

**WE'VE DONE IT AGAIN!
NOT 1, NOR 2 BUT 3
YEARS IN A ROW, WE
ARE JUDGED AS THE
BEST-KEPT LARGE
VILLAGE IN MORAY.**

It has been a long wait since that dull day on the 4th August when the Best-kept Village in Moray judges, Cath & John McLaren from Melrose came to check us out. Their verdict: "An exciting and very enjoyable experience with a high 'wow' factor for the discerning visitor! All elements of this delightful village appeared to work in unison to create a bright, clean environment always at one with its location and history. Achievements to date and those already planned are to be applauded and supported at every level." Scotland in Bloom next year?

It was enough to make us third time winners of the Competition. It means that next year we can enter again but must yield the top spot to another community! Runners up this year in our category was Fochabers. The small village winner was Duffus. Miltonduff took the honours for scattered communities. In the Junior entry our youngsters, represented by Haley Urquhart and Caroline Shearer gained a Highly Commended Certificate and a "Well done" from the judges. The shield winner, Duffus.

Your Editor and Lil Urquhart picked up the winner's shield for the village. It was presented by Claire Russell, the Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire, who had many fond memories of her recent visit

to Portknockie for the Dedication of the Fishermen's Memorial. She has also revisited the village since to check out our floral features. Ballindalloch Castle is, of course, famous for its gardens.

**Keep Monday 20th
September evening free.
This is your invitation to
help us manage Portknockie
better**

If you are a resident and 16 or over please join us in **The McBoyle Hall at 7pm** for a review of how we manage all the community things we try to provide in Portknockie over the course of a year. Whose job do you think it is to manage the McBoyle Hall, organise a Festival of Fishing, arrange the Best-kept Village in Moray display, set up Christmas Lights, prepare for Remembrance Day, sort out the Youth Club, arrange the Best-kept Garden Challenge, publish the village newspaper, or run the village website? Come along and let's agree to get more of you involved

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Welcome to John and Janet Bruce from Keith who are moving into "Reidhaven", Station Road.

Carl Thorpe of "Roselea" 14 Bridge Street has quickly established a regular local **Helping Hands** service for the village. He now runs around in a small red van doing odd jobs about the house and gardening. Apologies to him and anyone who tried to contact him on the phone number printed in the last issue of The K'nocker. It should have read **841342**. He can also be contacted on his mobile phone: **07813867527**.

Certain heritage luminaries in the village have been questioning the assertion in the last issue of The K'nocker that **Cullen House dates from 1543**. This fact had been taken from the Seafeld Estate information sheet offered to visitors at the

Estate Open Day in Cullen on May 29th. Your Editor has been directed to the following extract from W. Crammond's Annals of Cullen – "Upon the XX (20th) day of Mrche 1600 yeiris the Lairdis house in Culane was begun and the grund cassin." Does this settle the matter? Or could this source be disputable?

The organising team of the inaugural Festival of Fishing are holding a **thank you get together** on Friday 17th September in the McBoyle Hall.

A Big Thanks to Zander Reid and Eric Smith who have been pumping out the harbour paddling pool to keep the water fresh for all the youngsters using the pool this summer.

The poem Margaret Downie was seeking in the last issue has been found and sent on to her. The poem she was seeking for her book of "Granny's Memories" is in the Davie Mair Collection and is by Joan B. White. She still hopes someone will find the Johnnie Lovie postcard of Admiralty St.

PORTKNOCKIE

"There's a quiet little haven
Far awa' fae fret and worry
Wi' winsome ways for wonderin' feet
By the bonnie braes o' Moray.

Fae the Tronachs by the linlinks
Fae Hythie to Whale's Mou'
There lies a land o' beauty
It's a joy to ramble through.
Ilka rock and cave some story
Can tell o' bygone days
O' Dane and Viking foray
In the Bauds a'hint the Naze.

Deep in a cup o' emerald green
In sun-kissed gowden sands
And brown-sailed boats their courses steer
Whaur the great Bow Fiddle stands.

When the sun sits a'hint Morven
Ye will tine life's care and worry
Gin ye reach the quiet haven
By the bonnie braes o' Moray."

There have been many complimentary notes and letters of appreciation from visitors who were in Portknockie the week of the **inaugural Fishing Festival**. Typical of the sentiments expressed are the comments from Rena Mair of Edinburgh:

"Now that I am back home, I'm still thinking about last week – what a special week it was! I don't know how you all kept going and kept so helpful and pleasant. There was such a good community spirit. I so enjoyed being able to go back to the "old days". It was a hard life but they knew nothing else and just got on with it.

SUSAN'S KUI' N KURL
LADIES & GENTS HAIR STYLIST
Susan, Kerry, & Claire
In Park Street



840366

The women walking miles with the creels of fish on their backs, leaving home early in the morning and coming home late and having to see to their families. I'm enclosing a card for your team. I just had to thank you all for your efforts in making the Fishing Festival such a success.

The Dedication was quite something. Very moving and awesome really. I'll never forget that Sunday evening and I think many others will feel the same."

Making the national news as this issue was being prepared was the revelation that the **late Wullie Wood** left a very substantial sum of money to his old school, Gordonstoun, where he took nautical studies. Wullie Wood served 40 years with the Blue Funnel Line reaching the rank of Master Mariner. He died in December 2003 having lived in retirement at "Summerton", along King Edward Terrace. The money is to go to establish a scholarship scheme for the children of local fishing families. A number of the successful mariners who live in Portknockie started their sea-going careers after benefiting from the Gordonstoun School nautical studies scholarships. It is also the fact that most of them commenced their sea-going days with the Blue Funnel Line. Perhaps one of them might prepare an article for The K'nocker describing the link between the village and this shipping line.

