

Strathdearn Newsletter

February, 2008. Vol.8 Issue 1..

The New Community Council for 2008.

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Community Development Worker: Mr Duncan Hendry
E-mail: Strathdearn@hotmail.co.uk

Highland Councillors for Inverness South: Jim Crawford, John Holden, Roy Pedersen, Thomas Prag (All Highland Councillor e-mail addresses are firstname.surname@highland.gov.uk)

Ward Manager: Charles Stephen,

charles.stephen@highland.gov.uk

The Newsletter has a new editor. I volunteered in order to give Vivian a rest: she's been doing a splendid job this last two years but she has more than enough community commitments already and could use a bit of space in her crowded schedule! Also involved in Newsletter production are Ian Mearns (page layout) and Susan Mackintosh-Grant (distribution) – thankyou both for giving your time to help, and thankyou also to the network of local residents who go out and deliver the Newsletters.

Local news, articles, reports and adverts are always welcome. If possible, please send the copy as an attachment via email, or saved on disk (less typing for me!) but don't worry if you can't – send it any which way you can to me:

Mrs Denise Barley, Lauriston, Morilemore, Tomatin, IV13 7YN
01808 511733 Barley@btinternet.com

Local Events

Every Monday

1.30pm Strathdearn Hall

Line Dancing

Contact: Jean MacRae 511314

First Monday of the Month

7.30pm, Findhorn Room,
Strathdearn Hall

WRI

Contact: Carol James 531220

2nd/4th Mondays of Month

7.30pm, Findhorn Room,
Strathdearn Hall

Patchwork & Quilting

Contact: Chris West 511412

3rd Monday of Month

7.30pm, Findhorn Room
Strathdearn Hall,

Gardening Club

Contact: Alex Don 511729

During Term-Time:

Tuesdays 1 - 3 pm and

Fridays 9.45 - 11.45 am

Strathdearn Hall

Croileagan Tom Aitinn

(Tomatin Gaelic Playgroup)

Contact: Rosemary Dempster 531215

Every Wednesday

10.30 am Findhorn Room,
Strathdearn Hall,

Community Coffee Morning

All Welcome

Every Wednesday

2pm Strathdearn Hall

Walking Group

Contact: Kathy Bonniface 511740

Every Wednesday during

term-time

5.30 - 7pm Findhorn Room,
Strathdearn Hall

YOGA

Contact: Pam Hardwick 511766

Every Thursday

11am Tomatin Inn

Coffee Morning

Every Thursday

1.30pm Findhorn Room,
Strathdearn Hall,

Art Class

Contact: Betty Watson 511271

Last Friday of Month (venue varies)

Strathdearn Book Club

See Notice in The Shop for details.

1st Strathdearn Rainbow and Brownie Unit

for girls aged 5 - 10.

Contact Alison (511369)

or Trish (511486)

TOMATIN DISTILLERY WHISKY PRESENTATION & TASTING TOURS

Tomatin Distillery is offering a **Whisky Presentation & Tasting Tour** at £30 per person. The mysteries of whisky making will be explained during a tour by one of our Managers. This specialised tour also includes "**Nosing and Tasting**" aged expressions of our Brands.

For more details please contact

Gill MacLeod Tel: 01808 511 234 or E-mail: gill@tomatin.co.uk

www.tomatin.com

Salmon Fishing Report

During April 07, three fish were taken above Pollochaig (Shenachie); one of them caught in the Tomatin area on the 10th. By the end of May catches of only half a dozen or less had been recorded from all beats in the glen with a slight increase in June. The Spring run was lower than expected as low catches have also been recorded throughout the river system.

The heavy rain of the summer months brought numerous spates, some near flooding level, making the fishing hard going. Despite this some fresh grilse mixed with salmon had been landed. Early September saw a few runs but it wasn't until the third week that larger runs of grilse were appearing bringing with them the big old springers that were lying resident mid river since April/May.

The heaviest recorded fish of the season was caught and returned, in the Drynahan area, and weighed 32lbs.

This coming summer fed fry from the Dalmagarry and Lethen hatcheries will be planted out in the head waters at Coignafearn. This will be the fourth year running that fry have been planted out in the head waters. Although there are many factors that will determine the survival rate from fry to spawning stage, hopefully we may see an increase in the numbers of returning fish.

