What’s On

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

- **Advice Works** - every Tuesday from 10am—12.30 in Lochwinnoch Library.

- **Tai Chi for Beginners** - Friday nights, 6.45—7.45pm at The Room, Lochwinnoch Library.

- **Yoga Classes** - re-start on Wednesday nights at 7.30pm from September onwards, in McKillop Institute. All welcome.

- **Fri 7th September– Prize Bingo Night** - Masonic Club*

- **Friday 7th September** - Stedfast Silver Band and Gleniffer Singers - from 7.30pm in the Parish Church.

- **Thursday 13th September** - **Open Day** celebrating 150 Years of the McDowall Building at the library - *

- **13th & 27th September— Jazz at the Junction** *

- **Sat 15th September** - **Councillor Arthur’s Surgery**— McKillop Hall from 11.30am. *

- **Tues 25th September - Sat 20th October** - Lochwinnoch Art Group Annual Exhibition—Library Room *

- **Krafty Kids Arts & Crafts Club** - from September in Space Rooms *

- **Kickjitsu for Kids** - on Monday nights from September at Parish Church rooms *

- **Sunday 7th October** - Lochwinnoch Autumn Farmers Market - from 1100 - 1430 hrs (or until sold out) at Castle Semple Centre.

- **Sunday 7th October** - afternoon Dawg Dawdle *

* for more details see inside this issue of Chatterbox.

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**LCBG The Struthers Project**

The Village says Yes!
The Scottish Exec says Yes!
The Pension Fund Says NO

Thank you.
After the excellent result at the ballot for the buyout of the Struthers site, everyone at the Lochwinnoch Community Buyout Group (LCBG) would like to say thank you to the village for all their support. We submitted the result, along with our outline business plan, to the Scottish Executive at the beginning of August. On the 22 August the Environment Minister, Michael Russell said Yes! However, our celebrations were short lived. The owners, the Alfano Brothers Retirement Benefits Pension Scheme, withdrew the site from sale less than a week later.

Where now?
We still have the right to buy the site, for at least 5 years and it cannot be sold to anyone else without

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**Editorial & copy for Chatterbox**
Let us have your stories, notices, information, events and other items of interest — either hand-deliver them to the Chatterbox drop-box in the Library or e-mail to: chatterbox@lochwinnoch.info

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

**LCBG having first refusal.**
We are planning discussions with the Big Lottery Fund, the Community Assets Branch at the Scottish Executive and the owners to try to find a route forward that suits all parties.

On a happier note, we held a ceilidh in the village on the 25th August and it was well attended and everyone had a good time!

We will be holding our AGM on Thursday 13th September at 7.30pm in Lochwinnoch Bowling Club, Calderhaugh Lane, Lochwinnoch. All welcome.

So, again, thanks to everyone for their support and my thanks to all those in LCBG who have worked tirelessly over the past 12-18 months to make this project happen.

Alec Harley,
Chairman, LCBG
The MacDowall School Building in Lochwinnoch, currently the library, celebrates 150 years this year.

Donated by Henry MacDowall in 1857 as a school for local children, it was run, like many others at that time, by the Parish Kirk Session. At one time there were as many as 10 small schools in the area.

The 1872 Education (Scotland) Act created state schools and made education compulsory for all children aged 5 – 13. At this time, and largely due to the newness of the school building, it was deemed suitable for state education.

Known as the “Wee School” it remained the infant school until 1950 when the Annexe to the Public School was opened.

Since the 1950’s the building has been home to Lochwinnoch Library.

Why not come along on the 13th September and join in the celebrations…

All welcome
**MAGIC OF THE MUNROS**

There’s no better way to capture the essence of Scotland than to explore its glens, corries and, of course, its mountains. However, it is still only a relative few who experience the ultimate perspective of the country from the summits of all 284 Munros.

When KAY WADDELL stood at the summit cairn of Ben More (Mull) on the 4th of August she became the first female Lochenyochian to "compleat" the Munros. Those who know something of the remote areas and the nail-biting ridges she has traversed in this venture can attest to the extent of her achievement.

