

GLENKENS GAZETTE

News from Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Mossdale, New Galloway and St John's Town of Dalry

April/May 2016

ISSUE 93

FREE

DRAMA TRIUMPH FOR CATSTRAND DUO

CatStrand's Youth Players have taken top place in the Stewarty drama festival.

Zoe Kirkpatrick and Eilidh Thomson starred as mother and daughter, portraying their developing relationship over 40 years, in the two-hander *Tell Me Another Story, Sing Me A Song* by Jean Lenox Toddie.

Adjudicator Margaret Tomlinson, awarding them top place with a score of 88%, said: "The two actors created totally believable, likeable characters in this delightful portrayal of a mother-daughter relationship – the audience's attention was caught and held throughout."

This year the Stewarty District Scottish Community Drama

Association festival at the Fullarton Theatre had to be spread over two weekends to accommodate the large number of entries - the largest district festival in Scotland.

CatStrand Youth Players also entered *Us And Them* by David Campton, a popular play for a 17-strong cast written 40 years ago but just as relevant today as then. The play portrays the problems that can develop between two neighbouring territories when



Eilidh Thomson (left) and Zoe Kirkpatrick with their trophy.

the settlers become suspicious of what is going on 'over the wall'.

Continued on p10...

NEW GLENKENS UPRISING SAVES HISTORY

A local history lecture has sparked a new 'Glenkens Uprising' to bring a vital history book back into print.

When Peter Aitchison and Andrew Cassell gave a talk on their book, *The Lowland Clearances*, at an event organised by local history project, The Glenkens Story, many in the capacity CatStrand audience expected to be able to buy their book.

However Professor Ted Cowan, who originally coined the phrase 'Lowland Clearances', explained

that no copies were on sale because it was out of print and Birlinn the publisher was refusing to reprint it.

Next day Lucy Brown from Dalry and Castle Douglas-based historian Alistair Livingston started an online petition calling on Birlinn to reprint the book.

The petition rapidly attracted hundreds of signatures including historians Tom Devine and Neil Davidson and MSPs Mike Russell, Joan McAlpine and John Finnie.

Finally, Birlinn yielded to the



Alistair Livingston and Lucy Brown.

pressure and the first copies of the 2016 reprint were dispatched in February. **Continued on p4...**

BIG LOTTERY BACKS SHOP

The campaign to save New Galloway's only shop from closing has won first stage development funding from the Big Lottery.

This is a major step towards creating a community shop and self-catering tourist flats within the existing Hopkins' shop and house.

The award is enabling New Galloway Community Enterprises Ltd (NGCE) to undertake the detailed research and development work for a second stage bid to the Big Lottery. This would provide funds to buy and refurbish the property and support the early stages of the new business. NGCE is working with locally-based consultants Creetown Initiative and architect Marc Henkleman of Kirkcudbright to submit the funding bid in the summer.

Helen Keron, chair of NGCE, says: "We would like to thank everyone in New Galloway who has supported the bid so far. Your support was vital in convincing the Big Lottery what there was a real need to secure the shop. We know that the competition for second stage funding will be fierce so we will continue to need your support to demonstrate that New Galloway has the will and ability to back the project."

You can follow developments by watching out for posters in the village, viewing the progress file in Hopkins Shop or on Facebook - 'New Galloway Community Shop and Enterprises'.

ANNIE WINSTANLEY

It is with joy that we remember Annie Winstanley who sadly passed away on 4 March 2016.

A warm and heartfelt person, Annie was involved in the community from the moment she and her husband, Simon, arrived in the Glenkens in 1983.

She was quick to smile, and quick to offer help and support to those around her. Over the years Annie had been involved in too many community projects and activities to mention, one of them being the singing group Damsel Jam of which she was a member for many years, and most recently volunteering at Glenkens Community Shop where she brightened anyone's day who happened to pop in when she was there.

What I remember best about Annie was her readiness to laugh, and her enthusiasm and zest for life. She seemed always prepared at a moment's notice to share a joke, enjoy the moment, and say yes to whatever life had to offer.

Annie will be missed by her family and her many, many friends, and will remain in the hearts and minds of so many around the Glenkens, Galloway and beyond.

If anyone would like to make a donation in memory of Annie, please donate to the Glenkens Community Shop, Main Street, Dalry.

Sarah Ade



LING's One-year Deal for Town Hall

Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING) has taken on a one-year agreement with D&G Council for the management of the Town Hall from the start of February.

D&G will remain responsible for keeping the building wind and water tight and services such as the heating system.

We are working on increasing the use and setting up events and activities that were suggested in our Open Day survey a couple of years ago.

We have received a small grant from the Integrated Health Fund to enable a six-month pilot extended lunch club which will be starting after Easter.

The first of regular indoor car boot sales was held at the end of February, carpet bowls have started and table tennis will be available later this month.

A pop-up weekend museum is being investigated to the summer. Anyone willing to volunteer please contact Craig on 07926 044 062. This is also the new number for making bookings for the hall.

We look forward to seeing you,
Ros Hill, LING Chairman

GLENKENS CANDIDATE FOR HOLYROOD ELECTIONS

Andrew Metcalf, who lives near Carsphairn with his wife Jane, will be the Scottish Liberal Democrats candidate in the Scottish Parliament election which takes place in May.

Andrew said: "Since coming to Galloway nine years ago, I have been made very welcome by local people. I would welcome the opportunity to now represent the area in Edinburgh."

THE STEWARTRY VETERINARY CENTRE

CASTLE DOUGLAS SURGERY HOURS
Mon-Fri 2.00-2.30 pm & 5-6 pm
Sat 2-2.30 pm

DALBEATTIE SURGERY HOURS
Mon, Wed, Fri 3-3.30 pm
Tues & Thurs 6-6.30 pm

FOR APPOINTMENTS AT BOTH SURGERIES
OR IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

01556 502263

VETERINARY SURGERY
OAKWELL ROAD
CASTLE DOUGLAS

THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS

An open meeting for parents of pupils in all the Glenkens schools - Carsphairn, Dalry and Kells - was held on 21 March to meet with representatives of Dumfries & Galloway Education Department and discuss their proposed changes to education provision in the Glenkens.

A large turnout of concerned parents from all the local schools, as well as people from the wider community, ensured a lively evening of discussion and debate.

Dr Gillian Brydson, Head of Education, reported that falling school rolls and changing demographics are an ongoing problem for the provision of education across the whole region, not just the Glenkens, particularly in light of the millions of pounds worth of savings the council needs to make in the forthcoming years.

The Education Department see their role as to provide the best possible outcomes for Glenkens pupils; to provide strong support for transition from early stage to senior phase and to provide a coherent curriculum and a stable and sustainable future

for education provision. However, concerns about how Curriculum for Excellence can fit into an S1-S4 school when the split would more realistically come after S3, and the difficulties in staff recruitment in a school with low pupil numbers coupled with budget restraints, pose problems.

Their proposals for the Glenkens are to recruit a new head teacher for the three primary schools in the Glenkens to start in August and to link Dalry Secondary to Castle Douglas High School. This would involve a depute teacher in Dalry who would be part of the overall management team based at Castle Douglas.

Dalry Parent Council Chair, Andrea Ramsay, asked for small groups to discuss the implications of the proposals and then report back their findings to the meeting. This was then followed by a question-and-answer session.

The overall feel from parents was that the Glenkens schools already provided an excellent education for their children and that the current model of an overall head teacher

either save money or be better for pupils. The answer given was that by pooling resources with Castle Douglas, more choice could be offered to pupils. However, a further concern was that having a depute in Dalry under a head teacher in Castle Douglas would not be a partnership but a hierarchical structure with less power afforded to Dalry when it came to resources.

The timescale was also of concern as parent councils would need to consult with their parent bodies and examine all the implications. Lastly, comments from the community highlighted that when talking about costs it was important to look at the wider picture: the money spent per pupil in Dalry Secondary may be higher than elsewhere in the region but this is money well spent. Pupils from the Glenkens are well-educated, responsible and successful individuals, everything that Curriculum for Excellence aims for, and become responsible hard-working adults who give back to the community and cost the state nothing – the Glenkens is not an inner city with the associated costs of high crime and social service intervention.

As the impact of any changes to the schools within the cluster would have far-reaching effects for all the villages, the Community Councils

are also involved in the process. If parents have further questions they wish to raise about their child's future education they are urged to contact their parent council who can ensure that all concerns reach the education authority.

Pupils from the Glenkens are well-educated, responsible and successful individuals, everything that Curriculum for Excellence aims for...

for the Glenkens Primaries and the Secondary worked well. Many felt that Dalry Secondary should continue to offer education certainly up to S4, possibly to S6. There was little understanding as to how only offering S1-S3 education could

Our Schools: A Personal Perspective

Coming away from the schools meeting on 21 March, I felt reassured in the strength of our Glenkens communities.

