

We thought it was all over but we were wrong! New water works go on to March

The water mains renewal project in the village will not now be completed before the Spring. A Scottish Water spokesman said, "We regret this delay but we hope Portknockie customers will understand that it has been largely outwith our control.

The works to replace cast iron mains dating back to the 1920s has been more complex than expected. Our contractors expected to be able to fast pull the new pipes through large sections of the existing network but the bad quality of the old cast iron pipes made that impossible.

Further delays arose when our workmen were laying connections from the mains to individual homes and we discovered lead pipes, which had to be completely replaced.

Overall the project will replace 4 000 metres of pipeline. So far 2 600 metres of new plastic water main has been laid within the village.

Scottish Water is acutely aware that it has inherited water mains which for years have had little or no investment. The ageing mains in Portknockie were in critical need of upgrading and replacement.

Once it is finished the replacement programme in Portknockie will improve water pressure and reduce the likelihood of sudden bursts, greatly benefiting our customers in the area."

There is probably no truth in the

rumours that the frequent heavy rains we have experienced this year have anything to do with disturbing the ancient water pipes of the village! Did we have unusual strikes of lightning when the power lines were changed?

2002 The year a new wastewater service was provided in Portknockie for Xmas!

The wastewater pumping station down by the harbour is now completed and it is expected to start pumping our sewage to Findochty and the March Road Treatment Works at Buckie in December. Completion took longer than expected because of construction difficulties presented by the limited working space available alongside Alan Pirie's garage.

Catchment apologises for the disturbance to the village over the past year but reminds us of the long-term benefits that will be brought to the quality of the water in the Moray Firth as a result of this substantial investment in wastewater services.

Bob Croucher and Margret Wood wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Guising seemed to be alive and well this year with plenty of village youngsters **disguised** in frightening fancy costumes knocking at our doors on Halloween evening. It was good to see parents and elder siblings accompanying those out for the first time. Your Editor heard some good skeleton jokes from the youngsters. Some big bangs were heard from the harbour area on and around November 5th but the annual fireworks show also seemed to pass off without too much anti-social behaviour in the village. The traditional bonfire spot down in the Hythie was certainly left clean and tidy.

Portknockie is being heard in Edinburgh. On November 6th, Paula Hedley gave a talk on

career choices to MSPs and leading academics at a "Science and The Parliament 2002" conference in the city. A quotation sent in by your Editor to the nation-wide **Voices of Scotland** competition is one of 200 selected to go on the large poster hoardings that are being placed around the new Scottish Parliament building. The quote was from Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides - "*A Scotchman must be a very sturdy moralist who does not love Scotland better than truth*". A reception to launch the quotation boards takes place in Edinburgh on Saturday 7th December.

A baby seal was parked on the beach in the Hythie on Sunday 10th November. It was checked out for the seal virus by Peter McDonald from the Friends of Moray Firth Dolphin group, found clear and left for mother to reclaim. Peter said that seal mothers often leave their new babies on a beach while they search for food because the babies do not have the full insulation for fishing expeditions.

Talking of babies - Jackie from Scallywags and Graham have had a son, Morgan. He weighed in at 7lb 5oz and Pearl Murray says "he is the bonniest baby she knows!"

Many thanks to Lord Seafield for his annual gift of a Christmas Tree and £350 to Community Council funds.

Christine Slater has placed a photograph in the Library that was given to her by Alex Runcie (formerly of 8 Reidhaven Street) while he was here recently on holiday. This photograph was taken around 1956/7 by Johnnie Lovie - then the village chemist. Go and check out the list of names and see if you can put a name to everyone in the crowd. There is also a baby in the picture. Does anyone know why the photograph was taken or what the occasion was?

Was it warmer in those days, or the children tougher? Because three of the lads are in their sweemin claes not wet suits! (Ed).

Mrs Johnston asks whether it is possible for anyone to **collect waste paper**. She says old people save their papers but they cannot always get to where the lorry collection point is.

The Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial took place in the customary wind and cold, (although the rain had just stopped!) on Sunday 10th November. Pondering on the usual

observance - some prayers led by the Minister and two wreaths laid by Moray Council and the Community Council with the minute silence, your Editor wondered whether folk might like to consider any changes for future years. Perhaps getting the young folk more engaged with our annual service of remembrance - lest folk should start to forget. This year a young girl just walked through the crowd apparently oblivious to the bowed heads and the silence. In this issue there is an article recalling the old days in when the schoolchildren used to march to the War Memorial for a service. Would folk like to see any changes in the format of the service? If so what changes and who might organise things?