Whether on the narrow ridges of Liathach or the Aonach Eagach in Glencoe, enduring the skill and character test demanded by the Skye Cuillins, wild camping in the remote mountains of Knoydart and the Fisherfields, or taking in the gentler slopes of the Monadhliaths, the Munroist is rewarded for their efforts by a real understanding of Scotland’s geographic and historical tapestry.

Kay has been awarded the Scottish Mountaineering Club’s Munroist number 3873 in the list first established in the 1920’s.

Many congratulations, Kay.

Almost exactly two years earlier BILLY MANDERS had become the first male Lochenyochian "compleatist" when he summited Slioch in September 2005. Impressively, Billy’s round of the Munros included doing the technically more difficult 12 Skye Munros without the help of a local mountaineer guide.

Well done Kay and Billy on a tremendous achievement and your entries into the Lochenyochian Hall of Fame !!!

Adrian Tharme
thoughts

by Pat Thomson

sitting at the window looking out as darkness falls, at the chimney pots, the loch and the hills on the other side of the valley, the tops gleaming in the last light of the day. something makes you think of the people who lived and died in these houses over the years. Were they happy or sad? Did they have a comfortable home? Were they employed in the mills or the furniture works? What did they do in their spare time?

in the late twenties a family of incomers arrived in the village. To provide a living they bought a coal merchants business. Originally they lived in Calder Street in a house that had stables behind for the horses. The father and eldest son took care of the business, bagging and delivering coal, loading carts and most importantly looking after the horses. I remember being told stories about them. Each had a very distinctive nature and, you could say, were named accordingly.

Jet was a black cob who took his time about everything and couldn’t be rushed. Every so often he decided to have a holiday, he just lay down in the shafts and re-fused to work. All they could do was take him back to the stables, where he spent the rest of the day, quite happy to return to work the next day.

A horse called Patience would take herself home to the stable whenever the works hooter went. So, take a bag of coal off the cart and go up a close to the customer’s bunker, the 12 o’clock horn goes, no horse and cart! After the 1 o’clock went she would work till 5 o’clock sounded, then off back to the stable for her supper. She would then go back to work, and if necessary work until next morning, when the hooter sounded again. The last and only horse I remember was a Clydesdale called Captain, who a fortnight after he retired tried to jump a fence, broke his leg, and had to be put to sleep. So ended the career of a gentle giant.

Horses were a big part of village life. What is now known a Barr Loch was drained in summer months. The dried grass was cut and used for bedding the beast. During the Second World War the machinery used for this fell into disrepair. After the war there was no need for the straw, and since the cost of repairing the pump was high, the meadow was allowed to flood.

in the late thirties the family moved to Braehead, into one of the new council houses. The father who was a great “doo” man had a new loft built at the new house. During summer, you would find him there on a Saturday afternoon, waiting on the birds coming in so he could ring them. He would sit on a wooden bench in front of the loft, puffing on a cigarette, until a bird landed on the roof. If it wasn’t going in or it took off again he was up with his wee tin of peas, rattling it enticingly to coax the bird into the loft.

When it eventually came in the ring was taken from its leg and put in a box which recorded the time. If the pigeon landed early enough and he won, he was as happy as a sand boy but if it didn’t he would threaten to wring its neck.

As lorries were taking over from horses it was decided to get one. The son taught himself to drive and to his dying day never sat a driving test. One of his early mishaps was hitting the Village Hall gatepost when he was reversing in. The gatepost, made of red sandstone and relatively soft, was left a bit shoggly. This gate does not exist any more.

The pace of life must have been much slower than to-day, when people had time to listen to the peace and quiet. Few cars, no lawn mowers or strimmers to disturb the peace. Does your lawn need cutting? Shove a goat or sheep in for a couple of hours. Not many people then had a lawn, perhaps a drying green where they could sit for a few minutes at the end of the day. Most gardens would be used to grow edible plants that could supplement the family budget.

When I was a girl the stables garden still existed and, in season, all the soft fruit it was possible to grow were there as well as apple and pear trees. Many a warm summer afternoon I’ve spent filling my face with this bounty from nature.

or try this tender love lyric by Davie Dougan, the result of an exercise set by our tutor, Gerry Stewart!

my mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun
with apologies to William Shakespeare

her feet smell like a herd of swine, are larger than ‘sweet Clementine’
She never wears a brogue or slipper
Alas! Can’t find a pair to fit her!
her hair, a luscious fiery red,
gets taken off, when time for bed
most smiling eyes, you’ve ever seen
The glass one’s blue; and the real one’s green.

