

GLENKENS GAZETTE

incorporating news from Glenkens Community & Arts Trust

FREE IN : BALMACLELLAN - CARSPHAIN - MOSSDALE - NEW GALLOWAY - ST. JOHN'S TOWN OF DALRY

December/January 2010

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www.glenkensgazette.com

GOING FOR GOLD

Amanda Simmons received a Gold Award for her unique kiln formed glass vessels at the prestigious Origin Craft Council fair in London.

The award gives Corsock-based artist Amanda the opportunity to explore a chosen overseas market. Amanda has chosen America as her target market because of the longstanding tradition of glass making and collecting, and the fact that it is the birth place of her particular medium of kiln formed glass.

Amanda will use the award money to visit New York in Spring 2011. She says: "I'm very excited about my research trip to the States as I haven't visited for over 15 years and it will be interesting to see the changes and experience the applied arts market on a larger scale. I hope I will be able to export a little part of Dumfries and Galloway to America."

Amanda is currently exhibiting in the

States for the first time and will also be showing her unique glass vessels at a select few galleries in Dumfries and Galloway and around the UK this winter.

**To find out more visit
www.amandajsimmons.co.uk**



Photo shows Amanda receiving her award in London with representatives from UK Trade and Investment and Crafts Council (photo by Gary Plahe)

DALRY SPREADS ITS WINGS

A series of environmental workshops in October was the launching event for Dalry Bird Town, celebrating the life and work of renowned bird artist Donald Watson and his son, golden eagle expert Jeff Watson.

During the week 14 young people braved the chilly October weather to make art works and explore the outdoors around Dalry. (See p5 for more on the Creative Explorer workshops...)

At the heart of the concept of Dalry Bird Town is the Watson Bird Centre, which it is hoped will provide opportunities for new writers, artists and all interested in any aspect of birds, arts and landscape, which was the core of Donald's work. Roger Crofts, who is at the forefront of the project, outlined current thinking on the conversion of the Watson family home at Barone on Main Street; Donald's original studio, archive and library, offices for bird organisations, exhibition space, accommodation and work space for artist in residence and

caretaker. In addition, the garden would provide space for sculptures, trails and an open air studio.

The initiative is being taken forward by a steering group including Dalry residents, the Watson family, bird, arts and science interests and it has been agreed that the Glenkens Community and Arts Trust will provide the charitable home for the initiative. (See p3 for more on Dalry Bird Town...)



Creative Explorers

A DECADE IN PRINT

Matthew Newton, creator of the Glenkens Gazette, says:

"My original idea of a small local magazine has certainly blossomed since GCAT took over.

"There are so many activities and groups, and the area is home to such a wide range of talented individuals. I think the Gazette is a mirror for the Glenkens and will continue to reflect the growth and energy of its folk and their community spirit for many years to come.

"And one last thing... a word of thanks to the present editor - I know what a great amount of time and effort you must put into each edition!"

Thank you Matthew, and well done for creating such a thriving local publication!



IN THIS ISSUE

- Halloween
- Bonfire Night
- Birds - Red Kites, Birdwatchers, Bird Town, Bird Book
- CatStrand Awards
- Local History
- Clubs
- Much More...

A Merry Christmas to all our readers!

Local Author: Cathy Cassidy

Glenkens-based author Cathy Cassidy gives us a taste of life as a successful childrens' book writer:

"I write children's books, most aimed at the 9-14 age group, and 2010 was a busy year for me... but a good one! Back in the days before I was published, I imagined an author's life to be pretty idyllic... lots of daydreaming mixed in with the occasional bit of writing. I didn't factor in the whole book tour/book festival thing, or deadlines, or website upkeep... urghh! It turns out that writing is a more than full-time job, but the fab reader feedback makes all the hard work worthwhile.

Book festivals, school visits and bookshop

signings took me from Beijing to Brighton to Belfast in 2010, and just about everywhere in between... and in the middle of all that, I was writing books! Love, Peace & Chocolate was published in April; Daizy Star & The Pink Guitar in June; and Cherry Crush, the first of my new Chocolate Box Girls series, in September. I was also voted 'Queen of Teen' at a national book awards ceremony in September, which was very scary – and yes, there was an actual crown involved. Nobody has been in touch yet to outline my queenly duties, but I have a few ideas up my sleeve... surely I can swing a few perks like free chocolate for all and daydreaming on the school timetable? Well, maybe!

inspiring. Travelling the country and beyond on book tours is fun, but nothing will ever be better than coming back home to Galloway, to my cottage, my family. Red kites soaring overhead, deer picking their way gently through the shadows... and space to dream. What could be better?"



Cathy's newest book, Cherry Crush, is out now and available to buy at The CatStrand and in all good bookstores. Find out more about Cathy and her books on www.cathycassidy.com



photo by Chris Watt

Winter is one of my favourite times of year, though, especially here in Galloway... it means peace and quiet, time to write, curled up with my laptop beside a roaring wood fire. If writer's block strikes, I take my dog, Kelpie, out for a long tramp through the hills... the still, quiet beauty of the countryside never fails to work its usual magic! I am very lucky to live in such an unspoilt part of Scotland – after 20 years, I still find it endlessly

NOTICEBOARD

Carsphairn's Got (Even More)

Talent takes place on Saturday, 4th December, in Carsphairn's Lagwyne Hall, at 7.30pm.

The Dalry quarry petition closes at the end of the month. Anyone wanting to add their name can do so at Matthew Newton's shop. The Community Council is planning to present the petition to D&G Council in Dumfries on 16th December. We would like as many people as possible to come along to demonstrate the community's opposition.