STRATHDEARN BOOK CLUB

We have just finished "North and South" by Elizabeth Gaskell. Once you got into it, this was an interesting exposition of the 19th century cotton industry and early union growth in England. We thought her style more akin to Charles Dickens than Jane Austen. It was a complete contrast to our previous book "The Tenderness of Wolves" by Stef Penny. The staccato style of its short chapters belied the author's history in film-making but made for an effective telling of a murder-mystery set in the wilds of 19th century Canada.

In February we are changing continent again - and time - with "A Thousand Splendid Suns". Do come and join us for a cuppa and friendly blether about our reads. Next meeting is 29th February 2pm at Sheneval, Tomatin. Phone 511411 for details or a lift.

February: "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini

A Note from Councillor Jim Crawford

Firstly I would like to thank all of you who voted for me in last year's election, I hope I can fulfil your expectations over the next three years. It has been a very steep learning curve on which I am just starting to climb. I will make mistakes and hopefully get some things right. I know that I cannot please everyone all of the time, especially in Planning. On Planning issues, I will endeavour to represent the majority decision while recognizing that the minority are also right on many occasions.

I have found this first eight months very interesting, with a huge variety of problems affecting the constituents in Inverness South, from disputes over garden fences to voting for an ASDA store in Inverness. The problems in Strathdearn will I am sure multiply over the next few years when more and more people realise that the quality of life in the Strath is superior to that elsewhere. You will become victims of your undoubted success.

I envisage, when a suitable drainage scheme can be built in Tomatin, you will become more of a dormitory town for Inverness than you are now. This will not necessarily be a bad thing, as with controlled growth, you will attract the essential services that are lost to you now i.e. Doctor, Nurse, Train Halt etc.

I attend many Community Councils each month, and I have not met a more involved or dedicated group than the Strathdearn Community Council. I recently had the pleasure of sitting on the interview panel for the head teacher post in Tomatin, and I am sure we appointed a very good candidate, who will give your children a very rounded education.

I wish Strathdearn well, and know that your future is in good hands, and your Community Council are working very hard for your benefit. I am always at the end of the 'phone if you require my help.

Jim Crawford

Tel.01463 794941.

Jim.Crawford@highland.gov.uk

March: "The Foreign Correspondent" by Alan Furst

April: "The Purple Hibiscus" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

2008 Flower Show – Advanced Notice!

This year the show will be held on Saturday 6th September.
Full details will be appear in the May Newsletter, with schedules and rules available from the shop and committee members from the beginning of June.

Welcome to

John and Jenny Clark, Dylan(11)and Holly(9)who have recently moved to Moy. We hope you have settled in, and will enjoy many happy years in Strathdearn.

THE TOMATIN DISTILLERY CO. LTD.

**FULL OR PART-TIME STAFF REQUIRED
FOR THE TOMATIN DISTILLERY VISITOR CENTRE & GIFT SHOP**

**INTERESTING WORK, TO SUIT ALL AGES FROM 18 UPWARDS
FROM EASTER TO OCTOBER**

(POSSIBILITY OF ALL YEAR WORK)

TRAINING WILL BE GIVEN IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE JOB

**FLEXIBLE HOURS OF WORK TO SUIT YOU
(SOME WEEKEND WORK REQUIRED)**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED – PLEASE WRITE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO:
Gill MacLeod, P.A. to Managing Director, Tomatin Distillery Co. Ltd.
Tomatin, Inverness-shire IV13 7YT**

**STRATHDEARN YOUTH GROUP
HOMEWORK CLUB**

Tuesdays 6-7pm, Strathdearn Hall from 22nd January
Open to anyone over the age of 10 (including adults)

This is intended as a quiet hour when people can come and make use of a table and a peaceful atmosphere to catch up on work or reading, whether from school or elsewhere. In attendance will be Mrs Denise Barley, a retired Secondary English teacher who is available, if required, to help students with any aspects of their homework which they are finding difficult to understand. Please note this doesn't mean giving them the answers or doing the work for them!

The group is run under the auspices of Strathdearn Youth Group. School students will be asked to provide the phone number of their parent/guardian. Sessions are free of charge and will take place weekly until the end of February; they may continue after that depending on the level of interest shown.

Any further enquiries to Denise Barley 01808 511733 or Alan Hardwick 01808 511766

Natural History Club

2007 was our first full year as a properly constituted club and was successful in its aims of being both enjoyable and adding to our knowledge of local flora, fauna and landscapes and their underlying geology.

Highlights included searching for bats at Dalarossie, observing badgers at their sett, and logging wildlife with our own Spring, Autumn and Winter Watches.

