

A WARM WELCOME HOME TO OUR NEW HEAD TEACHER BACK FROM NEW ZEALAND

Welcome back home to Mrs Shona Idle, the new Head Teacher of Portknockie School. Mrs Idle is a native of these parts and commenced her own formal education at Findochty School before switching in P2 to Portknockie School where in 1971 she was awarded the Dux prize. She spent the next six years at Buckie High School then went on to Aberdeen University where she took an Honours degree in French and German. She followed this with a post-graduate teacher training course at the College of Education.

Her first teaching post saw her as acting relief Head Teacher cover for Mr Frank Reynolds back in Portknockie. From 1983 to 1999 Mrs Idle taught at the Hythehill Primary School in Lossiemouth before migrating with her husband for a period overseas in New Zealand.

There followed a short spell teaching in the Auckland area before finding a dream location in South Island, an hour outside Nelson. Here she began teaching in the little Lake Rotoiti School at St Arnaud. This was a pioneering time for the couple as they took on a 66 acre spread of paddock and native bush which they planted with trees and an orchard. They even found time to dismantle a house in Nelson, transport it to St Arnaud, rebuild it and connect it to a nearby stream for a water supply! By 2003 Mrs Idle had taken over the headship of this school gaining further experience which has helped prepare her for this new challenge in Portknockie.

COUNCIL CONFIRMS THE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE RELOCATION OF OUR LIBRARY TO THE SCHOOL

Moray Council has given the green light for the proposed move of the village library from Park Street to the School. This move was first suggested by the Save the School campaign group last year as one of the ways to make better use of our school building and to save it from closure.

Moray Council has announced that libraries in Burghead, Dufftown, Findochty, Hopeman and Rothes will also be relocated to their Primary School. Portknockie and Rothes will pilot an integrated school/community library facility. That is the provision of a shared community resource.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

The Summer 2007 K'nocker is available to download from www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk in printed form and also in **Audio Digest** format. **CD** copies of this podcast have been passed on to Lois Mair and to local residential homes for the elderly. At Christmas time, we plan to produce an annual compilation on CD for download or purchase.

A Thank you e-mail from Mr & Mrs Mair and son of Macclesfield, Cheshire:

‘On our yearly visit to Portknockie we arrived on Saturday 30th June. We had a lovely few days until our son was taken ill with a slight stroke the day before we were to return home. We cannot thank the people of Portknockie enough for their help and concern, including the shop keepers and the landlord of the Victoria Hotel. Thanks also to Mr& Mrs D Poole and Mrs M Geddes who put us up in her B&B until our son was well enough to travel home.

My husband’s family come from Portknockie and we are related to Mair (“King”) who lived in Blantyre Place. We hope to come back again next year.’

An e-mail from George Mair who used to sell vegetables from a barrow which was stored in Alex

Legge's farm. He highlights some more of the businesses that once traded in the village:

The Aberdeen Savings Bank and Louis Aitken, clothes retailer both in Park Street; John Stewart, butcher in Church Street opposite the Hall; Alfred Thompson, a joiner at the rear of the Victoria Hotel; David Slater, also a joiner in Commercial Road; James Paul, a builder opposite the Chemist shop and John McBoyle also a builder in Admiralty Street at the junction with Falconer Terrace; James Mair, a gents hairdresser at the rear of the Seafield Inn; Alexander Pirie ("Alkie Peerie") ship chandler and David Gardiner, a plumber both in Reidhaven Street; 'Aick', the tailor and slater who had a shoe shop both in Bridge Street; ? Wood (Post) a shoe cobbler at the rear of the Seafield Hall; George Mair (King), "Georgie Kingie" on Cliff Terrace; Robert Wood, coal merchant, the Harbour; George Mair who sold vegetables from a barrow that was stored on Alex Legge's farm and "Doddie Piddly" from the Bauds.

Airmail from Australia: Charlie Slater writes from Wanniasa, Australia with more memories of when he lived in Portknockie. His brother is David Slater, his sister is Morag Reid and George Findlay is a cousin. He has been in contact with Alexander Mair and he would welcome other contacts via his e-mail address – cetess@tpg.com.au

"As Zena Brown wrote in the last issue ('I cannot remember Charles Slater ...') it is sometimes hard to recall what a certain person looked like or did though the name is familiar and I find it fun trying to do so. After staying in Pulteney Street my parents got a council house (6 Samson Street) vacated by my aunt and uncle when they moved to Aberdeen. That was my home until I married in 1961 although I had been working away from Portknockie for quite a time before then.

I think Zena was the school generation after me because I remember when Georgie Kingie had the sweet shop with a snooker table on Church Street long before Wright's or Sammy Hunter and Wullie Pirie had it as an electrician and, I think my uncle Dan eventually moved into it or next door later on.

Is there no football team in the Port anymore? I was the goalkeeper for the Seafield Albion at one time and one year we won the Duncan Cup and the Welfare League Flag. **Editor:** Charlie has sent a photo (now in the Library) showing the team and naming Pat Innes, James Wood, William John Pirie, John Alex Mair, George Slater, Jack Taylor, Ron Taylor, Billy Taylor and George Skene – three others not named.

At the Coronation Gala parade (1953) I was supposed to be an Indian Brave on horseback and when the piper started playing the horse bolted along Church Street much to the amusement of the spectators.

I love poems in the Doric and write quite a few myself but my friends out here do not have a clue how to pronounce some of the words (the computer does not understand the Doric either and always underlines the words in red!) Fortunately I am in contact with a blacksmith with whom I worked back in 1959 and we enjoy now swapping our poems – his name is James Tawse and he lives in Newtonhill, near Aberdeen. **Editor:** Charles has sent some of his poems for Poet's Corner. One is featured in this issue and we will publish the others in due course.

Keep up the good work on the K'nocker and roll on September for the next issue. Charlie Slater."

Editor: Charlie has also written to the K'nocker with some memories of places and people he used to know when he lived and grew up in Portknockie - see the following page. Are there any past members of the Seafield Albion football team who might write a short history of the "beautiful game" as it used to be played in Portknockie for a future issue of the K'nocker?

Congratulations to George and Margaret Stephen for winning again the Best-kept Council house garden competition that is organised by Moray Council. The Stephen's immaculately kept garden in 2 Stuart Place gained them best in class not only in the Buckie area but for the whole of East Moray. The Buckie area runner-up also came from the same spot in the village - James Runcie, 26 Admiralty Street.

Kut 'n' Kurl
of
Portknockie
840366
Kerry, Susan, Claire & Joanne

Compliments to Portknockie prize winners in local shows: John Rose did well in several classes at the Deskford Show while Margaret Greig and Mary Sutherland won a number of prizes in the Banffshire SWRI contests at the Keith Show.

PORTKNOCKIE PRE-1945 RECOLLECTIONS

by Charlie Slater:

The reason the harbour walls are all black was as the result of a "Flame thrower" being installed for the defence of the harbour during WW2. The remains of the building which housed the pump and the oil can still be seen on the breakwater right behind the Wee Jetty. The pipes went right along the breakwater and came out opposite the (Brasso Tin) lighthouse – (**Editor:** now long gone.) During one trial I recall the black crude oil spewed out for a long time before it ignited and the oil, floating on the surface, covered all the walls as the tide fell and the fishermen were livid as their boats all now had a new, black plimssole line.

"Fackie's shed" was built in the Hythie, as we knew the area, and the cave going through to the Linn Links was the Hythie Cave and we never heard it called "Fackie's Cave". In Fackie's shed we school kids could earn one penny per hour after school taking the eye shoots off potatoes which were going to seed. These were then re-bagged by John Deere (Provost Falconer's truck driver and handy man) and sold to the Army and Air Force camps at Dalachie and in Portsoy. John owned the Chip Shop that burned down behind Lizzy Legge's byre. Years later, in the same shed, poultry were gathered for slaughter. John would pull their necks and the birds were plucked by local ladies, ones I recall were Mrs Stephen (Nobilie), Mrs Leel, Maggie Innes and her daughter, Mary (Pulteney Street) and Mrs Staples. (**Editor:** Margret Wood says that her Mam remembers she helped her Mam, Mary Bruce and Edie Sutherland pluck hens in this shed. Vera Mair also recalls the Portknockie chicken pluckers in her e-mail on page 19).

At the bottom of the Horse Road was Alardyce's shed next to Bob Wood's shed. Across from there was Weldie's shed, then the wee shed with a deep well and then, I think, there was a cooper's shed, used by Alkie Slater, where we used to play among the barrels and staves. The last of the sheds were the Tarrie Shed and Provost Falconer's new shed.

When I was a boy the Doo cave (mentioned in the Easter issue) was probably 10-15 feet high. We used to throw stones up at the pigeons roosting or nesting as we could not reach them. Further along by the Cradlies was where we used to build "hutties" further inshore due to the tides.