Her film-star teeth. – the best by far –
Are steeped each night, in a bed-side jar
She steals my breath, each time we kiss,
A tribute to her Botoxed lips.

Still only one thing puts me off,
 Best not stand close; should my love cough
Spare parts fly off. – Watch her glass eye pop
Have to wheel her home, to a Quick-Fit shop.

She’s re-assembled, piece by piece
Some dabs of glue, some bits need grease:
I love her so; she makes me sweat
She’s the only lover, I can get!

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Friendly atmosphere.
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www.lochwinnochwriters.org.uk
Sky at Night
Lochwinnoch
September/October 2007

Last month’s Perseid meteors were affected by cloud/showers but we did manage to see 3, one a fireball. The next notable shower is the Geminids in December. Year on year, they produce the highest reliable rates of 120+ per hour, more on these closer to the time.

The September sky is fairly quiet - Venus and Saturn are early morning objects in the East just before dawn.

Towards the end of September Mars, rising in the east about midnight, makes an impressive telescopic sight. The planet’s North Polar Region is in shadow while the South Polar Region basks in the light of the late southern Martian summer.

About 2am on October 3rd, the crescent Moon and Mars are only 5 degrees apart.

The Moon is ‘New’ on the 11th and ‘Full’ on the 26th September. Throughout its cycle, the Moon appears to change size. The orbit of the Moon is eccentric.

The point furthest away from the Earth, (the Apogee), makes it seem smaller. Conversely, Perigee, when the moon’s orbit is closest to the Earth, makes it seem larger. This is called Apsides of the Moon.

We are fortunate that in Paisley we have a good Victorian observatory which is well worth a visit for astronomical and architectural interest.

Coast Observatory:
49 Oakshaw Street, Paisley PA1 2DE.
Opening Times Sun 2pm-5pm and Tues – Sat 10am-5pm
Tel: 0141 889 2013 or E-Mail: museums.els@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Public telescope viewing takes place every Tuesday and Thursday from 30 October 2007 to 28 March 2008 between 6pm and 9.30pm. Admission is free.

The observatory contains displays on astronomy, astronautics, seismology and meteorology. Whether paying a daytime visit to the observatory or attending one of the viewing nights, please telephone to confirm it will be open.

More information on the Village Forum - www.lochwinnoch.info

The McDowall’s

Someone, somewhere should write the history of Lochwinnoch’s McDowall family. The McDowall family (often spelt MacDowall) were deeply involved in village life around the 18th/19th century. They were instrumental in shaping the geography in the area around Castle Semple Loch.

The McDowalls were heavily involved in the commercial activities of Scotland. William McDowall played a leading part in what Professor Tom Devine called ‘the mighty West India House of Alexander Houston and Company’. The chief business of the company was sugar. Unfortunately, the revolutionary wars in France, slave revolts, plundering and sky-high insurance brought about a decline in the sugar trade and the Houston Company was forced into bankruptcy.

At the start of the 19th century, William McDowall had to sell Castle Semple. Help was ‘almost’ on the way. McDowall’s youngest brother, the splendidly named Day Hort McDowall, pledged to buy Castle Semple back for £100,100.

Day Hort had amassed a considerable fortune in India, he also owned the Milton calico-printing works in Dumbarton. Day Hort was, obviously, not as rich as he thought and he failed to raise enough money to complete the sale. Clearly depressed and dispirited at his failure, he drowned himself in one of the Castle Semple fishponds.

William McDowall died a few months later from natural causes; his colleagues in Paisley erected a monument to his memory in Paisley Abbey.

As a footnote, it is terribly sad that the McDowall’s mansion, Garthland House, (the one time St Joseph’s College), has now fallen prey to vandals, as has the small chapel built alongside the mansion; a building possessed of recording quality acoustics.

Perhaps one day, someone will restore this splendid piece of our heritage to its former glory and not let it fall into disrepair, the fate of many fine old buildings in Paisley.
FRMELLA HERITAGE MARKET SHOP

Visit our shop for the finest meat and game as well as smoked fish, local cheeses, seasonal fruit and vegetables, home-made jams, pickles and lots more locally sourced produce.

