

HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP,HELP Your Village newspaper runs out of News!

Your editorial team finds it increasingly difficult to fill the news pages of The K'nocker. We get the occasional note of thanks but where are the big community scoops – the wedding announcements, news of babies, gripes, achievements by our citizens?

The in-tray for The K'nocker remains bafflingly empty for each issue. We badly need more of you to correspond! The alternatives are for us to consider closing down or running with the sort of article once found in the "Portrochie Squeak" (see p. 7) or you the reader coming out of the closet with your news and views.

In the last issue almost every page called for a comment and yet not one was received! Come on readers this is a job for everyone to feel they can be a part of it. We want this paper to serve the whole village. Just four times a year you could be more helpful highlighting what is the Portknockie news. You are invited to come along to the Cullen Town Hall from 7.30 pm on Friday 11th July to thank Dr Morrison for 22 years serving the local practice and to wish him and Dr Susan Morrison well in their new locum life. There will be some entertainment, a presentation, a few speeches and some light refreshments on offer.

Portknockie what should be the next developments in our village?

We have our new water mains and sewage system. We have a well-established array of "Village in Bloom" features. The McBoyle Hall has been given a makeover and our local footpath network is taking shape. Our skateboard area is under construction. But where next?

One suggestion has been for changes in the harbour, the traditional centre of Portknockie but what should be the nature of any changes? Voices are being heard asking for more local building land to be made available. Are we doing enough to attract visitors to stop in the village and spend their money? Ought there be more facilities and local activity groups? You say!

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Dr R M Morrison writes:

"As you will all no doubt know by now, I take my leave from you as from the 13th April 2003. I have not taken a retirement as I still enjoy the profession that I entered 32 years ago, but rather I have taken a look at what I am presently doing, and have decided that I can adjust my life to make it more enjoyable to me.

I have been your doctor here in Cullen and Portknockie now since June 1981 and 22 years is not a bad innings! My predecessor, Wilson Thompson, did 32 years in service, but medicine was not quite such an all-devouring and demanding career in those days. Sadly, whilst I still hugely appreciate and enjoy my contact with you all, the demands made upon doctors now in terms of administration, form filling, Health Board demands, targets, ever-increasing audits, appraisal, accreditation, learning plans, financial juggling, and now, to cap it all, yet another "New Contract" foisted upon us - all this has made me come to the conclusion that I have had enough.

I am in the fortunate position that I would be intending to retire anyhow in three years time, at the age of 60, so what I am in fact doing is to

resign from the Cullen Practice, not to retire. I propose to work for the next three years as an independent medical locum, beholden to nobody but myself. It will mean that I shall continue to live amongst you - apologies to those who were looking forward to getting rid of me! - here in Cullen, but I will be available to work in a much larger area including Grampian, Highland, Orkney, the Shetlands, and the Western Isles.

As many of you know, I am doing a sponsored walk along the Great Wall of China (100Km over 5 days) on behalf of the Scottish Society for Autism, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and your very much appreciated and generous donations. The minimum amount I had to raise for this trip was £2 500 and, at the time of writing, my fund is standing at around £7 000! It will be probably nearer £8 000 by the time I set off with my well-worn walking boots on the 25th of April on my odyssey.

You are indeed very fortunate to be left in Richard Stoker's hands. Our partnership has been an excellent relationship for us both and I know that he will continue to offer the same high standard of care for you that we have all endeavoured to provide in the past.

Not only that, but Richard will be joined in mid July by Dr Shirley Haunschmitt, who has been the GP on Westray (Orkney) for the last 15 years. She is just the ideal person to replace me and I am so pleased that there will not be any gap in our provision of care to you all.

So it will be a sad farewell for me in many ways but equally, I eagerly anticipate my new challenges over the next three years.

Thank you all for being such a wonderful community, and for putting up with this "Skyeman" for so long. Adieu."

(Editor: I am sure there will be many of you with stories and appreciation to offer to Dr Morrison for his time looking after folk in Portknockie. Perhaps you will write in some for the next issue.)

A strange mixture of weather this winter in Portknockie. There were a couple of falls of snow but then a very dry and sunny February - and March indeed said to be the driest winter months since records in Scotland began in 1961!

There were some extremely strong gales from the north, which gave Alistair Wood some work replacing slates and chimney caps dislodged by several days of windy conditions. A mild sunny period at the end of February and into March encouraged the crocuses to show early and the first daffodil was in flower on the cliffs along Patrol Road on March 6th. A butterfly was even spotted by Jennie's Well on March 22nd!

Welcome to Dot & Lin Hill, a mother and daughter who have moved into 9 High Street from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

News from the village website - The exciting news is that this village newspaper can now be accessed from the internet using the www. Portknockiewebsite.com web address created by Neil Hedley and John Smith. This will allow expat "K'nockers" living abroad to keep in touch with Portknockie events. There have been several e-mail requests this winter for details about B&Bs in Portknockie and Scott holiday homes will be featuring downloaded information sheets from our website for their visitors.

Judy and Ray Parrott, now living in Swadlincote, England used the e-mail link to send the following in memory of John Butler:

"A good friend is like a four leaf clover, hard to find, lucky to have and impossible to forget. True friendship never ends. Friends are forever. Most people walk in and out of your life, but only friends leave footprints in your heart."

In February a flurry of building works were started in the village by Moray Council. Donald McKenzie's Training Squad created a by-pass to the slump on the footpath alongside the Slack Burn that has been really impassable since last summer. The squad has also installed a new design "Mini-recycling Unit" at the park end of Wood Place. This will hold collection banks for bottles and old clothing and will be landscaped.

