

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR 2007: IT'S A K'NOCKEROUT!

At the 2007 awards evening of the Caingorms & Moray Newsletter and Website Project in Tomintoul village hall on Friday 18th May the K'nocker was declared the Community Newsletter of the Year in Moray.

This event, now in its second year, aims to celebrate and acknowledge the quality of the newsletters of towns and villages and special interest groups and community websites. Portknockie won the Jenkins-Marr Shield as the community newsletter of the year in Moray. The shield is on view in our Library along with a Northern Scot diploma of special achievement for headline writing.

The panel of judges was chaired by Pauline Taylor, Editor of the Northern Scot, and the awards were presented by Richard Lochhead, Moray MSP and Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment.

The list of entries included 18 newsletters, 15 websites and 14 special interest newsletters covering Moray and the Cairgorms NP area. The top newsletter from the Cairgorms area was the Grantown News and the website award went to Archiestown. The Portknockie website received a diploma of achievement.

The judges praised the high standards of the entrants and welcomed evidence that communities appreciated and responded to

their local newsletters. Richard Lochhead, in his address, suggested that local newsletters and websites were part of the fabric binding communities together.

PORTKNOCKIE IN BLOOM is it or isn't it Aye afloat? Do residents care?

This issue comes out when the village is looking bonny and bright with its customary floral features in seasonal bloom. However, there are signs that Portknockie in Bloom cannot be guaranteed for next year. The number of residents who are prepared to put in the necessary effort to make this annual show of flowers come together is dwindling.

This year we have been down to just a dozen folk taking on the considerable task of preparing the ground, ordering and collecting the plants, planting out and regular weeding, fertilising and watering to reach competition standard. This year we are entered for Beautiful Scotland and the Moray Best-kept Village but this may be for the last time.

Village in Bloom has brought us prestige, it will be sad if this must come to an end.

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

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

Airmail from Australia: Zena Brown (Mair) writes from Sydney having read and chuckled over the Easter issue of The K'nocker sent by her sister Jessie.

All the shops in the village mentioned by Charles Slater – Ann Bruce’s, Davie Calder’s, ‘The Bakers’, Johnnie Lovie, ‘The Chemist’ to mention a few. Our mothers would send us for errands: Ann Bruce had the best current loaves, Calder’s for the softies and cookies. A shop at the bottom of Park Street every Saturday got a delivery of fancy cakes from a Findochty bakery – meringues joined together with cream, coloured sponge slices and brandy snaps would be the first to go.

Charles forgot to mention Wright’s, the electrical and Paper Shop on Church Street (my brother, Winston, was one of their paper boys), Mary Anderson’s on Falconer Terrace and the Falkner Sweetie shop in the Square where the school kids would spend their pocket money if they got any. They would buy liquorice sticks or chewing gum. Saturday night was a highlight for the men of the village gathering in the Square waiting for the 9 o’clock Alexander Blue Bird bus to drop off the ‘Green Final’ paper to check their pools hoping to have become a little richer.

Johnnie Lovie was a man of all trades. The day I left Portknockie for Sydney, Australia in 1958 he came with his camera and took my photograph and had it published in the Press & Journal ... ‘Local lass leaves for Down Under’. Charles you will have to excuse my memory but I just cannot remember you at all nor what street you lived in. (**Ed. wasn’t it 14 and 16 Pulteney Street?**). The next time I phone my sister I will ask her to refresh my memory. To my school-mates – Margaret Mair, Georgina Pirie, Vera Monro, Elsie Anderson and Cathie Moore thank-you for being my friend.

Best Regards, Zena Brown.

Editor: Perhaps Zena’s friends might care to tell us more about some of their memories of when they were all chums in Portknockie?

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

Alky Parky & Co - The K’nocker is gathering the Portknockie clans from all over the world!

Twa quines frae Fife, Kim and Kerry, knocked on the door of 18 Church Street one Saturday afternoon last October. They were up in Portknockie with their husbands, who were playing golf, and they came to

number 18 to announce that they were the grand-daughters of Peter Carr who had owned the house from the late 1960s. A very nostalgic tour of the house was made and there were stories of the two, as wee girls, sitting in the wide window-sills of the upstairs bedroom and making faces at the boy across the road in the window of 13 Church Street. Kim and Kerry also had a look at the tiny room upstairs that now serves as a walk-in airing cupboard and boiler room, which they remember as a bedroom - just big enough for a single bed which had to be climbed into over the bed-end since there was no room to pass down the side! This room also contained a piece of history: behind the present airing shelves was the same wallpaper that the girls remembered from thirty-odd years ago! All these reminiscences have been added to the story of the house which was set out in the K’nocker of June 2006.

Then, last February, Margret in the Library received an email from an old ex-resident of Portknockie. She sent a poem about a Christmas ‘soirée’ at the local school in 1939. She gave her name as “J. Macleod” or better still, “Alky Parky’s quine”. Sure enough, the older locals remembered her as a daughter of “Alky Parky” (Alec Wood) – and were able to list her other sisters and a brother! Jean Macleod, née Wood, now lives in Golspie. Her poem, being about Christmas, will be in the December issue of the K’nocker.

Next, there was another knock on the door of 18 Church Street on a Sunday in April and there stood Phil and Paul Picking, now of Oswestry and Preston respectively, but nephews of Jean Wood (“Auntie Queenie”) and also cousins of Kim and Kerry from Fife. A comment by Phil and Paul on their visit to Portknockie is on page 3 of this issue of the K’nocker.

Welcome to any more still to come to the door of number 18!

Stormin’ Norman bows out in style

The Portknockie milkman, Norman Legg, unofficially retired on Friday 20 April 2007 after 35 years of service to the community.

The customers of the village had for the previous months been contributing to a surprise presentation for Norman. This was made at 11 o’clock on the Friday morning at Hill Street Newsagents. A sizeable gathering of well-wishers was there, hiding in the shop to make sure that it was all a surprise – and, for the first time in living memory, Norman was late! He had not arrived by his usual time, between a quarter to and five to eleven, so a search party was sent out –

whereupon Norman promptly turned up and was duly surprised.

Warm tributes were paid to Norman and he was presented with DIY gift vouchers, other vouchers for a meal out for two, a framed picture of Portknockie harbour in a winter storm, and a bottle of whisky. There were also bouquets of flowers for Norman's wife and grand-daughter, who were both part of the surprise.

Norman then had another few weeks of deliveries to do while a new roundsman was trained to take over.