Available soon – Partridge, Mallard Duck, Wood Pigeon and wild rabbit.

Come along to our stall at the Lochwinnoch Farmers Market at Castle Semple Loch on Sunday 7th October.

39 High Street, Lochwinnoch PA12 4AB Tel: 01505 844941
SHOP OPENING HOURS - Mon, Tues, Thurs & Friday 9am—6pm
Wed 9am-1pm, Sat 9am –3.30pm Closed Sundays

PRIZE BINGO NIGHTS

at the Masonic Club
at 7.30pm on

Friday 7th September
Friday 5th October
Friday 9th November, and
Friday 7th December.

More fun nights coming soon.
For tickets and more information, contact Billy Davey on
Tel: 01505 843359

St Winnoch Singers

Why not join a choir? Singing in a choir is one of the great activities in life. Louis Armstrong, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles and countless other great stars all set out as singers by singing in a choir. It helps you to become more confident, helps your poise, and it is a great way to make friends.
The choir here in Lochwinnoch have, in Glasgow, twice sang the works of Karl Jenkins under the baton of the composer. This summer they sang at the re-opening celebrations of the Kibble Palace – who knows where they’ll sing next?
If you would like to join this now well-known choir, all you have to do is turn up for a rehearsal on Monday nights at 7.30pm in the Parish Church. There is no audition all you do is turn up and enjoy yourself.

FALL BALL CEILIDH

on Saturday 27th October

at McKillop Institute
Doors Open 8.15pm. Bar.
Tickets £8 from Brown Bull, Junction and Corner Bar.
Ceilidh being held in aid of Maggie Centre and LCBG.

KRAFTY KIDS

The new session of arts and crafts for kids – Krafty Kids – begins in September. The kids (from P1-S1) have a lot of fun making things whilst building skills. This year the themes include witches and ghosts for Hallow’een, decorations for Christmas and designing and making your own cushion.

The classes are held in Youth Space. The morning class is now full (usually first Saturday of the month, 10-11.30) but, at the time of going to press, the afternoon class still had spaces (usually the last Saturday of the month, 1.30-3.00).

Registration for the afternoon class is Saturday 8th September at 11.15 at Youth Space Rooms at the McKillop Institute. But it may be worth phoning Morag Gibson on 842116 before the first afternoon class (29th Sept) to find out if there are still places, then you can join on the day. The cost is £20 for the 6 sessions.

Lochwinnoch Population Facts

1991 census – population 2347
2001 census – population 2570
In ten years an increase of 237 or 10.09%
1991 census – households in Lochwinnoch 969
2001 census - households in Lochwinnoch 1092
In ten years an increase of 123 households or 12.69%
Since the 2001 census until August 2007 the increase in households in the village – new build sites, split properties and single units – is 138. This represents a further increase of 12.64%.

Using the household average for Lochwinnoch at 2001 (2.35) and an adjustment for St Joseph’s Nursing Home (–64) and St Joseph’s Residential Care (+8) the current population of the village is approximately 2838. This is a gain since 2001 of approximately 268 or 10.42%.
Come Dancing

I hate being unfit, but I can't do sport and I'm scared of the gym. Fortunately I live in a place with playing fields, a bowling green, a cycle track, rowing boats and a Loch .. The Mckillop Hall has lots of activities too, yoga, aero-bics, keep-fit and ... Scottish Country Dancing

Actually I've been going there for 5 years. The name's wrong, of course, it should be Scottish fun dancing as far as I'm concerned because that's really what we do, have fun, dance and get a bit of exercise.

Your brain also gets a work out as you try to remember the moves and patterns of the dance. But it's not a problem if you can't do this straight away, as there's always someone who likes to tell you what to do. It should be the teacher of course and she will if she spots you before anyone else helps you out. No one minds if you make a mistake, that's part of the fun somehow.

The teacher has the patience of a saint. I've never seen her annoyed or even slightly irritated when we go wrong.

She always gives us a challenge, by finding new dances to tryout as well as going over the old favourites. Some of the members are quite accomplished and dance very elegantly, and perfect 'pas de Bas' and may even have been in competitions in their youth. Others mainly exercise their stomach muscles as they laugh so much their sides must ache. One game girl is waiting for knee operations so she struggles a bit but she gives it a go and enjoys the company.