Substantial improvements have been made to the old "Reid Roadie" running down to the ninth tee on the golf course and the path that crosses the McLeod Park has been re-surfaced. In the old railway cutting the Moray Access Officer has carried out alteration works to the path to make it easier for everyone to use. This work required the path to be re-aligned at the Hill Street end where it crossed a privately owned plot of land.

The football pitch in the park has received its first major maintenance ever to help improve problems that have arisen from soil compaction and waterlogging. The turf was cored, lifted, then rolled and a top dressing has been applied. It looked rather drastic treatment but we are assured it will be fine for next season.

A new B&B in town: Hannah Crozier at 18 Harbour Place intends to offer a room for bed & breakfast visitors from Easter. The room has en-suite facilities and Hannah and Kenneth used to run a successful B&B in Perth before "retiring" here. For details contact 01542-841493.

A new bouncing baby boy came for Sylvia Mearns in February. His name is Ellis, he is doing just fine and his mother is exhausted!

Wanted by Frank Reynolds, The Schoolhouse, King Edward Terrace, any information folk have on the "The Reid Road" sung by Blanche Wood.

Have you noticed how fast houses seem to be selling at the moment? A year or so ago houses on the market in Portknockie were very slow to sell and it looked as if the property development site at the western end of the village would never be completed. Now the picture is very different and one can but wonder about the buoyancy of the local housing market. Perhaps, word has got out about the wonderful quality of life that can be enjoyed here. Is it the amazing climate of the Moray Firth coastal strip, the beauty of the local environment, the "Village in Bloom" efforts to make Portknockie an attractive place to live in, the friendly nature of local residents or what?

The Scottish Executive is worried about the decline in the population of Scotland, maybe MSPs should come here and check things out! The **2001 census** showed that Scotland's population has fallen by 2% to 5,062,011 since 1981. The number of Scots under 15 years of age has dropped by 18% and the number of Scots over 75 has increased by 29%.

How much vandalism occurs in Portknockie?

It is not easy to know for sure as this type of unsocial offence usually goes under reported. The Police rarely hear about it and they are seldom in the village long enough to observe it happening and to take action. Since the New Year there have been several instances of local vandalism. Barrels of compost from "Village in

Bloom" features have been tipped up (pretty difficult for small children to manage this!), some of the hanging baskets along Harbour Road have been thrown over the cliffs, some windows have been smashed, a fence was broken, a contractor's equipment damaged, a caravan was seriously damaged and many instances were reported of motorbikes being illegally driven at high speed within the village and along our footpaths. It can hardly be called a crime wave but it does upset folks and create extra work for all our village volunteers. The Community Council is very keen to put an end to this nonsense. Those doing it please be warned!

This is not a unique local issue but rather a national blight that just seems to be part of modern living. There is no easy answer to it. We have to hope that setting a good example, educating younger ones to care for their environment, putting community pressure on offenders and showing that we all care about our neighbourhood will limit the worst excesses.

Complaints about this come mostly from the older folk but, probably, if they are honest, they will recognise that similar problems have always been with us. Nowadays, the difficulty is that we keep re-assessing what we mean by vandalism. But what a paradise this place would be if we all really cared for our village!

It's not just the current vandals we are asking to show more respect. We also need those who wantonly despoil the village with their used chewing gum, crisp packets and empty drinks containers to think "refuse container". The dog owners who let their animals foul public places to pick up after their pets. The car owners who empty their vehicle ashtrays in the street, toss fast food containers out on the grass verges or boost their sound systems so that we can all hear them passing through to hesitate and think - **"this is my community."**

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2002

This year's "Village in Bloom" planning group met for the first time on March 3rd. One of the new features for this year's show will be a Noah's Ark. Minds were bent to think of fund-raising events as the starting kitty for purchasing plants is much lower this year than it was last year. It is hoped that local businesses and the wider community will give good support to the fund raising planned through April and May.

We need to build on our **Number 1** spot in Moray as the Best-kept large village. This position will be tough to maintain and ideas for boosting our marks would be very welcome. We could get **more marks** for the sections allocated to public buildings and recycling measures. Our two experimental compost bins have remained very full all winter with garden refuse but some of the garden waste being left is too woody and will not compost easily. Does anyone in the village have an interest in managing a village composting site? Perhaps one could be set up with the new plastic compost bins from "Moray Waste Busters"? They cost £5 to pensioners and maybe a group of residents without gardens would welcome a communal site somewhere?

Our unhappy experience last year with the judging of the "**Beautiful Scotland in Bloom**" competition may deter us from entering again year. This is a prestigious competition but the marking criteria and the early judging date tend to penalise exposed, northerly coastal locations. It also requires a huge investment in volunteer time and cash. One of the finalist villages last year spent over £20 000 in preparation! Do folk have an opinion on this issue?

Some of the ideas raised at this first meeting included a suggestion to put up a sign advertising the fact that Portknockie is the current best-kept large village in Moray. Another proposal was to position a directions post in the Haig Street "jubilee circle". There was also an idea to create a plastic composting bin facility - probably near the new recycling unit in the park - that could be used by villagers. The colour co-ordinated scheme for the Church Street floral display this year will be rainbow red, blue and yellow.

A year ago Village groups were asked to comment on a plan for **improving McLeod Park**. The intention was to make it a more attractive feature for a wider range of the community to use. The Lottery funded "Awards for All" made a grant of £5 000 to enable some of the suggestions to be put in place. Over the winter three raised beds have been created opposite Logie Drive. The beds have been built from wood to complement the design of the play swings. They will be planted with shrubs and they will feature a mulch covering of wood chips. The cruciform shaped bed will be planted and maintained by a group from the parish church but would any of the community groups

in the village care to look after the other two beds? It would be a very helpful gesture.

A picnic table, waste bins and some new seating will be placed around these new flowerbeds. However, the bulk of the grant aid goes towards establishing a **skateboarding facility** in the park. This was a special request from the youngsters and quite a few of the adults and parents in the village anxious about young skaters using the roads for their favourite sport.