A Christmas Concert Party for Portknockie is being considered. What do you think of the idea of using our own local talent for a variety concert in the McBoyle Hall? Do you fancy the idea of treading the boards and donning the greasepaint? The search is now on to identify the local players for a Christmas Show programme. Songsters,

musicians, storytellers, actors and comedians your stage awaits. Offers or nominations please pass to Pearl Murray on **841087**. In the case of child stars please first contact the school.

Spare a thought for the residents of Wood Place and Logie Drive when you drop your bottles in at the **Recycling Unit** by the play park. Their peace is being shattered by the inconsiderate dumping of hoarded bottles early on Sunday mornings and even in the middle of the night!

Portknockie Library News: The colouring competition run in conjunction with the Fishing Festival had many artistic entries from the children. Winners were Category 1 – Charlotte Smith and Sarah Campbell; Category 2 – Dana McIntosh and Emma Sievwright. Well done to all those who entered. The drawings are on show in the Library so pop in and see them.

The successful Fisher Quine Raffle was drawn at the Ceilidh on Saturday 24th July. The painting of Portknockie Harbour was won by Irene Weir; the Shetland Silver Necklace went to Cherry Miller; the Edinburgh crystal to Bill Thain and the Shetland sheepskin rug to Neil Robertson.

The Computer classes in the library are at an end – a few people have asked if there will be further sessions as they would like to join. The People’s Network Computers in the library are kept very busy offering free internet access. Please book on **841149** if you require a special time.

Visitors to the Library this summer included - **Gilbert Anderson** from Stafford, twin to the late Stanley Anderson. He was wanting some information about a pupil in an old school photograph. Eddie Anderson has suggested it is David Flett from Findochty who stayed with his grandparents for a few years at 5 Haig Street. Hope this rings a bell with you Gilbert. While in the Library, Gilbert talked about a Grace his father/grandfather used to say:

“Lord be Here
Lord be There
Lord be ower the Table
Let every man tak’ up his speen and sup for all
he’s able. Amen.”

After using this Grace at a dinner down south, an American came up to Gilbert and said that his ancestors from the Huntley area used to say this Grace and called it the “Threshing Grace”.

Lesley Weeks and her husband from the Cornwall area also visited the Library and, with help from Arnold Pirie, made a successful research of her grandmother’s ancestors.

Many Thanks from Margret Wood to all those generous folk who donated to the Heritage tables at the Festival of Fishing.

Many donations have been gratefully received to cover the construction costs of the **Memorial to Fishermen** and to help set up a fund for its on-going maintenance. There is a Memorial Book in the Library that can be used to record names being remembered by visitors to the Fishermen’s Memorial Cairn.

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2004

The judging for the **Moray Best-kept Village** competition took place on Wednesday 4th of August at 9.30am. The judges were Mr & Mrs McLaren. Rather unfortunately the weather that morning was ‘affa dreich’ – not like the previous day when Portknockie was a picture of complete beauty under the clear blue Moray skies. Despite the greyness, the judges were very impressed with what they saw and complimented us on the quality, colour and range of the many floral features we had on display. They were especially interested in the support given by the local community and the noticeable cleanliness of the village. A special impact on the judges was made as we walked Portknockie by the many unexpected floral delights around almost every corner of the village. This was probably the most impressive display that the “Village in Bloom” volunteers have created for us so far.

A lot of visitors to the village this summer have come just to see the displays and we have earned much praise from many quarters. There is a palpable sense of pride about the standards that have been set for Portknockie’s annual “**Village in Bloom**” show. This standard needs a lot of volunteer effort and financial support from the community. Each year doing better sets a fresh target for us. The next hurdle looks likely to be a return to the “Scotland in Bloom” challenge. This means taking on places like Comrie, North Berwick, Melrose, Pitlochry where there is very impressive commercial backing available to the organizing group. There are also extra problems for an exposed coastal place like Portknockie because the first judging for Beautiful Scotland

in Bloom takes place early in July, a full month in advance of the “Moray Best-kept Village” Competition.

The current group of “Village in Bloom” volunteers would appreciate some clear signals from the community that there will be the extra backing if this step is taken next year. Additional hands on help will be necessary to prepare the village for a step up to the premier league standards. Not only that, the commitment must be available for the whole of the summer display season not just at the beginning. Most useful would be small groups of residents or individuals offering to adopt a tub or feature and taking over complete responsibility for its care – watering, feeding and weeding. Make yourself known and do not hesitate to offer ideas and suggestions for improving the planning and management of our 2005 floral show.

In order to make Portknockie bonny for longer in the year, it is proposed to plant more spring bulbs this autumn – particularly crocus, narcissi hyacinths and the miniature daffodils and tulips in our tubs and troughs. When you buy your bulbs this year maybe you might consider buying extra and then offering those for community use.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

Our entry in the Calor Gas **Scottish Community of the Year challenge for 2004** never made it to the finals list this time. Our submission focused on the diverse range of community groups we have in Portknockie and how unstintingly many volunteers work to enrich the quality of life for all our residents. We are seeking some guidance from the organisers on how our entry failed.

Our entry in the British Legion War Memorials’ Competition this year also seems to have dropped into a black hole and we have not yet had any feedback on what the judges were looking for. We will probably try again next year after our new railings are installed.

A reminder to readers that we are fast approaching the annual **Remembrance Day** ceremony and last year you were asked for your views on making future Remembrance Day services in Portknockie more elaborate and more inclusive. What do you think?