There are men too! A tall fit man who is very enthusiastic, he often tells people where ceilidhs are on encouraging them to go along. An older experienced chap comes from Johnstone - very jolly and never misses a class. Then there's a young local chap who stumbles at times but is dead keen and can pick up the dance patterns really quickly He's serious though, always wears his tartan trousers!

One veteran lady has even made up a dance based on the river that runs through the village. We signify pool circles going this way and that and form arches like trees along its banks. She's called it 'The Calder Strathspey'. It's lovely - you should see it -we perform it every year at Gala Day.

So if you feel the need of a bit of exercise that's fun and not too much hard work, come along and give Lochwinnoch Scottish Country Dance Club a try. We start up again on Tuesday 4th September. You'll be more than welcome.

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Lochwinnoch Art Group Annual Exhibition 2007

Lochwinnoch Art Group are pleased to announce that this year’s Exhibition is making a very welcome return to its original venue in the ' Library Room ' (formerly Lochwinnoch Community Museum)

Around 12 members from the group will be exhibiting their work. A variety of styles will be on display, ranging from drawings, acrylics, oils and watercolours.

An invitation is extended to anyone who wishes to attend the opening evening on Tuesday 25th September at 7.30pm.

The exhibition will run until Saturday 20th October; access is via the library at the following times:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 2pm-5pm and 6pm-8pm  
Tuesday & Saturday 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm

KICKJITSU FOR KIDS
Starting on Monday 3rd September at Lochwinnoch Parish Church, from 5pm-6.45pm.

Professional instructors can teach your kids self-defence, gymnastics, anti-bullying and course material for the martial arts side of things. Suitable for 5-14 year olds. For more information or to enrol, phone 01505 683575 or 07986 146418.

SILENT AUCTION
Saturday 20th October from 10am—3pm in the Parish Church.
It was at the beginning of June that we started our actual polo training. Luckily I was based at Stewarton Polo Club so travelling there six days a week did not seem a hassle plus the fact that I was totally addicted to polo. On the days when I wasn’t playing polo I would find myself out in the garden hitting a ball around with a practise mallet.

August the 18th arrived in what felt like a flash. I have never felt so nervous in all my life. Unfortunately, it was pouring from the heavens on that Saturday but it didn’t stop the crowds from turning up and everyone seemed to be in good spirit. My team went out and gave it their best shot but, unfortunately, we lost. We were not disheartened however because it was a big enough achievement completing the training.

Polo is a great sport that can take you many places. Winston Churchill was a keen polo player and once said “polo is the passport to the world”. I intend to find out if he was right by taking a year out after my studies and travelling to different countries to play polo.

I would like to say a big thank you to Lochwinnoch Community Council for their generous donation, that went towards funding my exciting experience.

Lisa Keen
Jeffreystock Farm,
Lochwinnoch

Remembering Lady Di

Ten years ago, on the last day of August, Diana Spencer was killed in Paris.

The event affected us all in one way or the other. I remember the Sunday morning the news of her death was announced. I was in the newsagents in Church Street and on the floor lay a bundle of popular Sunday newspapers. The shocking news was splashed across the front page. It was hard to take in what had happened. I bought a paper and walked up the road. A woman I didn’t know stopped me and asked if I had heard the news. I opened the paper and showed her the front page. I got home and turned on the TV; all 4 channels covered the news. On that Sunday the streets of the village were deserted, most people stayed at home and watched as newscasters tried to find words to describe the events that had happened the night before.

During the week the nation descended into a state of collective mourning that now, looking back on, seems rather bizarre. George Square was turned into a shrine where thousands of people laid flowers. One humid evening I sat in a restaurant looking onto the Square and, amidst the muffled sound of traffic, a row of people waited to lay their flowers and pay their last respects. It was a strange experience; never, apart from on Remembrance Sunday, has the Square been so silent.

On the Saturday of the funeral most shops in the village closed and the streets were once again deserted as most folks watched the solemn occasion on TV.