What the education department need to understand is that we are aware of the evolving demands of modern education, and of the necessity to adapt to the changing times, and we are happy to do this – but *only* if we feel those measures will benefit us and our children.

We are proud of our identity. Proud of our highly successful schools which produce consistently great results. We appreciate

and understand the value of our autonomy, and the assets our schools possess which make ours a unique learning environment.

Our strong sense of community gives our children a secure and confident start in life – from which they take flight into the world-at-large fully equipped, but also often coming home to roost, the sign of a healthy and thriving community. We give them roots.

It is suggested that Dalry secondary should become a satellite school to Castle Douglas so that we can share resources and create partnerships but why does that have to involve losing our autonomy? Just because a concept is new doesn't mean we should throw away the

old without any thought for what it has provided for us. And at the end of the day, shouldn't it be our choice, as a community, rather than a choice imposed on us because it's what the powers-that-be think is the best for us?

In the Glenkens we have a history of fighting for the things we feel are important – schools, shops, libraries – we don't just jump on the latest bandwagon at the risk of losing our valuable community assets. We know we won't ever get them back. We thoroughly consider the pros and cons. And make an informed choice. After all, we're pretty well educated. Our schools have seen to that.

Sarah Ade (editor and parent)

Glenkens Freecycle

sponsored by natural power



EVERYTHING listed in the Glenkens Freecycle section is FREE - you just need to contact the owner and go and pick it up! If you would like to list something on this page, please get in touch with Sarah on 07727 127 997 or email glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk

VARIOUS

Upright piano in good working order. Steel frame. All notes & pedals work but would benefit from re-tuning after moving. It will take several people to lift it into a van or similar. From smoke and pet free home. Collection from Mochrum near Knockvennie. Contact: Trevor on 440 683

Toaster. Kenwood. Fully functional. Contact: 460 516

Ink cartridges for Canon Pixma iP4500 etc. Contact: 460 516

Bags of Polystyrene Loosefill and also some air pocket filling. Perhaps useful for packaging artworks, etc. Contact: Ruth on 460 516

Small red IKEA table, 55cm square, 45cm high. Slight scratch on top. Contact: 430 218

Woven jute rug, natural colour with Greek key design in black, 70" x 47", may be useful for conservatory or doggie area. Contact: Sue on 07563 718 011

Rotted horse manure for the garden,

New Galloway area, collect with bags or trailer. Contact: Sue on 07563 718 011

WANTED

Boys bikes ages 5/6 and 8/9.

Contact: Mary on 07967 959 511

Chest of drawers. Contact: Simon on 07426 124 982

Boys kilt, aged 4-5, any Tartan style.

Contact: Chrissy on 07824 810 305

Guinea-pig run. Contact: Sarah on 07727 127 997

LOWLAND CLEARANCES BOOK

Continued from front

page... The book describes how, long before the well-known Highland Clearances, there had been an uprising in Galloway against the first of the Lowland Clearances in 1724. Although forgotten now, from Berwickshire to Aberdeenshire and from Galloway to Renfrewshire, thousands of people were cleared from the Scottish lowlands by improving landowners and had to emigrate or find work in factories and mines.

Peter Aitchison, co-author of the book, says he was amazed by the

response: "Andy Cassell and I were pleased to be invited by our former BBC colleague Mike Brown to lecture to The Glenkens Story project. We were stunned when the event sold out, and delighted at the response of a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable audience."

"Despite our own efforts the book had been out of print for some time but that didn't deter these latter-day radicals who launched an incredible online petition and very vocal campaign to have the volume reprinted. Andy and I are massively grateful to all those who pressured Birlinn into doing this."

The public appetite for the story of what happened in lowland parts more than 250 years ago is seen by sales which propelled the reprint into the best-selling charts, at one time reaching the number three positions for Scottish books. It is amazing what people-power can achieve, and all thanks to a chance invitation to talk to a wonderful local history group."

Alistair Livingston says: "I am very pleased that the 'Lowland Clearances' is back in print. The next challenge is to make sure it stays in print so that this important part of history is remembered. The best way to do that is to order a copy."

Logo Competition

New Galloway Community Enterprises (NGCE) Ltd is holding a competition to find a winning idea for a logo for the proposed New Galloway Community Shop and self-catering flats.

The second stage of the bid to secure full funding from the Big Lottery is now underway (see p2) and we're looking for a great design that will represent the bid and may even be used on the shop front itself.

Open to all in the Glenkens, here's an excellent opportunity to get creative and get doodling - entries don't have to be wonderfully

drawn, it's the ideas that count!

There will be a small prize in vouchers for each age group - 12 and under, 13-17 and 18 upwards - and the overall winner will have their idea turned into the logo.

Entry details: The final logo will have to work in both colour and black and white, and be clear enough to use on large and small scales. Entries can be in any medium, and can include letters or just an image. Please submit entries by 1 May to Hopkins shop or New Galloway Post Office with your name, contact number and age on the back. Entries will be judged anonymously and the final logo will be copyright of NGCE Ltd.

For info please contact Mary Smith on 07967 959 511 or maryzair@gmail.com

ATTENTION YOUNG WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS & GRAPHIC DESIGNERS!

We are looking for budding young contributors to create a youth section within the Glenkens Gazette.

If you would like to share writing, review a show, film or album, conduct your own interviews or showcase your art or photography then get in touch.

All abilities and interests, open to all under 25. Please email davem@catstrand.com to submit work or for further details.

Eco Feature

sponsored by natural power



wild springfestival

Dumfries & Galloway's Wild Spring Festival runs from 25 March to 10 April and boasts many opportunities in and around the Glenkens to experience the unique wildlife and nature of our little corner of Galloway.

Some of the activities on offer throughout the region include opportunities to make feeders for birds, squirrels and butterflies, to watch feeding badgers and red kites and to forage for wild food under the watchful eye of Scotland's only professional wild-food forager, Mark Williams. Whether you wish to watch wildlife on foot, bike or canoe, and whenever you wish to watch it - dawn, daytime, dusk or dark - there's something for you in the programme.

Some of the activities on offer in and around the Glenkens are:

Wilderness Kayak Trip: runs between 25 March and 10 April, 10am to 5pm. Explore Loch Ken in a kayak and see Greenland white-fronted and Icelandic greylag geese as well as many other species of birds and other animals such as deer and otters. Meet at the Galloway Activity Centre, Loch Ken. Cost: £17.50. Min age: 8. Contact: 01556 502011, gac@lochken.co.uk Booking is essential.

Open Day at Red Kite Feeding Station: 2 April, 1-4pm. Free entry to the red kite feeding station at Laurieston. Meet: Bellymack Hill Farm, Kite Feeding Station, Laurieston. Contact: 01556 670464, calum.murray@rspb.org.uk

Wild Spring at Parton: 5 April, 10:30am to 12noon. Join the RSPB to discover wild animals, plants and red kites. Find out how we have helped give these a home here and enjoy impressive springtime views over Loch Ken and River Dee. Kids can take part in a Scavenger Hunt. Meet: Loch Ken Holiday Park, Parton, Castle Douglas. Cost: RSPB members £3; non-members £4; children half price. Contact: Calum Murray, 01556 670464, calum.murray@rspb.org.uk

Spring & Kites at Ken-Dee: 7 April, 10am to 12noon. Discover the sounds and signs of spring at this reserve. With red kites overhead and nesting lapwings in the fields, fragrant flowers and buds in the glades and singing woodland birds in chorus. Kids can take part in a Scavenger Hunt. Meet: RSPB Ken-Dee Marshes Reserve, Mains of Duchrae, Castle Douglas. Cost: Adult £4, Child £2, RSPB members half price. Minimum Age: 6. Contact: Calum Murray, 01556 670464, calum.murray@rspb.org.uk Booking is essential.

Night-time Guided Mountain Bike Ride: 8 April, 8-10pm. The evening starts at Galloway Activity Centre at 6.30pm where we'll meet and get kitted-out with bikes, helmets and lighting. After a short powerboat ride across

the loch to the forest at the other, side we'll guide you on a gentle off-road forest ride up to the Otter pool in the heart of the Galloway Forest Park. Price is £15 and includes equipment. Meet: Galloway Activity Centre, Loch Ken. Cost: £15. Minimum Age: 8. Contact: 01556 502011, gac@lochken.co.uk Booking is essential.

Galloway Glens Landscape from the Parton Viewpoint: 9 April, 2-4pm. Come for a short walk through some of the landscape that is included in the £2.9 million Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership Project. Find out what the project is all about, how it could transform the local area and how you can get involved. This will be a short walk but is quite steep and could be muddy so come prepared. Meet: Boat o' Rhone layby, NX685704, DG7 3NE, Contact: Tom Henry, 07702 250958. Booking is essential.