What a tremendous success our first **Festival of Fishing** turned out to be! The programme of

activities for a first time event was varied and stimulating and very well attended by a good mix of locals and visitors. The buzz of excitement in the village all week was palpable and everyone was quite stunned by the very professional standards that the Festival achieved. What a celebration of fishing tradition and what a welcome everyone received!

Throughout the week there were moments of great poetry and emotion released by the series of heritage events. Everyone will have their favourite moment but for your Editor the great moments were: The opening service of praise in the Church of Scotland, the great surge of folk on the first Saturday as the Festival parade that followed the pipe band between the Heid o’ the Brae and the McBoyle Hall; the excitement on the faces of those returning from their Monday boat trips on the Moray Firth; the Church of Christ packed with glorious singing on Tuesday evening; the eager anticipation of folk crowding the Harbour Road railings watching for the safe arrival of the Regent Bird on Thursday and the tears in some eyes recalling the days when this was part of everyday life here; the harbour awash with children and adults on Thursday and Friday evening and, of course, the most poignant event of all, the moving Dedication of the Fishermen’s Memorial on the final Sunday evening.

By any standards this celebration of our village’s seafaring traditions was a huge success. This was a show of community spirit that re-charged everyone’s pride in being a part of Portknockie. One “K’nocker” wrote a letter to the local press commenting that the Festival was the best week of social activity in the village he could ever remember! It inevitably raises the issue of where next. It took a lot of effort and it will be a hard act to follow, let alone improve! Your views and ideas would be very welcome.

At the moment, the organisers are thinking that it may be sensible to aim for a Festival of Fishing every other year. This would help create local anticipation and avoid the risk of the programme becoming too familiar or stale. The link being proposed is that in the between years a Garden and Flower Show is put on with a regular annual Remembrance service held at the Fishermen’s Memorial. Keep watch for notices of meetings about the organisation of village affairs coming soon.

The Best-kept Gardens Competition 2004 was judged on Friday 30th July by John Addison and Ian Angus, two experienced gardeners from Cullen with your Editor and Helen Sammon representing the Community Council. This year there were 27 entries, a little down on last year when there were 34 nominations.

Despite the strange summer we have experienced this year with strong, cold winds setting back plant flowering, the garden standards were as high as ever. The presentations took place in George and Margaret Stephen's garden at 2 Stuart Place, worthy winners of the best Council House Garden Cup. Before handing out the awards your Editor took the opportunity of being with the best of the village's gardeners to raise some issues that we as a community might feel worth considering over the winter months:

- Should we organise an annual flower show in addition to the Best-kept Garden Competition?
- Would folk be interested in forming a Garden Club or Co-operative?
- Is there a local demand for allotments and where could they be established?
- Our Village in Bloom developments are at a cross roads. Any more expansion needs an increase in the volunteer group that organises things. The existing group is stretched to the limit. Are there additional helpers prepared to offer time and energy to go further? The next step could be a return crack at Beautiful Scotland in Bloom.

The competition class winners were: **Best Council House Garden Cup** – George & Margaret Stephen at 2 Stuart Place with the **Runner up plaque** going to Helen Ritchie at 8 Addison Street. **Best Private House Garden Cup** – Gerry & Sybil Connelly at 4 Westfield Drive with the **Runner up plaque** to Martin and Doreen Millar at "Regent Villa", Westfield Drive. **Best Small Display Certificate** - David & Maureen Pirie of 13 Reidhaven Street. **Best Tubs/Hanging Baskets Certificate** to Kenneth & Hannah Crozier of 18 Harbour Place.

The **Commendation Certificates** went to Robert & Margaret Dawson of 1 Firth View, William & Cathlene Dawson of 15 Church Street, Dave & Elsie Turner of 38 Church Street, Joe & Janice Smith of 3 Dover Street, George & Nettie Innes of 3 Bridge Street, David & Helen Field of 7 Admiralty Street, James & Mary

Runcie of 26 Admiralty Street, John & Pat Wood of 7 Samson Place, James & Maria Watson of 4 Addison Street and George & Aileen Stephen of 31 Seafield Street.

Community Certificates for "Village in Bloom" volunteers were awarded to Jean Forbes-Hicks of 35 Church Street and John & Tricia Barclay of 13 Dover Street. The **Certificates for Local Business Support** went to John & Isabel McLean at 6 New Street and Jim Urquhart of 3 Mid Street.

A **special Certificate** was awarded for the Junior Entry in the Best-kept Garden Competition and that was picked up by Haley Urquhart, Robyn Downie and Caroline Shearer on behalf of the Young Ceramics group.

Press photographs of the awards presentation appeared in the North Scot (20th August) and the Banffshire Advertiser (24th August). Our thanks go to George and Margaret and other members of the Stephen family for the friendly welcome extended to all the winners, who gathered at 2 Stuart Place and the delicious refreshments that were offered after the presentations.

"WILD ABOUT PORTKNOCKIE" - a series of local nature notes by Mary Thorpe:

A very common animal around Portknockie is the hedgehog. We usually start to see them snuffling around from about the end of April. Hedgehogs start to mate anytime between May and September and they are not faithful to one partner. In fact they may mate with numerous partners all through the breeding season. If you are fortunate to have them nesting in your garden you will benefit from them eating our big garden pests, the slugs. (Ed. George Stephens has told me that he has a resident hedgehog, which eats at the back door of 2 Stuart Place). I think we have a nest under our hedge where we leave some wood litter for them. Unfortunately we have found, on two occasions, a poor creature drowned in our garden pond. We felt terrible especially as we encourage them. A friend has advised that we should put a length of chicken wire over the edge of the pond as an escape route for any bathing hedgehog. The young are born with their eyes closed and no spines at all. They appear after only a few hours and are white at first. They will leave the nest at about five to six weeks to forage with mum. The father has no input at all in their rearing ... no comment!