News from the village website,

www.portknockie.com - Dailene Wood from British Columbia, Canada has found our village site searching for information about the Portknockie fishing lugger, "Evangeline" lost at sea off Stronsay, Orkney on January 16th 1905. Her father-in-law is David Wood (born 1928), a grandson of the Evangeline's skipper, David Wood. He is a water colour artist and wants to recognise the 100 years anniversary of this sad fishing disaster with a series of commemorative paintings - hence a request for information. The Buckie Heritage Centre was able to provide a picture of the boat and the crew and if anyone else has useful details for the artist to use it can be passed on. Give it to Margret in the Library.

Marie Murray from Lancaster, Ohio, USA has e-mailed an account of a recent stay in our village. She spent a week at Sea Breezes, Cliff Terrace with her son, his wife and her daughter's two sons. She says her cousin, Margaret Rumbles lives in Firth View and Mary Anderson's late husband, Ian was a distant cousin. Her father, John Anderson, was born in Victoria Street and moved to 30 Church Street when he was about five. Marie bought all their food at the local grocery and praises the very helpful and friendly staff she met there. They hope to come back to Portknockie next summer with two daughters, a son and four granddaughters.

A big surprise for Marie was to discover that the Slaters from Ohio had spent a whole month in Portknockie shortly before she arrived. Nancy & Kermit Slater described their stay here in the last issue of The K'nocker. Marie's own grandmother was a Slater who passed away in 1937. The world really became smaller when she realised

that the Slaters live only 20 miles from them back in the USA!

Mrs Lesley Weeks, née Trenberth, searching the web for Portknockie has e-mailed us about her paternal grandmother, who was born here. She married before the First World War and lived thereafter in Plymouth, Devon. Lesley has few records of her grandmother other than her name was Catherine Wood, a few photos, a book of Robert Burns poetry and a memory of her playing "I'll take you home again Kathleen" on her wind up gramophone. Lesley says she loves all things Celtic, she belongs to a Morris side in Cornwall (a traditional dancing group) and hopes one day to visit here. Not much to go on here but does this description ring a bell with anyone? Over to the all the Woods in the village!

Robin and Cynthia Fanshawe from Sussex in England have come up with an intriguing puzzle for us. Their great-great uncle was the late Pre-Raphaelite artist, George Wilson of Tochieneal, near Cullen. He painted a number of scenes along the Moray coastline, including a painting of the Whale's Moo and one, which seems to be the shore at Craigenroan, Portessie (it is labelled "Ianstown"). Their problem is that the Whale's Moo painting shows the rocks sloping from right to left, whereas, as seen from the footpath, the rock beds are folded from left to right. They queried whether the painting could have been composed from the Moray Firth side looking towards the shore. In fact, that seems to be the most likely explanation and some of you may remember the steep path from Scarnose point down to a fishing area on the seaward side of the Whale's Moo. One extra complication is that the painting also shows a wave breaking towards the painter's position! Robin Fanshawe has kindly written an article on his famous relative for us.

Check out also www.portknockiewebsite.com set up by John Smith. You can download The K'nocker and plenty of pictures of the village.

A big Thank-you to all those who were active in the BBC Radio Scotland "Talk the Walk" event on Saturday 2nd November in aid of "**Children in Need**". About 50 of us took part in the walk around the Braes with Frieda Morrison and Jo de Silva, the programme producer and camera technician. Frieda stopped every so often to regale us with tales of her youth here in the village. It was good to see so many youngsters taking part in this event and Frieda got a lively

response to her regular shouts of "Brownies" and "Thursday Club". Back in the Youth Centre, where others had been busy putting questions to the Beechgrove Garden presenters, the wet and wind-blown walkers were met with steaming cups of soup and sandwiches. Davie Mair had briefed Frieda on the history of Zulu fishing boats in the area and, during the walk, George Addison pointed out various local landmarks to everyone. A very large sum of money was pledged to the charity and it was a day to be very proud of the interest and generosity of local folk.

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2002

When the judge's report finally arrived for our **Beautiful Scotland in Bloom** display last July, it showed marks lost to litter and dog mess on our streets. This was a great pity for the pre-judging scavenging team had tried their best to keep the streets of the village clean for judging time. We wrote to the organisers querying the results and the fact that the Portknockie floral displays had been checked by just one judge last July. In a response, our high standards were acknowledged and the village was awarded a Beautiful Scotland in Bloom **Certificate of Excellence**. This is on show in the Library along with the award for Best-kept Village in Moray 2002.

Planning for next year needs to be starting now. It is hoped that all those who were active last year will again offer help and suggestions for the coming season. Anyone or any group in the village is welcome to link up with the activists to improve our "Village in Bloom" display for 2003. There is work to be done around the harbour, in the railway cutting, in the park, on the banking opposite Addison Street, at the west end of Pulteney Street and where ever you might see a potential for improvement.