Now, ten years on from that fateful Saturday, the old millennium has passed into history, the new millennium is still as fresh as a daisy, people have come into the world, people have gone out, countries have been blown apart in senseless wars, thousands of people have been destroyed at the behest of maniacs, the world has become brasher, noisier and more dangerous and it seems as if all the humanitarian instincts of friendship and love have vanished like summer frost.
‘VIKING DOWN!’

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF AN AIRLINER CRASH AND ROUTES TO SURVIVAL IN THE CUNNINGHAME HILLS

Many ‘Chatterbox’ readers will have travelled along the main A760 over to Largs. However, most are unaware that the wreckage of an airliner resides on the hillside of Irish Law, just over a mile from the roadside.

Just before 9pm on the evening of Wednesday 21 April 1948, expectant friends, family and colleagues awaited the arrival of flight S200P at Renfrew, it having left Northolt – London’s airport at the time - nearly two hours earlier. Onboard were a crew of four and 16 passengers, amongst them a honeymooning Norwegian couple and several business executives. Noting the drone of the machine’s twin engines overhead, those on the ground were confused when it flies off westward, disappearing from view and out of earshot. Communications were lost with the aircraft some minutes later.

In the meantime, unbeknown to those at Renfrew, the machine has crashed at around 150mph in desolate, windswept and sodden moorland on Irish Law near Largs. As soon as the plane hits the hill, fire breaks out around the engines, and when the aircraft has bounced to a halt, the dazed passengers leap out from a gap torn at the rear of the fuselage.

Remarkably, all 20 occupants escape with only burned hands and other minor injuries. The passengers watch as a raging inferno consumes the fuselage of the aircraft, where they had just been enjoying refreshments some minutes earlier.

With visibility of only two yards, and weather worsening, the survivors – including five women dressed only in frocks - construct a small shelter made from wreckage of the ‘plane. The 28 year old pilot and a passenger stumble across the moors, eventually reaching Largs three hours later and raising the alarm. Later, the pilot leads a search party from Muirshiel, unsure where the airliner had come to grief.

Back at the wreck on Irish Law, the Radio Officer and 3 passengers decide to make their own bid for help at daybreak, with the use of a compass in a charm bracelet. Three hours later, the party arrive at Ladyland House between Lochwinnoch and Kilbirnie.

By 9am the remaining survivors are suffering from exposure and shock. Several search parties have been unable to find them, such are the terrible conditions on the boggy moorland. They decide that they must make their own way to safety. Some walk barefooted, while one of the women has to be carried all the way due a broken ankle sustained in the crash. Eventually they reach safety by following a stream downhill to Largs. Their ordeal is over.

Meanwhile, Scotland wakes up to some remarkable headlines. The front page of the Daily Record declares ‘Air Liner Down Near Largs,’ the Evening Times ‘Barefooted Viking Passengers Saved After All-Night Ordeal’.

Nearly 60 years later... the twisted remains of the Viking, shelter for the sheep on this bleak hill ground, still lies on the shoulder of Irish Law. Decades of visitors have left their inscriptions on the airliner’s carcass, many of them probably not aware of the incredible story behind the crash.

For over a year, James Towill, who was Visitor & Publicity Officer at Lochwinnoch RSPB Reserve and former RSPB volunteer Dougie Martindale of Kilbarchan, have been researching the events of that night with a view to publishing a book focussing on this remarkable incident.

Although we have succeeded in unearthing a wealth of information and contacting amongst others, the First Officer on the airliner, we are still very keen to talk to anyone with any information about the crash. We especially wish to contact survivors of the crash, or their relatives and speak with former BEA pilots or anyone involved in the rescue parties. It is hoped that as well as appealing to aircraft enthusiasts, the final work will provide an enthralling read for locals, tourists and indeed anyone interested in this unique facet of west of Scotland history.

Please see our website at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VikingCrash1948/ or contact (01505) 706456, or E-mail: viking1948@tiscali.co.uk

James Towill & Dougie Martindale

‘BAREFOOTED VIKING PASSENGERS SAVED AFTER ALL-NIGHT ORDEAL’
**Arctic Run**

I thought you might like to know how our fundraising is going for Teenage Cancer Trust.

The total we have managed to raise for Teenage Cancer Trust from the Arctic Marathon is now **£1,730**.