Hands-On Day at Knowetop Lochs: 10 April, 10:30am to 3.30pm. Get involved with practical conservation work at Knowetop Lochs. Activities will include peat depth measurement and sampling, sapling removal, habitat creation. Join in for the day or just an hour - bring wellies, gloves and old clothes or simply come and meet the Reserves Conservation Team and watch them at work! Meet: Scottish Wildlife Trust Knowetop Lochs, Reserve, five miles west of Corsock on A712. This event is free. Contact: swtgalloway@gmail.com

To find out more about the Wild Spring Festival visit www.wildseasons.co.uk



GALLOWAY AND
SOUTHERN AYRSHIRE
BIOSPHERE

gsabiosphere.org.uk

Chair with a View

Balmaclellan Community Council has submitted a considered objection to South West Woodlands planning application for Rigg of Airee.

Small issues arising since New Year have included how to care for communal areas such as Kentucky and the Jubilee seat that have been neglected in recent years. A regular volunteers' day might be one way to do this and to help care for the hall. Look out for notices in the shop. Storm damage to the Jubilee Walk map also needs to be repaired.

An exciting development in the area is the fact that Blue Energy started construction of Black Craig wind farm in January. The 23 turbines are due to be commissioned sometime

between March and October 2017. Approximately a year after that Blue Energy will be starting to pay out the Community Benefit Fund. This is a sum of £265,000 per annum for 25 years. Such a sum would do a lot for the local community and provide a legacy for future generations if properly managed.

At a recent meeting of the Glenkens and District Community Councils it was agreed to encourage discussion and participation in all our communities with regard to setting up an appropriate organisation to receive and manage funds for the benefit of the community. Community Councils of the Glenkens participated in setting up the Glenkens & District Trust in 2015 and the Trust is currently applying for a Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) grant in order to survey the needs, desires and ideas of the community.

Balmaclellan Community Council is inviting all residents of Balmaclellan parish to contribute

their thoughts and ideas either by attending a Community Council meeting or emailing Anita Garnham or Alan Rumble at balmaclellancc@gmail.com and by participation in the survey when it comes out. There could be at least two years before disbursement of the monies so there is plenty of time for extensive thought and discussion.

Community Council meetings are normally held on the last Monday of every month (excluding July and December) in the village hall, from 7.30-9pm. Meetings are open to all although voting rights are restricted to members of the council.

Balmaclellan Community Council

Members of Balmaclellan Community Council from November 2015: Alan Rumble (chair), Kay Bird (secretary), Jim Kirkpatrick (hall keeper), Robin Jardine, Tom Hudson, Anita Garnham, Alison Chapman, Roland Chaplain, Anna Blyth. The responsibilities of treasurer will be undertaken by SCVS (Scottish Council for Voluntary Service).

THE GALLERY AT LAURIESTON SPRING SHOW

Phil and family at the recently opened Gallery at Laurieston are delighted to announce the latest show at the gallery.

Incorporating some of the best local artisans, the Gallery's Spring Show 2016 really does have something for everyone. You'd be very welcome to come along and spend some time enjoying the variety of works on show.

Situated in the old Laurie Arms Inn, the new gallery provides an open, airy, light and welcoming space which aims to highlight the glories of Galloway and the rich talent that resides here. Please visit our 'Gallery at Laurieston' Trip Advisor page

to read the thoughts of recent visitors.

Among the artists and makers taking part in the Spring Show are Jo Gallant with her lively, warm and rich textiles; pottery by world-renowned potter team Fitch & McAndrew; Aberdonian Elaine Lindsay and her amazing corn and straw creations (Elaine has created work for high-profile spaces such as The Saatchi Gallery in London); contemporary screenprints by Sarah Stewart and the #windowstills project by Val Macadam and Laura Hudson Mackay. Come view their work on the metaphoric quality of windows. And finally there is work by artist Phil McMenemy whose



THE
GALLERY AT
LAURIESTON

journey in the arts continues alongside his ongoing love affair with Galloway.

The Gallery situated in Laurieston village, outside Castle Douglas, and is open most weekdays and every Sunday.

Please feel free to contact Phil on 01644 450 235 to plan your trip.

Phil McMenemy

CatStrand Highlights

Keep your eyes peeled on the CatStrand this spring for a host of not-to-be missed performances.

April 1 sees the **Zoe Rahman Trio** take the stage. Zoe is a world-class pianist and has firmly established herself as one of the brightest stars on the contemporary jazz scene. On 16 April **The Railsplitters** will perform, fresh off the success of their first album. Having taken first place in Rockygrass' Best

See our Spring Season brochure and website for programme details. Book online at www.catstrand.com or call 01644 420374.

New Band Competition, they have been busy touring and we're lucky to catch them.

On 7 May there is comedy with **The Croft & Pearce Show**, described by Alistair McGowan as: "Sketch comedy at its very best". Following hot on its heels is a performance by talented musician **Emma Gillespie** on 23 May. With her melancholic brand of acoustic folk-pop, Emma became an overnight success after winning the first series of Sky 1's antidote to The X Factor, Must Be the Music. Rounding off the month on 23 May is the **Juan Martin Flamenco Trio**. A truly awe-inspiring flamenco guitarist,



Emma Gillespie

Juan is accompanied by flamenco dancer Carmen Moncada and singer Antonio Aparecida.

Along with these stellar performances are films, exhibitions and a wide variety of workshops and community events - why not pop along, enjoy a cuppa in the CatStrand Cafe and see what's going on?

SONGWRITING, MUSIC PRODUCTION & MORE

Songwriting workshop with Emma Gillespie:

Whether you're a beginner and just want to get started or need a little help knocking your songs into shape, this interactive workshop will help you develop your songwriting skills!

Emma has an extensive writing and performance background from busking on the streets of Glasgow to winning Sky One show 'Must Be The Music' as 'Emma's Imagination'.

Alongside Emma, we'll be looking at developing confidence in your songwriting, storytelling

through song, breaking through writer's block and publishing and opportunities as a writer.

The workshop is free of charge for those aged 14-25 and takes place on Monday 11 April from 6-8pm. You don't need to book, simply turn up on the night.

For further details, please contact davem@catstrand.com

Stranded Cat Records:

Young artists have been working on their singles in time for release this summer. As part of a youth record label project at CatStrand, participants have the opportunity to write, record and release a two-

track single alongside experienced tutors. There are two places left on the project and you can find the application by hitting 'youth' then 'stranded cat records' at www.catstrand.com

All of this takes place on a Monday evening.

CatStrand's youth music traineeship scheme:

If you'd like to join the team at CatStrand for a ten-week training programme in areas such as music production, tech for the stage or events management then please contact davem@catstrand.com for a place.

GLENKENS MEDICAL PRACTICE

General Medical & Dispensing Services

*The Surgery
High Street
New Galloway*

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL

01644 420234

Councillors' Surgeries CASTLE DOUGLAS AND GLENKENS

Councillor Finlay Carson

Tel: 07825 633185

Email: finlay@finlaycarson.co.uk

Please contact Councillor Carson for an appointment.

www.finlaycarson.co.uk

www.dumgal.gov.uk

Dumfries & Galloway

W BONE

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OPEN 8.30AM - 6PM (SIX DAYS)
10AM - 6PM SUNDAYS

- FUEL 24 HOURS -

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jeeps@whbjeps.co.uk www.whbjeps.co.uk

RED SQUIRREL GROUP REMOVES 400 GREYS IN FIRST YEAR

A volunteer group from Glenkens dedicated to protecting the future of Scotland's iconic red squirrels successfully removed over 400 grey squirrels from the area in its first year.

The Glenkens Red Squirrel Group (GKRSG) aims to conserve reds by controlling numbers of non-native grey squirrels and protecting the native red squirrel in the Glenkens. The new group is among a growing number in south Scotland affiliated to the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project.

The red squirrel is the UK's only native squirrel. Numbers have declined rapidly since the introduction of grey squirrels from North America in the 19th Century. Greys have replaced the native reds in much of the UK because they compete for food and habitat, and transmit the deadly squirrelpox virus.

Since 1952, 95% of red squirrels in England and Wales have been wiped out. Today, 75% of the UK's remaining population is found in

Scotland.

In addition to carrying squirrel pox, the larger greys are able to tolerate tannins which enable them to eat unripe hazelnuts and acorns, eating them before red squirrels get the chance. Greys also devalue Scottish timber crops by 25% due to bark stripping. Reducing grey numbers will also assist our songbird population as greys consume eggs and young birds.

Project Officer for Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels in the Southwest, Kate Thomson, said: "Our project has shown that red squirrels can survive in the presence of the disease if grey squirrel populations are kept to a minimum."

Brian, a volunteer grey squirrel controller for the group, acknowledges the controversial nature of the task: "It is undoubtedly an emotive issue, the killing of any animal, and some may disagree with it. But if we want the red squirrel to survive in the Glenkens someone has to undertake this task."

The group are on the lookout for



Red Squirrel by Alison Wallace.

new members. Bob Peace, treasurer of GKRSG, says: "Everyone is welcome. Not only do we need more grey squirrel controllers but also people to help attend local events or assist with fundraising. However if you are willing to help control the greys, we will provide training

The group asks the public to report any squirrel sightings – red or grey – online at:

<http://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/squirrel-sightings>

For further information visit the Glenkens Red Squirrel Group Facebook page.