This year we are developing an equally exciting programme, commencing in February with a talk on fungi, with Ern Emmett, to be followed up later in the year with a fungus foray. In March/April we hope to be out searching for early ants and bumblebees with Murdo Macdonald, also in April a talk on butterflies by Tom Prescott.

In May we will be following on last year's interesting talk by Davey Thomson on estate management with a talk by Adam Smith of the Game Conservancy Trust.

Later we are planning a visit to Insh marshes, more "bat watching" with Katy Martin and hearing about red squirrels with Juliet Robinson.

All this and regularly sharing photos and chat on what we have seen in a friendly atmosphere.

Regular meetings will be on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:30, with occasional exceptions for daytime outings and in the event of limited speaker availability.

David Bonniface – secretary.

1st Strathdearn Rainbow and Brownie Unit

Another busy term ahead for the girls - there'll be lots of craft with Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Easter all approaching. We will also be celebrating Thinking Day this term by dressing up in national costumes, sampling food and learning about life and traditions in different countries and are delighted that the Culloden Brownies will be joining us for the evening. The RSPB are going to tell us about the Big Garden Bird Watch and later in the term we're going to try out our writing skills for National Book week.

It's an exciting time for the Rainbows, as this year they're 21 and we're celebrating by going to a birthday Jamborette at Charleston Academy where we can try African drumming, arts and crafts, ballet and an assault course with Rainbows from all over Inverness-shire.

We're also going to The Gang Show at Eden Court to watch local Guides and Scouts in their variety performance.

Alison/Trish/Eilidh/Gail

TOMATIN AND MOY SWRI

Our 2007-2008 programme is now of course well under way, and we have had some stimulating and thought-provoking talks on a wide range of topics, including the help given by the Pegasus Trust to abused and street children in South Africa and South America; sexual health for women; and embroidery with a Pictish theme.

In December we entertained the senior citizens in the village to a very pleasant light lunch at the Tomatin Inn, followed by folk songs and carols ably led by Ian Purves. I think everyone agreed that this was a most fitting start to set the mood for the Christmas period.

We have an interesting programme for 2008, starting with a talk on February 4th by Alasdair Wallace about Thomas Telford. On March 3rd Ian Jones will be explaining to us about wood turning, whilst on April 7th we shall be learning from Susan Beckley about the new Inverness Archive Centre. As you can see, there is something of interest for everyone, including each month the opportunity to demonstrate your own skills by entering the competition for members. These will include decorated biscuits, an Easter card and a sewn peg bag. I stress that this is not compulsory, but is fun.

You are most welcome to join us: we would love to extend our membership!
We meet on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm at Strathdearn Hall. Why not give us a try?
Kathy Bonniface

FAREWELL TO THE FREEBURN

They have chewed up all the old hotel
and left it in a heap
Like the sudden end of a lifelong
friend
The sense of loss runs deep.

Such a painful sight for a place once
bright
old locals well remember
where we all got tight on a Saturday
night
amongst friendly wit and banter.

Now we must hope that the Braemore
folk
are people we can trust
and they very soon take pity
on the homeless Freeburn ghost.

Donald Macaskill

FROM DULNAIN BRIDGE TO NAKOM NYAH

Extracts from an unpublished book written by the late Murdo MacAskill, Alt-Dhubhag, recording his war-time experiences

I think it was the evening of that same day, at the beginning of the short dusk which follows a tropical sunset, that a party of us were sent from Brigade HQ to B Eschelon. This was two or three small huts in a corner of the field round which the artillery were emplaced. About 30 or 40 yards from our destination rifle fire broke out, coming in our direction. I sprinted across the road and down the side of the embankment towards the huts when I came on a slit trench, into which I immediately jumped. I was joined there by a small, timid looking youngster. The fire increased like a wild west film shoot out. Tracer bullets from a bren gun thudded into the bank above our heads. My companion seemed unsettled and started to stand up. "Stay where you are, man!" I said to him. He settled only for some seconds before suddenly bolting out like a ferreted rabbit. Shortly afterwards I heard the voice of one of our officers calling out, "Stop firing! Stop firing!" The fire died down. I got up and made my way down the bank to the huts. I've forgotten the name of that officer, a stoutish fellow in his forties. He was brave, doing what he had to do, walking out over that open field in the dusk exposed to all these trigger-happy fellows blazing away at anything or nothing. He did not get down when a shell came whistling over. That must have been the night that I slept soundly through, behind the house which contained the Brigade HQ, under a truck wrapped in the trailing end of its camouflage net.