Substantial delays have occurred in this part of the overall project due to the unexpected requirement on us to make a formal planning application to Moray Council for the facility. An 8 x 25 metre concrete surface for skaters with a low crash barrier is to be built at the south end of the football pitch between the path and the pitch. The planning requirement arose because we are trying to have this skateboarding facility built by local volunteers to save money!

If you are planning to put out tubs and planters for the summer season here are some **handy hints for floral tubs**. Water your plants prior to planting, it is not enough to rely on rainfall. Water every second day. Start feeding after four weeks but never feed a dry tub. As the season proceeds remove spent blooms and dead leaves weekly. Plan to have tubs in flower outside your house by village judging day in August.

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

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

The final report to Moray Firth Partnership for its Community Grant of £900 for the Three Creeks Shore project was completed in January. The interpretation panels will be positioned on a stone cairn, to be built by Graham Lappin, on the cliff top between Reidhaven Street and Park Street as soon as the better weather arrives.

The Chair and Secretary of the Community Council met with the Moray Council Convener in February to request more equitable support from Moray Council for villages preparing for "Village in Bloom" events. The balance of support is perceived as favouring the five towns of Moray. With the help of local councillor, Ron Shepherd, we had a useful exchange of views and a promise of better support in the future.

A special meeting of the Community Council has been held to consider in detail a possible 2003 application to the Landfill Tax Credit scheme. Moray Council, as a registered Landfill Tax Operator, can offset some of its tax liability to the Government for local schemes aimed to deliver lasting environmental benefits. Projects need to be fully costed, approved and registered by the end of June. However, we are waiting to hear of possible changes to this scheme about to be announced. The most favoured idea was to seek a grant for a **harbour development scheme** that would make better use of harbour space, reclaim some of the derelict areas for modern uses and to breath life and activity for residents and visitors in what is the focal point of our village.

Ideas raised - some from the schoolchildren's competition (see later)) ranged from better facilities for boat owners, an improved paddling pool, a play space for younger children, the establishment of a small shop for visitors, attractions and various landscaping changes. With the plans already approved for a re-instatement of the Flagstaff Hill this would create a fresh and attractive look to the harbour area. We need more ideas, we seek consultation with current harbour users and potential users and above all we need to carry local community support for such a major initiative. Please talk about this idea and offer up your personal opinions.

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



840366

Moray Council has indicated that The Flagstaff Hill improvement scheme to re-instate the old weather mast and create a viewing point to overlook the harbour and the Moray Firth should start in the early summer.

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

Spring Flowers: Apart from the obvious early wild flowers such as Snowdrops one of the first signs that Spring has finally overtaken Winter is

the flowering of the Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*). According to wild flower books this plant flowers from May until August but here in Portknockie it starts to open its buds from early February. You can see it around the braes but mainly it is to be found down on the shores by the caves. The name of the plant is attributed to the fact that it was used as a source of vitamin C by sailors long ago to avoid getting scurvy whilst on voyages that could last many months.

Scurvy is a nasty disease caused by deficiency of vitamin C over a long period of time. It causes swollen limbs, sore gums and bad breath as well as skin eruptions - very nasty indeed! The main diet of these sailors was dried biscuit and salt pork so they supplemented this with scurvy grass, which has a particularly high content of vitamin C.

Another lovely flower that should be evident very soon is the Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*). This is a beautiful plant with heart-shaped leaves and golden flowers. It is to be seen everywhere locally and is often found in woods, where it lays down golden carpets. William Wordsworth even wrote a poem about this lovely flower:

To the Lesser Celandine:

"There is a flower, the Lesser Celandine
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain
And, the first moment that the sun may shine
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!"

It is also a traditional herbal remedy for haemorrhoids! (Ed. now that's a nasty one too!)

Very soon we will see Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemurosa*) and Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*). These two are really woodland plants, as their names imply but they are to be found in abundance on the banking of the cycle track going towards Cullen.

My absolute favourite though has to be Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*). From a distance these flowers look fairly insignificant but if you get close up you will appreciate their beauty. They grow in great numbers locally just about everywhere but you cannot miss them if you walk down by the harbour. They are on all the banks. You will be able to see them in April.

POETS' CORNER

Poems handed in by Davie Mair and William Anderson.

To the Scottish Fisher Quines

T'was midnight on a summer day
On far off Stronsay's lonely isle
Alas no summer's sun has cheered
Our labours with its welcome smile.

But rain and cold and blustering wind
Had been our portion all the day
From morn till night our girls had toiled
No time was theirs for rest or play.

At last the weary day was done
And still they plied their labour hard
But hark what sounds so strongly sweet
Come floating from the herring yard.

It drew me back though midnight hour
Had sounded from the village clock
Still at the herring tubs there stood
That splendid band of fisher folk.

"The Lord's my shepherd" sang the girls
Their fingers never seemed to tire
"In pastures green he leadeth me"
Their feet were ankle deep in mire.

"Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me", they sang
And as I slowly turned away
Still through the night their voices rang.

I could not stay to share their toil
But one short prayer was breathed by me
"That in God's house for evermore
Our lassies' dwelling place might be".

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Where are they now?

Where are they, all the bonnie boats of yore
That reaped the silver harvest of our seas

Their great brown billowing sails bent to the will
Of boisterous winds, and their disdainful prows
Scything a path thro' on rushing waves.

Where are they now, brave boats whose very
names are lovely to recall?
Where now the Glide, the Paragon, Paradigm,
The Dash, the Daring and the Gleam of Hope?
Where now, the Prince of Joy, the Charm, the
Sparkling Star?