There were many stories of the past 35 years and it was generally agreed that the village had been privileged in having the services of someone as reliable as Norman (to say nothing of discreet...). In the words of one village stalwart:



Senseless acts of vandalism continue which shame our village: Horrible graffiti has defaced the gable end of 22 New Street for some weeks now; burn marks have been made in the village street map in the Millennium Garden; the train feature in Station Road has been wantonly broken, the new Jungle Gym play facility in the school has been damaged already and the local memorial seat to Ken Beverley has been ripped from its foundations at the Heid o' the Auld Laft overlooking the golf course and thrown over the cliff. The family and villagers are very upset and disgusted by such mindless behaviour. In a joint statement to the local press Alan Beresford, Chair of Portknockie Community Council, and Pearl Murray, Chair of Portknockie Community Association commented:

"To do something like this to any public amenity is bad enough, but to try one's best to destroy a memorial bench dedicated to the memory of a well-respected and much-loved resident is just beyond the pale. It beggars belief what the perpetrators got out of doing this".

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JOINERY MANUFACTURE REPLACEMENT WINDOW SPECIALIST

Phil and Paul Picking, from Oswestry and Preston, visited Portknockie one weekend in April for the sad duty of scattering the ashes of their mother, Isobel (née Wood), at the Bow Fiddle Rock. She was another daughter of 'Alky Parky'. The boys pass on the following message through the K'nocker:

Pip and Paul would like to thank all in Portknockie for the warm welcome that was shown to them during their weekend in the village (especially Davy in the 'Seafield Inn'). They have good memories of happy childhood days spent in the village and are glad to find that things have not changed, at least in that respect! They hope to return later in the year to spend more time in Portknockie than they were able to in April.

Welcome back any time, lads!

Irresponsible dog owners in the village have moved one reader to write: "Having just moved back to Portknockie I am enjoying walking to all the places I used to play at as a child but the enjoyment of these walks has been marred by dog owners who do not pick up their dogs' mess. I am a dog owner myself and got my dog on the understanding that I would have to pick up his mess after him but it seems that some dog owners in the village are not doing this.

Portknockie is a beautiful place with lovely cliff walks and the walk along the old railway line to Cullen but how off putting it is to come across this dog mess on the paths. The entrance to the cycle path to Cullen is particularly bad and that is with a special bin for dogs' mess use nearby. Come on dog owners be responsible and do not spoil Portknockie's beauty any more!"

A VERY BIG WELL DONE: To the Victoria Hotel Ladies Pool Team who have won the Buckie & District Pool League once again.

Four of the girls are also playing in the SEPF (Scotland Eight ball Pool Federation). They have had 4 tours so far and they are all in the top 10 with two more tours to go – “C’mon Grace, Sally, Gwen and Elaine!” (Ed. Thanks for the donation!).

Seafield Inn Darts ‘A’ team sweeps the board:

The Buckie & District Darts League, Division 1, has been won by the Seafield Inn ‘A’ team, which had the following remarkable record:

P	W	D	L	F	A	Points
14	12	1	1	119	48	37

Not content with the League title, the ‘A’ team also ran away with three other trophies: “Top of the Town”, “Premier Cup”, and “Wayne Langnes”.

The captain of the ‘A’ team, John Wilson, won the “Captain’s Trophy”, and the “Grouse 4s Trophy” was won by the Seafield Inn team of S. Cowie, J. Wilson, G. Calder and I. Mair.

An insider at the Seafield Inn was able to tell the K’nocker that the Seafield ‘B’ team, by contrast, was “an awfu’ sociable lot and had a real gweed time but won (*expletive deleted*) all.”

Back in Portknockie after 9 years away are Mike and Sandra Skelton and their two teenage children Natalie and Alan. Also with them is 8 year old Zahra who was born in Dundee. Sandra grew up in Portknockie and is the youngest daughter of Ian and Vi Mair.

The Victoria Hotel has new owners. Mike and Karen Ridley have moved out and John and Linda Scott opened for business on Wednesday 6th June. Previously, they were running the Station Hotel in Burghead and, before that, the Highlander Hotel in Buckie. With them are two of their three children and two Westies, named Tilly and Misty. Once settled next month, they expect to provide bar lunches snacks, teas and coffee and evening meals as well as the full range of pub drinks. The Vic is expected to offer B&B next year once the rooms are re-decorated.

Name that Beach! Ian Mair has written in about the “Portknockie Shoreline” feature in the last issue:

“The Three Doored Cave is on the east side of the Creeks. Over the years some local place names have changed but the shoreline is how I remember it from childhood. It was there that my generation played,

cleeked, fished, lit fires and climbed most of the rocks.

I would welcome comments from older K’nockers. For instance, what was Fackie’s Beach and Cave called before being associated with Provost Bill Falconer?”

Award winning headline in The K’nocker: At the Cairngorms and Moray Newsletters and Websites Awards 2007 evening in Tomintoul on the 18th May we not only won the Jenkins- Marr shield for the outstanding village newspaper in Moray, we also gained a Northern Scot diploma for Harry Hawkes’ Easter 2007 issue headline – **Portknockie Primary School to stay Open and “Aye Afloat”**

From Ishbel Beresford: Snippets from the past: Mrs J Jappy (formerly Annie Runcie) of Portknockie For perfect attendance at Portknockie Primary School between 1935 and 1945 received a gift of £10 saving stamps. Her son John (a twin) for Perfect Attendance at Lady Cathcart School, Buckie between 1958 and 1965 received a watch.

Portknockie War Memorial features Rachel weeping for her children; Jeremiah, Chapter 31 Verse 15.

It was very sad to hear of the passing of Eddie Anderson on Sunday 10th June. Eddie was a regular contributor to the K’nocker and for seven years he was one of the valuable team of volunteers delivering the village newspaper to subscribers. His Doric style was always very precise and carefully checked and included such gems as “A Tattie Boodie” in autumn 2005 and “Aul ‘Ears Nicht wi dustings o’ Doric” in the summer of 2004. The Editor’s favourite was his Nature Conundrums series, which was very original.

The Inscriptions on the Fishermen’s Memorial plaques at the Flagstaff have weathered rather badly since their completion in 2004. JR Henderson, the monumental sculptors & stonemasons of Elgin have examined the plaques and agreed to re-do the lettering at no extra cost. This is a very welcome example of fine after service.