The pupils of Kells Primary School would like to invite senior citizens of our community, to attend the dress rehearsal of our play on Tuesday the 14th of December from 1.30pm-2.30pm. We would like to offer transport to those of you who would find it difficult to get to the school. Please call the office on 01644 420 340 before the 7th of December

to arrange this. The evening performance is reserved for parents and family only.

On the Sundays on either side of Christmas (19th and 26th December) Dalry Church will be holding a retiring collection for the Bethany Drop-in centre for homeless and vulnerable people in Dumfries, to help them cover a shortfall in funding for the salary of the Drop-in Coordinator.

If you are not able to attend these services and would like to contribute to this need at Christmas time you are welcome to pass a donation to the Rev David Bartholomew or a Dalry elder.

Balmaclellan Community Council will be holding their annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch in December. If you are entitled to attend (eg resident in Balmaclellan and of an age), and have not received your invitation by the

beginning of December, please contact Jane Brayshaw (Douglas) on 01644 420686.

Call for Volunteers! Dalry School and the NHS have initiated a health and well-being project which hopes to raise awareness of emotional well-being and self esteem in an integrated way involving not only the school and pupils but parents and the wider community.

They are currently looking for volunteers from the community who might have a skill to offer to run a taster session or a series of sessions during lunchtimes or after school. The skills could be anything that addresses or contributes to emotional well-being and self esteem, eg: yoga, drama, storytelling groups, sleep workshops, walking groups - these are just some examples. Please contact Morag Paterson on either 01644 430 004 or moragleeming@me.com

DOUBLE LAUNCH IN DALRY

Continued from front page... Around a hundred people gathered in Dalry Town Hall on Saturday 16th October for a double launch; the inauguration of the Dalry Bird Town Initiative and the launch of Donald Watson's last book 'In Search of the Harrier'.

Chris Rollie gave a marvellous evocation of Donald's work as bird observer, writer and artist and Louise Watson, one of Donald's daughters, gave us a wonderful insight into her father and quoted some key passages from the book.

It is a singular occasion when books by father and son are published, albeit posthumously. The second edition of Jeff Watson's seminal work 'The Golden Eagle' also being available for the first time in Scotland. Des

Thompson, who led production of the second edition, introduced it. We were delighted that Vanessa Halhead, Jeff's widow, was with us.

The Dalry Bird Town Initiative was introduced by Roger Crofts and is being taken forward by a steering group including Dalry residents, the Watson family and bird, arts and science interests. Andrew Mellor, a

long-standing Dalry resident and one of its members, spoke of the need for new vitality in the village and his enthusiasm for this project.

GCAT is supporting the project and says it is ready to take on new initiatives beyond the transport project, the Glenkens Gazette and The Catstrand.

There is a great deal to be done and lots of funds to be raised. All of this will take time. We have already applied for funds to employ a Project Development Officer and to set up base in Dalry; the first job to result from the initiative. We hope for others in the future.

Photo: Left to right - Vanessa Halhead, Roger Crofts, Pam Richardson, Cathy Agnew, Louise Watson and Des Thompson



Dalry Community Council

Repairs between the Police station and Allangibbon bridge were successful, but side verges weren't tidied up and work not carried out on the corner, thereby it's foreseeable another accident could happen fairly soon. It was confirmed that the petition against the quarry is in circulation and suggested that a group of members should go to D&G council to present it once signatures have been collected.

Next meeting: Mon 6 Dec, 7pm, Dalry Town Hall.

New Galloway & Kells Community Council

Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING) chairman Ros Hill reported on a meeting with D&G Council; it seems unlikely that they would cover the annual expense of the Town Hall's upkeep.

The Treasurer report showed that after deductions, the total (so far) for the Alternative Games (August 2010) is £3696.45. Further monies are yet to come in.

Next meetings: Mon 13 Dec & Mon 10 Jan, 7.30pm, New Galloway Town Hall.

Balmaclellan Community Council

Appreciation was expressed for Chris Bird, former chair of the CC, who has resigned. A vacancy now exists on the CC and various options are being considered.

Full minutes of local Community Council meetings can be viewed at Dalry Library.

Repairs to 'Old Mortality' are likely to be delayed due to sensitivity of materials to temperature and moisture. However, the prospect of further damage due to winter weather was noted.

The village hall committee reported on a busy programme of events planned for participation and fun. In the New Year, a Burns' supper will be held on January 22nd and you are all welcome!

Next meeting: Mon 29 Nov, 7pm, Balmaclellan Village Hall.

Carsphairn Community Council

There are to be massive cuts in the council's budget next year, in line with national budget cuts. Cllr Duncan advised that people will really start to see changes.

The volume and speed of timber lorries on the B729 was found to be "shocking", and very frightening when lorries don't move out of the centre of the road. When drivers have been questioned, they say the verges are too soft. It was agreed that the chair would pursue this issue.

The chair contacted D&G and Ayrshire roads dept. regarding closure of the A713 for resurfacing and the lack of prior notification to businesses and residents effected. It was confirmed that Carsphairn will be consulted next time the road is to be closed.

There will be no meeting Dec. The next meeting will be Mon 31 Jan, 7pm, Lagwyne Hall.



Red Kites Take Flight

Louise McClure from Dalmellington says:

"My husband Archie and I had a most enjoyable time at the red kite open day at Belhymack Hill. To be so close to those beautiful birds was a day to remember."

Many thanks to Louise for submitting this wonderful photo of the day.

GLENKENS SCHOOLS REPORT

Day Out at Carlingwark

James Rees, P5, Carsphairn Primary: On Tuesday, 28 September I got picked up in Carsphairn at 8 o'clock in the morning to go to Carlingwark. I got on the coach and I could not wait to meet new friends and do the activities. I did sailing first and that was the best thing I did on the whole trip except my partner Cara kept screaming. She thought I was not driving properly. When we swapped boats we had a race and I won the race with Kyle from Dalry and that proved I was driving properly!

