

Seabraes development site is approved for expansion in the revised Local Plan

The Moray Local Plan (Final version) has given approval for a larger housing development on the Seabraes site at the eastern edge of the village between the McLeod Park and Addison Street. Up to 50 new houses are to be allowed on this site with access via Wood Place and Addison Street. The current total of households in the village is 514 so this represents a 10% expansion of housing development.

The new housing will necessitate some alterations to the existing road network especially where Admiralty Street meets Seafield Terrace and the main road, A942. Wood Place will be widened to 6m and there will be parking provision on the new estate.

Because this is an exposed cliff top location the eastern boundary line will need sensitive treatment to ensure a seamless visual integration with the surrounding countryside, which is of special scientific interest. Footpath links will be provided to the coastal path and the playing fields.

The population of Portknockie (2001 census) is 1 217 and this proposal is seen as a modest and steady level of future development for the village.

The new Local Plan maintains protection for designated open spaces on Addison Street, Bridge Street, the sports areas, the national cycle route, the former railway line and the braes above the harbour. The prime use of the harbour will be for recreational use only. The caravan site is retained for holiday use with a presumption against any other

redevelopment. Patrol Road remains for small business.

NIGEL ‘MIDGE’ MIDDLETON IS 2006 PORTKNOCKIE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

At 6.30pm on Saturday 25th November the village Christmas lights display and the tree in the Millennium Garden were switched on by our youngest school pupil, Nyah McKay. The ceremony was watched by a large crowd of residents who then gathered in the Seafield Hall for carols led off by the members of the Friday Children's Meetings conducted by the Minister, Graham Austin.

There followed the presentation of the John Addison Trophy to the 2006 Citizen of the Year, Midge Middleton by Pearl Murray, the current holder of this award. A presentation from several of the village groups was made to recognise Midge's involvement, over three decades, in providing music and commentary at village discos and other events.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

The autumn days of September and October were mostly pleasant and warm. The village had a fine evening for the Coat of Arms re-investiture ceremony on September 9th (details in this issue) and the garden flowers just seemed to go on blooming and preparing as if for spring! Shrubs and trees produced berries in abundance this year – not necessarily a harbinger of a hard winter but because birds were still finding plenty to eat out in the surrounding fields! Caterpillars could still be found on the cliff paths in the last week of October. Meteorologists have described autumn 2006 as a “phantom spring”, the warmest on record!

However, things changed dramatically on Thursday 26th October when a sudden gale of wind from the NW blew up around 6pm. Wheelie bins started rolling, letterboxes rattled, slates started flying, salty spume battered the windows and a large section of the flat roof of the Gospel Hall in Patrol Road lifted off. Several houses along that part of Patrol Road suffered wind damage to slates. The following day Louise and Judith Mair were very busy helping to clear away the wreckage from the Hall roof. It is good to see young people caring for their community.

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

*Wishing all our clients a merry
 Christmas & a prosperous New Year*

The Westfield Drive development was finally completed this autumn. The developers, AJ Rennie Ltd. from Banff, cleared and levelled the designated playing area, finished the pavements and widened the narrow section of King Edward Terrace where it connects with Westfield Drive.

Remembrance Day Service – 12th November 2006:

A largish group of residents paused to pay their respects to those who lost their lives in two World Wars and other conflicts since 1945. Stuart Mackenzie led the service and three wreaths were laid by Ron Shepherd (Moray Council), Alan Beresford (PCC) and George McKenzie (British Legion). It is noticeable that our annual service of remembrance no longer seems to attract much attendance from the younger people of the village. Should we be urging the future generation to continue with this tradition?

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JOINERY MANUFACTURE REPLACEMENT WINDOW SPECIALIST

Slater's Shop, Pulteney Street featured in the last issue stimulated a memory from 'Anon' – "As a bairn I was always fascinated by the shop's till. It had a brass casing and buttons that Slater pressed to record the price, then he turned a handle on the side and the drawer for the money sprang open. It must have been the nearest thing to a computer of its day!"

Flying high for Portknockie School: Kirsty Coull successfully completed her first ever sky dive on the afternoon of 23rd September from 10 000 feet above St Andrews. She reports that it was a nervous time waiting for the jump but once flying in free fall it was a wonderful experience. She is not inclined to repeat the experience but, in making the skydive, she has

raised £1 520 sponsorship funding for Portknockie Primary School. Kirsty was a pupil at the village school and her young brother, Ross, is still there. She says, "Like everyone else in the village, I have been concerned that the school might close, so I thought their funds could do with all the cash they could get." What a wonderful way to show support for the village school! The money raised was presented at the school on Friday 24th November, £760 for school funds and £760 to the School Support Group towards the purchase of the 'Jungle Gym'.

PORTKNOCKIE CHIP SHOP

**Ron & Dee look forward to serving you with
 traditional fish supper**

Opening Hours

Mon-Thurs: 4.30-8pm, Fri-Sat: 4.30-9pm

*Wishing all our customers a merry
 Christmas & a prosperous New Year*

**A letter from Helen Forman, née Slater now living
 in Nairn: She writes Dear Mr Croucher,**

"I'd like to congratulate the organisers of the Coat of Arms Re-Investiture Event – I thought it was wonderful and made me very proud to be a K'nocker. I'd also like to say how impressed I was with the floral displays around the village. As a keen gardener myself I can appreciate the time and effort involved. My mother-in-law and her friends make the journey from Turriff every year to see the Portknockie displays and she says these are always something special. (Ed: this feedback makes it all worth doing).

I was also very pleased to see Pearl Murray again whom I haven't seen for many a long year – though I have of course heard of her hard work to improve so many aspects of life in Portknockie, my late father was always praising her efforts and her organising ability. I left Portknockie over 30 years ago but still feel the need to visit regularly to get back to my roots. In the last K'nocker you had an article about my Granda's shop in Pulteney Street which mentioned a 50 gallon drum of golden syrup – my father when "helping" once left the tap open and the floor become covered in syrup – he was less than popular for a while!" Mrs Forman is the daughter of Willie Slater whose stories are often featured in the K'nocker.

Can anyone confirm this story from David Pirie?

"Imagine the consternation on a morning around 1930 when the buses first began to run between Cullen and

Buckie. The bus was at the stop opposite High Street as the milk cart came over the bridge. The horse took fright and bolted, the shaft of the cart went right through the windscreen of the bus killing the driver! The horse kept going and came to a halt when it demolished the street water well at the top of Bridge Street.” Did this really happen?

An e-mail from Margaret Bazaud, née Bruce now living in Agen, France – the Heid o’ the Brae poem by A Mitchell in the last issue brought a tear to her eye as that scene - the men sitting looking over the Firth, before their cooked tea, evokes how she best remembers living in Portknockie.

Those special words children used in games – in the last issue. Harry Hawkes recalls his childhood in Dumfries when children used to stick both thumbs up and say “**keys**” when asking for a truce in a game. No word of the local expression that was used yet!

Sad to report an instance of mindless vandalism of the village bowling green on Sunday 22nd October when deep heel marks were dug across the surface of the green and rubbish was scattered about. A set back for club members who have worked extremely hard this season getting the green into professional shape.

Congratulations to Amy Cowie, Lauren Hay, Alice Leitch, Vicki Pirie and Natalie Slater of the 1st Portknockie Girl Guides who gained Baden Powell badges and certificates during October. The awards came from meeting a series of challenges which included putting on a party for the Rainbow Guides.

November saw the whole length of Church Street resurfaced and the creation of a short stretch of pavement with a barrier on Seafield Terrace by the Samson Place gateway to help children cross the road safely on their way to school.

A Warm welcome to Portknockie is extended to Maurice Paynton and his carer, Patricia Morgan who have moved into 18 Pulteney Street from Wales along with two dogs and a guinea pig and to Neil and Sandra Taylor from Kent who are making a new life in Scotland at 3 Seafield Street with their little dog, Thora. The couple have previously been resident in South Africa for 28 years.

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2006:

The Best-kept Village in Moray competition awards for 2006 were announced at Elgin Town Hall on Friday 1st September. Portknockie, back in this competition after the year out for winning three years

in a row, managed Runners Up to the winners in the large village category, Aberlour. Some folk saw this as disappointing particularly as much praise had been won by the village for this year’s fine floral displays. In fact the judges had split the two villages by just a couple of marks difference and second place gives us all a chance to make even greater efforts for 2007.