Many thanks to everyone who has supported us and has been kind enough to sponsor us (again!).

If you intended to sponsor us, but haven’t got around to it yet, please do so now as the website page closes soon – webpage details below.

I would also like to record my thanks to Rikki Gemmell from the village, who raised a very impressive **£2,050** for TCT in his company’s (Land Securities) cycle from Glasgow to Edinburgh. Well done Rikki.

Also, if you know anyone else who you think might like to sponsor us, please take a moment to send them the online fundraising page link, featured opposite.

**LADIES CHAMPAGNE TEA AND FASHION SHOW**

Last year’s sell out TCT Champagne Tea & Fashion Show received great feedback with many requests for a repeat performance!

This elegant event will take place on Sunday 28th October at 3pm in the luxurious 5 star Mar Hall Hotel, Erskine.

The event will start with a Champagne reception with the opportunity to browse and purchase bespoke handbags, jewellery & fashion accessories. The Ladies will then take their place in the stunning Morton House where they will be served speciality teas and delectable sandwiches and pastries.

As last year, the models will be girls who have fought cancer, along with their Mums, and whilst the ladies “take tea” the girls will model this Winter’s must-have fashion items from casual wear, evening wear and the finale of the Wedding dress! All the clothes will be available to purchase with profits going to the Teenage Cancer Trust. Last year’s auction had two tables in a bidding war and we hope for the same again! All the ladies will leave with a Goody Bag as a Thank You for supporting the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Tickets £25. Cheques (made payable to TCT Ladies Champagne Tea) to Karen Kelly, Armannoch House, Harvey Square, Lochwinnoch, PA12 4HE or online at www.KarenKellydesigns.com

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**http://www.justgiving.com/johndelaneyTCT**

Finally, as Christmas approaches, preparations will soon be underway for the annual Christmas Auction and Raffle at the Brown Bull pub. This event has been held for the past 2 years and has been a fantastic success. In 2005, £5,000 was raised and in 2006, an incredible £7,000.

Look out for more news on this annual fund-raising event in future issues of Chatterbox.

Please join us in supporting Teenage Cancer Trust and a fabulous cause.

Thanks and best wishes,

John and the team.
Romania
July 2007

A team from 1st Lochwinnoch Girls Brigade company have written to Chatterbox about their experiences working in a summer camp with Romanian children.

After fundraising for weeks and waiting for what seemed like ages, our trip flew past in a flash.

We arrived at Budapest Airport eager to get to Virfurile in Transylvania but our luggage had other ideas. Thankfully it arrived the next morning.

Sitting in the mini-bus in the soaring heat in our warm clothes (we left Lochwinnoch at 4am) for the six hour journey to the camp was not a pleasant experience.

On arriving at the camp at around 9pm we were shown to our chalet that we would call home for the next ten days.

The next day 48 boys and girls arrived, some by train from Arad and others by minibus from the small village beside the camp. Their excitement was infectious and it wasn’t long before we were joining in the Romanian singing and games.

It was a very strict schedule with different activities each day. The theme for the week was Joseph and all the activities stemmed from this. There were four different teams all competing for first prize - even though they all got a prize and were praised equally.

A lot of the activities were held up on the hill behind the camp. The activities included learning new songs, playing games and making up a drama.

We enjoyed a long walk to a quarry learning about the local history along the way and admiring the wonderful scenery. Another day we took a trip to the local football fields where everyone participated in a mini Olympics.

On the Monday before we left we were taken on a day trip without the kids to see the local area. We visited the local produce market in Brad and sampled the traditional cuisine. After this we headed to Deva to explore the remains of an ancient castle high up on the hilltop, with access by a vertical monorail. This was a great day out, letting us see more of the Romanian culture and way of life.

During our stay we washed and dried a lot of dishes, cleaned toilets and scrubbed floors until our hands went wrinkly.

The majority of these children have lived in poverty throughout their young lives and don’t know what it is like to have a change of clothes but, by the love they gave and generosity they showed, you can’t begin to imagine the troubles they experience in their daily lives.

Stephanie Donnachie, Lorna Lamont, Chloe Patterson
1st Lochwinnoch, Girls Brigade company

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HAPPY RETIREMENT

I would like to thank, via Chatterbox, Archie Hodson, village dentist for the past 20 years for his much valued service to the village. With Archie’s announcement of retirement Lochwinnoch will return to be Dentist-free as it was 25 years ago possibly.

