



The Gargunnock Bugle



Issue 64 February 2021



Local News

Clubs and Groups

Charity work

Health and Fitness

The Great Outdoors

Meet your Neighbour

Unsung Hero

Photography

In and Out of School

Wildlife

Farm and Business

Saying Goodbye

Local History

And so much more....

Gargunnock Advent Trail - 2020

© HRH Photos

See rear cover for full list of Advent window creators

Editorial

Gargunock is a very special community.

Sometimes, we think of 'community' in terms of a shared sense of space. We all belong to the community of Gargunock because that is where we live (and/or work). And the surroundings we share are truly breathtaking, as you'll see in the photographs sharing just some of the winter beauty we've enjoyed.

But community can mean shared values and interests too. That's where things get really interesting – and special. Sometimes people come together to work in groups, but other times, it's just the little things that individuals do, that add up into something quite spectacular.

Can't get out of the house to walk your dog? That's Anne Marie and Sheena to the rescue.

Main Street gullies filling with leaves – that's Hamish out with his brush.

Prescriptions need fetched? – David's got that in hand.

Too much litter around our roads? – Gilly has a plan for that...

Need photos to brighten up your day – Anne Marie keeps us up to date with village wildlife each day through Facebook.

So many 'Unsung Heroes'

who do what they do because they feel it needs to be done. I'm nominating my first Unsung Hero here – Anne Marie Stewart. Mentioned above, but pictured here just before Christmas spreading her own version of festive cheer... If you would like to nominate others for an honourable mention in later issues, do please get in touch.



© HRH Photos

Christmas was different.

No previous Bugle, or other village magazine has been empty of reports of concerts in the school or Community Centre, or of services in the church, or of gatherings at The Square for New Year. But we still celebrated Christmas in our own way – the church bell still rung in the New Year; the Gargunock Inn still served Christmas food; past and present members of Gargunock Songsters still met and sang; and Santa still found time to visit the village.

And then a number of you joined with the Kirk in keeping the 'Lights of Hope' shining throughout the village through January

as we all hope for continued progress in the fight against the Coronavirus.

Volunteers?

Would you like to make a difference? For those who want to do more in your community, we have vacancies for the willing – whether it be as Caretaker for our precious Community Centre, or perhaps by helping to improve the village as a Trust or Windfarm Panel member...



© HRH Photos

I was expecting to struggle for stories for this issue, but they came flooding in. This Issue celebrates the very real work that is still going on. Much of that work supports people here in Gargunock, but you wouldn't expect such a big-hearted place to stop at that. Hence the pages in this issue celebrating the sterling work that our villagers do for Scottish charities.

Here in village lockdown, life is different. And death is different too. This issue marks just some of the differences. We don't give up. We adapt and we change to meet our changing circumstances.

We're also celebrating what I first knew as the WRI or 'The Rural'. Perhaps it should be renamed The Wonderful Rural Institute in recognition of all the great work it is doing. There was no question what our cover image would be – it had to capture the Advent Windows that members staged through December to brightened all our days.

I hope there is something here in Issue 64 of The Gargunock Bugle for everyone. In addition to the new section on photography, we have articles on local history and on wildlife, each by resident experts. Contributions from younger writers and artists would be much appreciated for future issues. If what you see here spurs you on to wish to contribute, the next deadline for The Gargunock Bugle is **19th March**. Any contributions most welcome – to gargunockbugle@gmail.com

Helen Hyland. Editor

Congratulations Hamish!

Hamish Muirhead raised £490 for Erskine by selling bags of kindling to friends and neighbours in Gargunock. I'm quoting Anne here "Not bad for an 83 year old!"



Meet your Neighbour

Anne Muirhead

Allow me to introduce you to Anne Muirhead as the first 'neighbour' to be interviewed for this new section of The Gargunnoch Bugle. Anne is one of those selfless people who is always thinking of others, and whilst you might know of someone who has done more for the people of Gargunnoch, I am sure I do not. It is a real pleasure to be able to share her words.

How long have you lived in the village?

We moved back to Gargunnoch in 1988.

What brought you here?

Hamish had lived here before we were married in 1965 and we always intended returning to stay here.

What do you like about living in Gargunnoch?

I can't think of a better place. Nice situation surrounded by arable land, sheltered by hills and mountains and within easy reach of larger towns. Friendly neighbours.

How has the village changed in the time you have been here?

It has grown in size with a great deal of new build. The local pub is now an excellent restaurant catering for families. The Church hall was sold – a great loss to the Community. The Post Office closed – we now depend on the Post van turning up on the correct designated day. The annual Gala now takes place in the Community Centre (the old Primary school) instead of the football park. There have been 3 changes of Ministers in the Church and the present vacancy is worrying.

What is your present occupation?

I'm enjoying my retirement. I spent the last 27 years of my working life as telephonist in Cornton Vale Women's prison – an eye opening and humbling experience – . There, but for the grace of God.....

What is your favourite part of the village?

Our house, garden and where it is situated.

Have you been involved with any of the village groups?

Just one or two...

My involvement began with Hamish then Gargunnoch Boys Brigade, the 22nd Company. As a member of the Red Cross, I taught them First Aid for their badges. Hamish and I went on the BB camp to London and Weston-super-Mare with the Company in 1965. In later years, as a Sunday School teacher, I had children in my class whose fathers I had taught in the Boys Brigade.

My friend, Maureen Ferguson, and I ran the first tea-room in the Community Centre to raise funds for the Centre then my friend and neighbour Anne Kirkpatrick and I ran a tea room in the football pavilion. The pavilion was the ideal place for all the elderly residents who couldn't manage downhill to the Community Centre.

I was a member of the team who entered the village in the Gardening Scotland competition when we won the Small Village section. Unfortunately I have no idea where the certificate is now.

At present, I am involved in the Annual Flower Show, the Gargunnoch Senior Citizens Christmas Gift Fund, the SWI or as I will always call it "The Rural" and I am a Church Elder.

In the Flower Show I have had some success but have yet to win the top trophy. I have been runner up several times to my sister-in-law Janet Iffla – but that's okay – I taught her everything she knows!

My task on the committee of the Gargunnoch SCGGF is to ensure we include all citizens over a certain age – hence my little ditty in the last Christmas Bugle (I've got a little list...)



© HRH Photos

I have been a Rural member for more years than I can remember, holding several positions culminating in a three year term as Federation Chairman for 27 local Institutes. It was quite a challenge, but once I realised I was still a "Rural Wife" but wearing a different hat, all was well. I have learned so much as a Rural member and if asked, I will share what I know. I sat, and passed, the Rural Judging tests, which means I can be invited to judge at other Rural events the length and breadth of the country.

In 2012, I was presented with the Citizen Jaffrey Award after being nominated by Anne Lees, Janet Iffla and Kathleen Sinclair. This was in recognition of the above and the Charity Ceilidh dances held in the Albert Hall for twenty years.

How has the current situation has affected you and yours.

We have been affected the same as the rest of the country. Having to accept we are no longer free to please ourselves but to think of our interactions with others. This is the 'new normal' and common sense must kick in. We are lucky in our family we have no schoolchildren – it must be a nightmare organising child care because of school closures while trying to work from home.

What's your next challenge?

At my age, I'll be happy to wake up each morning and leave the challenges to the next generation.. Nothing else to add – I've probably rambled on too much.

Who would you like to nominate to answer this questionnaire for the next issue of the Bugle? And why?

I wanted to nominate Alex Paton of Stark Street because he is the oldest Gargunnoch born man living in the village. But that can wait while he comes to terms with his recent bereavement (we are all so sorry for your loss). So instead, I would like to nominate Liz Wilkinson, who may be a relative newcomer, but has fitted in so well into village life.

Editor's note

The image of the Gargunnoch Advent Calendar on the front cover of this Bugle was created for the WI by this editor at the 'request' of Anne... There are some people you simply can't say 'No' to....

Paths Group - update

David King writes

This busy group operates under the umbrella of The Community Trust and presently comprises Jeremy Wilkinson, Geoff Peart, Gavin Fleming, Edmond Mansion, Peter Rowell and myself.

Our biggest achievement, so far, has been the creation of the path and mini orchard with new benches at The Glebe Park (with volunteers led by Jeremy). Prior to that, Pete led the re-painting of the historical Iron Bridge over The Gargunnoch Burn.

Our latest task is the upgrading of Charlies Loan – which will resume once Covid restrictions are lifted. After prolonged and detailed discussions with Stirling Council, Pete and Jeremy have secured agreement for the rerouting of the original path to replace the steps down towards the Community Centre with a less steep and step-free path. The Council has agreed to foot most of the bill for the materials and we hope that an application to the Wind Farm Panel will secure the rest.

The Covid restrictions have encouraged an amazing number of walkers to discover/rediscover the paths network around the village and as a result there has been some major wear and tear on the network in various places. Pete, Jeremy and Edmond are working on plans for “running repairs” on some sections of The Ladies Walk (below) and The Leckie loop to the south of Watson House. (pictured right).



Meanwhile, Gavin continues to work on improving the Under the Craigs path. The team has largely cleared the route of whins and gorse and are hopeful that a Wind Farm Panel application to replace the marker posts will be successful.

We continue to work closely with Sustrans and their specialist consultants on plans for the proposed Cycle/Foot path between Gargunnoch and Stirling. Topographical and Ecological surveys are underway and discussions continue with landowners, farmers, tenants and the council as to the practicality, suitability and viability of this major project. Once these issues have been resolved, we will report back and then discuss how things might be taken forward as part of a broader Communications Exercise.

Finally, we are still considering how best to upgrade The Beeches Path. A major stumbling block here continues to be the ownership of various sections of this core path. If you are able to provide



information concerning the ownership of the sections, please do get in touch with us:-

- between the west end of Stevenson Street to Old Drummond Place and
- from Old Drummond Place behind the houses on New Drummond Place to connect to the actual Beeches stretch.

Obviously, none of these projects could have been accomplished without the involvement of a great number of volunteers from the village. It is hard work but a lot of fun has been had too. We thank you all, and look forward to seeing you again as soon as work is able to resume. And if anyone else is interested in helping our work, you will be made most welcome.

Gargunnoch Community Council Update

Jeremy Wilkinson writes

Although Gargunnoch Community Council has not held public meetings during the current pandemic situation, your councillors have continued to support the village. Following are some of the efforts, and also information about issues affecting Gargunnoch:

Christmas Lights

Thanks go to the team of residents who installed the Christmas lights in The Square; the Rural for their Advent windows event; the church for the lights on their tree; and the residents who lit up their homes – all helping to brighten up what was a difficult period for us all.