We probably need to take a long hard look at some of the older displays and to do some severe pruning in places where permanent features have become rather overgrown. – the shrubs in the McLeod Park, the Cottage Garden and the Beach feature. It is also clear that we need a few more regular volunteers to be on call to help with planting, pruning, weeding and watering. Village in Bloom is really an all year activity not just for the summer months. Please give this serious consideration and talk to the regular group of volunteers who tend to get left with most of the grafting. Many hands make lighter work! Come along to the 2007 planning meeting in January.

PORTKNOCKIE - BEST-KEPT GARDEN CHALLENGE:

Still no reaction from anyone about this competition! Do we want this annual competition to continue? The issues to resolve include: Do we want the division between Council and Private Gardens? Do we want different sizes of gardens judged separately? Do we want gardens nominated by a third party or by self entry? Do we want the best gardens to receive cups and/or certificates or cash prizes? Do we want to use outside judges and is August the best month for judging to take place? Or do you feel it is time to confine the competition to the compost heap? Even the Moray wide best-kept gardens competition this year only attracted a handful of entrants. Send your thoughts and ideas to the K’nocker or make them clear to community representatives.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

The Council now 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** – Lauren Pirie and Karlie Thomas. Two vacancies are yet to be filled.

Sgt Keith Munro from Buckie attended the October meeting and listed local traffic accidents, crimes and breaches of the peace. He urged any members of the public seeing anything suspicious or having any information concerning an incident to report it to the

police. At the meeting criticisms were voiced about the dangers of the single-track slip road between the A942 from the village and where it joins the A98 trunk road. Cllr Shepherd agreed to take the issue up with the Moray Council. Options might be to make the narrow road one way or even to close it.

With only 70 pupils so far this term the village school is currently less than half full. The PCC is working closely with The Moray Council to explore possible additional uses of our school. These include a re-location of the Library, possible adult classes and the proposal from the Mothers & Toddlers Group to move their meetings from the McBoyle Hall to the school. The public consultation continues until 20th December and there will be a public meeting held in the New Year before the Review goes to The Moray Council Educational Committee on February 14th 2007. The PCC has welcomed news of the recent HMIE follow up Report showing that our school is making progress on a number of the criticisms that were highlighted in the 2004 inspection.

The possibility of a footpath alongside the A942 from Station Road to the Hillhead cemetery was raised. The Chair, Alan Beresford indicated that such a path would be a popular improvement with villagers who are concerned about the isolated nature of the present coastal track to the cemetery.

Two new Junior Community Councillors were welcomed to their first meeting replacing Ross Jagger and Laura Davidson who have moved on to a life of higher education.

A DVD of the Coat of Arms parade and ceremony is now available with proceeds going to the Community Association funds.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

The AGM was held on Tuesday 10th October in the McBoyle Hall. The Management group for 2006/7 includes: **Chair:** Pearl Murray (she says for the last year!), **Vice Chair:** Brenda Cowie, **Secretary:** Bob Croucher, **Treasurer:** Rachel Munro. The volunteer working group who will attend meetings includes the officers and John Bell, John Myles, Harry Hawkes, Eric Earl, Jim & Lil Urquhart, David & Helen Field, Cathleen Harper, Helen Sammon, Gladys McKenzie and Janice Smith. This is the core group but, of course all residents have automatic membership of the Community Association and are very welcome to attend meetings, volunteer help organising events and to make any suggestions for village activities.

The Treasurer's report showed the current bank balance of funds to be just over £2 500 and the account is also holding in addition a sum of £608 raised by the School Support Group.

The Secretary's report for 2005/6 drew attention to the collaboration with the Community Council over the Coat of Arms Project, the purchase of extra tables for the McBoyle Hall and the resurfacing work to the frontage to allow improved disabled access. Village activities and fund raisers for the year past included the 2006 Village in Bloom display, the Fireworks Display, the new Christmas Lights, a Children's Concert, the Boxing night Dance and the Hogmanay disco, an Easter Tea, a Quiz Night, a summer Cream Tea and the July fete in the Square. The 100 Club has been a great success with prizes each month going to three lucky members. The Thrift shop was a regular and busy weekly feature during the summer months.

The Community Association is a recognised Scottish charity and the Secretary drew attention to the checks and specific duties currently being imposed on all charities by the newly established Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

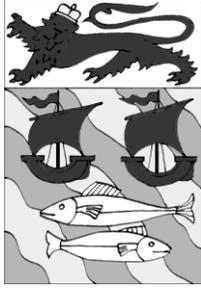
It has been proposed that next May the village will enter a team in the well-known Six Harbours Walk from Portsoy to Buckie organised by the Rotary Club of Buckie. Start thinking about this in the New Year and work out a fitness timetable – you can either walk or cycle. The team will be able to donate up to half their sponsorship total to their own choice of charity.

At the November meeting it was proposed that the Tariff of Hall Charges should be rationalised and made public. New charges will be introduced from January 1st 2007. Rising insurance, heating and water costs mean that booking charges must reflect the true costs of running this village amenity.

The Hundred Club draw for September: 1st Linda Sutherland, 2nd Lil Urquhart and 3rd George Smith. **The October draw:** 1st James Farquhar 2nd Margaret Blanchard, and 3rd Brenda Cowie. **The November draw:** 1st Cathlene Harper 2nd John Wood and 3rd Ross Jagger.

PORTKNOCKIE COAT OF ARMS: a record of this historic event in the history of the village put together by Harry Hawkes:

**Portknockie flag blessed
Friday 8th September 2006**



A special service in the local Church of Scotland saw the ceremonial blessing of the new Portknockie flag (above), whose design is based on the revived coat of arms of the village.

A crowded congregation was welcomed by the Rev. Graham Austin and heard a short speech by Pearl Murray, who outlined the history of the village coat of arms and praised the community effort by both individuals and local organisations in getting the arms reinstated – the Portknockie Community Council and Community Association, the Church of Scotland, the School Support Group and the Seafield WRI.

The service continued with prayers and hymns, and included an address by Stuart McKenzie, a lay preacher of the church. He emphasised that the flag and the coat of arms were symbols of the unique identity of the village; and that the motto “Aye Afloat” sent a clear signal about the optimism of the people and their determination to fulfil the potential of the community. So good it is printed in full below.

The flag, draped at the front of the church during the service, was held aloft by members of the local Boys’ Brigade, Michael Leslie and Andrew Bruce, and blessed by the Rev Graham Austin. After a final hymn, the flag was carried out by the BBs, who displayed the banner in the porch of the church so that the congregation could have a close view of it on their way out.

A final blessing by the minister ended this first public event in the introduction of Portknockie’s renewed heraldic identity.

SERMON

8 September 2006
Portknockie Coat of Arms

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 – ‘For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to

drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.’

When Graham – Mr Austin – was telling me about this event, he admitted being a bit surprised that a heraldic motto should be expressed in as couthy language as ‘Aye Afloat’. He said he thought these things were always in Latin. I warned him that just because a motto is in Latin you should not take it any more seriously. I have heard of a school where the motto was supposed to be *Ego non erant, domine*, which translates as, ‘It wisnae me, sir!’ There is another well-known school where the motto is *Drago dormiens nunquam titillandus*, which means ‘Don’t tickle a sleeping dragon’. It is, of course, Harry Potter’s school of Hogwarts. [And the fictional city of Ankh-Morpork, the creation of the humorous writer, Terry Pratchett, delights in the motto, *Quanti canicula in fenestra*, or ‘How much is that doggy in the window?'] You can have great fun with making up pretentious-sounding Latin mottos, and even Latin-sounding mottos like the old soldiers’ one of *Nil illegitimi carborundum*, which under these circumstances I shall not translate fully, but just remind you that carborundum is a material used for grinding things down.

So, a straight-forward, couthy motto like ‘Aye afloat’ saves everyone from a lot of nonsense and sends out a good, clear signal that it is going to take more than the machinations of bureaucrats at any level, from Europe down, to sink Portknockie as a community. But I also think it is a good motto for individuals. There are times when we have to let the tides and storms of life take us where they will, but if we do our best to be ‘Aye Afloat’, then we shall come through it all. Of course, we can always do with some help to stay aye afloat, and while the sailor overboard would be glad of his life-jacket, in the storms of life, there is nothing better than faith in Jesus Christ to keep our heads above water. Over the years, every time I have come into Portknockie, I have been reminded of this and been cheered by the sign: ‘Aye afloat’ – for there is an optimism and a determination in the motto which is very encouraging. A good motto for the community and for everyone in it.

