

A FOND FAREWELL TO OUR MINISTER AS HE MOVES ON TO A NEW CHARGE

I write for the last time and to say a farewell to the folks of Portknockie. My family and I are moving to Wishaw near Glasgow at the beginning of July to take up a new charge. I have enjoyed my time in this part of the country but it's time to be moving on. We do feel that this is God's calling but we leave with some very happy memories and for the benefit of the K'nocker readers I will share one or two of them that are relevant to Portknockie.

First and foremost is my congregation – a great bunch of people. They have been patient and gentle with me and have been a great support throughout the years. Then there is the Sunday School, Thursday Club and the Primary school. The kids here are great and I have had some great laughs with them. They have helped me to see the funny side and the simpler things in the Christian faith.

The occasion of the re-installation of the Portknockie Coat of Arms was a great event and the memorable sermon by my reader Stuart Mackenzie was excellent. It was a real honour for me to be involved.

If I have any disappointments it would be the lack of attendance by the community first at church (it's my job remember!) and also secondly at the war memorial. Portknockie has a rich spiritual undercurrent that still influences the village for the good thanks to your forebears. So can I encourage you (as any good minister would) to attend church (any church), we are open every Sunday.. **Cont p3**

WANT TO SAVE MONEY? HOLIDAY AT HOME & BRING FRIENDS TO THE VILLAGE GALA.

A Gala is a festive occasion and the name seems to come from the Old French word for "making merry". The Community Association is preparing to hold a Gala in the village on Saturday 16th August 2008 to raise funds for the on-going maintenance of the McBoyle Hall. Be sure to put this event in your diary.

Do any of you have Gala skills or experience that you could offer during the planning stage and on the actual Gala day? If so make yourself or your idea known to members of the PCA so that we can put together a community inspired event with attractions for all age groups. It would be very appropriate if many or all of the village groups put on an activity.

Why think of spending money travelling far when you could have a splendid day of local fun, for a good cause, in Portknockie?

VILLAGE NEWS & AROUND:

Continued from front page –

and we don't bite...much! God welcomes K'nockers and we all have souls that need to be fed.

As for Remembrance Sunday I really feel that this should not be over looked especially by a village that endured first hand some of the trauma of WWII. Our soldiers, serving in war torn areas of the world, whether we agree with the politics or not, still need to know that they are not forgotten.

We will not easily forget you in the years to come and no doubt we will visit. A few things for sure are that we will miss the nearness of the sea, the beautiful scenery and the brilliant people. Farewell and God bless.

Graham Austin.

Latest estimates put the worldwide Scottish diaspora at some 50 millions. Your Editor met quite a number of these Scottish descendants on a recent holiday in West Australia. 2009 has been designated as Scotland's "Year of Homecoming" so should we be busy preparing to welcome back ex-K'nockers in numbers? One of the major national highlights planned will be 'The Gathering', a pageant of the clans on the Esplanade at Edinburgh Castle. Does anyone have any suggestions for a local Homecoming celebration that will make use of the many worldwide Portknockie connections? This could be, perhaps, a suitable opportunity to launch the idea, aired in a previous issue of a Portknockie Day in the village.

Have you seen the first two issues of the second newspaper in the village? The 'School Times' was launched by Portknockie School in March and edited by Judith Mair and Kirsty Simpson and is on sale at 25p a copy. The newspaper will be run by pupils in P7 class and it is planned to be published monthly.

Portknockie School also featured in Moray newspapers as winners of a Moray Schools Travel Award for its 'walking bus' initiative run by parents, Jackie Smith, Susan Milton and Jill Alton. The award recognises what the school has done to encourage pupils to walk or cycle to school rather than to be driven by their parents. The Moray School Travel Plan Award was designed by local artist Geoff Roberts.

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

Remarkable local weather: Very strong, gale force winds blew up from the north on Good Friday, 21st March, which sent huge waves crashing over the harbour and hurling spume right across the village. Long time residents in the village had never seen such towering waves before. The newly blooming daffodils around the village took an awful pounding and never really recovered from the set back.

May 2008 has gone down as one of the driest months on record – we have received only about a quarter of the normal monthly expected rainfall. The dry sunny weather across Moray is expected to do wonders for this year's local potato crop.

Congratulations to Mel Brown who completed his sponsored skydive over St Andrews on April 19th in aid of the Oaks Palliative Care Centre in Elgin and Macmillan Cancer Support. Mel's sponsor forms were well-supported by the village and many others further afield and they raised the substantial sum of £6000, split between the two charities.

Harbour happenings: This year the waiting list for berths has reached 21 but the 30% increase in harbour dues over the past two years has not been welcomed by local boat owners. However, in readiness for the summer season, £14 625 of maintenance work has been carried out in our harbour by Moray Council. The leading lights arrangement has been upgraded and the newly-installed floodlights provide improved illumination for both sets of pontoons. Despite this added security it is sad to note the vandalism of a wooden fishing boat that was out of the water some time between April 21st and May 5th.

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WORLD-WIDE WEB LINKS:

Vera Findlay from Vancouver has been in touch with Harry Hawkes recalling details about the sweetie and paper shop in Hill Street. The original house had low buildings alongside similar to what is now part of Geoff and Maggie's High Street property. The shop was run by James Wood (Jeemsie Postie). Vera also remembers there being a black, metal fountain /well nearby that provided water for the surrounding houses. Vera's mother grew up at 5 High Street.

Charlie Slater has e-mailed some more childhood memories. "Growing up in Portknockie just after the war was the start of many changes not only for the "Kids" but also the village as we still had no street lighting. However the windows were not blacked out so during the summer months, we had daylight virtually until midnight. There were the summer time things to do other than fishing down the harbour or out at the rocks. We made 'hurdis' (billie carts), which we made by scavenging old fish boxes and old 'Bowies' (Buoys) which were often washed up on the rocks. The Buoys were in use with the herring fishing for keeping the herring nets afloat like a curtain in the path of the shoals.

We would use the wooden tops as wheels for the hurdis and, if the inner bladder was sound or could be patched, we would play at 'headers' which was great fun as the huge bladder would come down over one's head as it was always soft. Fish boxes were always plentiful and were used for about every wood-working project like making sledges in winter which would have runners made of "Cope iron or strap iron" to perform better on snow. We used to sledge from the top of Hill Street, down the Bakers' Brae, past the Post Office, Blantyre Place and, if lucky, right down the Horse Road to the harbour.

If one could locate an old pram or a pair of bicycle wheels then we would make a barrow, again using a fish box, to go to the woods at "Kirkies" (The Game Keeper at the edge of the woods was a Mr.Kirk hence the name) to collect branches and fallen tree limbs for firewood. Every boy carried an old Nest Pocket Knife but would never think of using it as a weapon which seems to be the case now-a-days. The knife was always very sharp which was achieved by honing on any sandstone dike and I think if you were to look at the wall (dyke) outside the Bank (Bridge Street?) you will still see some grooves as the fishermen also sharpened their knives there at times.