VILLAGE IN BLOOM 2007:

The national competition this year has been renamed “Beautiful Scotland” and there are a number of changes in the arrangements. Unlike previous years there will be only one judging between **July 30th and August 10th**. The emphasis has moved from summer floral features to all the year displays, permanent

planting and projects to help enhance and sustain the local environment and encourage greater biodiversity.

The involvement of the whole community in the creation and maintenance of the village's floral features is important to demonstrate and there will be a significant role to play for our school in the junior section of the competition. It is hoped to use the involvement of the school children in this prestigious competition to attract young parents in Portknockie's to take a greater part in village in bloom activities.

The judges will be looking for street and buildings cleanliness and any evidence of graffiti, vandalism or dog mess anywhere in the village. Helpfully the PCC has arranged for a replacement bus shelter at Bridge Street – the existing one is covered in graffiti. We are required to present a portfolio of illustrations showing how the whole exercise here is organised and arranged. Similar criteria will also apply to the "Best Kept Village in Moray" competition which will be judged between **July 30th and August 3rd**. The results of both competitions will be known by the first week of September.

Plenty of voluntary effort has already been put in to prepare the 2007 floral features. The Beach area at the west entrance to the village has been changed to include a lighthouse (grateful thanks to Stuart Stevenson who provided the large concrete pipe). The cottage garden in Station Road has been restyled and changes have been made to the important area in front of the school where Village in Bloom judging starts. The permanent planting in the McLeod Park has been cut back and the beds have been re-barked. There is still much to do and volunteers are very welcome and needed for weeding and watering throughout the summer. The lack of volunteers is seriously affecting our ability to keep Village in Bloom continuing.

It would be a tremendous help if every householder along Church Street would undertake to water and weed the troughs in front of their houses – perhaps folk could take alternate turns, one day the odd side and the next day the even side! The school also needs help from parents with pupils to water and weed its features particularly during the shut down period of the summer from July 5th to the start of the new term.

Would those residents who have plot(s) behind the Chemist's shop in the Remembrance Garden make sure that what they have planted is trimmed, weeded freshened and up to standard for the judges.

Who has the best hanging basket, window box or plants in a pot in Portknockie? This summer a

NEW garden competition is coming to the village. You do not even need a garden to enter!

The Community Association intends to award three commendation certificates to the houses/businesses with the best displayed outdoor pot, hanging basket or window box during the main Beautiful Scotland judging period (30th July to August 10th). These displays should be clearly visible to passers by, some of whom will be doing the judging!

The judges will be looking at the overall presentation/impact, the colour co-ordination and the quality of the plants. This judging will take place over the week-end of 4/5th August.

PORTKNOCKIE CHIP SHOP

Ron & Dee

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Fri-Sat: 4.30-9.00

Last orders 15 minutes before closing time

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

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

The Community Council has expressed concerns about vandalism in the village and it has raised with police representatives local dissatisfaction with the service from the Grampian Police call centre. To further allay public concern, it has been agreed to invite the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to the next PCC meeting to explore how this scheme might be extended to cover the whole village. Steps are being taken to bring to fruition the rescue scheme put forward to save the school from closure – the re-location of the Library, the move of the Mothers & Toddlers group, the possible introduction of new community services such as adult classes and nurse led clinics. A Moray Council Best Value Review of Library Services has proposed cut backs for some villages e.g. Findochty's library to be replaced with a mobile van service. This policy change by the Moray Council could complicate the arrangements agreed for the move of our village library to our school.

The PCC was pleased to hear that the School has been recognised for its innovative Walking Bus Project as part of the School Travel Plan Initiative.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

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

Recent fund raising has included £303 raised at the Pancake Tea in February, £125 from calendars sold at the Newsagent's shop, the entry of a team of seven in the Rotary Club of Buckie "Six Harbour Walk", which raised over £400, the "100 Club" subscriptions (rather slow to get taken up and re-started this year) and the Farmhouse Tea planned for **June 19th** in the McBoyle Hall. This year villagers are being asked once again to sponsor barrels (£5) to go towards the Village in Bloom expenses. Other very welcome donations have been received from the PCC, Scott Holiday Homes and from several residents.

Currently, the PCA is considering making an application to the National Lottery's "Awards for All" scheme. Three projects are being examined and the PCA committee would welcome advice, observations and suggestions of help from the residents of the village.

- One possible project would focus on making more flexible use of the Youth Centre in the old Burgh Chambers, Church Street. Other uses for this hall might include: As a small meeting place for village groups, as a semi-permanent heritage and local information centre (currently in the Library and it may not be possible to find additional space for this when the Library moves into the school) and as a suitable area for the proposed nurse-led, local health clinics.
- Make changes to the McBoyle Hall to better fit it for 21st century uses. This would require a village survey to see what people want from their village hall and to see what

extra groups could be formed to use the Hall. (keep-fit, arts & crafts, teenagers etc)

- A range of environmental enhancements – landscaping eyesores, a village sculpture feature, create a village lake, make the old railway cutting a dedicated nature park, improving facilities for all in the harbour area, set up community allotments scheme with a village composting arrangement etc.

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

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MORAY CITIZENS' PANEL LOOKS AT THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT:

The latest Survey requested views and experience on various issues relating to protecting and enhancing the Moray environment. One set of questions sought people's understanding of **Global Warming** and asked to what extent it is now a concern for all the citizens of Moray? There were other questions about pollution and how damage to the countryside could best be minimized, particularly relating to one's personal lifestyle. The issue of how personal choices when buying goods and services can result in long term damage to the environment was raised and the questionnaire sought to identify where the lead should be taken in tackling these environmental problems. Is it the job of the Scottish Parliament, local Councils, environmental agencies or the general public – and what would be the most effective way of working together on the problems?

Other questions highlighted the amount of energy used in the home and workplace and what awareness does the public have of the best ways to take action to limit one's personal waste and try to reduce each family's carbon imprint. The questionnaire ended with the topic of how people are using the Scottish countryside and what understanding do people have of the term **Natural Heritage** – is it just about the countryside, the wildlife, historical buildings or arts and culture? Or is it about all of these?

The **active partners** interested in the information gathered by this survey include: The Moray Council, HIE Moray, Community Councils, NHS Grampian, RAF Lossiemouth & Kinloss, the Findhorn Foundation, Scottish National Heritage, Scottish Water, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Friends of the Earth, REAP and Moray Voluntary Services.

Of course, the expectation within the survey questions was that the other partners involved in sustaining and protecting the Moray environment for the future generation should be **YOU** and your employers. What do you think? Are you prepared to get involved?