At the bottom of the road going down to the Creeks Bill Simpson, the carter, used to stable his horse. He would have been what is now called a courier (**Editor:** in the Doric, 'cadger') as he collected the

goods from the railway station and delivered them all round the shops. Bill was also a coal merchant and he had land up at Dyce Backie where he would furrow a field and people could plant their own potatoes and he would cover them in for a nominal fee and, later for another fee, dig them up. He sold his potatoes and vegetables from the back of his house in Church Street opposite the Provost's shop, now Costcutters. (**Editor:** this is just the idea of a community allotment with home grown, organic and cheap produce that the Community Association feel would be very useful for Portknockie now!)

There used to be a couple we referred to as "Woolies" who used to come to the village on two bicycles joined together and pulling a low trailer from which they sold a variety of household items. There was also a man who came on a bicycle which he set up to sharpen knives and scissors. He would raise the back on a stand, attach a belt to the back wheel and when he peddled he turned the grinding stone on which he ground the cutters. And, of course, we had annual visits from the "Onion Jonnies" with their bicycles laden with strings of onions. Nell Ross would always be giving a cuppa to any door to door sales persons and I remember, she once asked me to run down to the bakery for some cakes for the onion man's "fly cup". They all respected her for her kindness and they were like family to her.

I am sure there are many oldies like myself who are still in the Port who can remember these things from our past and could recount them for your readers. Wouldn't it be interesting to find out how many different countries around the world where one can now find Portknockie expats living? It is good to know Portknockie is "Aye Afloat" and it is thanks to you people who are involved with the K'nocker.

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JOINERY MANUFACTURE REPLACEMENT WINDOW SPECIALIST

Margaret Downie (nee Chalmers) has written from Lesmahagow: "I've never heard of the shoreline west of the village called the 'Lang Links' – my father was born in 1897 and he always called it the 'Linn Links' where he went dookin with his pals.

My memory of the Fishermen's Hall is of being sent there to a little room upstairs to pay the rent on a Saturday morning. A clerk from Scrimgeour's Solicitors, Portsoy collected the council house rents.

I do not know what Fackie's Cave was called before but I guess it got that name in the early 1940s from the large wholesale potato store that was there belonging to James Falconer, the Provost. My father worked there for a bit and was later transferred to Kirkwall to a store there where he drove the lorry delivering the potatoes to the naval fleet in Scapa Flow. The Provost's brother, Bill was the local registrar and he ran the sweets and ice cream shop in the Square. His wife taught Primary 2 at Portknockie School.

Would Ishbel Beresford be Ishbel Slater? I wonder if she remembers sitting by my cousin, Beryl Geddes and me in Mr Mair's class when he told us that one day a man would reach the moon and that maybe we would be able to go on holiday there!. We all thought he had "lost the place" but, at least, part of his prediction has come true although I haven't heard of anybody holidaying there yet!

From Isobel Worrell: The Guardian Guide to the Seaside 2007 – 10 unusual rock formations: "Bow Fiddle Rock, Moray Firth – The most spectacular rock formation along a stretch of coast in north-east Scotland that is dotted with arches, caves and sea stacks, formed by erosion of the steeply folded 650 million year old Cullen quartzite. Bow Fiddle Rock is part of the massive Caledonian fold belt that's said to have once formed mountain ranges as high as the Himalayas." (Published in the Guardian newspaper).

The Inscription on the Fishermen's Memorial at the Flagstaff has weathered rather badly since its completion in 2004. JR Henderson, the monumental sculptors & stonemasons of Elgin have agreed to re-do the lettering at no extra cost. This is a welcome example of fine after service and it was carried out on Thursday 2nd August 2007.

Whatever happened to summer 2007? Residents who have lived in Portknockie for 70 years or more have been heard to comment that they cannot recall a poorer summer. From May through to August the skies have been so grey and wet. For each day of blue skies and warmth there have been four or more following that have been cold, windy and dreich. Certainly the flowers in Portknockie have taken an awful battering over the summer season.

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2007 – A DOUBLE JUDGEMENT ON MONDAY 30TH JULY:

Portknockie was the first village to be judged in the Moray Best-kept Village Competition this year. The two judges, Jim and Pat MacCallum were up from Stirling. Jim recalled being part of the Beautiful Scotland in Bloom judging team that came here back in 2001. His comments this time were that if we had been as good then as we are now we might well have scooped a national trophy.

The MacCullum's were very impressed with the cleanliness of the village and the interest of residents in Village in Bloom shown by the large numbers of hanging baskets and window boxes outside so many houses. They complimented particularly the Playgroup's junior entry (box of growing vegetables) – "forward thinking to see children being taught from an early age about growing and caring for vegetables so important in our daily lives.", Treasure Island, our War Memorial display, the Remembrance Garden and the new Lighthouse feature at the Beach. The Banffshire Advertiser took photos of the judging team with Bob Croucher, Helen and David Field, representing the village, at The Lighthouse. David who had painted the Lighthouse and the two gulls explained how it had been made up from a spare concrete sewage pipe. Special thanks to Stuart Stevenson for giving us the pipe and son, Mark who levelled the patch of weeds by the Westfield Drive development in time for the judging. It is planned to landscape this area later with chuckies and permanent shrubs.

At 11am the second pair of judges for the national competition, "Beautiful Scotland", arrived! Photos were taken by the Press & Journal and the Northern Scot outside the school. The Beautiful Scotland judges were Ian McKenzie, the Parks Officer for Aberdeen City and Keith Vernon, a landscape architect with South Lanarkshire Council. They were part of a team judging 51 communities of all sizes across Scotland. Fortunately the rain held off and, although some of the hanging baskets and troughs looked somewhat battered by the recent winds and rain, Portknockie looked very tidy and bonny. The only adverse comment made by the judges was about the old iron framed seat in the Square being badly in need of painting. Very much appreciated was the fine refreshment stop provided by John and Linda Scott in the Victoria Hotel. The judges watched a DVD of the contrasts between the village in winter and summer filmed by John Bell, examined the Portfolio of Village in Bloom 2007 activities and checked out posters produced by P7 children to draw attention to

Portknockie's problems with dog owners not cleaning up after their pets - all this while consuming their tea, coffee, sandwiches and cakes!

The judges were impressed by the financial backing given to this competition by residents and urged us to explore all ways of involving more volunteers to help in the year round preparations for the Beautiful Scotland competition. They welcomed suggestions that we might test local interest in establishing a community allotment that could appeal to all age groups; that we intend to improve landscaping by the McBoyle Hall and that plans are in hand for the school to make use of the wildlife area in the old railway cutting as an outdoor laboratory to help enrich the pupils' Eco-school curriculum experience. Results of this judging will be announced at the Presentation of Awards, hosted this year by Dundee City Council, in the Caird Hall on Wednesday 19th September.

At the Awards Evening for the Best-kept Village in Moray competition on 30th August Portknockie came **runner up** to the winners, Dufftown in the large village section. A special award for an outstanding feature was made by the judges, the first time in 3 years, to us for the Treasure Island landscaping in Bridge Street. The Playgroup received a Commended certificate for its box of vegetables. The awards were presented by Richard Lochhead, Moray MSP and Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment.

Who had the best hanging basket, window box or plants in a pot in Portknockie this summer? The opinion of the judging team (Bob Croucher, Helen and David Field, John Myles and Harry Hawkes) for this **NEW** garden competition was as follows:

Best Window Box: 10 Mid Street (Ysanne Hill) with runners up - 8 Victoria Street (Catherine and Alec Ritchie) and the Seafeld Inn.

Best Hanging Basket: 18 Harbour Place (Delia and Paul Fletcher) with runners up - 26 King Edward Terrace (Mr and Mrs Smith) and "Mamre", King Edward Terrace (Isobel and Graham Reid).

Best Pot: 18 Pulteney Street (Mrs Patricia Morgan) with runners up - 11 Mid Street (Sue and Peter Cross) and 7 Seaview Place (John and Margaret Greig).

The judging took place over the weekend of 4/5th August and the judges found it hard to single out winners from the variety and quality of the displays they found across the village. The judges were

particularly impressed by the residents of Mid Street who had set up a wonderful display of pots, hanging baskets and window boxes - truly a street in bloom!

If residents like the idea of this annual competition it might be sensible to draw up an agreed schedule for the future. For example, should these displays be nominated (by their owners or neighbours), should the competition only cover displays that can be viewed by the public from the road and should the competition cover the whole display or just individual baskets, boxes and pots?

PORTKNOCKIE CHIP SHOP

Ron & Dee

Mon-Thurs: 4.30-8.00

Fri-Sat: 4.30-9.00

Last orders 15 minutes before closing time

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

The Council comprises: **Chairman:** Alan Beresford (840534/07790023983), **Secretary:** Janice Smith (842826), **Vice Chair:** Helen Sammon (841794) **Treasurer:** Gladys McKenzie (840542), **Press Secretary:** Pearl Murray (841087) with Lil Urquhart, Sam Muir, Cathleen Harper and the two **Junior Councillors** - awaiting nomination. Two vacancies are yet to be filled.