With the knife we would make our catapults from a "y"-shaped branch and for the elastic we would cut

strips from old inner tubes as they were rubber of the finest quality (motor cycle ones were the best). The leather piece for the stone was cut from the tongue of some old boot found at the tip. With the sling we used to go to the "Lea" at the west end of the Head of the Brae with a pocketful of pebbles from the "Cradlies" and try and see how close we could get to the breakwater.

With rubber bands we also made a gun for shooting paper pellets (bus tickets made good ammo). At school we were allowed to make a 'Peeterie Dick' which one could use to sound like castanets in time to music but it was especially good for practicing Morse Code. We also could carve mending needles for weaving and mending nets.

There always seemed to be a season for various games or toys but there was no defined time that one could say we did this or that. During the long summer evenings we would play with 'Whip and Top' and kids could keep a top spinning for ages. Another thing we would do was "walk" the top round different obstacles which could be a hole in the road or a manhole. Most tops were bought or were a present from Santa but I have, like others, made one with the knife and a piece of old curtain pole. We would go and get a 'tacket' from Jimmy Postie, the shoemaker (he had his shoppie behind the Seafield Hall with a pigeon loft at the top end and his Cobbler shop at the end nearest the Chemist Shop) to put in the pointed end for the top to spin on.

During the darker nights we would play a game called "Three Flaps" which involved playing chases (Tag) from as far as the Cemetery down the Slack to Cruat's farm. For devilment (never vandalism) we would get an old cotton reel and cut notches round the rim, wind a string round it – then, by putting a pencil through it as an axle, we would hold the reel against a window, pull the string which made the reel revolve and rattle the window.

Another trick was to tie a length of cotton onto a pebble leaving a tail about six inches long. The end of which would be stuck to a window pane with chewing gum and then we would hide across the street and, using the long length of cotton, we would be able to make the pebble tap-tap-tap on the window and the householder would come out looking to see who was tapping on the window.

There must be still plenty of "Oldies" like myself still in the village who could furnish you with the knowledge of "How it was" in a village that had absolutely no commercial means of entertainment for

the youth of Portknockie yet it had very little if any crime and, at one time, produced more Trawl Skippers than any other town in the North East. (I recall reading that statement in the Press and Journal years ago).

On the back page of this issue you can find Charlie's sketches of some of the homemade toys that he and his chums played with back in the 1940s

Editor: How do Charlie's memories of childhood amusements compare with today's play? It would be good to have some youngsters write down an account for the K'nocker to publish as a record of modern day play. This would help establish a record for folk later down the line to follow the changes in children's play and amusements in our village.

David Pirie, a frequent contributor to our pages, writes from Aberdeen at the time of his 80th birthday – best wishes to you from us all. He has written about a childhood memory of John Innes – see p.10. He also reminds us of a genuine Portknockie word – 'goran', which he describes as a flow of blood from a wound. When children fell and skinned their knees their legs were always "goren wi'bleed." He used it recently when a nurse was clumsily taking a blood sample from his arm but he had a bit of explaining to do afterwards to get her to understand his meaning.

Gardiner Wood who lives in America has e-mailed Margret Wood about a photograph of the opening of Portknockie Harbour in 'Portknockie Memories' by Willie Slater. Margret has put him in touch with the Cullen, Deskford & Portknockie Heritage Group and she is going to send him an article from a 1920 copy of the Banffshire Advertiser which features the photograph.

NEW PEOPLE TO MEET ON THE STREETS:

A warm Welcome to the Evans family who moved up from Lancashire to 20 Pulteney Street on the 17th of March. The family – Dad (Peter), Mum (Karen), the 'newly weds' (Rennie and Simone) and Simon, the dog have enjoyed every moment since arriving in Portknockie. Simone runs a home-based business, The North Scotland Virtual PA which offers admin services to local, small, rural companies via computer links and face to face meetings. See more detail p.6.

Also very welcome to the area are Sarah and Terry Melton who moved to Smithstown Farm mid Bauds in April. The couple have moved here from Cornwall and Terry has family living locally. He also has a special interest in Portknockie as he recalls spending

many happy days in the village with his grandparents, George and Williamina Scott at 15 Pulteney Street. Sarah produced the local Tintagel Magazine back in Cornwall and she has offered to help out with future editions of the K'nocker.

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VILLAGE IN BLOOM SUMMER 2008

The annual transformation of Portknockie with floral features ablaze with colour in many of our streets will be somewhat subdued this year. The credit crunch has hit us and we are just not finding the volunteers to take on the tasks, our floral show requires. A letter drop to every household explaining the situation and asking for help produced very little positive help for the existing members of the Community Association.

For this summer display, with bedding plants coming from Moray Council, you can expect to see Hanging Baskets in the Square, the Millennium Garden and the Ship's Wheel in Church Street and bedding plants in such features as the two trains, the Dolphin feature on Cliff Terrace and the picnic area at the north end of Admiralty Street. Shirley and Mambo McLean, with the help of neighbours, will be once again showcasing the Slater Crescent circle. The wide scatter of flowering tubs and planters has been drastically curtailed although those in Mid Street and outside the Newspaper Shop are prime examples of what a public spirited contribution to the village can create.

Most of the Village in Bloom features which are permanently planted will be retained – the Beach feature with lighthouse at the west end of the village, the Cottage Garden in Station Road, the Ship's Wheel in Church Street, the Millennium Garden, Treasure Island in Bridge Street, the biblical features outside the school, the three beds in the McLeod Park, the Haig Street and Slater Crescent circles and the Remembrance Garden behind the Chemist shop.

The Church of Scotland has asked the Village in Bloom volunteers to take over maintenance of what was the biblical bed in the McLeod Park nearby the

swings and paid for its re-instatement treatment. The Nursery will again be using the box at the east end of King Edward Terrace for growing vegetables planted out by the children.

The Community Association is very grateful for those who have made donations to funds for supporting village in bloom and to those considerate spirits who undertake to weed and water nearby features. This is what village in bloom should really be about –people coming together to share in making our community a pleasant place for all to enjoy and experience.

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:

The Council comprises: **Chairman:** Alan Beresford (840534/07790023983), **Secretary:** Karen Campbell, **Vice Chair:** Helen Sammon (841794) **Treasurer:** Gladys McKenzie (840542), **Press Secretary:** Pearl Murray (841087) with Lil Urquhart, Sam Muir, Cathleen Harper and Angela Mair.

The Community Council has given strong backing to the widespread criticisms of the service provided by the Grampian Police Call Centre originally made by (Fochabers-Lhanbryde) Cllr. Douglas Ross at a Grampian Joint Police Board meeting. However, the PCC feels it is very satisfied with the on-going partnership activity that has been put in place in Portknockie which brings together the Community Council, Neighbourhood Watch and Grampian Police in keeping vigil over the village. One aspect of this arrangement has seen a series of visits by the new mobile Police Office to the Square with open surgeries for the public held by Community Beat Officer PC Kevin McPherson. Any concerns you have about public order can be raised and discussed confidentially with PC McPherson. Dates of future visits of this facility are due on Tuesday 24th June at 7pm, Thursday July 17th at 3pm and Wednesday July 30th at 5pm.