Unrivalled beauties in their day, all crewed
By strong God-fearing men, who sought no
fame,
Their only aim to earn a livelihood for wives and
bairns.
Where now the Pilot Me, the Breadwinner,
Sublime, Smiling Morn, the Rose of Sharon and
the Flower of May,
The Crystal River and the Lustre Gem?

All graceful as the swift winged Phalarope
Swan like in calm, Dreadnought before the gale?
Where now the Diadem, the Evangeline,
The Monarch of the Tide, the Bonnie Lass?
Their names recorded only in a few old dusty
almanacs,
that lie unread, on dusty office shelves.
Bold boats they were with bonny names and
lovely lissom lines,
Where are they now? All bound maybe for some
Celestial Shore all leading the fleet
The Faith, the Guiding Light, the Welcome
Home.

The Fisher Lad

O comely is my Fisher Lad
Wha's sailing ower the sea
And bonny is his herring boat
That brings him hame to me.
He's left the Pentland's waves astern
The Bin Hill's on his boo
Atween the Tronnachs and the Creeks
He guides his boatie through.
My Mither cries "Fat ails the quine!"
As I rush oot the door.
My Father girns "Och, lat her rin ..
It's Davie jist ashore."
I rush along the harbour road
My hert is beatin' fast
For Davie has been lang awa'
And noo he's hame at last.

His e'e sae bright, his step sae light
His breath like caller air.

I widna gie my Fisher Lad
For a' the landsmen fair.
And though o' riches he has nane
A hert o' gold has he
And strong his arm tae reap again
The harvest o' the sea.

O bonny grow the heather bells
Oot ower Portknockie brae
And soon will ring the wedding bells
For Davie and for me.
For love is of the humble cot
As weel's the palace grand
And Davie is as comely lad
As ony in the land!

The following poem was found by a friend researching in Aberdeen Library. It is very interesting because it captures one of society's current issues - service and waiting times in the National Health Service. It brings back those shapeless operating gowns, often without their modesty ties, that one has to wear for the tests! It also reminds us that our National Health Service should always put patients first and be responsive to their needs at all times.

THE OUTPATIENT'S LAMENT

I'm sittin' here, stripped tae the skin
I've lost my normal herty grin.
It seems a week and nowt tae eat,
Since I wis telt tae hae a seat,
You Doctor mannies dinna' care,
But just ca' canny, jist beware;
It's foulk like us, wi' broken beens;
Ulcers, heidaches and galsteens,
That keep you lads in plenty wark,
But dae ye iver cast yer sark
Or, or rin a'roon withoot yer breeks,
Like ane o' Sanger's Circus Freeks;
Then streakit oot tae get X-rayed,
Wi' temper gettin' slightly frayed;
Yer dignity takes quite a shock;
As lassies passin' a' tak stock.
Och weel! a'tween just you and me,
Nae doot yev' got yer troubles tee.
These twa three wirds pit doon in Rhyme
Hiv fairly helped tae pass the time,
While waitin' for the X-ray plate,
Tae show my stammicks sorry state,
I ken it's a' deen for the best,
These wirds are really a' in jest,
But a' the same I'd like tae ken,
Jist fan yel' come and cry me ben;
Tae hear the verdict, good or bad
Och, this waitin' drives me mad!

If I sit muckle langer here,
I'll fa' asleep and winna' hear,
The lassie shoutin' come away,
We canna' wait for you a' day.
Weel I maun stop but jist tak' heed,
If I collapse or drap steen deed;
Yel ken I caught a naisty chill,
While waitin' in this cubicle.

Composed while waiting for appointment with Doctor and X-Ray at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

THE WILSON FAMILY OF TOCHIENEAL WHICH INCLUDED GEORGE WILSON 1848-90 - A BANFFSHIRE ARTIST -
researched by Arnold Pirie.

I refer to the article in the Christmas Edition of the K'nocker 2002, regarding the above named person which I enjoyed very much. The family of Wilsons at Tochieneal has fascinated me for many years. A John Wilson who was born about 31st October, 1733 married his wife Jean I believe on 4th July 1780, and they lived at the farm of Brangan, near the Boyne Castle, on the Portsoy - Whitehills Road. They had about six children altogether and two of their sons were born at Brangan, namely a John Wilson, born 29th July, 1769, and Alexander Wilson, born 20th November, 1774.

Jean Wilson died at the age of 43 years, on 4th July 1780, and the father died on 11th April 1820, at the age of 83 years. Both are buried at Fordyce Cemetery.

Their son, John, farmed at Brangan, Portsoy, and at Badenvouchers, Deskford. On New Years day 1801, he married Ann Thurburn, the daughter of James Thurburn and his wife Barbara, who lived at Drum, near Keith. Ann Thurburn must have been a beauty as she was known as 'Bonnie Annie o' Drum'. The couple celebrated their golden wedding in 1851, and would have seen the start of the new town of Cullen, and the building of Cullen harbour. John died on 2nd April 1856, aged 86 years, and his wife Ann died on 28th November, aged 80 years. Both are buried at Fordyce Cemetery. They had a number of children including John Wilson, the eldest, born at Brangan on 5th July 1802, and Alexander Wilson, third eldest, born at Brangan on 31st October 1805.

John's brother Alexander, that was the one born on 20th November, 1774, was probably educated

at Fordyce School, and was appointed a Second Lieutenant in the Banffshire Volunteers about 1797. It would have been about this time that he took up residence at Tochieneal House and the house would have remained in possession of the family for some 70 years. Alexander became an Assistant Factor at Cullen House probably about 1801. About 1822, he built Tochieneal Distillery for the manufacture of a pure malt whisky which, I believe, was called 'Tochieneal'. He was a Magistrate in Cullen, and he held the factorship for about 30 years. Alexander died at Tochieneal on 11th May 1831, at the early age of 56 years, leaving the Distillery to his nephews John Wilson and Alexander Wilson. Although the factor Alexander never married, he did father a male child who was called Alexander Wilson, and who was brought up in the family home at Tochieneal. He was educated at Aberdeen University, and was left a sum of money when his father died. He became a surgeon in the Royal Navy and served on board H.M.S. Skylark. This son died unmarried in Edinburgh in 1862. The factor Alexander Wilson is also buried at Fordyce Cemetery.