Brian Fishwick

Glenkens Transport Initiative

Regular Bus Services

Tuesdays

Dalry to Newton Stewart Return Swimming and Shopping

Outward Pickups: Dalry (Underhill) 1115, New Galloway 1120 (Fire Station)

Return Pickups: Newton Stewart (ALDI Car Park) 1320, (Merrick Centre) 1330

Return Fare: £3.00 Return

More information/booking phone Ann on 01644 460518

Wednesday Evenings

Dalry to Castle Douglas (Tesco) Return (registered route)

Outward Journey	
1900	Depart Dalry (Underhill)
1905	New Galloway (CatStrand)
1915	Mossdale
1925	Lauriston
1930	Townhead of Greenlaw
1937	Castle Douglas (Market Street)
1940	Castle Douglas (Tesco)
Return Journey	
2035	Depart Castle Douglas (Tesco)
2037	Castle Douglas (Market Street)
2047	Townhead of Greenlaw
2050	Lauriston
2100	Mossdale
2110	New Galloway (CatStrand)
2115	Dalry (Underhill)

Services & Excursions April-May 2016

Phone the CatStrand (01644 420374) or see the GTI website (<http://catstrand.wix.com/glenkenstransport>) for more details and to book.

Glenkens to Ayr & Back

Saturday April 30 and Saturday May 28

Pickups: New Galloway (CatStrand) 0930, Dalry (Underhill) 0940, Carsphairn (Shop) 1000. Leaving Ayr 1500.

Fare £3.50, Concessions £3.00 each way.

Drumlanrig Castle

Thursday 7 April

Pickups: New Galloway (CatStrand) 0930; Dalry (Underhill) 0940, Fare £6. Concessions £5.

Glenwhan Gardens

Wednesday 20 April

Pickups: Dalry (Underhill) 0930, New Galloway (CatStrand) 0940, Fare £6. Concessions £5.

Culzean Castle

Thursday 26 May

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DUMFRIES...EDINBURGH...THE WORLD: DALRY SCHOOL COMPETES

This term has seen students from Dalry School compete in several events leading to broader experiences, as well as individual and group success.

Three pupils travelled to Edinburgh for the National Table Tennis finals held at Bathgate. Being part of a big competition is a resilience-building experience and playing with the best in Scotland has been stimulating.

A team of two travelled to Dumfries Academy for the first round of the Procurator Fiscals' Public Speaking competition in February. Speaking on the theme 'What it means to be a refugee in Scotland', Aidan Taylor (S2) and Mia Walker (S3) spoke for nearly five minutes each in a great team effort. They had some very encouraging feedback and made it through to the next round, beating the two Dumfries Academy teams. They are busy preparing for their next outing.

Cross country running has been a much more pleasurable experience this year as the

weather has been kinder. Consequently 19 secondary students competed in the regional cross country event, which this year was held at Kirroughtree. The responsibility and compassion of three of our young people shone through as they realised a fellow runner was in serious trouble and stopped to help. We understand that the girl had in fact broken her ankle.

A world record was set behind closed doors on Monday 22 February 2016. Secondary pupils at Dalry School took part in a world record attempt to hold the World's Biggest Simultaneous Book Quiz.

At 2pm exactly, they sat down in teams with independent witnesses to take part in the UK-wide event. The bid was part of the World Book Day activities. Pupils had to be counted in, take part in mixed-age teams and do their best to answer six rounds of questions on books.

Alex Fergusson MSP, Brian Edgar from

the CatStrand and Libby Ritchie joined them as independent witnesses, making sure that everything was as it should be. Libby and Mary Dougan volunteered as our markers for the quiz. The school was very grateful to these volunteers who made the event possible. We learned a lot about the verification of official world records and it wasn't as easy as first thought.

On World Book Day it was announced that the bid was successful and Dalry School helped achieve a record which will be included in the 2017 edition of the Guinness Book of World Records.



Dalry working towards the world record for World's Biggest Simultaneous Book Quiz.

AN INSPIRATIONAL MAN

"What's the next thing that's gonna kill us?"

Who do you think said this? Han Solo? Doctor Who? Well you're wrong. This is something I heard the astronaut Chris Hadfield say during his recent talk at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh. This was the thought that was constantly going through his head during his time on the International Space Station. Pretty mind-blowing, huh?

In fact, mind-blowing is the word to describe Colonel Chris Hadfield's entire lecture. Colonel Hadfield is an amazing and inspirational person who had to deal with some seriously dangerous emergencies during his time on the ISS. For example, one time Houston were going to update the ISS's system, but when it was update time the

ISS stopped working and went pitch black. The crew, including Chris Hadfield, lost contact with Earth. Then the ISS started rolling out of control. Working as a team, the crew rebooted the ISS's system using an old floppy disk (ask your parents). The crew manually controlled the ISS and tilted the antennae towards Earth. They managed to send out an SOS saying to call NASA.

After telling the audience many outstanding stories like this, Colonel Hadfield talked about how you can apply these lessons to your own life. How you can work with others to solve problems. How you can keep calm under pressure. How you can persevere.

During his lecture in Edinburgh, Colonel Hadfield also said that everyone should try imagining a



perfect next 10 years. When he saw the moon landing as a kid he thought, "I wanna go to space." But at that time Canada had no space agency, no astronauts and not even any sort of ground control. "But the impossible is possible," says Chris. That's one inspirational guy. He makes you imagine a future without limits.

by Cosmas Green, age 10

Community Police Advice on Beating Local Crime

As an introduction, I am the Stewartry Crime Reduction Officer based at Castle Douglas Police Station.

I have been in the Police service for approaching 29 years and been a resident in New Galloway for the last 20 years.

The Glenkens area as a whole has a generally very low crime rate, with only sporadic opportunistic-type offences being reported throughout the year. There are occasions when targeted incidents occur, such as a number of recent break-ins to residential properties, or fuel thefts. However, thankfully these types of offences are few.

I provided details to Dalry community council of recent matters including a break-in at a detached bungalow on the outskirts of Dalry. This happened whilst the occupant was away from the property for a prolonged period. (This was very similar to the recent spate of break-ins reported across the region where cash and jewellery was targeted.)

To reduce the opportunity of future housebreakings I would advise residents to consider taking the

following actions:

- Try to make your premises look occupied when they are not at home and if leaving properties vacant for long periods of time
 - Use timer switches to control internal lighting during the hours of darkness
 - Ensure that any mail delivered is collected and not left in view within hall/porch ways
 - Notify neighbours that you are away and when you expect to return. Ask them to report anything suspicious.
 - Review the current location of valuables within your home (don't be predictable, such as keeping jewellery in a bedside drawer)
 - A neighbour's car parked on the driveway or outside can assist to give the appearance that the property is occupied
 - In any case, neighbours and village residents are asked to report any suspicious persons or vehicles to the police straight away (call 999 in an emergency or 101 in less urgent cases).
- More recently there has been an increase in doorstep 'cold-calling' traders within the area. People offering roofing-type work have called at residential properties and obtained agreements to carry out



PC Simon Kennedy

repair/cleaning work. This was reported to police who are looking into the circumstances.

In the meantime can I remind residents of the dangers of 'doorstep crime', especially rogue traders who usually cold-call, offering to make repairs or carry out work on the house, garden or driveway. Often they charge inflated prices for shoddy or even completely unnecessary work. Police do not recommend dealing with any cold-callers for property maintenance and repairs and advise people to contact Dumfries & Galloway council for details of accredited trusted traders for the area.

PC Simon Kennedy
Stewartry Crime Reduction Officer

Youth Players

Continued from front page... The young cast, several appearing in their first competition, were praised by the adjudicator for the way they clearly changed mood depending on the scenes and how they interacted with everyone else on stage. She particularly praised the two 'recorders' who effectively narrated the storyline and spoke clearly and with conviction throughout. She also noted the simple colourful costumes and the well-planned and motivated movement, particularly in the 'impressive' fight scene.

A fortnight later at Stranraer, Zoe and Eilidh again staged their play along with the five other district representatives in the Western Division Festival. Once again their performance was flawless. The audience certainly appreciated the play and left the adjudicator in no doubt as to which play was their favourite! Unfortunately, whilst it was all very close in the final shake-up, the festival winners were Thistle Players from Greenock who will now represent the Western Division at the Scottish Finals in Glasgow.

This was CatStrand Youth Players' fourth appearance at the Western Finals and there is no doubt that each appearance has further enhanced their growing reputation in Scottish Youth Drama.

Guild Dates Back to 1930

When planning their annual fundraising event, the Glenkens Royal National Lifeboat Institute committee did some research into the early days of the committee.

The Ladies Lifeboat Guild, as it was then known, was formed in late 1930 with the first sale in July 1931 at which ten pounds and six shillings was raised - equivalent to approximately £475 today!

