away the weeds. Other times she would just sit on the bench and think, contemplating death. What *happened*? Did you go to heaven or hell? Did you come back as someone else, with no memory of the person you were before? Or did you simply cease to exist? The thought scared her.

Winter was the best time to come here; winter mornings, her favourite. She loved the crisp frost breaking under her boots, her breath coming out in huge clouds.

It was winter the day he died.

She had been pestering him to go skating, arguing, "It's a waste to leave the lake alone, it likes being skated on; that's why it freezes!" and eventually he agreed. "Thank you, daddy!" She had cried and bounded off to get her skates.

Willow held her head to keep the memory from flooding back. She decided it was being here, near him, so she got up, dusted off her skirt, and left, silent as the graves around her.

But still she found no peace. The engraving on his grave was stuck in her head:

"Do not stand at my grave and weep."

It was his favourite poem; hers, too. They had a lot in common, far more than Willow's mother and she. He was an English teacher, in love with the language. Willow had inherited that love, while her mother wanted her to concentrate on maths and science and get a "proper job", or at least a proper marriage. She had never approved of Willow's father's work, or, for that matter, his beliefs. He believed in faeries. Willow saw her mother now, waiting for her on the porch.

"Where have you been? You look a state. You've been at that damned place again, haven't you? Do you enjoy being sad? Why can't you be more like your sister? Cecilia's a good girl."

Yet another thing Willow and her mother did not see eye to eye on. Her mother hated the graveyard, as did Cecilia, which was probably one of the reasons Willow liked it so much. Her mother was always comparing Willow to Cecilia. Cecilia was the "perfect child", though Willow failed to see where "lack of free will" ended and "perfect child" begun, and thought her mother often wished she had only one child.

"If by 'damned place' you mean your husband's grave, then yes. As for the enjoyment, not really, but it *was* only a year ago that he died, and I felt it was entirely fair for me to be in mourning, as should you be."

"I'll have less cheek from you, girl. And change into something nice. Something with a bit of *colour*. We're going out."

Willow looked down at her black skirt, boots and blouse and saw nothing particularly unpleasant about them. But as her sister came out of the house and saw her, she

realised it wasn't exactly appropriate for wherever they were going. Her mother had on a shawl, so Willow hadn't noticed her dress, but Cecilia was never one for holding back and had on a gold ball gown.

"God, what happened to you? Your hair's a mess and your skirt is *covered* in dirt. Mother, can we please leave her at home?" Her delightful sister begged.

"No, Cecilia. The invitation was for the whole family, and, as unfortunate as it may be, Willow is part of the family." She looked back at Willow, "what are you doing? Get changed!"

Willow hurried past them to her room, where she realised she didn't have anything to change *into*. Sophie, the maid, came in with an old red dress of Cecilia's, which was more appropriate attire for whatever party they were attending.

"Here you go, Miss Willow. I didn't think you had anything like what your mother and sister were wearing, so I looked this out," she held up the dress, "it should fit."

Willow thanked her and was helped into the dress. It was a little on the large side, as she had always been thinner than her sister.

"There we go; that almost fits. Now for your hair..." She grabbed a brush from the dressing table and began brushing in brisk, short strokes.

A headache and a half later, Willow was deemed presentable to be seen in polite company, and they left for a ball at a house belonging to Mr Wickerburn, who had just moved in, apparently. The ball was to meet all the pretty young ladies of the town, as Mr Wickerburn was rich and single. No wonder Cecilia was making such a fuss.

The ball went exactly as Willow had thought. She got up and danced a couple of times, but mostly stood at the edges holding Cecilia's drinks. Mr Wickerburn briefly flirted with Cecilia but soon got bored, as all she could talk about was material and money. They returned home late, with Cecilia and her mother in a foul mood because Mr Wickerburn was not interested. Willow hoped they would be in a better mood the next day, but they had not improved at all. She mostly avoided

them and their insults. She went to her father's grave. Unfortunately, she could not avoid them forever; obviously she had to come home at night, lest the faeries get her. Though this was just another point of ridicule in her family, as her mother and Cecilia thought anyone who believed in faeries was a fool. But Willow swore she saw one once. At the woods by the graveyard, watching her.

Willow kept up a routine. She went to the graveyard every day, and came back to the house for a late dinner in the evening. She knew she shouldn't spend so much time at the graveyard, and sometimes thought it had more to do with the faerie than to do with sitting at her father's grave. In the evenings her mother would consistently tell her to wear more colour, she would argue that she was still in mourning, and her mother would say it was about time she out of mourning, and not to keep going to "that horrid place", it was "improper for a lady". Willow argued it was improper not to mourn, and her mother would order her to bed. Cecilia would throw insults every now and then, but they were feeble, as Willow refused to acknowledge them. The nights were getting shorter and shorter, colder and colder. One evening as Willow sat by her father's grave, she fell asleep. If she had been watching, she would have seen the faerie take her, and she was never seen again. In her subconscious mind, barely operational, she relived the moment of her father's death.