All households in the village are being circulated with a news letter detailing the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme and the advantages of membership. The message is that residents should help each other keep Portknockie safe, don't suffer from vandalism and report incidents because there is help out there! The Community Council has met with the Grampian Police to agree this strategy for persuading residents to be watchful and active in reporting incidents of petty vandalism and anti-social behaviour that can so easily upset harmony for all in the village. Residents are asked to indicate an interest in joining the village Neighbourhood Watch Group by using the tear off slip and leaving their details at the Hill Street Newsagent, the Chemist or at the Library. Also available from the Library is a sticker warning off doorstep callers from cold sales activities.

During August the PCC has circulated news in the local shops of proposed adult evening classes to be offered at the school during the coming winter months. There will be an opportunity on **Wednesday 19th September** to attend a taster session organised by Moray Council in the school. It will be possible to

sign up for classes during the evening and even to suggest other alternative classes for consideration.

The initial list of classes on offer includes: Internet and e-mail; Keep fit; Spanish; French; Tai Chi; Cake Decorating; Art; Quilt making; Aromatherapy and Yoga. Come along on the evening and sign up for meeting people with similar interests, having fun, learning useful skills and doing something for the whole community – helping to ensure that the school is better used and has a lasting future in the village.

For more details and to book a place before the Taster Evening contact any of the following:

Alan Beresford on 07790023983 or e-mail alan_beresford@yahoo.com – Pearl Murray on 841087 or e-mail pearlayefloat@aol.com – Lil Urquhart on 840004 or e-mail LLISCO@aol.com

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

The PCA will need to change its Constitution at the next AGM on 23rd October as a consequence of new tighter regulations from the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator. The present Constitution refers to an **annual audit of accounts** but under the new regulations this will require costly scrutiny of the accounts by professional registered auditors. For a local charity like the PCA it will be acceptable for the accounts to be scrutinised by an independent local examiner with auditing skills. The amendment to our Constitution will indicate that **‘an independent examination of the accounts each year’** takes place.

The annual Gala activities this year began with a novel “P in the Park” event for children on Thursday 26th July. Sadly, the inclement weather meant a swift shift of location for the picnic from the McLeod Park to the McBoyle Hall. However, all enjoyed the event organised by Lil Urquhart and Donna Coull.

The following evening the village Gala took place in the Square and although the weather was typically summer 2007 i.e. unseasonably overcast and cool, the rain held off enough for a warm and generous crowd of residents and visitors to fire up the gala atmosphere and enjoy the various stalls, competitions, barbecue kippers and burgers and activities. Both pubs played a major role in the entertainment, the Victoria Hotel served teas and home bakes in the lounge and later was the venue for Fat Willy’s karaoke. The Seafield Inn hosted the tombola and an evening of music and dancing. The Gala did very well to raise £1 500 which will boost PCA funds to pay for Village in Bloom expenses and go towards the running costs of

the village hall. Any proceeds from the P in the Park event will be shared, along with the profits from the Thrift Shop, amongst local groups and worthy causes in the village.

In the absence of any feedback from residents to the proposals (already listed in the summer issue of The K’nocker) for an application to the National Lottery’s “Awards for All” scheme no action has yet been taken. As a reminder three projects were put forward and the PCA committee needs comments, **alternative ideas**, suggestions of help and indications of what project (s) would be most welcome from the residents of the village.

- One possible project would focus on making more flexible use of the Youth Centre in the old Burgh Chambers, Church Street. Other uses for this hall might include: As a small meeting place for village groups, as a semi-permanent heritage and local information centre (currently in the Library and it may not be possible to find additional space for this when the Library moves into the school) and as a suitable area for the proposed nurse-led, local health clinics.
- Make changes to the McBoyle Hall to better fit it for 21st century uses. This would require a village survey to see what people want from their village hall and to see what extra groups could be formed to use the Hall. (keep-fit, arts & crafts, teenagers etc)
- A range of environmental enhancements – landscaping eyesores, a village sculpture feature, create a village lake, make the old railway cutting a dedicated nature park, improving facilities for all in the harbour area, set up a community allotment scheme with a village composting arrangement etc.

To get a Lottery Award we would need to show that the community backs the idea with enthusiasm, will support the project (funding and voluntary effort) and will offer skilled help and expertise. Do any of these ideas excite you? Can you see extra possibilities in any of them? Are you prepared to commit yourself and local resources to helping an enhancement project take off in Portknockie? Put your views to any of the PCA committee members and write to The K’nocker.

100 Club Draw: May – Donna Coull, Laura Cowie, G&B Simpson. **June:** - Mrs Rennie, Donald Morrison, Lil Urquhart. **July:** - Helen Reynolds, Helen Field, Joan Reynolds.

Russell O'Hanlon
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MORAY CITIZEN'S PANEL:

The July 2007 survey asked for experiences and views on issues related to children and young people in Moray. Views were sought on the working of Moray's "Children and Young People's Integrated Service Plan." This brings together all the local services for the under 16s and the 16-24 age group supporting their safety, their activity levels, their health and education and their role in society. The starting question for this survey was do you know about the Children/Young People's Service Plan and its aims to ensure that Moray's under 16s and the 16-24 age group are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included?

The first issue raised was whether road safety is a problem for children/young people in Moray and what could be done to improve the situation. How would you rate children's local play areas and are children/young people today getting enough physical exercise? Other questions sought views on the main issues affecting the health of the age group in Moray and which problems need priority action. Have you ever or would you consider fostering children/young people? This was one of several questions that sought to examine the issues surrounding adults getting involved in voluntary work with the young. The value we attach to gaining qualifications and general life skills was explored and opinion was sought on the services provided by Moray schools and colleges.

The survey concluded with questions about the behaviour of young children/young people in Moray. How would you rate their behaviour on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor? How bad are the following problems in your community – drinking in public spaces, alcohol abuse, drugs misuse, young people hanging around, threatening behaviour, graffiti, vandalism or violence? What actions could be taken to reduce the incidence of such anti-social problems? The final question of the survey examined ways of encouraging this age group

in Moray to get more involved in the decisions affecting their communities.

Eric McGillivray, Chair of The Moray Community Planning Partnership has thanked all members of the Citizens' Panel for making this such a successful venture. There are now over 1 200 Moray residents participating in this wide-ranging consultation process. The surveys undertaken so far have had excellent response rates and the perceptions and opinions confirm the potential of the Panel both to influence decision-making within the Moray Partnership and to improve public service delivery. Full survey results and analysis can be obtained from the Community Planning website, www.yourmoray.org.uk by clicking on the Citizens' Panel button.

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

SPARROW HAWK SAGA

We have had something of a drama going on in our garden with sparrow hawks over the last few weeks. The first event was a male that crashed into our porch window and killed itself in the process. It was very sad to see this beautiful bird, so perfect even in death. We discarded his body amongst the undergrowth on the railway line in the hope that something would feed on the carrion. A week and a day after this we were sitting watching the TV when we heard an almighty crash on the glass of the porch and we just knew what we would find outside! It was a female this time. It was just heartbreaking that it had happened again and so soon too. In our ten years here it had happened only once before with a sparrow hawk and that was a long time ago.

My father in law pointed out to me that the mark on the glass where the last bird had hit was directly over a sticker of a silhouette of a bird that we'd put in the window to try and stop small birds trying to fly "through" the glass! It seemed apparent to me then that both birds had thought the silhouette was a sitting duck as it were. I was mortified! We have since removed all the bird silhouettes and replaced them with other deterrents to hopefully avert any more tragedy.

A few days after the death of the female we saw another sparrow hawk swooping about the garden and going in to a dense privet bush and then apparently having difficulty getting out. This bush is always full of sparrows. I saw the bird do this again another twice on successive days and now haven't seen it for

about four days. I have come to the conclusion that the two birds that died were probably the parents of an inexperienced young bird that has been trying to catch the sparrows in the privet. By the time it has blundered its way in to the bush the sparrows have long since scarpered. I hope it has managed to find prey elsewhere as it is bad enough that two birds were lost.

Sparrow hawks are really woodland birds, but with us and many other people feeding birds all through the year they are actually finding easy pickings in our gardens. It is hard to watch our little garden birds fall prey to a hawk but it is all part of the big picture and if you happen to witness such an attack and find it difficult to watch I would say to just turn ones back and walk away. Nature isn't always how we'd like it to be.

Also in the garden, earlier in the summer....well, if that's what we can call it! I saw what I identified as Magpie moths. As their name suggest they are mostly black and white with some orange too. I also saw the biggest moth I'd ever seen on a wall where it was dark and damp. I don't know what it was but it was quite scarey!