If you want to encourage hedgehogs into your garden you can put out food such as cat or dog food, which is best watered down to a slop but try to avoid giving them bread and milk as it can upset their tummies. You can even buy special tins of food especially formulated for hedgehogs but this can work out quite expensive. If you want to feed hedgehogs and not cats put the food in a cage accessed by a narrow pipe, about 20 cm in diameter, which a cat should not be able to get through. Slug pellets are also a great danger to hedgehogs and birds so it is best to avoid the use of these. I find a beer trap is more effective at getting rid of this pest and at least the slugs go happy! It is quite important for any young hedgehogs born late in August and September to have enough body weight to survive the winter hibernation so help with food at this time is very important.

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So far it has been a very good year for the bees. Our garden has been fairly humming with them. We plan to put up some bee boxes after watching **Bill Oddie Goes Wild** on the TV in June. I have also learned that flowers with single blooms produce more nectar than the double hybrids and are, therefore, more beneficial to wildlife. We have quite a few plants that attract wasps as well as bees notably the cotoneasters and another plant, which I believe is called 'bergmansion beige' this is a strange plant in that its flowers are almost insignificant atop of long stems. It grows to quite a height too and last year it got to at least 170cm that is about five and half feet. Anyway, insignificant its flowers might be but the wasps just love them.

There is an abundance of late summer wild flowers out at the moment. Particularly noticeable is the common yarrow or achillea, so named after Achilles, the Greek, who apparently used the plant to cure wounds made by iron

weapons. They are mostly creamy white with quite large, flat heads of tiny flowers but sometimes you come across them in lovely pink and even deep red. You can also get them as hybrids for the garden. We used to have the wild variety growing on our lawn and even the mower did not have much impact on them. They just grew horizontal instead! Common knapweed is also in flower just now. Knap is an old term for knob which refers to the flower shape. They are very beneficial to many types of insects and are attractive with their purple flowers. The seeds end up like miniature parachutes, which disperse on the wind.

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There are also some cracking teasels down on the old railway cutting. I think they must have been planted as I have not seen them anywhere else locally (**Ed.** Yes, they came from Lynn Selwood's eco- friendly garden overlooking the harbour a few years back). There are also some giant hollyhocks growing behind the communal compost bin. They must be at least six feet high! There is also a very pretty little trefoil that has established itself since the wild life planting project began along the old line. I think it maybe the hop trefoil. It is certainly a good ground cover plant as it has filled in all the gaps on the banking. It is yellow like most of the trefoils and it is related to the pea family.

Not quite Portknockie but not too far away we were at Spey Bay for a picnic one Sunday recently and were fortunate to see ospreys. We had stopped half way down towards the old bridge and we were tucking into our sandwiches. I had said to my daughter, Jadine who was visiting with us, that we usually spotted ospreys during the summer months here when, lo and behold, one appeared in the distance at quite a height and began to hover looking out for fish. There was also one a bit higher up. We were amazed at quite how high it was. They must have very good vision! The hovering osprey soon had to give up its hunt though as an

oystercatcher began mobbing it until it finally got fed up and went elsewhere. Carl and I saw our first Spey osprey a couple of years ago and it was a classic. We came upon a clearing by the river and an osprey dived in right in front of us and came up with a huge salmon in its talons and made off with it in the typical way they do with the fish facing forward so that it can see where it is going!! No! it's for aerodynamics reasons really but I could not resist that.

I could hear some blue tits calling as I was writing this article and when I looked out there were about five or six in the climbing rose hopefully feeding on the greenfly but sadly, I frightened them off. Hopefully, they will come back to finish off the job. (Ed. I have had no greenfly this year at all on my honeysuckle, could it be because of global wetting!).

One late spring afternoon, I could hear what I thought was a blackbird 'pinking' beyond our garden on the old railway line. I thought it was bound to be a cat getting too close to a nest so I set off with Brin (the dog) to see it off. We discovered that it was a song thrush desperately attacking a couple of jackdaws that had its baby. It was quite distressing to see but that is nature for you. I do not suppose we feel much sympathy for the poor snails that get battered by the thrushes! A few years back we used to live at the edge of some woods and a friend was very keen on birds and had numerous feeders out to attract siskins and woodpeckers. But she complained to me that a sparrowhawk was coming to her garden every day and picking off the siskins. She was all for chasing it away but I pointed out that sparrowhawks have to live too. Then one day I heard squawking in my garden and found a sparrowhawk with a little pied wagtail. I then knew exactly how she had felt!

I would be interested in knowing what type of caterpillar it is that decimates the leaves of our nasturtiums each year. They usually appear quite a while after the plants have begun to flower and they are green with stripes and small black dots on the back. I am not knowledgeable when it comes to butterflies and moths so I checked out my Collins Gem Book on the subject and I think the caterpillars may be **Six-spot burnets** but I am not at all sure.

Well it will not be long until all our summer visiting birds migrate to warmer climes for the winter and we will hear the geese calling as they

return to us. The nights are shortening fast already and it is getting chilly in the evenings. Time for our little hedgehogs to curl up somewhere warm, I think.

PORTKNOCKIE WAR MEMORIAL 1939-1945: The Unveiling Ceremony compiled by Arnold Pirie. Part 2 of the story of our War Memorial's history.

Dean of Guild James Wood from Portknockie unveiled the new panels on the War Memorial on Sunday, 11th December, 1948. His son William John Wood was the first Portknockie man to be killed in World War II. Aged 21, he lost his life in the sinking of the battleship Royal Oak, in Scapa Flow, Orkney, on the 14th October, 1939. His name heads the Roll of Dead on the new panel on the memorial.