His blades had been loose, and they had been laughing at his wobbling feet. They skated at the edges, where it was quieter. Suddenly, his hand was no longer in hers. He had disappeared under the ice. Willow didn't know what to do. She saw his mouth open and close, though no words came out. They couldn't. Just as she couldn't help him. She screamed. She screamed and screamed, until people came rushing over to see what was wrong. She screamed until her throat was sore, until the ambulance had taken him away. But it was too late. Too late.

By Eilidh Bremner

Oops! A production gremlin crept into Lee McKinlay's ad and misspelled Holistic (I blame the Ed). We apologise to Lee for the error.



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New Year Tradition

Those of you old enough (seen at least a couple of 21st birthdays) may remember an English comedian called Freddy Frinton. He was most well-known for playing a drunk, usually in full evening dress, clutching a bent cigarette. While well-known, he was never a big star.

What has he got to do with New Year traditions? I hear you ask. Well, quite a bit..

In many European countries they have a tradition of watching a particular old television programme. called "The same procedure as last year" or "Dinner for One". You guessed it, starring Freddie Frinton.

The conceit is an elderly duchess holding a New Year dinner party for a dozen of her friends and Freddie Frinton's character is her butler. It turns out that for one reason or another each of her guests fails to appear at the dinner so she has to dine alone (as happened last year). She decides that the butler should stand in for each of the guests, in character and drink toasts to her ladyship and the New Year (the same procedure as last year). He is in turn a general, an admiral and so on. As you might imagine these toasts start to have an effect on the butler and as dinner progresses his table service becomes more and more hilarious.

Why this programme should be so popular from one generation to our Northern European neighbours is hard to understand. It just seems to be considered a tradition to watch it on New Year's eve or New Year's Day.

Who says we don't have influence in Europe?

Different New Year Traditions
Residents of **Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia** and other South American states welcome the New Year by wearing colorful underpants. The usually wear red, yellow or other brightly colored underwear past midnight to bring good fortune to the coming year. This also helps them find a mate. People express themselves via their underpants. Red means an amorous love life ahead and yellow expresses the desire to gain money and wealth.

Ecuador has a unique custom of making scarecrows and burning them at midnight. They dress up and fill the scarecrows with newspapers and pieces of wood. As midnight approaches, everyone gathers outside their homes and each family burns their scarecrow. The tradition says that this destroys all the bad things that took place in the past 12 months. The scarecrow also scares bad luck away and brings good luck and happiness in the New Year.

Imagine streets full of people wearing polka dots and dining tables full of round food and fruit. This happens in **The Philippines** every year on New Year's Eve. People in the Philippines believe that this will bring them prosperity by associating the round dots and food with coins and wealth.

It may be surprising, but it is very fortunate to find your door heaped with piles of broken dishes at New Year in **Denmark**. Throughout the year people save all their old dishes and at midnight on New Year's Eve they throw them at the front door of

their friends and neighbours. The bigger the pile of broken dishes at your front door the luckier you are because you have many friends.

Mexicans strongly believe that they can communicate with the souls of their dead loved ones. New Year eve is considered the best time to communicate with dead spirits to convey a message or ask for guidance. This is not just done at home on an individual basis but is also practised professionally. You can buy 15 minute sessions of talking with the dead.

In **Germany** people drop molten lead into cold water and try to tell the future from the shape it made. A heart or ring shape meant a wedding, a ship a journey, and a pig plenty of food in the year ahead.

People also would leave a bit of every food eaten on New Year's Eve on their plate until after Midnight as a way of ensuring a well-stocked larder. Carp was included in the meal as it was thought to bring wealth.

In parts of **Ireland** New Year brings single women an opportunity to both find love and get rid of bad luck. They place mistletoe under their pillow to get rid of bad luck and to bring them a husband.

In **Spain** and some other European countries people eat a grape for each of the bells that sound midnight. Even during concerts and plays, action stops so that the audience can eat their twelve grapes. Eating the grapes brings good luck, cheating brings the opposite.