After that we put our sails in for lunch so we took our life jackets and waterproofs off and went into the dining room for lunch. When we had finished lunch we went back into our groups.

Rona Johnston, P5, Dalry Primary: My group did sailing in the morning so we went canoeing in the afternoon. The canoes could fit 3 people in it,

my partners were Mia and Emily. My group just couldn't turn! We tried to turn but we kept going backwards! Eventually we did manage to turn, but it was still pretty hard. Our instructor, a man called Ed tied all our canoes together and we sailed to an island and Fred was called Captain Fred! A man named Paul showed us Splash Fu moves, and he got a paddle and splashed us all with

freezing water. One of the moves he did splashed my head and I was soaked!

After that we all went inside and unpacked. We all had rooms and there were two boys and two for the girls. I was sharing with Emily, Cara, Kelsie, Amber-Lee, Poppy and Mia so it was a pretty big room. Next we went to a restaurant called the Scottish Pantry and I had lasagne and a lovely dessert.

Raphael Langford, P5, Kells Primary: The next day we were doing orienteering in Dalbeattie Forest. It was great fun! My partner was Poppy. She and I worked great as partners, but I did get stuck in the mud a few times but in the end I got out because Poppy came to the rescue. We did get lost a few times too and it was tough in the pouring rain.

When we were finished the men announced the winners and it was time to go home.



Harvest Assembly

On Monday 27 September Dalry Nursery and Primary held their annual Harvest Assembly. P4/5/6 led the assembly, and entertained family and friends, along with the Nursery children.

Everybody donated harvest produce for our Harvest table which later got split into bags and delivered to members of the community. Parents, staff and pupils did this in the afternoon so a big thank you to everyone for their help and support. We have had a lot of kind thank you letters from people who received bags... All in all, a very worth while, rewarding and enjoyable event.

Indoor Athletics

On Wednesday 27th October Dalry P4 Pupils took part in the Indoor Athletics Event at Castle Douglas High School. Schools from all over the region took part. The children were split into 10 groups and had to cover 10 different stations, ranging from throwing, running, balancing and jumping. Everyone had a fantastic time!



Fat Lamb Fundraiser

A group of children representing Kells, Dalry and Carsphairn Primary Schools, attended Wallets Mart in Castle Douglas on Tuesday 2 November to sell the fat lambs that had been donated to the Glenkens schools. This was part of a cluster fundraising event whereby local farmers were asked to donate a lamb for the pupils to sell, with all proceeds going towards outdoor learning projects for the three schools.

The staff were thrilled that this project supports our aim to encourage learning through real life, hands on experiences and the children have been so enthused by the project that they have barely noticed the research, writing and collaborative skills they have developed along the way! The pupils are now all keen advocates for eating fresh, local produce and they loved the experience of getting into the ring and hearing the price they got for their lamb! Now they have got the taste for bartering we may have some future entrepreneurs in our midst!

Kells, Dalry and Carsphairn would like to say a huge thank you to all those who made this exciting fundraiser possible: Wallets Mart for accommodating us and the canteen staff for supplying the snacks. Robin Anderson co-ordinated the lambs

being sold on our behalf and looked after us on the day. Andrew Gold who gave a pupil the opportunity to introduce our lambs for auction and then he showed us all how it was done! Derek Thomson who collected and delivered all our lambs to market and Kate and Marcus Maxwell, whose powers of persuasion encouraged everyone to support the project!! Finally, a huge vote of thanks to all the farmers who donated lambs and made this possible, even though some of them no longer have pupils in the Glenkens schools anymore.

On the day we raised an amazing £1150 from selling 15 lambs and with a donation from Wallets Mart! This figure is set to rise as several farmers are still to take their lambs to market on our behalf. Thanks to the wonderful support from the whole Glenkens community this project has been a huge success both educationally and financially and is one that the children and staff were excited and proud to be part of.

Kelly Devine, Depute Head Kells Primary



YOUTH UPDATE

Creative Explorers

The Creative Explorer art workshops were delivered by Room 13 by lead artist Emma Conder.

They were able to take place thanks to funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Gaelforce, with support from GCAT, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Sarah Keast.

As well as drawing and painting we undertook a variety of exercises and games exploring the environment and spent time alone on 'solos' thinking about wild places and whether they matter. The group worked with found material on our sites including willow, colourful autumn leaves, forest floor materials, sheep wool, mud and even cow pats to create a variety of art works. It is hoped that there will be an opportunity to exhibit pictures of the art works soon.

Having had a taster of this style of art workshop, there is an opportunity now for the Glenkens schools to consider future involvement with Creative Explorer and Room 13 art events.

Emma Conder

YOUTH PLAYERS

The Youth Players are looking forward to taking to the CatStrand stage again on Friday 3 December.

Their first productions of the new season have been in rehearsal since September. Most of the members are involved in 'Ernie's Incredible Illucinations' by Alan Ayckbourn, and some of the older members will also perform two shorter pieces 'Kennel Club' by David Muncaster and 'The Funeral' by Laurie Allen.

All of the plays are comedies and the evening promises to be great entertainment for the audience and, judging by the rehearsals, the cast too!

To get ready for the Festive Season, coffee and mince pies will be served in the CatStrand cafe at the end of the show. Tickets are available from The CatStrand - please book early to avoid disappointment. The Youth Players will then meet once more before Christmas on Sunday 5th December at 3pm to make final plans for the 2011 Drama Festival. It is planned to enter two plays for the festival this time around and rehearsals will commence in earnest on Sunday 9th January.

Teenspirit

Around 30 young people meet weekly at The Catstrand to hang out with their mates, play the wii, PS3 or watch movies or go on trips.

