

GLENKENS GAZETTE

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

February/March 2019

ISSUE 110

FREE

THE HIDDEN BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Here in the Glenkens we're incredibly lucky to have such a strong sense of community.

However, it has been shown that people are feeling increasingly alienated from their communities, which in turn leads to less community involvement and all kinds of psychological and physiological health problems in individuals. In a recent study, it was found that almost 70% of the population in the UK regard themselves as lonely – these are epidemic proportions.

One of the ways to allow people to feel more connected to those people around them, and therefore find a greater sense of personal fulfillment, is to volunteer within their local community.

"Our social connections are fundamental to our daily

experience, to the ways that we make meaning in our lives and to quality of life and life satisfaction. At best, being socially connected – and having roles to play with the friends, colleagues, family members, neighbours, and even casual acquaintances in our lives – provides a sense of purpose, camaraderie, belonging and identity," states the report *Trapped in a Bubble*, funded by the Red Cross and Co-op. The report goes on to say: "Support or services that instil a sense of purpose, a tangible output, are ideal. For example, volunteering one's time..."

Volunteering within our local community can build connections vital to our well-being and give us a sense of fulfillment and purpose in our lives. Friends are made, and we feel of value to the community



and to the people around us. We are genuinely needed, valued and appreciated, and in turn this supports us through feelings of self-worth and satisfaction, right through to joy and contentment. And of course, the whole community benefits from the input of active people.

In this issue of the Glenkens Gazette, we will give an overview of some of the community organisations which enrich life here in the Glenkens – and who always need more hands on deck.

To find out more see the spread on pages 14 & 15...

The School in Need of Children Raising Hundreds for Children in Need

Carsphairn Primary School held a coffee morning in aid of Children in Need, coming in as one of the top schools in the country in terms of money raised per pupil taking part.

Carsphairn is the smallest primary school in the Glenkens but, when the school puts on an event, the local community rally round and support the school in tremendous fashion.

At the Children in Need coffee

morning, the classroom was bursting at the seams with folk enjoying tea or coffee with their home baking. The incredible figure of over £227 was raised, and the event had a fantastic atmosphere and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Carsphairn Primary pupils had baked cakes in school, and others were provided by parents, community members and teachers.

Just a month later, the school put on their annual Christmas show, and held a quiz night. Again, there was a great turnout of the community to watch a truly unique performance. It is always a challenge to put on a performance when there are not many pupils, but a challenge such

as this is exactly where Carsphairn school excels. Between the class teacher, Mrs Welsh, and the pupils, they put together a performance which included both actors up on the stage and some pre-filmed sections carried out as part of their class work in school. So as well as learning about drama and live performance, they also had the opportunity to learn about screen performance.

This term Carsphairn Primary will go to the Glasgow Science Centre to join several other small schools where they will participate in various workshops together.

*Irene McCreath, Chair,
Carsphairn Parent Teacher Council*

The News from Balmaclellan

After a somewhat tumultuous year Balmaclellan Community Council is once again up and running.

Following the election in July there were some returning members as well as some new faces.

As always, our main focus is representing the needs of our community to the regional council.

In the next few months the Balmaclellan Community Trust website should be going live and

the community council will have a page on there along with a number of other Balmaclellan groups. The plan is for all our minutes to be accessible on there as well as any information about upcoming events. We also have a Facebook page which is updated regularly (www.facebook.com/balmaclellancc).

Working in tandem with the Balmaclellan Community Trust and concerned locals the derelict building in the village has now been made safe. There is also now a quarterly newsheet being distributed to every household in the parish.

In November Paul Goodwin

presented a fascinating talk on the history of the village war memorial which was well attended. In December our Christmas events were incredibly successful and received a huge amount of support from the Glenkens and local businesses.

The Ken Bridge provided a delicious meal for our seniors and some wonderful raffle prizes were donated. The children's party? We were overwhelmed with the generosity from local businesses and, again, locals who donated raffle prizes. The Glenkens Community Shop, CREFL, Tesco (Castle Douglas), Co-Op (Castle Douglas), New Galloway Community Council, Wilko and Morrisons (Dumfries) are amongst the many who supported us. Thank you also to the local primary schools who lent us the red suit. We had nearly 60 children attend (we were getting a bit nervous that Santa would run out of presents) and it was an extremely enjoyable afternoon for all involved.

What next?

