

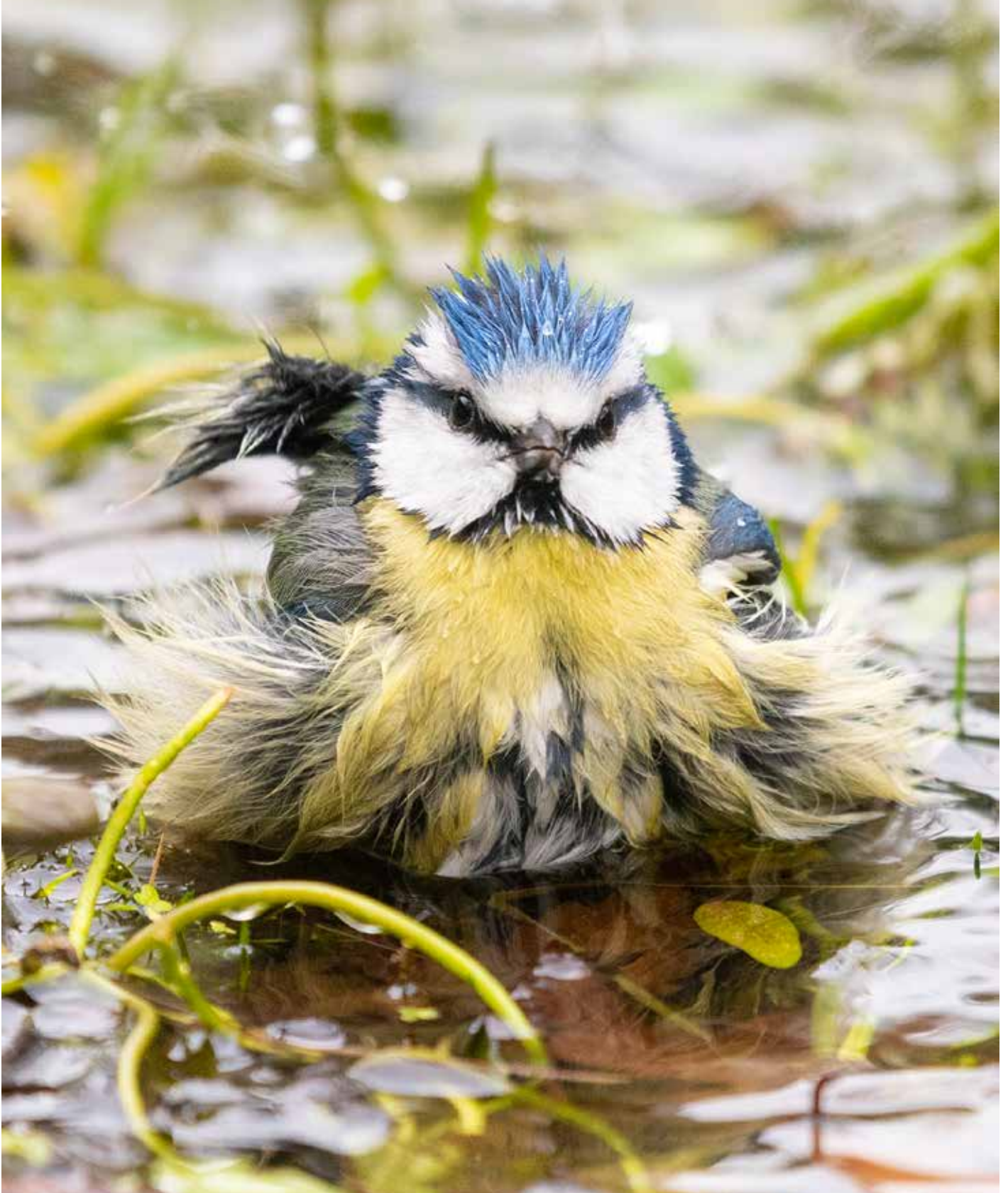


Killearn. Courier

ISSUE 49

SPRING 2021

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Noticeboard

Some of the items below may depend on Covid-19 restrictions in force at the time.
Please check that the event is going ahead.

16 Mar **Strathendrick Embroiderers' Guild** Zoom meeting. 10.30am – 12.30pm. Carol Omand will give a talk on 'Inspired by Nature'. Members will receive an invitation. Visitors welcome. Contact strathendrickchair@gmail.com.

17 Mar **Killlearn Community Council** meeting over Zoom. Contact Fiona (fiona.rennie@btinternet.com; 07799 625993).

18 Mar **The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley** Zoom/YouTube lecture. 10am. 'Punch and Judy' with Bertie Pearce. Anyone can watch, contact artssocsfvmembership@gmail.com; www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk.

2 Apr **Killlearn Health Centre** closed.

5 Apr **Killlearn Health Centre** closed.

20 Apr **Strathendrick Embroiderers' Guild** Zoom meeting. 10am – 12noon. Odile Hughson will give a talk on 'Cashmere Shawls'. Members will receive an invitation. Visitors welcome. £3/£4 full day. Contact strathendrickchair@gmail.com for further information.

21 Apr **Killlearn Community Council** meeting over Zoom. Contact Fiona (fiona.rennie@btinternet.com; 07799 625993).

22 Apr **The Arts Society Stirling** Zoom/YouTube lecture. 10am. 'Here Be Dragons: Monsters in Statues' with Imogen Corrigan. Anyone can watch, contact artssocsfvmembership@gmail.com; www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk.

3 May **Killlearn Health Centre** closed.

17 May **Strathendrick Embroiderers' Guild** Zoom meeting. TBC.

19 May **Killlearn Community Council** meeting over Zoom. Contact Fiona (fiona.rennie@btinternet.com; 07799 625993).

20 May **The Arts Society Stirling** Zoom/YouTube lecture. 10am. 'From Lenina to Artemisia' with Paula Nuttall. Anyone can watch, contact artssocsfvmembership@gmail.com; www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk.

22 May **Killlearn Horticultural Society** outdoor plant sale. Village Hall, 10am – 12 noon.

16 Jun **Killlearn Community Council** meeting over Zoom. Contact Fiona (fiona.rennie@btinternet.com; 07799 625993).

17 Jun **The Arts Society Stirling** Zoom/YouTube lecture. 10am. 'Nothing to declare: Art stopped at customs' with Rosalind Whyte. Anyone can watch, contact artssocsfvmembership@gmail.com; www.theartssocietystirling.org.uk.

The following have suspended activities.

Contacts for details:

Strathendrick Film Society
mikebath42@gmail.com

Kirk Guild
Members will be notified when meetings restart

Strathendrick Singers
secretary@strathendricksingers.org.uk

Drymen & District Local History Society
www.drymen-history.org.uk

If you have dates of events for the summer issue of the Noticeboard (end of August until mid November), please contact Heather McArthur (07985 082678; heather.mcarthur@virgin.net).

Killearn Village Hall Classes and Clubs

These are suspended at the present time.
They will restart when restrictions allow.

Just do Pilates Mondays, 9.30am–10.30am. Also Wednesdays, 7.30pm–8.30pm and Thursdays, 11am–12noon. All levels welcome. Contact Willie McIntosh (williemac.justdopilates@gmail.com; 07733 406464).

Monday Club Monday afternoons, Main Hall and Garden Room.

Balfron Gymnastics Club Mondays, 4pm–8pm & Saturdays, 9am–5pm, Main Hall for the short term. Contact Anna (balfrongymnastics@mail.com).

Stillness Moves – Meditation and Mindful Movement Mondays, 6.45pm–8pm, Main Hall. Best for those with some meditation and yoga experience. Contact Adelaide (07809 469572; ashalhope@stillnessmoves.com).

Yoga class Tuesdays, 10.30am and Thursdays, 7pm, Garden Room. Contact Craig Buchanan (craig@insideyoga.net).

Tai Chi for Health Tuesdays, 10.45am–11.45am, Garden Room. Contact Sukyee (sukyee.tai@gmail.com).

Linda Turner School of Dancing Thursdays, 4pm–6.30pm, Main Hall. Dance classes for children of all ages. Contact Lynda (01360 770390; geolyn2000@hotmail.com).

Town Break Friendship Group First Tuesday of each month, 1.30pm–3.30pm, Garden Room. (www.townbreakstirling.org).

DIY circuits Tuesdays, 6.30pm–7.30pm, Main Hall. Contact Fiona (07799 625993; fiona.rennie@btinternet.com) or Nick (07860 700928).

Killearn Bridge Club Tuesdays, 7pm–10.30pm, Garden Room. Contact Arthur Whittaker (07748 636312; www.bridgewebs.com/killearn).

Yoga class Wednesdays, 9.30am–10.30am. Suitable for all. Contact Sarah Fleming (sarahfleming99@yahoo.com).

Killearn Brownies Wednesdays, 6.15pm–7.15pm. Main Hall in the short term. Contact Natalie Johnstone (1stkillearnbrownies@gmail.com).

Dancercise Fridays, 10am–11am. Low impact dance-based exercise and routines for over 50s, ladies and gents. Contact Yasmin (07979 856837; yasmin@throthegrapevine.co.uk).

Dance for Parkinson's Fridays, 12noon–1pm, Garden Room. Providing creative movement and dance to the Parkinson's and mobility disorders community. Contact Julie Symmonds (07496 231913; julie@danceforparkinsons.org).

Buchanan Castle Bridge Club Fridays, 2pm–5pm, Garden Room. Contact Lesley Nicholl (07720 978998; lesleynic7@icloud.com).

Youth Club Sundays, 3pm–4pm, Main Hall. One hour of activities for children aged 7–12 years. Contact Archie Wilson (07786 913573; archie@treesurgery.com).

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the 2021 spring issue of the *Courier*. When I wrote the editorial for the spring issue just one year ago, I mentioned the storms we had already experienced and warned that there was another one on the horizon. Little did I know that the real storm that arrived was not 'Ellen' but Covid-19, which is still with us, along with the loss of the normality of life we had previously enjoyed.

The *Courier* has endeavoured to produce our magazine in our usual up-beat style, so you can sit back and enjoy articles from the usual contributors which are always worth reading.

Several articles address the uptick in canine companions in the village, which rather complement items about the natural world on our doorstep, with help in putting a name to ordinary (but often anonymous) plants and animals.

On a more serious note, this issue also has pieces with some very pertinent advice as to how to deal with unscrupulous people who are making use of the pandemic to advance their criminal activities.

But on the bright side, there is also an exciting update on the Killearn Heritage Trail which will be going 'live' soon.

If there is one message which has come out of living with the virus for over a year, it has been that many Killearn residents are not taking it lying down. Creative folk have come up with all sorts of fabulous activities and services which have gone a long way to render a degree of comfort to the community and hold promise for the future. That's called resilience. The Community Hub is an excellent example of people stepping up to the mark. The Advent Windows Trail, the Christmas lights and the efforts of the nursery schools are other instances where local volunteers, with the support of local businesses, made such a difference this past winter. And that's not to forget those businesses which have proved so flexible in supplying not only everyday necessities, but also much needed treats.

It would be remiss of me if I did not mention the support of our advertisers, the '*Courier*' volunteers who have been working away all through the pandemic, those who lay out each issue and those who deliver your copy to your door. Many thanks to them all.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Stay Safe.

Ian

Cover Image

The cover photo of a baby blue tit was taken by Kay Roxby and remains her copyright. Our thanks to Kay for permission to use her image.

‘Lighting up Killearn’ at Christmas

In December, our community came together to help ‘Light up Killearn’, adding a little sparkle and brightening up our days.