Many people think that coats of arms and all this heraldry stuff is a load of old-fashioned nonsense. Certainly, it has its origins away back in the early middle ages when knights in chain mail and big helmets wore some identifying sign so that on the battlefield you knew that you were not belting seven hells out of someone on the same side. But it still resonates down today. Part of the heraldry is the badge – something which followers or supporters

could wear to show they belonged to the same side or the same family or had the same name. Again, it was important in these small altercations which took place in the Highlands over cattle ownership to know that you weren't sticking your dirk in the wrong person. These same badges can create a storm even today, as the clan-based Highland regiments, in particular – the Cameron Highlanders, the Gordons and the Seaforths, for example – were amalgamated. Former soldiers – who were as likely to have the name 'Smith' as 'Gordon' or 'Cameron' – did not want see their old regiments losing their identity.

And it is because badges and coats of arms help to give us our identity that they are important. Today, we worry more than ever about our identities. We worry over our loss of identity in a society where we are reduced to a series of numbers or even just a barcode. We also worry over the theft of our identities for criminal purposes – people getting access to our credit cards or banking details. Our identity is important to us, for it defines who we are and our place in society.

One of the ways we show our identity is by displaying signals about the groups or communities to which we belong, or even our jobs or professions. Sometimes we do this through the way we dress – bowlers in blazers and white flannels going to an away match; the Boys Brigade in uniform; some ministers who wear dog collars; medical students and very new doctors in hospitals – they're the only ones openly carrying stethoscopes. And it is not just jobs or professions but different clothes and hairstyles indicate identity. I give away my age in the examples I can think of – spivs, teddy boys, mods and rockers, new romantics, Goths and punks – to name but a few.

People like being part of a group. Being part of a group gives people a sense of belonging, of having people around them on whom they can rely or with whom they feel comfortable or safe. Sometimes this can take a wrong turning and the group of playground pals can turn into the gang of vandals or even criminals – the gang culture which can be a blight on society. On the other hand, the group can be a regular gathering of friends and neighbours for a common purpose and good fellowship – the Guild, the Rural, Probus, the Buckie Travellers Club, indoor and outdoor bowling clubs and so on – too numerous to mention. And there are groups for younger people, too, from Sunday School, Boys Brigade, Scouts, Guides, cadet forces like the ATC. Most of these clubs, groups and organisations have some way of displaying their identity – uniforms, badges, club ties or scarves, lapel badges or pins.

One of the most important groupings, however, is that of community – the people we live with and live amongst. There was a time, up to say

250 years ago, when almost everyone in Scotland lived in a small community – a fermtoun, or a village of twenty or thirty houses or burgh of a few hundred people. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, only seven towns in Scotland had more than 15,000 inhabitants – Portknockie was not one of them. In fact, in 1791, Portknockie did not make the list of places having more than 300 inhabitants. Whatever the size of the community, however, there was a community identity which might be fostered in a number of ways – a common ancestry, a common means of making a living, a particular dialect.

These were all very well for giving a community an identity before the days of cheap and easy travel. People are much more transient and can follow the jobs and the housing market. Fostering a community identity is much more difficult in a time when people are coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, and when a developer can double the size of a village virtually overnight. Look what has happened to places like Lhanbryde and Urquhart and is threatened to happen to Hopeman. Under these circumstances, anything to encourage community identity is worthwhile. Community efforts to brighten the village are one way, and the whole community can take great pride in the blaze of colour and the fun of the floral displays. But not everyone can participate in that, and so there is a need for a variety of ways of creating and sustaining the community identity.

The coat-of-arms is an important way, for here there is something which belongs to everyone in the community, and which distinguishes this community from every other. It is a good way not only to display your distinctiveness but to remember the origins of the community and what made Portknockie flourish – what kept it afloat. Portknockie had its very beginnings in harvesting of the sea, and while the fishing has become less and less central to the community, the sea will always be an essential element of life in Portknockie – whether it's your family heritage or the view from the sitting-room window. So the coat of arms with the green of the sea and the gold of the sand remind us of the environment of which we are all stewards.

The feudal element of the Seafield lion may not be in tune with our more democratic times as we become citizens rather than subjects. However, I think it serves a very important purpose, for, since the Seafield lands were very extensive indeed, it is a reminder that Portknockie is part of a much wider community. It can be easy for a community to be too inward-looking; to see everything only as it affects ourselves. Aberdonians used to be – probably still are – notorious for considering that everything of importance in the universe is restricted to 'Aiberdeen

and twal' mile roon'. I would hope that Portknockie, while having a 'guid conceit of itself', would also look outwards and play a part in the wider community as well – be a good neighbour to the other towns and villages which share a common heritage.

In the late eighteenth century, a local minister summed up the character of the people of the area – and he was writing of an area which included Portknockie and other communities. He wrote of the people:

They . . . seem strongly attached to the place of their abode. They have long been remarkable for their charitable disposition, not only to their poor neighbours, but also to strangers. They live peaceably with one another.

That is not a bad heritage. It shows a community which recognises its responsibilities both the neighbour in need and the stranger at the gate. It pictures a community where disagreements and disputes – which inevitably arise in any community – can be ironed out eventually through discussion. In honesty, I must tell you that the writer did go on to say, more or less, that they would do *anything* to avoid going to the lawyers in Banff or Buckie.

For the Reading, I used part of St Paul's letter to the Christian community at Corinth. I selected that Reading for it gives a practical lesson, not just to the specifically Christian community, but to all communities – that everyone has a part to play in making the community work, and the community should seek out the talents of everyone in the community. The community should be inclusive. No-one should be shunned. Paul talked about 'Jews or Greeks, slaves or free', whereas we might speak of 'native-born' and incomers, old Scots and new Scots. God has blessed each one of us with talents – different talents – which brought together under the one flag can create a better community life for all.

Your coat-of-arms is not just a symbol of your identity as members of the Portknockie community, but is also a challenge to fulfil the potential of that community.

**Ross Herald Presents
Portknockie Coat of Arms
Saturday 9th September 2006**



A perfect Scottish late summer's evening (the midges were out in force) was laid on by Portknockie Community Council for the official presentation of the revived village coat of arms, made by the Ross Herald from the Court of the Lyon King of Arms.

The whole village was in gala mood as the proceedings began at 6.30 p.m. with a parade from the Harbour Head to the Millennium Garden in Church Street, led by the Buckie Pipe Band and including representatives of local organisations in uniform – primary and secondary schools, Brownies, Boys' Brigade, Masonic Lodges and marshalled by members of the School Support Group. By the time the parade arrived in front of the Millennium Garden at 6.45 p.m., crowds of villagers had already gathered in Church Street – traffic was diverted for the ceremony. The honoured guests were seated in the Garden by this time too:

The Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire,
Mrs Clare Russell
The Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire,
Mr John Fowlie
The Ross Herald, Mr Charles Burnett
Rev. Graham Austin, our Minister
Angus Robertson MP,
Richard Lochhead MSP
Moray Council Convenor, Mr Eddie Coutts
Moray Councillor Ron Shepherd

The crowds were welcomed by Portknockie Community Council, the ladies dressed in black trousers and white blouses, and wearing gold sashes embroidered with the motto of Portknockie, "Aye Afloat".

Mr Alan Beresford, the Chair of the Community Council, highlighted the importance of the new coat of arms as a symbol of the historic identity of the village and of its present-day sense of purpose.

Rev. Graham Austin then spoke briefly and introduced a local favourite hymn, "Will your anchor hold?" which was sung by all present.

The Ross Herald, in full heraldic regalia, formally presented the vellum parchment from the Lord Lyon King of Arms setting out the legal award of Arms to Portknockie Community Council.

A prayer of blessing was then given by Rev. Austin, after which the Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire, Mrs. Clare Russell, addressed the meeting. She expressed her pleasure at attending such a significant event and delivered a royal greeting from Her Majesty the Queen to the people of Portknockie.

This was followed by a homily from the Rev. Austin in which he reflected on the importance of the day's event for the village and on the coat of arms as a symbol from the past which would have great bearing on the future. The hymn "To God be the glory" was sung before the Minister led prayers and gave the blessing.

In a final act of ceremony, two members of the Boys' Brigade, Michael Leslie and Andrew Bruce, escorted by a piper, carried the new Portknockie flag to the old Burgh Chambers. There, the banner was raised on a flagstaff where it will, in time to come, continue to fly during the summer seasons and on public occasions.