Our current priority is maintaining the village hall and we will be running many more events there in the future including crafting mornings and more quiz nights to help fund this. In the long term we hope to eventually replace the hall with a more modern (easier to heat) building with a layout more suited to village needs.

*Ailsa Malone, Secretary,
Balmaclellan Community Council*



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Entrance by donation - proceeds towards Dalry Town Hall Refurbishment Fund
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Remembering Alastair Livingstone

We were all shocked by the sudden passing of Alastair Livingstone on 3 November 2018, aged just 60.

A local historian and activist he brought an impressive range of talents to the study of his native Galloway with special interests in the history of Castle Douglas and the Glenkens. In what, sadly, was to prove one of our last discussions he lectured the Rev. David Bartholomew and me on the activities of local covenants as part of the Galloway Glens project. He researched in depth the rise and fall of Gaelic in the kingdom of Galloway, publishing two important articles on the subject in Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, with a third to appear as part of the

proceedings of the conference last September on 'Galloway, Gaelic's Lost Province'. He was also fascinated, as we all should be, by the achievements of those Glenkensians who took themselves off to Manchester to become the cotton magnates of Britain. When cotton was king, the kings of cotton were from Glenkens! Alastair worked tirelessly on various local projects such as the Threave paths and numerous others, including support of the Galloway National Park Project.

I had for years admired from afar the various causes in which he became involved and I welcomed the opportunity to work with him on his postgraduate research at the University of Glasgow's Crichton Campus. His topic was The Galloway Levellers, the agriculturalists who knocked

down dykes erected in the great cattle parks by eighteenth century lairds. By so doing they were putting some farmers and potentially many cottars out of work. The protesters were to prove Scotland's only rural rebels, who were somewhat demystified by Alastair's investigations which also uncovered new evidence that greatly enhanced our understanding of the movement. He was the ideal grad student who knew exactly what he wished to study and usually had an excellent knowledge of where his sources were to be found. I often confided to colleagues that his thesis wrote itself with a minimal input from the candidate's supervisors, a view with which his external examiners concurred. It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with him. Galloway has lost a truly dedicated and insightful historian.

Ted Cowan

Group Oil Purchasing

We are up and running! At the end of November New Galloway Oil Purchasing Scheme placed their first order with oil fuel distributors based at Thornhill, Allison and Hunter, achieving a fantastic 3p per litre (6%) discount on heating oil.

Community members who used the scheme said, "Wow, I saved £18 on my oil by purchasing it using the scheme", "I can't believe how simple the process was", "Delivery was so prompt" and "I will definitely be using this service again."

Our next order was placed at the beginning of January and a discount of 2p per litre (4.6%)

was achieved. We will continue to order at monthly intervals (first Monday of the month) during the winter/spring period, reducing to bi-monthly during the summer months.

Anyone in the Glenkens area can join and make use of the scheme, although the oil-supplier reserves the right to place restrictions concerning distance and access issues.

We are saving money and doing our bit for the environment by reducing the number of tankers coming into our community.

If you are interested in signing up for group purchasing, require an information pack or wish to discuss further please contact Sam Rushton at samCEW@newgallowaycommunity.shop, phone 07741 656 601 or pop into New Galloway Community Shop.

Our next orders will be: Monday 4 February and Monday 4 March.

*Sam Rushton,
Community Engagement Worker
(CEW)*

Flower Show Entries

Below are the Handicraft Classes for 2019 Glenkens Flower Show (24 August), giving you plenty of time to get making...

Hand Made Card; Teddy; Item Cross stitch; Toy - any craft; cushion - any craft; Child's Hat & Mitts/Gloves - any craft; Article on Sewing Machine; Any Other Needle Craft; Article in Wood - not furniture; Original Painting or Drawing; Article Recycled Material; Any Other Craft Article. The class for 12 to 18 year-olds is for a Bug Hot made from Natural Materials. The category for this year's Photographic Competition is 'Castles'.

For further info call Hilda on 01644 430 383.

Glenkens Freecycle

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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 glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk

OFFERED

Neoprene Muckboots, size 5, green, unisex style, fairly wide fit, very good condition, fully waterproof. Contact: Sue on 07563 718 011

Set of four wall lights with glass shades. Good condition. Contact: 01644 450 265

WANTED

Any unwanted garden equipment for Garroch Walled Garden Community Project. Condition immaterial (we at present have a rusty rake, and not much else...!). Anything will be gratefully received. Contact: 420 664.