Killearn Community Council along with Killearn Community Futures Company and 11 wonderful local businesses funded the purchase and installation of four lamp post starburst Christmas lights on Balfron Road, in front of the Kirk, and at the Village Hall.

These built on the installation of the lights on the tree at the Village Hall and complemented the lovely lights and Advent windows at houses around the village, as well as the beautiful tree at the Kirk supplied by Edenmill and decorated by Colourful Killearn.

Despite the difficult year our local businesses have had, they kindly helped us to realise this project, and we must say a huge thank you to them for their generosity.

Our thanks go to:

- Blane Valley Construction
- Country Cycles
- Edenmill
- Glengoyne Distillery
- Heron House
- Hewitt & Aker
- The Kitchen Window
- Mulberry Bush Montessori
- The Old Mill
- Our Little Outdoor Classroom
- Town & Country Designs

We hope everyone enjoyed seeing the lights on their walk or drive around the village, and we hope to reinstall these again next year.

KILLEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Advent Windows Trail

Many thanks to all who made Advent windows, those who enjoyed looking at the windows and to everyone for their very generous donations to Shelter which amounted to £940.86.

Photos courtesy of L. Kirk.



News in brief

There have been a number of instances of dog-napping in the northern parts of Glasgow. Unattended animals are being stolen from gardens or when tied up outside shops. It appeared that two men and two women, apparently posing as energy consultants, were prime suspects. The Scottish SPCA have also warned of fake inspectors attempting to remove animals from properties. Always ask for ID and vehicle registration, and if in doubt, phone their helpline 03000 999 999.

Stirling Council has given the green light to 16 projects that will support safe active travel and promote economic recovery in communities from the Covid-19 pandemic. Killearn's share of the £513,000 pot will go towards the introduction of 20mph limits and installation of cycle parking.

Following work to demolish the Killearn Hotel (aka The Black Bull) in the spring, building work is scheduled to begin in July. The 16-unit block, over two floors, will consist of four 3-bed flats on the ground floor and twelve 2-bed flats on the first floor.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and Citizens Advice Scotland have partnered up to help advise households suffering fuel poverty. SSEN is also in partnership with Home Energy Scotland, offering free and impartial expert energy efficiency advice. For further information and support contact Laura Hutchison (07498 925159; Laura.Hutchison@StirlingCAB.casonline.org.uk).

Grow G63, part of social enterprise Hub G63, is developing a Community Growing Garden with volunteers along the Balfour Road behind Heron's Court. Learn all about it and win a reward here: www.crowdfunder.co.uk/grow-g63.



Killearn Christmas Post 2020
raised **£1027.93** for



Children's Hospices Across Scotland

Thank you to everyone
who contributed so generously.

Cumming – Dennis



Lynsey Cumming of Killearn and William Dennis from Edinburgh were married on 3 October 2020 at Errichel Country House, Aberfeldy.

Despite all the rain and the need to have a smaller celebration than originally planned, the couple and both their families had a very happy and memorable day.

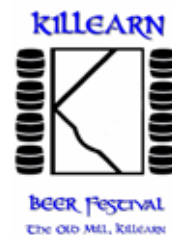
Killearn Beer Festival 2021

We missed you all and the Old Mill last year, but be assured we are planning for a brilliant Killearn Beer Festival this year.

So while some turned their hand to baking, sourdough and cycling, some of us from the KBF experimented with home brewing. Whilst the main ingredients have thankfully remained the same, homebrew kits have greatly improved since our last attempt back in the '80s. We experimented with a New World Saison, Mocha porter and American Oaked Rum Ale as well as the usual suspects. A very worthwhile distraction during lockdown, although it's not the same drinking on Zoom!

We can't wait for the real McCoy, and even though we can't be sure about the exact date as yet, we will give you local notice as soon as we can.

Slàinte mhath.



The Killearn weather year 2020 was notable for its rainfall pattern. In spite of two very dry months in April and May, we exceeded our average annual rainfall of 1,120 mm (44 ins) by the end of October.

A glance at the yearly summary chart shows high monthly rain in January, February, October and November, but examination of the most rain in 24 hours, indicates a pattern of intense downpours rather than many days of lighter rain. This is what we can expect as our climate warms, of course.

In the Winter 2020 issue, I explained how the Thwaites ice glacier in Antarctica was melting from below and could release billions of tons of sea ice into the Southern Ocean every year with a risk of an alarming rise in global sea levels. Scientists have had difficulty examining this phenomenon, but will be aided when the new polar research vessel RRS *Sir David Attenborough* makes its way to the Southern Ocean.



Launched in Cammell Laird shipyard in October, this vessel is the largest of the British polar research ships and was designed to break ice floes 1m thick at a speed of 3 knots. The ship has a helicopter pad, cranes, laboratories and an enclosed moon pool (a hole in the ship that goes right down to the surface of the ocean to aid the deployment of a myriad of scientific instruments). It also has a giant piston corer capable of collecting core samples up to 40m long.

The *Sir David Attenborough* will be expected to transport a scientific and support crew to the British Antarctic Research base at the Rothera Research Station on Adelaide Island, which is situated to the west of the Antarctic Peninsula. Open all year round, the resident scientists include marine and terrestrial biologists, meteorologists and a number of essential support staff.



©BAS

Rothera Research Station

Since the industrial revolution, the world's oceans absorb about 30 per cent of the CO₂ created by humans and over 90 per cent of the heat created since the onset of global warming.

Although the Southern Ocean occupies only about 30 per cent of the total ocean area, it absorbs around three-quarters of the world's atmospheric heat and around half of the CO₂.

Rothera is a very important research station at a time of climate change, as the oceans are critical in controlling how our planet's climate changes.

Planet Earth, issue 1, 2020, Natural Environment Research Council (<https://tinyurl.com/nerc-paper>)

TOM RENFREW

Yearly Summary for Killearn (2020)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Highest Temp	12	10.1	12.2	21.3	27.5	27	26.2	27.5	20.4	14.8	13.7	11.6
Lowest Temp	-2.3	-2.6	-2.5	-0.2	-0.2	5.3	7.5	4.6	-0.6	1.4	-1.9	-4.1
Mean Temp	5.5	3.8	5.1	8.4	11.2	14	13.1	14.6	11.5	8.7	7.3	3.7
Days Below Freezing	4	5	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	8
Highest Wind Gust	37	48	39	40	43	30	24	26	25	37	33	27
Monthly Rain	150.8	270	98.8	13.8	29.9	100.6	114.4	115.8	82	145.8	130.1	125.8
Most Rain in 24 hrs	33.4	40	12.4	4.8	7	16	23.8	43	21.2	19.2	19	18.4
Days without Rain	5	2	13	21	15	12	9	11	10	8	5	5
Cumulative Rainfall	150.8	420.8	519.6	533.4	563.3	663.9	778.3	894.1	976.5	1122.3	1252.4	1378.2

Temperature in °C, rainfall in mm, and wind speed in miles per hour

Covid Vaccination at Killearn Health Centre

After a bit of an anxious wait through January, we were very pleased to take our first delivery of the Covid vaccine and start immunising our patients on Monday, 18 January. In common with other general practices across Scotland, we are using the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine which can be safely stored in the practice.

To ensure that we use the vaccine quickly once it arrives, we are telephoning our patients to arrange both their first appointment and also their appointment time for a second dose which is scheduled within 12 weeks.

We are working to ensure that we immunise as many people as we can within the constraints of the vaccine supply that we receive.

We are working to Scottish Government guidelines which focus on ensuring that patients who are most vulnerable to the effects of Covid-19 are immunised first.

All of our patients in care homes have been immunised and, at the time of writing, we are immunising our oldest patients. Some sensible discretion can, however, be applied to other relatively vulnerable patients (for example, those undergoing cancer treatment or those who are shielding). Our district nursing teams are helping to ensure that all of our housebound patients are also offered immunisation in a timely way.

Working within the limits of social distancing, we have been immunising up to 200 patients a week. Vaccine

supplies permitting, our aim has been to immunise the vast majority of our patients over 65 by the end of February, together with all of those over the age of 16 who are shielding. That amounts to approximately 1,400 of our patients.

The response to date has been incredibly encouraging and we have had virtually 100 per cent uptake of the vaccine from our over 80-year-old patients.

While we had worries initially about the uncertainty of vaccine arriving, we soon started to receive further deliveries, together with assurance of sufficient future vaccine supplies.

So far this has been a very positive and enjoyable part of our work, helping to create and maintain a positive working environment for the health centre team. It is also so good to observe how relieved people are to receive their immunisation. Hopefully this is a big step towards the light at the end of the Covid tunnel.

STUART CUMMING



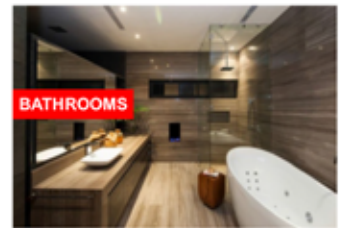
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It has been a difficult time for both the residents and Friends of Abbeyfield to get together over recent months – apart from conversations through open windows. It is hoped the vaccines will provide a solution to this problem very soon, allowing the usual variety of activities to resume.

Abbeyfield welcomed two new residents who are settling in well, so this leaves only one vacant room.

Many activities have been arranged for the residents by the staff and these can be seen on their Facebook page.

The housekeeper, who has been looking after the residents so well for many years, has unfortunately left due to ill health, so Abbeyfield Scotland are actively recruiting a replacement. The residents and Friends miss her and wish her well.

As the Friends group has been unable to visit or take the residents out – the Christmas Dinner cooked by the Friends had to be cancelled – all were given special Christmas presents this year.

There have been two retirements from the Friends group, and we'd like to give a special thanks to them for their active and helpful service. We hope 2021 will be a much better year.

The Friends of Abbeyfield would welcome new members for our committee and anyone interested in joining should please contact Philip Pain (550752).

The Guild continues to operate in these difficult times. There had been a hope that we could meet face to face, if not in January, then by February. Not to be.

However, given that we could not meet for the start of 2021, we held our very first Zoom meeting in January. It was a great success, although we did miss our members who aren't on the internet. It was good to 'see' everyone and remind ourselves that we really are a well-knit cohesive group. Given the uncertainties, we have decided to continue meeting by Zoom on our usual day (the third Tuesday) until May. For details, see the Noticeboard.



February consisted of a 'Show and Tell' and pieces received for the Lockdown Panel were showcased. Members were given an update of other items and areas to be explored for our March meeting. We hope to host a talk/class with branch members assisting – a kind of virtual 'corners' – and which may include other speakers and tutors from the world of embroidery and textile.

We look forward to a 'more normal life' in the coming months. We also look forward to welcoming anyone who would like to visit a branch meeting and perhaps become a member of our Guild. For information, contact Susan Gray (strathendrickchair@gmail.com).

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Spring has Sprung

I have never been particularly fond of housework in general or cleaning of any kind. However, spring is a season when the days are slowly lengthening and there is a perceptible warmth in the sunlight. This same sunlight reveals our cobweb-infested corners, our spidery shelves and our smudged windows. Not yet time to pack away the winter vests or switch off the central heating, but a spot of spring cleaning might not be a bad idea.

Our house had a superb view of the Campsie Hills from the east-facing windows, and those windows were really grubby. This was going to be hard work. I decided that, as a preparatory step, I should have a coffee and a couple of digestive biscuits.

The window cleaning was certainly exhausting. In no time I realised that I needed to change the water and find another packet of biscuits. I trekked back to the kitchen, feeling very virtuous. On my return to the window with my bucket of clean water, I could scarcely believe what I saw. The entire window was splintered and cracked, and there was a sizeable hole in the glass. On the carpet beside my stepladder lay a bullet.