We have had some spectacular trips to Loch Ken water ski school- where Roddy took over 20 kids out banana boating followed by a BBQ. The group are always

up for trying new activities, next week we are trying a youth nightclub in Ayr, and soon we'll be away to catch the latest Harry Potter blockbuster.

Teenspirit meet every Tuesday night from 7.30 to 9.30. If you are interested in coming along or would like more information call 01644 420374.

Halloween Hilarity

After a year's gap, Dalry once again hosted a Halloween party for Glenkens children at the Community Centre.

Generous support from Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Dalry and New Galloway community councils ensured a great evening of scary fun and games for all.

Friends of Dalry School (FODS), who had organised the evening, did an amazing job of decorating the community centre and this, plus music provided by Robbie Struthers, made a great backdrop to the evening. The Fancy Dress Competition was judged by Rhoda Rugg who had a very difficult task choosing winners from such an inventive parade.

FODS are already planning next year's party having snapped up cut-price decorations the following week. Save the date - 31st October 2011!



A ROARING SUCCESS

Carsphairn Kirk Social Committee organised their village bonfire, where many traditional games were played in the Village Hall. The children then made their way through the Village collecting money for Children In Need.

Finally they arrived at the Stag Tea Garden where the Guys, dressed as Goldilocks' three Bears, ended up in the Bonfire while the children enjoyed pudding and sparklers.

Thanks go to Carsphairn Community Garden Steering group, who donated the sparklers for the evening.

Balmaclellan provided its usual wonderful fireworks display as well as a great bonfire, soup, sandwiches and even mulled wine. Despite the wet

weather there was a good turn-out.

The New Galloway bonfire night, organised by John Thom, was a great success. John orchestrated and funded the event through his own endeavours, and funds raised on the night were donated to the Combat Stress charity in Hollybush.



A good turn-out for Carsphairn bonfire night

Breathe Easy Stewartry

Thursday 7th October in Castle Douglas saw the launch of the Stewartry branch of the British Lung Foundation's 'Breathe Easy' local support network.

The network supports those with lung disease, especially respiratory, (ie. Asthma, Emphysema, COPD, bronchiectasis, etc).

The group is supported by the Respiratory Managed Clinical Network

of Dumfries & Galloway NHS and by the Public Health Office.

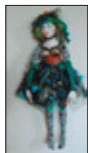
Posters are displayed throughout the Glenkens, and meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month in St Ninians Church Hall, Castle Douglas, 2-4pm. Membership and entry are free. We encourage partners, carers and family to come along. **For more details call David on 01556 660093.**

David Dearing, Secretary

The CatStrand: News & Events

Christmas Shopping Night, Wed 24 Nov, 5-8pm.

Calling all Santas! Choose from an exclusive seasonal collection of locally made arts & crafts, gifts and cards, while enjoying a glass of mulled wine and live musical entertainment.



Exhibition: Threads in Fashion by the Exploring Embroidery Group, runs to Thurs 9 Dec, CatStrand opening hours. Some of the work produced from this wide-ranging topic includes wallhangings, bags, dolls and textile jewellery.

The Pines, Thurs 2 Dec, 7.30pm, £10/£8.

A powerful young force in American roots music. Exhilarating music from one of the finest US bands to emerge in the last 10 years.



CatStrand Youth Players Show - Winter Season Productions, Fri 3 Dec 7.30pm, £5/£3. The award winning CatStrand Youth Players present 'Ernie's Incredible Illucinations' along with another two peices, and the evening includes coffee & mince pies after the show.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens told by Mike Maran, Thurs 9 Dec, 7pm, £10/£8 (£6 under 16), ages 6+. Marvellous entertainment and a fabulous treat for the whole family!



Film: Toy Story 3, Wed 29 Dec, 2pm, £5/£4. Toy Story 3 welcomes Woody, Buzz and the whole gang back to the big screen as Andy prepares to depart for college and his loyal toys find themselves in daycare!

Exhibition: Anne Butler & Urpu Sellar, Sat 11 Dec to Fri 28 Jan, CatStrand opening hours.



Shivers Down the Spine - Storytelling Showcase, Sat 15 Jan, 7.30pm, £7/£5. Tales to warm your heart and tales to chill your soul; the Galloway Storytelling Collective bring the best of the regions storytellers keeping the traditional stories of Galloway alive.

Breakdance Double Bill: Rock-a-bye-Bboy and Box Fresh, Thurs 20 Jan, 7pm, £8/£5 Ages 7+. Random Aspekts and Cypher Dance: "Four extremely talented and impossibly acrobatic young men..."



Film: Coco Chanel & Igor Stravinsky, Thurs 27 Jan, 7.30pm, £5/£4. Paris 1913; Coco Chanel is infatuated with the rich and handsome Boy Capel, but she is also compelled by her work.

Regular events:

Exercise to Music, Mon, 10-11am, £4/£3.



Play it by Ear, every Monday during term time, 1.30-2.30pm, £2 per adult/child + 50p for each additional child. A weekly song, music and storytelling session for pre-school children and their parents or carers which now takes place every Monday afternoon. Juice and biscuits included in the price.

Children's Dance Classes with Margaret Morris Movement, every Monday during term time, 3.15-4pm pre school, 4-5pm 8-12 years, free. Dance exercises are created to develop agility, balance, co-ordination, elevation, flexibility and posture.



Taking the Next Step in Computing, Mon, 5.30-7.30pm.

Carers, Coffee & Chat, 1st Tue each month, 10am-12 noon, free. Transport may be available if required, please phone 01644 420374.



Teen Spirit, every Tues, 7.30pm-9.30pm. A weekly club for young people to hang out, chill, listen to music, eat munchies, play console games on a big screen, watch films and plan trips and activities. If you are interested in coming along contact Catherine on 01644 420374.