This year's coffee evening will therefore be the 85th such event held here in the Glenkens for the benefit of the lifeboats.

Glenkens folk have always been generous supporters of the RNLI and the committee hope that this year will be no exception - please join us on Thursday 19 May, 7pm, at Dalry Town Hall.

Emma's Wild Eats

It's finally Spring - the time of the year when there is really no need to buy any salad greens!

Here are some of the easiest and best pickable greens on offer:

Dandelion flowers/leaves - young flowers raw or tempura-battered are great. The small leaves are tastiest but any can be eaten, raw or cooked.

Bramble shoots - these surprisingly tasty young leaves (whilst tiny, thorns are still soft and can be rubbed off) have an interesting flavour straight off the plant, and can be steamed or added to a stir fry.

Daisy leaf - one of my favourite garden surprises. Few people realise these tiny leaves are edible and have a warm, unusual flavour.

Gorse flower - sweet, with the flavour of coconut, these can be eaten fresh or used to make a syrup to sweeten drinks or dressings.

Hawthorn leaves - try the leaves in a salad whilst they are young and tender.

Sweet violet - being common

makes these very easy to use regularly. The flowers and little heart-shaped leaves look beautiful in a salad.

Hairy bittercress - a very tasty small plant to nibble on. It grows in attractive rosettes and leaves vary from green to purple in colour.

Wood sorrel - sprinkle these magical delicate leaves and flowers on a salad for a tasty, lemony flavour. Don't be tempted to eat them by the bucket-full as too much can cause stomach upset.

Sheep sorrel - the spear-shaped leaves have a pleasant lemony flavour, like a tart apple, and are a great addition to salads, soups, cakes and sorbets. *All the sorrels contain oxalic acid (as do many common everyday foodstuffs) and should be avoided by people prone to kidney stones.*

Ground elder - maybe the best of all garden 'weeds'. With a parsley-like flavour, these are the basis to most of our spring and summer salads.

From the shore:

Sea beet - the new glossy leaves of this plant are extremely nourishing and delicious and are best raw or delicately cooked.



Young gorse flowers.

Sea radish - with a distinctive form and flavour, this is a tasty, abundant and substantial plant to use for fermented greens or include in various recipes. The leaves, flowers and young seed pods can all be eaten.

Sea kale - this plant is striking and delicious. Leaves, flower buds, flowers and seed pods can all be eaten. It is unfortunately less common, so if you do stumble across one try to leave some so it can continue to grow and reproduce.

I have assumed the ability to identify these plants, but please be sure not to pick anything unless you have no doubt over what it is.

Happy spring foraging!
Emma

Check out Emma's blog:
www.emmaswild.co.uk

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Over 30 Walks Feature in Festival

The Glenkens will once again be playing host to walkers from across the country this May as those attending Newton Stewart Walking Festival enjoy the area.

The week-long event, which runs from 6 to 12 May, is now in its 14th year and the festival programme includes over 30 all-day walks and other events, including several in the Glenkens.

Walkers of a range of abilities will be able to enjoy the Glenkens during the festival. One of the easier routes starts from the old railway station in Mossdale and follows the 'Paddy Line' to picturesque Loch Stroan before heading along an old route towards Slogarie, and then on to Laurieston to finish at Belymack Farm.

The festival also features the 'Cairnsmore Trilogy', giving visitors the chance to climb

three of Galloway's Cairnsmore hills. These include Cairnsmore of Dee overlooking Clatteringshaws, and Cairnsmore of Carsphairn.

For those looking for a really challenging day out in the hills, the Rhinns of Kells features in a couple of routes. One focuses on the southern Kells and includes a climb to the top of Corserine (814 metres high) via North Gairy Top. The second is what the festival organisers call the WalkFest challenge – a 24-kilometre (around 15 miles) route from Forrest Lodge to Kirriereoch north of Glentworth. The route, which includes 1,600 metres of ascent, takes in Galloway's highest hills including Corserine and Merrick (843 metres high).

Joan Mitchell, chair of the festival committee, said: "We are delighted to once again be featuring several routes in the Glenkens. Although based in Newton Stewart, we work to promote walking opportunities across Galloway. We are very grateful to the people of the



Exploring evidence of man's activities in the past in the Glenkens during last year's Newton Stewart Walking Festival © Joan Mitchell.

Glenkens for the help and support we have received over the years. We have several guides who help us each year from the area, such as Bob Peace of Galloway Mountain Rescue Team, and we are delighted to work with Glenkens Community Transport who provide us with minibuses."

The full festival programme is available online at www.newtonstewartwalkfest.com or look out for the brochures. Alternatively call the WalkFest booking line on 01671 404 500.

*Joan Mitchell, Chair,
Newton Stewart Walking Festival
Committee*

FUNDING FOR GLENS PROJECT

Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Biosphere stride ahead.

Following the announcement from the Heritage Lottery Fund of development funding for the Galloway Glens project, Dumfries & Galloway Council have been laying the foundations for this multi-million pound investment in the area.

The first step has been to commission technical studies and recruit full-time staff. McNabb Laurie has been appointed as the Galloway Glens development officer but will already be known to some of you as the Dumfries & Galloway Council wind farms contributions officer. McNabb will be switching roles in April and is keen to involve local people at the early stages of the scheme. He says: "I am really excited about the opportunities the Galloway Glens project offers to the people and heritage of the Ken-Dee valley and I am looking forward to working with local communities to develop the project over the coming months".

The offer of support from the Heritage Lottery Fund has is a significant achievement for the Glenkens area but there is still much to be done.

Biosphere Progress

The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere team have recently completed the Natural Heritage Management Plan to provide information on the status, conservation and requirements of High Focus Habitats and Species within the Biosphere.

The next step was to agree actions and targets with input from a wide range of individuals and organisations who have an interest in Natural Heritage across the Biosphere. The event took place at the CatStrand and provided the Biosphere team with lots of information to help develop future work.

One of the actions was to gain better knowledge of where the priority habitats are located in the Biosphere area. Whorled caraway is a special plant in southwest Scotland and is often found in one of our priority habitats - purple-moor

grass/rush pasture. The feathery leaves of whorled caraway are just emerging now in wetlands or wet pasture. It looks a little like yarrow from a distance, but is unusual in that its leaves form whorls right around the stem and it can be seen amongst rushes in the summer, with its distinctive white flower head.

If you find whorled caraway please let us know as we want to find out how widespread this habitat is. Email location details and a photo to wendy@gsabiosphere.org.uk



Whorled caraway shoots.

SHORT STORY WRITING CHALLENGE

The Youth Writing Group has completed its first challenge focusing on short story writing.

The project began in January with a study of *The Raiders* by Samuel Rutherford Crockett. Cally Phillips of the Galloway Raiders very kindly supported the project's research by creating a section on the website called 'Young Raiders' which the young writers could access to find out more about the book and also about Crockett himself.

Locally-based writer Margaret Elphinstone has also been supporting the project and ran a workshop on creating an effective setting. Using some of the themes explored in *The Raiders*, members of the Youth Writing Group set about creating their own short stories which were then displayed at CatStrand over the weekend of the Literature Festival.

The Youth Writing Group was set up with the help of Mrs Nurse (Dalry Literature Co-ordinator) and is always looking to increase its membership. The group meets each Thursday from 3.30-5pm in the

library at Dalry School. Please come along and join us!

Sara Lockwood,
CatStrand Youth Arts Officer

Two young writers received tokens for their efforts. Here are extracts from their stories.

Katie's Story by Evie

Prince: As I ran towards the giant otter statue, through the dark I spotted a pair of eyes watch me. I stopped so suddenly, I nearly fell flat on my face. I got my pistol out and crept towards the bushes. I heard something crack. I readied my gun, and aimed. Suddenly someone ran out from under the cover of the bushes. I shot at him and he fell down, crying as he went. I cautiously stepped towards him, I didn't know if he had a weapon. A sudden crack rang out from the rocks, and I felt a hot, searing pain shoot in my leg. I cried out in horror as I saw one of them running towards one of my friends.