THOSE LITTLE JOBS AROUND THE VILLAGE:

Portknockie has received an environmental improvement grant of £1 500 to improve signs around the village. The grant will enable us to erect a sign on Church Street directing visitors to the Library and the Local Heritage Information Point in Park Street. The grant will also provide a village map in the Millenium garden directing visitors to all the local features. This is to be designed in such a way that local businesses will be able to advertise their locations on the street plan. Finally, a special illustration as part of the

Treasure Island feature in Bridge Street will point visitors to other Village in Bloom delights.

The Moray Access Officer has agreed to improve the footpath through the old railway cutting to make it more accessible to everyone. The path surface will be suitable for wheelchairs and the gradients at either end will be reduced. This work will be completed early in the New Year.

Moray Council has agreed to repair and re-paint the welcome to Portknockie boat at the eastern entrance to the village.

Moray Council is expected to erect soon the first of the new landscaped mini recycling units in McLeod Park where Wood Place meets Logie Drive. It will contain a bottle and a can bank.

NEED ANY PLUMBING JOBS DONE? Give Cliff Smith a ring on 840052

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

At its November meeting the local MP, Angus Robertson paid Portknockie a visit. He listened with interest to local business and then discussed at some length local anxieties mainly about the threats to the NE Scottish fishing industry from the latest European Union regulatory proposals and the likelihood of any real support from the Scottish and UK parliaments.

The Steering Group of "Fit Like!", the community learning plan for the Buckie Area Communities 2002-4, met recently for the first time. There are many initiatives underway or about to be launched to enrich local area learning opportunities. Some possibilities to watch for in the coming year include a "Drop in advice centre for "Lifestyles change" in Elgin; a Youth Information Day in February; a special Moray-wide celebration for International Women's Day that includes an eight week series of classes in essential skills for young women; in July, a drama Festival based on the floating theatre, "Walk the Plank" in Buckie harbour; summer schools to give students basic skills in setting up a flat while away at university and offers of special training for sports leaders in the villages.

It would be helpful to hear from existing groups or from anyone with ideas for a new village group that might benefit from being within this **Community Learning Plan**. It brings together expertise relating to arts development, sports

development, health promotion and essential skills relating to all age groups. It provides an opportunity for getting help, sharing experience and accessing regional and national development agencies, including funding sources. At its next meeting in February the Steering Group plans to focus on widening learning opportunities locally for older folk.

Woodturning: pens, pencils, key rings, cheese boards, au'dhours sets, table lamps, clocks - all made to order. Contact John Bell, Schoolhouse, Portknockie. Phone 01542-841065.

The Community Council has a number of village projects in various stages of progress at the moment also needing your participation and support. As part of the **McLeod Park** changes a design for the skateboarding area has been agreed and costed, volunteers have come forward for the construction and the main need now is to secure the funding. A sponsored skateboarding fund raising event cancelled earlier in October is in the process of being re-arranged. The Church of Scotland group has suggested a theme for one of the garden areas to be established between the Hall and the children's swings area. There is the possibility of creating two further floral beds. It has been suggested that the surround to these flowerbeds could be in wooden shapes in a style to match the bases of the existing swings and slides. There will also be provision of seats and a picnic table.

The Three Creeks Shore project has changed from providing a footpath access to establishing a viewing point and information panel along Patrol Road between Park Street and Reidhaven Street. Some residents and the experts from Scottish Natural Heritage had raised serious reservations about the original idea to open this area up to walkers, who might disturb the Eider duck population that nests along the shore. It has now been agreed to create an information cairn to draw the attention of visitors to the exciting wildlife and heritage of this part of Portknockie. Graham Lappin has offered to build us the cairn and John Tasker from Drybridge, who produced the Bow Fiddle Rock panel and the harbour panel, is under-taking the design.

Once the new sewage system is commissioned Portknockie can expect a grant of £5000 from the developer, which will be used to re-create the old **Flagstaff Hill** layout by Rock House. This funding will provide for a replacement flagstaff,

white picket fencing, new seating and general landscaping. This project will form a part of several improvements, which it is planned to carry out around the harbour area of the village. Any ideas from the readers for improvements to our harbour would be very welcome.

A grant of £250 has been given to the village by Scottish Water for "**Village in Bloom**" 2003. It is proposed to use this for additional hanging baskets along Station Road. Moray Council will help us to extend this development to include floral beds along the main road towards Buckie.

Ideas are also being canvassed for a Landfill tax application in the coming year. Portknockie, once being a landfill site, should be in a good position to benefit from this scheme. One possibility might be to restore an old building to public use. The plans we have previously proposed for the old Bank building as a "Village workshop" and small group meeting area would be one possibility. With the **Fisherman's Hall** on the market again it is possible that a group could be formed to undertake a restoration of this important village building to community use. Does anyone in Portknockie feel this is worth doing? The building is on the National Cycle Route and might be reborn as a local enterprise unit offering a service to visitors. What do you think? Any volunteers wanting to take this on?