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

I have always advocated feeding our garden birds throughout the year. The last few decades have seen birds' natural foods in the country side decline steadily, from insects, to seeds and grain. We have encouraged them to our gardens in the winter months with nuts and fat to sustain them and I believe in carrying this on albeit on a lesser scale throughout the summer. Yesterday, though, I made a decision to stop feeding our blackbirds their raisins after watching a pair of male birds having a right battle. There were yellow beaks flashing and feathers flying as they tumbled about in the garden. I wouldn't normally interfere in wild creatures' natural behaviour but on consideration I thought that as I had created an unnatural balance in my garden through feeding that I would separate them. They were so intent on killing one another that I went right up to them and could have scooped them up! I know that we have a few different pairs of blackbirds coming for food but they all have a territory that is obviously crossed when they come for food, hence the fight. It's not the first one by any means either, so I have made the decision to withdraw raisins and after all there are plenty of worms in my garden!

Most of our summer visiting birds are back with us now although, as yet (18th May), I have yet to see a swift but they are usually back quite late. I saw my first swallow on the 20th April and my friend Angela recorded the first cuckoo on the 7th May in the woods at the foot of the Bin.

Our first fledgling this year was a single blackbird on the 28th of April. I think there had been more birds but the week before I saw the crows in the ivy probably raiding the nest as there was a right to-do with the parent blackbirds distressed and “pinking” loudly.

Driving in to Portknockie the other lunchtime I saw what I would guess to be over a hundred rooks in the field where the sheep and lambs had recently been feeding on neeps. The ground had been turned so I would think they were having a feast on their favourite food of leatherjackets and wire worms. They are known to damage crops too I believe. There is a large rookery at Hatton Castle near Aberdeen where up to six thousand nests have been counted. I have very quickly changed my mind after two days of withdrawing raisins! Every time we open the front door there is a begging bird and not always a blackbird. Starlings are very busy feeding their young just now and they have always muscled in on the raisin free for all. Talk about resourceful. I had a starling, acting like a humming bird, at the front door today trying to get my attention when it saw me inside. How could I resist? I watched a sparrow the other day with a raisin in his beak and it was so funny to see him whirling it round and round and then scraping it on the ground very much like a thrush with a snail. He left it in the end and tried another one which he succeeded with.

Last K'nocker I mentioned the popularity amongst all the birds with the sunflower hearts that I've been using in the feeders. The latest birds to come feeding on the spilled seed are a beautiful pair of wood pigeons. Aren't they big?! They make the collared doves look positively dainty. At first when we saw them we thought they were after our vegetable seedlings that were beginning to show but after watching them for a while through binoculars it was obvious that it was the seeds. Is this a good thing (coming to our gardens) as it keeps them from being a nuisance to farmers or are they using us both? Mind you they don't half trample the perennial plants growing underneath the seed feeder. Wood pigeon numbers are on the increase according to the RSPB garden bird count.

Still on the subject of sunflower hearts which I offer to attract finches, particularly goldfinches I was so pleased to see some fledgling birds being fed in the garden by the parents up in the laburnum tree. It's the first time I'd seen young goldfinches in the garden and I hope I had some part to play in their success by providing a constant source of food.

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THE PORTKNOCKIE SHORELINE PART 2: a description of what you can see walking from the harbour towards Findochty.

MacDonald's Quay is the quay on the west side of the harbour also known as the lighthouse quay. The rock joined to the quay is the **Tarrie Rockie** where fishermen used to tar their fishing gear.

Fackies Beach is the beach on the west side of the harbour. The large cave on the rock face is **Fackies Cave**. The cave which links the beach to the **First Beachie** of the Lang Links is the **Tunnelie**.

The Ring Rock is the small rock opposite MacDonald's Quay submerged at high water. Until the late 1950s a ring could be seen embedded in the rock. Ropes were passed from the quay and through the ring and were used to pull sailboats from the harbour until the wind caught their sails.

The First Mouri is the rock on the side of the path which leads down to the Lang Links.

The Second Mouri is the rock on the north side of the Lang Links path. On its north side is the **Second Tunnelie** which goes through the rock. On the east side there is a cave which can be entered from a slit in the ground. A larger cave is on the west side.

The Rotten Goat are the rocks which stretch seaward from the Second Mouri.

The Second Beachie is the beach between the Second Mouri and the Tweetick.

The Arramoo Cave is the small cave on the left side of the path between the Second Mouri and the Lang Man.

Corbie's Well; this is now overgrown and is just past the Arramoo Cave.

The Lang Man is the rock pinnacle standing at the end of the Lang Links footpath.

The Tweetick is a group of rocks at the western end of the Second Beachie.

The Ower Loup is the rock on the seaward side of the Tweetick separated from the Tweetick by the **Tweetick Channel**. Access to the Ower Loup is on the eastern side by louping across the channel. A favourite fishing place but the incoming tide could lock you on the rock.

The Lang Links Stane is the rock in the sea lying off the Ower Loup and west of the harbour entrance. It is almost submerged during spring tides.

The Third or Tweetick Beachie is the beach on the west side of the Tweetick.

The Whitin' Fall is the rock which separates the Tweetick Beachie from the Fourth Beachie. Access from one beach to the other is easy at low tide. It is possible at mid-winter to climb around the western rock face.

The Cradlies Cave is the large cave on the west side of the Fourth Beachie.

The Cradlies is a shingle beach and grassy area on the west side of the cave. Once this was a popular picnic area. A railtrack ran up the dog-legged path which was used to carry shingle from the beach.

The Craig O' Bane are the rocks stretching into the sea from the Cradlies.

The Tronachs is the area which includes the Tronach Beach, the Mirror, Tronach Head and the two large rocks separated by the Tronach Channel. On the western rock, the Tronach Cave is on the south side and the three Tronach Pots are on the seaward side.

The next notable rock westwards is the **Horse Heid** but all rocks west of the Tronachs are part of the Finechty shore.

WILL GLOBAL WARMING BRING MORE TOURISTS TO PORTKNOCKIE? WOULD YOU WANT THAT TO HAPPEN?