I was shocked. I had to sit down. Was it a tad melodramatic to think that I might have narrowly escaped

death? I decided to ring the Killearn policeman who lived in a cottage just down the road.

The policeman seemed quite delighted to have something unusual to investigate. He was immediately able to identify the bullet. 'This,' he pronounced, 'has been fired from a rifle.'

I was shocked. Mentally I began to compile a list of people who might have wanted to shoot me. My husband? He didn't have a rifle. The third-year boy at Balforn High School to whom I had awarded a detention?

The policeman explained that, given the range of the rifle, the perpetrator was probably shooting some distance away, very possibly from the Campsie Hills. He added, with relish, that those hills were alive – not with the sound of music, but with sportsmen hoping to shoot deer and other animals. Keen marksmen, he said, some of whom didn't know one end of a gun from the other. He thought that I had been fortunate in deciding to refill my bucket at just the right moment.

The policeman and I finished the biscuits. That was certainly the last time I cleaned the windows in that house.

CHRISTINE BOWIE

Sorrel is the Hardest Word

In addition to our five managed patches, there are plenty of wilder wildflowers to be found all around the verges, fields and woodlands of the village and wider parish. During Covid constitucionals, I have spotted a (by no means comprehensive) list of more than 60 different varieties.

With spring hopefully making its presence felt, a particular favourite of mine should be appearing just about now – wood sorrel. As the name implies, you'll find it amongst the trees, nestling at the base of a trunk or fallen branch. It's not big or brash – but a wee gem nonetheless. The first sign in March or April is a rash of tiny emerald spears pushing through moss and leaf litter, which unfold to the most perfect heart-shaped leaves, clover-like, three to a stem and bright fresh green. At night, or in bad weather these will often fold back down to a pointed cone for protection, opening up again when touched by the sun.

A month or so later, in late April and early May, the leaves are topped by a short, wiry stem carrying a single delicate white bell, veined with blue or purple and only a couple of inches high. It's easily overlooked, but well worth getting down for a close-up view. Unlike many woodland plants, the leaves do not die back as the leaf canopy develops and often persist right through summer and deep into the winter months.

Historically, this unassuming plant has found quite a few uses. Eaten as a snack on the hoof, or (more



refinedly) as a salad leaf, it gained the Scottish name of 'soldier's mouthful' (*greim saighdeir*), or 'lady's clover' more locally in Perthshire. The leaves also reputedly make a fresh, acidic tea.

A word of warning, though: frequently taken, it can be detrimental (for gout or rheumatism) or even toxic due to oxalic acid content (hence the Latin tag *Oxalis Acetosella*). This very acidity led to its use in herbal remedies as an antiseptic and for other conditions. Traditionally it will 'strengthen a weak stomach', 'counter contagious sickness or pestilential fever', 'stay vomiting' and 'hinder putrefaction of the blood'. More modern uses are as an infusion for catarrh and urinary tract inflammation, or topically for skin infections and a gargle for mouth ulcers. A handy little plant to have around in a pandemic!

KILLEARN WILDFLOWER GROUP

Bridge by Zorro

Due to continuing restrictions, the Killearn Club, in common with many others, has adopted an online system to meet and play. This is RealBridge, an excellent platform that allows many different forms of play. A tablet or a computer can be used.

A key feature of the system is that we can see and speak to each other and so have a social chat between hands as well as card play; chat requires a camera and microphone, although even this is not essential to use the system for play. Please come and join us. Go to our website and ask to join the next Tuesday night session.

The article this time looks at defence. Things can be hard enough for Declarer, but at least they are able to see how their hands mesh together. Defenders need to help each other where they can, so I'm going to cover signals and discards in defence. There are some players who take the view that any sort of signalling is to be discouraged because a signal makes the information available to Declarer as well as partner. However, it has a part to play to assist inferences from the bidding and the visible distribution.

A more balanced view is to say that a signal is 'to tell partner what they need to know', and only signal when it will help the defence. It must also be said that the main purpose of a high card is to take a trick, or promote a card in partner's hand, and not to make a signal.

There are three sorts of signal: 'attitude' (which shows like, or dislike, for the suit played), 'count' (which indicates an odd or even number of cards in the suit played) and 'suit preference' (which directs attention to another suit). This article will focus on the first of these, attitude, leaving the other two for another day.

To take a simple example, defending against 3NT with South as Declarer, in each of the two cases below, West leads the ♠K which wins the trick. The question is which Spade should West lead next? Imagine that East is not allowed to signal. Who has the ♠A in each case? (Note: as West, you wouldn't really be able to see the East and South hands).

Answers, and explanation of how an attitude signal from East would help, are on page 36.

(a)	North		
	♠ 8 6 5		
West		East	
♠ K Q 10 3		♠ 9 7 2	
	South		
	♠ A J 4		

(b)	North		
	♠ J 7 4		
West		East	
♠ K Q 10 3		♠ A 9 2	
	South		
	♠ 8 6 5		

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Be Prepared... What Have the Killearn Scouts and Cubs Been Doing?

This time last year, five days before our planned weekend ski/activity camp was due to take place at Glenshee, the first national lockdown was put in place; this was a big setback for the group of Cubs and Scouts, many of whom were going to experience their first overnight trip away.

We continued initially with online Zoom sessions: home cooking, scavenger hunts, quizzes, book reviews, games, and even bingo. We also managed to lay some trails for Scouts to follow in their own time.

Once restrictions were lifted, a big hurdle was how to meet up safely for face-to-face sessions. When allowed, we have held all our sessions outdoors, sometimes in very challenging weather conditions! In true scouting fashion, and living up to our 'be prepared' motto, we have managed to keep a packed calendar with, depending on age group, socially distanced events to which both the Scouts and Cubs have adapted with enthusiasm.

Activities included cycling challenges, route mapping, bleep tests, archery and boules competitions, campfire cooking, a treasure hunt using map reading skills, and night walks through the woods.



The highlight of the year was a scary 'Halloween' walk through quiet woods, which the Scouts organised. They hid on a route filled with 'witches curses' to overcome and plenty of theatrical scares along the way.

Due to number restrictions, this was a long day for the Scouts – they had to put on the show four times to ensure

all the Cubs had the opportunity to be scared witless! Each session ended with a firework display, and the whole event proved such a success, it will no doubt become an annual occasion.



We have had more challenges outwith working around Covid restrictions, which have included some of the group's camping equipment being damaged due to poor storage conditions. We are currently trying to deal with this using any spare funds we have. If anyone has unwanted or excess equipment that they feel the Scouts group could use, this would be most gratefully received. A secure, dry, rodent-free storage facility within the village would also be of great interest.

A big thank you must go to all who have helped in any way over the past challenging year. There are too many names to mention, although Frances McCartney (Scouts) and Emily Hotchkiss (Cubs) deserve special credit for the continuing hard work and time they put in to facilitate the thriving success of the group. Cubs now has a waiting list, and Scouts – which only restarted a few years ago – already has 18 members. This is a fantastic position to be in given the year that has passed, which has included the continuing restrictions and rule changes endured. It is something we are all proud of, given that many other Scouting groups are struggling to adapt.

Until next time, Dib-Dib!

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Spreading Happiness at Christmas

Killlearn Community Council (KCC) has been engaging with the village's more isolated or vulnerable residents in a unique way this winter, by working with local nursery schools and their creative staff to create 'snippets of happiness' for nominated residents.

Children planted spring bulbs in pots for distribution with a specially designed postcard, and villagers were asked to suggest names of residents who would particularly benefit. Many names were put forward and more than 60 'snippets of happiness' were delivered to the doorsteps by the children and the nursery staff.



Fiona Rennie, KCC secretary, said: 'With winter approaching and lockdown restrictions a way of life, it was felt that receiving a bulb in a pot decorated by local children along with a contact card could easily help us engage with residents. We see them as "conversation starters" and a way for the community to help people feel less lonely or isolated. It's also a chance for us to provide up-to-date information on initiatives that can assist in these Covid times, using funds from Stirling Council given for this purpose.'

One recipient's daughter wrote to KCC saying: 'I am writing on behalf of my mother to pass on her thanks for the bowl of spring bulbs which was delivered to her

recently. It was a lovely surprise and we look forward to seeing what flowers emerge in the spring. Very many thanks for this delightful idea.'

Fiona continued: 'KCC particularly wants to thank all the local nurseries that took part – Mulberry Bush Montessori, Heron House, Killlearn Primary School and Our Little Outdoor Classroom – as well as Mike Gray from Colourful Killlearn for sourcing the plant pots, compost, daffodil and crocus bulbs. We've also had a really positive response to the Christmas cards made by the children which were delivered to the people they made pots for.'



Fiona concluded: 'We want everyone to think how we can support each other as a community and, rather than merely wondering how our neighbour is, ask ourselves if can we reach out and give them a call or pop round to their doorstep with a smile and a hello.'



In 2021, KCC are looking to continue with the project – linking in again with the nurseries – to help build those relationships with local residents and also to work more with local businesses to find ways of lessening loneliness and isolation in Killlearn. So if you run a local business or have an idea to help achieve this, do get in touch via contactus@killlearncc.org.uk.

Thank You

When this card and two teacakes arrived at our door, another gift to add to the beautiful flowering narcissus, I was inspired to send Our Little Outdoor Classroom this poem to say thank you. JW



In November came a pot plant,
Bringing us a bit of Spring
Now its flowering giving pleasure;
What a lovely gift to bring.

Now we have another present,
Tunnock teacakes for our tea;
Spreading happiness again
From nurseries and KCC.

Though we're in a Covid lockdown
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So we give a mighty thank you
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Community Council Update

The Community Council has been continuing to pass on information from the Scottish Government, Stirling Council and the NHS.

We continue to vet all local planning applications, and monitor and report regarding ongoing ones. We can confirm that preliminary down takings have commenced at the former hotel and this will be followed up by demolition of the building, hopefully around March/April.

KCC has set up a working group with CALA and representatives from the community, including the KCFC Paths Group, Country Cycles and parents of children who go to the primary school, to look at the proposed path to the village from the development at the hospital site. The current plan submitted to Stirling Council is to have a path along the A81 to Station Road and then up Station Road. Initial consultations with Stirling Council highlighted an option to look at an alternative route.

Given the aspiration for safe, active travel in the village, KCC's working group have been in discussions with CALA and local landowners to scope out an off-road active travel path from the development to the village. At the time of writing these were ongoing. Decontamination work is again programmed to commence by March 2021. This could be impacted by present restrictions on working practices.

The application for the proposal to develop 11 affordable houses at the bottom of Lampson Road has been withdrawn. It is anticipated that a further application

will be made by Rural Stirling Housing Association in due course, once further work can be undertaken.

Regarding other matters, we have written to elected members, Stirling Council Roads Department and the police regarding safer parking for visitors at Dumgoyne and we await response.

In terms of road improvements, work is scheduled for repairs at the junction of Lampson Road and Napier Road, while traffic slowing measures for Main Street are being progressed by Stirling Council. KCC and residents will be involved in consultations, but this could be in a form similar to recent works to create the 'Balfron Gateway', with chicanes and speed bumps. In Killearn, we will be hoping to incorporate speed management measures along Balfron Road and down Station Road, and a crossing over to the Co-Op side of the road, possibly around or north of Well Green.

The Branziert area continues to have problems with broadband speed, and we would encourage anyone affected in that area to contact the Broadband Group, who are investigating a wireless provision.

