

PORTKNOCKIE ON RED ALERT AS THE FUTURE OF THE SCHOOL IN DOUBT AGAIN AGAIN.

Once more Portknockie Primary School is being haunted by the spectre of closure with a further fall in its roll. An expected occupancy rate of under 60% is enough to tip the school into Moray Council's controversial review process to examine the future viability of the school.

Last summer the Community Council, the School Support Group and the School Action Group with local Councillor, Ron Shepherd combined with others across Moray to work out a joint approach that would ensure that the village retains its primary school. One of the calls in the "Vision for a 21st Century School" was to move our Library into the school thereby helping to safeguard the future of two prime community assets. There is some indication that this proposal is being well received by Moray Council.

All residents are urged to take part in the consultation process to help make sure there is still a place for a school in Portknockie. Every voice of support counts, as was made plain last year, and the closing date is **July 9th**. For those who wish, pro-forma letters to Moray Council will be available from the Newsagent's which can be signed and sent to the Council. Alan Beresford, Chair of the Community Council, Pearl Murray, Chair of the Action Group and Jackie Kirkwood, Chair of the School

Support Group have issued this message: "One year ago we sent a powerful message to Moray Council namely that we would never go away and never surrender. Well, we haven't and we won't."

Prestigious Community Awards for Portknockie— Newsletter and Website

Portknockie had a very successful showing at the first ever "**Moray Community Newsletter and Website Awards**" on Thursday 11 May 2006. Entries to the competition were judged by a panel chaired by Pauline Taylor, Editor of "The Northern Scot". The awards were presented by Dr Winifred Ewing.

The **Portknockie website** designed by Neil Hedley, and John Smith was runner-up out of 8 entries in the website category and gained a "Highly Commended" certificate together with the RabIT Trophy (a fine piece of crystal presented by 'RabIT Solutions' of Forres) and a bottle of single malt whisky (presented by Glen Moray distillery).

The K'nockerContinue on Backpage

**First Moray Community
Newsletter and Website Awards**

**Thursday 11 May 2006
Beechtree Restaurant, Moray College**

This award scheme was inaugurated by **Moray Council** in conjunction with **Moray Action for Communities (MAC)** and 'The Northern Scot'. The scheme recognises local expertise in producing and managing community information media, and acknowledges their influence on the communities that they serve.

Almost 40 entries were judged by Pauline Taylor (Editor of the 'Scot'), Patricia Robertson (Moray Voluntary Services Organisation), Karen Archer (Press Officer, Cairngorms NPA), Howie Firth (consultant), and Bruce Wares (Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations – editor of the website Rural Gateways).

The Editor of the 'Scot' said that the national and regional press could not be everywhere and cover everything. The community newsletter had therefore become very important and was the modern equivalent of the parish pump as a method of passing news round the village.

Mrs Taylor said that the standard of the entries had been extremely high, with the size of a community no bar to the size and professionalism of the newsletter produced. The judges took into consideration the presentation of the newsletter; the contents; the range of topics; the amount of contributions from the community; and evidence that the newsletter provided a valuable service to its community.

The awards were presented by Dr Winifred Ewing. In her address, Dr Ewing said that informing the community is a "precious duty" and made everyone concerned "an activist". Newsletters reach the parts that local newspapers cannot. Dr Ewing said that, in her long career, she had never attended such an innovative occasion as the newsletter awards, one of the first of its kind.

Results were as follows:

Awards - Newsletters

Moray Community : Winner, **The Fochaberian**;
Runner-up, **The Rothesian**.

"**The K'nocker**" received a Certificate of Merit and these positive comments from the judges:

'Bright, lively and easy to read...The contents are impressive... A contender for the top awards look forward to seeing The K'nocker again!'

Cairngorms NPA : Winner, **Thistledown** (Glenlivet and Inveravon); Runner-up, **The Nethy** (Nethy Bridge).

Special Interest Groups : Winner, **Forres Soccer Sevens**; Runner-up, **Moray Carers Project**.

Awards – Websites

Winner, **www.nethybridge.com**

Runner-up, **www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk**

Neil Hedley and John Smith's website for the village had these positive comments from the judges:

'...we loved this site. It is small with a simple layout, but is very friendly, warm and welcoming. The fading in pictures give an essence of Portknockie as being a very picturesque, attractive place to visit. A very good advertisement for the community.'

Prizes were sponsored by Jenkins & Marr (Architects), The Northern Scot, RabIT Solutions (Forres), Cairngorms National Park, Groverprint (Newtonmore), Tomintoul Distillery, Glen Moray Distillery.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Soon after the Easter issue hit our streets a very complimentary comment was posted to us by Jann Gray on **www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk** praising the website and Harry Hawkes' article on 18 Church Street in The K'nocker. Jann was also moved by DP Kelty's poem "Drifters" as it made reference to the fishing boat owned by her maternal Grandfather, John Mair – the 'Elsie Bruce'. Jann believes her Grandad also owned the 'Utopia' and the 'Nellie Wed'. He was, she says, married to Jeanie Wood and they lived at 10 Mid Street. She plans to visit Portknockie in April to trace her extended family and visit her aunt in Fraserburgh. She has passed on details of Neil and John's website, which contains the latest issue of The K'nocker, to her brother in Lancashire and her sister in Hampshire – village news certainly gets around far and fast these days! Did Jann speak to any of our readers?

Extra comfort - along the cliff tops brae to the Heid o' the Auld Laft two environment-friendly seats have been provided by Moray Council. From them you can gaze out over Cullen Bay and give your dog a rest when out on its daily walkies. The seat donated in remembrance of the Slater family is also now in place beneath the Flagstaff looking across the harbour towards the original family home in Cliff Terrace.

Moray Citizens' Panel – John Bell is the third local resident to admit to membership of this Panel. Based on the population of the village there could be as many as a dozen from this community taking part in these surveys. The latest survey explored issues relating to Travel and Transport in Moray. Members of the Panel

were asked for their views and experience of various transport-related issues affecting Moray. These included what use is made of public transport services, how much of a problem is off-street parking in Elgin and other Moray towns, road safety and drink driving matters and what needs to be done to encourage greater use of public transport services in Moray? There was also a section of questions relating to our use of transport and the nature of its impact on the local environment.

Scottish Quiz No 2: There were two winners of Harry's second Scottish Quiz in the Easter issue of the K'nocker. They were George Campbell from "Aranmore", King Edward Terrace and Thomas Redpath from 16 Kingshill Avenue, Aberdeen. They both received prizes of £5.

Cullen Golf Club now features a splendid stone bridge across the burn to link the 10th and 11th fairways. The stone bridge, built by Sandy Laing and the club greenkeepers, honours the life of Portknockie's Joe Wilson. The plaque reads –

**“Joe’s Bridge”
in memory of Joe Wilson
Golfer
1920 – 2005.**

A bridge on a golf course seems very fitting as a memorial for Joe because he was a lifelong devotee of the game and he spent many years as a linking kind of person between Portknockie and the wider area of Moray. Peggy has also pointed out that she chose a bridge as an appropriate memory of Joe because one of the most evocative moments in Joe's life was when he was standing on the famous Swilcan Bridge having played the Old Course at St Andrew's.