At the April meeting, the PCC discussed whether the concerns raised by boat owners at Findochty harbour about substantial harbour fees increases over the past

two years by Moray Council also applied to harbour users in Portknockie. The current concerns raise a broader issue about whether Moray Council should be doing more with the six harbours it owns both in terms of regular maintenance and reaching agreement on possible long term development plans with users.

Community Councils are being asked by local Moray Councillors to give backing to a campaign that seeks to raise the profile of historic county names such as Banffshire. One suggestion is to put in place road signs that keep alive the boundaries of the old county. Some people still use Banffshire as part of their postal addresses and several local newspapers continue to use the name in their banner titles. It is felt that visitors returning to NE Scotland are very likely to associate themselves with the historic county name. It is also the case that the Queen's local representative is still titled the Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire.

Other matters under discussion by our Community Councillors have included exploring the potential for and likely local interest in setting up a twinning arrangement for the village with a European community and watching with concern NHS Grampian proposals that could lead to the closure of the Muirton Ward facility at the Seafield Hospital in Buckie (a 30 bed secure ward for dementia sufferers) The PCC and other local Community Councils have voiced their anxieties to Moray Councillors and our MSPs. The proposals are being seen as another step to centralising health resources on one site – Elgin!

A second Neighbourhood Watch newsletter has been distributed within the village. This issue, in bold colours, praises the renewed interest being shown in membership of NW, gives news of the local police response to anti-social behaviour problems in the community and highlights the perennial problem of the few who do not pick up after their dog fouls in public places. The May meeting saw a briefing from the Moray Recycling Officer, Shona Dryburgh, with news of plastic bottle recycling (Buckie the Gollachy site) and a doorstep collection of textiles in June/July. Concerns were raised regarding the revised selection process for appointing a new Head Teacher.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS:

This village group, formed in 2000, has the job of looking after our village hall, The McBoyle Hall. The members currently are: Jim Urquhart (**Chair**), Bob Croucher (**Secretary**), Rachel Munro (**Treasurer**) with Lil Urquhart (**Bookings**), John Myles, John Bell, John Going, Gladys McKenzie, Harry Hawkes, Helen Field and Cathleen Harper.

Lil Urquhart is managing bookings for the village hall and supervising the volunteers carrying out the cleaning while Jim Urquhart has drawn up a plan of maintenance for the McBoyle Hall. So far this year the electricians have been checked and new emergency double doors have been fitted at the rear of the Hall. The main hall floor has been sanded and re-varnished. Still on the list to be completed are some high cost measures – the fitting of low maintenance pvc fascia boards and, at some stage, an external paint job.

The spring Fund raiser, the Easter Tea on Wednesday 26th March in collaboration with members of the SWRI was very successful raising £584. The SWRI very kindly donated their half of the take towards village hall restorations. The first of what is hoped to be regular sessions of Bingo in the Seafield Inn will take place on Wednesday 25th June starting at 7.30pm. The main fund raising event of the year will be the Summer Gala on Saturday 16th August. This will be a traditional family affair with a fancy dress parade led by a piper and a crowned Gala Queen and Princesses. The new season's "100 Club" will be launched in June to commence with the first draw at the Gala. Subscriptions remain at £10 for 12 months draws with half of the income being used for the monthly prizes.

The final draws of last year's 100 Club subscription were- **March:** J Taylor, Sandra Cowie, Peggy Stevenson, **April:** Mrs Rennie, Aly Wood, Kirsty Coull and **May:** Marj Croucher, Jim Urquhart Joan Reynolds.

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MORAY CITIZEN'S PANEL:

The March 2008 Citizen's Panel survey sought public views on contacting Community Planning Partnership member agencies – The Moray Council, Grampian Police, NHS Grampian, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service and the Moray Voluntary Services.

The survey sought to find out which local services are contacted most frequently and how effective and

efficient the organizations are in dealing with requests from the public for help. Questions covered such issues as how easy is it to make an appointment with your doctor and the effectiveness of the emergency services. This survey also asked for feedback on the experience of being a Citizens' Panel member and ideas on possible ways to further improve the Panel in the future.

The Moray Citizens' Panel was originally planned to have a membership of 850 but currently over 1 200 Moray residents take part in this public consultation process. The Chair of the Moray Community Planning Partnership, Cllr. Eric McGillivray believes that the panel surveys undertaken so far have had excellent response rates (around 70%) and the results have been used to influence decision-making within the Partnership and to improve local service delivery.

Full survey results and analysis can be downloaded from the Community Planning Partnership website, www.yourmoray.org.uk by clicking on the Citizens' Panel button.

The North Scotland Virtual PA was set up by newly arrived resident, Simone Evans, in February this year as she pursued her dream of being her own boss after years working as a PA/Office Manager at a steelworks company. Her business has been set up to help small, rural businesses across North Scotland who do not need to employ an administrator full-time but do need help on an as and when basis. Simone does the full range of book-keeping and all the things any normal PA would do except that she is based in her home in Pulteney Street at the end of high-tech communication links. These allow her to access her clients' desktops and relevant files. When required she can also meet her clients face to face. Simone's aspirations are not just confined to working on her own and she also has the intention to set up a network of people doing what does and offering the range of services that she offers. For more details check with Simone's website at www.northscot-virtualpa.co.uk

THE LOSS OF THE RAPTURE BF1263 in 1890:

As reported in the Banffshire Advertiser of 20th March 1890 (sent in by William Anderson).

Last week the Zulu fishing boat, 'Rapture' foundered in Loch Eriboll and, of the crew of nine, only two survived. On Saturday week, in the company of 7 other boats, the 'Rapture' left Stornoway to return to Buckie. On crossing the Minch the weather report in the Pentland Firth was poor and the boats made for

either Stornoway or Lochinver until the weather moderated.

On the following Monday the 8 boats joined up at Cape Wrath and, as the weather worsened, they all made for Loch Eriboll. They all anchored near a small island inside the Loch but, as the weather worsened, they moved further into the Loch. Six of the boats going to the steam boat slipway with the 'Rapture' anchoring near the island by the Old Limekilns. The 'Rapture' was moored by the stern in 25 fathoms of water by two anchors, which dragged and a third anchor was put out at 1am on Wednesday. This anchor finally held at 4.50am. The gale continued and it was decided to cut loose from the three anchors and drift to shore. Two of the anchors were cleared but, before the third could be cut, the boat shipped a huge wave and, as a hatch cover was off, the 'Rapture' foundered. A member of crew, Alex McKenzie, on gaining the shore, staggered to a house for help. George McKay, a Ferryman and James Clark were staying in the house overnight and, on reaching the beach, found one other survivor and two bodies.