John Wilson, the one born on 5th July 1802 and the father of George, the famous artist, was probably educated at Fordyce School and Aberdeen University, and had gone to work for his uncle as an Assistant Factor at Cullen House about 1820. On 21st August 1832, he brought his new bride home to Tochieneal House. She was his cousin Helen Thurnburn of Keith. They had a successful marriage, which produced some 8 sons and 5 daughters, and all attained adult life with the exception of one. John was probably one of the best factors who had worked for the Seafield family. By the year 1847, he had seen in excess of thirty one million trees planted over an area of 8 223 acres on the estate.

In 1841, John Wilson started a small business at Tochieneal manufacturing drain pipes and tiles, and then bricks. The remains of the brickworks can still be seen to this day at Tochieneal, samples of the brick can still be seen around Cullen and Portknockie. In the course of time the business prospered and became just as lucrative as the Distillery. He was also an elder of the Kirk in Cullen and a Senior Bailie in the town in 1841. Shortly after this date he began to suffer from duodenal ulcers and he died on 30th September 1852. He knew that he was dying and he wrote a lovely letter for his wife, which had to be given to her after his death. Part of the

letter states;- " For the love, affection, and unwearied care you have shown to myself, what can I say to you - it has indeed been wonderful and has made me, during our long union, happy in a degree experienced by few in this world. I can only bless you, and pray to our Heavenly Father to give you his blessing and that he may ever guide and comfort you and cause his face to shine upon you. And now dear Helen I must say Farewell. Accept this poor little token of my dying love and affection, John Wilson.

John Wilson was well liked by the people in the district and, shortly before his death at Tochieneal, he was presented with a chest of silver plate consisting of two salvers, a cake basket, and a tea and coffee service, by friends and tenants whose interests he had served so well. John Wilson was 50 years old when he died. He is also buried with his fore fathers at Fordyce. His widow died in Aberdeen on 14th May 1891.

Following John Wilson's death, his brother Alexander Wilson moved from Kilnhillock to Tochieneal House. Previously he had been combining his Distillery duties at Tochieneal with his farming at Kilnhillock. There was some understanding between him and the then 6th Earl of Seafield that he would carry out the duties of factor until John Wilson's son, John who was aged 16 years, should become qualified to succeed to the post. Unfortunately the Earl died on 8th July 1853, and Alexander was at loggerheads with the new 7th Earl of Seafield, John Charles Ogilvie Grant, and he eventually gave up his employment as factor, to concentrate on Tochieneal Distillery. In the year 1871, after more problems from Seafield Estates, Alexander Wilson built a new distillery at Inchgower, near Buckie, and the business was transferred from Tochieneal. With his new position as Managing Director, he moved to Arradoul House near the distillery and was looked after by his niece Helen. He was joined later by a nephew, James Wilson (born 4th October 1844), and he took over as Managing Director in 1882. Alexander Wilson was 77 years of age when he died in April 1822, and he never married. He is buried at Fordyce Cemetery.

James Wilson who took over in 1882, died unmarried on 28th September 1908, and I believe he was the last member of the Wilson family to be buried at Fordyce. He was succeeded by a

Walter Wilson, who became Managing Director in about 1910.

Another son of the famous factor John Wilson was Hugh Thurburn Wilson who was born at Tochieneal on 17th September 1851. Hugh was only 9 months old when his father John died. He was the youngest in a family of 8 boys and 5 girls, and educated at Cullen, Weston House, Elgin, and Edinburgh University. Hugh joined the North of Scotland Bank in The Square, Cullen about 1870 (now the Clydesdale Bank) as a junior clerk. In 1871 he transferred to the Aberdeen Town and County Bank at Keith. Later he transferred to work in London, at the office of the Union Bank of Australia at a salary of £60 per year. On 11th April 1878, he became a clerk at the Union Bank branch in Melbourne, Australia, at a salary of £225, promoted to Assistant Accountant on 1st January 1881, at a salary of £300, and on 1st January 1887, became Sub Manager at Melbourne at a salary of £600 per year. He resigned from the Union Bank on 20th April 1888 to become manager of the newly formed Royal Bank of Australia at a salary of £2,000 per year. In 1908 he became General Manager of the Royal Bank of Australia and under his guidance the assets rose from £770,664 in 1900 to £6,920,874 in 1923 when he retired on 30th November 1923.

In 1890, Hugh T. Wilson married Anetta Emily Baker, who was aged 30 years at the time. She was the daughter of Henry Streatfield Baker, and Anna Brander of London. They had no family themselves but did adopt a daughter.

On 1st July 1909, Mrs. Wilson and her adopted daughter left Melbourne on the SS Waratah bound for London, via Durban and Cape Town. The ship left Durban on 26th July 1909, and was sighted the following day by the ship Clan McIntyre, near Cape Agulhas. That was the last anyone ever saw of the Waratah. No wreckage was ever found, and the ship's disappearance remained a mystery until July 1999, when the remains of the vessel were found on the ocean floor, ten kilometers east of South Africa. The SS Waratah was commissioned by Lund's Blue Anchor Line, and was built on the Clyde by Barclay, Curle, and Company about 1908. She was a 9,339 ton steamship built for the Australian migrant trade and was carrying some 211 passengers and crew, and 10,000 tons of cargo when she disappeared. The enquiry concluded that the ship had sunk when she

encountered 20 metre high waves and deep troughs that occur when the Aghullas current meets the heavy southwest swell. It was interesting to note that two passengers George S. Richardson from Geelong in Australia and a Mr. G. Sawyer decided to leave the ship at Durban, as they were not happy with the ship's stability in a head wind.