The “Blacking” for Leah and Murray took place in wintry conditions on the evening of Saturday 25th March – your Editor was too cold watching to see whether the party ended up in the water! Fast forward two weeks, it was still cold and very windy but the wedding took place.

The sun shone from blue skies as Leah Wood arrived in a stretch limo just after 2.30pm on Saturday 8th April to marry Murray Laing. The bride wore a white, frothy dress and she was accompanied by three bridesmaids in sea mist green and young Gianna Thain in white. Most of the men guests wore the tartan and the service was conducted by the Minister, Graham Austin.

One uninvited guest was Richard Lochhead, the SNP candidate for the Moray bye-election, who timed his canvassing visit in the village to clash with the guests and onlookers assembling outside the Kirk. His election banner declaimed “Let Scotland flourish”, perhaps it should have read “Let Mr & Mrs Laing flourish!” The reception after the wedding was held at the Fife Lodge Hotel in Banff.

The K'nocker team wishes Leah and Murray a long and happy marriage. Their wedding luck was obviously very good because just after the ceremony finished the skies over the village opened and down came a heavy fall of hail.

Paula & Chris at 9 Church Street would like to say goodbye to all their friends in the village. They ask everyone to warmly welcome the new residents at 9 Church Street, Brenda and Kevin and their two bairns.

Less pleasing to report is the thoughtless vandalism that will mean we need to replace all the junction boxes in the Millennium Garden that are used to connect up the Christmas Lights. The new metal boxes will cost over £300. Also what behaviour led person(s) unknown to smash the bird table in the old Railway Cutting? This has been in place at the Bridge Street end for over four years and was purchased as part of the School's Wildlife Improvements Project.

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

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JOINERY MANUFACTURE REPLACEMENT WINDOW SPECIALIST

The Moray dredger, Sheerwater, was at work in the harbour during the last week of April.

A warm Portknockie Welcome to Amy and Martin with two year old daughter, Lily who have moved into 22 Seafield Street. They are up from Edinburgh. They are really in love with everything about Portknockie! We welcome once again Teunis and Margaret Kuyper who are back living in the village, now at 3 Harbour Terrace. And welcome to Celia and John Going who are now at 25 Seafield Street with their two dogs and two cats. They have moved here from Portsmouth - already enrolled for the K'nocker!

PORTKNOCKIE CHIP SHOP

Ron & Dee look forward to serving you with traditional fish suppers

Opening Hours

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

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2006

20 new barrels cut to an interesting shape have been placed to add variety to some of the regular displays around the village. The two familiar arches at each end of the village have been de-rusted, re-painted and re-gilded and look as new again. The dominant colour theme for this year's floral displays will be based on the main colours of the village coat of arms – red, green, yellow and silver.

Sponsor a barrel! Help *Village in Bloom* to keep Portknockie bright for the competition by sponsoring a flower barrel for £5. We will put your name on your barrel (unless you are very, very shy...). Speak to any PCA committee member and get your family name on show for the season.

The first judging of the village floral show will be by Beautiful Scotland in Bloom judges on Monday 17th July. Would everyone put in the usual effort to make the village bonny and bright by this first deadline? Judging this year for the Moray Best-kept Village competition will take place in the week beginning 31st July. The Moray Awards ceremony takes place on Friday 1st September in Elgin Town Hall.

Volunteers for weeding, cutting and watering are still needed so please make yourselves known to Lil or Jim Urquhart, 3 Mid Street (840004).

Work parties are needed most Saturday mornings meeting behind the Youth Centre in Pulteney Street, Being out in the open helping to ensure the village looks a picture is very therapeutic and helps build community solidarity.

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, Cathy Mills and the two **junior councillors** – Laura Davidson and Ross Jagger.

The planning for the reinstatement of the village coat of arms is proceeding well. The ceremony will take place on Saturday 9th September with a parade from the harbour starting at 6pm. The Letters Patent on vellum will be handed over to the Community Council at 6.30pm by the Ross Herald in the Millennium Garden. The Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire will then read a letter of greetings to her loyal subjects from the Queen. The coat of arms flag will be raised on the old Burgh Chambers building and a permanent plaque unveiled. On the Friday evening before the ceremony the new flag will be blessed in a special service in the Kirk. After the coat of arms ceremony there will be a grand reception for villagers and our guests in the McBoyle Hall.

A grant of £5 000 has been confirmed from the "Awards for All" scheme to pay for the legal fees, the new flag, the parade arrangements and a permanent commemorative plaque. It is intended to provide a commemorative certificate to all the children of the village as a record of this key date in Portknockie's history. The coat of arms whose design reflects the rich seafaring heritage of the village will be available for use on the Community Council's notepaper and will also be available for approved village notices and memorabilia.

Put this date in your diaries and invite family and friends to be in Portknockie for this weekend in September when the "Aye Afloat" motto and historic coat of arms are restored to village use.

THE PORTKNOCKIE COAT OF ARMS

This is the re-authorised coat of arms for the Portknockie Community Council. The village coat of arms was first approved on the 10th of

September 1964 and was in use until 1975 when a re-organisation of Scottish local authorities saw the ending of the Portknockie Town Council and Burgh status. The main change to the design is the replacement of the old Police Burgh coronet with a new version that is proper to Scottish Community Councils.



In the language of heraldry our coat of arms is described thus – *“Bendy wavy Vert and Or, two lymphads under full sail Gules and in base as many fishes paleways naiant counternaiant Argent; on a chief of the Fourth a Lion passant guardant of the Third, imperially crowned of the Second. And in an escrol below the Shield which is ensigned of a coronet proper to a Community Council a motto ‘Aye Afloat’.*

This translates as - Green and Gold diagonal wavy stripes, two red galleys under full sail and at the bottom the same number of Silver fishes, swimming and counter-swimming one above the other; on top of all these a lion passant protective of the symbols and with an imperial crown. And in a scroll below the shield, which is surmounted by a coronet appropriate to a Community Council, a motto ‘Aye Afloat’.

In explanation this design reflects the village’s long seafaring and fishing heritage. There are red ships with silver fish (herring) swimming on a background of green stripes representing the sea and gold stripes a symbol of the local sandy beaches. The Lion of the Ogilvy family on a silver field recognises the role of the superior of the village land, the Earls of Seafield.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

Our bid to the Moray Council for a Community Development grant of £4 000 to help us meet the estimated £6 600 costs of replacing the rotting fascia boards and improving public access for the disabled at the McBoyle Hall has resulted in an offer of £1 382. We will need to look to our own fundraising to make up the difference. This year it is hoped to complete the replacement of the cracked paving and to improve access by lowering the kerbstones. This will need the village to raise around £2 000 to match the grant offer. We are still waiting for Moray Council Roads to install the direction signs that will point visitors to the Fishermen’s Memorial. This project has been awaiting final completion for 15 months!