Next day Robbie and me went to join the defence platoon, who were guarding a hill about 50 feet high, that rose from the roadside opposite the HQ to the east. We found the platoon lined along the back of the hill, overlooking a deep hollow, but the left flank extended into a wood, on ground only slightly lower than the hilltop. We were posted towards the right flank and given tools to dig slit trenches. Both of us being experienced manual workers, we soon got down four feet in the soft red soil. A plane came swooping over the wood from the west and dropped a single bomb in the hollow close to a Malay house. A tall fellow on our left had a go at it with his bren gun. In the late afternoon a messenger came up the hill. Shortly afterwards the platoon sergeant came along to Robbie and me and told us to report to a party at HQ which was to erect or lay some sort of barbed wire barrier. We went down the hill grumbling to each other about getting more than our share of "shitty" jobs. Nobody at HQ knew anything about any wiring party. "What are you doing with the defence platoon anyway?" asked our mates. "Forget it." This we did and joined the off duty men in a small room off the signal office, and slept there on the floor, under a roof for the first time since leaving the Malay school near the city.

But next day we were again sent up to join the defence platoon. We found the trenches we had dug the previous day occupied, so the sergeant posted us in the wood on the left. There we spent dismal hours staring through the trees. Our guns kept hammering away; the enemy artillery fire had greatly increased, but most of the shells seemed to be landing to the south and west of our position. Once a single plane came skimming over the trees from the west, machine-gunning our line. I believe one of the platoon was hit but I cannot remember seeing him. In the afternoon we were again sent down the hill, this time to guard the entrance to the house occupied by the HQ. Thoroughly browned off and almost rebellious, we set off. But on our way downhill we got a laugh. Over the hedge surrounding the HQ we spied Captain Dickie de Grey standing out on the lawn before the front door, legs well apart, a rifle under his right arm, its muzzle sloping steeply towards the ground while he kept looking up from time to time; for all the world like a gun at a pheasant shoot!

YOUTH SPORT FACILITY

Planning permission has been granted by Highland Council for construction of the proposed covered multi-sports pitch and the new children's play area.

Mr Duncan Hendry, our Development Worker, has made funding applications for both schemes. In the case of the multi-sports pitch this amounts in total to £220,000 including: Building for Sport (Lottery) 50%; Highlands and Islands Enterprise 15%; Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust 25%; together with several other smaller providers. For the Children's Play Area funding applications have been made to the Four Acre Trust 25%; Lloyds TSB 10%; Lankelly Chase 25%; Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust 25%; together with HBOs, Abbey and several others.

Since Highland Council has responsibility for maintenance of the Children's Play Area, including the items of play equipment, Mr Iain Reid of HC obtained tenders for a completely new layout valued at approximately £40,000. Playdale is the selected contractor and it is expected that this scheme will be put in place during the forthcoming Spring. Mrs Debbie Mackay has been showing the layout to the schoolchildren in order that any minor adjustments can be arranged.

Further fundraising efforts by the young folk towards the cost of the multi-sports pitch are to be organised and your support of these schemes will be much appreciated. They will be separately notified.

A. Wallace on behalf of the Community Council

STEP IT UP HIGHLAND

We are now embarking upon our fourth year of walking for health in Tomatin. For newcomers to Strathdearn, or for old time residents who have just not noticed us before, let me explain a little of the background to our walking. Step it Up is an initiative which aims to promote walking to people from all age groups and all walks of life. It does this in several ways, such as establishing local walking groups, training their leaders and working with health professionals to refer patients who may benefit from these groups. It is developed by Partnerships for Wellbeing and is supported and funded by NHS Highland and Paths to Health.

There has never been so much discussion in the media, in government and amongst people generally about the benefits to our health of taking more regular exercise, and yet many problems still arise from the lack of it. Now, some people have said to me that they can, and do, walk on their own, and therefore do not need a regular time every week to set aside. I can well understand this argument, and would certainly agree that once a week is not enough. However, there are some excellent reasons for coming along and joining the group:

- It can often provide the motivation for walking when you know this is a regular fixture, whereas it is easy to find other things to do if you are on your own.
- It can even motivate you to walk in bad weather when you know you will be meeting others who will do likewise! (However, I hasten to add that we do modify the walks to suit the conditions).
- To walk with a group provides a most pleasant and sociable occasion, with lots of opportunity to chat and meet old friends, and also to meet new people from the village and beyond.
- The post walk cup of tea or coffee, usually in Strathdearn Village Hall, reinforces the friendly nature of the group and the sense of shared enjoyment.
- As we have developed, and continue to develop, different routes for walking, people have the opportunity to explore new areas that they may hesitate to walk alone. A number of people, even long term residents of the area, have told me how much they have enjoyed exploring a route they have never walked before.