I heard bad news of puffins on St. Kilda on the radio. The young birds were perishing due to starvation according to the report. The next day on the news was the report that the Yangtse river dolphin of China is now officially extinct. How depressing.

On a much, much brighter note I must tell you about our trip out in the Moray Firth on The Buchaneer a rigid hulled inflatable able to reach speeds of 30 mph. I had seen an article in the Birds magazine about trips on boats to Troupe Head to see puffins and gannets. The boat trip we chose was from Banff with North 58 sea adventures. We got donned up in full waterproof gear and lifejacket along with eight other shipmates plus the skipper. We set off from the harbour and once out and clear the skipper opened up the engine, the front of the boat came up and we were off! Before long we came across a small vessel onboard which was a guy who is studying dolphins and whales. He told our skipper that he had seen a few dolphins in the next bay along toward where we were headed. We set off and soon spotted the odd fin breaking surface but still quite a way off. Before we knew what was happening there were up to maybe fifteen dolphins surrounding our now idling boat. They were swimming right along side and we could look over the side and see them swimming under the water. They were leaping and doing all sorts of fancy flips and turns. All you could hear were people exclaiming and ooh-ing and ah-ing. A few times we

saw three beasts together breaking the waves and one of them was just a baby. It was just amazing and very difficult to describe ones feelings. Eventually after about fifteen minutes they made their way west and we were all left sort of speechless.

Carl managed to get some video footage with the digital camera so we can now relive the excitement when we watch it on the computer. Then the guy who told us about the dolphins radioed our skipper to say that he was now watching a minke whale! We had to hold back for a while whilst he filmed it for his studies but even as we waited we saw the whale surface in the distance three or four times. It then disappeared but not before the most awful stench wafted over us and our skipper informed us that this was actually the smell of the whale's breath! Ugh, it was 'orrible!

After all this excitement the birds didn't seem so important but once we reached Troupe Head the thousands of gannets wheeling over our heads was just breathtaking. Unfortunately the last puffins had been seen two weeks before our trip but we were lucky enough to see fulmars actually on the water instead of on the cliffs as we normally see them. An arctic skua also made a brief appearance flying past us low over the water. On the way back to Banff our skipper gave us all a bit of a thrill with her expertise in handling the Buchaneer! I would highly recommend to anyone, able to clamber aboard, having a trip out on this boat. It was great!

<p style="text-align: center;">Joe Smith Roofing Maintenance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“THE SMALL JOB ROOFER”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Free estimates</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tel: 01542-842826 Mobile: 0797 9524571</p>
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PORTKNOCKIE INSPIRES A NEW SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE COLLECTION:

Just arrived in the village is a new book of 12 new Scottish Country Dances devised by Margaret Zadworny with an accompanying CD of the music arranged by Muriel Johnstone. This “Aye Afloat” collection has been published in Canada and will be available wherever Scottish Country Dancers gather. What is the connection with Portknockie? Margaret Zadworny (Mackie) was born in Findochty and spent

her schooldays in 3 Slater Crescent, Portknockie with parents Bill and Meg and sisters, June, Helen and Joan. The whole family were very keen country dancers (Dad, Bill on the banjo and guitar) and this enthusiasm transferred when the family emigrated to Canada. Margaret has since taken teaching qualifications and runs her own group, The Braemar Dancers. The new dances have been tested and demonstrated by The Braemar Dancers.

The collection is dedicated to Margaret's cousin, our own Catherine Ritchie and to the community of Portknockie. The names of the dances evoke local sights and are familiar to all of us – The Moray Firth Hornpipe, Port-no-Quay, Aye afloat, Heid o' the Brae, The Port Hill Medley, The Sheltered Cove (the Hythe), The Cadger's Roadie (for incomers, a Cadger was an itinerant carrier), The Flagstaff and Cairn, The Three Creeks Shore, The Bow Fiddle Shore, The Whale's Moo and Jenny's Well. Each dance is described with instructions and diagrams showing the movements, the musical score and short pencil sketches and notes explaining the meaning behind the title. It is clearly a labour of love and a copy of the book and the CD is available in Portknockie Library. Contact Catherine Ritchie if you wish to purchase your own copy of this unique dancing dedication. Margaret has generously requested that all royalties from the sale of this Collection be used for the benefit of Portknockie.

The Portknockie ICSCD Club enjoyed the privilege of being the first Scottish Country Dancing Group in the UK to use the dances and music from "Aye Afloat" on Wednesday 15th August, 2007. The Portknockie dancing club meet in the Seafield Hall on Wednesdays at 7.15pm. Anyone interested in sampling the activities of the dancing club would be most welcome – no need to bring a partner. For more information contact Robert Dawson on 01542-840491.

JENNY'S WELL & CAVES two articles from the Banffshire Advertiser of 18 June 1936 sent in from a Cullen correspondent:

Portknockie is making a strenuous effort to attract summer visitors. Although the long spoken rose garden (**Editor: what was this story?**) did not materialise, steps have been taken in other directions to popularise the town.

To visitors, the caves have a mysterious appeal, and in that respect Portknockie is particularly fortunate, for at its door are several huge rock caverns. One is called the Preacher's Cave. It has been tidied up by

the Town Council and a nice footpath has been made right into it.

Nearby, a well, which rises in the spring, and which formerly trickled into the sand has been built up with granite blocks and now presents a pleasing feature. For generations it has been known as "Jenny's Well" and the inscription has been artistically worked in on a block of granite which surmounts the well. Underneath, and cut out in cement are the words "Portknockie Welcomes You". Great interest in this side of bringing Portknockie into the limelight has been taken by Bailie Hosie, who has spend day after day seeing the work carried through. The water was described at the last Town Council meeting as 100% pure, and is certainly very cold and refreshing.

To get to the well and the caves a fine footpath has been constructed and when funds permit, it is the intention of the Town Council to make another roadway which would be suitable for cars. It would leave the town near the back of the bowls green and come out at a point directly above Jenny's well. (**Editor: I wonder where they proposed that vehicles would turn and park. 70 odd years on what big ideas have we got in the village to attract summer visitors to Portknockie?**)

A letter To Portknockie Town Council from Mr D T Samson on behalf of the Seafield Estates:

"I am favoured with your letter of the 12th instant and I am glad to note that the Town Council had in view the improvement of the amenities of the burgh, by tidying up the access to the Preacher's Cave and an adjoining cave and also the cleaning out of the debris that had accumulated in them. On behalf of Lady Seafield Trustees I have pleasure in stating that the Town council have permission to carry out all the improvements they propose, and for this purpose, in order to give the Town Council full control, I am to add that the Trustees let to the Town Council as from this date, the caves and access thereto free of charge. This will enable the Council to deal with offenders, fortunately the day of the troglodytes were past."

AN 80 YEAR OLD GOLF STORY researched in the Buckie Advertiser by our Cullen correspondent:

In the final of the 1927 Cullen three day Golf Tournament between W Simpson, Cullen Bay Hotel and WH Mair "Willie Hughie", a Knocker the match was finely balanced after 17 holes had been played. All square and only the 18th to play. On the 18th fairway fleets of herring nets were neatly laid out to dry. The finalists to avoid the nets had to play up the

right hand side of the fairway. Unfortunately for Willie Hughie he sliced his drive into the rough at the foot of the railway embankment. With his next stroke his ball landed on the herring nets. After having played 4 shots he was still off the green. Willie Simpson was on the green in 2 and Willie Hughie sportingly conceded the match.

Editor: the Cullen course has enough tough hazards without having to play round drying herring nets!

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7137470

PORTKNOCKIE IN 1901¹

The existence of Portknockie (facetiously dubbed “The Land of Promise”) is entirely due to the existence of a natural deep-water creek, which has proved a capital haven for fishing boats, and in which is now situated its commodious harbour. The building of the harbour had for long been the aim of the villagers, and they subscribed a considerable sum towards its cost, Lady Seafield also giving a contribution of £1,000. After repeated application to Scottish Fishery Board a grant of £6,500 was obtained, the total cost being over £10,500. Various improvements have been carried out from time to time since the harbour was formally opened by Lady Seafield in May, 1890, and a further sum of £4,000 is being presently expended on extension.

Portknockie is situated about one mile from Cullen, and we might be safe in saying that there is not a more flourishing village on the east coast of Scotland. It has made vast progress within the last few years, and not the least factor in that progress has been the untiring energy of its ministers—Messrs M^cIntyre and Brown—who have spared no efforts and lost no opportunities of keeping the village to the front. With its rapidly increasing population, now over 1,580, building is brisk, and some fine houses have been erected in the upper part including a handsome hotel built by the late Mr Milne. Efforts are now being made to induce visitors to spend their holidays in the village, and certainly no mean advantages and attractions are to be found. Being in proximity to Cullen Links, about 200 yards distant, golfing may be

enjoyed, and splendid bathing facilities are close at hand.