The Community Council has given its support to a bill being proposed by MSP Shona Robison to require the sale of fireworks in Scotland to be restricted to licensed outlets. Your Council is also checking out a planning application by the caravan site that will change its use to static vans only.

Community Council meetings coming up will be, as usual, on Monday evenings starting at 7.00pm on December 9th, January 13th, February 10th, March 10th, April 14th, May 12th, June 9th and July 14th. Meetings are open to residents and the Minutes of each meeting can be viewed in the Library folder.



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A **MERY CHRISTMAS**

& PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

NATURE NOTES by Lynn Selwood:
"An eel, a dragonfly and a tornado!"

I wondered where the Goldfinches were until I read in the Autumn issue of the K'nocker that they had been seen along the old railway cutting. They did eventually arrive on the harbour braes when the seed heads burst in mid-September and we were treated to "charms" of 50 or more birds flitting from place to place.

Earlier in mid-July I was standing in my favourite spot at the top of the harbour brae hoping to see dolphins when a movement on the road caught my eye. I thought at first it was a large snake and I approached it with extreme caution. It was crossing the road to Cliff Terrace slowly and obviously distressed, not a snake (thankfully) but a youngish conger eel. It must have been caught and released alive and somehow managed to cross two, maybe three roads smelling the salt water. I was unable to catch it but two people on holiday in Pulteney Street did catch it in my fishing net and took it down to the harbour where they released it. By then its skin was drying out but after a few minutes it swam away.

The flood water during the summer which turned the sea brown and diluted the salt meant that fish disappeared offshore so there were very few dolphins to be seen and the minke whales, which normally appear in July, were not seen until late August. I heard there were six minke whales seen then but I only saw two. Towards the end of September, on a gloriously sunny morning the whole bay was seething with dolphins, between 120 and 140 of them were seen by quite a few people. I have not seen so many at one time for years.

(Ed. This is some good news to balance recent newspaper reports that our bottle-nosed dolphins are being seen increasingly south of Aberdeen towards the Fife coast. A researcher from Aberdeen University tracking the dolphin movements has suggested that the reason for dolphins venturing out into the North Sea is in search for food, which is becoming increasingly scarce in the Moray Firth. The loss of this population of dolphins would be a big blow to the tourist attractions of the Moray Firth).

On September 7th in the late afternoon I saw a rather large **tornado** on the horizon. It was travelling west towards Caithness. I watched it for half an hour and later that evening there were bad storms in most of the north and north east Scotland.

I had a "first" in my garden pond this year and

SUSAN'S KUT N KURL
LADIE'S & GENT'S HAIR STYLIST

**Would like to wish all customers and
friends a Merry Xmas & Best Wishes for
2003**

this "first" happened twice, once in late August and again in early September. A large **dragonfly** flew over the roof of 1 Harbour Place, landed on an iris leaf laid eggs and then flew off. To see it happen once was lucky but when another one did the same thing about 10 days later I was really excited. I wonder how far the two dragonflies flew before they found my small pond so much to their liking? I have seen damsel flies on the irises occasionally but dragonflies are rarely seen. I had been thinking about cleaning out my pond this autumn but, when I spoke to Carole Baxter at the "Potting Shed" event on November 2nd, her advice was not to touch it. I may be lucky enough to see dragonflies hatch in two years time.

**"If you ever blow a fuse
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contact George on 840066 or 3 Bridge St.**

Neighbourhood Watch is an example of the police and local communities working together to prevent crime, to help build safer communities and to generally improve the quality of all our lives. Membership is free and some insurance companies will give a reduction on their annual premiums to those living in a Neighbourhood Watch area. New members in Portknockie are welcome to join. Contact John Myles.

One scheme in which the Watch participates is the "Message in a Bottle", whereby a small container, holding details of your medication, allergies, blood group, next of kin etc. is kept in the fridge. Stickers are placed nearby to alert medical help in an emergency, providing

possibly vital information. Anyone interested in this scheme, either for themselves or another (you do not have to be a Watch member to use the idea) can obtain details from the Library or phone John Myles, the Portknockie Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, on 840 000.

GEORGE WILSON 1848 – 1890, a Banffshire artist

© Robin Fanshawe, extract from the draft text for a forthcoming publication on the life and work of George Wilson.

George Wilson was born on 18th November 1848, at Tochieneal House in Lintmill. His father, John Wilson, was the Factor to the Earl of Findlater and Seafield, for whom he managed their vast Cullen district estates. In 1820, John Wilson's uncle, Alexander, had built the small Tochieneal Distillery. When John Wilson died in 1852 his brother, Alexander (Sandy) took over the factorship in care for George's elder brother, another John. Sandy fell out with the new seventh Earl and resigned the factorship in 1854. Young John eventually moved to Castle Park in Huntly to become Factor instead to the Duke of Richmond and Gordon.