Finally, we have a vacancy on the Community Council arising from the resignation of Janet Duncan. Anyone interested should contact any member of the Council for further information. We would like to add our thanks to Janet for her long service and contribution to the village, both in the Post Office and with the Community Council over 30 years.

JIM PTOLOMEY



Rural Stirling
Housing Association

Do you need an affordable home ?

Rural Stirling Housing Association aims to support local communities by providing quality homes at affordable rents for families, couples and single people in housing need.

We currently have over 600 rented houses and flats. Around 40 of these become available for rent each year. We currently have properties in the following communities:

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Buchlyvie	Gargunnoch	Kippen	Tyndrum
Callander	Gartmore	Lochearnhead	
Deanston	Killearn	Strathblane	

We are currently planning further new build developments for Killearn, Balmaha, Croftamie, Kippen and Drymen. Please let us know if you want to live in a village that is not listed above. Information on local housing need and demand helps us plan for the future. For further information about us and a downloadable application pack please visit our website www.rsha.org.uk.

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enquiries@rsha.org.uk
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A Wildflower Walk

Readers of the *Courier* who are fond of walking will no doubt know the lovely Banks of Endrick walk from Drumtlan Ford to Ballochruin Bridge following the north bank of the River Endrick then on to Balfron on the south bank. A burn runs into the Endrick on the north bank which has a plank to aid crossing, but in wet spells this plank can be underwater, and it is better not to attempt a crossing.

During the first Covid 2019 lockdown in spring and summer, my wife and I frequently walked from Ballochruin Bridge through the plantation on the north side of the river down to the riverbank and followed the path as far as a little burn flowing into the river. (Note that this burn is almost impossible to cross unless it has been dry for some little while.)

Although a short stretch of the river, the bank was alive with a variety of wild flowers that added to the beauty of the setting. At the end of what was a dry and sunny spring and summer, we had identified (observed, but not picked) 28 different wildflowers. Here are some you might come across if you walk this way in spring and summer 2021.

Red Campion (*Silene dioica*)



This species is dioecious (i.e., it has separate male and female flowers). The root of the plant has been used as a soap substitute obtained by simmering the root in hot water.

Flag or Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

This is a perennial herb that is common in wet environments and will grow happily in water. Yellow and green dyes from this plant were used in the Harris tweed industry.



Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)



Also known as All Heal, this is a tall medicinal herb whose roots and rhizomes contain oils which have sedative and antispasmodic effects.

Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

This is an invasive plant and one of the top 20 aliens in Britain. It spreads rapidly by spitting its seeds onto waterways where the seeds germinate, float downstream and colonise further along the bank.



Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*)

This is a very pretty plant in flower from mid to late summer. Its seeds are poisonous to us, but they do not seem to affect birds or sheep. It is listed under the Noxious Weeds Act of 1936, but I tend to classify a weed as a plant growing where it's not wanted!



Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)



This is a tall, graceful plant that thrives on acid soils. A single plant can produce one to two million seeds hence its commonality. The brownish purple spots on the flowers are markings which attract bees as the spots show up in ultraviolet

light which the insect can see.

Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*)

Common though this orchid is, it is no less beautiful for that. It is taller than the heath spotted orchid with which it is often confused. The lip of the common spotted orchid has an exaggerated central tooth which helps in its identification.



Hoof Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*)



I spotted this fungus (also known as Tinder Fungus) on a beech tree close to the river. Although not a wildflower, I have included it because it has some fascinating uses. The inner flesh, known as amadou, was used in fly fishing to soak up excess water from the flies. Pre-historic humans used the skin to create a spark by scratching it with a flint and then slicing the fungi into thin pieces to provide tinder. It has also been used to make very thick paper.

I hope this article will enhance the beauty of your walks along the River Endrick or elsewhere in our countryside. I used two main books to help with identification of wildflowers and fungi:

W. Lippert and D. Podlech, *Collins Nature Guide to Wild Flowers of Britain and Europe* (1993).
Shelley Evans and Geoffrey Kibby, *Pocket Nature Fungi* (Dorling Kindersley, 2004).

TOM RENFREW

Canine Lockdown Challenges

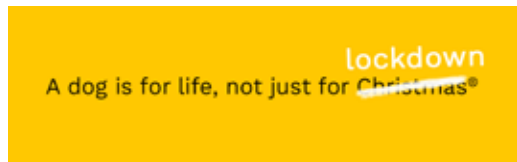
Covid-19 has changed all our lives, including those of our pets. There have been very sad instances when pets have had to be given up because of changes of circumstances as a direct result of the pandemic. Mostly, though, the news is about the many people who bought a puppy for companionship and to give them something to do during lockdown.

But what happens once lockdown is over and they all need to go back to work? A lot of these people will no longer be able to give the dog the care and attention it needs when other responsibilities may push their dog's wellbeing down on their list of priorities.

Dogs Trust (DogsTrust.org.uk) warned that as many as 40,000 dogs could be abandoned as a result of the pandemic. In the last three months of 2020, the charity received 2,000 calls from owners who regret the purchase of their new pet.

Dogs Trust has even put out a new slogan: 'A dog is for life, not just for lockdown'. You probably recognise it

as a riff on their 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas' slogan which was put in place because individuals were buying puppies as Christmas presents without thinking about the effort and time it takes to care for a dog. The



same issues seem to be appearing as a result of lockdown. People have been buying dogs to keep them company and provide a good reason to go out of doors, without always thinking through how they would care for them once the pandemic receded.

If you are considering buying a dog, please think about how you will be able to take care of it in the future.

Make sure your new family member is from a legitimate dog breeder.

If a puppy is for sale, especially online, at a price that's too good to be true, you are probably dealing with an unscrupulous puppy farmer. If in doubt, contact your local vet or organisations such as Dogs Trust and the SSPCA. And do consider a rescue dog.



Both these charities also care for many of the dogs and puppies that have been abandoned – both as a result of lockdown and its eventual ending – and they are in need of good homes.

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Before you get your puppy

There once was a puppy, sold on the streets of Glasgow to a mum as a present for her kids. They looked for advice online and followed a well-known trainer on YouTube whose methods included showing the dog who's boss and locking him away. He was walked on a short chain, locally. They meant well, but liked him less and less.

At six months, the dog was labelled 'dangerous and unpredictable' and given up. He wasn't actually either of those things, but he is still emotionally confused about humans and has anxiety problems. He is also now mine, and it took a lot of time for him to trust people. Sadly, he isn't a one-off!

As a veterinarian with qualifications in animal behaviour and care as well as training, here are some tips on how to start your dog off on the right paw.



- ❗ Think before you buy. Owning a dog is a daily commitment for around 15 years.
- ❗ Do you want to **own** or might you prefer to **foster** a dog from a rescue organisation or even help another dog owner? Would another pet suit you better?
- ❗ Is **now** the right time? Covid-19 has turned the world upside down and getting a dog when life is abnormal is generally not recommended. Dog selection and socialisation are limited, and dogs now enjoying constant human companionship will struggle when owners are absent again, especially if that is all they know.
- ❗ Does it have to be a **puppy**? Adopting an older dog has many advantages: a lot of choice, you see what you get, you have a (good) charity's support. Those dogs (and pups!) are wonderful, and deserve a good home.

Is your heart set on a puppy?

- ❗ The first couple of years will test your patience. This is when many owners give up.
- ❗ There is no ideal breed or mix. Every dog is an individual, with behaviour determined by genetics, learning and current environment. Smaller dogs are somewhat easier, but it's really up to

you. However, understand that some breeds have extreme conformations (Pugs, for example) that may cause health problems, and true working dogs (like farm Collies) are bred to work, which can be a huge challenge.

- ❗ Buy from a good breeder who keeps the dogs in a domestic setting. Meet the pup's parents; visit several times before making a decision or taking a pup home. Generally, select a pup that is not either extremely shy or overly boisterous.

Those all-important first weeks at home set you and your puppy up for success.

- ❗ The ideal age to take puppy home is 8–9 weeks, because your puppy should collect positive perceptions of your home environment (and of '7 places, 70 dogs and 700 people') before the socialisation period ends at about 12 weeks! Pups also develop their toilet substrate preference (grass, for instance) at 9 weeks.
- ❗ Have a crate in a puppy-proofed area, a well-fenced garden with appropriate toys and equipment. Know how to teach puppy and provide environmental enrichment, but have some rules.
- ❗ Ideally, find a professional for 'your' dog before you take pup home. Anyone can call themselves a 'trainer' or 'behaviourist', so look for qualifications. If aversive, forceful methods are used, among the common side effects are anxiety, aggression and brittle compliance. Those methods have damaged countless dogs. Training should be modern, reward-based education based on scientific learning theory, and be efficient, ethical and fun, strengthening the bond you have with your dog.

Rose Lederer is a veterinarian, with further qualifications in animal behaviour consultant (MSc) and pet dog trainer. Contact her at rose@breathingspace.vet; 07925 846618.



New Look 'Welcome to Killearn' Signs



At the end of the millennium year there were funds available for village projects, and residents were asked for ideas on how best to spend them.

'Welcome to Killearn' signs was an idea submitted by Mrs Christine Bowie, and these, carved in elm, were erected on the three entry points to the village – Balfron Road, Station Road and on Main Street at the Branziert Road junction. 'George Buchanan Birthplace 1506' was added in 2006 to mark the 500th anniversary of his birth.

The signs began to look a bit jaded last year and certainly not very welcoming, and it was agreed that they needed a makeover. The decision was taken to paint the lettering a lighter, brighter colour, and so the signs were duly taken down, and repainted and repaired where necessary. The results speak for themselves!

The pictures show Mike Gray erecting the sign in Station Road, and Fiona Glass busily painting. FG



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THE KILLEARN HERITAGE TRAIL

through

We are lucky enough to live in a picturesque village in a beautiful part of the world. The origins of Killearn date back hundreds of years but how much do most of us know of this heritage? We enjoy a wonderful environment – but which landscapes are natural, and which were ‘managed’ over the centuries?

To help bring the history of the village to life, launching in mid May this year (restrictions permitting) the KILLEARN HERITAGE TRAIL will feature:

- 📍 Eight beautifully designed information boards illustrating the stories of the village’s history
- 📍 A 2km, wheelchair-accessible, guided route around the village, for residents and visitors alike
- 📍 Information on Killearn’s most historic buildings, and tales of some of its leading characters

Complemented by a dynamic new website detailing the Trail, its pages will cover many aspects of local history, and our built and natural environment. The website will include:

- 📍 Trail map and boards
- 📍 Heritage Trail quiz for kids
- 📍 Further detailed information on ancient buildings and landmarks
- 📍 Maps showing Killearn’s development through the centuries
- 📍 A gallery of intriguing archive photographs
- 📍 Suggested paths for walking/running/cycling
- 📍 Documents, features and links on local history

The map displayed here shows the route of the Trail and the site of each of the eight information boards. What each board says will be revealed when the Trail is launched.

Killearn is full of surprises. Here are a few unearthed while seeking out information for the Heritage Trail.

Key to Images on p19 (clockwise from top left):
 Dumgoyne Station; Water wheel made in Simpson’s workshop for Walter MacGowan’s mill; Gilfillan’s bakery vehicle; Balfroon Road with White Horse pub; Haymaking in field which became Allan Road; Village smithy, now 12 Main Street; Atkinson’s garage; Bank House

Eight information boards guide you round the



When Killearn voted to have only one pub

In the early 1920s, there were two pubs in the village, the Black Bull and the Wheat Sheaf (on the site of the Little Outdoor Classroom). On 8 December 1925, an official Temperance Poll was held in Killearn. The voters supported just one alcohol licence in the village and the Wheat Sheaf ceased serving alcohol. It was only in 1964 that the village voted to remove the limit on alcohol licences.