At the suggestion of the Minister, Graham Austin the Christmas tree lighting ceremony this year will be linked to an open carol service in the Kirk. The date will be on Sunday 26th November and all will be welcome. The Seafield Estate, which provides our tree each year, has indicated that this earlier than customary dressing and lighting of the tree will not be a problem. Plans are already in hand for some new, additional Christmas lighting displays for the village.

The Hall filled to capacity, a queue of folk eagerly waiting to take up vacated places, a sales table groaning under the spread of so many home bakes and excited children showing their painted eggs for display on the stage – this was the scene experienced at the Easter Tea in the Seafield Hall on Thursday evening the 13th April. This very successful community fund raising event took in £400 for village funds. From the 20 odd entrants the main winners of the painted egg challenge were 1st Kayla Ritchie, 2nd Greg Sutherland, 3rd Gianna Thain and 4th Ross Coull.

Brenda Cowie reports that, so far, the new non-smoking legislation has not created any problems for those using the McBoyle Hall for public events.

Activities currently in the planning stages include a sponsored walk in June and at the end of July a Cream Tea fund raiser on the 26th, the Annual Bowls Challenge Cup competition on Thursday 27th and the summer Gala evening in the Square on the 28th.

Looking ahead in 2007 Moray communities will be able to take part in an exciting 12 months of activities that will be a celebration of Highland

Culture. Villagers might like to start thinking about what may be put on in Portknockie as a contribution to the Highland2007 programme. It is known that one event in June 2007 will feature a flotilla of traditional fishing boats that will cruise the Moray Firth passing the village and possibly berthing in Buckie. Details of the programme being planned can be found on the internet at www.highland2007.com

The Hundred Club draw for April draw: 1st Kerry Wood, 2nd Brenda Cowie and 3rd David Field **The May draw:** 1st John West, 2nd George Smith and 3rd Jean Muir.

So far 91 of you have subscribed this year to the village 100 Club. What a deal, just £10 for the whole year with all the excitement of the monthly draw! To join the 100 Club contact Lil Urquhart, 3 Mid Street or any of the committee members. Money raised goes for the good of the community!

The threat to raise the lease charges for the old Burgh Chambers seems to have passed. Apparently the proposal to raise the leasing rental from £1 to £6 600 a year should be viewed merely as an indicative figure based on market rental rates. It has been put forward at this time to demonstrate how much our use of this public building is being subsidised by Moray Council. We expect to hear that the notional charge will continue at £1 a year after August 6th. This is a great relief and one less thing for the Community Association and villagers to be worried about!

BUCKIE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM:

An open meeting to launch our own Local Forum group, part of the Moray Community Partnership, took place on Wednesday 22nd March 2006. A modest group of residents from the Buckie area, covering Cullen to Portgordon and south to Drybridge, Clochan and Deskford, met in the Town House, Buckie to hear from the two Forum Support Workers how they could get more actively involved with local community development. Those present were urged to help tackle the identified local social and economic needs and issues and then to agree a way forward that will bring a healthy, caring, forward looking and safe community in this area for us all.

Across Moray there are to be eight of these Neighbourhood Forums based on the catchment areas of the secondary schools. Each Forum

group will have the task of identifying local needs and issues and establishing a working arrangement with the public service agencies such as the NHS, the Grampian Police, The Moray Council, the Fire & Rescue Service and others to ensure that we get the best, most effective community support services possible.

The community consultation for the Buckie area has already highlighted the following priorities for action – childcare arrangements, community safety, more things for young people to do, leisure and social facilities and housing. Forum members will be asked to work on these priority issues and any others that might emerge with local workers such as school and college staff, community Beat Officers and Wardens, health visitors, youth workers, housing agencies, social workers etc using their experience and resources to develop a range of local projects for change. The process is one of community development that fully engages the local community from the start – not the more traditional approach where service providers decide for themselves what sort of local services a community may be allocated.

The whole approach hinges on people getting involved and it remains to be seen how well this might develop locally. Critics suggest that this seems like duplication as there are already plenty of organisations such as community councils and pressure groups who claim to get things done and represent the views of the people. The acid test will be does this approach, already tested in the Lossiemouth area (the Laich Partnership) reach out to everyone fairly and get the job done more effectively? Those behind the new Local Neighbourhood Forums say that this is the chance for the people of Moray to influence their future so it is important for everyone to consider getting involved. Watch out for further meetings and invitations to help tackle the needs and the issues of the towns and village across Moray. Your Community maybe needs YOU! Not to join a talkshop but to get things changed. The local support work is Rosalind Adie who can be contacted on 01343 829026.

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WHO IS YOUR BEST FRIEND?

A recent article in the Times newspaper drew attention to the fact that canine companionship costs these days an amazing £22 000 over the course of the average dog's (12 year) lifetime. This puts the costs of keeping a dog at over half as much as it does to raise a child!

The annual costs of keeping a dog based on the purchase price, its food, essential veterinary bills, grooming, insurance, accessories and boarding costs during holidays amount to some £1 900 a year. Most owners are very surprised by such a total and, when asked guess that their canine friend probably costs them no more than £5 000 over its lifetime. Yet certain breeds would cost even more – Great Danes come out at a total cost of over £32 000. The cheapest option seems to be the Jack Russell likely to cost something like £18 000 over its lifespan.

Anyone extravagant enough to own two dogs should note that parenthood is probably cheaper. These costs were worked out by Churchill Insurance and are based on a modest and average approach to dog ownership. Those with expensive tastes for top pedigrees, luxury leashes and top-brand feeding could find the costs of owning their pooch even higher. With costs such as this it is clearly a serious matter deciding on the purchase of that adorable little puppy in the window!

PETS CODE OF CONDUCT in the last issue struck a cord with Dot Poole of 5 Blantyre Place. She has written in:

“Reading the article about Pets Conduct and the Animal Welfare Bill, I have a book called Trade Secrets, Pets which was written by Katherine Lapwerth (1999). It contains over a 1000 tips about choosing, feeding, grooming, training, Showing, caring for and enjoying your pets. It

is the only book that I have with interesting facts and tips on cats.

As a dog owner, I have bought Hamish some books for his 7th birthday – four stories, Stick dog, Silly dog, Bone dog and Buddy dog. They are written by Flora Kennedy and there others in the series entitled Glam dog, City dog, Precious dog and Tricky dog. Each book contains two stories and they were written in memory of Boo Boo, the author's German Shepherd dog who loved listening to her stories which became the inspiration for “Tales for Dogs”.