Those lost included Peter Smith 'Latin' (pronounced Laytin) aged 46, the Skipper, George Smith 'Latin', aged 17, son, John Smith 'Latin' aged 19, nephew, Peter Smith 'Latin' aged 19, nephew, James Smith 'Latin' aged 24, nephew and Alex Smith 'Latin' aged 26, nephew. The survivors were George Smith 'Latin' and Alex McKenzie 'Lola'.

The 'Rapture' was owned by George Smith 'Latin' who was not onboard at the time. The other boats were 'Swiftsure', 'Victory' and 'Felicity' who sailed home when the weather moderated. The 'Jessie Smith', 'Dove', 'Jessie Isabella' and 'Jubilee' remained to look for the bodies. The two survivors and the two recovered bodies (George Smith and Peter Smith) returned to Buckie in the 'Jubilee'.

Editor: The wild weather we experienced on March 21st this year shows that severe gales threatening those at sea can be a feature of this time of the year.

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

JACKDAWS

I have a real soft spot for jackdaws. In fact any of the crow family appeals to me, probably because they are quite often thought of as “bad birds”. At least in the films they are often portrayed as part of the darker side of things! Anyway back to the jackdaws. We

have a little bird table with quite a low roof (to keep the big birds off!) that we put scraps on and jackdaws started to visit this table low roof and all. I had read that jackdaws were struggling for food in certain areas so I don't mind feeding them. I put out stale cakes and scones and other food left overs and having watched them feeding I have realized that there is a definite pecking order. There is one individual that is the “Alpha” but I'm not sure if it's male or female but whichever it is it gets first choice and no other jackdaw is allowed on the table until this one is finished. The others all wait on top of the fence squabbling amongst themselves and although one will occasionally try to muscle in they get seen off. It is comical to see a little starling fly in and be tolerated. Much to the disgust of the other jackdaws I'm sure! They are extremely handsome birds particularly at this time of year when they are in their breeding plumage. The head is a glossy blue-black with a pale beady eye and the nape of their neck is a beautiful dusky grey. From the back view when they are on the bird table it almost looks as though they are wearing frilly black bloomers!

We have a very healthy population of these birds in Portknockie mostly nesting in our chimneys. This isn't a problem unless it is for an open fire! Their natural nesting sites are cliff faces and holes in trees and they live in colonies which gives rise to lots of posturing and calling as a means of communicating. I certainly witness this when they are all queuing for the bird table.

I've noticed a lot more siskins coming to feed on the nijer seed. They are a small green and black bird usually associated with conifers which is where they nest. Their natural food is spruce and pine seeds and also thistle which is what brings them to the nijer. I keep the feeder high on a branch of a tree in the hedge and also far over so that the husks drop the other side of the hedge and the other evening I was looking through my binoculars to see what was feeding and was so excited to see a baby siskin sitting on a branch being fed from the feeder by a parent bird. It was quivering its little wings and looked so delightful! Last year I'd seen baby goldfinches being fed there too.

A pair of blackbirds decided to nest on the ledge above our back door again. They had done this before so we were pleased to see them back. Unfortunately we needed some repair work to the roof directly above where they were and this entailed a ladder right over them plus an awful lot of banging. I could hardly look but unbelievably she sat tight in that nest through it all. Phew! After a while it was

obvious that there was a baby or two as the parents were back and to with worms. We had a quick look one day and there was one baby and one unhatched egg. Then one day we noticed that there was no activity at the nest at all and when we looked later on there was one poor little naked chick barely alive and the weather was cold and wet. We guessed that the mother had been killed by a cat or a car and decided to try and help the little thing. We brought it in and managed to warm it up a bit but we couldn't get it to feed at all even after me (a vegetarian!) finding little worms and actually cutting one up! Ugh! Poor thing.

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We made the difficult decision to put it back and let nature take its course. Needless to say the poor little scrap had died. We took down the nest and were surprised when a week or so later the female bird came back with more twigs to build again. We deduced that the baby had been a weakling and the mother had given up on it after all and hadn't been killed. We have discouraged any more nest building on that ledge after all it's not in an ideal spot! I'm fairly sure that we have robins nesting in the garden somewhere too, but as yet I haven't found where. We had blue tits nesting in a box last year and when I took it down to clean it out in the winter I was very amused to see a lot of luminous yellow fluff off of a tennis ball in amongst the other material.

Well, apart from the birds I've seen a single hare in a field and a friend saw and photographed a red squirrel in a tree near her home at Bruntown.

Also a few weeks ago we watched a cat in the garden following a hedgehog round and round the summer house. The hedgehog didn't seem at all worried. I don't think they have much to worry about from a cat!

A couple of things in the press that we have all been asked to look out for are firstly a thing affecting greenfinches in particular. It is a disease that can be picked up from infected feeders. If a sick bird is seen usually fluffed out with its head under its wing we have been advised firstly not to touch the bird and

secondly to contact **Defra** on 0845 9335577. The second thing is for the Butterfly Conservation Scotland and Highland Biodiversity Partnership want people to report any sightings of peacock butterflies. If seen, one can get a peacock postcard from libraries or visit www.butterfly-conservation.org. They are hoping that reports of sightings will give a better idea on how butterflies are responding to climate change. Peacocks over-winter and can usually be seen from March to June and again from August to September.

WHAT ABOUT THIS FOR AN IDEA? This is a feature that any reader can use to put forward a proposal to make Portknockie a better place. Pass on your ideas for the village to neighbours and let them be aired in these pages.

Adopt a street: aired before in this publication but put into practice a year ago by Stonehaven. 50 volunteers clear up 60 streets and open spaces in the town each week. This litter scheme has enhanced the appearance of the town and created a fine spirit of community collaboration. The idea could of course be extended to cover such things as village in bloom features, public artwork, street parties, car sharing etc.

What do you think? Let your views be known and published in the next issue of The K'nocker.

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"Charlie the Smithy" – Extract 2
How Charlie became a smithy

So, how did I end up being a Country Smith? Well, fishing is a gamble! Some men make their fortune and yet others can't earn a living. Because the 'work site' is so changeable and dangerous, a lot of men lose their lives. Because of the uncertainty of it, my father said I had to learn a trade before he would allow me to go to sea, then I would have something to fall back on if the fishing didn't work out.

Back in those days, one's father's Word was LAW!!! Also, just as I was approaching my 14th birthday,

they changed the rules and raised the school leaving age to 15, very much to my annoyance.

Father imposed another law stating that I was not leaving school until I had an apprenticeship to go to. This was a very cruel blow as school didn't interest me any more. The result was I caused a lot of devilment and mayhem (never vandalism or injury to others, though). This was brought to my attention much later at my investiture (the completion of my apprenticeship). The local headmaster said, and I quote: "If Charlie had put as much effort into his lessons as he did into devilment, he would have been Dux of the school".