Watch out for the elephant

In the 1930s, travelling shows went around the villages to provide entertainment. In 1935, a circus visited the village and you could have found an elephant being washed next to the public standpipe between the Black Bull and the Old Kirk.



Watch out for details of the launch coming
in your letterbox, on social media and in the local press.

Historic features of the village



Which king liked the view?

On the way out of the village towards Balfron are two houses called King's Mile and King's View. In 1899, the Prince of Wales was travelling to Duntreath Castle to meet his mistress, Alice Keppel, the sister of Sir Archibald Edmonstone (grandfather of the current baronet). He so admired the view from this spot that it was then named 'Prince's View'. It was quickly upgraded to King's View when he became Edward VII on the death of his mother, Queen Victoria, in 1901.



Where's the Stone?

Just over 70 years ago, on Christmas Day 1950, the Stone of Destiny was stolen from underneath the seat of the Coronation Chair at Westminster Abbey. For a few days before it was returned to Arbroath Abbey on 11 April 1951, it was hidden here. In the words of one involved, the Stone was taken 'to Killearn to the house of a friend who, although he was privately sympathetic to our movement, was not a known supporter. There the Stone was completely bricked-in among the foundations of the house.'



No great escape here

In 1943, a small prisoner-of-war camp was built at the top of Drumbeg Loan. There were two prisoners' huts, each able to hold 28 people. In addition, there was a washblock, cook house and canteen, and accommodation for guards. Many of the prisoners, initially Italian and later German, worked during the day on local farms.



Van Gogh's friend

When Sir William Burrell gave his art collection to the City of Glasgow in 1944, a condition was that it should be housed within four miles of Killearn to avoid Glasgow's pollution. But why here? It turns out he did know about the village. Alexander Reid, the Glasgow art dealer through whom Burrell bought many French impressionist paintings, spent his last three years at Lettre Cottage, just outside the village. Burrell visited him there. In 1886, Reid shared a studio in Paris with Vincent van Gogh. Van Gogh's portrait of Reid is one of the treasures of the Kelvingrove Museum.



Discrete advertising

A company that repaired the Buchanan Monument in the 19th century carved its name on the Monument – not as an obvious advertisement, however. 'STUART. BUILDER. GLASGOW' is carved on the very top stone of the Monument.



Killlearn Covid-19 Community Hub

When the first Covid-19 lockdown happened last March, a group of residents got together to offer assistance or information to anyone living in our village.

One of the initial organisers, Emily Hotchkiss, said: 'We were keen to reach out to the isolated and vulnerable in our community, especially anyone in need who was self-isolating. We were aware that not everyone was on social media, let alone Facebook, and not everyone has a smartphone. Which is why we started to coordinate volunteers across the village, each of whom took responsibility for a street or road in Killlearn. They then posted a note through each door in their street, with details of a local person to contact in case of need. The idea was that if someone needed anything picking up from a shop, some advice or even a chat, they could get in touch with the volunteer. And we now have more than 100 volunteers on the list!' A Facebook group, Killlearn

Covid-19 Community Hub, was established to share information related to the virus that might affect the residents (to locate the hub page, Google 'facebook killlearn covid'). As the pandemic developed, local businesses, shops, council-provided services and voluntary groups that were offering deliveries, assistance, services or information were able to post on the page.

The page contains a mix of items, mainly news and government advice, but there is also information about schools and even a topic on refuse bin collections! There are now more than 100 posts about Covid-19, all relevant to local residents.

Paul Searle, one of the administrators on the Facebook page, said: 'The really useful thing about it is that you don't need a Facebook account to be able to view it. We deliberately made it a "public page" so that anyone with a computer or smartphone can see who's in the group and what they post. We now have more than 400 members – people who do have a Facebook account requesting membership – and it also includes those who live outwith the village, but maybe have relatives living here. The advantage of being a member is that you get alerted when information is posted, and you can connect with other villagers very easily. To join, you simply state what your connection is



to Killlearn.'

Emily concluded by saying: 'The system has really run itself, based as it is on the street-level help, but we're also very grateful for the support of Killlearn Community Council. We would like to thank all of our volunteers for their commitment, hard work and generous support to others in need of help at this difficult time. And don't forget that if you, a neighbour, friend or relative need any help or advice relating to the Covid-19 situation or need anything picking up from a shop for instance, please get in touch with your street's volunteer.'

The list of volunteers was updated in January and is available on the Facebook page. Or you can contact Killlearn Community Council, who will put you in touch with the relevant person.

The Killlearn Covid-19 Community Hub is registered with Stirling Council's Community Engagement Team.

Contact Killlearn Community Council:
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Facebook: @KilllearnCC;
www.killlearncc.org.uk.

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Buchanan Castle Golf Club

Buchanan Castle is a naturally beautiful parkland golf course situated on the outskirts of Drymen, crossed by two streams and bordered by the River Endrick. The course abounds with wildlife. Deer, pheasants and buzzards are commonplace. The fortunate may also spot otters and ospreys.



a number of testing par 4s. There are water features and most greens are well protected by bunkers

After golf, you will find a warm welcome in the clubhouse. Our chef prides himself on warming soups, and the weekly specials provide great value for money. Lighter snacks and good coffee are always

Golfers at Buchanan enjoy unrivalled practice facilities. There is a fully fitted and functioning covered driving range, with 10 bays, a par three Academy course, warm-up area, and the pro shop has an adjoining video instruction room. Our club professional, Jason McCreadie is a very accomplished coach, and the pro shop is well stocked. Members always enjoy a chat here before and after golf.

The course was designed by the great James Braid and it opened in 1936. Although a relative newcomer, it is now recognised as one of the finest courses in the area. The layout has two par 5s, four par 3s and

available. The clubhouse can also be made available for weddings and private functions.

Buchanan Castle offers a wide range of membership offers. Full adult membership starts at £550 for the first year rising to £750 in year 3. Sons and daughters can join free with every new adult member. If you are aged between 25 to 30, membership costs £385 for the first year. If you are aged between 18 and 24, and the first year is only £200.

Full details can be found on our website www.buchanancastlegolfclub.co.uk/membership or email Secretary@buchanancastlegolfclub.co.uk



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Or visit: www.buchanancastlegolfclub.co.uk/membership

I got a free membership...

Moments of Brightness

There used to be a feeling of mystery and excitement attached to the word 'mask'. There was the image of the masked ball, with attendant glamorous costume. *The Phantom of the Opera* offered the same strange allure, and even the *Man in the Iron Mask* had a hideous fascination. On the criminal front, there was a romantic appeal to the image of the masked highwayman, who must in real life have been utterly terrifying.

There is certainly nothing remotely attractive about today's hoodlum in a balaclava, which is presumably the modern equivalent. Hallowe'en, on the other hand, is an opportunity to indulge in the fun of disguise, instead of the menace. And then there was the Lone Ranger, who was clearly on the side of the angels, as are the legions of NHS staff, smothered as they are from head to foot in PPE. Oh, yes, the mask has a whole new meaning for all of us.

People in what is referred to as 'the caring professions' have, of course, always worn masks. Surgeons, dentists, anyone working in close contact with patients are well used to them. Now it has become the norm for all of us, and hopefully for most of us the 'caring' bit is automatically included. But am I the only one to notice the number of masks abandoned on the pavement?

Anyone can accidentally drop one and not realise it, but there does seem to be a bit of a rash of them, as though folk are just tossing them away. They seem to favour car parks, as though drivers drop them from their laps as they get out of their cars and can't be bothered to pick them up.

And, of course, it's not just here. You only have to watch any nature programme to see masks turning up in places of spectacular isolation. It's only a matter of time before they appear at the bottom of

the Mariana Trench. It sounds mad that wildlife is being threatened by something as small and innocent and designed to protect as a mask, but that is what's happening. Idiocy prevails, even sometimes in a caring community.

And we are still a caring community, aren't we. It is because we know each other that we recognise each other in all sorts of unexpected places, even if we have to work around the masks. Not long ago, I had to hold my breath and unveil myself momentarily to Helen, in the expanse of the Forth Valley atrium – a fun moment in an otherwise dreary day.

Apart from such serendipitous occasions, there are lots of other demonstrations of village togetherness. For instance, at Christmas time, weren't the Advent windows wonderful? Lots of villagers could be seen walking round in the dark, looking out for them and admiring them.

Also during Advent, a small group from Killearn Primary Nursery Class visited us, bringing a bowl of bulbs as a spontaneous gift. I'm not sure how we qualified for it, but we were thrilled with the whole idea. Later in the month, we had a Christmas card from Killearn Primary School – another charming surprise. We were truly touched.

At the time of writing, spring is still some way off, but the bulbs are leaping up in the winter sunshine, promising the blossoms of spring.



The children who brought the bulbs had no masks, because they were so little. We could see their bright and shining faces, and their happiness in the giving of the gift. It is gratifying to know that our children are still being taught life's important values. Our thanks go to them, and to their teachers.

JOYCE BEGG



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Bravely driving on, despite the pandemic!



It's been a tricky old time for Keith Roache and his mildly effective team of staff at the depot. It's also been, shall we say, an 'interesting' learning curve for the production team behind *Roaches Coaches*, the first ever FADS podcast, which made its debut on Spotify and Anchor in early December.

Written and directed by Ian Kidd, *Roaches Coaches* is set in a small-town bus depot, in a magical time before Covid-19 was invented. The business is going through hard times and the hapless staff have to get the buses out despite vandalism, terrorism, extreme feminism and a lack of optimism. Owner/Manager Keith Roache does his best, but he's always one step behind lazy Jimmy, hopeless Carol, desperate Mags, womaniser Kenny, naïve William and camp Laurence.

The original plan was to record and publish the podcast during the summer of 2020, while no other shows were in production. We thought we'd have a few rehearsals, then record each episode 'live' in the Menzies Hall over a few Sunday afternoons. Then lockdown and social distancing happened.

Determined to carry on, we've been using Zoom for read-throughs and rehearsals, and managed to record most of Episode One last autumn in special studio



premises with separate rooms for the production team and cast. These allowed us to accommodate one or two actors at a time (restrictions permitting). The last bit of dialogue had to be captured via online means – trial and error in itself! And then our very talented sound engineer, Sam Yoffe, had to spend a huge amount of time stitching it all together.

The first episode was published in early December, two short specials were recorded remotely over the festive



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Search 'Roaches Coaches' on Spotify
www.anchor.fm/roaches-coaches




season, and now we're just working out the best way to get Episode Two down.

Although it's a much longer and more painstaking process than any of us anticipated, we are getting there, slowly – just like the buses at Roaches Coaches.

Episode One and our two short specials are available now on Spotify, Anchor and a number of other podcast platforms.

You can find out all about Keith and his team on the dedicated Roaches pages of our website at www.fintrydrama.org.uk. Links to all other platforms can be found via Anchor (anchor.fm/roaches-coaches).

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(Lumsdaine Halls, adjacent to Killearn Pharmacy)
Buchlyvie Old Surgery – Monday, 9.30am – 1.30pm
Torrance – Thursday and Friday, 9.30am – 2.00pm

Killearn Village Hall News

As I write, it's getting towards the end of January. The snowdrops are starting to peek through. The sky is blue. The lights on the tree continue to brighten the darker nights and mornings.

The vaccination programme has started. The Kitchen Window is open for business, even if it is only on a takeaway basis.

Spring is in the air, and we're looking forward to things opening up again.

A big shout out to the Village Hall team who have worked quietly behind the scenes to keep the Hall in good working order during these open/closed/half-open times.