Shelloch Windfarm

As you are aware from recent articles, Force9Energy have plans to construct a new Windfarm on the Fintry Hills. The proposal



Community Council (continued)

with associated infrastructure to be located just West of the existing Earlsburn and Kingsburn Windfarms. You will find up to date information on the proposal is available on the developer's website: <http://force9energy.com>

Stirling Council has recently received the formal Planning Application and Environmental Statement for the project, and these documents can be found on Stirling Council's Planning website (search for Reference 20/00840/FUL). Please be aware, if you submitted comments to earlier consultations on this project, that those comments are not automatically taken into account by the Council in reviewing this current Planning Application – so you may wish to consider re-submitting any comments under the above reference. Please note the closing date for comments (by post, online or by email) is 13th February 2021.

Wolfcraig Distillery

A Proposal of Application Notice has been submitted to Stirling Council for a £15 million "whisky experience" to be located in Touch between the A811 and Touch Road. The plans include a whisky distillery and an education-focused family visitor attraction, a private tasting room, and 180-cover bistro restaurant and bar. More details can be found at www.wolfcraig.com.

Although this project is outwith the Gargunnock Community Council area, the developer has communicated their plans to your Community Council, and if the project proceeds, it may generate potential employment and recreation opportunities for Gargunnock residents.

Scottish Water

Two instances of flooding in the village have been reported to Scottish Water. A blockage is scheduled to be removed on Main Street (at Charlie's Loan), but the Charles Street flooding has been found to be due to a lack of capacity in the drainage system for handling high rainfall. Scottish Water recognise that this problem exists, but resolution is not likely to happen in the near future due to high workload. Please continue to report to Scottish Water to help raise this up their priority list.

"Spaces for People" Fund

This Scottish Government fund is aimed at improving public spaces through the delivery of infrastructure and traffic speed reductions to support safe active travel and assist in recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Over a three-week period in October 2020, Stirling Council consulted the public for their views on how Stirling Council's share (£513,000) of the fund could be spent.

Stirling Council has assessed all responses to the consultation and on the 20th January finalized a list of projects for development and delivery. One of these projects is: "Installation of traffic calming entry gateway treatments" for Gargunnock.

Your Community Council has yet to be consulted on the plans, but as soon as details are available, we will publish more

information on our facebook page, village website, the noticeboard, and in The Bugle.

Stirling Council's Waste Transformation Programme

In June of last year, Stirling Council announced the approval of their Waste Transformation Programme. Information on the Programme was included in the local press, and in letters to residents' homes.

More details are available on Stirling Council's website, however, in summary the key points are phased introduction over the next two years of:

- Replacement of the grey and brown bins (that are coming towards the end of their life) with new bins of the same style as the existing green and blue bins. This standardisation of the bin styles will also facilitate improved operational efficiency.
- Stopping the current free garden waste collection, and the introduction during 2021 of an opt-in charging system for fortnightly garden waste collection (£35 per year).
- A new four-weekly collection frequency for the grey (non-recyclable waste) and blue (plastics, cans, cartons) bins, instead of the current fortnightly service, This is expected to come into effect after July 2021
- The ending of glass box collections when the Scottish Government's "National Deposit Return Scheme" starts in July 2022. After this scheme kicks in, glass waste not covered by the scheme can be put in your blue bin.

Note that green bin (paper and cardboard) collections will stay the same and will be collected every 4 weeks, and there will be no change to the frequency of brown bin collections.

Implementation of the Transformation Programme has started in Gargunnock with the replacement of the grey and brown bins during the first two weeks of January. If you have yet not received your new bins, or the old ones have not been collected, you can report the problem by completing the online form "Brown and Grey Bin replacement Enquiry Form" on Stirling Council's website, or call 01786 404040.

Opportunity to Shape Future Health and Care Provision

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Partnership want your views on community health and care - see our Facebook page for more information.

Speeding

Following a resident's complaint about vehicles speeding on Main Street, Stirling Council will monitor vehicle speeds in the village in the Spring and Police Scotland may also visit the village with their speed gun.

Community Council Meetings

As the restrictions on public gatherings have continued for longer than expected, the Community Council is now planning on holding virtual meetings starting in the near future. Keep your eyes on our Facebook page and village noticeboard for more information.



Gargunnoch Community Trust

By Stuart Ogg

An AGM is always a good time to reflect on what has happened and to think about what comes next. The Gargunnoch Community Trust AGM, (postponed from June 2020) took place via Zoom on 10 December.

Chairman, Iain Gulland praised the great community spirit he had witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic, with neighbours supporting each other and organisations maintaining services as far as they could under the Scottish Government's restrictions. The Trust established an independent Windfarm Fund Panel in 2017, for which Alison Younger has been appointed as its new Chair. Iain thanked Alison for the time and effort she had already put into reviewing all the key documents governing the work of the Panel. The Panel had continued to meet and had agreed to support a wide range of projects allocating the funding donated by Falck Renewables responsible for the Kingsburn Windfarm. Iain highlighted the considerable work of Douglas Johnston and Jeremy Wilkinson in maintaining the Community Centre services as far as permitted through the Covid-19 restrictions. Full advantage was taken of the shutdown to undertake a fire safety review, redecoration, and installation of a remote boiler management system whilst keeping it in readiness for when village activities could resume. Douglas Johnston, the Treasurer had successfully applied for a Business Interruption Scheme grant from Stirling Council which had helped compensate for the lost income over this period.

Iain also highlighted the significant progress the Trust had made with plans for a cycle route/path between Gargunnoch and Stirling. It had attracted considerable funding from Sustrans and the project had now got to a stage where detailed discussions were taking place with farmers and landowners about possible routes. Connections were also being made with groups in Kippen and Balfour to see how all path plans could be linked up. Jeremy Wilkinson was working closely with Stirling Council staff

on the Charlie's Loan upgrade and further work at the Glebe Park included an area being created for bee hives to help increase biodiversity and the number of pollinators.

This AGM saw some long standing and very valuable Directors/ Trustees stand down having spent between them a total of over 30 years supporting the work of the Trust for the local community. These were Iain Gulland, Chair; Jeremy Wilkinson, Company Secretary, and Edmond Mansion, Membership Secretary. They were thanked by the other Directors/Trustees for the very considerable personal time and energy they had invested. Thankfully all three have indicated a wish to stay involved with the Trust's project work and in Edmond's case to continue to facilitate the successful Gargunnoch Walking Group.

Jeremy provided the Company Secretary's report highlighting that many of the Trust's policies and procedures had been updated with others still being developed. Douglas gave the Treasurer's report which highlighted the loss of income since the Covid lockdown started, however, the funding from the Business Interruption Scheme meant that the overall financial position was still manageable. Douglas thanked David King for pursuing unpaid invoices which had also helped the situation.

The Board of Directors/Trustees appointed at the AGM and their roles (agreed at the Trust meeting held immediately after the AGM) are: David King (Chair), Gill Bell (Company Secretary), Gavin Fleming (Treasurer), Douglas Johnston (Property Convener), Jill Patrick (Membership Secretary), Stuart Ogg (Meetings Secretary), Geoff Peart, Barbara Linklater, Mairi Jackson and Nicola Stewart

As there were two vacancies unfilled at the end of the AGM Jonathan Park subsequently came forward and was appointed by the Directors/Trustees as a co-opted Director/Trustee. This still leaves one vacancy. If you are interested in supporting the community by becoming a member of the Board please speak to one of the existing Directors/Trustees or drop a note to gargunnochtrust@gmail.com

Gargunnoch Community Trust

CAN YOU HELP LOOK AFTER OUR COMMUNITY CENTRE?

Caretaker Role

Average of 2.5 to 3 hrs per week (can vary)
Honorarium of £1,200 per year (negotiable)

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Ensure hall is set up correctly for users (heating, room divider panels, janitorial supplies, stage).
- Daily inspection to ensure cleaning is completed to a high standard.
- Weekly inspection of building and emergency equipment.

The position would ideally suit someone who is available in the village during the day although a lot of input can now be done remotely.

You will be supported by the administrator, cleaner, boiler engineer and volunteer Trust Directors.

For more information please contact:

Douglas Johnston

on 860384 or djohnston@thehaven.eu



Windfarm Fund Update

By Alison Younger

The Windfarm Panel has had a busy year since I joined as Chair at the start of 2020. The Panel is responsible for directing awards from approx. £25,000 p.a. received from Falck Renewables. It is made up of a mix of volunteers - 2 representatives from both the Community Council and Community Trust, and another 6 from the wider community. Over the past year we've considered many applications seeking financial support from a whole range of individuals and organisations who provide benefits and services to our local community. We were delighted to receive some additional funds from Falck this year to target towards organisations struggling with the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. A table of the most recent awards is below.

Building on the significant work of the first panel members appointed back in 2017, the Community Trust and Foundation Scotland, the Panel last year undertook a comprehensive review of its set up, fund guidelines and how it operates. The Panel is not only responsible for considering applications and making recommendations for funding, but has a key role in making sure the funds provided by Falck are spent in a way which reflects community priorities. To help with this we will be reviewing the spend each year against the type and size of projects/initiatives funded but also the applicant type and age group. We will also take account of any robust local community plan which evidences local priorities. Recently the Panel recommended a significant award to the Community Trust to help support the ongoing repairs and maintenance costs of the Community Centre. The award of £5000 per year for the next 5 years is significant – reflecting 20% of the fund over this period. The award will hopefully enable the Trust to plan the works in the most cost effective manner and lever in additional external funding to keep this significant community asset fit for purpose.

As with all local groups there is significant time and energy put in by everyone involved. I'd like to express my thanks to Panel members' who have moved on since our last update, or who are about to retire: Geoff Peart, Charlie Fitches, Ian Young, and Mark Evans. Carol MacGregor who had provided administrative support for the Panel has handed over the reins to our new support, Helen Hyland. New panel members have joined us: David King, and Douglas Barr. A big welcome onboard to all the new panel members and Helen and a massive thanks to Carol for her sterling efforts over the years.

We are looking for 2 new community members to join the Panel – do please contact myself or Stuart Ogg of the Community Trust for more info. We meet 4 times a year and it's always interesting!

Awards made October 2020

Applicant	Detail	Award
Gargunnock Playgroup and Toddlers	Help meet shortfall due to Covid disruptions	£1507.50 Covid Funds
Gargunnock Primary School	Picnic bench for outside lunches	£500
Gargunnock Girl Guiding	50% fees for members	£849.50 – Covid Funds
Gargunnock Community Trust	Additional covid related expenditure for hall	£1204.78 – Covid Funds

Interested in doing something for your local community? BECOME A MEMBER OF THE GARGUNNOCK WINDFARM FUND PANEL

The Gargunnock Community Trust is looking for two new members of the Gargunnock Windfarm Fund Panel.