High cliffs and fantastically shaped rocks abound on the coast from Strathlene to beyond Cullen and nowhere are they so striking and various in shape as in the vicinity of Portknockie. Around the harbour the scene is beautiful, and on the east side of the Scar Nose is the notable rock, the Bow Fiddle. A movement was lately inaugurated for the provision of proper footpaths around the more interesting rocks. There are also a number of caves in the neighbourhood, and a visit to these would be interesting, and any time spent in their exploration will be amply repaid. A few years ago a new and plentiful water supply was introduced, and visitors will find suitable accommodation.

Portknockie is an old village, and may be said to have been founded in 1677. It has figured in no small way in the history of the district, and has not a few traditions, to which a slight reference may be made. During the period of the Danish piratical excursions the creek at Portknockie was a favourite landing-place, and history mentions that a battle was fought in 961 on the moor near Portknockie. The encounter was a severe one, and is known as the Battle of the Bauds. It resulted in the complete overthrow of the Danes, but the Scotch king, Indulph, was killed. His grave is said to be on an eminence near Woodside, and was covered with stones, the place being known as “The King’s Cairn.” Not far distant are a great number of smaller cairns, alleged to be the burial-places of the Danes who fell in the engagement. An ancient grave which was found on the moor of Portknockie has also been thought by some to be the last resting-place of Indulph. A good many of the invaders found graves near the shore, as if killed while retreating towards the sea for the purpose of escaping, numerous tumuli or grave mounds having been discovered. Portknockie has other historical tales of similar character, which we need not relate, though they are all equally interesting.

¹. *Extract taken from “Tourists and Visitors Guide (Banffshire Morayshire)” published by W F Johnston & Sons, Buckie – 1901. (In Buckie Library Local Collection catalogue No. L941.223)*

BUILDINGS OF PORTKNOCKIE: For the next issue Harry Hawkes wants to write an article on the McBoyle Hall. Any readers who have information about how the Hall was first established and financed or any other interesting stories to tell about its history - please contact him over the next two months.

**STATIC CARAVAN
FOR HOLIDAY RENTAL IN
PORTKNOCKIE
CALL JOANNE FOR DETAILS
01542-841756**

HOLIDAY HOME HINTS – an information and advice service for visitors staying in Portknockie. Any readers who have any helpful ideas for visitors staying in Portknockie to make up this feature, please pass them on to the Editor before next season starts.

WANTED! This is a new service in your newspaper for readers to use if they are looking for information or help. Two examples sent in can get us started:

P5/6/7 pupils in the School are doing a project on WW2 and they want someone to teach them how to knit as folk did during the war. Call the school on 840244 or pass on any offers of help to one of the children.

Has anyone a photograph showing Alec Legge's farm? If you have such an image hand it into the Library – it is for someone wanting to make a sketch

THE PORTKNOCKIE DIRECTORY

Police: Emergency 999
Non-Emergency 0845 600 5 700
Doctors: (Cullen) 840272
(Buckie) 831555
Seafeld Hospital: 832081
Dr Grays, Elgin: 01343 543131
Aberdeen RI: 01224 681818
Dentist: (Buckie) 831163
Chemist: (Portknockie) 840268
Optician: (Buckie) 832239
Plumber (Portknockie) 841701
Electrician: (Portknockie) 840066
Harbour Garage 840099
Hydro-Electric: (24hrs) 0800 300999
Gas leaks: (24 hrs) 0800 111999
Scottish Water Helpline: 0845 600 8855
BT: (fault reporting) 0800 800 151
Coastguard: (24 hrs) 01224 592334
Environmental Incidents: 0800 807060
Moray Council: 01343 563000
Out of hours 08457 565656
Buckie Access Point 837200
Uplift service (after 10am) 01343 557318
NHS24 - Health Advice 08454 242424
Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
Neighbourhood Watch (J.Myles) 840 000

Travel Information telephone numbers: Bus & Coach:

Bluebird (Macduff)	01261	833533
First Aberdeen Ltd.	01224	650065
National Coaches	0990	808080

Airports:

Aberdeen	087004	400006
Inverness	01667	464000

Seaport: (Aberdeen)

Northlink	0845 6000 449
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Trains:

National Rail Enquiries	0845 748950
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Taxis: (Portknockie)

840875

Portknockie Post Office

840201

Portknockie School

840244

Portknockie Library

841149

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

What do the Police mean by a non-emergency call? An enquiry which **does not** relate to the following:

- Violence is being used or threatened
- There is a danger to life
- A crime is in progress or the offender has been recently disturbed
- An injury road accident
- A non-injury road accident has occurred and there is serious traffic congestion

Calls relating to any of the above will be immediately transferred to the Grampian Force Control Room for an emergency response.

The Community Off-Road Transport Action Group (COTAG-Moray) is the first dedicated 4x4 response team in Scotland and became operational in May. The group, which is based in Keith, has Portknockie resident, David Field, as one of its members. The volunteer led project has been developed with the support of Grampian Police and the Grampian Emergency Planning Unit. COTAG is not an emergency or rescue service itself but specialises in supporting the emergency services by providing privately owned four wheel vehicles as assistance to partners during hostile environmental conditions.

Call out examples might include the delivery of urgent medical supplies to families living in remote

areas or assistance during search operations over rough terrain. All crews are first-aid trained, have passed advanced driving examinations both on and off road and are qualified VHF radio operators. All wear high visibility clothing and safety gear.

COTAG has received grant aid from Awards for All, Volunteer Scotland and Moray Action for Communities to set up and develop the project but will need to cover major running costs for public liability insurance, team training, communications and equipment maintenance. COTAG is a valuable new community initiative that you may feel is worthy of your support. COTAG is a recognised Scottish Charity so it is able to reclaim the tax paid on your donation. Please go to www.cafonline.org for further details of how to make a single or regular donation to COTAG. Our website is www.cotag.net

Scotland's population is getting older and there are more of us becoming senior citizens. Do you need help with elderly parents or relatives and are uncertain where to turn? Here is a useful list of contacts: **Age Concern** – UK's largest charity for the elderly - Freephone 0800 009966 for legal, financial, medical advice and information. **Help the Aged** – the international charity for the elderly. For advice ring 0808 8006565 or log on www.helptheaged.org.uk for a local support services search. **CareAware UK** – offers elderly care funding advice on 08705 134925. **Counsel and Care** – a charity that tries to influence elderly care policy, phone 0845 3007585 for free advice. www.privatehealth.co.uk/elderly can give advice on funding private care and home options. (source: The Times, July 3rd 2007).

With winter approaching is it time you looked around for energy support? The UK Home Heat Helpline has indicated that it gets very few calls from Moray. By calling the helpline you could benefit from advice on reducing the amount that you spend on heating your home, on access to grants for home insulation and support if you have special requirements because of disability. So if you are worried about coping with your heating over the coming winter try the helpline on 0800 336699 or to www.homeheathelpline.org



If you saved just 20% of the energy you use everyday you'll help prevent climate change!

We all use energy every day - at home, at work and when we travel. To generate that energy, we burn fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) that produce 'greenhouse' gases - in particular carbon dioxide (CO₂). These are changing our climate and damaging the environment. The following explains how you can take simple steps to save your 20%.

How Will You Save Your 20% ?

10 point checklist

- Turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10 per cent and save you around £40 per year.
- Is your water too hot? Your cylinder thermostat shouldn't need to be set higher than 60°C/140°F.
- Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
- Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- Don't leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave appliances on charge unnecessarily.
- If you're not filling up the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher, use the half-load or economy programme.
- Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
- A dripping hot water tap wastes energy and in one week wastes enough hot water to fill half a bath, so fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off!
- Replace your light bulbs with energy saving recommended ones: just one can reduce your lighting costs by up to £100 over the lifetime of the bulb - and they last up to 12 times longer than ordinary light bulbs.
- Do a home energy check. Just answer some simple questions about your home and they'll give you a free, impartial report telling you how you can save up to £300 a year on your household energy bills.

Call SCARF 0800 512 012.

HAME COOKING by SWRI members:

Orange Frosted Carrot Cake:

Ingredients for 12 squares:

225g (8oz) of self raising flour
 150g (5oz) of soft dark brown sugar
 150g (5oz) of carrots, peeled and grated
 Half a teaspoon of ground mixed spice
 2 medium eggs
 125 ml (quarter pint) of corn or sunflower oil
 2 tablespoons of milk
 And to finish:
 50g (2oz) of butter
 Half an orange, grated rind only
 2 tablespoons of orange juice
 225g (8oz) of icing sugar

You will need an 18 x 28cm (7 x 11 inches) oblong tin, greased and lined with non-stick baking parchment. Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 4 or 180C/350F.

Method: Place the flour and mixed spice into a large bowl and mix thoroughly. Stir in the brown sugar and carrots. Make a well in the centre of the mixture and then add the eggs, oil and milk. Beat well with a wooden spoon until evenly blended. Place the mixture in the prepared tin and bake for 40 minutes. Turn out from the tin and put to cool on a wire rack. Melt the butter, orange juice and rind in a saucepan, beat in the icing sugar until smooth. Swirl this over the cake and cut into a dozen squares.