New Year is a very important festival in **Japan**. To keep out evil spirits, Japanese hang a rope of straw across the front of their houses, which stands



New Year Special Offers

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Two Main Meals and a bottle of wine
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Sunday Special

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Choose from Beef, Lamb, Pork or Chicken
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(advanced bookings necessary. Prices may vary)

Special events

Burns Supper & Dance Friday 20th January
3 Course Haggis supper
Burns songs from Pauline Vallance
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Family tickets Available

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for happiness and good luck. When the New Year begins, Japanese people begin to laugh, because this is supposed to bring them good luck in the New Year.

In Japan, temple bells usher out the old year, and then the "night-watch bell", a series of exactly 108 peals rings in the new. These 108 rings is said to free the faithful from the 108 "earthly desires" lambasted in the Buddhist canon.

Fall Ball Ceilidh

A fantastic ceilidh was held at the Golf Club on Friday the 11th November.

The band, 'The Big Shoogle', were on top form, and the floor was full for almost every dance. Liz provided delicious stovies to keep the dancers' energy up!

Two special guests came to experience a Scottish evening: Mr Sufri Ali from Brunei and Mr Tatpol Vajarodaya from Thailand. They both wore the kilts (see picture) and looked tremendous! They are both studying at Strathclyde University for their PhDs. Eight old soldiers from Erskine Home attended the dance, and all had a fine time.

Thanks to all who helped us raise £300 for the Erskine Home.

Morag and Rowena

The Community Garden

Bringing the garden to the community

Amongst the Christmas lights at the McKillop, you may have noticed two planters with trees decorated by solar powered LED lights. This is the first stage of a project led by the Community Council to make the community garden more accessible to the community. If you haven't come across the community garden, it is located behind the parish church, and is an excellent well used facility, but for several reasons mainly to do with security, it is not open as much as we would like. This project aims to make the garden more accessible by moving a little of it into the centre of the village.

Mobile planters will be built for each season, the crops grown on in the garden and the planters moved to the McKillop when in season; xmas lights as you have already seen, daffodils and tulips in spring, bedding plants in summer. As the planters are mobile they can be moved aside to make way for other events such as the food festival.



Local volunteers who helped to build the planters



Village Christmas Lights-On 2011





RSPB Lochwinnoch Reserve

Saturday 7 Jan, 11am - 4pm Young Volunteers Group

Join us for the monthly Young Volunteers club, with activities including bird surveying, outdoor work, finding out more about RSPB campaigns and much more. Booking essential and places are limited, so please enquire beforehand. Young persons aged between 12 and 18 can participate. Participants will be registered as RSPB volunteers.

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 Jan, 1pm - 4pm - sessions begin on the hour and last for 1.5 hours.

Big Garden Birdwatch - Birds for Beginners—Ever wanted to take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch but don't know a blue tit from a blackbird? Join the team at RSPB Lochwinnoch for a session ideal for beginners to birdwatching, to help you learn more about common, garden birds and pick up tips and advice on how to join in with the Big Garden Birdwatch! The Big Garden Birdwatch takes place on 28th & 29th Jan. Price: £4 or £1 for RSPB members.

Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 Jan, 10am - 4pm—Binocular and telescope demonstration

An opportunity to choose from a wide range of competitively priced binoculars and telescopes, including RSPB brand, with the added

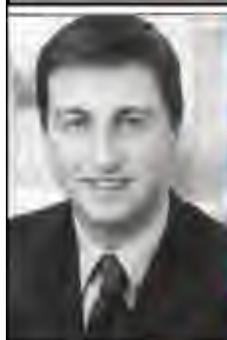


LEAP

Firstly, please note that there will be no mini-food-fair in January as stated in December's Chatterbox. It will instead be on the **25th Feb**, see below for details.

The end of last year was very busy here in Church St, applying to the Climate Challenge Fund for a further three years of funding to continue our work in and around Lochwinnoch, focusing on domestic energy, transport and food. As part of this we would like to thank everyone who has filled in our community consultation survey, it's been a great help, thank you! The findings from the survey and the community consultation are posted up on our website for you to find out more www.lochwinnoch.info/LEAP

This funding will continue our core activity of **free home energy checks** along with the associated services such



*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.

as thermal imaging and draught testing which can really help to pin down sources of heat loss and make homes more comfortable. We can help with free impartial advice on a whole range of issues, from insulation to boiler scrappage schemes, support for renewable installations, information on council and government assistance and general hints and tips on draught proofing and cutting energy wastage.

Come and talk to us if you would like to know more about the Governments upcoming **Green Deal**, designed to cut energy consumption by providing upfront finance for insulation measures, paid for through the energy savings, with a golden rule that means bills will remain the same or less, and without incurring personal debt.