Do not be put off by the length of our walks. Although our present regular walkers are happy to stride out for an hour or an hour and a half, we would be very willing, in addition, to set up a series of shorter walks on easy terrain if people are interested. Both groups could then socialise together over our usual drink at the end of the walk. We are able to do this because we now have four trained walk leaders in the village: David Boniface, Carol James, Lesley Smithers and me, Kathy Boniface.

Our walking has now resumed after the Christmas break. At the time of writing our last walk took place in sharp frost and beautiful sunshine in Distillery Wood. We all enjoyed the wonderful views over the surrounding hills, now visible since the felling of some of the trees there, and the glimpses of the deer in the woods. As we penetrated deeper into the wood we all marvelled at the beauty of the frost and snow sparkling on the conifers against an intense blue sky.

Finally, I do wish to make it clear that we do not expect everyone to walk every week. Of course things crop up where people have another commitment. But if you feel you would like to give the group a try we would be delighted for you to join us on Wednesday afternoons at 2.00pm usually at the village hall, or alternatively contact beforehand Kathy or David Boniface on 01808 511740 or Carol James on 01808 531220.

To while away the winter nights, unscramble these Strathdearn placenames:

1. Clayhlc
2. Vaimleadig
3. Arefigocann
4. Roobchrygru
5. Vabilrad

6. Iggreba
7. Caindeth
8. Leerroommi
9. reemonly
10. ramglazeenn

Church of Scotland
Parish of Moy, Dalarossie and Tomatin
Minister: Rev R F Campbell, Daviot Manse, Daviot. Tel: 01463 772242
www.strathsnairnanddearn.co.uk

Sunday Club:

welcomes primary-school aged children every Sunday morning during term-time in the Strathdearn Hall at 10.30 am (except for the second Sunday of the month when there is a Family Service). Further information Mrs Sandra Edward 511237.

The Guild:

welcomes ladies - and gentlemen - to their meetings in Tomatin Church at 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of the month from September - April inclusive. New Members welcome. Our Theme this year is "Think on These Things - focussing on The Mind" and our programme for the next few months is as follows:

13 February: Mental Health Issues with Frank Roden.

12 March: Experiential Lenten Service with Vivian Roden.

9th April: A.G.M.

Further information Mrs Sheila Don 511729.

Breakfast Club:

Join us for freshly brewed coffee, bacon rolls and croissants, followed by a gentle look at a Bible passage from Matthew's Gospel led by Vivian, and a time of singing and prayer. Come to the Strathdearn Hall for all, or some of the morning (9.30am for Breakfast/10.30am for the Bible passage/11.30am for singing and prayer). We will be meeting on the last two Mondays of each month until the end of June (except for March, when we will be meeting on Mondays 17th and 31st). Further information from Vivian on 511355.

Alpha Course Follow-On:

We would like to thank the Macleod family at the Tomatin Country Inn for continuing to let us use the sitting-room in the house for our video and discussion sessions after our meal on our follow-up to the Alpha Course. This is open to anyone who had done an Alpha Course and further details are available from Vivian (511355) or Sandra (511237).

Just Church Lenten Series:

This year we are having a Joint Series of Lenten Studies on the Theme of "How Just is Your Church" with Daviot & Dunlichity Church at 6.30 pm on Sunday Evenings during Lent, alternating between the Farr Community Hall (Sundays 10th February, 24th February, 9th March) and the Strathdearn Hall, Tomatin (Sundays 17th February, 2nd March, 16th March) culminating in a Joint Easter Sunday Evening Service in Moy Church at 6.30 pm.

SUNDAY SERVICES - at 10.30 am

FEBRUARY:

MARCH:

3rd: Dalarossie Church 2nd: Dalarossie Church

10th: Family Service in the 9th: Family Service in the
Strathdearn Hall. Strathdearn Hall.

17th: Moy Church 16th: Moy Church

24th: Tomatin Church (**Communion**) 23rd: Tomatin Church

30th: Moy Church

APRIL:

MAY:

6th: Dalarossie Church 4th: Dalarossie Church

13th: Family Service in the 11th: Family Service in the Strathdearn Hall.
Strathdearn Hall.

20th: Dalarossie Church

27th: Moy Church

SPECIAL SERVICES:

Friday 7th March - WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - 7.30 pm in Tomatin Church.