Hamish loves his story time, which takes 5-10 minutes. They are lovely stories with dog talk at the end of each story. Reading to a dog encourages it to learn. I have always found it important to have lots of stimulating toys for Hamish as he was growing and discovering these books has been a major find. You know the old saying that “You get out, what you put in” is very true of a pet, no matter what kind. If people have a problem finding a suitable book they can always make up stories and their pets will love them, because who knows their pet better than their owners? Happy story telling.”

SCOTS WORDS – a simple guide for incomers.

Broch This word describes the halo effect around the moon that often presages worsening weather. It is also the name for the round tower Pictish fortifications found in Orkney, Shetland and the North East of Scotland. But it can describe any circle such as the circle around the tee in a curling rink or the ring drawn on the ground for children's games. Its origin is the Old English word “burh” which is more familiar in the modern version “burgh” as in Edinburgh. To folk from the North-east, however, Broch is normally used in reference to Burghead or to Fraserburgh.

Editor: Would readers care to nominate other commonly used local dialect or Scots words with examples of how the word is used and what is/are its meaning(s).

While on this subject did you take note of the swearing in of Ms Maureen Watt, the new regional list MSP at Holyrood who replaced Richard Lochhead when he resigned to fight and win the Moray by-election in April? She chose to swear the Oath of Allegiance as a new MSP in the Doric: **“I, Maureen Watt, depone aat I**

will be leal and bear ae full alleadgance tae her majesty Queen Elizabeth, her airs an ony fa come aifter her anent the law. Sae help me God.” What do local experts think? Did she get the Doric right?

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

Well, I ended my last article saying that we would soon know it was spring when the geese left and the hedgehogs would be snuffling again. So, most of the geese have gone but I do not think any hedgehogs have dared venture out yet. Carl has just told me that he saw one scurrying across the road outside our house. But, as for spring, well, I think it is missing us out this year! What about all that snow back in March? I do not think Portknockie has seen such weather for many a year. Certainly not in the ten years we have been here. It is now mid April and we are still seeing snow showers and it is SO cold!

During the RSPB’s Big Garden Bird Watch in early March we had a couple of song thrushes in the garden. I was also pleased to see our thrushes come for their share of the blackbird’s raisins. I had been quite jealous when I saw a thrush coming to my Mum for titbits. We started feeding with raisins after I read an article in the Birds magazine by a man who was studying blackbirds and he had tamed them with raisins. Our blackbirds come for theirs as soon as they see us through a window and this has been going on for quite a while now. The watching starlings try to muscle in but they are so nervous that they are scared off very easily.

My Mum has her share of semi-tame blackbirds from feeding raisins and one day there was a female with what looked like a twig sticking out of the side of her beak. It was heartbreaking to watch her trying and failing to pick up anything at all to eat. She patiently tried for about fifteen minutes to pick up a worm. Because of her

tameness I managed to catch her by throwing raisins into Mum’s greenhouse and when she happily hopped in I had her trapped. I thought I would easily pull the twig away but somehow it seemed to be attached to the inside of her mouth. Nothing else for it but to take her to the vets in Buckie! We put her in a Tupperware box and off I went. Becky, the vet soon realised that the blackbird’s bottom beak had actually split and was stopping her from closing it at all. She said that as the bird was quite tame anyway we could keep her and try to feed her with worms as well as raisins! The vet even gave us an old cage to keep the blackbird in and very kindly did not charge for the consultation.

Back home we dug up about twenty worms (just as well they do not eat spiders or she would have had to starve) but we saw that the bird was so distressed that we made the decision to let her go and take her own chance. The next day I was dreading asking if Mum had seen the blackbird and I was thrilled when Mum said that not only had she seen her but that she was feeding as well albeit with difficulty. As the weeks have passed she has got more adept at using her open beak and it has slowly started to close though I doubt it will ever be perfect again.

Well from the sublime to the ridiculous. Still at my Mum’s house – she now has a great big rook coming into her garden and somehow he manages to grip the thin washing line with his huge feet and he pecks away at the little fat ball hanging there. The funniest bit though is to see the little sparrows and chaffinches underneath catching all the bits he is pecking out! I think rooks are quite funny and appealing and to see the antics of this one was pure comedy.

The niger seed we put out to attract goldfinches has worked extremely well and we now have quite a number of siskins coming to feed as well. They are comical to watch at our pond where we have two ornamental frogs that are supposed to hold a tea light. We fill them with water instead and the siskins drink from these.

I have only seen one toad since I moved to Portknockie! I am ashamed to say that I tried to kidnap or should I say ‘toadnap’ it for the garden. I spotted him down the old railway line one evening and it was the time of year when they hibernate so I thought I would bring him home and put him in the dark, damp place underneath our water butt. I never saw him

again so I imagine that he did not think much of our garden as a place to spend the winter. When I lived in Fort Augustus you could hardly go anywhere in the spring without having to avoid running over or treading on a toad. They were everywhere! Mind you we had a lot of water for them there. I recall one night coming out of the hotel where I worked and it was very dark. As I walked down the long drive I stood on something that felt suspiciously amphibian. Ugh! The next night when I walked up the drive to work I was dreading what I would find so I was very relieved to see a squashed apple laying in about the right place!

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HOLIDAY HOME HINTS: a new feature intended to help visitors who are staying in one of the many Portknockie holiday homes get the most from their summer sojourn in the village. Readers are invited to send in ideas for local trips, advice on what to do and, perhaps, what not to do. It would also be a generous act for visitors to use The K'nocker for the occasional compliment recognising the hard work put in by many residents to make Portknockie a pleasing place for holidays. We know they often put very complimentary comments in the Holiday Home visitors' books. However, most residents rarely get to see what has been written in these books.

I will start the feature with a reminder that visitors can obtain three village leaflets from our Library which describe our community, some of the coastal features like the Bow fiddle Rock, local walks and the "Portknockie Experience", an interesting and easy tour around the built heritage of the village. The Library also keeps back numbers of the village newspaper and it has a number of local heritage folders for reference use. Costcutter General Store and the Newspaper Shop in Church Street both stock many of the food and drink items needed to keep you going during a holiday, there are two pubs at which to get a drink, a fish & chip shop and James and Ann at the paper shop also sell

buckets and spades, fishing nets, post cards and other village mementoes that you might want to take away as a souvenir of your stay.

THE WONDERS OF PORTKNOCKIE – what do readers think these are? Send in your opinion to share with all our readers:

The restored Flagstaff and the white piquet fence, which can be seen from so many vantage points as one moves around the village – in particular, the NE view of it as you come along the Buckie road from the cemetery is splendid. The light blue skies spreading clear across the Moray Firth during the spring always look so wonderful.

SOMETHING TO DO EVERY 100 YEARS:

Did you do anything special that you can recall on the 1st second of the 2nd minute of the 3rd hour of the 4th day (Thursday) of the 5th month (May) of 2006? This unusual sequence of 01,02, 03, 04, 05, 06 is an opportunity that does not come round too often in one's life!