Taking the First Step in Computing, Wed 5.30pm-7.30pm.

Gentle Yoga & Relaxation, Thurs, 10-11.15am, £30 per 6 week block.

Tone and Stretch, Fri 10am, £4/£3. A workout to tone muscle and improve body shape followed by a stretch out to ease those tired/aching muscles; a great way to start the day!

Afternoon Tea Club, 2nd Fri each month, 2pm, annual membership £2. Minibus pick up from Balmaclellan & Dalry by prior arrangement - call 01644 420374.

Saturday Art Club, 2nd Sat of every month, 10am-12noon, £4. Two-hour workshops run by professional artists and teachers, offering expert tuition and hands-on experience across a range of fun filled visual arts and crafts activities (age 5-12).



CatStrand Youth Players, every Sun during term time, 3-5pm. The Youth division of the Glenkens 73 Club. If you are interested in acting, directing, costumes, sound, lighting, stage management or any other aspect of drama or theatre, then come along and have some fun (age 10-18).

The Clog & Shoe Workshop Balmaclellan

Open 10am - 5pm weekdays
In winter please ring to arrange a visit.

Tel: 01644 420465

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www.clogandshoe.co.uk

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The CatStrand: News & Events

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Why not shop locally this Christmas...

The CatStrand has a selection of local arts, crafts, gifts and cards - perfect for that personal touch at Christmas.

From locally crafted handmade soaps to delicious gourmet chocolates; beautiful, practical glassworks to a variety of jewellery, books and fine art by local artists and authors.

Come along and have a look, and support your local economy this Christmas!

Allotment Update

If anyone is interested in being involved in a community garden or would like an allotment please get in touch.

So far we have had demand for 12 allotments and have space for more. We have been given the use of a fantastic field with spectacular views over New Galloway and more importantly very fertile soil.

Please call 420374 or email catherinep@catstrand.com

CatStrand Cafe

**LUNCHES
Mon - Fri
11am-2pm**

NEW WINTER MENU

*take-away food
available*



CatStrand Wins Awards

The CatStrand has scooped up two prestigious awards this season. Both are wonderful achievements illustrating that the venue is operating to its greatest potential in a variety of areas.

The CatStrand is the winner of the Culture Champion Award in the Arts & Leisure Category of the first Dumfries & Galloway Life People of the Year Awards. (To find out more visit www.dgblife.co.uk)

The venue joined the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) last year in support of sustainability and green issues and has been awarded Gold in its first grading!

The GTBS is the national sustainable tourism certification scheme for the UK. Originally developed in partnership with Visit Scotland, it is now the only certification scheme validated by Visit Britain, through the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT).

Businesses opting to join Green Tourism are assessed against a rigorous set of criteria covering a range of areas such as energy and water efficiency, waste management, biodiversity and more. Those businesses that meet the required standard receive

a Bronze, Silver or Gold award based on their level of achievement.

(To find out more visit www.green-business.co.uk)



THE BUS : GLENKENS TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

UPDATE ON CONDITIONS OF USE: We have recently updated the terms and conditions of use for the mini bus. If you are a user group it is still £10 to hire it for the first six hours and then £3 per hour after that. The fuel charge remains at 40p per mile for the time being. So why not use the bus for a Xmas or New Year outing? To register as a user group costs a one-off payment of £20 - anyone wanting a copy of the latest conditions of use or who is thinking of setting up a user group please contact Keith.

WEDNESDAY BUS SERVICE (REGD. ROUTE): CONCESSIONARY BUS PASSES ARE ACCEPTED ON THIS ROUTE, SO PLEASE MAKE USE OF THIS EXTRA SERVICE

Timings are as follows:

1900 Dept Dalry (Underhill)

1910 New Galloway

1925 Mossdale

1935 Laurieston

1940 Townhead of Greenlaw

1947 Castle Douglas (Market Street)

1950 Arrive Castle Douglas (Tesco)

The return journey :

2045 Departs Castle Douglas (Tesco)

2047 Castle Douglas (Market Street)

2052 Townhead of Greenlaw

2100 Laurieston

2110 Mossdale

2125 New Galloway

2135 Arrive Dalry

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BOOK THE COMMUNITY-BUS OR IF YOU WANT
ANY MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT KEITH COOPER, GTI
ADMINISTRATOR ON 01644 420374.**

Another bus is now the only item on GTI's Xmas list - we would obviously like a new one but that depends on how much money we can raise. If you know a pot of gold that can be explored please don't keep the idea to yourself!

A BIG THANK YOU AND HAPPY XMAS to all those people who have contributed in any way to making 2010 another good year for GTI. Over 3,000 passengers carried, 800 voluntary hours driven, and 14,000 miles travelled means we are one of the best transport initiatives in SW Wcotland - thank you!

*Keith Cooper,
GTI Administrator*

**For further info &
to buy tickets visit
www.catstrand.com
or call 01644 420 374**

LOCAL HISTORY

William Macmath, Ballad Collector of Glenkens

As the Festive Season approaches it is sobering to reflect that while Hogmanay was well celebrated in the Glenkens, Christmas was not.

Since there was no scriptural authority for the date of Christ's birth, presbyterians gave it a body-swerve. However, irrespective of how folk marked the passing of the winter solstice and the return of the light, there would be an accompaniment of story-telling and ballad-singing in the home, the 'big hooses' and the hostelrys of the glen.

Galloway had the reputation of being a musical place and one man who devoted much of his life to the preservation of ballad heritage in particular was William Macmath (1844-1922). Born in Brighton to Scottish parents he spent much of his childhood at Airds of Kells, home of his maternal grandparents and his beloved Auntie Jeanie, aka Miss Jane Webster. Jeanie ended her days in Crossmichael.