Because of these 'rules' I decided there was only one way for me to go, and that was to get into a trade. I couldn't have given two hoots what the trade was, though I did like engineering and I was quite versatile with my hands at woodwork or art. I had no intention of painting as I classed that as a punishment, not a job (still do!).

As I mentioned, my father didn't make good wages though he worked long and hard for his employer. We kids didn't see much pocket money even though by this time I had quite a good 'message boy' delivery service going for the bakery where dad worked and for a local butcher. At weekends, I would help the milkman on his rounds with his horse and cart on a Sunday, feeling great holding the reins as the horse galloped homeward while the milkman counted out his takings on the back of the cart. I would often go on the cart as far as the 'Smiddy', which was what we called the blacksmith shop one and a half miles (about 3km) by road from the village. There I would get off and jog all the way home again with a couple of shillings in my pocket, which was always handed over to mum to help with the housekeeping costs.

During summer holidays from school I would sometimes go with the milkman during the week instead of going down to the sea, which was our playground. When we got to the 'Smiddy' I would go in and watch the smiths making sparks and shoeing horses. They come to know me as they knew my father's family fairly well.

One summer the old smith asked me if I would like a job during my holidays, saying I was a big strong lad for my age (how to play on a young man 's ego!), so I jumped at the chance — but I didn't get to do too much blacksmithing. I mostly painted harrows and ploughs that they had repaired. After a week or so they did start to show me how to sharpen harrow tines

in the forge — and, I might add, mostly in my own time after normal working hours so that was my introduction to the trade during school holidays one summer.

In my last year at school, I started playing truant regularly by going to the schoolhouse and being signed in by the teacher at the first class, then taking off to hike to Buckie. It was an exciting place, and it had three boat-building yards and many other industries associated with fishing, such as tinsmiths, marine engineers, coopers (who made barrels), marine plumbers, sailmakers and a host of other trades where a young man might land an apprenticeship if he happened to be in the right place at the right time. I was determined to be that young man, so I wasn't deterred by the seven mile (10km) walk there and back again, which I did sometimes three times in one week.

One evening at the village square I overheard that a motor mechanic in the village (Cullen) next to ours, only one mile (2km) away around the shoreline, was looking for an apprentice. Next morning I didn't bother going to school and was waiting at his workshop for him to open when one of the workers arrived and opened up. I asked him when John Lawrence (the proprietor) would be in. Not today, he replied, as he is away to a car sale and won't be back until evening, can I help you? I told him that I was looking for a job, and he took all my particulars and said he would make sure his boss got them, so I left feeling a little more optimistic.

It was a fine day and still only about 8.30am and I had no intention of going to school, so I decided to walk back home by the highway, a distance of about two miles (4km) as it branched inland through the countryside. Half way along this main thoroughfare a branch road led past the 'Smiddy', so I thought I would go and see what they were doing as I could hear the anvil ringing in the clear morning air (on some days the anvil could be heard nearly a mile away). I didn't even think of trying for a job there because the idea of apprentice blacksmiths never entered my head - I had only seen 'old' men in the 'Smiddy'.

I stood in the door watching for a couple of minutes before the boss noticed me and said: "What are you doing here?" I told him that my father wouldn't let me leave school until I got an apprenticeship, so I had been down to see if I could get a start with John Lawrence but he wasn't there. The blacksmith said my father was quite right then asked me if I wanted to be a motor mechanic. I told him I didn't care: all I

wanted was to leave school. That was the end of the conversation.

Just after tea that night I was preparing to go to soccer training and was out in the garden shed cleaning my soccer boots when my little sister came out and said, 'Dad wants you.' There was a man she didn't know looking for me. Well! I immediately thought the worst and tried to remember whom I had upset with some prank as I went in to face my father and the music. There, sitting in a chair, was the blacksmith all dressed up and chatting away with my father like they were long lost cousins.

Once they had finished their conversation my father said: "Mr Grant (the blacksmith) tells me you were at his place today while you were playing truant looking for a job, but you didn't ask if he had a job for you." I think I gasped, "Have you?" Of course he had and, there and then, a set of indenture papers was produced which both my parents signed, Mr Grant signed and I signed. Later in the week my father got the local minister and constable to sign as witnesses. This indenture form is about twelve inches (20cm) long, like a dog's pedigree, and I used to call it my sentence to six* years hard slave labour which I had to endure, the second three under Mr Grant's son-in-law, who had taken over the business.

Mr Grant would not have been more than five minutes out from our house — with me still on cloud nine as I was starting work on the Monday, which meant I had only one more day at school to hand in my text books — when the front door bell rang. My mother, who had gone to answer it, returned leading John Lawrence, who had come to offer me an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic. Call it fate or whatever you will, but that is how I became a Blacksmith.

*The indenture period was five years when I started, but they extended it to six during my apprenticeship, which is why I had to wait an extra year to thumb my nose at the then-boss.

From:

"Charlie the Smithy – How to forge and cheat legally" by Charles Slater, Chapter 17. Quix Mill Publishing Australia, 2002. ISBN 0 9580780 0 9.

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A BOYHOOD MEMORY OF JOHN INNES by

David Pirie who writes from Aberdeen:

John Innes was a worthie of the Burgh in the 1930s and well-respected by all. His religious beliefs led him to bring solace to bereaved families, especially to families who had lost loved ones in the War.

On fine sunny Sunday evenings he took up his stance at the 'Heid o' the Brae' by Commercial Road and held a religious service. He started off with a prayer and a hymn, then a sermon. His sermons often referred to sinners to repent and he assured everyone that there was time to repent right up to the nick of time. Once there was a fierce storm at sea and a lot of the boats did not make harbour and his boat was the last to make it to port - just in the nick of time! This experience made him change the boat's name to the Nick of Time.

At the end of the service all the children sat on the dyke and got a piece of hard, black sugar, the kind bought from the chemist. When the first child received his bit he went to the end of the line and so on. When John realised this, we all got a scolding. I can still see him in my mind's eye yet. He was old but he had a full head of white hair.

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
Antisocial Behav. Helpline 0800	5877 197

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:

Fire Risks

There have been several house fires in the village in the past six months. Fortunately, these have not resulted in any personal injury but smoke damage has been a costly consequence. Really, we should all take steps to have smoke detectors fitted in our homes and regularly checked. The Grampian Fire and Rescue Service can provide free advice on reducing the frequency and consequences of accidental house fires. A home fire safety visit can be requested by calling 01343 549060, by texting FIRE 61611 or by logging on to the website www.grampianfrs.org.uk

Do you throw an apple a day away?

Estimates from the UK Government's waste advisory body (Wrap) indicate that food waste accounts for 40% of all household rubbish and it goes mostly to landfill sites. This represents a third of all food purchased for consumption at home and works out on average a cost of £400 for every household. Each day we dump over 4 million apples (almost a third of all the apples we buy), over 5 million potatoes, nearly 3 million tomatoes, 1.6 million bananas and just over 1 million oranges and these are not peelings or scraps but whole items!