In May of 1914, Mr. Hugh Wilson informed the Cullen Minister, that he would present an organ in memory of his wife, and the organ was dedicated at Cullen Church on Sunday, 25th October 1914, by Professor Nicol, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, during the forenoon service.

Hugh Thurburn Wilson, died at 'Patenbrigan', Keyington Place, Toorak, an upmarket suburb of Melbourne, on 30th June 1933, at the age of 81 years. He left real estate valued at £6,715 and a personal estate of £57,855 - 15- 3d. He was an accomplished player of the cello, and a keen supporter of all genuine musical undertakings, and in his will bequeathed £1 000 to Melbourne Musical Society.

In his latter years, he was looked after by his niece Florence Wilson, born 7th July 1879, and she kept house for him until his death. She was the daughter of John Wilson, who was factor for the Huntly District of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon's vast estates. Florence was educated at the Gordon Schools, Huntly, the Ladies College, Queen Street, Edinburgh, and at Boston House, Eastbourne. She became a nurse at the Sick Children's Hospital in Edinburgh, in 1899, and afterwards at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool. She was the 12th child in a family of about 16 children.

Florence was probably the most extensively travelled person of all her brothers and sisters, and in later years returned to Scotland and resided at Mackenzie's Private Hotel, 58 Melville Street, Edinburgh 3. I do believe that Florence was bequeathed a violin cello, a Ferdinandus Galliano, which belonged to her uncle, Hugh Wilson.

THE PORTKNOCKIE DIRECTORY

Police: (Buckie)	832222
(Cullen)	840222
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
Scottish Gas: (24 hrs) 0800		111999
Scottish Water Emergency:	0845600	8855
BT: (fault reporting) 0800 800		151
Coastguard: (24 hrs) 01224		592334
Environmental Incidents: 0800		807060
Moray Council:	01343	543000
Out of hours	08457	565656
Buckie Access Point		837200
Uplift service (after 10am) 01343		557318
Patientline -NHS advice	0500	202070
NHS24 - Health Advice	0845	242424

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: (Aberdeen)

Northlink	0845 6000	449
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Trains:

National Rail Enquiries	0845	748950
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Taxis: (Portknockie)		840875
Portknockie Post Office		840201
Portknockie School		840244
Portknockie Library		841149
The K'nocker (Bob Croucher)		841291

OLDEN TIMES RECALLED: David Pirie "Darlin" writes with some memories of the old times from Aberdeen:

I am an avid reader of The K'nocker and I think it is a great paper. It is lovely to know that Portknockie is such a forward looking place.

I am 74 and make no excuses for enjoying a bit of nostalgia, so I would like to add one or two memories that have been left out from previous articles. On meeting a teacher boys had to salute and girls had to nod, this was a very strict rule.

The 24th May was Empire Day and all the pupils had to salute the flag. A Union Jack was hoisted in the playground and the pupils gathered around it for a short ceremony.

What excitement, Mary Dick is here! The Dick family used to set up their amusements in the park opposite the school. The barrel organ played, the shaudie boats, the roll a penny and the shooting stalls were the highlights of the year.

Harry Munro and Jocky Smith "Soger" from Cullen would be amazed to see the new water pipes being put in place. Harry and Jockie were each kitted out with a barrow, a pick and a shovel. Harry dug up the roads to repair water leaks and Jockie sorted out the gas leaks.

Harry was the Burgh workman whose tasks were never ending. I will try to recall some of them but I am sure other readers will mind on many more. His day started with emptying the muck buckets with Andra Leel. In the winter, he did not finish until he had put out all the gaslights. Most of the Portknockie wifies at that time swept the streets in front of their own houses so that saved him a job. When he did his duty as the town crier he had a hand bell and shouted out on every street corner.

There were four panes of glass on every street lamppost, guess who cleaned them? Well that is enough to be going on with. Oh! I nearly forgot he spoiled the fun of the bairns when he sanded the Bakers' Brae and Park Street where their sledging and slides were in full swing. I have lived in Aberdeen all my life but I still like to know what is going on in the Port.

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CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? Another delve into the past to make you wonder how you could be still here to read this!

If you lived as a child in the 1940s, 50, 60, or 70s and you look back, it is hard to believe that you could still be surviving!

As children, we would ride in cars with no seats belts or air bags.

Our cots were covered with bright coloured, lead-based paint. We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cupboards and when we rode our bikes or skates we did not wear helmets and protection gear.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from sealed bottles. We would spend hours building carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill only to find out we had forgotten to add brakes.

We would leave home in the morning and play out all day as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one came searching for us.

There were no mobile phones to check on us.

We got cuts and broken bones and there were no legal claims from these accidents - no one was to blame except us.

We ate cakes, loads of bread and butter and drank cordials but we were never overweight.

We shared our drinks with others from the same bottle and no one died from this.

We did not know about Playstations, Nintendo 64, video games, multi channel TV, DVD and video tape movies, surround sound, personal computers and Chat rooms nor text messaging - we played with friends and talked!

We rode bikes or walked to school and our friends' homes by ourselves and often without asking our parents. All alone in the cruel world! We made up games with sticks and things and we ate worms and nothing awful happened to us. Football and other games had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who did not had to learn to deal with their disappointment.

Some pupils were not as smart as others, so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same class. Our actions were down to us, tests were not adjusted for any reason.

The idea of your parent helping out if we broke the law was unheard of - they would actually take the side of the law!