The re-dedication service was simple but impressive. In fine cold weather, town councillors and a fine gathering of townsfolk assembled round the memorial to pay homage to the men who had given their lives in WWII.

The Rev. James Grant, conducted the service which began with the singing of 'O God our help in ages Past' after which Mr. Grant read from the book of Revelation. Dean of Guild Wood then broke the Union Jack covering the memorial, and Provost Falconer laid the community's wreath.

Bugler W. Tomlinson from Buckie, sounded 'The Last Post' and Piper A. Keith also from Buckie, played a lament.

Mr. Grant re-dedicated the memorial and led the gathering in prayer, and the service concluded with the singing of 'How bright those glorious spirits shine'. A wreath was laid by Mrs. W.G. Flett, a daughter of Dean of Guild Wood, and a sister of Corporal Wood. The new panel bears 26 names - 20 Navy or Merchant Navy, 3 Army and 3 Royal Air Force.

The full list is as follows:- Corporal William J. Wood, R.N.; Skipper John Donaldson, R.N.R.; Skipper Alex. P. Mair, R.N.R.; Engineer James Bruce, R.N.R.; Engineer Thomas J. Wood, R.N.R.; Seaman Arthur J. Innes, R.N.S.R.; Seaman David Falconer, R.N.R.; Seaman George Mair, R.N.R.; Seaman Alexander Pirie, R.N.R.; Seaman William G.S. Mair, R.N.R.; Seaman George Sutherland, R.N.R.; Captain John Falconer, M.N.; Seaman Peter McIntosh, M.N.; Seaman Ernest M. Murray, M.N.;

Seaman John P. Mair, M.N.; Lieut. John A. Wood, Gordon Highlanders; Sergeant William Goodbrand, Gordon Highlanders; Private George Slater, R.A.M.C.; Pilot Officer James Anderson, R.A.F.; Warrant Officer James Murray, R.A.F.; and Flight Sergeant John McKay, R.A.F.

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PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

An older people's group has been set up for Moray called **Moray Seniors' Forum**. This is an action group speaking with one voice to represent the interests and concerns of older folk across Moray. If you are interested in getting involved contact April Charlesworth at the Community Care Project, 15 High Street, Elgin or phone on 01343 543490.

The latest Community Care Project newsletter reminds us that all World War II veterans and people over 75 can now obtain free 10 year passports. For further Passport enquiries phone 0870 521 0410. There is also a new Helpline for older people and their families which is 0845 125 9732.

Moray Council launched its **new recycling and refuse collection scheme** on 24th August. The aim is to double the present rate of recycling in Moray by 2006. The push for this is coming from tighter governmental regulation about waste disposal and the fact that the Dallachy Landfill Site has less than 10-12 years capacity left. The recycling performance of Scotland compares poorly with many other similar sized countries in Europe. The rise of the throwaway society means each household generates over a tonne of waste each year. This waste must be disposed of in a more efficient manner. The best way forward seems to be more awareness about the issues of waste disposal, the availability of kerbside recycling schemes and a change in everyone's lifestyle that leads to our reducing personal waste and finding better ways to re-use and re-cycle more of our household waste.

The new refuse collection scheme will start in the Forres area in September and will roll out gradually over the whole of Moray. Portknockie can expect to see the scheme by March 2006. Each household will be expected to separate out elements of waste so that different collections for recycling become possible. There will be new brown wheelie bins for garden waste collected weekly with two plastic boxes for glass and cans (orange) and mixed paper and card (blue). The old green wheelie bins will be used for residual

waste and will only be collected fortnightly. There will also be inducements to use garden composters and green cones to digest food waste.

The existing recycling centres around Moray will remain in use and as the new scheme reaches different areas of Moray full information on local collections will be made public. For more details about these plans contact the Moray Council Recycling Team on **01343 557045**.

NHS Scotland has published a community health and well-being profile for Moray, which shows a number of healthy living indicators for local post-code areas. Portknockie is lumped with Cullen and Findochty. The data give us some measure of how local health compares with the averages for Scotland as a whole. Some examples for you to ponder:

- We have more older people (over 65) than the average (i.e. for all Scotland)
- We have more lone pensioner households than the average.
- Life expectancy here is slightly longer than the average.
- The local birth rate is higher than the average.
- Alcohol related illness is lower than the average but smoking related illness is higher than the average. Smoking during pregnancy is higher than the average for Scotland.
- Drugs related deaths are lower than the average.
- Gross household income, house prices and households without cars are all lower than average for Scotland.
- Hospital admissions for cancer (lower), for heart disease (slightly higher), suicide or self-harm (much lower), for dental treatment (much higher).
- Deaths from heart disease are 10% higher than the average for Scotland.

Auntie Bessie's HAME COOKING:

A welcome six recipes have arrived at the offices of The K'nocker. The first two are featured in this issue:

Blow Away Sponge: For this you will need two 8 inch baking tins, 2 ozs of plain flour, 2 ozs of cornflour, 4 eggs, 4 ozs of castor sugar, a pinch of salt and one level teaspoon of baking powder.

Method: Separate the whites from the yolks of the eggs and beat the whites until stiff. Then add gradually the sugar and beat until smooth.

Whisk in the yolks and then add the other dry ingredients with a spoon. Put the mixture into two greased baking tins and bake in the oven at 350°F (180C) for 15 minutes until pale brown. To serve the sponges sandwich them together with whipped cream and strawberry or raspberry jam.