The ceremony was concluded with the singing of the song "Aye Afloat", which has become the anthem of Portknockie since it was composed in 2003 by local musician Frank Reynolds. The composer himself led the singing and also provided the accompaniment together with a group of other talented local music makers. This gave a rousing end to the whole occasion.

The festivities did not finish there, however. It was announced that refreshments would be available in the McBoyle Hall immediately following the presentation ceremony. All were invited to partake. There were also follow-up activities to be held in the Seafield Inn and the Victoria Hotel later the same evening, which continued well into the night!

The presentation ceremony was the focal point of a red-letter day in the history of Portknockie, and was an impressive display of the vitality of the village. Richard Lochhead MSP raised a motion in the Scottish Parliament the following week calling for official recognition by the Executive of the significant achievement of Portknockie.

Once again, "the Port" is to the fore!

**Scottish Parliament Motion 11 September 2006:
Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP):**

That the Parliament congratulates Portknockie on being presented with a new coat of arms on Saturday 9th September 2006; recognizes that the return of a coat of arms celebrates the community's rich heritage

and identity; pays tribute to Portknockie Community Council and Community Association and other local groups and individuals who helped make the ceremony such a successful and memorable event, and notes that, as the song says, "Sailing on a steady course, guided by its canny folk, Portknockie town is aye afloat".

BRUCE'S BAKERY – Doreen Laurenson writes from Holmsgarth, Lerwick, Shetland:

"I've just spent a lovely three weeks in Portknockie and during that period enjoyed quite a few conversations with a young 92 year old.

Ann has spent most of her life in Harbour Terrace, formerly Patrol Place, and had a lot of stories to tell. Particularly interesting I found were the stories of the bake shop.

In 1918, her father, a fisherman, had an accident rendering him unable to carry on fishing, as he was badly disabled. He bought an existing bakery business which went on to employ all the family for all their working lives. Ann's three brothers all became bakers but, due to asthma, William could not carry on in the bake shop but worked in the shop. Her father died suddenly in 1928, whereupon Ann had to leave school at 14 and work in the shop. The business was then run largely by their mother with all the family working very hard.

For the bakers, starting time was 3am through till 3pm with Saturdays starting at 1am. In the early years the shop was open from 7am – 9pm then over the years closing time came back to 8pm and then latterly 6pm. They only ever had 3 bakers working at any time.

The list of what they made amazed me. I'm sure the following will bring back a lot of memories for those who remember the shop.

First thing they would make the rolls, butteries, white baps, morning scones and softies, then the loaves, pan loaves, sweet loaves and currant loaves. There were iced cookies and cream cookies, **streakers**, which was an iced finger bun, german buns, **heaters** which was a big round stamped out in six wedge shaped sections. Then the fancies: **scoskies**, similar to Eccles cakes and **Pan Jotteries**. I hope I have spelled those two correctly. Also there were sponge buns with currants on top, big sponges with jam and cream, ginger cakes with dates, sponge squares with white icing and coconut called **snows**. There were meringues, pink and white, and peppermint ones

dipped in chocolate, brandy snaps, some filled with cream and some plain, **craw's feet** and pastry with ginger, apple scones and apple tarts, both puff pastry and shortcrust pastry, sponge flans with oranges, a selection of biscuits – tea biscuits, Perkins, rice biscuits, ginger biscuits, coconut rings, shortbread and biscuits with 100s and 1000s.

They also made mince pies with puff pastry, large ones for 2d and smaller ones for 1d, plus bridies. There were also the seasonal goodies – hot cross buns at Easter and strawberry tarts in summer and at Christmas time the usual array of iced cakes, iced shortbread and mincemeat pies.

What an amazing list to be turned out by one small bakeshop and I believe there were two other bakeries in Portknockie at the time.

As my forebears came from Portknockie I'd like to think that at least some of the Mair "Peems" enjoyed some of the fruits of the Bruce's bakery. I hope this stirs some memories and leaves you all with your mouths watering as it did mine when Ann was telling me."

SCOTS WORDS – the Doric column compiled by you the reader.

Hied hurry: The lum gied up, and in the **heid hurry** I forgot I hid left the dinner on the cooker and it got burnt. (The chimney caught fire and in the excitement I forgot I had left the dinner on the cooker and it got burnt).

Queet: I geed ower my **queet** and it's richt sair. (I twisted my ankle and it's very sore).

Steek: meaning close or shut and sew. I never **steekit** my een a' nicht. (I had a sleepless night). I've torn my troosers, will you **steek** them? (Will you sew them up). The word **shew** can also mean to sew.

Trance: a very old fashioned word which refers to the lobby or passage between two rooms.

Pymin: Your father will gie ye a richt **pymin** when he comes hame. A Findochty word that describes the impending likelihood of corporal punishment.

Flaf o' reek: We were sittin roon the fire when Jock opened the door sennen a **flaf o' reek** doon the lum. We nearly a' got smored. (We were sitting around the fire when Jock opened the door sending a cloud of smoke down the chimney. We nearly all suffocated).

A K'nocker was telling his pal that his wife gave birth that morning. His pal replied "Was it a **Bulky** or a **Besky**?" Meaning was it a boy or girl.

David Pirie, who sent in these words, writes "I know that most of these words are in general use amongst the older folk. Younger people and incomers will be enlightened. I am one of the older folk and I have been out of Portknockie for many years and there is nothing I like better than to meet an old school chum and speak the language of our childhood."

Editor: Thank you David. Would other readers care to nominate further examples of commonly used local dialect or Scots words with some explanation of how the expression is or was once used?

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

What a lovely Indian summer we had! It certainly brought the butterflies out from hiding. We had lots of red admirals and peacocks on our late summer flowers such as yellow buddlia and red sedums. They really lift the spirits don't they? But, the weather has now turned seasonal which means many creatures such as bats and hedgehogs will be hibernating or snoozing on colder days. Although they hibernate, hedgehogs are sometimes seen in mild spells looking for a tasty morsel. Look out for queen wasps, tortoiseshell and red admiral butterflies looking for somewhere snug like a shed or outhouse to overwinter. In the garden be careful with the garden fork near piles of wood or leaves lest a hedgehog is keeping warm within.

Robins are appearing more and more now the breeding season is finished and I'm sure that some of them have come in from foreign shores. They are usually so keen to make friends with us and get rewarded with tit bits but "our" robin is a bit on the snooty side. I even bought a packet of dried mealworms (ugh!) and every time I notice a robin outside I rush out with the packet only to see the tail end of the bird flying away. My friend Janet across the road has noticed the same with "her" robin too. If you see a particularly round and plump robin it is not a fat one but a very cold one! They fluff out their feathers to trap warm air when it's really cold, so keep feeding them!

A lot of our garden bird numbers including starlings, blackbirds, tits and robins are swelled in winter from continental birds coming for our milder climate. I haven't as yet seen any redwings or fieldfares and I live in hope of seeing waxwings again. They breed in

Finland and it is thought that they come here when there are plenty of their favourite rowanberries to feast on. One of the best years on record was the winter of 1965-66 when there were up to eleven thousand birds on our shores. They feed in groups usually on any type of berry so will visit gardens readily. They have a pretty trilling call, which easily gives them away. Waxwings are named after the red tips of their secondary feathers, which look like a bit like sealing wax. They have a lovely crest, a black throat and yellow tips to the tail feathers. It is a gorgeous bird well worth looking out for.

There is bad news from the RSPB on Guillemots around our coast. It's the sand eels again, or rather the lack of them. Hundreds of chicks have died for lack of the right food. Adult birds were seen offering the chicks pipefish, which are stiff and choke them. When a sand eel was found it was a lot smaller than usual and as guillemots only carry one fish at a time it was very hard work. Arctic terns and puffins though did better than the last two years. The RSPB are being consulted by the UK Government on a Marine Bill but this wouldn't apply to Scottish waters. Forty five percent of Europe's sea birds breed around our coast, which as yet remains insufficiently protected.

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Wishing all my customers a Merry Christmas & a Prosperous New Year.

THE TINTO HILL ANGEL - by Mary Thorpe:

Mary is taking a rest from her wildlife series and this issue she writes about a hill walk in Lanarkshire:

The Tinto Hill Angel

I hate tea and never drink the stuff-until, that is I met Angus MacDonald...

Last March my husband Carl and I went away for a long weekend to visit his brother and family in Lanark. The weather wasn't too good considering the time of year and on the first day we had cold blustery sunshine and showers. We had planned to walk to the top of Tinto Hill (a tad higher and steeper than the

Bin I think) whilst we were there and we waited for good weather, which came the next day.