With the weather turning so much colder and energy prices set to keep on rising, it makes sense to stop your heat leaking back outside. If you are tired of draughts and cold areas call us for a chat- we can send round an energy adviser for a free visit and advice on suitable measures.

November saw two successful **Draughtbuster workshops**, one in Lochwinnoch and one in Kilbarchan, where local people learned 'hands on' draught-proofing and filling techniques and went off with material to start their own doors and windows. These were relaxed and informative events, all free of charge to participants. These will be running again in January in both villages so please get in touch if you would like to take part.

Our Car Club preparation is approaching its final stages as we negotiate with the council for suitable locations for the vehicles, and tie up the logistics of booking etc. All being well we still plan to launch late March/early April this

year. This is a club where members have 24/7 access to two efficient hire vehicles parked centrally, bookable online up to 6 months in advance, or even at a couple of hours notice. Similar clubs around the country are saving people anything up to £2,000 per year! Get in touch if you are interested in any way.

The third leg of our work is promoting local food interests. There will be no mini market in December or January. Come February we will get the year off to a bang and our regular mini food fairs will be under way again with a **Pancake Festival on Feb 25th**, in our usual place outside the McKillop, from 11-3. We could use all the help we can get, so if you would like to run a stall selling food stuffs (the more local the better), or just help to organise, toss pancakes or play music, then give us a call.

This will be followed by the **March** event on **Sat 24th**, tying in with the Lochwinnoch Arts Festival, and a larger **Spring Food Festival** in May. Again, if you have any bright ideas on making this work better for you and the village we would be delighted to hear from you.

Drop by our office (or give us a call) for friendly help and up to date information. While you are there why not borrow an **energy monitor** free for a month and keep an eye on exactly how your electricity is being used.

Chatsearch Answers

BELLS	BIGBEN	BLACKBUN
MUSIC	PARTIES	PARTYFOOD
FAMILY	DIETPLANS	FIREWORKS
FRIENDS	TOASTS	FIRSTFOOT
COAL	COLD	DANCING
VISITORS	MIDNIGHT	AWEEEDRAM
RESOLUTIONS	SHORTBREAD	
CELEBRATIONS	DESIGNATEDDRIVER	
ICYPAVEMENTS	AULDLANDSYNE	

Lochwinnoch Art Group

Happy New Year everyone and welcome to 2012!

We have two meetings in January: on the 16th and 30th at the usual time of 7.30pm and will be pleased to welcome anyone who is interested in joining us.

Why not give it a try? We meet fortnightly in the Space Room of the McKillop Institute from 7.30- 9.30pm.

This month our members have been invited to return to Castle Semple Visitor Centre to display our work at Clyde Muirshiel's "Art in the Park Exhibition" from 20th Jan - 7th Feb.

If you drop in for a look we hope you'll enjoy the variety of subject, style and technique on display.

PATCh

For the past few months the toddlers in the Parish Church have been enjoying PATCh - Parent And Toddler Church.

We meet once a month and share stories, songs and playing. All the under-fives in the village (and beyond) are invited to come along to the Parish Church Hall, with their Mummies and Daddies, and any older brothers and sisters, on Sunday 8th January at 3pm.

PATCh usually lasts about 35 mins.

Historical Society

Guest speaker for January at the meeting in the Parish Church guild room on Thursday 19th January at 7.30pm.

"Graeme Smith"

"The Alhambra Theatre"



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Happy Birthday to the
village website

www.lochwinnoch.info
is now 10 years old!

New Year's Resolutions for Pets

- Have a torrid one-night stand with a street mutt.
- Try to understand that the cat is from Venus and the dog from Mars.
- Take time from busy schedule to stop and smell the behinds.
- Grow opposable thumb; break into pantry; decide for MYSELF how much food is "too" much.
- Maybe swim counter-clockwise this year.
- January 1st: Kill the sock! Must kill the sock! January 2nd - December 31: Re-live victory over sock.
- I will NOT chase the stick unless I see it LEAVE HIS HAND.

Thanks & Happy Birthday

We would like to offer birthday congratulations to Alan Lovegreen and express how much we enjoy his Chatterbox articles.

We would like also like to thank the Chatterbox Team.

John and Sheila Harris

CHATTERBOX

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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

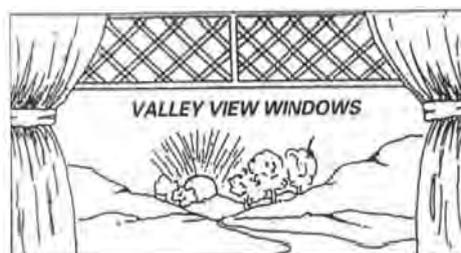
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