The Panel is independent of the Trust and is responsible for deciding how to distribute funding received each year from the Kingsburn Wind Energy Ltd Community Benefit Fund. This includes deciding on what mechanisms should be used in consultation with the Trust and considering and approving applications for funding from local groups and organisations.

The Fund is used to benefit the community of Gargunnock.

The Trust also helps to ensure that the Panel operates within the current legal framework.

The role involves up to four meetings a year

It considers applications from local groups and organisations seeking funding to take forward a range of different projects.

The Panel comprises a Chair, up to 6 members from the Community, two Community Council members and two Trust Directors/Trustees.

If you are interested in the role please email gargunnocktrust@gmail.com or if you would like to discuss the role with someone please contact one of the following:

Alison Younger (Chair Windfarm Fund Panel)
on 07825241196 or alisonyounger472@btinternet.com

Stuart Ogg (Community Trust Meetings Secretary)
on 07715160751 or stuartogg54@gmail.com

Police Report

Community Engagement and Reassurance

PC Steven Graham and PC Gary Martin are based at Balfour Police Office and can be contacted on 101 or at ForthEndrick-CPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk. It is recommended that this email address is used by the local community for email contact. 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. Our Facebook and Twitter pages can be found at:

- www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision
- www.facebook.com/policescotland
- www.twitter.com/stirlingpol
- www.twitter.com/policescotland

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 that need us most during this time of this crisis.

Criminals are using the Coronavirus 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 and 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 updates and 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. If you receive an email, text or WhatsApp message purporting to be from the government, HMRC, the World Health Organisation (WHO) or a coronavirus-related charity, then take a moment to think before you part with your money or information. Never click on links or download attachments as criminals may infect your devices with malware or ask you to enter your personal or financial information into fake websites. In some cases this can lead to your identity being stolen.

Theft

There have been no thefts in the Gargunock area recently *however there have been in other villages* in the Forth and Endrick area. Please be vigilant and contact the Police should anyone see anything suspicious. Remember to follow basic home security rules and help to make it make it harder for the thieves.

Please consider the following:

- Use timer switches on lights and radios to make it look as if your home is occupied.
- Ensure all doors and windows are secure when you leave and when you go to bed.
- If possible use secure lighting at the front and back of your property.
- Make sure all garden tools and ladders are locked away when not being used. Don't give the thieves the tools to break into your house.
- Use a good quality lock on any garden sheds and outhouses. Make a note of all makes, models and serial numbers of expensive items in your home.

If your house is fitted with an alarm then please use it. This is a good deterrent should thieves manage to force entry to your house.

create a FREE and secure inventory of all your personal property at www.immobilise.com

If you note anything suspicious in your neighbourhood report it on 101.

There are guides on the Police Scotland website giving other ideas to protect property in rural areas:
<https://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/home-and-personal-property/rural-crime>

Road Safety

The Central Scotland Safety Camera Partnership have continued to operate on the A811 and local officers have and will continue to carry out high visibility patrols to improve road safety.



Bogus workmen.

How can I protect myself from doorstep crime?

- Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly.
- Keep front and back doors locked.
- Use the door viewer or nearby window when answering the door.
- Fit a door chain or bar – use it and keep it on when talking to callers at the door.
- If you're not sure, don't answer the door.
- Don't feel embarrassed - genuine callers expect you to be careful.
- Only let callers in if they have an appointment and you have confirmed they are genuine.
- Always ask for identification badges of anyone you answer the door to, but don't rely on them. Identity cards can be faked – phone the company to verify their identity.
- Some companies offer a password system. Ask your utility providers if this can be used and if you have a password with a company make sure the caller uses it.
- Never let people try to persuade you to let them into your home even if they are asking for help – they may not be genuine. If someone is persistent, ask them to call at another time and arrange for a friend or family member to be with you.
- Never agree to pay for goods or give money to strangers who arrive at your door.
- Don't keep large amounts of money in your home.
- Remember, it's your home. There's no reason why anyone should ever enter your home against your wishes.
- If you're not sure, don't answer the door.

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/personal-safety/doorstep-crime-and-bogus-callers/>

Mamie Davies

Gargunnock Women's Institute's Honorary Member



By Anne Christie, President

It is with great pleasure that I can report that the oldest member of Gargunnock WI, Mamie Davies, has been made an Honorary Member, in recognition of her long service with the W.I. ('The Rural'). This year marks her 75th year as a Federation member as she joined the Kinlochard Rural at the age of 24. She will be 99 on the 10th February 2021.

Mamie was born on the 10th February 1922 on the Isle of Mull into the McLean family: second oldest with 3 sisters and a brother. Her father was a fisherman. She went to Ulva Ferry Grammar School and then to the High school at Tobermory. Mamie left school at the age of 17 and had a few small jobs before following in the footsteps of her 2 other sisters to join the WRENS at the age of 18. She served there for 5 years



ending up as a Petty Officer before leaving to marry a local boy, Alex Laing from Mull. Alex and Mamie both worked at the Kinlochard Hotel - Alex until he died and Mamie for 5 years as housekeeper. They had one son, Alastair.

Mamie then married her second husband, Eric L Davies, the owner of the Forrest Hills Hotel. They went on to have a very happy marriage, working hard running the hotel and then enjoying lots of foreign holidays in the winter when the hotel was closed. She particularly enjoyed travelling to Madeira.

Mamie's remembered that the Kinlochard Rural met at the school and was the main social outlet for wives and mothers. Mamie enjoyed knitting and embroidery particularly

tapestry. She is very proud of her medal she received when she passed her Housewife's test when she was a member of Kinlochard. After Kinlochard closed down she then went to Stronachlachar WI. When she was on a WRI visit to the theatre she ended up with a broken wrist. Having moved to Stirling she joined Muchart WI until they folded.

It was Anne Muirhead – Gargunnock WI's secretary - who invited Mamie to join Gargunnock WI and arranged for her daughter Seonaid to give her a lift from Stirling. Mamie always arrives prepared for meetings with raffle prize at the ready and keen to join in with "hands on" tasks. She is always bright and cheerful with an infectious smile and a sparkle in her eye. She collects pennies for the "Pennies for Friendship" charity each year and enjoys reading, gardening knitting and embroidery.



Mamie enjoys Rainbow whist with the WI and attended the last Stirling Federation meeting in February 2020. I was honoured to join with Federation President Ray McLeod to give her a lovely bouquet of flowers to mark her 98th birthday.

When asked what her secret is for being so positive, she replied that it's a pleasure to meet people and she enjoys being a member of Gargunnock WI where she has made good friends. She feels very blessed with good health and is the only one remaining from her immediate family and the only one left from her class of 15 at school.

Let's hope we can all take a leaf out of Mamie's book and may we wish her continued good health and happiness.

Goodie Bags and Zoom!

It is inevitable that, under current circumstances, many village groups have been forced to stop meeting. I believe that, fleetingly, the Gargunnock WI considered so doing. But then thought better and instead redoubled its efforts to serve its members. Nothing seems to daunt them – not even new technology like Zoom. They continue to welcome new members and they tell me that now they've got the hang of Zoom, they plan many more meetings in this coming year (fingers crossed their Windfarm application for funding comes good). 'Plans' are afoot for their next village event for Easter.

Gargunnock WI President, Anne Christie, writes

Gargunnock WI had its first Zoom meeting on 15th December with 20 of our members joining in. Thanks go to Janet Iffla who hosted the meeting and had infinite patience while we were all getting in. Many of the members were using Zoom for the first time.

Because we couldn't meet and have our

traditional Christmas meeting, members were instead given a goodie bag beforehand from their committee Buddies which contained a mince pie donated by the Gargunnock Village Inn, a sachet of Hot Chocolate, Christmas Quiz sheet donated from the WI Federation, Christmas Cracker with wordsearch, Christmas jokes, and, of course, chocolate! In the photograph, I am welcoming our latest new member, Tracy Lafferty, with a Christmas goodie bag. Tracy has recently set up her own beautician business in the village and we are all looking forward to having a bit of pampering as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Entertainment for the evening was homegrown - Anne Muirhead provided entertainment by telling the ladies a personal story of how she was rescued from a snowdrift by an angel and I read a favourite Christmas poem. Jessie Wyllie shared a recipe for a Christmas Pudding that she had been given by a fellow 'Rural' member, a Mrs Aird from Ballycoach, a super baker, cook and demonstrator who gave a cookery demonstration when Jessie was a member of Dalrymple WRI.



The Gargoyles - Still Singing

By Helen Rowell

Last year's singing schedule was, necessarily, far less busy than in previous years. Our main excitement last year was modelling (individually) for photographer Mark Leslie to produce period images for a book launch for Bannockburn House. Zoe Fouracre, Liz Wilkinson and I travelled there (separately), on a cold September day, dressed in our finest period costumes. How we suffered for art! It was so cold and we had to get into unusual positions and "hold it" until we were told we could move again!

I represented our group in a Zoom Ceilidh for the Early Music Forum for Scotland, reading the lyrics to one of our favourite songs, The Tale of Sir Patrick Spens - it is a powerful tale about the King ordering one of his greatest sailors out to brave the winter storms and sending him and the Scottish lords to the bottom of the sea. When we sing it, we put so much feeling into it that the last verse can bring me to tears. I had to be careful not to get emotional on screen! I will be reading for them again in February - two more of our songs - Three Ravens and the Twa Corbies. These gruesome tales tell what happens to the body of a knight killed in battle.

This coming May, we have been booked to perform at the Traquair House Medieval Fayre. We have booked our accommodation. It's highly unlikely this will go ahead, but it's nice to dream! We have also been asked to sing at the official book launch in Bannockburn House in September (fingers crossed it might actually happen!).

Meanwhile, we've learnt how to practice on Zoom! Every Tuesday morning, we have a coffee and chat 'together' and then one person takes the lead and sings their part of a song and the other two mute themselves and sing along. Our songs are all in 3-part harmony, so it sort of works! But it's fun anyway and keeps us singing!

Our singing and costumes seem to bring pleasure to those who see and hear us perform so we do hope that we can all get back to some kind of normality eventually!



Gargunock Playgroup and Toddlers are currently closed

Because we must follow all regulations and guidelines around Covid-19, Gargunock Playgroup and Toddlers, at the time of writing (28th January) are sadly closed.

However, we hope to be open again just as soon as restrictions are lifted. We run sessions weekly throughout the year for all children up to school age. If you are new to the village and have young children or are expecting a baby, please do get in touch.

In more normal times, **Gargunock Playgroup** runs every Monday and Thursday from 9:30-12pm during the school term in the Community Centre. Our qualified staff run a varied set of

activities suiting all ages and interests. We are an independent Playgroup, registered with the Care Inspectorate, managed by parents and welcome children from 2½ yrs to pre-school. Please contact Rea Gourlay (Playgroup Leader) 07851175815, playgroup@gargunock.com for more details.