Five of us set off in the car to drive to the bottom of the hill which was a few miles from the house. We left the car and set off in high spirits along the muddy lower slopes and it wasn't long before I put one foot in to a bog right over my boot. Good start, I thought, as I squelched along with one very cold and wet foot. After about twenty minutes of fairly easy going the wind really got up and we were hit by hailstorm, which was hitting us sideways. It was quite comical to see each other with one completely white side. The pockets on the right side of my coat were full of hailstones. There was no shelter but the hail stopped as suddenly as it started.

We soon left behind the muddy bottom slopes and came upon the higher snow packed steeper part of the hill. It started to snow now and we considered turning back. I was all for it but I was out numbered. Everyone else was of the mind set that once you start, you should finish. I have to admit that I don't like hill walking. I would walk for miles on the flat but hills do me in! Eventually, the rest of the party gave in on me holding them back and set off at their own pace but Carl, bless him, stayed with me. I told him to go on and I would meet everyone coming back (fingers tightly crossed behind my back) but he would have none of it and kept encouraging me on. Even on such an inclement day there were lots of walkers – all passing us. By now the path was as steep as climbing stairs and it was snowing heavily and so cold with the gale force wind. I was now thoroughly miserable! I kept having to stop and at one point Carl said that there was an old man coming up behind us and putting me to shame. That really cheered me up! The old man stopped to chat and tried to urge me on to the top before passing us. Then my mobile rang and it was Carl's brother from the top saying we were nearly there! Right, I thought, I WILL do it! Off we set and then we could see the top. Hurrah! We huddled together to stop getting blown about and everyone had a drink and a piece of fruit but by this time with the effort of the climb I felt sick so declined anything.

After a minute or so we set off for the descent and the snow stopped and we could see a little flat area off to the side. We stopped there to take some pictures while the weather was clear and while we did the old man from before came over to us and said to me that he'd noticed that I hadn't had a drink at the top and would I like a wee cup of tea? As I said before I don't like tea and told the man as much. He insisted that I would like his tea saying that it was very weak

with no milk or sugar. I still politely declined but Carl nudged me and so I gave in gracefully at which point he produced a wee flask and poured me the tea. I took a sip of the steaming liquid and could hardly believe how good this stuff tasted. He then produced another type of flask and poured a wee dram in to the tea! He passed the flask to Carl and his brother for a dram and introduced himself as Angus MacDonald. A typically Scottish name you won't forget he said and he was right!

We set off and it was myself and Carl bringing up the rear again. Angus walked along with us for a while and as we left the snow behind and got back to slippery muddy lower slopes he offered me his stick. Angus was seventy-seven and there was no way I was going to take his stick but he would not take no for an answer. Carl and he were now just ahead of me and after a while my hands were so cold that I couldn't hold the stick! The next thing I knew Angus turned to me and without even asking he took off his warm gloves and put them on my cold and stiff digits! He then said he was setting off for the bottom and would see us there. By the time we got down Angus was in his car ready for off and I returned his kit to him with my heartfelt thanks. We joined the rest of our party and headed for home and a very hot bath. I often think of Angus and his kindness and what an angel he was. I think he saved me for sure! I have tried weak tea since but none have come anywhere near to that cup I had up Tinto Hill that day.

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DO YOU REMEMBER? – Bill Porteous, 2 Church Street, recalls Nettie Hain, who lived opposite at Alex Legge's farm in Bridge Street:

Are you old enough to remember being sent as a child to Alex Legge's farm for a pint of milk, some tatties or maybe a cabbage? If the answer is yes, then the person who probably served you was Nettie. Sadly Nettie died peacefully on 22nd September 2006, aged 93 and hence an era came to an end.

Janet Seaton Hain (Nettie) was born on 23rd July 1913 in Saskatoon, a town in central Saskatchewan in

Canada. Her parents returned to Scotland at the beginning of 1914, bringing Nettie, along with her brother and sister to visit her mother's sister, Lizzie Legge in Portknockie. Due to the outbreak of World War 1 and the dangers of crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the family stayed in the village until the war ended. Because of financial difficulties, together with the uncertainty of what lay ahead in Canada, the family returned leaving Nettie behind with her Auntie Lizzie and Uncle Alex, until they were settled back in Canada, and in a position to return for her. Sadly, conditions did not improve, and along came the Depression and World War 2, all preventing Nettie being reunited with her family

Thus Nettie became the Legge's daughter. On leaving school, she helped Alex and Lizzie run the village farm, helping with the housework, in the garden and selling farm produce from the back door of number 10 (Bridge Street), often quite late at night. In later years she cared for both her uncle and aunt in their old age, and their nephew, Alex.

Nettie always appeared contented and happy, and led a very sheltered life in the village. Small things gave her pleasure; the roses in her garden, the whins glowing yellow on the braes, the deep purple colour of the heather in autumn, and the occasional outing to Grantown or Tomintoul, and, once even to Skye. It seems strange today, that until she was 80 years old, she had never been out of Scotland, and then it was just across the border into England. When on a holiday to Newcastle, she was able to see places visitors had talked about, such as the bridges over the River Tyne, shipyards with their large cranes and the many superstores. On a visit to the Lake District, the highlight was a boat trip around Derwentwater, which she enjoyed like an 8 year old.

Her family always kept in touch by writing regularly, keeping the Post Office busy, but she never saw her Mother and Father again, and it was not until her mid nineties, when to her great delight, her brother Andy, and her two sisters, Betty and Ina came to visit her in Portknockie. Since then, a number of the younger family members have paid her a visit.

Nettie enjoyed a friendly chat over a cup of tea, and was always interested in hearing news of their families. No child ever left the house without a penny or a sweetie.

2006 SOME WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS from the harbour area by Lynn Selwood:

The past few months have provided some of the most exciting birdlife observations I have experienced since coming to live in Portknockie almost 17 years ago. On September 22nd huge shoals of mackerel arrived just outside the harbour chasing sand eels and churning the sea in a frenzy of feeding to within a few feet of the shore. This sudden feast also provided the terns with their favourite food and quite a few terns stayed here until the beginning of November, much later than usual. The Gannets seem to have had very few young ones this year. I saw quite a few young ones from the two previous years but none of this year's youngsters until mid-October.

On the morning of October 1st it was dull and cold with rain showers but again I noticed the mackerel just off the harbour. Suddenly about 30 dolphins arrived hurling themselves through the water and leaping to round up the fish. This went on for ten minutes this side of the pier where a man was fishing. I have never seen dolphins before so close to the harbour entrance and shore. They then sped off past Tronach and, even now, I can still re-live the excitement I felt at the time.

After one of the autumn storms I noticed numerous birds taking refuge in the harbour. Amongst them were black Guillemots, Cormorants and Mergansers. I have seen Mergansers (**Ed.** this type of duck chases fish underwater sometimes acting together as a hunting group) at the same time in previous years but this year the harbour was teeming with small fry so the birds spent hours gorging themselves on them, hassled by a few herring gulls, which occasionally grabbed a fish from the beaks of the Mergansers but they can dive and the gulls cannot so they were not too successful. The ducks returned every morning for a week then were not seen again. For about five weeks there was a lone male Eider duck in the harbour. Other Eiders would arrive and sit on the rocks for an hour or so and then leave but this one stayed all the time swimming around the inner basin. He might have been ill but eventually he left.

Reading in the last issue of the Knocker about Mary Thorpe's Blackbirds reminded me of the one really sad incident of the year. My pair of blackbirds had been together for three years even during the winters. They nested in my hedge and seemed to be feeding a large brood of chicks but the eggs had been laid in the warm weather of February but then it snowed and turned bitterly cold in late March./April. One day at the end of April a chick left the nest and was brought to the back garden by the parents. It was very large and well-fed for a chick. The parents continued going in and out of the nest but no more babies

emerged. A week later I checked the blackbird nest and found seven unhatched and very cold eggs. No wonder the one which had been fledged was so fat! A few days later when keeping an eye on the young blackbird I saw the parents going in and out of ivy in the back garden. This time things were much more successful as all but one of the six eggs hatched and survived.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of the Redwings and Fieldfares from Scandinavia a few weeks ago I was visited briefly by a Great Grey Shrike. I have never seen one of these birds before. It stood on the road after leaving my garden then flew off between numbers 2 and 3 Harbour Place.