Wednesday 12th March at 7.30 pm in Tomatin Church - Guild Lenten Experiential Service.

Thursday 20th March at 7.30 pm in the Strathdearn Hall, Tomatin - Maundy Thursday Communion Service.

Friday 21st March at 7 pm in Daviot Church - Service for Good Friday

Sunday 23rd March at 10.30am in Tomatin Church - Easter Family Service.

Sunday 23rd March at 6.30 pm in Moy Church - Joint Easter Sunday Evening Service with Daviot & Dunlichity.

All warmly welcome to join with us in any of our Services or Activities

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT RAIGBEG

At the December meeting the CC agreed to write to the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust to see whether it would be possible to get a grant to offset the cost of some element of this affordable housing development, albeit that this might require a change in the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust Deed.

Tinsley (Branston) Farms Ltd and the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust have applied for outline planning permission to erect 6 houses at Raigbeg, Tomatin. Two of these sites are to be developed privately by Tinsley (Branston); the other four are to be offered for affordable housing. Two are to be offered for sale to local residents who would then build their houses with the help of a Rural Home Ownership Grant; and it is hoped that Albyn Housing or a similar housing association will deliver the remaining two units as rented housing.

In the event, however, of a housing association finding themselves unable to deliver the two rented units, the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust will apply for an amendment to the planning permission and instead offer three plots for selling to local residents who would then build their homes with the help of a Rural Home Ownership Grant.

Why might a housing association not be able to take on the two units for rental? Because the funding mechanism which is being made available is undergoing a change from the new financial year beginning on 1st April. The benchmark is going to be reduced which means that less money per unit is going to be made available to them. At the same time the costs of building houses are not reducing, and furthermore, all developments have to adhere to the new revised building regulations, incurring further costs. This is why we cannot say definitely, at this time, whether a housing association will be able to deliver these two units for rental, although the planning application is proceeding on that basis.

As reported in the last Newsletter, surgeries will be held in the Strathdearn Hall which will give local residents, and people with a strong Strathdearn connection living elsewhere, the opportunity to meet with Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust staff to discuss their housing needs and their eligibility to apply for one of these houses. Watch the Noticeboards for further information!

Art in Strathdearn

The Art Club enjoyed a successful 2007, with the welcome addition of several new members, one from as far off as Newtonmore. Further new members will be very welcome as we begin to prepare our programme for 2008.

Preparation of eight painted glass panels depicting local history and interests was one of the highlights of the year, and these have been mounted within the entranceway of the Strathdearn Hall. Highland Council sponsored this work together with our purchase of new display boards which we first used at our annual Exhibition in August. These display boards are stored at the Hall and are available to hire for any outside bodies.

On 1st December we had a sales table at the local Craft Fair, which was a worthwhile occasion. A sumptuous Christmas lunch was enjoyed by sixteen in the Hall on 13th December, including three of our tutors and special guest Mrs Celia Mackintosh.

In 2008 we plan to have further tutoring in watercolour and pastel work, and hope to get our hands dirty again throwing some pots!

We are all learning as we go along, so if you feel like joining us please don't be nervous about starting from scratch. After a few weeks you will impress yourself (and your friends!)

Aberdeen University Talk: St Kilda - Islands at the edge of the world! Donald Paterson will be delivering this talk on **Thursday 28th February at 7.30 pm in the Strathdearn Hall.** **Admission £3** - All welcome.

News from the Community Council.

The first meeting of the new CC in December got down to business straight away, dealing with a variety of issues. The CC decided to **object to the planning application for a road and bridge**, accessed from the A9 near Invereen, to provide an **access route** to the proposed **Glenkirk Windfarm**, and indeed to all the other routes suggested, taking the view that it was not necessary to consider this until a decision was made on the Windfarm itself.

A letter had been received seeking **pedestrian access at the underpass on Station Road**, pointing out that many Tomatin residents had enjoyed this walk from Old Mill Road to Station Road in the past. We have written to Highland Council seeking their help to have this restored. In response to another letter we have arranged for the **No 15 Rapson's bus** to be **re-routed through Moy and Daviot in the mornings during school holidays** and are working with Highland Council to get **pedestrian access to the bus stops on either side of the A9 near the Tomatin junction**. *(So it does pay to contact your CC!)*

Councillor Crawford reported that he had been approached by a local resident about the **re-opening of Tomatin Station**. The CC has raised this before with little success - we were told it would add extra stopping-time to existing train journeys etc - and the community's response to an article in a previous newsletter asking for evidence of support for this didn't exactly overwhelm us! Nevertheless, this is a Rural Development Area and the re-opening of the station is in the Local Plan. So what do you think about trying to get the Station re-opened? If it re-opened would you use it? If so, for what purpose, eg commuting to work; shopping; recreational trips for meals, cinema, concerts; other? Please let us have your views (see list of Community Councillors printed in this edition).