We've put in a new booking system, painted, scrubbed and fitted new bulbs in emergency lights.

We loved having the chance to be part of the Killearn Advent Windows adventure. A big thanks to the team



behind that – a lovely way to bring the community together to smile as they walked around the village.

But the Hall isn't about us – it's about you, the local community.

As things start to open up, we look forward to working with you to chat about how we can help you get back to classes, to activities, to family get-togethers.

We have space in the Hall. Maybe you might feel that the bigger spaces can help you sit down or catch up with a few friends and family for food, drinks, activities...

We're here to help. We're open for business and excited to see the café opening. Come and talk to us or email us at killearnvillagehall@gmail.com.

FIONA RENNIE



Image courtesy of L Kirk

KCFC Report

The Board wish to thank Mike Gray, who recently stepped down as Chairman, for the huge contribution he made to the continued success of KCFC. Enterprises for which he was responsible or to which he provided invaluable support include the e-bikes initiative, the Killearn to Balfron path delivery plan, and the Heritage Trail. These successes are a legacy of which he can be justly proud. We look forward to Mike's continued support and will rely on his sound judgement on many subjects. Graeme Fraser and Fiona Rennie succeed him as convenor and co-convenor respectively.

During a period of semi-hibernation, the Village Hall welcomed Sarah and David Weir as the new café operators. The Kitchen Window was only up and running for two days when new lockdown restrictions required a take-away service to be implemented. Although disappointing and disruptive, the customer feedback during the very short period of normal operation was very positive, which was encouraging, and we look forward to the café becoming firmly established as a village favourite.

In cooperation with Killearn Community Council, the Christmas Lights initiative was brought together at record

speed and helped to brighten some of the dark December days. Special thanks should go to all the local businesses that generously supported this scheme and largely made it financially viable. The lights have a minimum five-year life expectancy, so we will look forward to seeing them again next year in less fraught circumstances.

Colourful Killearn as usual erected and decorated the Christmas Tree at the front of Killearn Kirk, although the socially distanced procedure was somewhat less jolly than normal. Edenmill once again generously donated the tree and helped both with delivery, installation and removal. A very big thank you to them for all their help.

We have agreed to the installation of air quality monitoring equipment on the tower at the Village Hall, and look forward to receiving feed back from the University of Strathclyde as they gather data.

We are currently working on plans to widen and improve our communication channels with members and the wider community, and want to thank everyone for their continued support during these difficult times.

We expect to be able to report progress with this in the next issue of the *Courier*.

Broadband Update

Once again, there are no visible changes to report in the village. The proposed installation of a fibre cabinet (Onesy) on the corner of Graham Road and Main Street is not yet underway. By the time you read this, the proposal for a wireless internet service to parts of the Branziert and Drumbeg Loan may be in operation if there has been sufficient support. The basic service offers 30Mbps down and 3Mbps up. An early proof-of-concept trial showed that speeds of 100Mbps down and 20Mbps up could be delivered. If you live in these areas and are not already aware of this possible wireless service, then please get in touch to see if the service can be delivered to you.

Communications about the progress of the R100 fibre roll-out programme from Digital Scotland have dried up. It is quite clear from news filtering through that the programme will be delayed by at least one, and probably two, years (i.e. now targeted for completion in 2025). This doesn't help improve individual circumstances when we are all making increased demands on the internet service we have at present. It is understandable that Openreach may well be concentrating on maintaining the existing infrastructure and connectivity rather than undertaking new work, probably while also being understaffed due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, KBG continues to provide regular monthly updates to Killearn Community Council.

DOUG ASHWORTH
CHAIR, KILLEARN BROADBAND GROUP

The Wine List's Curious Facts

Here are a few facts about wine to take your mind off the challenges of the world of Covid-19.

- Red wine has to be the healthiest way to drink alcohol. It helps us live longer, have a healthy heart, even sleep better and is naturally low in carbs.
- In Japan, it is possible to buy wine-flavoured Kit-Kats.
- Because wine tasting is so much about the smell, women are better wine tasters than men.
- If a husband found his wife drinking wine in ancient Rome, he was at liberty to kill her – it was forbidden for women drink wine.
- Vatican City drinks the most wine per capita in a year, with 74L consumed by each person a year.
- During the Prohibition era in the United States (1920–33), enterprising vintners sold bricks of grape concentrate, with the conscientious warning that on no account should customers dissolve the bricks in water and place them in a dark cupboard for 20 days 'because then it would turn into wine'.
- Prince Charles has an Aston Martin that runs on biofuel made out of old wine.
- An average bottle of wine is made with 600–800 grapes, and a vine generally produces enough for 10 bottles.
- A champagne bottle is pressurised to between 70–90 PSI, which is twice the pressure in your car tyre.

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As you can imagine all the Club's activities that would involve meeting up have been severely curtailed recently. Activities have been typically limited to some work in garages and home offices. It's been another grand opportunity to do lots of tidying and maintenance activities.

We have been meeting virtually, though, with video nights featuring Colin McRae's early rallying days up to the point he joined Subaru and a more recent return to the Isle of Man, Goodwood Revival and Festival of Speed, and vintage cars with monster engines.

The Beast of Turin is a prime example of the latter with a 28-litre engine of only 4 cylinders! This monster also featured in an early episode of *David Jason's Secret Service*.

A Christmas Quiz Night was challenging for the organiser, but was fun for the participants, although everyone had to provide their own glass of wine and mince pie!

We are hoping that when lockdown is lifted and folk have had their inoculations, we'll be able to get our cars



1911 FIAT S76 highest recorded speed 132mph.
Videos available on YouTube, including starting it up.

out again and go somewhere – anywhere – although our most hoped for event is one postponed from last summer: up to Macrahanish and a round of golf!

Meanwhile, we'll continue with an online programme and regular electronic *Overdrive* newsletters to keep members informed and entertained until we are able to meet up in person again.

If you would like to know about our plans before the next issue of the *Courier*, then please contact me as secretary at SCCC.info001@gmail.com.

DOUG ASHWORTH



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Covid-19

During this pandemic we are continuing to provide all the essential services you expect from us. We urge everyone to do what they can to comply with the advice from government and the health service. We need your continued support to ensure that we are able to help those who need us most during this time.

Criminals are using the Covid as a cover story to trick you into parting with your money or information. Always take a moment to Stop, Challenge and Protect before making any payments.

It's important not to let the criminals rush or panic you into making a decision that you later come to regret. Remain vigilant and guard against criminals using the publicity around coronavirus as a chance to target you with fraudulent emails, phone calls, texts messages or social media posts.

With fake news articles on the internet and in the press promoting remedies, cures and false advice around coronavirus, it's also important to only share articles from trustworthy sources. If you are in any doubt, then visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus or www.who.int for information.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment. Stop and think: it could protect you and your money. (See Latest Scams, below.)

Theft

Country Cycles was broken into with a high value of bikes being stolen. Please remember to be vigilant and

Latest Scams

Email scams are still rife, ranging from one saying that their TV licence was due (date given in *US format*) to another saying that their bank account had been accidentally credited and to call to arrange reversal of funds. One involved an email supposedly announcing the BT bill and providing a fraudulent log-in link used to capture the log-in details. These were then used to harvest emails and contact addresses to send an appeal for help and to buy an Amazon voucher on their behalf.

Other emails have featured government departments like the 'Home Office' requesting payment of an outstanding parking penalty (not their business), or scam messages from 'HMRC' about your tax return and suggesting you have a refund to claim. Genuine, official notification will come from HMRC only by post.

And there is the evergreen favourite of phony phone calls with a message 'Amazon prime services have been renewed for £79'.

A relatively new scam involves another round of emails either suggesting you need to update your Outlook

contact the police should anyone see anything suspicious. Remember to follow basic home security rules and help to make it harder for the thieves.

There are guides on the Police Scotland website giving ideas to protect your property: <https://rb.gy/z63yiy>.

Road Safety

Speed checks have been carried out in the village and these will continue.

Bogus Workmen

How can I protect myself from doorstep crime?

For lots of suggestions, contact us directly or see <https://rb.gy/ylpuqk>. Remember, it's your home. There's no reason why anyone should enter your home against your wishes.

Contacts

PC Steven Graham and PC Gary Martin are based at Balfron Police Office. Contact them on 101 or at ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk.

Please remember that we regularly publish useful information and updates on social media, including appeals for information, updates about road closures and crime prevention advice.

- www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision
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email as it is an old version or an email, supposedly from a friend, requesting help but since their phone is not working, communication is only possible by email. These are scams! Should you reply, a request comes back to buy vouchers on their behalf. The scammer is again trying to get bank or card details. In the cases I have seen recently, the email account was compromised to allow these scam emails to appear to be sent from the friend. Changing your password is essential but is not sufficient, because other changes have been made to the operation of the friend's email, and these have to be reversed, too.

These are all just examples of fraudsters trying to get you to give them log-in, bank account or credit card details.

Keep those scammers at bay. Be healthily sceptical about unexpected communications. Check by making a phone call using a number on an official communication. Preferably use a different phone to do this, or wait a few minutes after any call coming in to you. Stay safe.

DOUG ASHWORTH

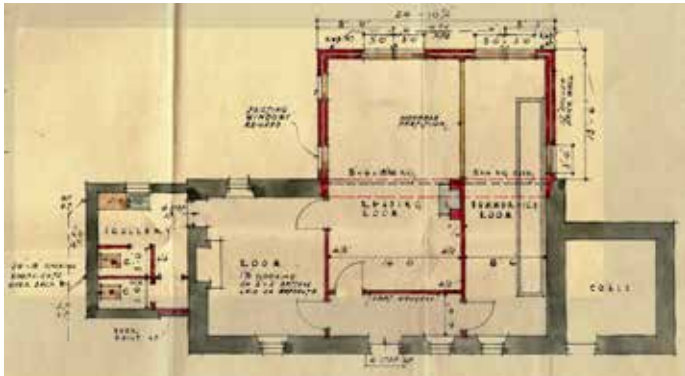
From the Archive: Townfoot Cottage's Great Escapes

Townfoot Cottage, dating from the mid to late 18th century, stands in a key position on Main Street. It narrowly escaped demolition on two occasions.

Owned by Curtis Lampson, the cottage had become vacant in 1938. It was considered sub-standard for use as a dwelling and a Demolition Order was made by the County Council.

Its first escape was engineered by Killearn Recreation Club, which was formed in 1931. They met either in the Parish Hall (now the Village Hall) or in the Wheatsheaf Inn (on the site of the nursery), and were looking for premises of their own.

Mr Lampson made the cottage available to the Club at no cost. Members developed a plan aided by the Killearn Trust in which the cottage would be vested to the Trustees and converted for Club use.



The cost of the necessary modifications, estimated to be about £260, would be shared between the Club and the Trust. Fundraising, including door-to-door collections, had raised £168 by early 1939 and the Trust had guaranteed another £100, allowing the alterations to proceed, thus preserving the building.

In October 1939, the Club members optimistically agreed to maintain activities, and moved into Townfoot despite the outbreak of war. The Simpson joinery business was to be awarded the contract for the alterations making the cottage suitable for Club purposes, with members undertaking as much of the work as possible themselves.

By November, it was decided to hold the major work in abeyance and, from 16 March 1940, Club meetings were suspended. Instead, the premises were made available to let at 2s 6d (12½p) a night.

One room was let to the Special Constables and the second to the Auxiliary Fire Service and the Home Guard. In 1944, part of the premises was let to Miss Campbell for use as a post office. Little maintenance was carried out.