SHEAR DEZIGN

Hair by Lisa

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Samosas (A Zimbabwean Recipe): You will need 6-8 ozs of mince, 1 medium onion, 1 large or 2 small tomatoes, one green or red pepper, ¼ oz of mixed spice, one teaspoon of ground ginger, ½ teaspoon of cayenne pepper, one teaspoon of salt, 2 teaspoons of curry powder, one dessertspoon of margarine, 1 tea cup of water, 1 dessertspoon of lemon juice and one tablespoon of chutney.

Method: Fry the chopped onion in the margarine and then add the ginger, the spices, the salt the pepper, the tomatoes and the mince. Cook for about 5 minutes then add the water and bring to boiling point. Turn down the heat to low and cook for a further 5 minutes. Add the curry powder, the chutney and the lemon juice, mash together finely and cook gently until dry.

For the pastry take 2-3 cups of plain flour, 2 ozs of margarine, a pinch of salt and 2 teaspoons of baking powder. Add water to create a moist consistency then roll out the pastry very thinly. Cut out rounds with a pastry cutter, put a teaspoon of the mince mixture on each round, fold over and seal the edges. Cook the samosas in oil until the pastry is brown and crisp. When they are cold you can store them in the freezer. To serve, heat in the oven and with drinks they make a fine savoury snack.

Look out in the Christmas issue for two more of Auntie Bessie's recipes – Meringues and Smoked Haddock Souffle.

MEMORIES OF LEGGE'S FARM from the writings of Willie Slater. A reminder that Portknockie has not just been a fishing village.

In my youth, along with a few of my fellow contemporaries, Alex Legge's was the place to go after school or during the holidays. The barns were demolished years ago and now the byres and stables have been replaced by two new houses. Three generations of the Legge's pride and joy gone forever.

The steading was on both sides of Church Street. On the north side (what is now 4 & 6 Church Street) were the stables with room for three horses and was entered from the back but had a door through to a space where the corn box and harness was kept. It was a place I liked to be before a Sunday School picnic, as all the harness was cleaned with boot polish and the chains were put in a hessian bag with lots of torn-up newspapers and shaken until they were bright and shiny. The bridle, saddle and all the leather pieces were adorned with paper flowers and ribbons. The horses and lorries, with two long seats tied back to back, were ready to take the children to the Laundry Park at Cullen House or wherever the picnic was to be held that year. I wonder if anyone ever thanked Andrew Leel (who was employed by Alex Legge) for all the effort and time he devoted, in his own spare time to making everything smart for the picnics.

Now we go next door to the byre where the cows are kept, on the right side of the building. They have just come in for milking and are a bit restless, but here comes Lizzie Legge with her three-legged stool. She places the stool alongside a cow and leans forward so that the stool is balancing on two legs and starts milking. I have learned from experience, if I go too close she will, without any effort, direct the flow of milk to hit me right between the eyes! On the opposite side from the cows there is a pen for the calves. No calves, no milk. Next door to the byre is the straw shed and out at the back is the farm midden.

On our way to the other buildings we pass the water butts, a lard barrel cut in two with a water tap for the animals to have a drink on their way out or in.

The first building on the south side (now the site of the Millennium Garden) is a stone-built shed where all the hand tools are kept. Hoes, picks, spades and hammers. This building was also used by passing shepherds to keep their dogs. I used to feel sorry for them, as all they got to eat

was a bowl of brose. One shepherd did tell me that if the dogs caught a rabbit, he would cut it up and give it to them to eat. On the right side were the cart sheds then the neep sheds, another favourite spot in the early evening when the neeps were being mashed. The cows' neeps were put through a hand-operated masher to be cut into slices. The slices fell into a herring basket which was put on a flat barrow and we thought it a great privilege to be allowed to take this down to the byre.

Opposite the neep shed is the mill which is a threshing machine used to separate the oat seeds from the straw. Then the seeds are put through another machine called a bruiser which crushes them and makes them more digestible for the animals. The straw is used as bedding for the animals. The engine, when not being used for the mill could be connected to the outside circular saw and used to cut logs for firewood, to be sold locally. The other by-produce chaff and weed seeds can be used by the locals in a chaff bed.

Round the corner from the mill is a pile of tree trunks waiting to be sawn up. Opposite these facing north were the two lorry sheds, open at the front and always a dry retreat for us boys on a wet day. In another corner was a small pigsty with a few pigs.

Round the corner on Bridge Street is the house of the Legge family (still there number 10) and a small milk house. There was a constant stream of people about tea-time coming for a penny or two of milk and maybe some eggs, vegetables for making broths and, of course, potatoes were always available. The corn yard was some distance from the steading and could not be seen from the house. On more than one occasion, the entire contents were burnt down, a whole year's work lost in an hour. There was vandalism then, too.

In the summer Alex provided a stance for "Mary Dicks' Fair", a very local fair which was over-wintered at Whitehills and remained mostly in the north-east. Old Mary was the boss, helped by her two sons, Arthur and Fred. There were what we called showdy boats, coconut shies, rolling the penny and two shooting galleries. There was one of the usual kind, four targets and four airguns with darts. The other one was special as it consisted of a long metal tube of about 30 feet with one target at the far end.

They had some system whereby after every shot Arthur and Fred would pull a rope which moved a brush out of a receptacle containing whitewash, over the target to give a nice clean surface. The local men would try night after night to get the highest score and whoever had the highest score at the end of the week got a prize. The prize, of course, was not nearly the worth of the money spent. All of their lorries and caravans were kept in immaculate condition, the paint shining and the copper gleaming.

ONE FIRTH VIEW by Margaret Dawson.
This is the first of a regular feature of comment by one of our avid readers from “up toon”.