The Wilsons eventually left Tochieneal in 1871. One of the final straws was the objection by the Countess to a distillery on her land – backed up by a sudden doubling of the rent! In anticipation of this, Sandy Wilson had, in 1870, started work on building a much larger malt whisky distillery at Inchgower. Inchgower distillery remained in the Wilson family hands until 1929, when during the depression, it was sold for its water rights to Buckie District Council, who promptly sold it to Arthur Bell & Co – still the owners.

From this brief history, it will be seen that George Wilson was lucky to be born into a reasonably well-to-do family, and was afforded a very good education from an early age. He was educated first at the local school in Cullen, then at the renowned Gymnasium, Old Aberdeen, under Dr Anderson. It seems that from an early age, he showed a desire not simply to paint, but to make painting his whole life.

In 1865, whilst still at the age of 16, he enrolled at Edinburgh University to study Arts for the next three years. In the late summer of 1868, still only 19, he went to London and entered Thomas Heatherley's School of Fine Art. Here he met up with a small group of artists whose

lives revolved around poetry and an upholding of the Pre-Raphaelite principles of a generation earlier. The 'Brotherhood', as the group had started to call themselves, consisted originally of John Butler Yeats, father of William Butler Yeats, John Trivett Nettleship, Edwin John Ellis and Sidney Prior Hall.

From Heatherley's, Wilson went briefly to the Royal Academy schools, but quickly moved on to the new Slade Art School, where he studied under Poynter.

Of the original group, only Wilson remained loyal to his Pre-Raphaelite principals, and although his later work showed some influence of impressionism through the use of light and colour, he never abandoned the fine detail of Pre-Raphaelitism. He was a true 'artist for art's sake', and seldom bothered to exhibit his paintings – only twice showing at the RA and on just a few occasions at other major galleries.

George Wilson painted in two significantly different styles. In oils, his only known remaining works are all strong allegorical and symbolist paintings of poetic subjects. His watercolours, by contrast, are mainly landscapes and the great majority are painted in his beloved Scotland.

Although he led a somewhat nomadic life, visiting Italy frequently, every year George Wilson returned to his native Scotland, staying primarily with his brother in Huntly – where he painted almost incessantly along the banks of the Deveron and Bogie rivers. However, he also frequently ventured across to Aberdeen; to Speyside, and to the Moray coast, where he stayed at Arradoul with another brother, James, who managed the Inchgower distillery. In this area he painted all along the coastline, constantly trying to perfect the depiction of waves and rocky shore scenes. There still exist scenes from Cullen, Ianstown, and The Whale's Mouth – apparently painted, curiously, from the seaward side.

George Wilson died in Huntly on 1st April 1890 at the young age of 41 from a chronic stomach disease, and is buried in Fordyce churchyard. There is little doubt that, had he lived longer, he would have become a very well renowned painter. Retrospective exhibitions of his work were held in Aberdeen in 1893 and in London in 1903. But sadly the majority of his works are

now lost – and since he never, ever, signed his works, they will be difficult to rediscover. A number of paintings lie in the hands of Wilson descendents; other examples of his watercolour work are held in the Aberdeen Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh, and there are examples of his drawings in both the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. There is a particularly fine allegorical oil painting hanging in the Delaware Art Museum in America.

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PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE:

Do you have any old medicines lying around?
Some helpful and timely advice from Jane at the Chemist shop.

If you are like most people in this country you are bound to have some things around the house you no longer use. Did you know though that wasted medicine is a problem that costs the NHS millions of pounds each year? In Grampian area alone it amounts to a loss of over £1 million a year! That sort of saving could provide this area with 2 extra intensive care beds or 167 heart bypass operations or 333 hip replacements!

There may be various reasons for having unused medicines in your home. These may include your doctor stopping a drug due to side effects or changing your therapy; not completing a course of treatment or you simply deciding you do not need a particular drug anymore. It is important, of course, to always discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before stopping any medication as it may be necessary to withdraw it gradually or an alternative may be needed.

There are many ways in which you can help to reduce excess medicines hanging around your home. In the case of antibiotics, the full course should always be taken for them to be effective. When you order your repeat prescriptions you

should only ask for the drugs that you need - never hoard tablets that you will never take! Do not keep medicines that you have been told to stop or that have gone out of date and do not ever keep medicines that you have been prescribed so that someone else can use them. They might not be suitable for anyone else and this practice could be very dangerous. Always remember too that medicines not stored safely in your home can be dangerous to children or even animals that could swallow them accidentally.

So it may be time to look through all those old medicine bottles or drug boxes and to dispose of any which are out of date or that are no longer required. Do not throw them away amongst household waste or put them down the toilet. Bring them back to the village pharmacy where we will gladly dispose of unwanted drugs safely.

**Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year from
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BT: (fault reporting) 0800 800 151
Coastguard: (24 hrs) 01224 592334
Environmental Incidents: 0800 80 70 60
Moray Council: 01343 543000
Out of hours 08457 565656
Buckie Access Point 837200
Uplift service (after 10am) 01343 557318

Patientline -NHS queries 0500 202070
Postwatch Scotland 0845 601 3265
NHS24 -24 hr health advice 0845 24 24 24

Travel Information telephone numbers:

Bus & Coach:

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

Airports:

Aberdeen 01224 722331
Inverness 01667 464000

Seaport:

P&O Passenger (Aberdeen) 01224 589111

Trains:

National Rail Enquiries 0845 748950

Taxis: (Portknockie) 840875

Local numbers:

Portknockie Post Office 840201
Portknockie School 840244
Portknockie Library 841149
The K'nocker (Bob Croucher) 841291

NHS24 (new entry to the directory) is a new confidential telephone advice and information service available any time of day or night. "You're worried because the pain is getting worse", "you don't know where to find a late opening chemist", "you are worried because you're still being sick", "You don't know where to find out about diabetes or where to get help giving up smoking" If you are worried and not sure then ring NHS24 and seek the help of an experienced nurse who can advise you on what is the best thing to do next.

CHANGED SCHOOLDAYS - a memory handed in to the Editor.

It is interesting to see articles about the school in the K'nocker. It is all changed since I went to school many years ago. Then, there were two intakes, one at Christmas and one after summer. The numbers in the classes were twice what they are now. The Janitor rang the bell in the morning and at dinnertime. He also called round to see why pupils were not at school!

Each class formed a line when marching in, beginning with the younger ones. The infants used the door at their side and the older ones used the other side. Then it was in to the drill hall to sing a hymn and to say the Lord's Prayer. The drill hall was used for gym. It had a wooden horse we had to try and jump over. We had a science room with Miss Wilson as the science teacher. There was a Cooking room where Annie Daff taught the basics. Miss Josephine's voice resounded through the whole school. For Geography she pointed to Portknockie with a pointer saying "Portknockie was built on rock" (no need to worry about flooding!).

The infants performed for Mother's Day singing and acting from poetry. Poetry that has long been forgotten - "Jack and Jill", "Polly put the kettle on", "Pussy cat, pussy cat", "Mary, Mary", "Ride a cock horse" and many more. When my son was at school he told the teacher that he had a Mobo horse so Mrs Moyes came home with him to see if she could borrow the horse for Mother's Day.

The Dux Board is missing? It should have been part of the history of the school. Mr Cummings said he could boast of clever pupils who had their first learning at Portknockie School before going on to Fordyce Academy or Buckie High School. Only three pupils were accepted to Buckie after the Qualifying Class, the others continued their education at Portknockie until the time to leave at fourteen.

On Armistice Day we marched down to the War Memorial to sing "O God Our Help In Ages Past". There was always a shower of hailstones. John Mair (Shanker) and others were there. John Shanker was School Convener and used to visit the school. We were told to stand up and say "Good Morning Mr Mair". A boy in my class informed the teacher it was John Shanker. She said "No" and he replied "If it's not him, it's very like him!" This will bring back memories!

Before Portknockie School was built the Portknockie children had to walk to Cullen for school. There were no cars or free transport then! My grandfather used to tell me about it and said this poem -

"In days of my boyhood
I wandered with joy
To the old school in Cullen
My time to employ.

My hair was then black
But now turning grey
And my heart leaps with joy
When I think of those days
When we walked past the Boarcraig
My comrades and I."

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POETS' CORNER

Thank you for being my friend.

I have a list of folks I know all written in a book,
and every now and then I go and take a look.
That is when I realise these names they are a part
not of the book they're written in but taken from
the heart.

For each name stands for someone who has
crossed my path sometime,
and in that meeting they have become the reason
and the rhyme.

Although it sounds fantastic for me to make this
claim,
I really am composed of each remembered name.
Although you're not aware of any special link,
just knowing you has shaped my life more than
you could think.

So please don't think my greeting as just a mere
routine,

your name was not forgotten in between.
For when I send a greeting that is addressed to
you,

it is because you're on the list of folks I'm
indebted to.

So whether I have known you for many days or
few,
in some ways you have a part in shaping things I
do.

I am but a total of many folks I've met,
you are a friend I would prefer never to forget.

Sent in to Portknockie by Judy and Ray Parrott
who used to stay at 10 Victoria Street.

Ode to an Arthritic

There's nothing, whatever the matter with me
I'm just as healthy as I can be.

I have arthritis in both my knees
And when I talk - I talk with a wheeze.

My pulse is weak and my blood is thin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
My teeth eventually have to come out
And my diet I just hate to think about.

I'm overweight and I can't get thin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
Arch supports I have for my feet
Or I wouldn't be able to walk on the street.