Club meetings in the cottage began again in January 1946. The Killearn Trust Report of 1946 noted the deterioration of the premises during the war and expressed concern that the property would become derelict.

The pre-war planned refurbishment was never implemented, and Club minutes over the following years indicate maintenance problems with the building and fluctuating Club membership.

Despite buying two television sets between 1952 and 1957 with the hope of attracting interest, membership continued to decline, the blame being laid principally on the impact of home televisions!

At an extraordinary General Meeting on 1 June 1961, it was decided that the club would be put into abeyance 'until such time as a Recreation Club was needed or wanted in the village' and that the Club should abandon the building.

The cottage was now empty and in such poor condition that the Trust initially considered demolition. An offer was made by the owners of the Wheatsheaf to purchase the land and 'derelict cottage'. However, after expert examination, the Trust decided it would be possible to refurbish the building as a dwelling and that, due to its age and strategic location, this work should be done.

There was considerable difficulty in getting planning permission for this second great escape from the County Council, which appeared to have a policy of demolishing sub-standard property at the time.

A 'standard grant' was theoretically available to upgrade the amenities of 'any dwelling'. This the Council initially refused on the grounds that the building had not been lived in since 1938 at which time it had been under a Demolition Order.



Despite the setbacks, the Trust proceeded with the refurbishment of Townfoot Cottage as a three-room house exceeding the standards required at the time.

In 1963, it was re-occupied by G.J. Russell. The house has been further modernised over the years, and is no longer under threat.

ALL KILLEARN ARCHIVE

Fingers Crossed for Killearn 10k

At time of writing, the January sky over Killearn is as grey as a battleship's hull. The ground is covered in the grubby, slushy remnants of the latest snowstorm, and what daylight there is gives the distinct impression that it can't wait for darkness to fall.

We're in full-on, strength-sapping lockdown. Given current restrictions on who we can exercise with, the



thought of 300 smiling runners, clad in all the colours of the rainbow, pounding our

pavements and the Pipe Track under shining early summer skies feels like one from another time, even another world.

What better occupation, then, than to look forward to better times ahead?

The last thing any of us wants to do is give up hope of a 2021 Killearn 10k. None of us knows right now what restrictions we'll be living under in June, specifically on the morning of its first Saturday. But the committee will do all in our power to make sure there is a running event of some kind on the appointed date.

We weren't able, given the circumstances at the time, to open entries in the normal way in early December, and we'll no doubt have to wait a while yet before we can finalise our plans. But our strong feeling right now is that we want to have an event this year.

So stay safe and positive, everybody, and save the date: 5 June 2021.



Rugby Round-up

In common with most team sports, the 2020–21 rugby season has been almost a complete write-off in terms of competitive games. But there is still plenty of interesting activity going on at Strathendrick Rugby Club.

The enforced restrictions have actually been a double-edged sword. When training activity was permitted for the juniors, the coaches had to devise interesting drills and exercises minimising contact. So running skills – balance, acceleration, changing direction and finding space – have all come to the fore.

Since this year's lockdown commenced, coaching has moved online, with regular seminars on all aspects of the game, coach development sessions and – of course – weekly strength and conditioning with Dave Cook.

The fundraising efforts in aid of Kerr Hamilton and brain injury charities were hugely successful with the appeal, raffle and charity auction raising over £15,000 thanks to generous contributions by supporters old and new, from far and wide.

So the Club aims to help people maintain both physical fitness and mental wellbeing through these dark days.

For more information visit www.pitchero.com/clubs/strathendrickrfc/. For details of online sessions, contact nick.hawkins01@btinternet.com.

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Killlearn Tennis Club News

We've all had a very trying 2020, but hopefully now we can look forward to a better 2021.

Play has continued over the winter months, with Covid guidelines strictly in place. The courts have been well used and it is great to see such activity at the Club in a safe environment. We would like to thank all members for adhering to the guidelines.

The Club's membership has increased over the last several months and we are delighted to warmly welcome our new members.

Our floodlights have recently been upgraded, so tennis is available for those who dare to play in the dark evenings! Also, we have had a great team of members and non-members working on the grounds and, thanks to them, the Club is in great shape. A huge thanks to all those who participated.

Spring is looming, so what an opportunity to pick up your racquet and head to the courts for some fun, fresh air and exercise. Killlearn Tennis Club caters for all levels,

from total beginners to team players. We also have an active social group, perfect for those who just want to have fun, a bit of chat and a little exercise. Coaching is available for all levels, but in these current times, is restricted. It is hoped that Junior Coaching will resume in spring.

Some members of the Committee have recently decided to retire after many years of involvement and dedication to the Club. We would like to take this opportunity to give our sincere thanks to all of the retirees for their amazing work. The Club would not function without the Committee's dedication.

The Club would like to welcome all those who wish to participate in tennis, whether for fun or competition, at what is one of the most beautifully located tennis clubs in the country.

If interested in membership or for more information, please visit our website www.killlearntennisclub.org.uk or see us on Facebook.

Curling – No Stones Turned

Since the article in the Winter issue of the *Courier*, there has been virtually no curling in Scotland, and none as far as Strathendrick Curling Club is concerned.

No ice allocations were given to the curling clubs at Stirling. Instead a scheme was set up to organise leagues which anyone could apply to join. A number of members from the Ladies Section made up six combined teams with Dollar Ladies, with whom the ice is shared on Thursday mornings.

Games were due to start on 28 October, then postponed to the following week and finally until after New Year. It is now thought to be extremely unlikely that any curling will happen this season.

A few of the Scottish rinks managed to open. Kinross and Greenacres very briefly, and Inverness, Dumfries and Aberdeen for a bit longer. All are now closed, apart from the Academy rinks at Stirling, which are purely for the elite players.

The Scottish Curling competitions have all been cancelled for the season and very few international competitions are taking place. The Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles World Championships, which were all cancelled last spring, are still scheduled for this spring, at the time of writing. These provide qualification points for the Beijing Winter Olympics in early 2022, which may itself need to be postponed.

It is anticipated that curling will be able to recommence in the autumn. It is going to be a challenge for members to start again after an 18-month break, but we hope for an enthusiastic response. Everyone should have been vaccinated by then, so the normal game should be possible and car sharing should also be permitted.

It is hoped to hold some form of AGM in the spring once gatherings are possible.

The Club will be 175 years old in 2021, so a special celebration will be held in due course.

The contacts for the Club are Diana Jackson (550314) or Gill Smith (550726) or look at our website at www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk.

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Killlearn Football Club News

Who would have thought we would have missed those midgie-ridden evenings up at the Park, watching local villages battle it out on the footy field?

When completing the changing rooms, we could never have predicted that they would lie empty a few years later due to a wee angry bug.

Well there is now light at the end of the tunnel, and fingers crossed we can get back to those wonderful Tuesday and Friday nights again this year.

However, just in case you are missing it too much, we have found a few photos from the archives of some well-kent faces who have graced 'the field of dreams'. See how many you recognise and visit our Facebook page for the full gallery!

For now, football can wait. Please stay safe, follow the rules and protect our community, the NHS and our essential workers.

Take care, from all at Killlearn FC.



Stuart Ballantyne: A Tribute

The *Courier* was very sad to learn of the death, on 9 November 2020 from Covid-19, of Stuart Ballantyne, a founder and key member of Trossachs Search and Rescue (TSAR).

After a successful career in the police and then the ambulance service, Stuart devoted a huge amount of time and effort in establishing and then developing TSAR in the 20 years since its inception in 1998. Over the years he was chairman and then secretary, but also fulfilled many other roles.

Stuart was a key influence in all aspects of TSAR's wide-ranging work: Search and Rescue Dogs (on behalf of the fire service, police and coastguard), First Responders (supporting the Scottish Ambulance Service), Heartstart community CPR classes, Water Rescue, TECS (Technology Enabled Care Service – on behalf of Stirling Council) and public access defibrillators and other community resilience tasks.

Stuart attended the Stockline factory collapse with his first search dog, Meg, and helped coordinate search and rescue work at the Clutha Pub tragedy in Glasgow.

He was a well-known and highly respected figure in the development of community resilience capacity across Scotland.



Stuart lived with his wife, Joanne, in Balfroon Station and was the key mentor, adviser, friend and companion to a generation of Trossachs Search and Rescue members – who formed a guard of honour at the funeral of their dear colleague at Killlearn Woodland Cemetery on 18 November.

Councillor Graham Lambie: A Tribute

Graham Lambie, the Forth and Endrick ward member, sadly passed away at home in February, aged 62.

Cllr Lambie was first elected as an SNP Councillor to Stirling Council in 2007. During his time as an elected member he served on a wide range of committees and panels, including recent roles on Environment and Housing, Adult Social Care and the Council's school holiday meal provision Delivery Group, which followed on from a previous role as Convener of the Council's Education Committee.

As well as a Councillor, Cllr Lambie was a Bailie, deputising for the Provost on civic occasions, a role which he very much enjoyed and carried out with great dignity and enthusiasm.

Closer to home, Cllr Lambie did a great deal for Killearn in his elected role as a Forth and Endrick ward member. He was a faithful attendee at Killearn Community Council meetings, as well as very good at dealing with constituency matters, both meeting people and writing to them.

He leaves a legacy of service to the community, and will be missed in the district.



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Catherine MacKenzie MacKinnon 1937 – 2020

Cathie was born in Gairloch, Wester Ross, one of four children born to Willie and Maggie Morrison. She attended Dingwall Academy, boarding at Tulloch Castle, Dingwall, and loved learning and especially enjoyed studying Latin. She also excelled at hockey and athletics, particularly the high and long jump.



Unfortunately, her education was cut short when she had to return to Gairloch to her mother who required support after an accident.

Family has been important to Cathie throughout her life. She was well known in Gairloch and the surrounding area for her singing ability, winning a gold medal in a local Mod competition and often singing at local ceilidhs.

Cathie came to Killearn and worked as a nanny. One night at a dance in Gartmore, she met Hector MacKinnon. They married and settled in Killearn with children Derek and Margaret. Cathie was a full-time housewife, then worked as a Home Help for a short time until ill health meant she had to leave the job.

She excelled at crafts, in particular sewing, tapestry and knitting, and she taught herself how to use a knitting machine, creating her own designs. She was also an excellent baker, baking on a weekly basis for the family, the baking often disappearing whilst it was still hot!

Cathie became known in Stirlingshire for her singing ability, and when she sang at ceilidhs, *Flower of Scotland* became her signature song. She was a proud Scot and kept up to date with what was happening on the Scottish political scene. She was interested in football, following the fortunes of Ross County football team.

In 1988 Cathie underwent a triple heart bypass. Thanks to the surgeon's skill, the operation was successful. Hector took early retirement to look after Cathie. In later years, Hector was diagnosed with Parkinson's and then they looked after each other.

Cathie shared with Hector a love of gardening; she was also a keen photographer and kept a photographic record of their gardening achievements.

She loved to chat to people and when in the garden spent more time talking to passers-by than actual gardening. Cathie and Hector were asked to open their garden to the public in the Scottish Garden Scheme. They also won First Prize for best garden in the Killearn Flower Show one year.

It became a source of sadness for them when they could no longer work in the garden. The year after Hector passed away, Cathie was encouraged by her family to enter the Killearn Flower Show which she did, winning prizes in every category she entered.

In recent times, Cathie became housebound. She was a voracious reader, and kept up to date with her family via Facebook. She greatly appreciated visits from family and friends old and new.

The shining light in the world of Cathie and Hector was their granddaughter Susan. All thoughts of illness vanished when Susan was around. Cathie and Hector were very proud of her and relished their roles of 'Grannie and Pa'.