We are trying to eat healthily by purchasing this fruit but we do not seem to be very clever at managing our food purchases. It would help if we brought smaller amounts at more frequent intervals and stored them in a fridge. A mixed fruit bowl on the sideboard is one of the main causes of fruit losing its freshness and going soft. We have been labelled a "throwaway society" but this example of food waste could fairly easily be reduced. Think of the money you would save.

Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group, old photographs wanted:

Our heritage group has a collection of photographs of old Portknockie. We find that the photos that attract most attention at our displays are the ones where we can name the people. Can I appeal to the readers of the K'nocker for old photographs of buildings and people of the village, particularly where you can name the people featured.

One idea we have, is to follow the occupancy of particular houses through the years. My own house, 12 Park Street, is well described by the late Willie Slater in his recently published book 'Portknockie Memories'. I have the title deeds for this house so I know that only two families owned it prior to me. It was built in 1896 for George Pirie, shoemaker and passed to the Slater family in 1928. I would dearly love to know if there are photos of the house also featuring members of these families that I could use for our displays.

Are there any more Portknockie residents with vivid stories and memories relating to their house of years ago and who have photos too? We will return all photos after we have scanned them.

Jim Illingworth
12 Park Street, Portknockie

HAME COOKING by SWRI members:

Haddock Pate

Ingredients:

12oz (300g) yellow fish pieces
2oz (50g) melted butter
¼ pint of double cream
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcester sauce
Sprinkle of cayenne pepper

Method:

Poach fish for 10 minutes then drain, skin and flake.

Puree the fish in a blender with the melted butter. Slightly whip the cream and fold into the fish mixture then add the other ingredients. Put in dish ready to serve with warmed toast or oatmeal biscuits.

Lamb Casserole

Ingredients:

1½lb (700g) chopped lamb pieces
2oz (50g) flour
3 onions
2 leeks
1 pint water
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon of pepper
½ teaspoon dried thyme
1 tablespoon tomato puree
1 can (8 oz) of tomatoes
Dripping for frying

Method:

Toss the lamb pieces in flour seasoned with salt and pepper then fry in dripping on both sides in a large pan. Place in a large casserole. Coarsely cut the leeks and onions and fry them for 2 minutes and place in the casserole with the drained tomatoes (reserving the juice). Add the remaining flour to the fat in the pan and cook for a minute then add in the water, the puree, the reserved tomato juice and the thyme. Bring to the boil stirring all the time. Pour this over the lamb in the casserole and bake in a moderate oven 350 °F (180° C) for two hours.

Lemon sponge pudding

Ingredients:

6oz (150g) granulated sugar
1 level tablespoon plain flour
½ oz butter
2 eggs
Grated rind and juice of one large lemon
1 cup (9 fl oz) of milk.
Pouring cream

Method:

Put sugar, flour and butter in a mixing bowl. Stir in the yolks of the eggs, the grated rind and the juice of the lemon. Beat until well blended. Stir in the milk, beat the egg whites until stiff and fold into the mixture. Pour this mixture gently into an oven-proof pudding dish. Sit this in a roasting tin that is half full of water and bake for 35 minutes at 365° F (185° C). This results in a spongy top with a lemon curd base. Serve warm or cold with pouring cream.

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“ONE FIRTH VIEW” – by Margaret Dawson.

An apple for the Teacher!

By and large teachers do the best they can with diminished funding, diminished prestige, diminished morale, minimal support and precious few thanks. These comments are from an article written almost ten years ago. Little seems to have changed and I make no apologies for including some of the other points mentioned in this article. I too believe that league tables, be they for schools, hospitals or any public service are pointless.

How many of us, when league tables are published, look first for the results of our old school or the school our children or grandchildren attend. Next you look for neighbourhood schools and compare them. Lastly you scan the complete list looking for the top performers and the “duffers”. We are wrong to do this. High league-table scores do not mean that those schools are filled to the rafters with star teachers. Neither, when one finds low scores, should one assume that the school is being run by a group of incompetent staff. Exam statistics do not show good teaching or bad teaching. They show schools where everyone is pulling (**Ed.** or not pulling!) in the right direction – that means providing the right mix of good curriculum, adequate funding, committed staff and (the key to it all) involved parents who produce enthusiastic pupils. No one can engineer that mix. Most of the factors are outwith a school’s control and teachers must make the best of the hand they are dealt by circumstances.

A recent study mentioned that we should concentrate on how to encourage more parents to become more active and interested in their children’s education. The study also said that teachers’ working hours have increased in recent years because of the number of Government-imposed initiatives and targets. The teaching day has become longer and bad behaviour

exacerbates the problems. The report mentioned one mother who allowed her 5 year old to stay up until 1am! Indulgent parents are struggling to deal with poor behaviour in their children and this is spilling over into schools, making things even more difficult for teachers. A school in which teachers know that their priorities and aims are shared actively by most of the parents is a fortunate school indeed. That is when examination results (if these are an effective yardstick at all) become impressive.

Certainly, there are gifted teachers in high-scoring schools. I do not suggest that their results happen without hard work. But there are many first-rate teachers doing their level best in low –result schools and it ill-behoves politicians or the public to fix on the statistics and use them as a stick. By the time many children come to school they have become expert in manipulating adults. Motivating them has become more difficult. Teachers don't need me to defend them but it must be sorely trying for them to be blamed for poor results without consideration of all the issues. A little humble and objective contemplation by all those too ready to criticise might not go amiss.

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POETS' CORNER:

“**Friendly Advice**” by Charlie Slater:

Just because you're older and the hair is grey on your head
Don't stop living till they say you are dead.
Your hip and knee joints they can replace,
Even your heart can be mechanically brought up to pace.

If your cholesterol is too high and your blood pressure too low
With a needle or pills they can keep you on the go.
So get down to your club and start playing bowls,
It is still not too late to set yourself goals.

You're in the company of people who are worse off than you
It all depends on your outlook and view.
So get off your backside and into gear

And plan what you're going to do next year.

Sorry if I sound like another dictator
But this is the philosophy of Charlie Slater.
Make the best of your time ahead
Because after all we're a long time dead!

And a poem from the Davie Mair Collection to spur us all on to greater achievements:

Thole an' gang for it and never let on
When fortune flees by you unwillin' to stan'
Man, nivver sit doon wi' your heid in your haun'
But just thole an' gan forrit an' nivver let on.

Just thole an' gang forrit an' nivver despair
Tho' few are your freens an' ower muckle your care.
You'll find in the end that far better you'll fare
If you thole an' gang forrit an' nivver despair.

Just thole an' gang forrit we'll win thro' at last
Wi' patience and courage to weather the blast.
So we'll nivver give in, put oor backs to the past
We'll thole an' gang forrit an' win thro' at last.