Gargunock Toddlers provides lots of toys, snack time and a warm welcome for parents-to-be, parents and children from 0-5, or their grandparents/child-minders etc. Every Wednesday morning (10-11.30am) in the Community Centre. Sessions are £2.50 + 50p for siblings. Why not come along and see for yourself! Contact for more information - Hannah Becks-Phelps (Toddler Representative) 07809241175, hcm22moore@gmail.com

Alternatively, contact Debbie Masson (Chairperson) 07779727209, debstarmasson74@gmail.com,



“Old Folks Welfare”

By Gill Bell

The Gargunock Senior Citizens Christmas Fund "wish to thank everybody who supported the quiz this year, it was good to see some new names amongst the entrants. Congratulations to Andrew McPhate who won the annual quiz run to raise funds for the Fund. There were a number of correct entries received and his was the name drawn out of the hat after the closing date.

Could we also thank Alastair and Violet in the shop for selling our quiz sheets, as this was our only outlet this year, and a special thank you to Alastair for his generous donation to our funds.

For those who did not know about this scheme, it was started in 1965 by Miss Stirling and vouchers have been given each Christmas since. The originals were for 12s 6d (62.5 new pence I think!). Originally the funds were raised by a committee consisting of one member of each of the village organisations,(about 18) and took the form of Afternoon Teas/ Coffee Mornings/Jumble Sales etc These days, we manage between the four of us - Anne, Grace,, Jill and myself - plus occasional helpers. Thanks to everyone's support (including the Windfarm) the fund typically spends about £1200-£1500 each year.

This year, we managed to issue vouchers 150 vouchers with extended 'use-by dates' to the end of February to allow everybody to (hopefully) get the full benefit. The vouchers can only be used within specific places, mostly village outlets (and the coal man!).

Thank you for your Christmas Card

by Jane Milne

This year's Gargunock Christmas card raised a magnificent £1849.45 which I believe may well be the most this has ever raised. Funds were raised for local charity Start Up Stirling which helps people in

financial crises through such things as delivery of food parcels, food banks and mental health support. Jane has received formal thanks from Andy Ireland, Food-bank and Client Services Manager, saying

MERRY CHRISTMAS GARGUNNOCK

Residents and friends of Gargunock have raised the magnificent sum of

£1849.45 for

START UP STIRLING.

The Anderson Family; Gill Bell; The Bennett Family; The Blackwood Family; Hughie & Martin Bonner; Janene, Kevin, Hope & Niamh Brodie; Gillian, Gavin, Amy & Chloé Bruce; Gay & Harry Burt; Chris, Jackie & Heather Campbell; Alec and Helen Clark; Maitland & Ann Clark; Naomi Russell & Adam Cottis; Douglas & Moira Coupethwaite; Bryan, Shona, Ella, Daniel & Louise Crawford; Jon & Marie Claire Cross; Margaret & David Crowe; Marshall, Jo, Andrew & Eva Dallas; Eric & Alice Dempster; Graham, Helen, Rachel & Cameron Dingley; Max & Barbara Drummond; Mike, Sue, Jamie, Andrew & Gregor Fitches; Gavin, Ashley, Peter & Nairn Fleming; Andy, Hilary, Max & Archie Flett; Zoe, Shelley, Luke, Adam & Joe Fouracre; Peter, Claire, Grace & Madeleine Gill; Crawford & Liz Gordon; Stuart, Helen, Fraser & Fergus Hansom; Becky, Sarah & Ali Hay; Rowena Boome & Tony Heath; Ewan, Jane, Lauren & Sam Hunter; David &

Helen Hyland; Philip, Ruth & Naomi Irvine; Andrew, Fiona, Amy & Christopher James; Tom, Fiona, Anna & William Jamieson; Ian & Fiona Johnston; Martin & Fiona Johnstone and family; David & Issy King; Karen, Duncan, Stewart & Megan Leask; John & Tracy Lafferty; Ian, Sandra, Katherine & Hamish Lewis; Gordon, Claire, Alex & James Lindsay; Martin & Barbara Linklater; Robin, Alison & Finlay Lunn; Gordon, Hilary, Duncan & Scott MacArthur; The MacCallum Family; Ali, Sam & Holly MacLachlan/Goldie; Lynda, Murdo, Catherine & Sarah MacLeod; Anne Malone; Edmond & Elizabeth Mansion; Iain, Jaine, Cara & Evie Gulland Marriott; Tina Peek & Charlie McAllister; Ewan, Amy & Frazer McCabe; Tom, Mairi, Carolyn & Finlay McEwan; The McGlynn Family; Lovat, Carol, Amelie & Nina McGregor; John & Helen McLaren; Gordon & Emma Milne; The Milne Family; The Mitchell Family; Angela & Hannah Muir; Anne,

Hamish, Jane & Seonaid Muirhead; Hugh, Jean & David O'Connor; The Ogg Family; Boyd, Sally, Sarah & Fraser Park; Morag, Jon, Matthew & Angus Park; Jill P & Rockie; Derek, Vanessa, Kate, Anna & Ben Paynton; Kate & Geoff Peart; David, Christine, Camille & Innes Penman; Hector, Trish, Darren & Alistair Petrie; Pete & Helen Rowell; Lois, Andrew, Tom & Finn Simpson; Claire, Doug & Bryony Smith; Matt & Jackie Stevenson; Wilma Stewart; Neil, Nicola, Hamish, Eilidh & Iona Stewart; Jon, Jacqueline, Miller & Kara Sutherland; Sarah, Ally, Euan & Ava Thomson; Colin, Morna, Freya & Andrew Tinto; Catriona Vass, Kirsty & Eilidh Vass Payne; Sandra Anderson & Colin Wales; Mark, Lorraine & Steven Welsh; Elizabeth & Iain Whyte; Liz & Jeremy Wilkinson; Lizzie Williams; Jocelyn & Al Wilson; Ian, Margaret, Gordon & Catriona Young; Eadie & Tom; Pauline, Mark, May & Archie; The Strictly Syndicate

Volunteer Tutors Organisation

By Helen Hyland

I had known Douglas Johnston a good many years before he admitted that he had started a charity while he was still a student. In 1974, he was studying at Strathclyde University, but also, in his spare time volunteering as a member of The Children's Panel in Glasgow. He saw that many of the children coming before the Panel struggled to get the best from education because of lack of family support. He decided to see whether other students might volunteer to provide one-to-one tutoring for these children. An advert placed through the Students' Union yielded a good number of volunteers who were then matched up with children through Social Services. The scheme was a great success and in 1977, became an independent charity, the Volunteer Tutors Organisation (VTO).

Douglas was chair of the organisation until work took him away from Glasgow. He picked up again, after retirement in 2014 and became chair again in 2016. He is actively involved in both the running of the organisation, and also the fundraising, leading the way in Santa dashes, the Kiltwalk, and even, last year a virtual Kiltwalk (which he spent mattocking and Chainsawing in the woods around Gargunock House).

The organisation still strives to offer one-to-one tuition to children and young people facing significant barriers to their education. Last year over 140 young people receive at least one hour's tuition each and every week. More than 20 learning Hubs have supported another 200 children. Pupils and tutors are carefully matched, based upon the needs of the pupils and the experience of the tutors. Its work has now expanded outside the Glasgow area and has responded imaginatively to the current Covid-19 crisis by providing an online tutoring service to over 160 children across Scotland.

The charity has reacted swiftly to changing circumstances, but still faces its challenges. If you might be interested in becoming an online tutor or have a spare laptop or tablet you could donate, please get in touch with Douglas,

Or visit the VTO website at www.vtoscotland.org or phone 0141 946 6498 or email admin@vtoscotland.org.



© HHT Photos

Online Christmas Choir

Even as a small child, Marion's singing gave huge pleasure to all those lucky to hear her. She is gifted with both a beautiful voice and a sunny disposition. She now lives in London where she teaches singing and conducts local choirs. She returns periodically to entertain us in local concerts in aid of Strathcarron Hospice. In October, she sent local singers an email which read "We are all missing getting together and singing so while we are still at home, I would like as many of us as possible to do some virtual singing!"

Marion Wyllie writes

"The nights were drawing in and you could feel the winter chill starting to ooze through the air. Scotland was heading back into lockdown and I was thinking about what people could do to entertain themselves at home - sing! We all know warbling is fun, but it is also of fun-damental importance to keeping a smile on our faces and staying healthy. Singing is an aerobic exercise that releases endorphins and allows us to express ourself in a way nothing else can. It also goes hand-in-hand with dancing, and a few of the choir ladies were certainly giving both their all during rehearsals!

We started meeting in mid-October and ran up until the week before Christmas, singing through some classical and popular carols. I chose a few of my favourites to work on in detail and then everyone made suggestions for our final two carol concert Zooms. There were some lovely local singers from the Songsters, Stirling City Choir, RSNO Chorus and Scene 2 (and my Mum of course!) who popped in and out, always bringing a warm-smile and lots of enthusiasm to the evening. On our final

evening, we even had guest soloists, Rudolph's antlers, dazzling Christmas jumpers, glowing Christmas tree light necklaces and even a stunning Garguncock photo selection courtesy of Helen, the editor of this very rag. A huge 'thank you' to everyone who took part; we definitely enjoyed ourselves!

The main aims of Christmas Choir were to brush off the vocal cobwebs and cheer folks up, but I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to raise some much-needed money for a local charity. Thank you to everyone who has donated - we have raised the fantastic number of £310 for Strathcarron Hospice so far. The page is still open if you would like to make a donation: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/m-wyllie>

Christmas Choir - it was a pleasure! It was great seeing you all and singing with you. I can't wait to get back up to Garguncock



© HRH Photos

Thanks, from Santa and Strathcarron!

David King writes

Saturday 5 December dawned bright and clear, a good day for Santa to take a "Dash" round the village and check out last minute present requests before the big day.

What fun he had and was very happy to meet lots of children and their parents out of their beds so early in the morning. He even received a special request to join in Lois's Boot Camp! I think he remembered all of the requests he received for presents, the one that puzzled him was for a Grabber, he had to look that up on his list of new toys!

He had to run 5k and he had a target of £200 to raise towards the Christmas Day expenses for Strathcarron Hospice, estimated at £12,900. In the end thanks to the generosity of his supporters including very many from the village he raised an amazing £1061 and the whole event involving some 367 fun runners achieved a massive £60,400, enough to cover the whole festive period.

So, Thank You Garguncock, a very generous village.

Photograph..