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:

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

Airports:

Aberdeen	087004	400006
Inverness	01667	464000

Seaport: (Aberdeen)

Northlink	0845 6000 449
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Trains:

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

HOW MUCH IS YOUR HOME WORTH?

The latest estimates of the cost of houses show that a home in Moray cost on average in 1996 £52 719 and the same home is now worth £116 757 (2006) that is a rise of 121% This figure compares with homes in Highland Region £54 745 (1996) and £141 411 (2006) – a rise of 158% and Aberdeenshire £69 598 (1996) and £141 298 (2006) – a rise of 103%. The top 2006 average prices for homes in Scotland are found in East Lothian (£178 051) and in the UK the top prices for homes are in Surrey at £298 835. No wonder people are moving north!

Recent Nationwide Building Society figures show that Moray and Aberdeenshire have the fastest rising house prices in the UK. In the last year local house prices have grown 18%.

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

The Anti-social Behaviour Helpline: To seek advice or to report any anti-social behaviour you are experiencing phone 0800 58 77 197. You might also consider seeking help from the local Community Warden on 07800 670662.

Victim Support Moray: This is an independent voluntary organisation. Its services are free and confidential and trained volunteers can provide practical and emotional support in the home or

on the phone to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime. Referrals can be made even if an incident has not been reported to the police. The Elgin office, 22 Culbard Street can be contacted on 01343 812 995.

CAIRGORMS NATIONAL PARK PLAN CONSULTATION BEGAN IN APRIL!

The Cairngorms National Park Plan is out for consultation for a period of three months. The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has a statutory duty to produce both a National Park Plan and a Local Plan for the area.

Up until now, most communities will be more familiar with the development of a Local Plan for the Park, with wide community consultation having taken place since September 2004. The Local Plan will set out a clear strategy for built development in the area with land use planning policies and site specific proposals for development, enhancement or protection of the area and will replace those Local Plans currently in existence for the four local authority areas covering the Park (Angus, Moray, Highland, Aberdeenshire).

The National Park Plan sets out the long-term vision (25 years) for the Park as a whole, with a set of priorities for action for the first five years of the plan (2007-2012).

The priorities for action are:

1. Conserving and enhancing the Parks biodiversity and landscapes.
2. Developing more sustainable deer management.
3. Supporting more integrated land management.
4. Improving high quality opportunities for outdoor access.
5. Making housing more affordable and sustainable.
6. Making business and tourism more sustainable.
7. Developing awareness and understanding of the Park.

The National Park Plan is not just a document to guide the work of the CNPA but is a Plan for all agencies operating in the Park, especially the public sector and particularly in relation to the four aims of the Park.

To get to this stage the development of the National Park Plan, extensive research, consultation and discussions have been undertaken with public sector partners and other interested parties. Now, it is over to the public!

A newsletter titled **Viewpoint** will be delivered to every household and business in the Park throughout April which will give people a snapshot of what is contained in the National Park Plan, with details of how to get involved in the consultation. Information will also appear on the CNPA website (www.cairngorms.co.uk)

This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future and overall direction of the Cairngorms National Park!

For more information contact:
Karen Archer
Press Officer
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Tel: 01479 870534 / email:
karenarcher@cairngorms.co.uk

Editor: At the weekends, during the summer months you can get the 500 bus from the village all the way to the Cairngorms National Park.

HAME COOKING by SWRI members: The recipes feature is being provided for a while by the members of our own Seafeld Women's Rural Institute.

Beef Olive, German style: For each beef olive you will need a slice of thin steak spread with mustard and layered with a rasher of smoked bacon, chopped onion and thin slices of sweet and sour gerkins.

Method: Roll up each beef olive and secure with a wooden toothpick. Fry gently in butter for about 30 minutes until the juices run and the beef is cooked. Keep warm while you thicken the pan juices with cream and serve together with a tossed green salad or the vegetables of your choice. This is a variation on the usual, local version stuffed with mealie or sausage meat.

Scotch Broth, Mary style: You will need a neck of mutton, 1 diced turnip, 1 large diced and 1 large grated carrot, 1 diced leek, 3oz of pearl barley, 3 cups of dried peas, 1 chopped onion, one tablespoon of chopped parsley, salt and pepper to season and 3 pints of water.

Method: Soak the peas overnight, wash the meat and put in a large stock pot with the water with the peas, barley and the salt and pepper. Bring to the boil and skim off any scum, add the diced vegetables and simmer for 3 hours. Finally add the grated carrot and simmer for a further 30 minutes. Before serving add the chopped parsley. For a gluten free broth add rice instead of barley.

A wife used to be judged on the goodness of her broth. Here is another version of Scotch Broth as served by a well-known Scottish chef:

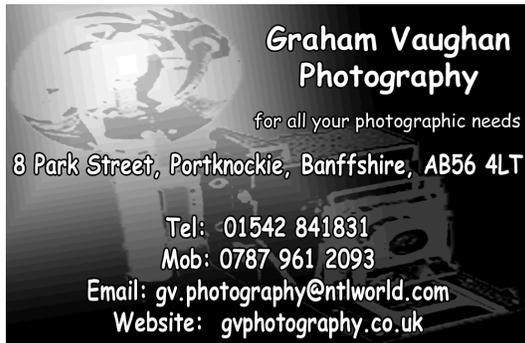
Scotch Broth: Gordon Ramsay style serves 4: 500g of neck of mutton with bone, 2 large onions, 1 halved and 1 chopped, 2 carrots (1 halved and 1 chopped), 1 stick of celery, halved, half a white cabbage, core trimmed and chopped, 30g of pearl barley soaked overnight in water, a few sprigs of thyme, 2 fresh bay leaves and a handful of flat-leaf parsley, chopped.

Method: Put the meat in a large pan of cold water and bring to the boil, let it bubble for a while then remove the meat and skim off any scum or impurities – this is to ensure the broth will be clear for cooking the vegetables. Return the meat to the pan and add the thyme, bay leaves, onion, carrot and celery halves and a little seasoning. Fill with enough water to cover and put on a medium heat. Bring the liquid to a simmer and cook gently for 1½ hours until the meat is just tender. Then add the chopped vegetables with the pearl barley top up with more boiling water if necessary and simmer for 30-45 minutes until the barley is cooked. Remove the mutton from the pan, separate the meat from the bone and any gristle, then chop the meat into bite-sized pieces and return to the soup. Reheat and season to taste and sprinkle over the chopped parsley before serving.

ODD FACT –CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

Every minute the world's rubbish dumps gain more than a million plastic bags. In a year that would produce enough plastic to shrink-wrap the whole of Britain! Are you doing your bit to

recycle or even refuse plastic bags? Why don't the local supermarkets charge customers for plastic bags as they do in many European countries?