The Smuggler Hunt by Caitlin Blackett: As we run towards the field of sheep behind the old school we see three pale figures

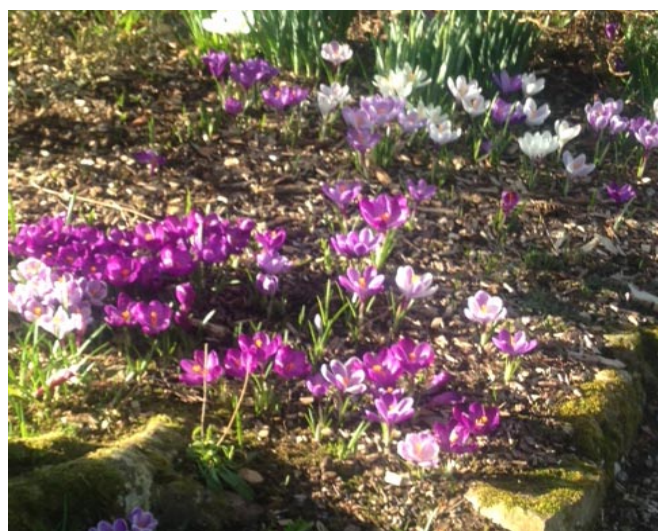


Margaret Elphinstone presents tokens to Dalry pupils Caitlin Blackett and Evie Prince.

turn and flee towards the hills behind, plunging over fences, stumbling through the long grasses. They have our best beer from the pub down the road. We have to catch them! They are headed to the passage between the hills, where are they going? As the green hills loom above us and the cold blue shadows cloak around us Carsphairn looks like a statue far in the distance. The moon is climbing high in the sky and is the only light that leads us. Its pale shape hangs above the village of shadows and darkness like a model. If anyone is looking out of their window right now they will think we are crazy. We are losing them, they are disappearing, and fast.

Photo of the Issue

Sponsored by the Ken Bridge Hotel



Competition judges Dave and Sue from the Ken Bridge Hotel chose *Spring Bulbs* by Nicolette Wise as this issue's winner, saying:

"As always, all entries were wonderful, but the photograph of the crocuses is a lovely sign of spring."

Nicolette wins a meal for two at the Ken Bridge Hotel's renowned Sunday Carvery.



Spring Show

The Gallery at Laurieston

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*Val Macadam & *Laura Hudson Mackay's #windowstills project

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BALMACLELLAN AMATEUR CONCERT 1878

To the right is an example of the entertainment provided by talented locals in the Glenkens in the 19th Century.

The Balmaclellan Amateur Concert of 1878 certainly had a full line-up and there are a few familiar local family names in the list of artists. I'm not sure where these concerts would have been held in Balmaclellan so if anyone has any information on this, please do let the Gazette know. As a boy I remember attending concerts in Balmaclellan Village Hall from the mid-1950s through to the 1960s. It was a very good talented and hilarious show with local farmers including Tommy Murray of Torwilkie, Bob Shankland of Low Hardland and Donald Clark of Cassenvey as well as many others. They were all very good entertainers and very funny.

Bill Blythe, Blowplain

Official - it was the wettest winter ever...

When destructive floods hit the Glenkens this winter many people reported flooding exceeding all past experience. Statistical confirmation has come with publication of record rainfall figures for the Stewartry. Met Office figures for December, January and February show over a metre of rain fell on the area. The figure of 1025 mm is 60% more than the average figure for the three months of 645mm.



Allangibbon during the December flood by Nicolette Wise.

AMATEUR CONCERT BALMACLELLAN FEBRUARY 1st 1878 PROGRAMME

Part 1

PIANO SOLO...	...	Miss MURRAY
SONG...	"Rob Roy"...	Mr A J YOUNG
SONG...	"My Ancestors were Englishmen"...	Mr R FERGUSON
SONG...	"The Woodpecker"...	Mr J A S McQUEEN
SONG...	...	Miss McQUEEN
PIANO SOLO...	...	Miss McMICHAEL
SONG...	"A Motto for Everyman"...	Mr McMICHAEL
SONG...	"Tain Frew"...	Mr DONALDSON
SONG...	"Maggie's Secret"...	Miss MABEN
SONG...	"Oh! send me one Flower from his Grave"...	Mr JOHN WELSH
RECITATION...	...	Mr WB MacQUEEN
SONG...	"The Whistling Thief"...	Mr ISHERWOOD
DUET...	...	{Miss ###
		{ Mr FERGUSON
SONG...	"Bonnie Scotland"...	Misses TAIT

INTERVAL.

Part II

PIANO SOLO...	...	Miss MURRAY
SONG...	"Rantin' Robin"...	Mr J A S McQUEEN
SONG...	"Auntie Laurie"...	Miss M MUIR
SONG...	"London's Bonnie Woods and Braes"...	Mr A J YOUNG
SONG...	"The Wilkie Plough"...	Mr J DOYLE
SONG...	"The Flowers of the Forest"...	{Miss M TAIT
		{Miss N McQUEEN
SONG...	"To Mary in Heaven"...	Mr JOHN WELSH
SONG...	"Mother says I must 'n'	Mr ISHERWOOD
SONG...	"Kate Kearney"...	Miss MABEN
SONG...	"Row upon the Stairs"...	Mr DONALDSON
SONG...	"Dark Lochmagar"...	Miss QUIG
SONG...	"Kate O'Brien"...	Mr GRAY
SONG...	"Last Rose of Summer"...	Miss McQUEEN
SONG...	"Bonnie Wood o' Craigilee"...	SCHOOL CHILDREN
SONG...	...	Mr SOMERVILLE

"AULD LAND SYNE"



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LOCAL HISTORY with TED COWAN

VIKING GALLOWAY



The recent exciting discovery of the Balmaghie Hoard, and the excellent talk at the CatStrand by Dumfries & Galloway Archaeologist Andrew Nicolson, have prompted several Glenkensians to ask me whether I have changed my views on Viking Galloway which I published, I am shocked to note, 25 years ago.

The occasion was a conference at Gatehouse. Peter Hill's thorough excavation of Whithorn was coming to an end to be published in his magnificent book of 1997, which reported undoubted finds of Viking artifacts, leading some to identify a Viking town at Whithorn.

At that time it was conventional in Scottish History books to hatch maps of Galloway, along with those of Shetland, Orkney, Caithness and the Hebrides, as 'Viking'. The point of my contribution was to argue that in fact there was very little evidence of a Viking presence in Galloway and to highlight the sheer inventiveness of local historians and others in this regard. The aim was to diss historians rather than archaeologists because the former created breathtakingly outrageous bricks out of tiny amounts of straw. As Robert De Bruce Trotter of the Dalshangan clan perceptively noted: 'A great Gallawa author yince remarked, yt the authentic traditions o' the country wus ey reliable – whun true. Deed! Tae my way of thinking, they're joost havers; some bigger leer nor

or'nar joost maks them up an tells them, an some fules believes them and tells them again, an maybe improves them a wee, an than they get into books'.

There are no recorded Viking attacks on Galloway. Orkneyinga Saga states that Earl Thorfinn the Mighty of Orkney briefly visited Gaddgedlar where Scotland and England meet. A reference in Njals Saga to Hvitsborg has, for no good reason, been identified as Whithorn.

There are very few Viking place-names in Galloway especially in comparison with Cumbria on the other side of the Solway. On this slender and tremulous basis PH McKerlie asserted that Thorfinn ruled over Galloway, entrusting administration to one Earl Malcolm, at Cruggleton Castle, which he spuriously claimed was built by Vikings. As it happens excavation of the castle-site showed no sign of Viking levels. Wentworth Huyshe added

Christianity and accepting worship of the pagan gods.

The Danes (an antiquated generic term for all Scandinavians) won a battle somewhere between Castle Douglas and Crossmichael. When they later faced defeat the leader of the Danes, Ronald fled to Galloway where he established his headquarters at Craig Ronald on the shores of Loch Grannoch, this otherwise unrecorded historical event being suggested by the place-name. Needless to say there is not a shred of evidence to back up these claims for the very good reason that absolutely none exists. Knowingly or otherwise these writers created an historical template that completely misled some archaeologists who tried to match their finds to the bogus history.

The Balmaghie Hoard is hugely significant but from what little is known so far, obsessed with secrecy as the authorities appear to be, it is likely to have been deposited by transients. As Andrew

Nicolson suggests, the hoarders

could have been following the old Roman road, west to east, or following the ancient track north or south through the Glenkens. We must await with great interest the archaeological reports. But beware Glenkensians! The treasure is about to be plundered again by modern Vikings masquerading as bureaucrats and administrators in the Nation's capital. Resistance may be futile but it is also necessary.

My original article 'The Vikings in Galloway A Review of the Evidence' appears in *Galloway Land and Lordship*, edited by Richard Oram and Geoffrey Stell (Edinburgh, 1991). Most of my arguments still seem relevant but you can judge for yourselves. Ted Cowan

The treasure is about to be plundered again by modern Vikings masquerading as bureaucrats...

that Wigtown became their chief naval arsenal. They were actually the allies and protectors of the Galwegians for centuries during which time Galloway constituted 'the real headquarters for practical offensive purposes of the Norse power'!

The highly respected WG Collingwood suggested that when King Harald Finehair of Norway attacked the Isle of Man, resident Vikings fled into Galloway, though Harald's expedition never happened. John F Robertson's *Story of Galloway*, probably one of the more influential 20th century books on the province, added more lard to the mince. He wrote, according to Irish chronicles of the time, known to him but to nobody else, that the Galwegians made their peace with the Vikings by renouncing

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Who Do We Think We Were?

Today's Glenkens inhabitants come from all sorts of places and backgrounds, far and near. Everyone has a story to tell - wherever you're from, whatever your age, and however long you've lived here.