“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

Déjà vu – the importance of water

Two years ago I wrote “Moray residents panic as the town’s taps run dry – Lossie loses its bottle! People began stockpiling the supplies as they were delivered. Two police officers responded to a call in relation to a potential confrontational situation”.

No change then. This summer extensive flooding affected many parts of England and amongst the headlines of “heroes rescuing people in the areas under siege” were the incidents of looting and panic buying. There were reports of vandalism from cars which victims were forced to abandon and people stockpiling and selling bottled water at vastly inflated prices. The Flood Defence Agency chiefs were not better. They gave themselves huge bonuses days before the worst floods in modern times occurred. This information was slipped out on the last day of Parliament before the summer recess! The victims of the floods expressed their disgust and urged the directors to give the bonus money to those families worst affected. The papers have remained silent – the floods have subsided and the story, including the bonuses, is no longer front page news!

Is our generation really changing things for the better or have some of us become used to so much that we have forgotten how to share and care for others? Luckily for us the great majority of people do good and seek to avoid notice because they do not want to create a fuss. Good people are the hardest to interview because they are reluctant to say very much. There are always plenty of them around in any emergency but good news tends not to sell newspapers and these Samaritans don’t seek self-gratification, and continue to strive for the common good, instead of the usual greedy clamour. Let us continue to praise our unsung heroes.

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POETS’ CORNER:

A salutary warning from Sheena Pirie –

THE WOOING

Like the Laird o’ Cockpen
 Jimmy wanted a wife
 That’s what he considered
 Wid roon aff his life.

His boat wis his ain
 His hoose furnished new
 But, as for courtin’
 Jimmy hidna a clue.

He’d picked oot the ane
 He wanted tae wed
 But hoo tae approach her
 Pit an ache in his head.

So he went tae his pal
 An’ asked him if he
 Wid gang an’ ask Jessie
 If her consent she’d gie.

Jessie wis shocked
 An’ nae very pleased
 Tae be asked second han’
 Made her feel rather peeved.

So, peer aul’ Jim

Didna ha'e ony joy.
Jessie? Well, she got hersel'
An Italian toy boy!!

Some fowk are aye grumblin' and niver are content
Nae maiter how weel they may fare
While others less fortunate niver lament
Tho' sma' be the portion they share.

Dame Fortune as fickle some say she's unkind
And knocks not at every man's door
But think on what's gane and maybe ye'll mind
O' chances ye've spurned aft afore.

Gitten doon in the moo' 'ill no help you a lot
Gin things may be gan a' bit wrang
A steep brae has ne'er made a willing horse quit
A stout heart just pushes along.

If ye look in the morning on things at their best
And ne'er meet your troubles half way
Contentment will bring you a night's peacefu' rest
Aifter a' the hard work o' the day.

(Not named but from the Davie Mair Collection).

North East Scotland Ports

The transformation over years
Of nor-east Scotland harbour piers
Which once had hundreds of barrels stacked
All with pickled herring packed

The herring were prepared by fisher wives
Who worked so hard all through their lives
Not only weaving nets and "ganzies"
Bringing up kids and growing pansies

The skipper was the one who set the bearings
To sail fifty miles to catch the herrings
If luck had then standing knee deep in fish
A favourable wind was the heavenly wish

Progress brought the steam engine with boiler
To power a propeller, a winch and coiler
The boats now had wheelhouse cabin and galley
And the boats expenses were part of the tally

Then diesel came in vogue to speed up the fleet
Which helped the shoals of fish deplete
Now quotas are set that cause displeasure
And harbours are filled with boats for pleasure.

A poem by Charlie Slater.

IN REMEMBRANCE: A Citation in respect of an award of Military Medal to Pte William John Taylor, (5/7th Bn., The Gordon Highlanders) known locally as Jackie Taylor, sent in by his daughter, Linda Wood:

"On 21 Nov 1944 during the advance on Donk, 'E' Company was the advanced guard. With its leading platoon were the Company Commander and the Company runner, Pte. Taylor.

When within 300 yards of Donk 7 enemy machine guns opened fire and pinned down the leading platoon in a flat bit of country almost completely devoid of cover. In the fire fight that followed ammunition began to run short. Pte. Taylor, under heavy fire, crossed and re-crossed open, bullet-swept ground and brought up the much-needed ammunition.

The Company Commander had, in the meantime, laid on a flanking attack with another platoon. This got within 80 yards of its objective when it was stopped by enemy fire. Captain J Stuart-Black, the Company Commander, tried to get up to the view point near the leading section. On the way there he was wounded by a spandau (machine gun) in the knee. He fell helpless in the open.

Pte. Taylor, at the peril of his life, immediately went forward and tried to carry his Company Commander back to safety. When half way back, he himself was wounded by bullets in the back. Despite his wounds, he refused to give up his task and ultimately brought Captain Stuart-Black back to safety. He then immediately returned to the leading platoon and would not have his wound dressed until the battalion attack assisted by 'B' Company was able to take its objective.

Pte. Taylor's devotion to duty is beyond all praise. His selfless determination to bring back his Company Commander when under heavy fire undoubtedly saved the latter's life."

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Portknockie.library@moray.gov.uk

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840718 or e-mail hrhyic@yahoo.co.uk

Adverts in the K'nocker: At present our policy is
not to charge for small, simple adverts useful to
readers so long as the person placing the advert is a
paid up subscribing member.

The K'nocker for friends and relatives abroad:

Remember you can always advise relatives and
friends to download a copy from Neil Hedley & John
Smith's village website at:
www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk

In 2008 the K'nocker will be published in March,
June, September and December. Copy, letters and
adverts for each issue should be passed to the Editor,
through the Library or the letterbox of 23 Harbour
Place or by e-mail to rmcdram@onetel.com in the
month before each quarterly publication. In fact, the
earlier you send in articles the easier you make things
for your editorial team!

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

Community Association: At its meeting on 11th
September the PCA committee will be considering
how to encourage the local community to make more
use of the village hall in the coming year and how
best to manage its income and expenditure. Funds
are low and this coming year the McBoyle Hall needs
re-painting, replacement fascia boards and security
improvements to the rear doors. At the AGM
meeting in October a new committee must be voted in
and the PCA Constitution will need to be amended to
meet new requirements from the Office of the
Scottish Charities Regulator on reporting activities
and auditing accounts. It would be helpful to see a
significant number from the village present at the
AGM. PCA membership is open to all residents of
the village and its future is very much in the hands of
the community. Your village hall is an important
community amenity and it needs all K'nockers to
show an interest in its well-being and to be active
participants in its management. Don't leave it all to
others, the PCA is for the benefit of Portknockie.

Catherine's Creative Ceramics: a date and time to
remember, Saturday, **October 13th** from 10am to
5pm in the McBoyle Hall. A display of ceramic
painting will be on show arranged by Catherine and

her ladies. The exhibition will showcase the beautiful
ceramic items painted by those attending Catherine
Ritchie's classes. Catherine has been successfully
teaching ceramic painting skills to an advanced level
in both adult and children's groups in the village for
some eight years. Also on show there will be Cards
and Candles by Cathleen Harper, Cakes and Sugar
flowers by Ruth O'Hanlon and Flower arrangements
by Donna Coull. Demonstrations will be on-going
during the day and visitors will be invited to
participate and have a go! The displays, activities,
teas and coffee will be available throughout the day
and all is included in the £2 entry fee. There will
also be a sales table and raffle. All the profit will be
going towards the maintenance repairs needed for the
McBoyle Hall. Make sure you come along and see
"Craft at its best by the best!"

Portknockie Seniors Group: The joining evening
for the coming year will be in the Seafield Hall on
Tuesday 18th September. All residents over the age
of 18 are welcome to join. Meetings are normally
held every third Tuesday in the month.

Seafield Women's Rural Institute: The first
meeting of the 2007/8 programme will be at 7pm on
Thursday 27th in the Seafield Hall. The President,
Margaret Greig and the Committee extend a warm
invitation to all women residents to join your local
SWRI. The meeting will hear about the work of the
Boyndie Trust from our visitor, Mr Duncan Leith and
the members' monthly competition will be an
Individual Trifle. At the October 25th meeting
Hazel's Hats of Huntly will give a talk and
demonstration and the competition is "Something
New from Something Old". Our guest speaker at the
November 22nd meeting will be Mr Ruparelia
describing his charity bike run across India. The
competition will be a home made calendar for 2008.

The Village Thrift Shop, run by Lil Urquhart and
Donna Coull, has been open and busy during the
summer months on Tuesday and Thursday morning in
the old bank building, Pulteney Street. All the money
raised goes to various village groups. Thanks to Lil
and Donna' initiative we are recycling things we no
longer need and raising funds for community groups.