This cheeky wee hedgehog was photographed by Maitland Clark in his back garden last Autumn



Gargunock Church

by Audrey Birrell, Session Clerk

The Church Buildings have been closed for Worship and meetings, since 22nd March due to the Coronavirus restrictions.

As the number of cases of Covid -19 kept changing within the Central Belt of Scotland this past year, the Kirk Session have been mindful of the health and well-being of everyone within the Community.

The buildings may be closed but we are still open for mission. We are grateful to Mr Ian Roy, our Reader, for his weekly Reflections / Services which he sends via email. The Reflections are often illustrated by sketches from the hand of Douglas Barr (see right). These are then distributed by the Session Clerk to members and friends for whom she has an email address.

Helen Rowell also gives links to these Reflections via Gargunock's Facebook. We thank both gentlemen for their efforts keeping us spiritually connected.



A NEW YEAR BLESSING,

with words attributed to Thomas a Becket
Shared by Val Rose

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain
but by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;
Not by making your path easy
but by making you sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from you,
but by taking fear from your heart;
Not by granting you unbroken sunshine
but by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;
Not by making your life always pleasant
but by showing you when people and their causes need
you the most
and by making you anxious to be there to help.
God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead!
Amen.

Please contact me if you would like to be included in the email circulation or would like a printed copy of the Reflections.

Christmas 2020 will certainly
be one we will remember
for a long time – it was
different for a variety of
reasons



For folks who like a sermon delivered in person, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and Ministers within Stirling Presbytery have been streaming weekly services which have been available to all, making use of the technology skills of their membership. Our own John McLaren has given of his time and skills by making audio recordings of past services available online and he and Helen record the weekly National Prayer which is available each Sunday evening at 7pm.

Rev Lynne Mack, although now retired as OLM attached to the linked charge, has been willing to provide Pastoral Care to the bereaved, who have found it so comforting to have a known person give help. And Johna Mailer (pictured below) continues to make sure that the church organ is kept in good musical condition.

The Kirk Session and Congregational Board have held meetings via Zoom with guidance and support from Valerie Rose, our Interim Moderator. Unfortunately progress with the vacancy has been very slow due to the Covid lockdowns with planned meetings being cancelled and Presbytery are awaiting their allocation of Ministry posts, which is likely to be cut by approx. 40%. Congregations within the Presbytery have been warned that not one of them can expect to be immune to the impact of future change. With the roll-out of the Covid vaccines we hope that restrictions will ease and that within the next six months we will be able to meet in person be it with the wearing of masks.



Online Sewing Classes

Storage Baskets



Make-up/
Toilet Bag

Get Creative During Lockdown
Join a Sewing Class on Zoom

Simple Projects - Only Requires Basic
Experience with a Sewing Machine!

Storage Basket Workshop - Thurs 18th Feb
6.30pm - 8.30pm - £28

Make-up/Toilet Bag Workshop - Sun 28th Feb
2pm - 4.30pm - £32

All Materials Delivered and Included in the Cost
Sewing Machine Required (a few available for loan)

Other classes and private groups available on request
Please contact Fiona James for details and to book
fionajamesinteriors@gmail.com 07753 139477

Boot Camp!

Anyone who knows Lois will think of her running, not walking, and very rarely standing still. Last year, she bit the bullet and decided to try to turn her pastime and passion for fitness into her profession. And not even a covid lockdown has stopped her in her tracks since. If you've ever wondered how it came to pass that there were groups of ladies pounding the ground around the school each Saturday morning, here's why...



Old Dogs and New Tricks!

By Lois Simpson

I set up MOVE IT! Fitness and Personal Training early in 2020 - better late than never eh? Leaving my job to retrain, it felt like a scary move but it also felt very, very right. Lots of studying, practicals, and many sleepless nights followed until I was finally able to start fitness classes locally. Word spread, numbers grew and to my delight people returned for more. "Phew. They like this", I thought, "It might just work!"

Then Covid and lockdown happened. At the worst possible time for a fledgling business. Suddenly the words furlough and Zoom were everywhere, and after climbing yet another steep learning curve, I decided to give online classes a go. .

And so it began, we trained together in our gardens, then as it got cooler we trained together indoors often with kids and pets involved. It became so important to all of us as a point of contact, a blether, laugh or rant (if needed). Each day we 'met' with someone other than the people we were living with. At the start, like many people, I had days where I would wake feeling low or panicked, but seeing these lovely faces popping up online ready to train was a head saver and mood changer.

Sunrise!

We've been enjoying some spectacular sunrises so far this year. Here is just one of them. If you have taken photographs that you are proud of, do please send us copies for our next issue - the Easter issue. Deadline for submissions is **19th March 2021**.



I've got to know more people locally and can even train my running friends all over the country, (a double bonus). Without noticing it everyone became fitter and stronger, they also learned exactly what 'active recovery' is.....

I undertook more training so that I might get Bootcamps going as soon as we could. I thought I'd run it once a month for a few hardy souls who were already training with me online. Almost instantly, that became TWO busy (but always socially distanced) sessions every Saturday, in all weathers. I hear we also now provide breakfast entertainment for those of you that can see us..

I absolutely love what I'm doing now and have not once regretted taking that first scary step. Get in touch if you'd like to join us. www.moveitfitness.net

A promotional graphic for 'MOVE IT! Fitness & Personal Training'. The background is a black and white photograph of a group of people running on a grassy field. At the top, there's a large 'M' logo with a silhouette of a runner jumping over it. Below the logo, the text reads 'MOVE MORE. LIVE MORE. BE MORE.' followed by 'MOVE IT!' in a large, bold font, and 'FITNESS & PERSONAL TRAINING' in a smaller font. At the bottom, the website 'moveitfitness.net' is displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font, and the slogan 'MOVE MORE. LIVE MORE. BE MORE.' is repeated in a smaller font.

En Garde!

Fencing comes to Gargunnock

By Gregor MacCallum

Fencing/, noun

1: The art or practice of attack and defence with the foil, épée, or sabre

2: Deriving from the expression, "The Art of Defence," meaning the art of defending one's self in combat.

Fencing can be done from age 6 upwards with no age limit and it's a sport where being male, or tall does not mean that you have an advantage!

I first started fencing when I was in 1st year at High School and fenced into my early twenties. I returned to the sport about 6 years ago, becoming a qualified Sabre and Foil coach for local clubs whilst also competing in a few competitions including as part the Scotland Veterans Sabre Team. Last year, at the Stirling Sword Open competition, I took 9th place in a field of 40 in Sabre. Not too bad for a 50-year-old, especially as the fencers ahead of me were all in their early Twenties!



As fencing is classed as a "Contact Sport", Covid restrictions put a brake on our club activities. But a change in the rules in November meant u18's could fence indoors so we took full advantage and turned the Community Centre into a Fencing Salle last December. For 4 hours each Saturday the sound of cold steel clashing could be heard, and I know we had a few strange looks from passerby.



Interest in the sessions has been tremendous with new members from Kippen and Balfron. We look forward to expanding into offering new beginners' sessions once Covid restrictions allow.

2020 was a challenge, but we used our time in lockdown to progress plans for a dedicated full-time fencing venue (Salle) in Stirling to attract fencers of all abilities from complete beginners to International level.

Once we are out of Tier 4, fencing will resume at Gargunnock. The U18 beginner's session is from 2pm till 4 pm on Saturdays and costs £5. All kit is provided- you just need to turn up in T shirt, track suit bottoms and trainers.

Adults – sorry but we need to be in Tier 0 for Adult Fencing!

If you would like to know more, please contact me at info@fvfencingclub.co.uk

Down on the Farm

by Alison Younger

"We've had a good winter so far along at Old Leckie. The freezing temperatures can bring both problems and respite. Frozen ground brings a welcome break from the usual squelching through mud and you can take large machinery over normally soft ground, so there has been plenty of dung and slurry spread along the Carse in the last few weeks. But really low temperatures bring their own challenges – tractors not starting, frozen pipes and slippery surfaces. Snow however in our household with 3 young kids means nothing but fun. Snowmen, igloos and quad bike sledging all feature as part of home schooling.

Whilst Brexit and the EU trade deal ultimately delivered a tariff-free trade on our meat exports, the uncertainty meant a lot of farms sold all their 2020 born lambs before the year end. For those still with lambs the price is as good as I've seen it since we took on the farm. Some farms have already started lambing indoors, but at Old Leckie we wait until we can lamb outside on the new grass growth of April. We are however scanning our ewes soon to see what we can expect in terms of number of singles, twins and triplets. It allows us to split the pregnant mothers into different groups so that we can feed them accordingly.

With little grass left, and frost and snow on the ground, anyone with stock outside will be adding feed runs onto their daily stock checks with bales of hay and silage being transported out to fields and fodder crops like turnips being strip grazed. For those of us using quad bikes to get out and about, the main rule of winter is to avoid getting your hands wet at all costs if you don't want them to turn to ice blocks as you head out to the far reaches of the farm.

Inside the sheds at Old Leckie we're bedding cattle, finishing our

late autumn calving (thanks to an infertile bull last year), keeping an eye on our new-born piglets and entertaining our Leckie Layers who have been under their own lockdown since mid December (avoiding a nasty strain of avian flu).

As the daylight starts to lengthen, I'm also trying to crack on with various office tasks like the final testing of our new online order system – it won't be long until I need to start planting salad!

Old Leckie Farm www.oldleckie.co.uk



LOCAL HISTORY

If ever you want to know something about village history, the best starting place is to ask local photographer and 'collector' John McLaren. He shies away from the official designation of Historian, simply saying that in the course of his collecting, he's picked up a lot of knowledge of local history. He's not yet found time to write down all he knows in a book, but in the meantime, you'll find a good deal of his research on his excellent website www.gargunockvillagehistory.co.uk

The Pinnacle

By John McLaren

Someone asked recently, through Gargunock Facebook, about the How, When and Who of the Pinnacle (the flagpole up on the hill). This is what I know.

The old branch was placed in the smaller of the two stone cairns up there, by 19th century local gamekeeper Alexander McNair (or so his grandson, also Alexander and now in his 90s, told me). That would make it at least 150 years old now and I can personally vouch for at least 70 of those years since I first visited it! Because it is so old I would sincerely hope no one ever disturbs it.....please.

Many years ago, an old lady from the village recalled that, on a fine Sunday afternoon after church, village girls would go up to the Pinnacle followed by village boys at a respectable distance, at least to begin with!

Over the years many items, some unmentionable, have been fixed to whatever branch or other piece of wood, brought up

from Sandy Robb's sawmill has been there, but they never lasted long, the wind being too strong.

Eight years ago, the village erected a proper flagpole, near to the original, to fly the Scottish Saltire. Sadly, the flags haven't lasted long in the wind. You'll get a hint of the weather up there (as well as hear some masterly piping) if you follow this link.