“REEL” FRIENDS”

The scene - Summer School at St. Andrews. Since 1925, for four weeks, the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) takes over the university Halls of residence for the annual Summer School. This year we were there for a week, but where were the Scots? Yes, they were there, but the largest contingent of dancers came from England. The Japanese and the Scots were 2nd equal, followed by 17 different nationalities from every corner of the globe.

Japanese doing Scottish Country dancing? They love it and cannot get enough of it! The wake-up call each morning is by the skirl of the pipes. A glance out of our bedroom window revealed that the piper was Japanese and a woman! In the Highland Dancing class in the afternoons, the highest leaper was a Japanese gentleman. His mother had made his kilt but, unfortunately he had forgotten to bring his sporran!

An energetic group of dancers had come from southern Russia. They dance with real passion and are interested in all aspects of Scottish dance and culture. They perform regularly at Scottish Festivals around their area of Russia.

It was very encouraging to see such a strong international element for one of our greatest assets. We ought to appreciate what we have to share with the dancers and musicians who come year after year to the Summer school to make new friends and to renew old acquaintanceships.

Michael Argyle, the social psychologist, once said – “A hobby or activity that involves the whole being is one of the best guarantees for long-term happiness” and Scottish Country

Dancing can certainly be put into that category. Dancing is the best prescription for a general feeling of contentment and satisfaction with life. (Ed. Robert & Margaret Dawson run local Scottish Country dancing groups for the Church)

POETS’ CORNER: “Portknockie” a poem by Sheena Pirie that catches something of the pride folk had for their own village, then as now.

“There’s the Cradlies and the Whal’s Moo
An’ the Preacher’s Cave an’ a’
They remind me o’ Portknockie
When I am far awa’.

Mony are the rafties
I made there as a loon
My mither was dementit
She feared that I micht droon

Portknockie hisna changed that much
Tho’ mony years have gone
An’ aften I return there
Jist tae hae a look aroon.

Aul fishermen still gaither
At the tap the hairber brae
The weemin folk are busy
It’s Monday - washin’ day.

The young lads are a’ stannin’
Up against the banker’s dyke
The things they say about the quines
Ye’ve niver heard the like!

There’s the bowlin’ green and tennis courts
Twas there I met my wife
Ye ken she comes from Cullen
But then that’s nae her wyte.

Ther’e Lizzie’s fairm an’ High street
Calder’s Brae and a’ the rest
The Bow Fiddle an’ Green Castle
An’ that’s aboot the best

Tho’strangers micht nae see it
Tae me great beauty lies
In every close and slappy
An’ in the seagulls’cries.”
(Davie Mair Collection)

Fancy yourself as another Rabbie Burns? A worldwide search is being launched to mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns in 2007. The competition will start next year with people invited to compose poems inspired by

Burns or new music for one of his original works. The best entries will come through the regional heats to compete in a televised final, in which the winners will be chosen by the public. Songwriters can choose to perform their works personally or use students from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. To get ahead of the game start working on a revised Auld Lang Syne or Ae Fond Kiss now. We can premier the very best in upcoming issues of The K'nocker!

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WE SHOULD ALL BE DEAD – passed to the K'nocker by a local doctor who should know!

According to today's regulators and bureaucrats, those of us who were kids in the 1960s, and 1970s probably shouldn't have survived. Why?

Our baby cots were covered with brightly coloured lead-based paint which was promptly chewed and licked. We had no child-proof lids on medicine bottles, or latches on doors or cabinets and it was fine to play with pans. When we rode our bikes, we wore no helmets, just flip flops and fluorescent 'spokey-dokeys' on our wheels. As children we would ride in cars with no seat belts or airbags and riding in the front seat was a treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle and it tasted the same. We ate chips, bread and butter pudding and drank fizzy pop with sugar in it but we were never overweight because we were always playing outside. We shared one drink with four friends, from one bottle or can and no-one actually died from this.

We would spend hours building go-carts out of scraps and then went top speed down the hill, only to find out we had forgotten to fix brakes. After running into stinging nettles a few times, we learnt to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and could play out all day as long as we were back before it

got dark. No one was able to reach us and no one minded!

We did not have Play stations or X-Boxes, no video games at all. No 99 channels on TV, no videotapes movies, no surround sound, no mobile phones, no personal computers and no Internet chat rooms. We had friends, we went outside and found them. We played elastics and street rounders and sometimes that ball really hurt.

We fell out of trees, got cut and broke bones but there were no law suits. We had full on fist fights but no prosecution followed from other parents. We played knock-and-run and were actually afraid of the owners catching us. We walked to friends' homes. We also, believe it or not, walked to school. We didn't rely on mummy or daddy to drive us to school, which was just round the corner.

We made up games with sticks and tennis balls. We rode bikes in packs and wore our coats by only the hood. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law.

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers and problem solvers and inventors ever. The past 50 years have seen an explosion of innovation and ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all. Do you recognise yourself?

NATURE CONUNDRUM No 1 – Where have all the 'hoppers gone? By Eddie Anderson:

In the 1930's Grasshoppers were numerous in the warm summer months, heard oftener than seen, as the males strummed to the females by rasping their long legs across their wings – a process called "stridulating". They were especially numerous and loudly audible as 'Knocker bairns trekked eastwards on the Black Roadie, alongside the railway cutting, on their way to the Reed Road leading down to the Sannies for a dook. Perhaps, with a shared bottle of Hay's Cream Cup lemonade, some buttered pancakes and a packet of Fardens, prigget from one's mother with a parting admonition – "Noo, dinna shak the bottle an' min' an'tak it hame!"

The sun seemed to shine out of a cloudless blue sky every day of the school's summer holidays.