Bowling Club Notes: Writing these notes in August,
it is a sobering thought that bowling on grass will
finish at the end of next month and we will have to
return to bowling indoors. However, it has been a
pleasant summer season, the grass has been excellent,
and with an increase in memberships attendances at
our hat nights have been very good. This year Club
finances are slightly improved. We were fortunate

with our annual Open Pairs competition attracting a large entry: some decidedly not summer weather thereafter caused difficulty, but after hard fought games the contest was eventually won by a Buckie Victoria team. Sincere thanks are due to the many that supported in various ways the Club Bowling Marathon which took place on Saturday 14 July. A very fine £500 was raised which will go towards the upkeep of the Club.

At the time of writing we have just played the last game in the local Buckie League: we have had mixed fortunes but much better than in 2006, when records seem to show that we did not win any of our League games. However the competition is keen and the games are always enjoyable. Saturday 18th August saw the playing of the now annual Willie Hay Trophy competition (winners Frank Legge and Wilson Weir) and on 8th September the Club will play another annual competition – this time for the Alan Maclean Cup. In outside tournaments Club players have done very well with Linda Wood and Wilson Weir winning the Buckie Victoria Open Pairs, and likewise Linda, Wilson, and Elaine Wood capturing the silverware in the Portsoy Open Triples. Congratulations are also due to Donald Morrison (bowling for Portgordon) who helped win the Pairs section in the prestigious City of Aberdeen Bowling Competition.

Until we close, the twice weekly hat nights (maybe not if it's wet) will continue on Mondays and Thursday evenings. If you would like to try, new (and old) members are always welcome, and there are bowls to borrow in the Club.

Neighbourhood Watch is simply watching out for one another — one for all and all for one — although in a fairly close knit village like Portknockie that is what many residents do naturally, whether or not they are Neighbourhood Watch members. There has been such a scheme in the village since 1997, when many became members. Should you wish to join, confirm you are listed as a member, or would simply like some further information, contact the Coordinator John Myles on 840000. As a money-saving footnote certain insurance companies will give NW members a discount (small maybe but still a discount) on their annual premium.

Tuesday 23rd October is the AGM meeting of the Portknockie Community Association. At this meeting the new committee for the year is formed. The PCA manages two village hall facilities, the Millennium Garden and the Village in Bloom annual show. It is vital for the PCA to have a strong working membership. It is a civic duty so please step forward

and volunteer service to the community. Don't just hope someone else will take up the task.

JMK

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

Library News: We had a busy summer probably due to the weather! This was a good thing for libraries though, personally, I would have liked to see the bairns doon to the beach mair aftner!

The "Gruffalo" was a hit at the summer Gala in the Square – a big thank you to Eleanor, my boss!

The 'Big Wild Read' was quite a success in Portknockie as over 20 children took part. Some joined, some finished their 6 books in record time; even grandchildren of local residents on holiday from London joined in. Thanks to all the children who came along to our 'Craft Days' usually held from 2-3pm on a Thursday. We made pebble pets, planted wild flower seeds, made rain sticks and tambourines – what fun we had! A special thank you goes to Ishbel Beresford and Senga Reeves with her grandson who joined in and helped on the planting seed day.

We will be having a Xmas Decoration session in the Library probably the first Thursday of the Tattie Holidays. I will put up posters when I have all the details settled. "Beach Guardians" – the Beach Litter Challenge for Children will be at the Portknockie Library on **Thursday 25th October** from 10.30-11.30am. All children 7-13 welcome and it is free. The same day from 2-4pm Mairi McCallum will be in the Library for any residents to drop in with enquiries regarding volunteering services in Moray. She can advise people who want to find out more about being a volunteer and give information to organisations who might want to join, for free, the Moray Voluntary Service Centre in Elgin. Come along and find out!

New computers have been installed in the Library for anyone to access – please come along and use them. We also have 2 hour lessons for £5 per session in the morning or the afternoon. I can also help anyone to access an e-mail address etc within the Library opening hours. Margret Wood, Librarian.

Fishing: Poor weather this summer has resulted in a patchy squid fishing. It has been fine to see a few boats off the port but not enough locals – Moray Endurance was spotted there for a few days.

CATHERINE 'S
CREATIVE
CERAMICS

A few places free for learning to
paint original and beautiful pieces
of ceramics at

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Portknockie Sunday school: In our Sunday school we do lots of fun activities. Every week we sing songs, make things, draw pictures and listen to stories of Jesus.

At Christmas time we had a lovely party with lots of good food and fun games. At the end, Santa came and we all received a present. This year the Sunday school members made a sandwich lunch for the church congregation, which was really good. In June we had our picnic which was awesome. We travelled to Mosstodloch playpark by bus. We had races for each group and we did lots of kinds of races, such as running races, sack races, three-legged races, skipping races and a tattie and spoon race. We played with the parachute, where we did a mushroom and when we were in the mushroom, we sang songs and played games. During the afternoon we were given ice-cream, sausage rolls, home bakes, juice and crisps. Everyone had a really good time. Our Sunday school will restart on **2nd September** at 11.15am in the church. All children over 3 are welcome to come along. If you have any queries phone Val on 841240. We look forward to seeing you there! Megan McGowan age 9. **(Editor:** how delightful to have a report by such a young Knocker).

Portknockie Playgroup: The Playgroup **Sports** was held in the school grounds on Tuesday 19th June. The children took part in games and races and received stickers for joining in. Parents and grandparents came along to watch and support. Afterwards we all went into the playgroup for juice, crisps, butteries and tea. The children going into P1 all received their Graduation Certificates and Prizes on Tuesday 3rd July. Our **summer picnic** was held in Whitehills on 4th July. We hired a 63 seater coach, which we filled and left Portknockie at 9.30am. The

weather was not too good as we left but later, by mid-morning, the sun was out. We used the local hall to play and have our picnic and then we all went into the park. We had a great day and arrived back in the village at 1.30pm.

Playgroup Flower Garden and Vegetable Patch – Before the holidays the children planted up flowers and vegetables to watch them grow and later to harvest. We grew a variety of flowers in the play area and also some lettuces, carrots and potatoes. We also planted cabbages, carrots leaks and marigolds in the box outside the school at King Edward Terrace. **(Editor:** this mix of vegetables and flowers was entered as the junior entry in the Moray Best-kept Village competition. The flower/vegetable combination intrigued the judges on 30th July and the entry was awarded a Highly Commended certificate). We are intending to harvest these vegetables and make a soup for our snack and we may also sell the cabbages.

Vandalism – Unfortunately during the holidays the Playgroup has been the victim of vandals. We have had our shed walls and fence broken, the play area left dirty, the slide has had its metal bars distorted and flowers and vegetables that the children have planted have been pulled about. Those responsible have also been onto the roof of the Playgroup and broken tiles.

Playgroup Coffee morning – We are hoping to hold a coffee morning in November, look out for posters and please come along to meet us, thank you.

Portknockie Brownies: 1st Portknockie brownies would like to invite all girls between 7 and 11 to brighten up Monday nights by joining our pack. At our meetings we try to have as much fun as possible while doing a variety of activities including arts and crafts and games and sports that go towards earning different Brownie badges. When the weather is fine we like to get outside and go for walks around the village, to the beach or along the old railway line doing nature quizzes. Doing this we discover more about the local environment and collect different items which we then use for various projects.

At Christmas, as a reward for all the hard work the girls put in over the year we take them to the pantomime in Buckie, which is always entertaining and, at the end of each school year we organise a trip away for the day. This year we had a pool party at Moray leisure Centre where great fun was had by all. We are currently trying to become more involved in community projects so if any groups need Brownies

to help out with anything, please do not hesitate to ask.

If you know a girl aged between 7 and 11, who you think would like to become a Brownie please bring her along to Portknockie Primary School on a Monday night, where she will be warmly welcomed by Pat, Donna and Helen. Our meetings run from 6 to 7.30pm. We look forward to seeing you.

For any more information please call or e-mail:

Pat on 841480 or patntony.hill@tiscali.co.uk

Donna on 841852

Helen on 842765 or dandygooner@aol.com

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PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Here we are at the start of a new session. Where did the six weeks go? More importantly – what happened to the weather? We hope there is an Indian summer just around the corner.

Everyone seems refreshed and keen to start a new school year. We have formed three classes for the moment. The new pupils in Primary 1 are settling quickly with Mrs Bennett in P1/2; Mrs Woolgar has P3/4/5 and Mrs McGookin has P5/6/7. Mr Paterson joins the staff every Tuesday morning as our PE specialist and Ms Twistelton is in school every Thursday afternoon as our art specialist. Unfortunately, we have lost Mrs McKay, our music specialist and await her replacement.

Mrs Cooper is to be re-phased into school after her long absence. I am to continue as Acting Head for the first four weeks of this term.