This generation produced some of the best risk takers and problem solvers and inventors. There has been an explosion of innovation in the past 50 years. We had the freedom to try new ideas, to learn from failure and to take responsibility.

We learned how to deal with whatever life threw at us! And you are one of them.

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE:

Do you have a car and love lunch? We are still looking for and needing volunteers for the local **Meals on Wheels service** to deliver lunches from Findochty to about half a dozen homes in Portknockie on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It would involve normally being on duty one week in very four or five weeks. The delivery does not take too much time and any petrol costs are refunded. If you think you could help please contact Mrs Margaret Main, 3 Netherton Terrace, Findochty. Tel: 832229.

A NICE FLY CUPPIE by Brooke Tetley

What do you reckon makes the perfect cup of tea? Who makes the best brew in Portknockie? Is tea tasting as well as it did in the old days?

The Royal Society of Chemistry is seeking views from the public, the top drinks specialists and the best scientific brains in the country for what creates the perfect cuppa. The answer might be here in Portknockie!

To help you compare your ideas here are some requirements that George Orwell, the famous novelist (*Animal Farm*, *Road to Wigan Pier*), thought important to making an unbeatable brew:

Only Indian or Ceylonese (now Sri Lanka) teas should be used. He considered China tea to be too weak. Tea should be strong, he favoured 6 heaped teaspoons to a quart pot. No strainers or tea bags should be used and tea should be poured before the milk is added. He was opposed to the use of sugar, which he thought spoilt the flavour. Tea is meant to be bitter!

The Tea Council advice is one teaspoon per person and one for the pot with at least six minutes brewing time without stirring or swirling. The ideal time for brewing does depend on the tea being used - speciality teas such as Darjeeling can easily be brewed for too long. Perhaps we could hold a sponsored tea tasting in the village or you, the readers, write in your preferred approach for the next issue.

RSPB'S BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH 2003

Did any one in the village count the birds in their garden over the weekend of 25-26 January? Last year a record 13 500 Scots took part in this census of the birds. The top fifteen species that were observed: Starling, House sparrow, Blue tit, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Collared dove, Great tit, Woodpigeon, Robin, Dunnock, Magpie, Coal tit, Wren and Song thrush. We do quite well in Portknockie on this list and we have big gulls too! The survey last year showed that the most common garden visitors were the Blackbird, the Blue tit, the Robin and the House sparrow. The rarest from the list was the Song thrush found in only a quarter of the gardens where a "birdwatch" had been carried out.

HOW WE USED TO EAT! Extract from the Daily Telegraph dated 1 March 1963. This newspaper article describes a weekly budget of £5.46p (put in modern money for ease of comparison) for a family of three!

The grocery bill for the family came to just over £2 and included items such as 3lb of wholemeal flour for 12p (modern money), 18 eggs for 37p, 1/2lb of bacon for 6p, a packet of cornflakes for 8p, 1/4lb tea for 8p, 1lb of cheddar cheese for 13p and a bottle of vinegar for 8p. The Bakery bill was 2 large loaves at 11p. The Greengrocery bill came to £1.40p and included amongst other things 7lb of potatoes for 15p, 2lb of onions for 6p, a lb of sprouts for 4p and 6 bananas for 9p. The Butcher's bill came to £1.6p and this provided a lb of shin of beef for 15p and 4lb of breast of veal for 36p plus ox liver and rolled forehock bacon. The bill from the Fishmonger included 3 herrings for 9p and 3 kippers for 10p. The milk bill (14pts about 8 litres) came to 52p.

The article included a **recipe for baked herrings** costed at 16p. "Clean three herrings and remove the backbone. Place in a greased ovenproof dish together with the roes, season and sprinkle with mixed herbs (optional). Cover with previously sauted onions (2) and top with par-boiled 1½lb of potatoes cut into rounds. Season both layers. Pour in a cup of water, dot with a little butter and bake in a moderate oven for 35 minutes. We certainly lived well in those days!

WHAT A WASTE - the problems we face in dealing with the mountains of waste we produce every year in Scotland.

Scotland's National Waste Plan will be published soon. Unhappily bonny Scotland has

one of the worst records in Europe for dealing properly with its generation of waste. Nine out of every ten tons of our waste is still buried in landfill sites like the one we used to have just outside the village. Our site is now closed but problems look like surfacing from it for many years to come - not least the slumping crisis along the cycle track where the buried rubbish has interfered with the natural drainage. Landfill sites are notoriously difficult to manage, they can cause water pollution and produce methane gas (a factor in global warming), there are very few suitable sites left in Scotland and their use means we are guilty of throwing away millions of tons of valuable resources with little useful return.

The "**experts**" agree that the only sensible way forward is for everyone to accept that waste disposal is our problem and we must face up to reducing the waste we generate or finding ways to recycle it to better uses. As a community, which cares, should we be doing more to save our fine environment for future generations?

A survey last November by the Scottish Waste Awareness Group showed that half the people interviewed did try to do some sort of recycling e.g. using the local bottle bank or civic amenity site. Three out of ten people compost their domestic waste and yet still **less than 10%** of domestic waste in Scotland was recycled last year! So we clearly are not doing so well.

Elsewhere in this issue is a suggestion that we set up some central compost bins for residents to use who might not have a garden. Remember the compost would be very welcome for our "Village in Bloom" features. Do we yet see it feasible that groups of volunteers might, as in the USA, "adopt" a street or area of the village - like the harbour and make sure it is kept litter free? The example set by such regular voluntary effort would surely change the attitude of the minority in the village who leave behind their personal waste with cynical disregard for others.