Sleep is denied me every night
And every morning I am quite a sight.
But I really don't mind when I think with a grin
Of all the places my "get up and go" has been.

I get up each morning and dust of my wits
I pick up the paper and read the obits.
If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead
So I eat a good breakfast and go right back to bed.

The moral is as this tale we unfold
That for you and me who are growing old
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin
Than to let them know the shape we are in!

Thanks from Ted & Rose Duddigan to the people of Portknockie for 12 enjoyable years living amongst them.

We are sorry to go but hope to come back for holidays. We have thoroughly enjoyed our time here and everyone was so friendly, especially Gertie who kept us right in the ways of the village. Thank you all, we will remember our time here with pleasure

SHEAR DEZIGN
Hair by Lisa

Open Tuesday - Saturday with late night Thursdays. We are open Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve over the holiday period.

"Merry Christmas to all our customers"

Phone 841711 for an appointment

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

The Amenities Association will be holding their regular Boxing Night dance with Andy Leyton-

James playing. Tickets for this McBoyle Hall event available early in December.

The renovations at the McBoyle Hall are virtually completed and the grant is spent up. The toilets have been refurbished, there is a new toilet for the disabled and there are now baby changing facilities. The Hall is very busy every night and the Association thanks everybody for their continued support throughout the year and wishes you a very Happy Christmas.

Portknockie Seniors wish to thank Pat Murray and friends on the Eider Alpha Oil Rig for their generous £300 donation to funds. The 19th November saw Trevor Mair entertaining with non-stop Country & Western music.

The Christmas Party will be at the Station Hotel, Portsoy on Thursday 19th December with the Woodlanders entertaining. In the **New Year** the Scotch Night is on the 21st January with Ian Cruikshank entertaining.

Other dates for the **rest of the year** are 18th February (John Rennie), 25th February (Jumble Sale), 18th March (Jane Farquarson, Monday Club), 15th April (Glen Scott), 27th May (Morning Tea), and the two summer bus runs on the 10th June and the 12th August.

Portknockie Mothers and Toddlers' Group finishes for Christmas on the 12th December after the Xmas Party. The group starts again on the 9th January 2003 in the McBoyle Hall. It meets Thursdays between 10 and 11.30am.

Fishing faces very disappointing news - it may be the year of the "CHIP" but not for the "FISH". Our fishing communities are facing a disaster if the excessive closures, proposed under the EU Common Fisheries Policy to protect cod and haddock stocks, go ahead. A very bleak outlook for Xmas and the New Year for all those involved with the fishing industry. Have you signed the petition sheets in local shops yet to "Save Scottish Fishing?"

Portknockie Library The new computers are being well used by adults and children but there is still free time to come and see for yourself the scope of the internet and get yourself a free e-mail address. Please come along and stock up with books and videos for Xmas and the New Year. Our **OPENING** hours over the Festive Season will be: Tuesday 24th December 2-5pm

(instead of 5-8pm) and Saturday 28th December 10-12noon. We will be **CLOSED** Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th and Tuesday 31st December and on Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd January 2003. I would like to wish all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. Thanks. Margret.

Opening times at the Library are as follows:
Tuesday: 5pm to 8pm; Thursday: 2pm to 5pm and 6pm to 8pm; Saturday: 10am to 12noon. So come along and become a world wide web surfer for free and see for yourself the Internet's scope.

Seafield WRI has the following programme through to the Spring - December 12th A Beetle Drive, January 23rd Doreen Wilson will talk on "Lifelong Learning opportunities", the Annual Dinner will be on February 27th and the March evening on the 27th will feature Karin Rose introducing "Candlewicking". New members always welcome.

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Your K'nocker needs you! Do you need your K'nocker? We normally go to print in the last weeks of March, June, August and November so make sure you look out for it. Please note that your subscription for 2003 is due **before** the next issue. Please see Margret in the Library and order your copy before the end of March, 2003. **The cost of your village newspaper remains at £3 for the year!**

Church of Scotland News: The Church held a successful **Holiday Club** for schoolchildren during the Tattie holidays. Up to 45 children turned up daily and both leaders and youngsters thoroughly enjoyed our time together. The visiting leaders commented on how well behaved the children were - keep it up kids!

Sunday School - our Christmas Party will be held on the 21st December in the Seafield Hall. On a very stormy day the **Thursday Club**, along with others took part in "Walk the Talk" with Radio Scotland. We enjoyed ourselves and managed to raise £250 for Children in Need. Thanks to all who contributed.

Christmas Services: Our Nativity Service will be on Sunday 22nd December at 11.15am. Please come along and support our children. Christmas Eve Service is at 7pm in the Church. All are welcome.