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Email: gv.photography@ntlworld.com
Website: gvphotography.co.uk

“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

THE BACKWARD SPRING

As I prepare to write this article it is only just beginning to warm up after a long and chilly spell of weather. When you live this far north, you know the meaning of summer and the meaning of winter. The year is a living thing and you live with it. But the months are now lightening and soon it will be summer — enjoy it while it is here. The long evenings, when the wind drops and everything goes still are well worth waiting for. In the evenings when, down at the harbour, the waves are gently lapping against the boats, Portknockie seems like the Garden of Eden!

Our “yellow floers”, though, have had a tough time and quite a number have suffered. Even their “protective coats” were not enough — there was no respite from the chill winds. Up here, they knew they were in a wind, not the wee breezes that southerners complain about! However, we hope that enough have survived to fill our front garden and bring a burst of sunshine to our corner of Portknockie. Come and visit them in the summer.

Even down south in Dorset and Somerset they have not escaped. In these counties, in early Spring, you would expect to see myriads of primroses along the country lanes and in the hedgerows, and buds beginning to appear on trees and shrubs. Not this year. Yes, they did appear but were later than normal. Perhaps this unseasonal spell of weather all round Britain will usher in a lovely warm summer and by the time this edition of the “Knocker” goes to print, we will all be basking in warm sunshine, sipping

drinks on the patio and looking for shade to avoid the glare of the sun!!

The Backward Spring — Step forward Summer!

SHEAR DEZIGN
Hair by Lisa
**Open Tuesday – Saturday with late night
Thursdays.**

Phone 841711 for an appointment

POETS' CORNER:

The Auld Days

Oor hoosie wis sma, that's jist by the by,
Jist a but an a ben, an a closet forby,
A tarred widden sheddie stuck tee tae the gale,
It did as a wash-hoose an kitchen as well.

Nae bathroom hid we, bit it wis nae disgrace,
In the sheddie's far corner the “throne” hid its
place,
Oor faces an hans wir washt at the wal,
Files a dook in the tub if it wasna oer caul.

Nae washin-masheen hid oor mither yon days,
She rubbit and scrubbit at faither's sea-claes,
She patcht an she darnt an she niver wis deen,
Oor claes wirna gran, bit she kept us a' clean.

Ooor faither vrocht hard, an got gae little for't,
The same wis the story aroon ilka port,
The herring they dumpit we ken wis wrang,
Bit they cwidna get rid them, no nae fur a sang.

Oor mither did braw wi the little she got,
A bane fae the butcher, syne on the broth pot,
A firkin o' herrin, and a bowlie o' meal,
A bag o' new tatties an my we fared weel.

Intae the bunnin-bed at nicht we a' geed,
Twa loons at the boddim, and twa at the heid,
Mair affin the fower o's wir a in a ra,
Oor feet pintin oot an oor heids at the wa.

We ca'd blankets nets that we shot an we hault,
The aulest wis “mannie”, an boy fit he bawlt,
“Awa wi the tailbooie, oot ower wi the lot,”
Syne “Git the aboard, we've got a gweed shot.”

The laft wisna lined, an the cupples wir bare,
Amung a dad's gear we wid aften play there,

There wis mennin an ozlin an corkin the ropes,
A'ready fir Yarmouth an ful a high hopes.

We wun intae ba's mony hanks o' barkt twine,
An fult up the needles, a curn at a time,
We aye kent fan scalders hid been on the scene,
They nippit oor noses an wattert oor een.

Aence they wir bathrin a steamer-drifter's crew,
They bocth fass-faces (noo this is quite true)
They cwidna git workit fin turnt oot tae hal,
Each rolt about lachin fin he lookt at his pal.

Tae tell a' the ongons wid ful a big beuk,
As we capert aroon the warm ingle-neuk,
An fariver I am, I jist aye think the same,
Thir's nae hoosie like it, thir's nae place like hame.

Twis there ma aul faither gart us reed the gweed
Beuk,
An we lernt that oor sins on the cross Jesus took,
Twis there I surrendert ma life tae His claim,
An noo I am langing fir ma Heavenly Hame.

From the Davie Mair Collection.

Mostly for older folk who may have the same
problem with their memory recall:

My Forgetter be Forgotten

My forgetter's getting better,
But my rememberer is broke
To you that may seem funny
But, to me, that is no joke.

For when I'm here I'm wondering
If I really should be there
And, when I try to think it through,
I haven't got a prayer!

Oft times I walk into a room,
Say "What am I here for?"
I wrack my brain, but all in vain!
A zero is my score.
At times I put something away
Where it is safe, but Gee!
The person it is safest from
Is, generally, me!

When shopping I may see someone,
Say "Hi" and have a chat,
Then, when the person walks away
I ask myself, "Who was that?"

Yes, my forgetter's getting better
While my rememberer is broke.
And it's driving me plumb crazy
And that isn't any joke.

The Pensioner's Prayer

Blessed are they who understand
my faltering steps and shaking hand.
Blessed who know my ears today
strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know,
my eyes are dim, my mind is slow.
Blessed are they with a cheery smile,
who stop and chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who make it known,
I am loved, respected and not alone.
Blessed are they who form this Branch,
to them are due our special thanks.

Sent in by a reader.

SEASONAL OBSERVANCES FROM OUR MINISTER

**by Rev Graham Austin, Church of Scotland,
Portknockie**

Well it's all happening. Portknockie will soon be re-establishing its Coat of Arms. It will be a reminder of the past and a focal point for the present community and something to pass on to future generations. We will look forward to a great day for the village when the Coat of Arms is dedicated, celebrated and hoisted about the Burgh Chambers.

The Church of Scotland will be playing its part as we host a service on Friday 8th September to which of course all are invited. As we do so it will remind us that no matter how high we fly our flags there is a higher flag - Jesus Christ. There is a great hymn 'Love divine all loves excellin' by, of course, Charles Wesley and the last verse goes like this:

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Do you notice the line in bold? It is wonderful thing to celebrate accomplishments and it will be

a great achievement by those working hard on our behalf to reinstall the Coat of Arms to Portknockie but what a greater day that is still to come when we lay that Coat of Arms at the feet of Jesus.

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BUILDINGS OF PORTKNOCKIE:

No 3 in a series.

The house at 5 High Street,

described by **Leslie Calder**, whose family has owned the house since building it in 1901.

On the 29th of April 1901 my great grandfather John Mair (Bobbin/Shy), fisherman, was granted Feu Charter by Caroline Countess Dowager of Seafield for ground at 323 Portknockie for an annual feu of ONE POUND TWO SHILLINGS and SIXPENCE. And *Au Revoir* (now Number 5 High Street) was then built.

The house was built for my great grandad and great granny Elsie Bruce (Runcie) for £104 and was the first house built by Portknockie builders, Jonny McBoyle. Built of good masonry rubble, it measured 39ft long, 20ft wide and 11ft high at the sidewalls. The ground floor contained a kitchen pantry, bedroom, lobby and parlour. Upstairs consisted of a net loft and mending room both lined with wood. A concrete outside stairs gave access to the upstairs.