We start the year with a variety of lunch-time and after-school clubs and we will be asking for help with different projects this year. I have heard that P5/6/7 pupils are going to be asking for volunteers from the village. Their topic is World War II this term and they would like to learn to knit. P3/4/5 is hoping to arrange a trip to Archaeolink as part of a Roman topic

and the playgroup will be having a joint music session on Monday mornings.

On a more serious note, I have to report a series of acts of vandalism in the school grounds during and after the summer holidays. Mr Robertson had to come across from BCHS on several occasions to sweep up the broken glass bottles which covered the playground. The large flower box was planted with bedding plants and several parents had volunteered to weed and water the box and border areas over the holidays. (**Editor:** this school project was to have been Portknockie's junior entry in the Moray Best-kept Village Competition for 2007. In the event the Playgroup project was used). I would like to thank the volunteers for their help. However, this task became less onerous than expected when the display was completely destroyed by evening visitors to the school playground. All but a handful of plants were pulled up and strewn across the field. Pupils and staff were very disappointed to come back to a box of weeds.

Tiles, felt and flashings had been pulled off the roof above the main entrance to the school. These have been replaced but at considerable cost. Those responsible can only have accessed this roof via areas coated in ant-vandal paint and their hands, shoes and clothing would have been covered in paint.

Several BCHS pupils were caught and reported to police during the first week of the term. They had been on the Playgroup roof and were jumping on the lid of the sandpit which the Playgroup had just bought and installed out in the field. They were also trying to break into one of the school sheds by pulling off the tiles and trying to force open a skylight. There is evidence that someone has been trying to set the equipment in the Playgroup shed alight. They have tried to gain access by knocking holes in the adjoining shelter wall.

Although school grounds are in the public domain after school hours, I would advise parents to inform their children, especially those of BCHS age, that the police will be making regular patrols because of these acts of vandalism. If these acts continue we will have to consider installing Moray's mobile CCTV units to catch those responsible.

On a brighter note, we look forward to the consultation and planning process continuing for the move of the village library into school, and we hope that Mrs Cooper's re-phased entry results in her return to full health, back to her post of Head Teacher.

School dates: 2007/8

Mid-term break: Monday 15th October to Friday 26th October.
In-service closure: Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th November.
Christmas holiday: Monday 24th December to Friday 4th January 2008.
Mid-term break: Friday 15th February to Monday 18th February.
Good Friday: 21st March.
Spring holiday: Monday 31st March to Friday 11th April.
May Day: Monday 5th May.
In service closure: Thursday 15th and Friday 16th May.
Local holiday: Monday 9th June.

G. A. McWhirter, Acting Head Teacher.

An e-mail from Vera (Mair) Findlay living in Vancouver, Canada. Vera, married to Sandy Findlay of Cullen, throws some light on recent articles about the Portknockie Shoreline and by co-incidence adds memories that link up with those sent in by Charlie Slater from Australia.

Vera says she has never heard of Fakkie's cave or beach. She adds "We didna speak about 'beachies' - they were always known as 'shories' in my day."
Another unknown name is 'arramoo Cave' - I wonder if it should be Narramoo as in 'narrow mouth'? The west side of the Port was the 'Lin Links' not the Lang Links.

It was generally accepted that the Lin Links was where the boys played tho' girls did occasionally venture there. The Cradlies was a good spot for a picnic and rolling Easter eggs. One visit there was with the Girl Guides when we had a sand castle competition. Most of the other rocks and places mentioned are well remembered.

I didn't know Zena (Mair) from Australia but remember two of the pals she mentioned, all a bit younger than me. Vera Munro lived at the 'heid o' the brae' - it no doubt has a proper name but was always known as I said. (**Editor:** that name is still used today, the only things changed – you will not find the old fishermen, the 'pee-hoosie' and the nets!). Cathie More lived on High Street right behind what was Georgie Kingie's billiard room which later became Wright's the electricians and a paper shop. It is now a dwelling house - 29 Church Street and I grew up in 31 Church Street.

I wonder how many Knockers remember when Provost Fackie was in the poultry business and the hens were 'plucked' in the loft of 29 Church Street.. Access was by outside stairs at the back and being next door we saw the women 'pluckers' go in and out daily. John 'Dear' of Pulteney Street was Fakkie's right hand man and with my chums we would watch him 'thraw' the necks of the hens. This was done 'doon the brae' just up from the 'Tarrie Rock' and round the corner a bit.

I always thought that Bill Fackie of the sweetie shop - between the Bank and the Bobby's hoose - was Provost Fackie's brother or were they cousins?

In a previous Knocker someone asked if anyone remembered Bill Porteous. If he was the younger brother then I played tennis with him several times. The Porteous family came every summer and stayed at the Leels at 2 Church Street. Last I heard of them was that the two brothers had bought the Aul' Kirk - where Sandy and I were married - and converted it to a dwelling house.

I also remember Nettie Hain though I never knew her last name. I went to Lizzie Legge's many times for potatoes for my Granny who lived at 5 High Street.. I often quote Lizzie yet as, when asking for two pounds (twa pun) of potatoes she would respond with, "Totties the day hen?" The middle two 'Ts' were usually silent.

BEST-KEPT VILLAGE AWARDS 2007 – THE JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Portknockie – there has been a vast improvement since we last visited several years ago (2001). Everything was more colourful and much tidier. We were very impressed with the Lighthouse feature and Treasure Island and the exceptional effort from all concerned in the production and planting of all the floral displays throughout the village.

We were most impressed with the permanent plantings on the two roundabouts and we were delighted to nominate "Treasure Island" for the outstanding (in Moray) item award. We thought this was a well planned and executed example of hard and soft landscaping.

We would suggest that some of the "twee" items be removed as we felt that they distracted from the other

displays. There would seem to be no other work necessary on the old railway cutting as it is already a wild life haven. All that is required is a path wide enough to allow easy passage for pedestrians. (**Editor:** this comment arises because we had discussed with the judges during their visit a possible enhancement project for the cutting so it could be used by our school pupils as an outdoor study area.)

The judges' final comment was "Quantity should never take preference over quality." This may be a sideways criticism that we are guilty of trying to display too many floral features across the village. Certainly, next year, if a Village in Bloom group nominates itself, it does look as if it might need to cut back on expenses by economising on the purchase of bedding plants, troughs, barrels and hanging baskets. We now await the thoughts and opinions of the Beautiful Scotland competition judges due from Dundee on September 19th.

SEASONAL OBSERVANCES FROM OUR MINISTER by Rev Graham Austin, Church of Scotland, Portknockie:

Jump across a snake infested pit

I, my brothers and a group of youths went for a ramble along the Turford Burn that flows through Earlston in the Borders and eventually joins up with the Leader which itself is a tributary of the famous Tweed that flows to the sea and enters at Berwick on Tweed.

Myself, brothers: Stuart, Ian, Colin and a couple of other guys parted company with the others after Stuart had inadvertently pushed a boy into the water. He was rushing to get passed and in his excitement shouldered the boy out of the way and into the river. My memory is of a slow motion star shaped fall and of course he hit the water exactly in the middle where it is, as you know, the wettest. Anyway off we went on our own adventure which took us deep into the countryside in the days when kids played outside - I sound old now, don't I! This trek involved scrambling and climbing and jumping.

Eventually we came to a ditch over which we had to jump to continue our journey. It was a long ditch, of course you could go round it but it would be too time-consuming, you had to jump it. It was a dark ditch, its depth was unknown, it was overgrown with grass that made it a mystery to me but my older brothers knew the answer to that which was unknown to me. This ditch, this divide between going forward or turning back was filled with snakes. It was a snake infested ditch. Not just any old snakes of course but poisonous snakes. They were there, they were real my

brothers said so and why would they lie about a thing like that?

They of course transcended the Grand Canyon of a ditch without so much as a look back, but you see one small step for them was one giant leap for me. I was there on the other side taking in the shocking information that if I failed in my jump I was a goner. The snakes would bite I would die a horrible death.

There they were safe on the other side, here I was contemplating my fate. They egged me on, encouraged me to jump. It was an easy jump, plenty of room for a run up but the space on the other side was restricted and the prospect of either not clearing the ditch or falling into the jaws of poisonous snakes was in front of me. Should I do it or turn back? Going forward and jumping was a long walk home but turning back was a long and lonely walk home. So mustering all my courage, with shouts of support ringing in my ears, I leapt my leap of faith. I made it. No snakes got me, I didn't fall in to the bottomless pit, I made it and I lived to tell the tale. I was safe on the other side.

My leap of faith so to speak.

I suppose we must all deal with dangers perhaps obvious, perhaps unknown, unseen even at times unreal (although real to us). It will take courage, it will take egging on, 'come on you can do it, jump!' It will take faith. I discovered something that I instinctively knew, that on the other side of the pit of doom was companionship and the way home - safe on the other shore. What is before us that will take us across our own fearful pits? Companionship, home, the Father in heaven.