At the end of the meeting **Mr John Cameron-Mackintosh**, whose 20-plus year term as Chairman had ended at the election, but whom the CC were glad to welcome back as a re-elected community councillor, **was warmly thanked for his notable contribution to the work of the CC**.

At our January meeting, tribute was also paid to **Lady Macpherson, our retiring Treasurer**; and we are grateful to **Margaret Saunders** who agreed to be elected as the **new Treasurer**. The CC is also grateful to **Denise Barley**, the new **Editor** of this newsletter, and also to **Ian Mearns** who continues as **Compositor**, and **Susan Mackintosh-Grant**, who is taking over responsibility for **distribution and invoicing**. We are, however, still **short of people to deliver the Newsletter**. The **areas not covered** (which are being temporarily covered due to the willingness of folk who already have an area doing a double delivery) are the Coignafearn side of the **Glen; Station Road** loop; and the **Ruthven area**. If you can help, we would be really glad to hear from you - and we are very grateful to Margaret Saunders and Marian Hendry from Moy, and Roger MacPherson from the Clune side of the Glen, who have already agreed to help.

Other issues we are currently involved in include: **Water Quality in Tomatin** - we have once again been in touch with Scottish Water with regard to local residents' complaints about the quality of the water. We have been asked to ensure that when people experience faults with the water, that they contact Scottish Water on the following FREEPHONE number **0845 601 8855**. When you register your complaint, make sure that you ask for an **S R Number**. This, along with a record of the date and time at which you make your phone call, will be proof that your complaint has been logged. Please also copy your complaint to the CC - this will help us to monitor the problem. We have written complaining about the taste and the chlorinated smell of the water.

Post Office Hosted Service at Tomatin - The current Post Office Consultation contains plans to have a 2 hour hosted (delivered by Post Office staff from another area) service at the Tomatin Country Inn on Thursday afternoons from 2 - 4. Following discussion at our January meeting, we wrote to ask that, because Tomatin Shop is closed on Thursday afternoons, and a Coffee Morning is held at the Pub on Thursday mornings, the Post Office opening hours be changed to 11am - 1pm. We have also asked that if demand for this service is great enough, they increase the opening hours to two sessions each week.

"Smiley Face" Speed Indicator Devices - Highland Council TEC Services have agreed to arrange for a traffic speed survey to be carried out at Tomatin. The CC also decided to invite Highland Council's Road Safety Officer to our next meeting on 18th February, and Andy Brown has agreed to take this forward under the "Safer Routes to Schools" Project.

Proposal to Create a 3 Lane Stretch of the A9 at Moy - At the time of writing this, Moy residents are organising a meeting to discuss this proposal which will block off the present access onto the A9 under the railway bridge past the Moy Notice Board. Several residents are unhappy about this and have written to Transerv, who intend to discuss problems individually, on a one-to-one basis. Representatives of the CC will attend the meeting to listen to the Moy residents' concerns.

Youth Sports' Facilities at the Hall/Kiddies' Playground - a lot of hard work is still being done to bring this about. See elsewhere for an update on progress.

Petrol Stations in Remote Areas - Councillor Crawford reported that a scheme existed whereby Highland Council buy petrol at cost price and dispense this to petrol tanks in remote areas which are operated by means of card-operated automatic dispenser. Any profit accruing stays in the village. The CC has asked Councillor Crawford to look into this further since it would be good to have petrol back in Tomatin.

RECIPES FROM BETTY

STROGANOFF FOR SUPPER

Prince Stroganoff, the famous Russian aristocrat, gave his name to this recipe. He is reputed to have loved sour cream in his food, and I believe Russians still carry on the tradition! Beef Stroganoff is one of the easiest dishes to make.

Recipe: 1½ lbs steak
12oz sliced onions
8oz button mushrooms
2oz butter
salt and freshly-ground pepper
½ pint soured cream
1 level tbspn French mustard.

Slice meat into half-inch strips and brown in butter. Add onions and mushrooms, and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Season, add cream and mustard, and heat through. Serve on a bed of rice.

PAVLOVA

This was named after the famous ballerina, Anna Pavlova – also easy to make.