Of Airds, where the Dee meets the Ken, it was said that "the hand of Nature has shut it out from almost all communication with the world: it seems intended as the nursery or dwelling of a poet", as indeed, it had been, for Robert Burns visited to pay homage to the memory of Glenkens poet, John Lowe.

Macmath always referred to himself as "a Stewartry man", visiting almost annually until a few months before he died. He will be known to some as the agent of Kirkcudbright artist E A Hornel, purchasing books, notably on Burns, for the splendid library at Broughton House. He had a day job as an Edinburgh lawyer but ballads were his passion and these he collected and sent to the American scholar Francis James Child who, based at Harvard, was compiling his ambitious *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, the first volume of which appeared at Christmas 1882; four more followed. William was well placed to perform this (often laborious) service. His mother, his aunt and four surviving younger sisters were all ballad singers, as well as collectors of tales and riddles. He, apparently, did not sing, but he was known

to recite a ballad as a party piece.

Though undoubtedly interested in the oral tradition, much of his work was on ballad manuscript collections, some of which he secured for Harvard. In truth, despite their mutual interest in the rambunctious, evocative, emotional and violent world of balladry, both he and Child often appear like a couple of dry sticks in severe need of combustion. But it is now largely due to William that we know anything at all about a Glenkens tradition, a precious legacy well worth acknowledgement.

He was very interested in the historical origins of individual ballads, more so than Child. Believing the latter to be overly concerned with questions of arrangement and classification, he once, rightly, threw Child's words back at him: "Strictness is offensive as well as useless. Perhaps it is impossible. Ballads are not like plants or insects, to be classified to a hair's breadth". He understood that ballads arose from the folk themselves and thus were as elusive, magical and mysterious as their creators, that ballads on a printed page were dead things, whereas in performance they were exhilarating and entertaining, familiar yet unpredictable, often offering essential cultural and social reinforcement. He was emphatic that the ballad's integrity must be respected; he totally opposed the 'improvement' favoured by Walter Scott and others, not to mention deliberate fakery and modern intrusions.

From Jeannie Webster he acquired an excellent version of the haunting *Lord Randall* which she had learned 50 years earlier from Mary Williamson, a nursemaid at Airds; another was a variant of *Johnie Scot* which she had heard from Miss Jane Hannay, Newton Stewart. In all, through her brother, she contributed sixteen ballads to Child's collection. William's sister, Minnie, supplied eight of the scarce 'ballad airs from manuscript'.

By the late nineteenth century the tradition was dying and the tunes had often been forgotten. From the recitation of Mary Cochrane, Abbeyyard, Crossmichael, he secured a lively version of *The Broom of Cowdenknowes*. In 1883 Macmath

obtained a copy of *The Lochmaben Harper* from the Rev. George Murray of Greenock who had it from his father, George Murray of Troquhain, minister of Balmacellan 1838 to 1881, who had taken it down from the singing of a sad woman in his parish named Sarah Rae. A true find came from Robert Trotter of the Glenkens literary family who communicated two verses of a Galloway ballad that had several different titles but was the inspiration for Scott's *Lochinvar* who "came out of the west":

They asked him and speired him,
And unto him did say,
'O, saw ye ocht o' an armed band,
As ye cam on your way?'

He jested them and jeered them,
And thus to them did say,
'O, I saw nocht but a fairy troop,
As I rode on my way'.

The 'ocht', the 'nocht' and the humour are convincingly Galloway. It is a pity that not more of it has survived.

There is no doubt that Macmath was a prickly character. When some of his favourite trees were cut down at Airds he never returned. A lawyer colleague reported that when his company placed William in charge of such activities as rent collections, rous or sales, he was not prepared to suffer fools gladly, nor was he "so popular as some of us with those of the company assembled who set at least as much store on the attendant refreshments as on the business of the day". He died a bachelor; a cousin reported that the Macmaths were not a marrying family. A John Macmath may have compensated by producing a largish family at the Woodhead lead mines at Carsphairn, but the Galloway Macmaths were otherwise on the decline; there are now more in the USA than in Scotland. William's labours in balladry undoubtedly made many people happy but not as many as a distant relation, the most famous of the family, who will almost certainly appear on our TV screens this Christmas. Ginger Rogers was born Virginia Katherine Macmath! Happy Holidays!

Ted Cowan

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CLUB CORNER

NEWS FROM THE STEWARTRY CAMERA CLUB

Morag Paterson was judge for the 'Open' competition, the first competition of the new session.

The variety and quality of the 40 entries provided her with a difficult task. Her approach was greatly appreciated as she discussed each of the prints in detail suggesting what she considered would improve the pictures and recommending what members should watch out for in future images.

She commented on framing and mounting and how this might help an image. Morag was obviously impressed with the entries as her favourite comment of the night was: "I really, really like this!"

The Best Landscape was 'Winter' by Glenkens resident John Houfe. The Best Monochrome was 'The Morning Washing' by John Smith. The Most Innovative Print was shared by Alec Blackadder with 'Plaited Mane' and George Wishart with 'Bow Blur'. George had a great night and also won The Best Print with 'Dead-eyes at Rest' and the best handicap score. Both these pictures,

taken at Bristol Docks, Morag described as inspiring.

Morag and her husband, Ted Leeming, are running a special photography course in November for 10 members of the club. It is to be hoped that this will raise the club standards even further. Keep watching!

For further information contact Mary McIlvenna 01644 420613 or George Wishart 01557 870090.



Morag Paterson with the Best Print 'Dead-eyes at Rest' - photograph courtesy of John Smith

Stewartry Bird Watchers

Stewartry Birdwatchers tarted their winter lecture season 'with a bang' when Keith Kirk, one of our Countryside Rangers, spoke so about the wildlife of Dumfries & Galloway, illustrating his talk with his excellent photographs.