<https://tinyurl.com/pinnvideo>

But there's no doubt that on a fine summer's day, the effort involved in getting up there is well worth the reward of a splendid view.

"It is delightful to look down from the hills to the cultivated plain below. The prospect is extensive and beautifully diversified. The winding of the Forth, the fertile valley stretching from west to east further than the eye can reach and the range of mountainous country on the north and south, serving as a wall to shelter it from the storms, form altogether one of the most picturesque scenes in Scotland."

First Statistical Account Gargunock Parish 1795

It is as true today as it was then. Give it a try some time.

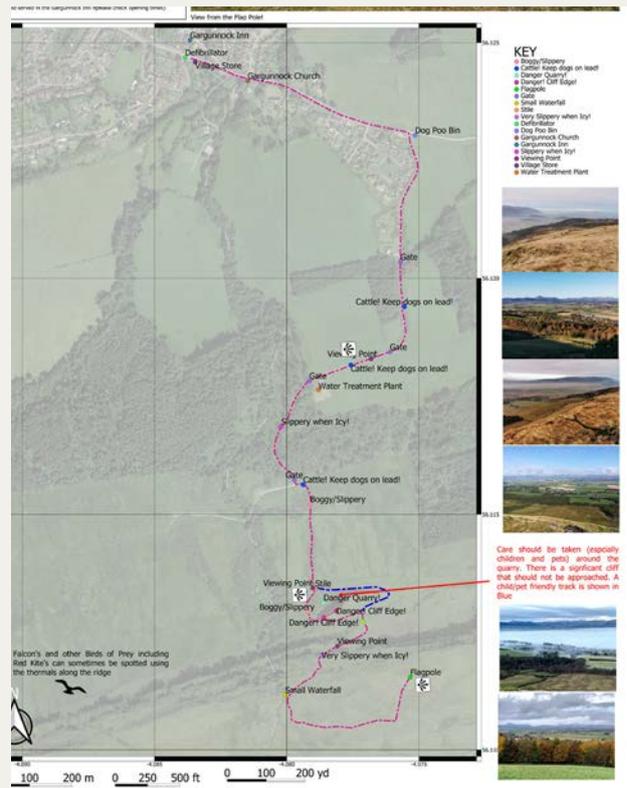
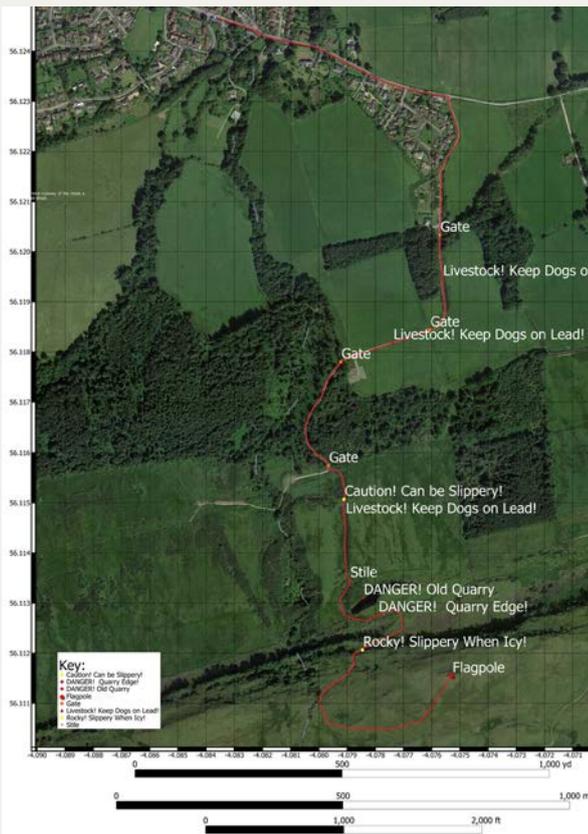
Maps!

by Leighton Rolley

During non-pandemic times I work offshore as a sonar operator with a bit of historic shipwreck work. The Pandemic has given me the "opportunity" to stay home for a lot longer than usual and I have been exploring the surrounding area...I really love history.

One of my "skills" is creating charts/plots and I have constructed a few "5 minute" jobs including this one of the Flagpole Walk. If anybody has any requests for specific plots I can have a go at producing you some custom charts/maps. I don't charge but I'll do them as/when I get a chance.

I would welcome any community feedback and notes for the walk, especially reminders to respect the land owners etc. With your feedback I'll create a nice A0 plot of the walk for the community.....



Saying Goodbye

– Gargunnock style

Gargunnock has always been good at funerals. I remember countless times when the church has filled to bursting as people flocked to say goodbye. The presence and comfort of so many people at the funeral has sustained the bereaved for many difficult weeks and months thereafter. The day passes in a blur of shared stories, hugs, words of comfort and food. Or at least it did, before Covid.

You will remember that I asked for photographs in the last issue. Almost by return, three images hit my inbox. All from Nigel Waterson.

It came as a huge shock to us all to learn of his death less than a month later. Our thoughts are with his wife, his family and his friends as they all come to terms with his loss. We can't come together as we would wish, but we still find ways of showing those that mourn that we care. So, thank you to Phyllis, his widow, for permitting me to pay tribute by reproducing them here in all their glory for you all to see. To me, these images just summed him up – his generosity of spirit; his interest in all that he encountered; his passion for wildlife; and his love of life.

- A white-tailed eagle slowing down.
- Portree lifeboat and Stornoway Coastguard helicopter demonstrating their skills.
- And the girls of the Bristol Gulls, training around Skye ahead of the Talisker Whisky transatlantic attempt which started in December from the Canary Islands.



We aren't allowed to gather. But Gargunnock is adept at adapting. We are still allowed to walk. And if that walk would happen to take us to roughly the same point at a particular time, then put it down to coincidence if you may.



So, I understand that a number of Nigel's friends made their way up to one of his favourite places and raised their hip flasks in his memory. I'm sure he would have appreciated that.

And on another day, **George Watt** took his final journey around the estates and farms where he had worked all his life. His widow, Isabel, and her family, took comfort from seeing the number of people who simply took time just to stand and be counted along the route that the hearse took to the cemetery.

May Paton of Stark Street died on Thursday morning at FVRH. She was Alex Paton's wife and mother to daughter, Agnes Sheriff and sons Sandy and Robert. May and Alex would have been married 69 years in March – they lived here in Gargunnock their whole married lives together. May is fondly remembered for her great love of dancing and the help she gave at the Gala.

We try to pay tribute to all who have passed. Our thoughts also go to Sandra Anderson whose partner, **Colin Wales**, a retired teacher from Bannockburn High School, recently passed away.

If you would like to give mention to someone in future issues, please do get in touch. In the meantime, to quote Church Session Clerk, Audrey Birrell,

"Our thoughts and prayers are with you all".





Andrew Anderson & Sons Funeral Directors

Est. 1969



“Stand Sure we will look after you & your family”

We are proud to offer a **24 hour caring and professional service** to the local community.

A wide range of memorial stones are available.

We can also clean and add further inscriptions to existing family memorials.

CALLANDER, Funeral Home, Glenartney Road, Callander, FK17 8EB, Tel: 01877 330398

BALFRON, 64B Buchanan Street, Balfron, Glasgow, G63 0TW, Tel: 01360 441023



STIRLING, 90 Drip Road, Stirling FK8 1RW, Tel: 01786 237480



Email: info@anderson-funerals.co.uk • www.anderson-funerals.co.uk

Photographic Challenge

The challenge set last time was for images that filled the frame.

Your challenge this time is to send me photographs taken from different **vantage points**. Where you hold your camera, can make all the difference in photography. Many subjects - like children, pets, or even snowdrops – look better if taken from low down. Sit down or put your camera on the floor and take the shot. If you want to take a picture making someone looking more confident, take it from chest or waist level, not eye level. Take a picture from above their heads and they look more vulnerable....

Anne Marie, for example, recently posted this shot (right) that was taken from between the rungs of the footbridge. All you would have seen, had she shot it from above the handrail would have been overhanging branches.

And sometimes, you have to get up high to get the best shot – get to the top of the hill for a view over the village, or (as I did) stand on the new bench in Glebe Park to grab this shot.....



© HRT Photos

The Great Outdoors

By Anne Marie Stewart

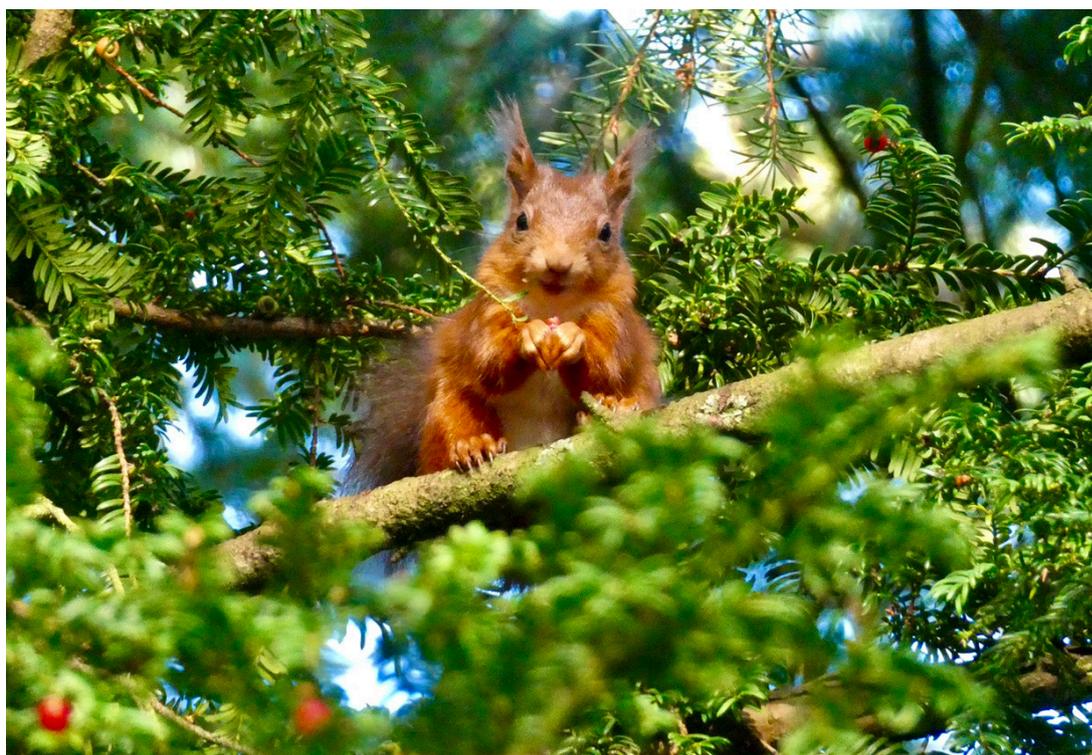
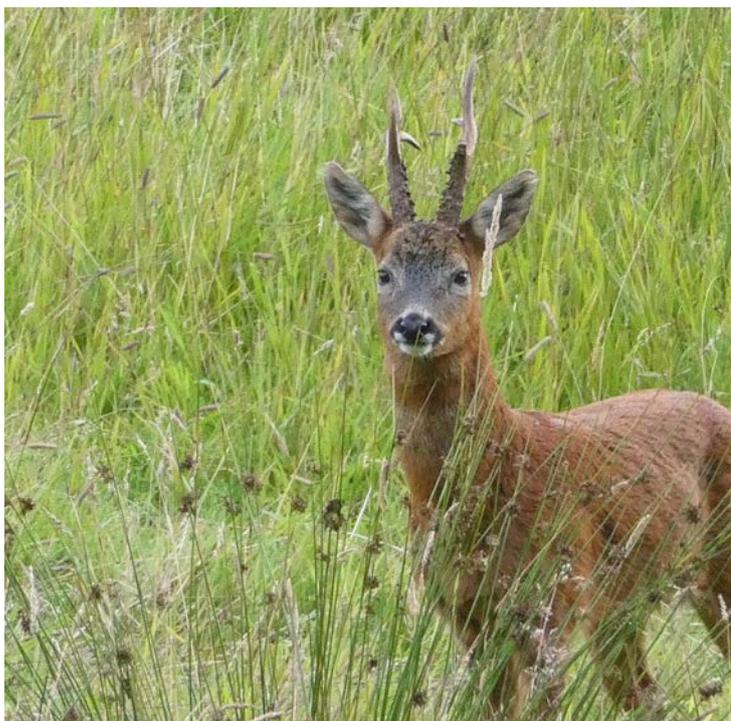
Time to wrap up with a scarf and gloves, warm and ready for the cold outdoors . What will I spot today? Excitement is what I feel as every day there is something new to see and hear.