Now to the event of the year which still has me smiling. Because my cat, Jennie, is a house cat it only goes out in the garden with me on a harness and lead. On June 26th, a sunny and warm day, I was on the bench with Jennie when I saw something brown scurrying across the patio. My initial reaction was help, a rat but then it appeared from under a plant and I saw that it was a small, dumpy brown bird. I got my bird book and identified it as a Quail, which I felt was an unusual visitor to a garden. My friend, Lenny came along and he confirmed it was a Quail and took some great shots of it in various parts of the garden. I had expected it to leave quickly but it stayed all day not at all nervous of my presence. It fed amongst the plants and it had a dust bath in the dry soil then lay under the herbs. I was worried in case a cat or a Sparrowhawk might catch it and thought it had flown off when I was indoors. As I showered early next morning I heard a scream which later I was to find out is what Quails do just before they fly off. The Bird Recorder for Moray suggested that I might have mistaken this bird for a Pheasant but he had to admit it was a Quail once he saw Lenny's photos. An extremely rare visitor to a small garden, I shall never forget that it chose to come to my garden!

THE PORTKNOCKIE DIRECTORY

Police: Emergency	999
Non-Emergency	0845 600 5 700
Doctors: (Cullen)	840272
(Buckie)	831555
Seafield Hospital:	832081
Dr Grays, Elgin: 01343	543131
Aberdeen RI: 01224	681818
Dentist: (Buckie)	831163
Chemist: (Portknockie)	840268
Optician: (Buckie)	832239
Plumber (Portknockie)	840052
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:

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First Aberdeen Ltd. 01224 650065
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Aberdeen 087004 400006
 Inverness 01667 464000

Seaport: (Aberdeen)

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PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

Low-cost energy saving tips from the experts:

- Turn down your central heating by just one degree C and save up to 10% on your annual heating bill. That could be £40 in a year.
- Set the domestic hot water temperature to no more than 60 degrees C.
- Seal draughts around windows and doors. This could save some £20 over a year.
- Always wash full loads of clothes and wash at no more than 40 degrees C.
- Use the free wind to dry your clothes and a clothes horse not a tumble dryer.
- Switch to low energy bulbs and save up to £35 a year by using them.
- Don't overfill kettles when boiling water.

- Defrost fridges and freezers regularly.
- Use saucepan lids to retain heat when cooking. Use a microwave rather than an oven wherever possible.
- Do not leave TVs, DVDs or computers on standby or mobiles on charge unnecessarily – an average household could save £37.

'Green Energy' – SCARF (Save Cash and Reduce Fuel)

Had enough of rocketing gas and electricity prices? How about your own miniature wind turbine on the chimney-stack, a solar panel on your roof or a system in your back garden to draw out the natural warmth of the earth and use it to heat your living room?

If any of these take your fancy, you would be well advised to consult SCARF, a registered charity dedicated to promoting the use of 'green' energy systems based on renewable sources of power – wind, sun, water etc.

SCARF gives free advice on a whole range of systems that can help to cushion the nasty financial and environmental effects of those expensive and scarce fuels: gas, coal and oil. They can advise on devices to stick up in the air, bury in the earth or dunk in the running waters of the burn at the bottom of your garden.

They also advise on house insulation and ways to save energy costs in the home.

The charity has offices in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee, Moray and Perth & Kinross. The main address for the north-east is 1 Cotton Street, Aberdeen AB11 5EE
 Tel: 01224-213005 or try the website:
www.scarf.org.uk

Oh, one final thought – you will usually need planning permission.....

HAME COOKING by SWRI members:

Cheese and Vegetable Flan: You will need 6 ozs of short crust pastry, some mixed vegetables – a carrot, an onion, two sticks of celery and peas or beans or broccoli or used frozen mixed vegetables. For the sauce you need an oz of flour, an oz of margarine, ¼ pt milk mixed with ¼ pt of the vegetable water, 2-3 ozs of grated cheese, salt and pepper for seasoning, a teaspoon of mustard, a tomato and a hard-boiled egg.

Method: Prepare the pastry baked blind in a flan tin. Cook the diced fresh or frozen mixed vegetables.

Make the white sauce. When this has thickened add the cooked vegetables with the cheese and seasoning and pour into the flan case. Garnish with the sliced hard-boiled egg and slices of tomato. Eat when cold.

“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

The Glory of the Garden

So another gardening year has passed and the dedicated band of helpers who transform our village into such a feast of colour have earned their much needed rest. We did not win the coveted prize but so what – the important issue is that we have given so much pleasure to all those who have visited or driven through the village. Portknockie is becoming established as the “flower village” and folk are making a detour to view and admire the glory of the gardens. We feel so proud when we walk our visitors around and await the words of appreciation. The local colourful flower displays can transform the dulllest day and lift the spirits. Our “yellow flooers”, on their windy corner, haven’t done too badly either, and are still hanging on to the last vestiges of colour. Wish them luck over the winter months!

To end an extract taken from the Glory of the Garden by Rudyard Kipling, no mean gardener himself and the humblest of men. Did anyone read in a recent P&J the comments of Roger Moore (now a Sir)? “I admire Rudyard Kipling because he turned down all honours offered to him – even a knighthood. I was very happy to accept mine.” For acting James Bond!

“Oh Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener’s work is done upon his knees,
So when your work is finished you can wash your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden that it may not pass away!
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!”

Merry Christmas to all the readers.

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*A merry Christmas and Prosperous
New Year to all our clients.*

SEASONAL GREETINGS 2006/7:



There is a list of folks I know, all written in a book,
and every year at Christmas time I go and take a look.
And that is when I realise that these names are a part,
not of the book they’re written in but of my very heart.
For once you’ve met somebody, the years cannot erase,
the memory of a pleasant word or of a loving face.
Never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine,
of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between.
For, be you relative or friend or just someone that I’ve met,
you happen to be one of those I’d rather not forget.
And whether I have known you for many years or few,
in some way you have had a part in shaping things I do.
So, as you read this message that I send at Christmas time,
know that I send you all my love while you are on my mind

(Anon, sent in by a reader)

Seasonal Greetings from villagers:

*To all relatives in Canada, - wishing
YOU a Merry Christmas and a healthy
and happy New Year.*

Alex & Catherine Ritchie.

*Bob & Marj Croucher wish all their
friends in the village “buon Natale e
Buon Anno da Zermeghedo, Italy.”*

*Christine Slater wishes all her friends
and neighbours in Portknockie a very
happy Christmas and New Year.*

Christine will donate the money to the Christmas Lights fund that she usually spends on sending cards. She thinks it a good idea to send seasonal greetings to our friends and neighbours through the columns of The K’nocker. If everyone did this, she says, it would be a good way to raise funds at this time of the year for the community or one’s favourite charity.

*Anne Addison family wish all their
friends and neighbours a merry Xmas
and a happy and Prosperous New Year*

POETS' CORNER:

A Mother's Christmas Day

Ye drag yersel' aff tae yer bed
On Christmas Eve – gie late
The stockings filled, the hoose a' cleaned
A guid nichts rest yer date.

Ye've hardly shut yer e'en it seems
When oot o' the room near by
Come the excited shouts and screams
"Is it time yet, Mum, tae rise?"

This goes on a' through the nicht
Till in sheer desperation
Ye a' git up at four o'clock
Tae empty every stockin'.

There's paper and streamers everywhere
An' boxes by the dizen
By the time it's a' been cleared awa'
It's time tae start the dinner.

Ye roast, ye baste, ye boil the pud
Mak' sauces, sweet and savoury
Cut up various kinds o' veg
An' then ye mak' the gravy.

Ye clear awa' the debris
When at last they've a' been fed
They want ye tae play an' watch TV
But a' ye want is yer bed.

By Sheena Pirie from the Davie Mair Collection.

Portknockie my hame

Portknockie I left at age sixteen
And off we went to Aberdeen.
The life in the city wisna the same
Portknockie will always be kent as my hame.

An noo in a land thit's far awa
The land 'o the maple leaf – O Can-a-da
Readen poems by "Exiled", dinna ken fits his name
A' aboot Portknockie his and my hame.

I think o' the school and Mr Moyes
The teachers we hid, that put up wi oor noise

Lernt cooken, maken knots, fexin nets and morse
code
For the life ahead further doon the road.

Portknockie his changed, the bonny bridge is noo
doon
Fit next will they de ti oor bonny wee toon
Nae matter fit they try, ti me it's the same
The toon o' my childhood, Portknockie my hame.

By George Findlay.