A short video of the 'Burnie Baker' dipping and feeding in a local burn began the evening's entertainment. But how many in the audience knew beforehand that this was a local name for the Dipper? Presumably called this because its white front looks like a baker's apron and because the bird nests and feeds around burns.

Surely the most attractive of winter waders is the Sanderling, with its pure white underparts and bright pearly grey back and wings, which scurries along the shoreline on its short black legs like a little clockwork toy dodging the waves. During his talk Keith mentioned and showed photographs of two other waders. First he told of the decline of that summer migrant, the Common Sandpiper, around Loch Ken, and then he said that the numbers of Whimbrels passing through Galloway every spring and autumn on the way to and from their northern tundra breeding grounds had greatly increased.

Memorable images shown by Keith included the Greenland White-fronted Geese in flight, which winter in the Loch Ken area, clearly showing the distinctive black markings on their bellies; the Black Guillemot flying across Portpatrick harbour with its feet splayed out to show off their brilliant and unique shade of red; the white Buzzard which has nested in the

Loch Ken area for several years now and has so often been mistaken for a Snowy Owl when perched on a fence post close to the A713 road near Parton; the colourful Waxwings feeding on equally colourful yellow rowan berries; and the close-up of the Nuthatch, a bird which was first noted on many local birdtables only in the early 1990's, and now nests throughout the region – a real success story when so many other species are in decline.

Of course birds of prey also featured in Keith's talk including some superb photographs of the Ospreys which nested at Threave this year and successfully reared three young, as did the Ospreys which nested near Wigtown and near Caerlaverock. The viewing platform at Threave is probably the nearest members of the public can get legally to any osprey nest in Britain. Keith also had several clever shots taken at the feeding station near Laurieston showing how acrobatic Red Kites are and, in addition, one of another Red Kite elsewhere in the area carrying off a Mallard duckling showing, unfortunately, that they do not only feed on carrion.

At the next meeting on Thursday 9th December in New Galloway School at 7.30p.m. the speaker will be Brian Morrell, who works at the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust at Caerlaverock, and his talk is entitled "Wild geese in the realm of the ice bear". All are welcome. Next year starts on January 13th with another excellent and prize-winning photographer, retired Dumfries GP Edmund Fellowes, on 'Some Northern Birds'. *Contacts: Geoff Packard; 01556 670466, Peter Swan; 01556 502144, oan Howie; 01644 430 226.*

Walking Groups

The Glenkens Ramblers meet on Mondays for a moderate walk taking around two hours. The Glenkens Walkers meet on Wednesdays for an easier walk taking around 90 minutes. Both groups meet at 1.30pm outside the Bank of Scotland in Dalry. Lists of walks are displayed in shops in Dalry and New Galloway.

Contacts: John & Isobel on 430 539, Gerry on 420 852, Peter on 420 419 and Elizabeth on 430 581.



Ramblers at the Bruce Stone above Loch Trool, which commemorates the victory by Bruce and his army over the English on the banks of the Loch. We had a great day walking the 7 miles around the Loch and had our picnic lunch at this spot.

Glenkens Hair Studio

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Eileen thanks all her customers for their support throughout the year and wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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SAT 18 Dec, 9am – 1pm
THURS 23 Dec, 9am – 6pm
(Gent's Barber Shop 5 - 6pm)
FRI 24 Dec, 9am – 5pm
THURS 30 Dec, 9am – 6pm
(Gent's Barber Shop 5 - 6pm)
FRI 31 Dec, 9am – 5pm

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**Dumfries
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Coping with Christmas

A few tips from Dietician & Nutritionist Lorna Willock

1 - Try not to feel as stuffed as the turkey! Our stomach works in a similar way to a cement mixer. If we overfill, it will not mix the contents properly leading to the misery of indigestion. Stop, let the food settle and then carry on if you're still hungry.

2 - Try to avoid the in-between heavy snacks like nuts and sweets. If you do feel like a snack have some fresh fruit, eg satsumas.

3 - Watch the alcohol intake. It's easy to overindulge in the holidays, especially if 'family measures' are around! To combat the dehydrating effects of alcohol have a glass of water along with the wine or spirits

4 - A walk in the earlier part of the day, while the light is good, will lift one's mood and get body metabolism into action.

5 - Ensure you still have your '5 a day' though it may be turkey broth, brussel sprouts and mandarin oranges!

6 - If eating out and no space left for the mince pies or mints then take them home for another day.

Merry Christmas!



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**TIMES OF WORSHIP
IN THE GLENKENS****CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

Sundays: Balmaclellan - 12noon 1st;
 Carsphairn 10.30am 1st 2nd 3rd 4th (Jan); Dalry
 - 12noon 1st 2nd 3rd 4th (Jan); Kells - 10.30am
 2nd 3rd 4th (Jan)

Special Services & Events

3 Dec, 7.30pm: Quiz Night, Balmaclellan,
 Village Hall. **4 Dec, 7.30pm:** Carsphairn's
 Got Talent, Lagwyne Hall. **12 Dec, 6.30pm:**
 Carols by Candlelight with Glenkens
 Church Choir, Kells Church. **22 Dec, 5pm:**
 Carsphairn Church Community Christmas
 Service & Childrens' Party. **24 Dec, 10.30am:**
 Watchnight Service, Carsphairn Church. **25**
Dec, 10.30am: Christmas Day Family Service,
 Kells Church. **26 Dec, 10.30am:** United
 Service with Choir, Dalry Church

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GLENKENS DIARY FOR ALL EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Wed 24, Galloway Gatherings Lecture
 Series, 2-4pm, The CatStrand, see p8