It is being forecasted that climate change over the next decade or two may radically alter our holiday habits and boost tourism especially in northern parts of Europe. The popular beach destinations of the Mediterranean, island resorts such as the Maldives or the Seychelles and long haul favourites like the Caribbean, Florida and the Pacific Islands could become no-go areas because of rising sea levels, excessive heat and droughts. Fears of personal safety would be an additional problem for Britons facing searing heat and an increased frequency of flash flooding and forest fires in these traditional holiday destinations. The new vacation choices of the 2020s might be a winter visit to the south of France and a summer holiday in Scandinavia or NE Scotland!

A surge of tourists to the Moray area becomes even more likely when one factors in the spreading concerns people have for carbon saving and being seen to be “green” in how they live their lives. It will soon be socially unacceptable to fly long haul to holiday destinations or even to take cheap flights to Europe. The traditional holiday spots of England are already suffering from too much sun in summer and swarms of stinging jelly fish on the beaches. So maybe we should be looking at our village and giving some thought to how we might react to a summer invasion of visitors from England, France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal as changing holiday behaviour catches on.

Do we want to encourage the extension of a tourist economy locally or do we just keep quiet about the paradise which is Portknockie and keep it to ourselves?

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7137470

Buildings of Portknockie

The Halls of Portknockie 3 - The Fishermen’s Hall

The Fishermen’s Hall is the large, dilapidated building at 9 Patrol Place. It has been around for so long that it is quite difficult to nail down dates in its checkered history. Older villagers asked about the hall remember various things but when asked to put dates to these memories...

The building was erected about 1800¹ as a warehouse and only later converted to a fishermen’s hall. It is a wide, two-storey construction, gable-end-on to the sea. The upper storey was used as a meeting hall. Entrance to the hall was by a door in the south gable, reached by a forestair. The lower storey was entered either through the north gable, by a double door which gave access to carts (now masked by a modern sliding door); or through the west side wall where

¹ Register of listed buildings, 1989 (Heritage Centre, Moray Council, Elgin)

there is a small door for personal access. The long side walls on the east and the west contain the windows for the first floor and small “vents” for the ground floor. There is also a window in the north gable end, for the upper meeting hall.

Both the ground and the upper chambers are straightforward, rectangular rooms stretching from one gable end to the other. Each has an internal area approximately 5m wide by 18m long. The first-floor meeting hall has a fine, high, slated roof that gives a good sense of space to the area. There is a large fireplace in the north gable end of the meeting hall and another fireplace (less grand) downstairs, in the south gable end. Both chambers had a toilet installed, and there were kitchen facilities in the meeting hall upstairs.

The building has been put to different uses during its long life. The local Coal Society used the hall for its business, which entailed supplying members of the Society with coal at cost. It was also a kind of mutual society whereby members could, by making small payments at regular meetings, be entitled to a lump sum as help in times of need, such as funerals.

Later, the upper storey served for some time as the Burgh Town Hall and magistrate’s courts were held there. (Interestingly, the lower storage area still has, dangling from the ceiling beams, two old ropes complete with nooses – but there is no evidence of prisoners being “sent down” from the magistrate’s court above, for summary execution².) Eventually, the Town Hall functions were moved to the Free Church Hall at 16 Church Street, when that building became the “Burgh Chambers”.

The upper hall was also used as the meeting place for local Masons, and for public entertainments, for example bingo, cards, teas and dances. The ground floor became a storage place for Council equipment such as road-mending gear and the local “scaffie’s” cart. (The entrance into the ground floor store was originally wide enough for a horse-drawn cart to pass through but could not cope with modern motor transport and its mudguards – chunks were cut out of the masonry at the bottom of each side of the doorway, to accommodate the wider vehicles.)

In 1902, the hall was renovated at a cost of £100. A Council proposal in 1984 to sell off the hall met with public opposition and the building continued to be occupied. Eventually, old age did for the Fishermen’s Hall and it was condemned as unfit for use some years ago. It has now been sold into private hands for redevelopment and recent permissions have been granted for conversion into a single dwelling house.

The K'nocker would be interested to hear from any villager who has more detailed information or stories about the Fishermen's Hall, e.g. Who funded the original construction? When was it converted to the "Fishermen's Hall"? When did it become the Town Hall? Any tales from the magistrate's court? Please get in touch with Harry Hawkes at 18 Church Street, telephone 01542-840718.

² Many thanks to the Liley family, the new owners of the Hall, who kindly provided a tour of the interior and pointed out peculiarities such as the dangling nooses.

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

HOLIDAY HOME HINTS – an information and advice service for visitors staying in Portknockie. You do not need to leave the village for most essential items:

- There is a street map of the village in the Millennium Garden, Church Street by the Costcutter Store.
- If you are out of food or drink you will find all you might need at the Costcutter Store in Church Street open until 8pm (it also has a Post Office) and at the Newsagent's on the corner of Church Street and Hill Street.
- For cooked meals we have the village Chip Shop in the Square opposite the two pubs, The Seafield Inn and the Victoria Hotel – the latter also offers bar meals and snacks.
- Got a headache, cut your finger or forgotten your pills then go to the village Pharmacy behind the Seafield Inn in Union Street.
- If the local winds have spoilt your hair you are in luck because there are hairdressers in Park Street, Commercial Road and Victoria Place, behind the Pharmacy.
- If you have lively children there is a park with swings just past the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts along Seafield Terrace and there is a paddling pool in the Harbour.
- Teas, coffees and snacks are available from the Victoria Hotel and the Newsagent's. The latter is also the place for ice creams, holiday mementoes, postcards, buckets, spades and

fishing nets. It also sells most other things you might need from a paintbrush to a bag of compost!

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)	841701
Electrician: (Portknockie)	840066
Harbour Garage	840099
Hydro-Electric: (24hrs) 0800	300999
Gas leaks: (24 hrs) 0800	111999
Scottish Water Helpline:	0845 600 8855
BT: (fault reporting) 0800 800	151
Coastguard: (24 hrs) 01224	592334
Environmental Incidents: 0800	807060
Moray Council: 01343	563000
Out of hours	08457 565656
Buckie Access Point	837200
Uplift service (after 10am) 01343	557318
NHS24 - Health Advice 08454	242424
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Neighbourhood Watch (J.Myles)	840 000

Travel Information telephone numbers: Bus & Coach:

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

Airports:

Aberdeen	087004	400006
Inverness	01667	464000

Seaport: (Aberdeen)

Northlink	0845 6000 449
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Trains:

National Rail Enquiries	0845	748950
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Taxis: (Portknockie)	840875
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Portknockie Post Office	840201
Portknockie School	840244
Portknockie Library	841149

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES:

In case you missed the recent elections the three Moray Councillors elected for the Keith & Cullen Ward are Gary Scott Coull, Scottish National Party (SNP), John Stewart Cree, Independent and Ronald Hay Shepherd, Independent.