I hear a nuthatch call - a loud sound for all to hear. It's an agile bird running up and headfirst down the trees. They are tree creepers not easily spotted with mottled brown feather, great camouflage as they swirl round the trees.

There's a red squirrel jumping, almost flying through the trees. Sometimes spotted scurrying among the leaves looking for their hidden middens.

A skein of geese honking overhead..... Hares running and chasing each other over frozen fields.... Roe deer bouncing over fences and hedges alike .

What will you spot when you get outside ?



Well that was Pointless!

By Gilly Bruce

Do you ever watch the quiz shows and wonder how people get there? I do, and especially when sat watching Pointless, usually with Amy. She was quite good a guessing low score answers, me not so much, but I enjoyed the show. One day I decided to google "how to apply for Pointless" and found an application form so I decided to apply!

Some time later, both Amy and I were sent separate forms to complete, asking about our relationship, why we wanted to participate, interests etc. We sent these off, and heard nothing more.

A further 9 months later I had an unexpected call from a researcher, asking if Amy and I could attend an audition in either Glasgow or London studios. Unfortunately as Amy had moved down to Salisbury, we explained this was not going to be possible and thanked them for their call. However, we then received a further call, this time offering us a Zoom audition – if we could both be in the same place to do it together. It took a bit of rescheduling, but we managed to have a video chat with a researcher. This was a casual chat asking about our lives, such as work and hobbies. This was then shown to the producers, who choose the contestant pairs based mainly on personality and how we interacted. They also informed us that the next step would be a phone call, over which we would be given a general knowledge quiz. We did well enough with that, and the producer was happy, so then we just needed to wait to find out the day for filming!



The day of filming we needed to be at the studio by 8am, and were given a list of colours/prints of clothing that could or could not be worn. We had to take 4 outfits, and the wardrobe staff then chose the ones we were to wear. Before filming we had a tour of the empty studio, to put us at our ease later and get time for photos on set! We did not get to meet Xander and Richard until our filming slot, however we did find out that the computer Richard sits in front of is just a blank monitor!

Once changed into our selected outfits it was off to hair and makeup (the staff asked how you would normally be so it didn't look unnatural for you). After getting miked up and name badges attached we were taken back into the studio. They studio audience is actually quite small, and is filled from a queue outside – no tickets required, just a first come basis.

During the filming everything is pretty much as you see it, there is a bit of time after each round to remove podiums, you get to have a drink (through a straw, as they are worried about you dribbling on your outfit and it interfering with their continuity), and make-up is attended to. It's all very friendly, and relaxed, you forget about the cameras which actually are quite far away.

Amy and I had one goal, not to go out after the first round – and I was worried I was the weak link. After each round I breathed a sigh of relief, never expecting we could get right to the end –

and it was close! Just a single point led us to a tie break, and then who know that knowing about Larry the cat would turn out to be so crucial!

The categories of the final round were not too inspiring for us, and we just took a punt. I thought Amy's knowledge of the Royal family, especially Mary Queen of Scots might come in handy but that was not to be. Neither of us had even heard of Lords Spiritual, so we focused on the Dukedoms. In the end we were lucky, and very pleased.

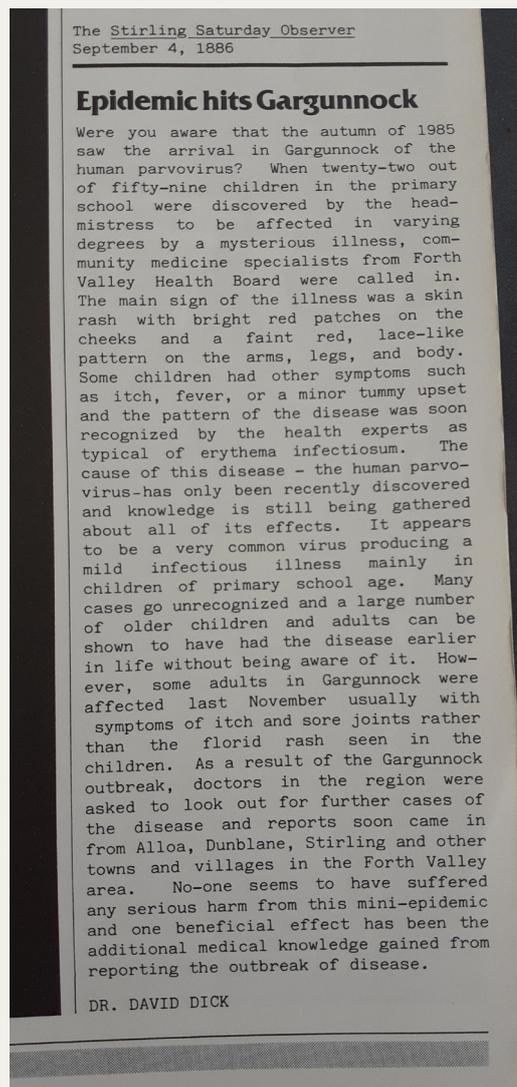
The trophy (you get one each) is about 5inches tall. It caused a bit of a stir with airport security on my way home as when my luggage went through the X-ray machine they wondered what the anomaly that flagged up on the screen. When asked I told them I had a glass trophy, the security guard was puzzled so I followed it up with "I've just won Pointless!"

And then we had to wait, for nearly a year before being informed last week that our episode was scheduled for airing on the 27th Jan – and so it came to be.

So, take a risk, put yourself out there, make memories.

Flashback

This clip was sent to me by Maitland Clark. He writes : "So we're not the only ones having to go through an epidemic!! This is taken from the Summer 1986 edition of the Garguncock Quarterly.



Gargunnock Primary School

By Janine Janine Rushton, Head Teacher

Dear friends in the community,

Once again we find ourselves in a time of school closure. These are certainly the strangest of days! For those of you who do not currently have children at school, we thought you might like to hear a little about how school is operating.

The school building remains open for the children of key workers, and for vulnerable children. We usually have between 6 and 8 children with us each day. School staff are working on a rota basis. Guidelines from the Scottish Government are to keep the number of people in the building to an absolute minimum.

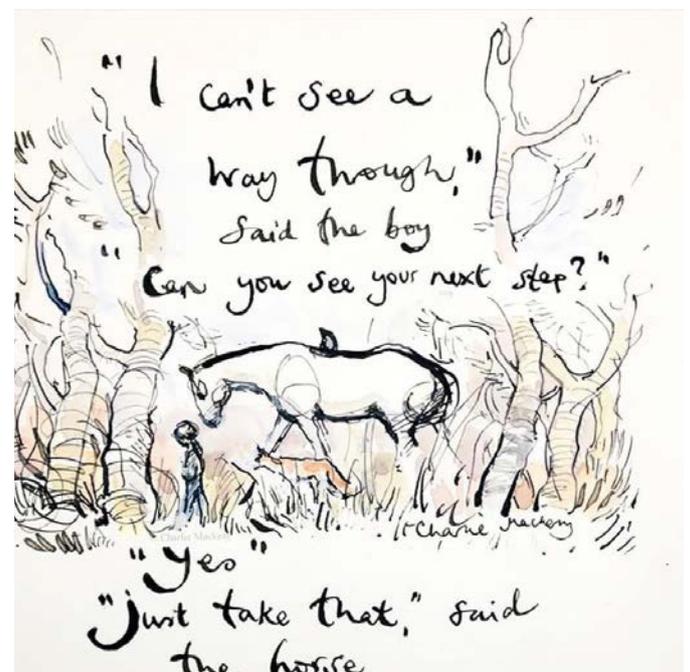
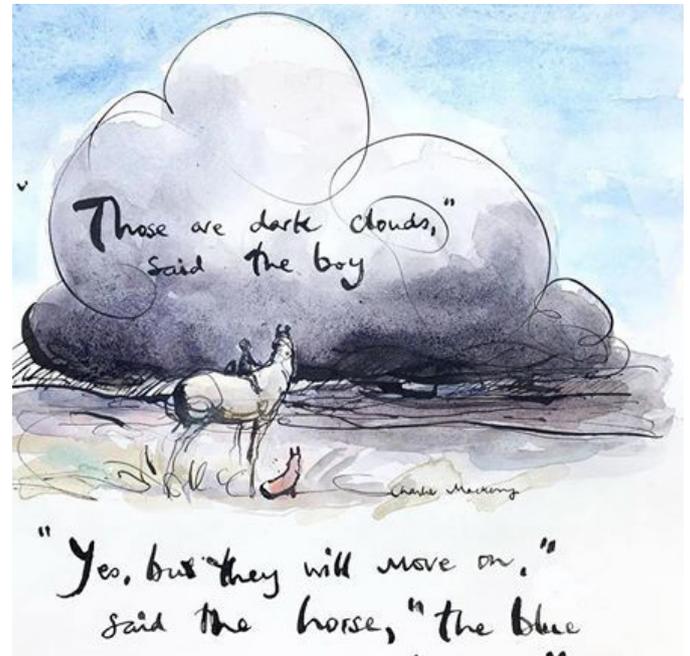
The vast majority of our pupils are working from home, taking part in 'remote learning'. All pupils in P2 – P7 now have the option of a school chromebook at home. Thirty new chromebooks were provided for us by Stirling Council, with funding from the Scottish Government. This is an excellent addition to the 24 we bought last year. As of this week, all class teachers have a school laptop with integrated webcam and microphone for working from home. Class work is being shared digitally on a daily and weekly basis; this is through 'Google Classroom' for P6 and P7, and through a platform called 'Seesaw' for P1-P5.