By 1915 my great grandparents had four sons and four daughters, one son being my granda.

In 1918 the house was insured for £300 - less than my great granda valued his fishing gear. The nets, ropes, pails, and buoys were insured for £320 with a provision that no tarring be undertaken on the premises. At that time the parlour still had an earth floor. And it must have been after this when the inside stair was added.

In February 1941 my granny and dad moved into the house when their home was damaged

during a bombing raid. Upstairs then became my grandparents' home.

My great granny died in 1945 and great granda in 1960 and my granda inherited the house. In 1965 the kitchen extension and a toilet were added and there have been several alterations over the years to make it as it is today.

For 2 years I lived upstairs with my parents until they were allocated a council house in 1966. After my granda died in 1996, my granny lived alone in the house where she died in March 2005. Myself and my family now live in the house and it's good to be living in the home of my great grand parents and grand parents, the home where my granda and dad both grew up in.

NOTE: When Leslie Calder's great-grandfather, John Mair, built the house called *Au Revoir* in 1901 it had no street number - because Portknockie, at that time, had no street names and so could not have house numbers. Street names came nearly twenty years later, as the following extract from the David Mair Collection shows:

PORTKNOCKIE TOWN COUNCIL

NAMING OF STREETS

Banffshire Advertiser
Thursday March 18th 1919

The Clerk intimated that the naming of streets had now been completed and all householders had got formal notice intimating the new addresses and requesting them to have the numbers put up. The official address would be changed as from the 18th May and the question of having the street names put up would have to be faced:

Estimate cost of 63 Name Plates £24.6.6d
(£24 and 32½ new pence. - What would be the equivalent price today?).

THE K'NOCKER SEEKS FEEDBACK:

The K'nocker is 7 years old in September and your editorial team feels it is time to review progress and see whether we and you, the reader, would like to see any changes for the future. To do this we need you to tell us what you think of your village newspaper and whether you want to

see changes in how and when it appears. Ideally we can also get some responses from those in the village who do not yet buy the K'nocker nor ever read it. We sell 300 copies each issue but these are ordered by only half of the homes in the village. Should we be trying to reach out to more of our residents? If so, how should we go about encouraging more homes to take the K'nocker?

Over the years of publication, your Editor has often asked for comments from the readership but you rarely take up the offer. People say that K'nockers are reluctant to commit themselves to print, so will this appeal work? Let's accept that we all want the best for our village newspaper, so we should work at setting up an effective dialogue – stop us in the street and talk, drop a note through our letterboxes or even send us an e-mail! The goal is to create between ourselves a more dynamic and responsive community newspaper.

So what sort of feedback are we seeking? It could be to do with the design and layout of the K'nocker – how long should it be, what size of page is best (we use A4 at present) and what size of print? Is the print size too small? Perhaps you will have views about the content of the paper – do you want to see changes to the regular features, what new features would you want to see? You might want to comment on the timing and distribution of the K'nocker – at the moment we have four issues a year in September, December, March and June) and we offer home delivery and purchase at the Library and the Chemist. Does this need changing?

Before you rush to respond do be realistic about what is possible. We are not seeking change for change sake but we are seeking to extend our readership. Some changes such as bigger issues or the use of colour, photos and complex layouts would involve extra costs and much greater commitment from someone. Would you be prepared to pay more and do you have the skills and commitment to take an active part in the newspaper's production? Now is the invitation to get involved! Anyone locally who can line draw in black and white would be extremely welcome as an illustrator for the paper.

The existing team, Bob Croucher, Margret Wood and Harry Hawkes, would welcome change by evolution rather than one revolutionary upheaval. Some clear indication of the things you like about the K'nocker, any irritations you have with

it and any offers of practical help with future productions. For example, it would be especially helpful to have a named correspondent for all the groups whose activities, which ought to be reported, make Portknockie such a pleasurable place in which to live. Because of rising costs we are likely to face having to raise the costs of the K'nocker from next year's subscription to, perhaps, £4 a year delivered or £1.50 per single copy purchased. Now is the time to be having your say about planning the shape and style of the 2007 village newspaper!

Editorial Team contacts:

Bob Croucher: 23 Harbour Place, 01542-841291 or e-mail rmcdram@onetel.com

Margret Wood: 34 King Edward Terrace or the Library, 01542840747 or e-mail Portknockie.library@moray.gov.uk

Harry Hawkes: 18 Church Street, 01542-841291 840718 or e-mail hrhyic@yahoo.co.uk

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WHERE AM I? Directions meant to help!

From the East follow the A96 to Inverness and when you meet the Raigmore Interchange take your 3rd exit (A9 North) which will take you up a slip road which will meet up with the A9, carry on down the A9 till you get to the Kessock Bridge Roundabout stay in the inside lane and take the first exit up another dual carriageway to another roundabout, go straight ahead then you will be passing a BP garage on your left and Inverness College on your right. This takes you to another roundabout take the 2nd exit here which takes you to another roundabout (Shore Street) take the 2nd exit again (the exit with traffic lights). Next you come to Telford Street Roundabout take the 4th exit which is the exit to

the right, carry straight along this road past the traffic lights till you meet another roundabout, take the exit to the right again so you pass B&Q on your left and the Co-op on your right, ahead of this is a raise in the road roundabout if you take the left there and follow the road past Inverness Tyres you will find us! What a round about journey!

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

A Craft Fair has been organized by Moray Firth Dolphins in the McBoyle Hall for Saturday 17th June from 11am to 4pm. A donation will be made from the Craft Fair proceeds to community funds.

Community Association: Look forward to putting your feet forward for a Sponsored Walk to raise funds for the village over the weekend of 24/25th June. Walkers can choose either a 7 or a 10 mile course starting for the main group from the McBoyle Hall at 1pm on the Sunday. There will be refreshments available for walkers in the Hall when they get back.

There will be a Cream Tea in the McBoyle Hall, tickets £2 for adults and £1 for children, on the 26th July at 7pm to raise funds for the annual Gala. The summer Gala will be held in the Square on Friday 28th July.

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Phone Sarah or Isabel
on 01542-841028 or 841317.**

Portknockie Seniors Portknockie Seniors: April 18th was the AGM. All the Committee were voted back on. The Morning Tea on the 30th May raised £384 and tickets were distributed for the summer bus run on Tuesday 13th June which will be to Montrose – members only. Regular monthly meetings will commence again on **Tuesday 19th September**, which will be Seniors' Group joining night. All residents in Portknockie over the age of 18 years are welcome to join.

Seafield Women's Rural Institute: The talk on "Healthy Eating on the 16th March was cancelled due to illness of the speaker, it is hoped to have this at a future date. In April Pat Fraser and

friends entertained with Doric poetry, pipes and accordion music. A fine selection of Easter bonnets was displayed by members. Margaret Smith from Buckie Cancer Support Group spoke of the work done by this group to help cancer patients and their families. Thursday 18th May was a busy day, a morning tea was held in the Seafield Hall in aid of the Buckie Cancer Support Group. Thanks to all who helped in any way. At the evening meeting President Isobel Mair presented a cheque for £444.10 to two BCS group members.