The Moray member of the Scottish Parliament is Richard Lochhead (SNP) You can contact your constituency MSP at 9 Wards Road, Elgin, Moray IV30 1NL or telephone on 01343 551111. You can write to Richard Lochhead MSP, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP or e-mail Richard.Lochhead.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Do you have good quality furniture, books, domestic appliances, garden tools and toys which are surplus to use and you need the space. Rather than dump them try the Green Home charity, based in Buckie, on **01542 839600** which runs a free collection service throughout Moray and recycles unwanted articles to new users. They can even take broken crockery!

HAME COOKING by SWRI members:

Chewy, seedy oat and apricot bars:

Ingredients:

300g (11oz) of porridge oats
100g (4oz) of pumpkin or sunflower seeds or mix
50g (2oz) of desiccated coconut
50g (2oz) of plain flour
200g (7oz) of butter
200g (7oz) of golden syrup
150g (5oz) of soft brown sugar
150g (5oz) of chopped dried apricots
125g (4½oz) of crunchy peanut butter
a teaspoon of vanilla extract.
You will need an 18 x 28cm (7 x 11 inches) Swiss roll tin with non-stick baking parchment leaving an overhang for later removal. Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 3 or 160C/325f.

Method: Mix the oats, seeds, coconut and flour together in a bowl. Melt the butter and syrup together in a pan and then mix in the sugar, apricots, peanut butter and vanilla. Pour into the bowl and mix until even. Press the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 20-25 minutes, until golden and slightly firm. Allow to cool in the tin and remove, still in the paper, and cut into bars. Store the bars in an airtight container for up to a week, they also freeze well.

“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

CEILIDH AND CORNCRACKES

Joining in the life of the Iona Community for just a week can last for the rest of your life. I was there, in idyllic weather, which put paid to one of the jokes heard at the village Ceilidh later in the week: “What do you call six weeks of rain in Fort William? Answer: the summer holidays!”

Let’s begin with the Corncrakes – they seemed to be everywhere. This bird has become virtually extinct over much of Britain but in the West of Scotland and, particularly Iona, it reigns supreme. The curious thing was that wherever we walked hardly any of our party saw the blessed things. After listening to that buzz-saw noise, it’s no wonder they are an extremely endangered species! (**Ed.** And keep hidden!)

Now for a different kind of sound, the Ceilidh, much more melodic! Local musicians meet once a week in the Village Hall to have a “right good knees-up” and we were invited to the party. Music, mime, magic monologues and singing were performed at intervals between the exuberant dancing. I mention magic because one of the volunteers during the evening was a gentleman from India who performed the most dexterous magic tricks with his hands, but not so much with his feet. I found this out later when he asked me for a dance!

Well we reeled and jigged (not a Strathspey all evening) until after midnight. We finished with “Strip the Willow” – all the way down the room version. “Bring your torches we had been told, there are no street lights on Iona.” There are not streets either for that matter! So when we left the Village Hall we would really need our torches wouldn’t we? Er, no, actually those long light evenings up North saw to that. As we tottered home there was still enough light to see without torches. None of us had remembered to bring them anyhow! And the Corncrakes were silent!

Iona is a remarkable place. Some 90 people live there with their lives centred around the Abbey. Those few folk certainly know how to run a Ceilidh.

SHEAR DEZIGN

Hair by Lisa

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

Phone 841711 for an appointment

POETS’ CORNER:

Dinna be chary o' yer praise
Gie praise where praise is due
Be strictly honest in a' yer ways
Tae the inner man be true.
An' dinna wi' haud a kindly word...
Sae feart ye'd mak' them proud;
The voice o' honest praise when heard
Is fraught wi' muckle good.

The selfish, envious may wi' haud
Unjustly what e'er they can.
But let the noble soul mak' glad
Brave struggling fellow man.

By giving just a word o' cheer
When ocht ye see weel done
For Cencures keen-edged sword severe
Will prove its steel there'on.

Oft noble aims untimely die
Tho' showin' fair at birth
Uncharitable breeze sweepin' by
Clean sweeps them frae the earth.

Judge kindly aye anither mood
Where anither joy may bide
Gie credit due tae what is good;
The blunders try tae hide.

All honours due the man among men
The thochtfu' honest chiel
What says "Weel Deen" by word or pen;
Ma freen I wish you weel.

Sae freenly wish maun cheer the soul
An' needed courage gie ...
A helpin' haun tae reach the goal
A spur tae energy.

Mothers and Sons By Sheena Pirie

Oor Johnny's jist a scunner
He's new cam' aff the sea
Wi a muckle bag o' fish
He wants fried for his tea.

Noo, I've been slavin' a' the week
This hoose tae clean an' shine
An' if he thinks I'm fryin' fish
He must be oot o' his min'

The hale hoose smells o' polish

The lavender kin' ye ken.
Am nae ha'en the smell o' fish
Come waftin' butt an' ben.

My cooker, it's jist gleamin'
Nae a spot o' grease ye'll see.
He can gang an' tak' his fish
An' throw them back 'n the sea.

I jist blame his mither
She spilt him as a loon,
He widna lift a finger
Tho' this hale hoose fell doon.

Oh, here's ma loon back fae the match,
Has Buckie Thistle won?
Yer lookin' kind o' weary son
Jist gang ben and sit doon.

I'll fry' ye steak and ingins son
An' a puckle hame made chips.
I'll jist get the fryin' pan on
Nae seener said than done!

(From the Davie Mair Collection).

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

Just a few weeks ago in Findochty Town Hall on Pentecost Sunday a group of people from various churches did a musical presentation called 'My utmost for His highest' that title coming from a book of the same name containing a collection of devotions by Oswald Chambers. It was a very good evening and a packed out hall.

It is an admirable motive for anyone to be the best they can be in whatever (good) area of endeavour they seek to work in. Like the clever farmer - outstanding in his own field!

But we need a standard that we can live by and to which we can live up to and I would want to suggest that we seek out the highest standard possible. So when we see that phrase, 'my utmost for His highest' we can take it to mean that in order to live our lives in the best possible way we should desire to live a life pleasing to God. He is the best standard possible to set our sights on. Any lower, I am afraid, produces selfishness and discord.