Each day, each pupil receives a literacy and numeracy task, with an accompanying pre-recorded video from their class teacher. Children are encouraged to complete these two tasks if they possibly can, and send them back to the teacher as soon as they are able. In addition, at the beginning of each week, each class receives a cross-curricular learning grid with a variety of tasks from which they can pick and choose. We have put links to further high quality resources and learning experiences on our website. It is a hard balance to strike, providing enough learning tasks for those who are keen and able to do more, without overwhelming those who find it more of a struggle to get the two set tasks completed.

Each class has two daily live check-in times with their class teacher, and class teachers are on hand throughout the school day to answer questions from pupils and parents alike. Some classes have started face to face Google Meets, and we hope to develop these further over the coming weeks.

On Friday mornings we have a whole school assembly. The first one was pre-recorded but then we moved to live assemblies, again via Google Meet. This took Mrs Rushton far out of her comfort zone, but it was worth it to see the many smiley faces on the screen! It is safe to say that the whole school community is on a very steep learning curve with regards to technology – pupils, parents and staff, but we are all working hard to support each other.

These are very challenging days for our school community, as they are for all families in Scotland and further afield. Parents and staff have a lot on their plates balancing having children at home along with their own working arrangements and family commitments. I am hugely proud of our parents, and of our staff team, for their commitment and positivity. Brighter days will come. As a school community we have taken some encouragement from the words and illustrations of Charlie Mackesy's 'The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse'. Perhaps they will be an encouragement to you too.



© HRH Photo?

Your editor, Helen R Hyland, is also a trainee photographer.

The images printed here are just a handful of those taken in (mostly) village wanderings over recent months. If you would like to see more of my work, please see my website - hrhphoto.co.uk - or follow my social media pages.

And if you would like to discuss a possible commission, order a copy of any images, or a pack of village Christmas cards showing the Advent Window, please contact me for prices - hrhphoto@outlook.com. If you share my images through social media, please credit me.

Thank you for your positive comments and for your support.

Thoughts on Homeschooling

We asked Mrs Rushton (Head Teacher of Gargunnoch Primary School) if she could gather together some first-hand experiences and thoughts about home-schooling,

Evie, age 10. P6

"One great thing about remote learning is that I get to sleep later than if it was a normal school day! The thing I don't like is that I don't get to see my friends during school time, although I get to see them when I go to the park after home-school. I still feel like I'm learning new things (like algebra) and the videos from my teacher are really useful. I think learning from home is better this time because we understand more about technology for logging onto stuff but I am looking forward to going back to school when we can!"



Rachael, P7

"I've been working in the same room as Mum and Dad, and even my budgerigar, Jack! I'm usually working on my Chromebook from school. I've been working on maths and literacy, and other subjects from a grid. I like being in the same room and having a timetable. I look forward to mid-morning break because we have tea and a KitKat, and you don't get that at school! But I miss my friends and being able to go outside with them, and seeing them. I like the Google Meet assemblies - I really enjoy them because it was more like our assemblies in the school hall."

Parent Council Update

by Alison Younger

It was great to see the children back in at Primary School after the summer break last year. The school had done a great job in preparing the school and grounds, teachers, pupils and parents in the return to the classroom. Whilst things were definitely different with class groups not able to mingle, and home lunches to be eaten outside, the high quality of learning provision remained.

At our AGM in September Alison Tunnah was elected Chair and the new parent council cohort set about our key fundraisers for the year. With the absence of the Xmas Fayre the team focussed on the 200 Club and Xmas Raffle – and we had a great response.

A huge thank you to all our Sponsors of the 200 Club and everyone who bought and sold numbers and tickets. We raised £1268.80 through the raffle sales and £1655 from the 200 Club.

Advertising

The Gargunnoch Bugle relies heavily on advertising income to cover its costs. Advertising rates are competitive - from just £15 per issue - for a newsletter that reaches nearly 350 homes in the village of Gargunnoch plus its world-wide digital audience. Deadline for booking space in the Easter Issue 19th March 2021.



To advertise in The Bugle, please contact gargunnochbugle@gmail.com.

Advertising rates **per issue** are:

Full page - £45

Half page - £25

Quarter page - only £15

Life in Lockdown – The Stewarts

The Stewart household is always a busy one with Neil (Dad and ICU doctor), Nicola (mum and GP), Hamish (age 8 and den builder), Eilidh (age 5 and unicorn lover) and Iona (17 months and recently renamed 'the homeschooling pest').

Lockdown feels a bit like a crash course in extreme plate spinning at times but we feel very lucky to live in such a great village with great neighbours (including Grace our fabulous babysitter) and a fantastic school.

Last summer during lockdown, all three kids went to a keyworker childcare hub in Stirling when we were at work. This was great but it is so nice this time round that they can go to their own school and nursery when needed.

On these days, they do the same work they would do if they were at home and have the support of the teachers on duty that day. They enjoy seeing some of their friends and always come home happy and tired! Hamish is in P4 and Eilidh P1. They are very well supported by their class teachers, Mr Webster and Miss Barrowman, who post work daily on 'seesaw' with helpful videos and voice recordings to explain how to do the tasks. We have more insight now than ever before into what the kids learn at school, how they learn and the challenges involved! Mum and Dad are learning a few new things too along the way!

The communication with the teachers is excellent as they quickly respond to work the kids' upload and any queries we have. The kids enjoy uploading videos and voice recordings about their work for their teachers to hear, which helps keep up the connection with them. Mrs Rushton does a weekly live assembly online and again this was lovely to watch and see lots of happy faces engage with her. The ways of learning and staying connected are evolving with time as we all learn more about remote learning. Today Eilidh's class had their first live online reading session with Mrs Rushton and Miss Barrowman. They enjoyed hearing a story and then talking about the books they are reading. The kids are very much looking forward to 'normal' school reopening (as are we!) but we are also very appreciative of the excellent remote schooling currently being provided in these unprecedented times. Thank you to all the staff at GPS!

The repair of the wooden play equipment in the playground is our main priority this year, and we will also be funding cases for the school chrome books and some batches of novels for classroom reading.

Since the Christmas holidays most pupils have been remote learning from home. This second 'lockdown' has seen the school and community step up again to support our pupils in maintaining their learning as best they can in what is a very tricky juggling act for everyone. The school has received additional chromebooks from Stirling Council for pupils and teachers are issuing daily tasks online focusing on numeracy and literacy.

As confidence grows the school has also embraced live online meetings – ranging from small groups through to whole school assemblies. We all hope the children can soon get back into school, but in the meantime are hugely appreciative to the staff team at Gargunnoch Primary for doing their best to support pupils and families. -

Masks!

Have you got a facemask to go with each outfit yet?

If not, there are still a good few left at the shop. All handmade by Gill Bell. Remember please, that all proceeds are going to good causes. It has come to our attention that the Certificate of Appreciation in the shop somewhat undersells the efforts of Gill Bell and the Brownies and their leaders. Yes, a donation of £600 was made to the SCAA (Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance). But since then, a further £1100 has gone to TSAR (the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team – First Responders) the original choice of charity of the Brownies for their fundraising charity for last year).

The charities chosen are small and local and I felt that such a lot of money had been raised for larger charities the smaller ones had been a bit overlooked. Thank you too to Violet for volunteering to be a model!



GARGUNNOCK VILLAGE STORE

OPEN 7 DAYS
01786 860703

Email address:
aweir.gvs@gmail.com

Monday-Saturday 7.30am-7pm
Sunday 8am-5pm



Check out our new gin, beer and wine selection!

Skidders Steak Pies
Leckie Produce - Eggs and Sausages
Try out our new cold meat selection

mortonsrolls
the only way to start your day



Thank you for your warm
welcome and support
Alistair and Violet

The Bugle

is a free Community Newsletter published five times a year by Gargunnoch Community Trust Ltd.

Its aim is to provide news, views, information and entertainment for the residents and friends of Gargunnoch and the surrounding area.

Editor:
Helen Hyland
gargunnochbugle@gmail.com

Deadline of next issue

Photographs, letters, articles, adverts & submissions may be made at any time before
19th March 2021

We reserve the right to edit, shorten, or refuse to publish any article or letter submitted.

Contributions will be attributed to the author.

However, at the Editor's discretion, a contribution may be printed anonymously, but the author's name, address, and phone number must be supplied to the Editor.



The Bugle accepts no responsibility for the return or the condition of unsolicited manuscripts, art or photographs. Whilst reasonable care will be taken to ensure the accuracy of information contained in The Bugle, the Editor, Trust and their agents cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions. Content and views in letters and articles published in The Bugle are held by the contributor, and are not necessarily those of the Trust or the Editor.

Gargunnoch Community Trust and The Bugle are not responsible for the content of advertisements, or for inaccuracies in advertisements, nor any consequences arising. Readers should verify details or obtain advice before taking action as a result of any information in this publication, however, where possible please support our advertisers who help make The Bugle possible.

Distribution:

The Bugle is distributed to more than 336 homes in the village by volunteers (thank you) and is also available on the village website (www.gargunnoch.org).

If you would like to help with distribution, please contact the Editor.

Compliments or Complaints:

Contact the Trust at:
gargunnochtrust@gmail.com

Gargunnoch Community Trust Ltd. is a registered company in Scotland (SC285574), and a registered charity (SC036793). The Trust is run by volunteers for the benefit of the Gargunnoch community.

Advent window displays were created by:-

Helen McLaren, Laura Henderson, Anne Christie, Janet Iffla, Cathy Rowley, Johan Mailer, Tina Peek, Seonaid Muirhead, Janette Wilson, Jessie Wyllie, Doreen Gardner, Gill Bell, Kimberley Hay, Heather McPhee, Anne Muirhead, Lynda McLeod, Sandra Anderson, Agnes Sheriff, Fiona Johnston, Grace Smellie, Marion Gray, Kathleen Sinclair, Liz Mansion, & Fiona McNicol.