Now the Glenkens Gazette is launching a regular feature to celebrate who we all are and where we come from. After all, we are all shaping what will be the 21st century history of the Glenkens.

Our first memoir is written by Gerry Cinderby of New Galloway with his memories of the Forest of Dean. We look forward to printing a mixture of memories, from those whose early days were in the Glenkens and from more recent arrivals from other places. So why not send us your memoir of where you come from?

Please send your contribution - of no more than 500 words - by email to margaret.elphinstone@dircon.co.uk or hand in a copy at CatStrand marked 'Glenkens Gazette - WDWTTWW'

FADING MEMORIES OF A MINING COMMUNITY by Gerry Cinderby

A coal seam, sometimes barely two foot thick buried deep beneath an ancient Royal Oak Forest, cropping out in hillsides where a Freeminor might freely dig the rock hard, shiny black, fiercely burning coal.

Miners summoned by the pit hooter, trudging many miles to shaft and

more below, festooned with helmets, carbide lamps, bait tins and flasks of sweet tea. "Don't let boy go down the dippo mother, tis filthy hot and black as hell down there."

Pit black miners trudging wearily back home still stooping from hours in a collier's squat, hewing coal by pick and shovel from thin seams for buttie boys to haul. Now smoking Woodbines and coughing up the phlegmy coal dust, savouring the cool fresh air.

Easing aching bones in a tin bath in front of parlour fire, family gathered round to swap the tales of day's events: Boy fell down in lane and cut his knee, Mrs B down road seen too close to baker's boy, no better than she ought to be.

Empty belly times when coal price was low with wages cut or worse, 'money in the office window' meant laid off, weakest first to go. Dole if you were lucky, time for animals and veggies; is the chicken better than the eggs? Dare we kill a sheep we graze on Common land? When will the pig be fat enough to kill? How will we pay the doctor's bill?

Disaster at Waterloo pit, miners break into disused flooded tunnel, many missing. But old miners know old shafts and tunnels, find a way to abandoned shaft where mates wait to haul them out. Chapels full of grateful wives thanking for their men's deliverance. The men stay home relying on their mates and providence.

The rock above creaks and groans, testing props and beams until one gives way and rocks fill the tramway. Nobody killed or injured this time thank God.

Then came the war and Coal was King, young and old drafted in,



Gerry Cinderby

'Bevin Boys' from distant towns, fresh genes to mix with inbred blood. Pit head baths, canteens for bait, changing rooms and overhauls, bus to work and home again, the NUM for workers' rights, the NCB for state-owned mines.

Afterwards when war was done and labour scarce, machines not suited to thin seams so mines were closed. Nowt left now but hidden spoil heaps cloaked by firs. Proud names like Waterloo, Trafalgar, New Fancy, Strip and At It, Small Profit, passed into folklore. Familiar greetings; "How bist thee ow Butt?" answered "I be alright mind" now lost from use.

Miners' cottages repaired and sold to those who may never know the years of toil and sweat spent mining iron ore and later coal. Tourists now enjoy a tranquil scene of forest glades and gushing streams bearing watery memories from deep below.

No need for mothers now to send their boys down the deep dark dippo!




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100 Years On...

One hundred years ago the Great War was grinding on and still taking its toll.

Following the heavy losses at Loos in September of 1915, more men from the Glenkens would fall in battle before the end of that year.

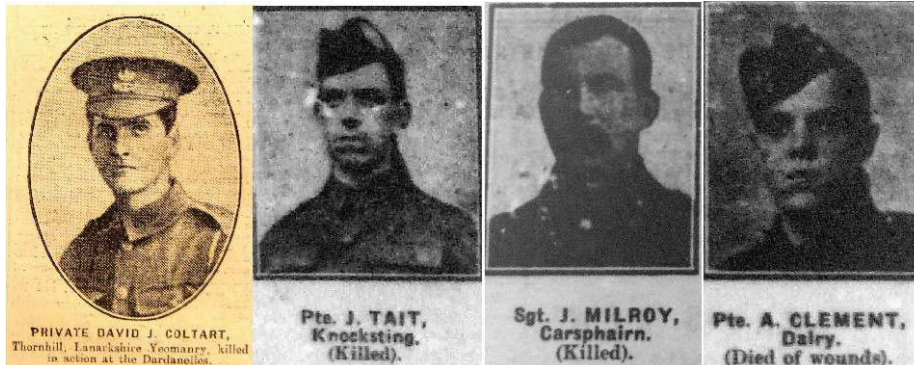
David John Coltart, originally of Glenburn, Dalry was killed in action at the Dardanelles. His officer, Second Lieutenant Mylne, wrote: "I am more grieved than I can say about his death, as he was one of our best men, and had made himself very popular." David is remembered on the Dalry and Thornhill memorials.

James Tait of Knocksting, Dalry, was also killed. His body was not found and he is remembered on the Loos memorial and the memorials in Dalry and Moniaive. James' brother

Peter would be awarded a DCM (Distinguished Conduct Medal) in 1916 and go on to survive the war.

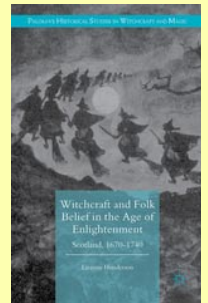
John Milroy of Carsphairn was reported missing in action at the age of 44. His father (Peter) was the local police constable in Carsphairn and John was one of six brothers who served in the war. John is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial and the Carsphairn memorial.

Alexander Clement of Ivy Cottage had been the first Dalry man to enlist at the outbreak of war. He would be the seventeenth and final Glenkens man to be killed. Alec was only 20 years old when he died on the hospital ship Devonlea from a gunshot wound received at Gallipoli, and was buried at sea. He is remembered on the Helles memorial and on the Dalry memorial.



New Book Notice: Glenkens resident, Dr Lizanne Henderson, lecturer in cultural history at the University of Glasgow's Dumfries campus, has just published her 382-page study *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment: Scotland, 1670-1740* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

She includes in-depth discussion of the Glenkens witches, Jonet McMuldritche of Airds, and Elspeth McEwen of Balmaclellan, the latter described as a woman of 'superior education'. The book also contains a substantial case study of witch belief in Dumfries and Galloway. Lizanne writes: "Both Jonet McMuldritche and Elspeth McEwen's houses were situated within a few miles from where I now reside in Galloway. Like Jonet, I have been known to challenge male authority and, like Elspeth, I could be described as a woman of 'superior education'. I think of them often when passing their former abodes. It is their lives, and others like them, that this book attempts to shed some light upon, asking why such people, my one time neighbours, were so feared and despised at the dawn of Scotland's Age of Enlightenment".



JIMMY'S CENTURY CELEBRATIONS



Jimmy Mitchell, of Carson's Knowe, New Galloway, celebrated his 100th birthday this February.

The photograph shows him receiving his card from the Queen, presented by Richard Agnew on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of the Stewartry, and also flowers and card from Dumfries & Galloway Council being presented by Councillor George Prentice. Jimmy also received gifts and cards from Kells and New Galloway Community Council.

New Galloway Golf Club

With Spring just around the corner, New Galloway Golf Club is looking forward to the opening day of the new season at the end of March.

In readiness for the new season, the club has been hard at work refurbishing the clubhouse and carrying out winter work on the course.

In an exciting development, the club has now set up a Golf Academy which is intended to offer coaching to anyone in the Glenkens who wishes to try the game of golf. Anyone interested can obtain information on the academy by using the link, Golf Academy, at www.nggc.uk

The club's junior coaching programme is also set to resume in April when we will be offering coaching to youngsters both at the club and in the local schools.