All the very best Archie.
Enjoy retirement.
Donald Reid

VILLAGE EVENT PLANNER

Lochwinnoch Post Office has a wall-mounted calendar, where members of the public can enter details of forthcoming events.

It is hoped that people will use this calendar to avoid any clashes when planning dates of events and, of course, to help publicise their events within the village.
News & Events at RSPB, Muirshiel, Cornealees & Castle Semple Centres

**Sunday 9th September -**
Room with a View: Castle Semple Tower - From 1400-1600 hours at Castle Semple Centre.
An opportunity to climb the Visitor Centre Tower and admire the views and current features of the Estate. The stunning full size copy of the 1760’s estate plan will also be on display as part of the illustrative story of the Estate in its heydays.

**Saturday 15th September -**
Beach Watch at Lunderston Bay
Come and help in the nationally co-ordinated beach clean up weekend and recording of the findings.
Tel: 01475 521 458 for more info.

**Saturday 15th September -**
Annual Fungus Foray at RSPB Centre from 1000 - 1400 hrs. Delve into the depths of the Lochwinnoch trails to find a multitude of fascinating fungi and mushrooms, then learn to identify them at the visitor centre. Tel: 01505 842663 to book a place. Waterproffs and stout footware recommended. £3 adult/£1.50 child non-members, Free for RSPB/WEx members.

**Sat 15th-Sunday 23rd September**
Sale of second-hand natural history books and optics at RSPB Centre, from 1000 - 1600 hrs. Here is your chance to pick up some bargain books and optics, as well as disposing of your surplus books/optics which we can accept as a donation or sell on your behalf. Please Tel: 01505 842663 for further details. Free Event

**Sunday 23rd September -**
Re-use Regatta at 1300 hrs at Cornealees Centre. Find out what can be recycled and put to good use. Tel: 01475 521 458 for details.

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**Sunday 23rd September -**
One-day Map and Compass Course: Theory and Practice from 1000 - 1600 hrs at Cornalees Centre. How are your map and compass skills when you are out on the hill? Classroom work in the morning and out on the hill in the afternoon.
Advance booking essential - Tel: 01505 842 882 - Ext 20.

**Sunday 30th September -**
Conservation Volunteer Day at Muirshiel Centre - 1000 to 1600 hrs. Get some fresh air, meet like-minded people and do something useful for the countryside. Tasks vary throughout the year but could include woodland management, drystane dyking or footpath maintenance. Full instruction and tools provided. Bring waterproffs, sturdy footwear and packed lunch. For more info. and to book a place, Tel: 01505 842803.

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**Exhibition of Wildlife Art inspired by the Clyde Muirshiel Hen Harrier Project**
By Duncan M Watt

Exhibition of Hen Harrier paintings and drawings is on throughout September at Muirshiel Visitor Centre, Lochwinnoch. Opening Hours 1100-1600 hrs every weekday and 1100-1700 hrs at weekends until end September. Tel: 01505 842803 for more details.

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**RSPB PHOTO COMPETITION**

Many fine photos were submitted, the votes have been cast and the results of the RSPB photo competition are in!

The top 10 pictures chosen will be going on a tour of the local libraries and will still be on display at the RSPB Reserve for a few weeks more.

First place goes to Raymond Watson with The Flight of Woody Titwillow, and
Second place goes to Gordon McCall with Willow Titwillow, and
Third place goes to Yvonne Young with Sunbathing Dragonfly.

The top 3 winners will each receive an RSPB book about digital wildlife photography and the overall winner will be featured in upcoming RSPB publications.

Fourth place - Zul Bhatia with Kingfisher
Fifth place - Vall Firminger with Frog in Pond 1
Sixth place - Vall Firminger with Peacock Butterfly
Seventh place - Zul Bhatia with Willow Warbler
Eighth place - Phyllis McCall with Chaffinch
Ninth place - Ed Cameron with Goldfinch, and
Tenth place - Robert Beattie with Mallard female landing.

WELL DONE AND THANK YOU TO ALL WHO TOOK PART.

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