But secondly and more importantly we ought to live a life like this not to gain God's love but rather in response to God's love revealed to us in Jesus. That is what Easter was all about - God giving the gift of his

Son that we might be forgiven and as we receive that gift through faith and repentance we are welcomed in His family.

As we enter into His family we become His children and so we are then to live by a new standard, God's standard - our utmost for his highest.

SCOTT HOLIDAY HOMES

Luxury seafront cottages available for short breaks

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www.scottholidayhomes.com

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Portknockie.library@moray.gov.uk

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

The K'nocker for friends and relatives abroad:

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

www.portknockiewebsite.co.uk

In 2007 the K'nocker will be published in March, June, September and December. Copy, letters and adverts for each issue should be passed to the Editor, through the Library or the letterbox of 23 Harbour Place or by e-mail to rmcdram@onetel.com in the month before each quarterly publication. In fact, the earlier you send in articles the easier you make things for your editorial team!

WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT:

Community Association: On **Tuesday 19th June** come along to the Farmhouse Tea at 7pm in the McBoyle Hall – oatcakes, crackers, cheese and tea and a sales table. There will be a collection at the door to help purchase two replacement flags for the Flagstaff. This year's Gala will be held in the Square

on **Friday 27th July**. On offer the usual fun activities, a whisky Trail, burgers and kippers and entertainment by our own youth dance group. The money raised will be going to Village in Bloom expenses and the McBoyle Hall running costs.

Portknockie Seniors Group: The Morning Tea on May 29th raised £328. The Bus run on June 12th took the Seniors Group to Aviemore and up the Cairgorms railway. There was a stop for soup and sweet in Forres and High Tea was taken in Grantown-on Spey. New members on The Committee include Molly Duigid, Isobel Hay and Nettie Innes.

Seafield Women's Rural Institute: "The wonders of technology, I just sit in my 'Wee Huttie', at all hours of the day and night, and beam my voice over the airwaves worldwide as requested". This was how Phillip Banks described his job as a voice-over for the TV and Film Industry, when he visited on the 22nd March. He does indeed have a lovely voice and uses it very effectively. It made a very entertaining evening. The competition for 4 muffins was won by Margaret Greig.

Seafield was invited to take part in Cornhill Institute's "At Home Evening" and 16 members enjoyed a splendid evening with local talent entertaining. There was a lavish supper and a sales table simply groaning with home bakes. The raffle was in aid of the local Rainbows' Summer Outing.

Due to unforeseen circumstances we had no guest on April 26th. However the Bring and Buy Sales Table was a success and members enjoyed good news over a flycup and home bakes. The competition for a Corsage was won by Kathleen Rennie

On May 11th three members enjoyed Mario Jannetta's Big Band in Concert at the Longmore Hall, Keith to celebrate the SWRI's 90th Birthday, hosted by the Banffshire Federation. The concert was well attended and a lovely supper was served in the interval. The raffle raised £300 for 'Fund a Farm', the SWRI Charity, and was presented to Mrs Marion Davidson, the guest for the evening.

A Morning Tea was held in the Seafield Hall on the morning of Thursday 24th May. A good sum was raised for funds and a big thank you goes to all who attended as well as everyone who donated and helped to make the morning a success. The evening brought the AGM and presentation of the competition prizes. **First-** Kathleen Rennie, **Second-** Margaret Greig and **Third-** Karin Rose. Pat Fraser and friends entertained

with Doric poetry and music from fiddle, pipes, accordion and piano.

The Annual Bus Run on Thursday 21 June will be to Beaully, then on to Moniac Castle, home of Highland Wineries and finally to Dows Diner in Inverness for High Tea. The cost will be £15, and the bus leaves at 12noon from the Memorial.

The Village Thrift Shop, run by Lil Urquhart and Donna Coull, will be open during the summer months on Tuesday and Thursday morning in the old bank building, Pulteney Street. Come along for bargains.

Bowling Club Notes: Following the end of our winter indoor carpet bowls season, the Bowling Green reopened on 21 April, earlier than normally, with the honours being done this year by Elaine Wood. Since then much of the play has been on our twice weekly (Monday and Thursday – now at 7pm) “Hat nights”, where we have enjoyed some fine weather. Crowds have been good, and it is pleasing to see lots of players on the green.

On the more competitive front the Club had limited success in this years’ National Competitions, but the tempo now picks up with a forthcoming round one game in the Duthie Shield. In addition, the summer league in which we play commences shortly – we are confident of improving on last year’s final position. June 2nd saw a big turnout both to enjoy and to take part in the annual Club Dougal Trophy, a competition which is always keenly fought. The winners this year were John Cowie and Brian Wood.

New and old members are especially welcome: there are always bowls in the Club available for general use.

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

While Portknockie generally has a low crime rate, anti-social acts and cases of vandalism do occur: it is best that these be brought to the attention of Police in

order that they are aware of what is happening and they can try and address the situation. In addition, it is probably a fact of life that communities or areas which tend to have less contact with the police receive less attention. The police contact number for non emergency calls is - **0845 600 5700**

Recently, Trading Standards have produced door stickers in an effort to discourage and deter cold callers. If you would like one, please contact John Myles above, or pick one up at the Library.

JMK

19 Cluny Square, Buckie
AB56 1HA.
Tel/Fax 01542 835665
Mobile: 07900 931905
Email: juliemckay@btconnect.com

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

Library News: Large Print is still proving popular with all ages. New titles are arriving weekly. To request a particular book there is a charge of 55p – so you can have a new title usually within a couple of weeks though if there is a waiting list you could be a lot longer!

Area Librarian, Eleanor Kidd and I visited Portknockie School on their Eco Day. We read part of a story and did a learning game called ‘The Football Challenge’ on the laptop which proved to be very popular with all the children. I received a lovely letter of thanks from Kris.

This summer sees us doing ‘The Big Wild Read’ for the school children; we are going to Portknockie School to promote this activity on the 19th June.

Watch out for the Library “Gruffalo” at the Portknockie Gala on Friday 27th July!!

Thanks to all of you who handed in old CD’s for the children’s event in the autumn, we should be festooned with decorations come Xmas.

IT sessions are still available in the library – telephone Eleanor Kidd 832121 – Portknockie Library 841149 – and arrange a date - £5.00p for a 2hour session.

Fishing: The MB Zenith has started fishing again after a long tie-up to repair the fire damage last year. Good luck and fishing to Skipper Graeme Reid and Crew.