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

A seasonal thought. That is what I have been asked to submit for this K'nocker. It struck me that that is the problem with Christmas, and Easter for that matter, we have restricted it to a time in the year, reduced it to a season. A season when we do make the special effort to be nice, to be family, sitting round the dinner table, to send cards, give presents, to be happy and to make others happy. These are all good things and I more than anyone would want to encourage this type of behaviour.

But listen God calls us to be good people, caring people, and loving people for all seasons; not just one day a year, or for a week but everyday - as the song goes, 'I wish it could be Christmas everyday.' Well you might think that's a bit expensive but actually you don't need to spend money to care for your family and your neighbour. So in 2007 try to bring the spirit of Christmas - which is about God giving his love - into the whole year and don't leave it for 365 days before you give someone a present, a smile, a little bit of your time.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year from all at the Portknockie Church of Scotland.

Buildings of Portknockie The Halls of Portknockie – 1 16 Church Street

"Free Church Hall" / "Burgh Chambers" /
"Council Chambers" / "Youth Centre Hall"

It is difficult to know what to call this imposing hall because it has served a number of different purposes throughout the 118 years of its existence. It was opened on Friday 17 February 1888. The 'Banffshire Advertiser' (BA) of the following Thursday described it as "built by the Rev. P. Brown for the use of the Free Church congregation and to be

available for general public purposes”¹. The hall therefore began as a religious centre. The Rev. Brown, at the opening ceremony, declared that the hall was meant for carrying on the work of the congregation, with special reference to the “.. Sabbath School ... evangelistic purpose... and ...Band of Hope”¹. As well as this, “..when it was desired for any public purpose, it would be at the disposal of the villagers”¹. However, “There are three things that would not be permitted within the hall : drinking, dancing and dramatic entertainments”¹.

The BA describes the exterior of the new hall: “The building is 52 feet long by 26 feet broad ... a plain, substantial structure. Built on a slope, the height of the frontage is 28 feet but at the back the height is 34 feet. The extra height at the back has been taken advantage of, a commodious shop being under the hall.”¹ We see the same exterior today, 118 years later, with the entrance to the shop premises still on Pulteney Street, at the back of the hall.

The first business to occupy the shop premises was a chemist-cum-bookseller, run by a Mr J. Buchanan of Cullen. The BA says: “Attached to the shop are two stores, one of which is fitted up with water so that there is every convenience for carrying on a large business”¹. Interesting, that an in-house water supply, so commonplace today, was worthy of such comment in 1888.

The shop premises must have changed hands a number of times over the years. By 1928, the Union Bank of Scotland occupied the site². This subsequently became the Bank of Scotland which was in the premises until 1999 when the branch finally closed. After some years of standing empty, the premises are now occupied by the village Thrift Shop.

The BA describes the interior of the hall. Originally, it was divided into two rooms by a set of six folding doors, each 8 □ x 3 □. The doors were surmounted by a plaster partition 6½ □ high, which gave the hall a height of about 15 □. This arrangement provided a large front room (30 □ long x 23 □ wide) and a smaller back room (16 □ long x 18 □ wide). With the folding doors open, there was space for up to 250 seats. The back room was narrower in width because some space was taken up by a storeroom. This store was at the head of a set of back stairs which gave access to the back room and also to the front room.

The BA report also comments favourably on the excellent standard of interior furnishings in the hall, including a finely-varnished dado, 4 □ □ high, which ran all round the walls of the rooms.

The newspaper also mentions that each of the original rooms had a fireplace but today the roof shows only one chimney at the rear of the hall.

In 1897 the hall was refurbished and the folding doors, with the plaster partition, were removed, leaving one permanent large room in the hall. The re-opening ceremony for the renovated hall featured “an exhibition of the cinematograph by Messrs Gibson of Turiff” in which “the animated moving pictures afforded great delight”³.

The back stairs and entrance have now gone, though one local memory dimly recalls an external set of stairs at the back of the hall.

The rooms of the hall were lighted by three large windows on each side. The middle window on the east side is now bricked up.

There is no reference in the BA reports to any toilet or kitchen facilities in the hall. These are now installed, being no doubt conveniences dependent on the wonders of modern sewage and electricity systems (and on the wonders of modern health and safety regulations).

The hall, in time, ceased to be a religious centre and passed over to civic use as the ‘burgh chambers’ in the early 1960s, replacing the old Fisherman’s Hall as the centre for such events as the local magistrate courts. In 1976, there was a wholesale reorganisation of local government, control of local affairs passed to Elgin and there was no further need for ‘burgh chambers’. Ownership of the hall rests with Moray Council who lease it to Portknockie Community Council for a peppercorn rent. The hall is presently the premises for the Portknockie Youth Centre. A plaque with the revived Portknockie coat of arms was fixed to the front of the building on Church Street, in September 2006; and a flag of the same flies proud on a new flagpole above the plaque – last vestiges of the civic administration days of the hall.

We would welcome any further information or stories about the hall. (One senior citizen in the village has already told of the Boy Scouts meeting in the hall in the early 1950s and storing waste paper for salvage in a large space under the floor – “waste aware” even

¹ ‘Banffshire Advertiser’, Thursday 28 February 1888.

² “Early Years in Portknockie” in ‘The Stories of Willie Slater’ (Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group).

³ ‘Banffshire Advertiser’, 25 March 1897

half a century ago, and without a blue plastic box!) Please contact any of the editorial team if you have information.

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BUILDINGS OF PORTKNOCKIE:

No 2 - Easter 2006.

18 Church Street an Update

Sybil (née Slater) from Pulteney Street has pointed out that the living room floor of 18 Church Street, now fitted with floorboards, used to be flagged in stone and there was no bathroom, the toilet was in the outhouse. David Pirie wrote in wondering how the old railway station booking office shed happened to end up in the garden of No 18. It was only a few years ago that it was finally demolished.

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*Christmas greetings and a Happy &
healthy New Year to all our customers*

YOUR NEW ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 2007

This falls due **before** the next issue comes out in March 2007. Please place your order with Margret Wood in the Library before then. This year we have at last increased the cost of the K'nocker to cover rising expenses and to help make a contribution to village fund raising. The new charge for 2007 will be **4 copies delivered for £4**. Single copies will still be available to purchase from the Library or the Chemist shop. See Margret Wood for postal rates but we have to charge extra to cover increased p&p.

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 2007 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 the better!

The K'nocker Editorial Team sends Christmas and New Year greetings 2006 to all our readers and a very special thank you to those in the village who volunteer to deliver your village newspaper over the year. When you see them why don't you thank them!

The K'nocker delivery Team:

Eddie Anderson – Haig Street, Moray View and Seaview Place.

Alec Campbell: King Edward Terrace.

Monique Cavalier: New Street, Park Street and Reidhaven Street.

Bob Croucher: Blantyre Place, Cliff Terrace, Commercial Road, Gordon Street, Harbour Place, Harbour Terrace, Hill Street, Mid Street, Pulteney Street, Seaforth Street, Victoria Street.

Cath Dawson: Church Street and Bridge Street.

George Donaldson: Addison Street, Bruce Place, Craigview Road, Mairs Street, Samson Place, Samson Street and Stuart Place.

Shirley McLean: Falconer Terrace, Geddes Avenue, Logie Drive, Slater Crescent and Wood Place.

Morag Reid: Admiralty Street and Seafield Terrace.

Karin & John Rose: High Street and Station Road.

Isobel Worrel: Seafield Street.

Margret Wood: Firthview, Findlater Avenue, Westfield Drive and Station Court.

And, finally, grateful thanks to Sandra and her colleagues in the Chemist Shop who sell single copies to visitors and those who do not yet subscribe on the annual subscription basis.

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

Community Association: The "Here comes summer" quiz winner was Mrs E Davidson, "Altloan", Fordyce, Banff. Christmas fun includes lighting the Christmas tree, carols and sausage rolls on Saturday 25th November, the famous Boxing Night Dance (tickets £7.50) and the Hogmanay Disco (£4). Watch out for bills in the shops and ticket sellers.

Portknockie Seniors Group: The Christmas Party is planned for December 12th in the Marine Hotel and our own **John Rennie** will be performing. The New Year begins on January 23rd with **Three-in-a-Row** at the Scotch Night. On February 20th the **Portsoy 75 Club** will be visiting. On March 20th **Ray Morton** will perform and on April 17th which is the AGM the concert party will be the **Ythan Fiddlers**. The year's programme ends in the summer with the Morning Tea on May 29th and the Annual Bus run on June 12th.

Seafield Women's Rural Institute: The new season opened on the 28th September, with Sarah Hawker from ASDA. Sarah gave a good turn out of members an insight into the working of a huge supermarket chain. The competition for a Pasta Salad was won by Mary Sutherland.