Old skateboard, for moving

hay/straw bales. Contact: 07563 718 011

House to let wanted, New Galloway area, local family, entry any time between now and autumn 2019, long-term let. Contact: Mary 07967 959 511

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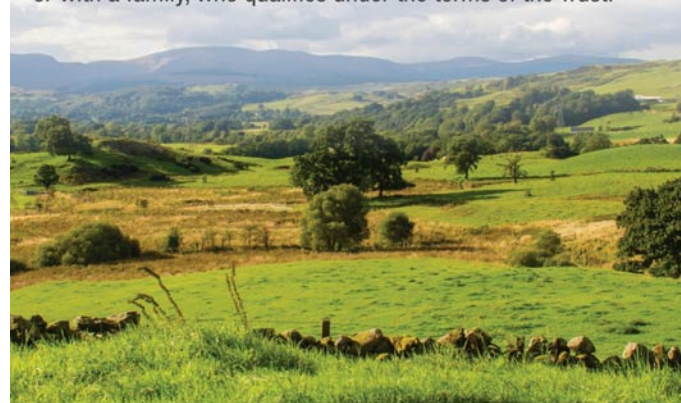
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Affordable housing for people living or working in the Glenkens whose circumstances would benefit from the provision of reduced rent.

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For more information or to download an application form, please go to www.pamelayoungtrust.co.uk, or telephone Peter Matthews of A B & A Matthews on 01671 404100.

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Eco Feature LOCAL INITIATIVES IN NEW GALLOWAY

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Can we own our Town Hall again?

The Town Hall was originally owned by The Burgh Council until it was transferred in the 1970s first to The Stewartry and then to Dumfries & Galloway Council.

We now have the opportunity to bring it back into local ownership. Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING) has secured grants to appoint consultants to investigate the viability and feasibility of doing this. It is now nearly three years since LING took over the day to day management of the Town Hall. Over this time we have seen its use increase both with LING events and activities and hired out to other users.

The main limit to further development and expansion is the lack of accessibility to the upstairs Main Hall. D&G Council are unwilling

to fund the installation of a lift and grants are not available to LING as we do not own the building.

The way forward therefore is to investigate the feasibility of taking over the ownership of the building - the process of asset transfer from the Council to the Community.

A New Car Park

With funding assistance from Stewartry Area Committee, LING has purchased a small car park area opposite the side door of the Town Hall. With parking limited on the High



Volunteers hard at work at the Walled Garden.

Street, this will be really useful for those who find the climb from the main car park difficult.

Exploring New Galloway

A working party on Wednesday mornings has been making great progress in the Garroch Estate Walled Garden.

Ros Hill

THE GARDEN SPOT

Now that the snowdrops are up, it is time to set about many of those jobs that we do in the dormant season.

Cleaning pots and tools, ordering seeds, summer bulbs and seed potatoes and making a plan for the garden for the coming season.

Bare rooted trees and bushes should be planted now (my new rose has just gone in). Fruit trees should be pruned now, cut out the damaged and crossing branches and when you prune, always leave a short stub - this is where the new fruit will form. The same applies to wisteria, prune last year's growth back to 2/3 buds - if you cut out last year's growth back to old wood, you are pruning out this year's flowers! Don't prune plums or cherries though, they should only be done in the summer.

I have decided to be more adventurous in my planting this year. In the ornamental garden I have already planted a yellow flowered magnolia and will be trying again with sea holly and blue poppies. I have also taken delivery of some more exotic seeds but these will have to be started off in the propagator in the greenhouse.

The real adventures this year will be in the veg plot where I will ONLY

be growing veggies or varieties that you cannot get in Tesco. For tatties I will go for *pink fir apple* which is the finest salad potato (even if it is ugly). For root crops; salsify or scorzonera, and I might

give oca another try. In the greenhouse, I will be trying new varieties of tomato and chilli. Last year I had great success with sweetcorn and sweet potato (see photo). The latter is a climber and needs greenhouse heat, but it's well worth the effort.

If, like me, you like to use any left-over seeds from last year, I recommend you throw any old carrot seeds away and buy new - they really don't keep well.

The Intrepid Gardener



Sweet potatoes.

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UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

The University of the Third Age is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community - those in their third 'age' of life.

It is commonly referred to as U3A (from Wikipedia). U3A membership is not related to a specific age but to a period in one's life (the third age) after

the second age of full-time employment and parental responsibility.

Anybody in their third age can join U3A and this includes people who are working part-time. There is no lower age for membership.