APRIL & MAY

APRIL

end March to mid-May, The Gallery at Laurieston: Spring Show

runs between 25 March & 10

April, Wilderness Kayak Trip, 10am-5pm, Galloway Activity Centre, Loch Ken, see p5

Fri 1, Zoe Rahman Trio, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sat 2, Open Day at Red Kite Feeding Station, 1-4pm, Bellymack Hill Farm, Laurieston, see p5

Sun 2, Poetry Reading: Sheila MacKenzie, 2.30pm, St Ninian's Church Hall, New Galloway

Tue 5, Wild Spring at Parton, 10.30am-12noon, Loch Ken Holiday Park, Parton, see p5

Thurs 7, Spring & Kites at Ken-Dee, 10am-12noon, RSPB Ken-Dee Marshes Reserve, Mains of Duchrae, see p5

Thu 7, GTI Bus Trip: Drumlanrig Castle, see p8

Fri 8, Night-time Guided Mountain Bike Ride, 8-10pm, Galloway Activity Centre, Loch Ken, see p5

Sat 9, Galloway Glens Landscape from the Parton Viewpoint, 2-4pm, Loch Ken Holiday Park, see p5

Sat 9, Wigtown Book Festival: Writer's Gathering, County Buildings, Wigtown, 9.30am-4.30pm

Sun 10, Hands-On Day at Knowetop Lochs, 10.30am-3.30pm, Scottish Wildlife Trust Knowetop Lochs Reserve, five miles west of Corsock on A712, see p5

Mon 11, Songwriting with Emma Gillespie, 6-8pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sat 16, Spalding Bowling Club,

green opening, 2pm, bowling green, Dalry (driveway opposite The Garage)

Sat 16, The Railsplitters, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Wed 20, GTI Bus Trip: Glenwhan Gardens, see p8

Sat 23, FILM: Macbeth [15], 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Wed 27, FILM: The Possibilities Are Endless [12], 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sat 30, GTI Bus Trip: Glenkens to Ayr & Back, see p8

MAY

Fri 6-Thu 12, Newton Stewart Walking Festival, see p12

Sat 7, The Croft & Pearce Show, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Fri 20, Emma Gillespie, Plus Special Guests, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Mon 23, Juan Martin Flamenco Trio, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Wed 25, FILM: Chasing Ice [12],

7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway
Thu 26, Puppet State Theatre Company: Leaf and Niggle by JRR Tolkien, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Thu 26, GTI Bus Trip: Culzean Castle, see p8

Thu 26-Sun 29, World Ceilidh Festival, Knockengoroch Farm, Carsphairn, see back page

Fri 27, Cultural Connections: The Banker Who Cared, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sat 28, Scottish Dance Theatre: Innocence, 2pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sat 28, GTI Bus Trip: Glenkens to Ayr & Back, see p8

Sat 28, Robert Burns: Rough Cut, 7.30pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sun 29, 2Magpies Theatre : Litvinenko project, 3pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Sun 29, 2Magpies Theatre : Ventoux, 5pm, CatStrand, New Galloway

Wigtown Poetry Competition:

Scotland's National Booktown is again celebrating the art of poetry writing with its international competition, now in its tenth year. With a main prize of £1500 and £250 for category winners, poets can submit multiple entries with their work.

The closing date for the competition is Friday 27 May 2016 and further details of how to enter and the fee structure for submissions can be found at www.wigtownbookfestival.com

PLANT SALE - CREAM TEAS - CAKE STALL

Balmaclellan & Kells Church are holding their annual Plant Sale with cream teas and a cake stall in Balmaclellan Village Hall on Saturday 28 May from 2-4 pm. The cost will be £2.50 per person and proceeds are in aid of church funds.

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Monday to Friday, 8am-4pm
Saturday 9am-3pm
Sunday - closed

REGULAR EVENTS

CatStrand, New Galloway:

Exercise to Music: Mon, 10-11am

Margaret Morris dance 1: 3-7yrs, term-time Mondays, 3.45-4.30pm

Margaret Morris dance 2: 8-16yrs, term-time Mondays, 4.30-5.15pm

Access All Areas Youth Arts

- Making Music: Please phone CatStrand to book session.

Gentle Tai Chi: Wed, 10am, 60+

Glenkens Writing Group: First Wed each month 3-5pm

Sing it Out: Thurs, 11am -12pm

Pilates: Thurs, 4.15-5.15pm & 5.30-6.30pm

CatStrand Ukes: Thurs, 1pm - 3.30pm 60+

Choreographic Skills Lab: Thurs (term-time), 7 - 8.30pm ages 12-18

Zumba Gold: Fridays (term-time), 10-11am, CatStrand, 16+

Saturday Art Club: twice a month, 10am-12noon, to book call 420 374

Zumba Kids: last Sat of the month (term-time), 10-10.45am

Catstrand Youth Players: Sun during term time, 2pm

Glenkens Acoustic Sessions: last Sun of the month, 2-4pm

Glenkens Community Centre, Dalry, (contact Kath on 430 281):

Glenkens Children's Club: Mon &

Fri, 10am-12noon

Paint & Art: Mon, 1.30-4.30pm & Wed, 7-9pm

Ballroom & Latin Dance Class:

Mon, 7.15pm, for more info call Sam Rushton on 420 672

GCC Playgroup: Tues, Wed & Thurs, 9.10-11.40am, contact Sue on 07709 929 482

Good Neighbours' Club: Tues, 2pm

Kickback Martial Arts: Thurs, 7-9pm

Thursday Craft Group: Thurs, 2-4pm

Brownies: Wed, 5.30-6.45pm

Guides: Tues during term-time, 6.15pm, contact: Kath 430 281

Various Locations:

Glenkens Walking Group, Mon & Wed, 1.30pm, contact Gerry on 420 852

Ballroom & Latin Dance: Mon, 7.30pm, Castle Douglas Primary School

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

Carsphairn Post Office: Tues, 1-3pm, Lagwyne Hall

Beavers: Tues, 6-7.15pm, New Galloway Scout Hut

Dog Training: Tues & Thurs, 7pm, Dalry Town Hall. Contact: Eric 460 670

Wednesday Quiz Night: Wed, 8.30pm, Cross Keys Hotel, New Galloway

Stewartry Camera Club: Wed,

7.30pm, Ringford Village Hall, runs Wed 11 Sept till end Mar

Zumba: Wed, 7.30-8.30pm, New Galloway Town Hall, 11+

Mossdale Painters: Wed, 9.30am, Mossdale Village Hall

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

Coffee & Craft Morning: Thurs, 9am-12noon, Lagwyne Hall

Youth Writing Group: Thurs (during term time), 3.30-5pm, ages 10-15, Dalry School

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

D&G Hard of Hearing Group Drop-in: 1st Friday each month, 10am-12noon, New Galloway Town Hall

Gentle Tai Chi: Fri 10-11am, Dalry Town Hall

To hire the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) behind Dalry School call Sonja Tranter on 430 244 or Nicolette Wise on 430 218.

Dalry Library

Temporary Hours

Tue: 12noon - 3.30pm

Fri: 10am - 12noon & 1pm - 4.30pm

There are 23 mobile library stops - to find out where and when please phone 430 234.

Glenkens Community Councils

Balmaclellan Community Council Meetings: 3rd Monday each month, 7.30pm, Balmaclellan Village Hall.

Carsphairn Community Council Meetings: Last Monday each month, 7pm, Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn.

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

Dalry Community Council Meetings: 1st Monday each month, 7pm, Dalry Town Hall.

New Galloway & Kells Community Council Meetings: 2nd Monday each month, 7.30pm, New Galloway Town Hall.

CHURCH TIMES

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Sunday Services - Balmaclellan 12noon:

1st. Carsphairn 10.30am: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th(May). Dalry (April) 12noon: 3rd, 4th. Dalry (May) 10.30am: 2nd. Dalry (May) 9am: 1st, 3rd, 4th. Kells 10.30am: 2nd(Apr), 3rd, 4th.

Special Services/Events: 10 Apr, 10.30am, United Family Service, Kells Church. 22 Apr, 7.30pm, Quiz Night, Dalry Town Hall. 8 May,

10.30am, United Family Service, Dalry Church. 31 May, 10.30am, United Service with Choir, Kells Church

Communion Service: 1 May, 12noon, Balmaclellan Church

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH: St Margaret's, New Galloway: Holy Communion, 10.30am every Sun & Wed.

CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICES: Kirkcudbright: Sun Mass, 9.30am. Dalbeattie: Sat Mass, 5pm

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GLENKENS TICKET RATES FOR WORLD CEILIDH REVELLERS

This year's World Ceilidh - Glenkens' own international roots music festival – is fast approaching and festival organisers are excited to announce what's on this year.

Situated on a remote farm in the hills behind Carsphairn, Knockengoroch's World Ceilidh Festival is an experience not to be missed. Organiser Liz Holmes said: "We feel it's a really special experience to listen to live bands, often who have travelled from quite far flung parts of the world, in the surroundings of the beautiful mountains of the Southern Uplands."

Some of the music which will be ringing out over the hills this May

are Scottish ensembles Skerryvore and Niteworks, Awry, Auntie Flo, and Optimo plus many more Scottish artists, Black Uhuru all the way from Jamaica, and, closer to home, Castle Douglas' own Dangleberries.

As always there is so much more than music on offer, with dance, spoken word, comedy and theatre, arts, music and environmental workshops as well as visual arts and light installations, session areas, open fires, a kids area, real ales, global goods stalls, delicious local food and drink, fire shows, a sauna, a healing area and more...

To welcome those from afar and celebrate the movement of life across this planet the World Ceilidh 2016 has a theme of migration and journeying. Whether seasonal or permanent, migration in 2016 continues and festival-goers are encouraged to get creative and celebrate journeys of all types.

The festival runs from Thursday 26 to Sunday 29 May 2016. To book advance tickets visit www.knockengoroch.org.uk

Special discount on tickets for Glenkens residents! 10% off advance ticket prices at the rate current at time of application for residents of New Galloway, Balmacellan, St Johns Town of Dalry and Carsphairn. Email info@knocken-goroch.org.uk for how to apply.



Sunday afternoon ceilidh

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