Cup winners for the Monthly Competitions over the year were 1st Marjorie Croucher, 2nd Margaret Greig and 3rd Karin Rose. Ladies from Threaplands Nursery talked about the history of the nursery, planted up specimen hanging baskets and gave advice on their care. There were also some lovely plants available for sale. A pansy pot donated to the Raffle was won by Wilma Robertson. Our annual bus run takes place on Thursday 22nd June to Fortrose and then on to Dow's Diner in Inverness for High Tea. The bus leaves at 12noon and the cost is £12 and the trip is open to non-members.

The SWRI website is now in place at www.swri.org.uk It contains a lot of interesting information. Did you know that the WI, as it was then called was founded in Canada in 1897?

Bowling Club Notes: The winter indoor carpets are rolled up and in their cupboards, and the new outdoor season is now in full swing. The opening day of 29 April saw very pleasant weather, and a big crowd turned out to see Mrs Irene Weir throw the first jack. While the local league in which we play does not commence until about mid June, we have been participating in knock out competitions: the Banffshire Top Ten (where we went out in the second game) and the Duthie Shield (where we beat Cullen). An Open Pairs competition is planned for early June and other Club competitions will follow: hopefully by then the weather will have warmed up!

The green has benefited from the attention given to it over the winter and early spring, it looks nice and it is playing well. While, since the opening, a healthy number of memberships has been taken out, there is plenty of room for others to join and new members will be most welcome. We normally have hat nights on a Monday and Thursday evenings, and there are a number of sets of Club bowls for loan in the Pavilion. After

a lengthy period of consideration, the Club has now formally agreed with Moray Council to take over full responsibility for both the maintenance of the green and Pavilion, along with the tennis courts. As this will mean an inevitable increase in running costs, the Club will need to be trying that bit harder to fund raise. Not unconnected with this are plans to hold a ceilidh in the McBoyle Hall on Saturday 7th October 2006: along with local musicians, a Northumbrian ceilidh band will be present and a most entertaining night is assured. Tickets - limited in numbers - will be on sale nearer the event.

Neighbourhood Watch: Neighbourhood Watch is simply watching out for one another – one for all and all for one - although in a fairly close knit village like Portknockie it is a fact that many residents do naturally watch out for one another, whether or not they are members. There has been a Neighbourhood Watch in the village since 1997, and many of the residents are members. Should you wish to join, confirm you are already a member, or would simply like some further information, contact the **Coordinator - John Myles on 840 000**. And as a money saving footnote, some insurance companies will give NW members a small reduction on their annual insurance premiums.

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

Library News: This summer's Library fun reading scheme, **The Reading Mission**, runs from 30th June until 26th August. All children will receive an invitation, which is on the way to schools now. It's FREE and FUN! They can participate all summer long or any time throughout the summer when it suits them. Lots of fun activities; secret mission pack; secret message pens; spy cards; stickers; magnets; secret codes; secret maze; secret agent games and quizzes.

New book titles are arriving weekly so come in for a browse or free internet use.

Fishing: The harbour has been busy this past few weeks with cranes lifting boats into the harbour for the summer season; divers galore; hopefully the squid fishing will be successful again this summer.

Further to the story about the launch of the first drifter, *Parvaim* - the sun was shining at 11 .30 a.m. and the harbour area was surrounded by folk of all ages to see this special event. The boats in the harbour, houses as well, had flags up and the new boat was strung with bunting. Mrs Pine, the wife of the skipper, christened and broke the bottle over the boat but nothing happened — the boat did not move! Eventually, the reason was found: the vessel had been laid down too level instead of having been given a few inches of a dip to the water. Excitement rippled round the crowds — a screw jack was applied to the stem low down but was unsuccessful. Finally, men were called on to come and help with ropes etc. and at 12.45 p.m. the *Parvaim* glided majestically down into the harbour amid cheers and whistles.

Sadly on a Tuesday afternoon, 23rd July 1907, word was received about the loss of the *Parvaim* by collision with the Twenty-Eight YH 711 when returning to Lerwick to land a catch of herring. The crew had a narrow escape but managed to scramble aboard the Yarmouth drifter with just the clothes they stood in.

(This is just an edited version of the facts and the full story is available in the library - thanks go to Davie Mair for passing on these papers).

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

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PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL:

Notes by Miss Moira Cooke, Head Teacher

I'd like to start off by saying that it has been a quiet year so far, but as ever it has been particularly busy. This summer term is traditionally a busy one as we tend to cram in as many outdoor activities as we can whilst the

weather is fair. Unfortunately, it seems that winter did not want to leave us and spring has been something of a washout; more on the activities to follow.

It hardly seems like 2 years since I arrived at the School as the time has gone by so quickly. The School had its inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education within a few weeks of my arrival in June 2004 and within the next few weeks they will be returning to carry out a follow-up inspection. This should be a much more 'low-key' event where the Inspectors will ensure we have addressed the shortfalls identified in their original report – wish us luck!



The School children in P5, P6 and P7 have been undertaking their Scottish Cycle Proficiency on Mondays and Fridays – there are frequently seen yellow bibs and bicycles on the streets adjacent to the School, and to ensure the children really learn and understand the safety issues it involves doing left and right turns over and over again.

As a part of the School's ECO project we will be holding a 'Planting Day' on Tuesday the 13th June starting at 1.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend to help or just watch. The children have purchased the plants and trees from Christies in Fochabers using money sourced from School Action Plan.

The Parent Support Group have had a busy term and organised and run two very successful events, the Talent show in the McBoyle Hall and more recently the School Fete. The two events raised over £2000 which will mainly be put toward a 'Jungle Gym' – a kind of playground climbing apparatus. I am going to discuss the school Action Plan for the school grounds at the next Parent Support Group Meeting in June 2006.



The School will be holding its Sports Day on Wednesday 7th June at the McBoyle playing fields. The fun begins at 1.30pm. The Parent Support Group will be running a stall with teas, coffees and snacks. There will be grown-ups race for the adventurous.

Finally, the end-of-term Service will be held on Tuesday 22nd June 2006 starting at 1.45pm – Family and friends are welcome to attend.

School Dates 2006:

Summer Term End 30th June 2006

School re-starts after the summer break on Tuesday 22nd August 2006.

Portknockie Primary School Parent Support Group thanks all those who helped and supported the very successful Talent Show in May.

JMK

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Continued from the Front page:

.. from 20 entries of newsletters throughout Moray, gained a Certificate of Merit accompanied by a most complimentary adjudication from the judging panel (see page 2).

Both these awards are on display in the window of the Library in Portknockie, and are an indication of how successful the village is among the other communities of Moray.

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

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