The Stewartry U3A has over 300 members, and has a monthly meeting in Castle Douglas Parish Church (at each meeting there is an interesting talk), organised trips and a whole host of interest groups who meet regularly, including



Latin, lunch clubs, line dancing and local history – and that's just the Ls!

If you are no longer in full-time employment, and have an active mind, check out their website at www.stewartryu3a.org.uk (it's a great website by the way).

Paul Goodwin

Dalry ELC Polytunnel

Dalry Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) would like to thank Marta McDonald for the kind donation of the polytunnel, and Mr and Mrs Elder for the woodchips.

The tunnel will be a fantastic resource for the children, especially over the winter months.

However, the polytunnel was sadly vandalised between 4pm Wednesday 16 and 8am Thursday 17 January. Two youths were spotted in or around the school that evening. If anyone has any information which would be helpful, please contact Dalry Primary School on 01644 430 105.

Jenna Devlin, Dalry ELC Teacher

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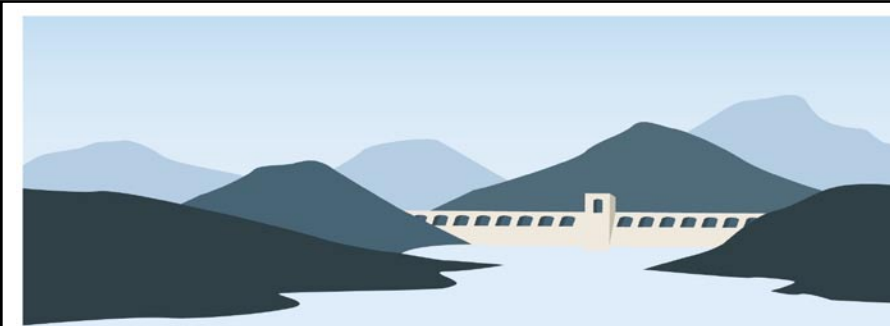
This is a **FREE** event but please book through www.businessgateway.com/events or by emailing helen.keron@dumgal.gov.uk, to ensure there's enough buffet to go around!

This event is the first in a series run by the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership, in partnership with Business Gateway and funded by the Heritage Lottery. See www.gallowayglens.org for more details.

Look out for our next events:

Growing your creative business
 Thurs 29th Feb, 5:30pm, Kirkcudbright Galleries.

Networking for food retailers and producers
 Thurs 28th March, 5:30pm, Castle Douglas.



GALLOWAY GLENS Landscape Partnership

From the Desk of the Galloway Glens Scheme

This issue is from Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership (GGLP) Education & Community Engagement Officer, Helen Keron:

My first three months in this role has been full of meetings and planning as I try and understand how best to move my projects forward. Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to meet me; things are really beginning to firm up now.

The Business Academy is well underway, with our first free event 'Maximising the Income from Your Accommodation Business' happening at the Clachan Inn, Dalry, on 31 January. More events will be happening monthly, in partnership with Business Gateway – see the advert over-page for details of this and other upcoming events.

I am also excited to be starting our Community Archaeology programme 'Can You Dig It' very soon. This will be happening at a few locations over the Galloway Glens area, and will consist of talks and walking surveys as well as a summer dig. All are welcome to these free events.

Biosphere Explorers is a lovely project being run by the Crichton Carbon Centre to introduce primary school children to the very special place that they live in. Ken Words is a Glenkens Community & Arts Trust literature project based out of the CatStrand, hosting writers' cafes and poetry walks – all levels of experience are welcome at these informal and inspiring events (see p24 of this issue).

I have also been working with the schools in the area to see how we can best use some of the other Galloway Glens projects to tie in with the curriculum, and also offer new opportunities that don't exist at present. One very exciting plan in development is to offer Modern Apprenticeships in Rural Skills in the area, which we will be seeking work placement providers for in due course. Also we hope to start 'Galloway Glens Goes Wild' in the summer, for P5/P6 pupils to re-discover what they can do for free in the outdoors.

A focus throughout my planning has been on removing barriers to attendance. Most Galloway Glens events are free or heavily subsidised, and I will also be working with each project to produce accessibility postcards about events, provide information and make them as accessible as possible.

All of the 35 Galloway Glens projects aim to either connect people with their local heritage or to support sustainable rural communities. I hope that over the next four years you will see a real difference to this area thanks to these projects. They have been enabled by the Heritage Lottery Fund and partnership funding, but also by the huge amount of volunteer effort put in by our community project partners. Thank you to all of you, these things wouldn't happen without you!