October saw Dr Susan Morrison from Cullen Medical Centre giving a talk on Safety in the Home. We are all aware that the home can be a dangerous place and Dr Susan had lots of tips and information for 'Older People'. The competition for a Greeting Card was won by Mary Sutherland.

There was a change of speaker in November. Elyse Minshull demonstrated Teabag folding (Pretty ones not the Tetley variety) and gave members a hands on opportunity to make cards, some lovely designs were created amid much hilarity at times. The competition for a Knitted Square was well represented and won by Margaret Simpson. More of Knitted Squares later.

Invitations from other Institutes came thick and fast for November. On Friday 3rd five members enjoyed a quiz at Arradoul Institute, a lovely tea was served and while we didn't win, we didn't come last. Fordyce was the next visit on the 14th when 3 members heard two volunteers from the Samaritans in Elgin talking about their work, it was very interesting and thought provoking.

Friday 17th, just as the snow started, four members ventured to the Marine Hotel, Buckie to 'Meet the Chairman', hosted by the Banffshire Federation. The Chairman, Mrs Alison Bailey, will be the National

Chairman for the next 3 Years. Mrs Isobel Eckersley, the Banffshire Chairman, opened the evening in her usual relaxed and amusing style, she then introduced Mrs Bailey, who talked about her years in the WRI in Edinburgh leading up to her becoming Chairman. A cake made by an Arradoul member was cut, a lovely supper was served and the entertainment was by the Strathspey Fiddlers.

Saturday 18th November was the Final of the competition 'Variations on a Theme' which was hosted this year by Banffshire Federation and held at the Fisherman's Hall, Buckie. The Theme this year was '**WORK**' and there were very many variations performed on the day. Eleven teams took part from all over Scotland. The standard was excellent, with only 1 point between 1st and 2nd places. Ballater were first with Tobermory in 2nd place. Three members from Seafield enjoyed a very entertaining day.

Knitted Squares – our winter project: There were a good number of squares donated at the November meeting and President Isobel Mair asked members to keep knitting through the winter. This is for a good cause - the squares are made up into blankets and sent to the Queen Mary Guild for distribution to Hospitals and Hospices. There is an instruction leaflet available, just ask any Committee member.

The next meeting is on Thursday 14th December and is the Christmas Party Night for MEMBERS ONLY. The competition will be a Christmas Tree Decoration.

Bowling Club Notes: Our winter carpet bowls season is now in full swing. We (usually) have our HAT nights in the McBoyle Hall on Monday and Thursday evenings, where it is fine to be out of the elements. In addition we participate in the Banffshire Coastal League, where we have made a very promising start. Some of the members have been playing also in open competitions in surrounding clubs and have already achieved notable successes.

In October our major Ceilidh evening went off very well. Apart from the enjoyment of the night, with the Club now liable for more bills than previously, the excellent total of £1 000 raised will provide us with a very valuable income cushion. Sincere thanks are extended to the "Over the Moon Band" who came up from Northumberland, to John Bell who did much of the organising and to the many others who helped and supported in any way on the night. Also to help with fund raising for the Club we are selling 2007 calendars, produced by John Bell and featuring aspects of Portknockie. They are available at £4 each from John or any of the Club members.

New members are most welcome to join us. If you would like to try, please come along. We have spare sets of bowls and flat soft shoes or slippers are fine.

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

Library News: New books are arriving weekly with Large Print proving to be very popular with all ages. IT Computer sessions are available in the Library – please contact me on 841149 or Eleanor on 832121 and ask for details; a two hour course on Word, Files and Folders or Internet costs £5 – a time can be arranged to suit you.

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. The Library will be closed on the 26th December and re-opens on the 28th but then is closed until Thursday 4th January 2007.

Fishing: Portknockie sees an addition to the fleet – the MB Transcend, owned by Neil Robertson and Kevin Wood and partners. We wish all boats and crews a prosperous 2007.

Portknockie Playgroup: Just a quick hello to let you know what has been happening in the Playgroup this term. We held a sponsored **pyjama day** which was great fun, everyone including the staff coming in their pyjamas – we raised £181.50 for our funds.

The **football quiz** received a good response and there were 22 correct entries - the winner was Cally Innes from Buckie.

The **2-3 Group** started meeting on Monday 13th November. This group will meet for two afternoons (Monday and Wednesday) each week from 1pm to 2.30pm. This is a new venture and the response has been very good. At our **Toy Sale** on 11th November we raised £165.03 – many thanks to all who helped.

Our second annual **Open Evening** was on Monday 4th December. It was open to the whole village to come along, look inside and have a chat over coffee between 6pm and 7.30pm.

The **Christmas Party** will be held on Friday 22nd December with Santa arriving around 11.15am.

Victoria Hotel – forthcoming seasonal events:

Traditional music nights held in the lounge bar on the second Friday of every month. They start at 8.30pm

come along and enjoy entertainment provided by talented local musicians.

We are holding a Christmas Quiz on Thursday 21st December at 8.15pm in the Lounge Bar. Come as teams of 4 with £1 per person entry fee. There will be a 1st prize of £20, prizes for 2nd and 3rd places plus spot prizes.

Mike & Karen and the staff at the Victoria Hotel look forward to welcoming you to the fun nights in store to brighten up the winter evenings. Merry Christmas all

Portknockie Toddlers: all parents and their pre-school children are welcome every Thursday morning 10-1130am at the McBoyle Hall.

JMK

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New Year to all our customers*

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wonderful time over Christmas and be
ready to paint again in the New Year
- from Catherine's Creative Ceramics.*

The **Portknockie School Support Group** would like to thank Kirsty Coull for her very kind donation of £760 which she raised doing a sponsored sky dive. It was very much appreciated and will go towards the installation of our Jungle Gym.

The Group held a country Hoe Down in September which raised just over £300 for our funds, our grateful thanks to all who turned up on the night and

supported us – it was very much appreciated. Our next fundraiser is our Christmas Hamper Raffle. Tickets for this can be purchased from any Support Group Member and will be drawn just before the school breaks up for Christmas.

The main target of the Support group this year was to raise funds for a 'Jungle Gym' for the children's playground. However, due to the fantastic generosity and support of Portknockie and beyond, we have not only succeeded in achieving this but we have also been able, during the year, to purchase equipment, books and other necessities to the value of £4 500 for the benefit of the school and its pupils. Many thanks again for all your encouragement.

THE K'NOCKER GOES DIGITAL: The editorial team, with the inspiring expertise of Neil Hedley, has produced the first audio podcast of your village newspaper. You and friends anywhere can now listen to the K'nocker being read to you while you get on with other things! The first podcast contains extracts from the four issues of 2006. You will be able to listen to it from your computer and download the podcast from www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk If there is a demand we may make a disc of the audio digest available for purchase.

PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL:

School Term Dates:

Winter Term Ends Friday 22nd December 2006.
Christmas Holidays Monday 25th December 2006 to Friday 5th January 2007.

Spring Term Commences Monday 8th January 2007
Occasional Day Holiday Friday 16th February 2007
Mid Term Holiday Monday 19th February 2007.
Spring Term Ends Friday 30th March 2007.
Easter Holidays Monday 2nd April 2007 to Friday 13th April 2007.

Summer Term Commences Monday 16th April 2007
May Day Holiday Monday 7th May 2007
In Service Closure Thursday 24th May 2007 and Friday 25th May 2007
Occasional Day Holiday Monday 11th June 2007
Summer Term Ends Thursday 5th July 2007.

Donald Morrison is taking weekly lessons for the older pupils in gaelic conversation. Donald comes from the Outer Isles and is fluent in speaking, reading and writing the gaelic language.

SOME NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS TO TRY

- Pay for your 2007 subscription at the Library in plenty of time before the March issue.
- Show your support for Village in Bloom by coming along to the open meeting (likely in January) to plan the year's display. Also consider volunteering to care for a floral feature near you during 2007.
- If not already a member, join one or more of the village groups and enjoy the pleasure of meeting one's neighbours in a mutual interest.
- Look out any bric-a-brac from your cupboards in readiness for the first fund raiser of 2007 in the village.
- Reflect on any vital lifestyle changes you perhaps, should consider making to ensure a healthy and active life in 2007.
- Consider signing up for and getting in trim for the Portknockie team proposed for the 6 Harbour Walk in May 2007.
- To have an exciting and fun-filled year ahead and to resolve to keep your resolutions