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Portknockie.library@moray.gov.uk

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

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

The K'nocker delivery Team:

Alec Campbell – Haig Street, Moray View and Seaview Place.

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

Bob Croucher: Blantyre Place, Cliff Terrace, Commercial Road, Dover Street, Gordon Street, Harbour Place, Harbour Terrace, Mid Street, Seaforth Street, Union Street and Victoria Street.

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Harry Hawkes: Bridge Street, Church Street, Hill Street and Pulteney Street.

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John Myles: Findlater Avenue and King Edward Ter.

Morag Reid: Admiralty Street and Seaford Terrace.

Karin & John Rose: High Street and Station Road.

Margret Wood: Firthview, Westfield Drive and Station Court.

Isobel Worrel: Seaford Street.

Grateful thanks to Sandra and her colleagues in the Chemist Shop who sell single copies to visitors and those who do take out the annual subscription.

During 2008 the K'nocker will be published also in 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!

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WHAT'S ON IN THE PORT?

Portknockie Seniors Group: held its AGM meeting on April 15th. Membership remains high and there is a healthy fund in the bank. Monthly entertainments have been well-attended – however, it was noted that

it is becoming increasingly difficult to find new concert parties. A successful Morning Tea fund raiser was held on May 27th at 10am and the summer bus run will be to Stonehaven and Ballater on June 10th departing at 10.30am. Margaret Simpson stepped down from Treasurer after 22 years of commitment and the new Treasurer is Kathleen Mair. Nettie Innes will take sick leave but the the Committee was voted back in en block. Following the AGM, a new group, "Ga an Aboot" provided a lively sing song for members.

CHEMIST'S CORNER

Holiday Health: Whether your plans for the summer months involve travelling or enjoying our own shores, we can offer lots of help and advice.

It is hay fever time already so if you are suffering pop in and see us for some relief. We have a range of tablets (including non-drowsy versions that won't interfere with your daily routine), nasal sprays (to target that blocked feeling directly) and eye drops (to banish red, itching eyes). These are available to buy but can also be supplied free of charge (when there is a pharmacist on duty) if you do not pay for your prescriptions. Pollen levels are highest early in the morning and late afternoon to evening time. If you can, it is best to stay indoors during these periods. Also keeping nearer the sea on days out gives less pollen exposure than travelling inland.

If you do venture inland, take care in long grass as our legs can sometimes provide tasty offerings to biting insects. Insect repellents are available here and are particularly essential if you are going abroad. Closer to home, ticks can be quite dangerous and are carried by deer in woodland areas. Insect repellents can be useful to protect against these too.

Ever optimistic, don't forget to stock up on suncream. Most of us need a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher to be protected enough, also remember to put enough on! If you are travelling this summer, remember to order your repeat prescription at least 48 hours before you leave.

Happy Holidays, Sarah and Sandra.

Seaford WRI: In March our members visited Hilton WRI and enjoyed entertainment from the Glee Club, Inverurie, a visit was made to see the Elgin Musical theatre production of The Mikado and, in conjunction with the PCA the sum of £584 was raised at an Easter Tea – the WRI share of these funds was donated back for McBoyle Hall refurbishment. Our regular monthly

meeting saw Mrs Helen Fitch, Urquhart WRI showing members how to make Boozy fruits. April saw our Morning Tea in aid of the RNLI when a total of £518 was raised and presented to Mr Adam Robertson at our meeting in the evening. Thanks go to everyone who donated money and goods for the sales table and raffles. Wiltshire Farm Foods were guests, explaining their ready made meals products.

Our final meeting of the season saw the AGM and presentation of the cup for monthly competitions – Mrs Margaret Stephens won the cup this year with Mrs Margaret Grieg second and Mrs Mary Sutherland in third place. Entertainment was by Skip2 the Beat from Portsoy, a group of very talented young people who currently have a National Champion in their group. The annual Bus Run will take place on Thursday 26th June with the bus leaving the War Memorial at 11.30am.

Portknockie Nursery: We have recently changed our name from Playgroup to Portknockie Nursery. As well as catering for pre-school age children, the group also runs a 2/3 group two afternoons a week. This term we have been piloting a Breakfast Club and After School Club. Anyone interested in using these facilities can contact the Nursery (Tel: 01542-841825). The Sports Day is on June 24th, weather permitting and our annual summer Picnic will be held at ‘Tons of Fun’ on the 3rd July.

Mrs Dee Austin, our Manager, is leaving at the end of this term. Staff and parents would like to wish Dee, Graham and Family well in the future. We would also like to wish those children moving into Pr. 1 next term all the very best. Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank the parents for all their help and support over the past year, and hope that everyone enjoys a happy relaxed holiday! Nursery will resume on 19th August, 2008.

Bowling Club Notes: The green reopened for the summer season at the end of April when, in fine weather, there was a big crowd to watch long-time member, Mrs Kathleen Rennie, throw the first jack. The opportunity was taken to present the winter indoor season prizes – this year’s winners being Graham Ritchie (singles), Jim Cowie and Wilson Weir (pairs) and Mrs Linda Wood (Hat). Since then there have been good attendances with members enjoying playing on good grass in fine weather.

It has been a busy May with several SBA National Championship games (mixed results so far but the Club is still represented), the Banffshire Top Ten Competition (out in the second game) and the Duthie

Shield Competition (first round defeat). The Club’s Dougal Cup Competition will take place on 14th June, the Portknockie Open Pairs will commence on 20th June, the Alan Maclean trophy will be played for on the 19th July while the Willie Hay Trophy day will go ahead on the 23rd August.

Old and new members are most welcome to come along. Normally, there is a Club “Hat” night on Monday and Thursday evenings starting at 6.30pm, but if you feel you would prefer a wee try first, just speak to any of the Club members. Club bowls are always available.

Neighbourhood Watch is simply looking out for one another. It is one for all and all for one. However, in a village like Portknockie that is what many residents do naturally.

There has been a healthy response to the leaflet drops – most recently in May and a good number of residents have expressed a wish to either join or continue as members. Efforts have been made to secure funding in order to obtain copies of a new Grampian NW Association handbook - it is both readable and informative. It is a vast improvement over the previous national handbooks. Unfortunately, printing costs dictate that this cannot be distributed free, but a grant would allow for copies to be provided for the current list of members.

Lastly, if renewing housing insurance, it may be worth mentioning membership of NW. Some companies allow a percentage off the premium for members. Should you wish to join or enquire about joining the local Scheme, please contact the Co-ordinator, John Myles on 840 000.