HAIR STUDIO

Unisex salon at 6 New Street

Phone Sarah on 841028 for appointments with Joanne or Amy

SOMY2GO Group is holding a very cosmopolitan evening for its Christmas event, an evening of Pizzas and Chinese dishes.

The 2003 "Citizen of the Year Trophy" announcement will be made during the evening of Friday 20th at the Victoria Hotel after the award for the Dennis Murray Pool Finals.

PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL NEWS:

Grateful thanks to all who packed a shoebox for Blytheswood. These gifts are well on their way to Romania by now and will certainly brighten a few lives there.

School Dates to note:

Tuesday December 10th: Christmas Lunch in the School canteen. All pupils requiring lunch need to book it using the return slip provided. Be warned - no booking, no lunch!

Friday 13th December: Whole school visit to see "The Sleeping Beauty" at the Eden Court Theatre, Inverness.

Wednesday December 18th: Playgroup party.

Thursday December 19th: Christmas Service at the Church of Scotland at 2pm. All welcome.

Friday December 20th: School goes on holiday at 3.20pm. There will no doubt be a "Come-as-you-please again!"

Monday January 6th 2003: School back at the usual time.

This year's Christmas Tree lighting was on November 30th. The honour for switching on the illuminations went to Caitlin Keir, the youngest pupil at the School.

A warm Welcome to Muriel and John Smith who are moving to 31 Church Street from deepest Kent. Mabel and Alex. Cowie are, in the meantime, sheltering at 18B New Street while they wait for their new house in Cullen.

MEMORIES OF PORTKNOCKIE by guess who?

First days at school. I was born in 1920. In 1924/5 there were over 50 youngsters in the fishermen's houses in Admiralty Street. My particular pals were to start school after the summer holiday but I was not due to start until the New Year. I was lost without my pals so about the middle of September, I went up to the school one day with them. One of the teachers, while commending my zeal, explained that I was not due there "until the snow comes". The first "shoor o' billets", however, came near the end of October so off I went back to school. This time I was allowed to stay for the day but told not to return until "after Hogmanay".

Because we were the "1914-18 family bulge" there were over 50 children in Primary 1 - the teacher was Miss Crossley's predecessor, Mrs Moyes. The eight oldest were transferred to P2, including me. This increased P2 to over 40. We were fortunate in having the highly respected Mr Donald as our Headmaster. Shortly after an extension was built to the school and coal-fired central heating and indoor cloakrooms were installed, but the lavatories were still outside!

The extension to Portknockie Harbour 1923/5.

I was only young so my recollections are limited but I remember vividly the cofferdam being built, a watertight structure between the two inner piers to keep out the water so the inner harbour could be deepened. The engineers were Best & Co. The explosives for blasting were stored in a cement hut on the Greencastle while the detonators were kept in the hut at the back of the Port Hill. Best & Co employed Irish labour and the men were billeted in houses along Commercial Road and Seaforth Street.

The Flagstaff. The area which includes the Harbour Garage was known to us as the Tods Hole (German for "death hole"). The Flagstaff, which was on top of the headland, had a mast and derrick on which a canvas cone was hoisted as a gale warning to shipping. The direction of the wind being indicated by whether the point or the base was uppermost. There was a white painted six foot high fence around the mast with a small hut where the cone and the signal flags were stored. A red flag was hoisted when blasting was in progress. Also the town crier went round with his bell warning residents to open their windows and to keep out of the

danger area during the blasting. In my day, the harbourmaster, Jim "Lyon", hoisted the gale warning signals on the authority of the local coastguards. On all prominent headlands around the coast similar signal masts were erected. **(Look out for further memories, next issue).**

An update e-mail from Dailene Wood. She says Dave Wood (King) had been over to see the photograph sent to her by Margret in the Library. He apparently has a number of documents about the "Evangeline" compiled by James Mair (Shanker), a British Rail manager living in Livingston. Dailene now asks for photos of Portknockie taken in 1890-1910 especially of the old houses in the centre of the village. Dave Wood would also like to hear any information about James Mair (Shanker). Dailene, who is a Home Economics teacher in the local high school, thanks Margret and others for their help.

Have the two communal composters in the village set you thinking about the value of home composting? If so you can get your own plastic compost bin from Moray Waste Busters in partnership with Moray Council at Unit 7, March Road Industrial Estate, Buckie (Tel: 01542-835533). There are two sizes, 29 or 40 inch base for £10 (£5 concessions). They fit any car.

Your K'nocker is edited by Bob Croucher, "The Bield", Harbour Place (841291) with the help of Margret Wood in the Library (841149). It is printed in the Moray Council Print Room. Please provide any articles or information for the Spring issue by **Friday 28th March 2003.**

A plaque on the door of Dovie Sutherland's old shed by the Paper Shop reads "Garage Vienne, 6 Place de la Liberte, BREST" Jeff Roberts, the present owner would love to have it explained.