Wed 24, Christmas Shopping Night, 5-8pm,
 The CatStrand

Thu 25, Film: A Single Man, 7:30pm, The
 CatStrand

Sat 27, The Sofa Show featuring Fred
 MacAulay & Parrot, 8.30pm, The CatStrand

Mon 29, Discovery Film Festival - Shorts for
 Wee Ones, 1.30pm, The CatStrand

Mon 29, Balmaclellan CC, Balmaclellan
 Village Hall

DECEMBER

Wed 1, Galloway Gatherings Lecture Series:
 speaker Stuart McCulloch, 2-4pm, The
 CatStrand

Wed 1, GTI bus trip to Ayr - xmas shopping
 or the Races, see p9

Thurs 2, The Pines, 7.30pm, The CatStrand

Fri 3, CatStrand Youth Players, The
 CatStrand

Sat 4, Carsphairn's Got (Even More) Talent,
 7.30pm, Lagwyne Hall

Sun 5, CatStrand Youth Players final pre-
 xmas meeting, 3pm, see p5

Mon 6, Dalry CC, 7pm, Dalry Town Hall

Wed 8, Galloway Gatherings Lecture Series:
 speaker Ted Cowan, 2-4pm, see p8, The
 CatStrand

runs until Thurs 9, Exhibition: Threads
 in Fashion, CatStrand opening hours, The
 CatStrand

Thurs 9, A Christmas Carol by Charles
 Dickens, 7pm, The CatStrand

Thu 9, SOC Talk with Brian Morrell, see p9

Sat 11 Dec to Fri 28 Jan, Exhibition: Anne
 Butler & Urpu Sellar, CatStrand opening
 hours, The CatStrand

Mon 13, Kells CC, 7.30pm, New Galloway
 Town Hall

Tue 14, Kells Primary School Play, 1.30-
 2.30pm, see p2

Wed 29, Film: Toy Story 3, 2pm, The
 CatStrand

JANUARY

Mon 10, Kells CC, 7.30pm, New Galloway
 Town Hall

Thu 13, SOC Talk with Edmund Fellowes,
 see p9

Sat 15, Shivers Down the Spine -
 Storytelling Showcase, 7.30pm, The
 CatStrand

Thurs 20, Breakdance Double Bill, 7pm,
 The CatStrand

Thu 20, Carsphairn Burns Supper,
 7.30pm, see ad below

Sat 22, Balmaclellan Burns Supper

Thurs 27, Film: Coco Chanel & Igor
 Stravinsky, 7.30pm, The CatStrand

Mon 31, Carsphairn CC, 7pm, Lagwyne
 Hall

FEBRUARY

Sat 5, '73 Drama Burns Supper, 7.30pm,
 The CatStrand

REGULAR EVENTS:

Glenkens Ramblers, 1.30pm, outside the
 Bank, Dalry

Scouts: Mon, 7-8.30pm, New Galloway
 Scout Hut

Mother & Toddlers Group: Tues 9.45-
 11.15am, New Galloway Town Hall

Beavers: Tues, 6.30-7.45pm, New Galloway
 Scout Hut

Glenkens Walking Group, 1.30pm, outside
 the Bank, Dalry

Stewartry Camera Club: Wed, 7.30pm, The
 Tolbooth, Kirkcudbright

Mossdale Painters, Wed, 9.30am, Mossdale
 Village Hall

Cub Scouts: Wed, 6.45-8pm, New Galloway
 Scout Hut

Lions Club monthly quiz, alternating
 between The CatStrand & Lochinvar Hotel.
 For further info contact Andrew Frew on 420
 323.

The CatStrand, New Galloway (see p6&7)

Exercise to Music: Mon, 10-11am

Play it by Ear: every Mon during term time,
 1.30-2.30pm

Children's Dance Classes with Margaret
 Morris Movement: every Mon during term
 time, 4-5pm (ages 8-12)

Taking the Next Step in Computing: Mon,
 5.30-7.30pm

Carers Coffee & Chat, starts Tues 1st Dec,
 10am-12noon

Teen Spirit: every Tues during term time,
 7.30-9.30pm

Taking the First Step in Computing: Wed,
 5.30-7.30pm

Gentle Yoga & Relaxation, Thurs, 10-
 11.15am

Afternoon Tea Club: 2nd Fri each month,
 2pm

Baby Reflexology, drop-in last Fri each
 month 10am-12noon

Saturday Art Club, 2nd Sat each month,
 10am-12noon

Tone & Stretch, Fri 10am, £4/£3

Catstrand Youth Players, every Sun during
 term time from 3-5pm, see p5

Glenkens Youth Choir, Sun, 5-6pm

CatStrand Playstation Tournaments: contact
 The CatStrand for info.

Dalry Community Centre

(for info contact Sarah on 430 393)

Glenkens Playgroup: Mon-Fri, 9.15-11.45am
 Paint & Art: Mon 1.30-4.30pm

Ballroom & Latin Dance drop-in class: Mon
 7.30-9pm, £5

Ballroom & Latin Dance course: Mon 9-
 10pm, for more info tel Sam Hood on 01644
 420672

Good Neighbours Club: Tues 2pm

Kickback Martial Arts: Tues & Thurs 7-9pm,
 both adults & children welcome

Glenkens Mother & Toddlers: Wed 1.30-3pm

Craft Class: Thurs 2-4pm

Brownies: Wed 5.30-6.45pm

Guides: Wed 5.30-7pm

WRITE FOR THE GAZETTE!

Submit events,
 activities, news stories, cartoons, reviews, tips & techniques, fiction,
 photos, ads or ideas... If you have a submission, contact Sarah Ade on
 07727 127 997 or glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk

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