Recipe: 3 egg whites
6oz caster sugar
½ teaspoon vinegar
½ teaspoon vanilla essence
1 punnet strawberries or other fruit
double cream

Beat egg whites until stiff and add sugar gradually. Beat in vinegar and vanilla. Pile mixture in an 8" flan dish, scooping a dent in the middle. Put in hot oven at 230C (450F), and turn down to 150C(300F). Bake 30 mins, then turn off for 1 hour. Remove, cool and just before serving fill with whipped cream and strawberries.

QUOTATION: Economy is not how little one can spend, but how wisely one can spend it!

CONGRATULATIONS.....To Angus Saunders of Lynemore, Moy, on gaining his Masters in Project Management at Leeds Uni. After graduating with a B. Eng in Civil Engineering in Glasgow he worked for a several years and then saved up to fund the Masters - and all with very little help (says his proud mum Margaret).

.....To Edward Cameron-Mackintosh of Morilemore, Tomatin, who graduated with a B.A. Hons in Accounting from Napier University, Edinburgh in November.

.....to Andy and Gail Brown, Corrybrough, Tomatin, on the birth of a baby girl.

STOP PRESS: MOY RESIDENTS' CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED THREE LANE CARRIAGEWAY AT MOY

15 Moy residents, including the new Moy Community Councillor, Margaret Saunders, got together at Moy Church on Thursday 31st January to discuss this proposal. Community Councillors Jimmy Duncan and Vivian Roden also attended. The residents' main concerns centred on:

1. Was this a genuine consultation? Not everyone at Moy (or even everyone at Lynebeg) had received a letter from Transerv giving details of this proposal. Transerv had made appointments to visit people individually, in their own homes, on 6th February (during the day when some people would be at work) but appeared reluctant to hold a public meeting.

2. Would this delay the contract for the dualling of the A9? Was it really going to cost £2,500,000 for a three lane carriageway for half a mile of road? The residents felt this proposal would make "no great improvement" and the best course of action would be for the trunk road authority and the Scottish Government "to wait and do the job properly" with barriers to make the road safer.

3. Safety Concerns: Fire engines could be restricted for access to Moybeg Cottage due to the size and height of the railway bridge (and this would be the only route to the cottage if the stopping up of the U348 at the junction with the A9 went ahead). The stopping up of the U348 would also prevent Moy residents using this for vehicular access to the A9. Especially during the winter months, Moy residents prefer to get onto the A9 as quickly as possible, knowing that it will be better gritted than the winding side road that eventually connects with the A9.

4. Provision of De-Accelerator Slip Lanes for traffic turning off the A9 to Lynebeg; and also for traffic turning off the A9 onto the U348 into the main part of Moy: Lynebeg residents reported several near-misses when turning off the A9 to their homes. Moy residents agreed that they did not want a three lane carriageway, but would like to see the provision of de-accelerator slip lanes for both the Lynebeg residents, and at the junction of the U348 with the A9.

5. The Moy residents asked the Community Council to invite Transerv to the next Community Council Meeting at the Strathdearn Hall, Tomatin, on Tuesday 19th February to give everyone in Moy - as well as in Tomatin, who also had an interest in this - the opportunity of finding out exactly what was happening.

and **happy birthday** to Mary Macdonald, Old Mill Road, who turned 80 years young on February 6th.

INVEREEN ACCESS ROUTE TO PROPOSED GLENKIRK WINDFARM

Update from Pat Wells, Co-ordinator, Strathdearn Against Windfarm Developments

The bridge crossing the River Findhorn below Invereen has been re-designed. The current plan is for a 155 metre structure. A 20 metre ramp either side of the river leads to a 50 metre raised section supported on concrete piers sunk into the ground on the left bank and a similar 20 metre section on the right bank. The raised sections will be joined by a 45 metre long single span bridge over the existing river channel.

This structure gives concerns about accumulation of flood debris, impoundment of flood waters and risk of surge flooding downstream .

The majority of the risk assessments by the developer and SEPA for this route have been desk-top studies only. Freedom of information applications have revealed very little on-site survey work.

Please see local notice boards for more details or contact Pat or Dave Wells (tel.01808 511351)

Strathdearn Community Council

www.tomatin.org.uk

publishes the "Strathdearn Newsletter" quarterly, delivering it free to every home in Strathdearn. The Newsletter is sponsored by **Mr George and Mrs Tanya Macleod of the Tomatin Inn**. This is a community newsletter, and the views and opinions expressed in contributions submitted by members of the community are not necessarily those of Strathdearn Community Council.