Youth Club: Has anyone a spare, unwanted computer and printer that could be used by youngsters at the club interested in becoming cub reporters for the K'nocker? In the autumn it is proposed to give members of the village Youth Club on Wednesday evenings the opportunity to prepare junior pages for the village newspaper.

CATHERINE ' S
CREATIVE
CERAMICS

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

8 Victoria Street
Portknockie
01542-840554

New Ceramics classes are a hit with school pupils.

After school classes in ceramics painting have been started up at the School by Catherine Ritchie. Pupils from P2 upwards have joined in and are thoroughly enjoying the experience. They are very interested in every aspect of ceramic painting including the moulding, the kiln firing and the actual painting of the pieces. Catherine hopes, at some point, to show the class the actual pouring of the moulds, the process towards the kiln firing and how the kilns work.

Not only are the children interested in their ceramics but the parents are also keen to see the finished efforts. Ceramics is an American craft activity and encourages patience, concentration and brushwork skills. Catherine is delighted with the response of the boys and girls who have attended so far.

The Portknockie School Parent Support Group:

What a busy year for us ending with the summer Fete at the school on **Saturday 16th June!** All proceeds will be going towards our current good cause to provide 12 laptop computers and trolleys for the school.

I have been asked to explain the difference between the School Board and the Parent Support Group, which I chair. The School Board is made up of parent representatives and co-elected members of the public who are there to help the Head Teacher in the running of the school. Being a member of the

School Board is a valuable service to the school and the community. You are helping to ensure a good education is available for our youngsters by being part of a partnership between parents and teachers.

Members have certain formal duties which include promoting good relationships between the school and parents, helping with the appointment of school staff, approving school finances and the management of the school's annual budget. School Board members can also discuss any matters relating to the school such as bullying, truancy and the decisions on the provision of learning facilities across the school.

The Parent Support Group, on the other hand, exists to raise funds for the pupils' extras and treats. We are there to help purchase extra books, to provide Christmas Parties and presents and to help purchase special items like the new playground equipment. In the last year, we have helped fund a French Café which was part of a special learning topic; we supplied ice creams on the last four Fridays of term which went down a treat; we organised and took the P7 leavers on a special trip to the Bowling in Elgin with lunch at Jimmy Chung's and a gift of a pen and mug inscribed with their names as a memento of their time at the village school. You will also be aware of the sum raised with the help of so many for the Jungle Gym equipment now erected in the school grounds.

Also this year, we ran another Talent Show which was purely for the enjoyment of the local children and to bring them together with the community to support our school. We are a small group and we would, therefore, encourage all parents or grand-parents in the village to consider joining with us as it is a really rewarding experience and it supports the school.

We wish to thank all the community for their on-going support over the past year and wish you all a lovely time during the summer holidays.

J Kirkwood, Chair Parent Support Group.
PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL REPORT:

The end of another term draws near. At school we wonder where the time has gone. At the beginning of the session a dark cloud of uncertainty hung over us as we entered the Review process. It was smiles all round when Portknockie heard that the school was not to go forward into Stage 2 of the review process.

A new initiative this year was the Breakfast Club. Several boys and girls come to school early on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays for their toast and cereal. Our thanks go to Mrs Donaldson and

Mrs McLean for organising the club and to Mrs Harper for overseeing the project.

Have you seen the playground recently? This year has seen us add a beautiful, colourful mural to the back wall. Our Jungle Gym and picnic tables are firmly established. We await the arrival of our mushroom bins and also four benches for the little yard. Our two vegetable boxes and flower box will soon be planted up.

We have had a great variety of clubs both during and after school this year, some 20 in total. These have ranged from sports, dancing, ceramics, gaelic, mountain biking and drama. We aim to provide a variety of experiences for pupils at our school and try to offer a wide range of activities.

The whole school was rewired, new lights were fitted, a sound system was installed and the Hall was brightened up with a coat of paint. All this combined has meant that visitors to school comment on how bright, cheerful and welcoming everything is.

The Edinburgh International Science Festival group presented three workshops called "Up, down, turn around." P5/6/7 enjoyed the "Body builders" workshop. P4/5/6/7 went to the Elgin Science Fair and Shell Education offered us three free workshops. P1/2 enjoyed a Circus Workshop and P3-7 made racing balloon buggies.

As well as things scientific we have been quite physical this year. Some children took part in the Buckie Dance Festival and Street Jam introduced 3 New Sessions dance parties. P3-7 have been on several walks as part of their John Muir Award. We have been on a forestry trip, bird-ringing and arranged an Eco-school Day. On a less physical note we were exhausted watching the Portsoy "Skip to the Beat" group demonstration. Jasdon Vending gave us a taste and try afternoon before we set up the healthy tuck shop.

We have had a very successful Book Fair, Pyjama Day, Bad Hair Day, Craft Fayre, Fete (despite the weather!) and Bag-2 in school this session. Our Walking Bus Group won a Moray School Travel Award. Thanks go to all who help and support us.

The session is not finished yet. We still have our Sports afternoon on Wednesday 27th June. Some pupils are dancing in the Buckie Festival on June 28th and the Fun with Food Group will be busy on 29th June. You are all invited to our School Concert on Friday 29th June at 1.45pm in the School Hall and to our end of term service in Portknockie Church on

Wednesday 4th July at 2pm. School closes on Thursday 5th July for a six week Summer Holiday. We re-open on Monday 20th August for teachers and on Tuesday 21st August we welcome pupils back.

Mrs Cooper has been off work since 22nd January. As acting Head I have been very well supported by all the staff, members of the School Board and the Parents Support group. Our two neighbouring schools' Head Teachers have also offered help, advice and support and I am very grateful to them.

As I write this article the sky is grey and overcast, there is a cold chill in the air – yes it is a June day. I hope the weather improves greatly and that you all have a wonderful summer holiday

G. A. McWhirter, Acting Head Teacher.

An open letter from Jackie Kirkwood:

"I write regarding the rumours spreading around the village that are potentially damaging to the school. Speaking as a parent, I am quite angered at the damage that could be done especially to children getting ready to come to the school this year. After such a long time of uncertainty about the school's future and the fight to keep it from closing, I feel that everyone should be continuing with their encouragement and support.

I would suggest to anyone with concerns about the school that they should put them in writing to Mr D Donaldson, The Director of Moray Educational Services in Elgin but the school is more than approachable, as I have found, any time I have had cause to be concerned.

We all need to work together to resolve any difficulties and to achieve the village school we all want to see in Portknockie."