SHEAR DEZIGN

Hair by Lisa

**Open Tuesday - Saturday with late night
Thursdays.**

Phone 841711 for an appointment

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

The Amenities Association - A very large turn out attended our "Fun Quiz Night" on Saturday 8th March. Congratulations to the winners, the Aye Afloat group, who generously donated back their prize money. This meant we raised over £800 for our funds. A BIG thank you to all who donated towards this Quiz. Our next fundraiser will be a Jumble Sale on Friday 25th April. If you feel you have some time on your hands we can always do with new members and help.

Portknockie Seniors had a very enjoyable and nostalgic night with John Rennie and others entertaining in February. The March meeting featured June Farquharson and the Monday Club and Tuesday 15th April is the AGM with Glen Scott entertaining. Many thanks to everyone who supported the recent Annual Jumble Sale, which raised a magnificent **£530.75**. A Morning Tea will be held on the 27th May when tickets will be available for the summer bus run on the 10th June - hopefully going to the Falls of Shin (remember to bring along your cheque book for Harrods!) and the West Coast area. Another bus run is planned for 5th August to Kirkaldy.

Fishing communities have been waiting for clear news on aid, days at sea and quotas for several months now. There is a new package for fishermen to be unveiled shortly. Hopefully, this will enable whitefish boats to tie up for days with aid. Also a better all round market price would be beneficial to all.

Portknockie Library: is converting from manual checking in and out of books to the computerised system used in most other libraries in Moray. Margret will be going to Elgin Library for training and it will be helpful if anyone with overdue books would return them as quickly as possible as the new system forwards overdue demand postcards automatically, which means **overdue charges!** The Library has a new photocopier. Charges are 10p a copy and there is a big improvement in the quality of the copies, for example, of old photographs. Come in and try it for yourself! To book an hour on the Computer for Internet access, get an e-mail address - ring Margret on 841149.

Seafield WRI had a lovely evening in the Coach House Hotel for their annual dinner in February. The March meeting on the 28th will see member Karin Rose giving a talk on Candlewicking and Patchwork. On April 25th we welcome Mrs Ann Cummins to give a talk on Greetings Cards and

other handicrafts. There will be a Morning Tea for our charity on May 22nd and a Bus run at the end of May.

SOMY2GO are holding a sponsored Disco at the Youth Centre, Church Street on Sunday 20th April from 10am to 8pm.

Portknockie Brownies meet every Monday at the School from 6-7.30pm. There are vacancies for any girls over 8 to join. The Friends of Guiding are holding an Evening Tea on the 25th March in the Seafield Hall from 6.30-8pm.

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Your K'nocker needs you! Over half the houses in Portknockie receive this newspaper and a number of copies go beyond the village to "K'nockers" world-wide. Every village group, local business and resident, **both young and old** should feel that they can offer something of interest whether it's a memory recalled, an idea, a query, a complaint to air or praise to be offered. All you need to do write it down or create a "Word" disc and get it to Margret in the Library or Bob at the Bield. We publish the last weeks in March, June, August and November.

Portknockie Bowling Club. The club has enjoyed a very successful winter bowls season - normally Monday and Thursday evenings in the McBoyle Hall. However, the grass on the bowling green is now growing again and looking good so the new outdoor season will commence before too long. New members are always welcome, come along and try the fun. Thanks to all those who attended or helped in any way with the fundraising Ceilidh on 1st February, which raised a fantastic amount for our funds.

Portknockie Toddlers' Group is having an Easter Picnic in the McLeod Park on the 3rd April between 1.30pm and 3.30pm.

Neighbourhood Watch. Many of the residents are members of the Watch, one aim of which is to help promote greater public safety awareness in the community.

A scheme in which the Watch participates is the "Message in a Bottle" - these are especially worthwhile aids for persons who, perhaps, live alone and are on medication. These special bottles provide an accurate record of your medication in any sort of emergency and can be picked up from Margret in the Library.

New members from any part of the village are always welcome and membership is completely free. As a bonus some insurance companies will give a reduction in their annual house insurance premiums to Watch members. Any queries, requests for bottles, handbooks, stickers etc please contact John Myles, the village Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator on 840000.

Portknockie Community Association:

Planning has begun for the Annual Fete on Saturday, 3rd May in the McLeod Park from 11.30am onwards. By special request and at huge expense **the main guests this year are Little Ant and Dec!** Proceeds will be going towards "Village in Bloom" running costs.

Other fund raising events for "**Village in Bloom 2003**" include a Garage Sale at 18 Park Street on the 10th April from 2-8pm (donations most welcome - contact Janine on 841315) and a sponsored children's Walk to the Bin Hill, which is being planned for a Sunday in June - help and encouragement from willing adults would be appreciated. Watch out for posters in the shops coming soon. A sponsored silence fundraiser by the youngsters attending Catherine Ritchie's Ceramics Class raised a tremendous £ 231 and the recent Morning Tea made £435 for the funds.

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PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL NEWS:

Essential dates for the Summer Term

Friday March 28th School closes for Easter.
Monday April 14th School reopens after Easter.

Friday April 18th School closed for Good Friday.
Monday May 5th School closed for May Day.
Thursday May 22nd School closed to pupils for Staff In-Service training.

Monday June 9th School closed for Buckie Area Holiday.

Friday July 4th School closed for Summer.

Tuesday August 19th School reopens for pupils.

Pupils took part in a competition, arranged with the School by the Community Council, to paint their best ideas of what an improved harbour area would look like. Some novel suggestions were made and small prizes were awarded to Amy Donaldson, Robyn Downie, Danielle Steward, Amy Wakefield and Chantelle Walker.

Champ again! 16 year old Nicol Craig, the Aberdeen grandson to Mr and Mrs David Mair, Logie Drive (their daughter Brenda's son) was again one of the star performers when he lifted the under 17 singles title at Table Tennis for the Scottish championships in Lanarkshire. Nicol is a Scottish Junior Internationalist and previously British Primary Championship winner.