JMK

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

Live Music at the Victoria Hotel: Portknockie’s informal “Folk Club” has no constitution, committee or funds and yet one of the liveliest evenings in the village happens at the Vic on the second Friday of each month. The attractions of the evening are known far beyond the boundaries of Portknockie mainly through the best possible advertising – word of mouth- and an astonishing variety of folk turn up. The lounge is usually bursting at the seams and we are looked after very well by John and Lynda and

staff. We don't have the bother of any electronic equipment, such as microphones and amplifiers which means listeners can hear the real thing and that can be anything from the Beatles, Coldplay, Simon & Garfunkel to traditional tunes on pipes, fiddles, whistles, accordion and mandoline. We are especially lucky to have many talented song writers in our midst and airing original material is one of our special features. People also entertain with recitations of poems in Scots and English. Overseas visitors have delighted us with songs in Russian, Polish, French and even Chinese! I expect the summer holiday season will bring in holidaymakers if they are in the area and everyone is given a warm welcome. Many good friendships seem to have started up on Friday music nights at the Vic. It is more than six years since Frank Reynolds approached Alex and me to consider starting these evenings and I am happy to report on their continuing success.

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

Library News: There is still no definite news on the shift of the village library to the school – the last word notified was that it might be for the end of July 2008. We shall see! Large Print books are still popular with readers and new titles are arriving regularly e.g. 'On the Edge' My Story by Richard Hammond of Top Gear; 'Catch a Wave', the Rise, Fall and Redemption of the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson by Peter Ames Carlin. In normal print new titles include: 'The Senator's Wife' by Sue Miller; 'Bad Luck and Trouble' by Lee Child; 'A Durable Fire' by B Keating and many others. We also have a wide selection of talking books either on cassettes or CDs. Come in and have a browse.

Fishing News: The rise in fuel prices is crippling our boats' livelihood this last few months as well as quota restrictions and having to pay for extra days at sea. We can only hope that our PO's and Scottish Fishing federation will fight for a better deal for us.

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The Portknockie Book Club meets on the 2nd Wednesday in each month. New members welcome please contact Janet Creese on 840687 for details.

1st Portknockie Brownies meet every Monday in the school hall from 6-7pm. We are always looking for new members aged between 7-11 years.

If there are any adults in the village who think they might enjoy an hour helping out don't be shy, it is fun and all are welcome. Please contact Brown Owl on 480841.

Church of Scotland Sunday School: We have enjoyed many activities this year at Sunday school. Some of our topics have been Moses, The Parables, Fruit of the Spirit and Creation. To illustrate our Bible stories we offer a variety of activities such as crafts, games, quizzes and even baking! We also enjoy learning new songs.

Our Prize Giving will take place during the morning service on Sunday 15th June and we look forward to our picnic on Saturday 21st June.

All children aged 3 and over are welcome. If you have any queries please phone Val on 841240.

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**PORTKNOCKIE SCHOOL
NEWS**

Where has the year gone? At this time, last year, I was Acting Head Teacher writing a similar article for the Knocker. Mrs Cooper returned to her post last September, but resigned from her position as Head Teacher on 14th February 2008. I accepted the post of Acting Head Teacher until a new Head Teacher was appointed. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all those who have supported me – staff, pupils, parents and friends from our local community. Action needed to be taken quickly to address issues of behaviour, uniform and homework. Thanks to all who expressed their concerns and gave us their support.

The school has participated in several events over the term, e.g. Rotary Quiz, Elgin Music Festival entries, a badminton challenge and a cricket festival. We did not win at any of these events, but our pupils were always commended for their wonderful sportsmanship and behaviour.

We did however win two prizes at the school Travel Awards; one for completing our School Travel Plan and the other being the Creative Communicators Award (we had our Travel Plan printed on a tea towel). Pr.3-7 had a very interesting school trip to the Elgin Science Festival and Pr.7 attended the annual Choices for Life event at AECC on 7th May 2008. June Andrews and Chris Thomson visited assemblies and gave a talk on Road Safety and Travelling to school. Pr.6 had their annual visit by the Fire Safety Officer. Pr.1/2 and Pr.3/4/5 were visited by Zoo-Lab on 21st April 2008 and had an interesting afternoon with mini-beasts and rainforest creatures. Pr. 1/2 had a visit by Mr McLeenan with the glitter box to incorporate the need for good hand washing into their 'In the garden' topic.

A little bit of culture came to school on Wednesday 14th May 2008! Three members of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra led Pr.1-3 in a 'Going on a Bear Hunt' workshop. The children were enthralled and could have stayed for more if the 'home' bell had not rung at 2.50 p.m. Culture will rise again when Pr.4 join other schools to perform 'Orlaff the Dragon' with members of the National Youth Chamber Orchestra in Buckie North Church Hall on Friday 6th June 2008.

We raised £90.10(including £15.00 from the Nursery) for Sports Relief. We had a very enjoyable morning run and really enjoyed the pancakes afterwards. Thanks go to all who donated and helped in any way.

We raised £238.65 for school funds at our very successful Craft Fayre. The children had a very busy week preparing for the Fayre and Pr.7 must be thanked for helping the younger pupils on the day. Our Parent Council members have been very busy raising money for the school. They have raised enough money to purchase two new computers. They hope to have enough money to purchase a third computer soon and this will mean that each class will have a new computer. The also hope to buy new sets of novels for the school and track suits for school use at sporting events.

Some families have kindly given a donation towards the cost of our new gym bags which were purchased by the Parent Council. The corridors look really

smart and de-cluttered now and visitors comment on how tidy we are.

We have a very small band of willing parent helpers and, as a small school, we could not survive without them. Next session we'd like to add some more names to our list, but more of that at a later date.

This term Pr.3/4/5 and P5/6/7 combined their efforts on their studies of the sea, water and the John Muir award. They planned a beach walk every Wednesday afternoon and have been extremely lucky weather-wise. We had a volunteer adult helper from outwith the village to help us on our walks, who unluckily for us landed a part-time job. I'd like to thank Judith Mair's mum for stepping in to help us out with our Wednesday walks at such short notice.

I'd like to thank Mrs Woolgar at this point. She gives up her own time to run our netball, cross-country and newspaper clubs. Thanks to her the educational experiences available to Portknockie school pupils is widened.

We were sad to hear that our school chaplain, Rev.Graham Austin, is moving to a new charge in Wishaw. The pupils and staff really enjoy his 'contributions' to our assemblies – what will we do with the 'bumble bee' song. It also means we will lose Dee from the nursery. In recent years we have worked very closely together and have shown good practice in transition from nursery to Pr.1. We wish you both, health, happiness and God's blessing as you venture into pastures new.

Provisional sports days have been pencilled in for 13th June or 27th June 2008. Pr.7 pupils are invited to a night out by the Parent Council on 26th June. Our end of term concert will be at school on Tuesday 1st July from 1.45 – 2.45 p.m. All parents and friends are invited to join us. School breaks up for the summer holidays on Friday 4th July and pupils return after the break on Tuesday 19th August 2008 at 9.00 a.m.

Mrs G McWhirter, Acting Head Teacher.

Portknockie Community Association will be organising a bingo session at the Seafield Inn on Wednesday 25th June starting at 7.30pm with profits going to the McBoyle Hall repairs fund. Watch out for bills in the shops. Another major date for your diary is Saturday 16th August, the Summer Gala Day.