Cathie will be remembered as someone who had a good sense of humour, was always willing to help others, and was a good friend and neighbour. MMACK

Bridge by Zorro

Solution to the problem on page 10

Seeing hand (a) in dummy, West might think that partner has ♠A otherwise Declarer would have won the trick with it. But you need to be aware of the Bath Coup. By ducking, Declarer is hoping that a low spade will be led into their ♠A J holding. To make an attitude signal, a low spade from East would indicate a lack of interest in the suit, or lack of help available from their hand, and not to continue leading spades.

Seeing hand (b) in Dummy, West might think that Declarer has the ♠A and that by ducking, they are hoping to persuade West to continue with a low spade that Dummy's ♠J will win. But it is evident that if Declarer did have ♠A then they would have taken it and won a second spade trick by leading up to Dummy's ♠J as it is obvious from the lead that West holds ♠Q. Here a 'high' card from East (i.e., ♠9) would indicate support in the suit and that the suit should be continued (safely with a low spade).

Expert players might manage without an attitude signal with these hands. With hand (a), West could infer that Declarer must have ♠A J as if East had the ♠A they would have played it, overtaking the ♠K with the Ace, and returning a spade knowing that West must have ♠K Q J x or ♠K Q 10 x, as holding ♠K Q x x they would have led ♠x as the initial lead.

With hand (b), an expert West will know that if Declarer had ♠A then they would have taken it (see login for hand (a)) and so East must hold it. However, with ♠J in Dummy, it would be a mistake for East to overtake with the ♠A. West must therefore lead ♠3 for the second trick.

With acknowledgement to:

Signals & Discards for You by Andrew Kambites

Sandy McLellan 1992 – 2020

Sandy McLellan was born on 30 January 1992 and brought home to Ballikinrain. His big sister, Laurie, was very excited.

After a few years, mum Athena remarried, and James became Sandy and Laurie's stepdad. They then welcomed son, Joe, into the mix and the three children had a happy childhood. They especially loved when their amazing Gran, Lee Lee (Leonora) and Pop (Fraser) took them and their cousins to the caravan at Kilberry for two weeks of sun, sea and sand.

Sandy developed a love of nature, animals and of being outdoors. Fascinated by all creatures, one of his proudest moments at school was taking a dead bat into the classroom for show-and-tell! He also loved drama and acting, and relished the challenge of the annual Burns recitals (and the home baking). He won a few times, too.

School, however, was not for our Sandy. Although he dearly loved his friends, he was happy at home with his array of pets: hamsters, cats, fish, rats and his beloved Wallace, our German Shepherd.

When he left school, he worked for a couple of years at Killlearn Co-op. Many remember him from his time there. Sandy was in his element when talking to people, and this was his true skill. He moved on from the Co-op to working with his Pop. They sanded many floors together and were very close.



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In 2013, Sandy became dad to Jacob, and although Jacob's mum and Sandy weren't together, Jacob was a massive part of Sandy's life. He loved spending time every weekend with him. He was a very proud dad.



By this time, Sandy had met the love of his life, Kirsty, and they set up home together in Glasgow's southside. They loved their holidays in Spain together.

Throughout Sandy's life he found that animals and birds were always drawn to him – we used to tease him that he was like a Disney princess. Last year he was befriended by a fox, the year before that, a squirrel. When their dogs had pups, Sandy was in his element.

He was such a kind and caring person and, of course, he treated his fellow humans with such compassion too. He didn't have much, but what he did have, he would give to a homeless person or someone whom he thought was in more need than him. He befriended many homeless people over the years and by taking the time to sit and talk to them, he made their day a tiny bit better. One such man told him that he had literally saved his life by giving him the train fare home when he was desperate.

Behind this outwardly confident, funny personality, Sandy had struggled for years with his mental health, and this last year had been dreadful for him. He tried so hard, and fought it for so long, until finally, aged only 28, our beautiful, kind soul, our Sandy, took his life.

There are no words that will ever explain what an amazing boy Sandy was. He was our son, dad, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin, and great friend who will always be missed, and the world is a sadder place without him.

AM



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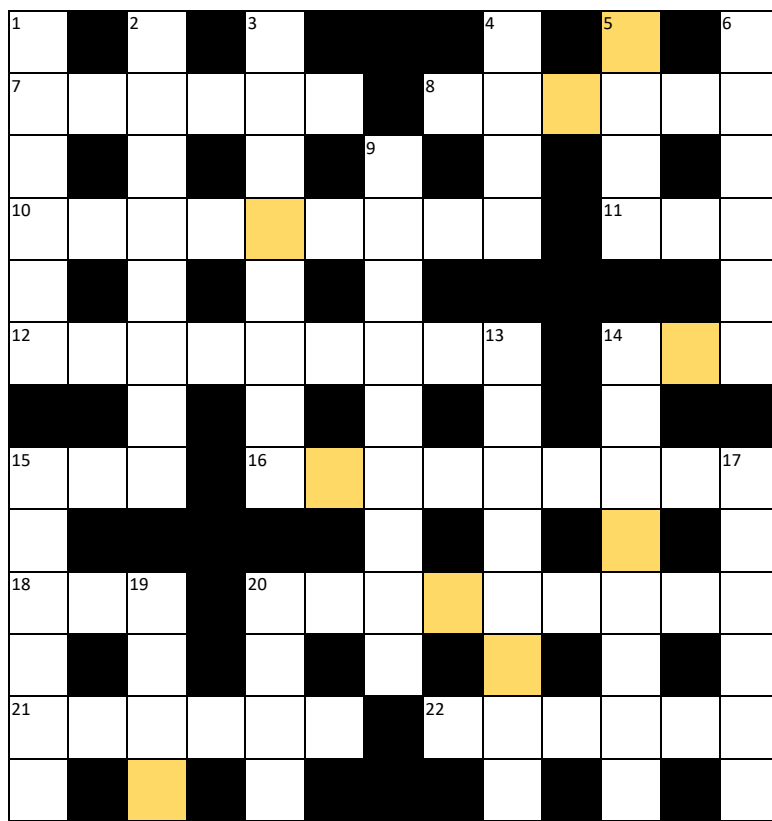
Our prize for the Prize Crossword is a Family Ticket to the Theatre Royal or the King's Theatre, Glasgow, subject to availability and restrictions on certain days. Our prize for the Children's Prize Codeword is a £10 voucher from the Co-op. Entrants must be 12 years old or under. The *Courier* would like to thank both the Ambassador Theatre Group and Co-operative Food for their generosity in providing the prizes for our competitions.

ACROSS

- 7 Run inside pipes to find these at 17, 20 (6)
8. Performer at risk when gravity falls to 100 (6)
10. Incapacitated and I lived around (9)
11. Take part in winter sport with a short bound (3)
12. Tin denims, that's not what I want.(9)
14. Perhaps Zeus comes back for a pet (3)
15. Shy rodent loses two-fifths (3)
16. An ideal world where you say you are sleeping (9)
18. He is inside an atomic pile (3)
20. Study this in a cosy igloo (9)
21. Walk clumsily to get a sweet on a stick for one penny less (6)
22. Fearful by the rim (2,4)

DOWN

1. Belief in God is in them (6)
2. Ridiculously inadequate underwear in a salver (8)
3. Refused to be covered after a short month (8)
4. Musicians cannot enter by the sound of it (4)
5. Religious book goes on stage (4)
6. Unknown in Hertfordshire town having a go (6)
9. Stick with it when you dance here maybe (9)
13. A demon guy was about in this distillery (8)
14. Suits that are very hard (8)
15. Pet story without a load of cows (6)
- 17,20. Parched chaps reveal cancelled event (6)
19. Bad French time for one from 13 (4)
20. See 17 (4)



The letters in the gold squares make up an anagram of a state we'd like to return to. Solve the crossword and find the answer to the anagram. This is the solution; email it or write the answer on a piece of paper and send it to the *Courier*.

Instructions in the box below.

Winner of the last crossword: Mike Gray, Killlearn

Solution to the last crossword: *Across*: 3 admit; 4 end; 7 white wine; 8 theatre; 11,25 Christmas cracker; 14 nurse; 15 limbo; 16 bells; 18 myrrh; 24 arms; 26 gold; 27 plate; 28,12 Frankincense
Down: 1,2 Advent window; 5 Thatcher; 6 underarm; 9 edited; 10 totals; 13 courage; 17 loch; 19 yarn; 20,21 art gallery; 22 skating; 23 elf

CHILDREN'S PRIZE WORDSEARCH

You should find 10 **colours** in the word search grid.

Eight of these colours are: **Crimson, Green, Lilac, Orange, Scarlet, Turquoise, White, Yellow.**

Find the other two colours, write them down and post them or email them to the *Courier* for a chance to win a £10 voucher which you can spend at the Co-op.

Please give your name, your age and a contact address or telephone number. Entrants must be 12 or under.

Instructions for sending it are given in the box below.

We urge everyone who tries our competitions to send in an entry. Winners are selected at random from those received, so everyone has a chance to win. Place your solution(s) in the postbox outside the Village Hall, in the box in the Co-op or email to peewit@kfc.co.uk with your name, address and a contact phone number before **12 April 2021**.



Children, if you enjoy doing this wordsearch, then let us know by entering the competition.

Chat Amongst Yourselves

In early January, I ventured down to the confluence of the Endrick and Blane Water to look for a very scarce little egret. This stunning all-white bird, which I had been lucky enough to find there three weeks before, deserves its own story some other time. Frustratingly, it had only hung around for one afternoon, but I had returned to the river with my camera in the hope that it might reappear and that I could improve on my very distant record shots of a white blob. But all to no avail.

Despite not relocating the bird, I was treated to a number of other avian delights by way of compensation. As well as dipper and kingfisher on the river, the highlight for me was most certainly a fine male stonechat, a transient travelling companion as I trudged over frozen fields.

Stonechats are in a group of songbirds that includes both larger thrushes and smaller, often brightly coloured birds, such as robins, redstarts and wheatears. Falling into this latter category, the stonechat is slightly smaller than a robin, but no less aesthetically pleasing – especially if you encounter an adult male in spring. You will find them wherever heather and gorse abound, but they occur in other habitats, too. Fields skirting Kirkhouse Wood and Killearn Glen are both good places to see them.

The stonechat is with us all year round and is joined in the summer by its relative, the whinchat. Both ‘chats’ will give themselves away by their call – a distinctive, agitated clicking, like two stones being hit together. Once that draws your attention, you will no doubt spy one or two birds

sitting up on low vegetation, before they restlessly flit from one perch to another.

My bird reminded me of an encounter in Shetland in October 2019.

A different looking stonechat had been found on a small stretch of coastline. Sure enough, when we arrived there and studied the bird, it became clear that this was no ‘common’ stonechat, but was instead one of its much rarer eastern cousins. But which one? The candidates are virtually inseparable in the field. There was only one thing for it...

While we watched it closely, the bird was generous enough to poo on a small pebble. A co-ordinated approach ensued to secure its ‘offering’, place it in a specimen pot and post it to the University of Aberdeen. Subsequent DNA analysis confirmed it as belonging to Stejneger’s stonechat – only the second Scottish record of this East Asian vagrant!

Thankfully, I did not have to go to such lengths to confirm that I was watching just a ‘common’ stonechat that cold January morning...

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Advertisements and artwork should be sent to us by Friday, 25 June 2021. Contact:
Gwen Stewart (01360 550856).

Contributions and letters to the editor should be in the hands of the editorial team by Friday, 25 June 2021. Please send them to:

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