The south-facing banks of the railway cutting had to be regularly scythed by the linesmen to ensure the tinder-dry grass did not get set alight by sparks from the train-engine lum, especially from the limited-stop Mailie hurtling through mid-afternoon from Buckie to Cullen, to link at Aberdeen with the over-night Mail and Sleeper services to London.

The grasshopper songs somehow sounded less strident as, tiredly, we trachled homeward, ready for our tea, with the lemonade bottle to hand in for the bawbee deposit, and with blueberries picked from the western slopes of the Aul' Laft, gathered into a large poke of curled plantain leaf. Our spirits lifted with the sneek of the back-door, to sniff the smell of griddled oatcakes and whiff the aroma of frying herring, landed that morning in Buckie from the drifter fleet whose lights had been seen flickering from the Flagstaff the previous forenicht, as their nets were shot, with hope and faith, in a long arc from west to east towards the darkening horizon. A long time passing! Where have they all gone? Including the Grasshoppers!

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

Portknockie Community Council: The first meeting of the year 2004/5 will be on the 7th September at 7pm in the Library. The Minutes of the Community Council are stored in the Library and open to scrutiny by any of the residents. The next three meetings will be on Mondays 18th October, November 8th and December 13th.

The first task of the September meeting will be to elect a new Chair to replace Mrs Ritchie, who has stepped down after six years of very dedicated service. Also needed is a replacement for Jonathan Milton, one of the two student members who has now moved out of the area. If you are between 16 and 18 and fancy taking an active part in how the village affairs are run contact Laura Bruce, the other student member of the Community Council or see Margret Wood in the Library.

The **Amenities Association** has been folded. Brenda Cowie and Donna Coull have agreed to continue to manage the McBoyle Hall until any new arrangements can be agreed. Expected to be at the public meeting on 20th September when the management of village affairs is being discussed. Brenda Cowie is the Hall Keeper and

she has the responsibility for all the letting arrangements and can be contacted at 11 Seafield Street or on 01542-840198.

Portknockie Playgroup: The Playgroup reassembled on Tuesday 17th August. The new session provides for 11 pre-school children and 8 three year olds. A further 5 three year olds will start Playgroup between the 1st September 2004 and 28th February 2005.

Portknockie Brownies: our first meeting is on Monday 6th September at 6pm in the School.

Fishing: The squid boats have been seen off and on in the area these past few months but it has not quite been the bonanza of last year. Alan and Ewan Robertson have a new venture, namely the LK Arnborg fishing for clams. Good fishing to them and all the other fishing boats.

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Library Opening Hours: 5-8pm Tuesdays; 2-5pm & 6-8pm Thursdays; 10-12noon on Saturdays.

Portknockie Seniors: Tuesday 21st September is Joining Night. Anyone over the age of 18 and resident in Portknockie is welcome to join.

Church of Christ Guild restarts on the 13th September. All ladies welcome.

Church of Christ Sunday School will resume on Sunday 5th September at 2pm. All children welcome.

Church of Scotland Guild: Next meeting on Wednesday 8th September at 7pm in the Seafield Hall. All very welcome to an evening with the Samaritans.

Seafield Women's Rural Institute (SWRI) starts the new season on Thursday 23rd September with Mrs Gray talking about work with the Children's Panel. On October 28th Mr Tim Drakeford talks about wines and how to make cocktails. On November 25th Jean Forbes

is bringing her young dancers to entertain. All meetings start at 7pm. New members always welcome to come and join in the fun.

Bowling Club Notes: We have had a busy time over the summer and, with a bigger membership this year, the green has been that bit busier. The local Buckie & District Friendly League, in which we play, has concluded with Portknockie finishing in third place (though this year the first three teams were all very close). During the Festival of Fishing the club ran a successful pairs tournament for the new Alan McLean Cup. This was won by Hector Lawson and Andrew Campbell from Cullen. A mainly sunny afternoon in late August saw Club members play out for the Dougal (Cowie) Cup, this being won by Andrew Ritchie and John Wood. In addition, members have been out and about taking part in competitions at other clubs in the area. While outdoor bowls continue for a few weeks yet, the AGM of the Club will take place at 7pm on **Friday 24th September** in the Pavilion. Did you also see the article in the Buckie Advertiser on the use club members have made of the giant draughts set made up by John Bell?

The indoor season, held in the light and warmth of the McBoyle Hall, will commence at 7pm on Monday 27th September. New members will be most welcome, if you do not have bowls shoes, ordinary carpet slippers will do just fine.

PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL NEWS

Welcome to this, my first submission for the Knocker since taking on the role of Head teacher at Portknockie Primary School. It has been an extremely busy period for the whole staff, with our increasing School Roll. However, within this hive of activity we are working on a number of initiatives. This term will see the formation of the 'Pupil's Council' which will allow the children to take an active role in shaping the future look of the School. The children elected to the committee will also be part of the School's 'ECO'-Committee, where they will formulate ideas into improvements to the school grounds. Some ideas have already been put forward and include ideas such the construction of an adventure play area and the establishment of a nature area.

There are other activities on the horizon this term. One of these will involve School

participation in the Gordonstoun Challenge. This competition is designed to test children both intellectually and physically. The School will be entering a team of 6 children into the challenge on the 19th September. I'm sure you'll join me in wishing them luck.

The School will be hosting The Friends of Moray Coast Dolphins for their Road show on the 28th September and there will be a Scholastic Book fair on the 29th September. Your support for the Book Fair is of course most welcome.

Finally, for your information the Autumn term will conclude on Friday the 8th October and re-starts with the second part of the term on Monday 25th October.

Moira Cooke Head teacher Portknockie School.

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