To find out more visit www.gallowayglens.org, sign up for our email newsletter, follow us on Facebook and Twitter @Gallowayglens, or get in touch with me on 07827 306 866 or Helen.keron@dumgal.gov.uk



EX-KELLS PRIMARY PUPILS...

The current Kells school is 50 years old this year, and we're planning some celebrations.

We'd love to have people's memories, photos and stories of Kells school from pre-1969, when it was in the CatStrand building, as well as from the current school. To get in touch, please call Kells school on 01644 420 340.

Mary Smith, Chair, Kells Parent Teacher Council

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New Appointment at CatStrand

As reported in the October issue, CatStrand's creative director, Simon Davidson, had left to take on a new role as Centre Director at the soon-to-open Moat Brae Centre for Children's Literature in Dumfries.

The Glenkens Community & Art Trust board took the opportunity of reviewing some of the existing job roles in the organisation and advertised for the role of Arts, Culture & Heritage Manager, effectively a replacement for the previous creative director role albeit with a slightly adjusted remit. The Board were delighted with the number and quality of applicants, but were unanimous in agreeing that Aidan Nicol had exactly the range of talents and experience required for the job.

Aidan will already be familiar to many people as she has been very successfully leading and developing CatStrand's Youth Arts Project for almost two years.

Aidan grew up in Shetland but has lived and worked all over Scotland. This has included working for arts festivals and delivering arts projects ranging from coordinating the Hebrides International Film Festival to running film education charities in Edinburgh to working as a production coordinator on documentary TV series in Aberdeen. In 2017 she finally found her way down to the warmer climes of Bonny Galloway and to CatStrand.

Aidan says: "I am passionate about continuing the celebration of the arts which CatStrand has achieved over the last decade, and look

forward to working with CatStrand's dedicated and talented team. I am very happy to have found such a creative, innovative and friendly community here in the Glenkens. Thanks for making me so welcome."



Aidan Nicol, CatStrand's new Arts, Culture & Heritage Manager.

CatStrand Highlights

Spring has sprung, at least at CatStrand, and February ushers in a new programme of events and activities to ease us into 2019 and keep us going through these gradually lengthening days.

We begin on Friday 1 February with an event for classical music lovers and those that enjoy a good story. Pianist **Reiko Fujisawa** returns to CatStrand for a spoken word and music recital celebrating the extraordinary life of **Clara Schumann** which will see Reiko perform Clara's compositions alongside that of composers she was closely associated with including Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin and her husband Robert Schumann. Reiko is joined by **Crawford Logan** who will narrate the story of Clara's life through readings that will tie together this evening of story and music which The Times described as "a total joy".

February also promises a moving contemporary dance piece from Dundee based company **Shaper/ Caper**. *Within this Dust* features cinematic elements as well as expressive theatre and dance in an exploration of the events of 9/11, taking inspiration from Richard Drew's iconic photographs of a man falling from the world trade centre. The performance in the evening on Friday 8 February will be preceded by a performance from our choreo skills lab dancers, performing their own pieces and a piece devised during a workshop run by Shaper/Caper that day. Anyone who would like to participate in the dance/movement workshop

delivered by the company with support from **Sara Lockwood** is welcome to join in, the session will run from 11-5pm at the town hall in New Galloway. The workshop is free and open to ages 12+. Please contact aidan@catstrand.com for more information on the workshop.

Dark Sky Jazz promises to light up the dreary February nights, this month featuring **Graham Costello's STRATA** who make their debut at CatStrand as part of their tour of new album 'Obelisk' on Saturday 16 February.

New lunchtime theatre is on the menu with our *Play & a Piece* events. Join us for a sandwich and hot or cold drink whilst enjoying classic one act plays from **Rapture Theatre** from 1pm on Tue 12 Feb, Thurs 7 March and Tue 26th March.

Open Stage returns on Wednesday 20 February with host **Alan McClure** for an entertaining evening of music, song, spoken word, stories, magic and more. Everyone is welcome to perform or just sit back and enjoy a night of entertainment. It's a free event and there's no need to book a slot to play, just come along and join in from 7.30pm.

Is your New Years' resolution to try something new? **Ollie Rigg** is bringing his trad tin whistle skills to CatStrand as we kick off *Learn the Whistle* groups starting on Thursday 28 February. The new weekly groups, supported by Connecting in Communities and CatStrandYouth, will run for 4-12s and over 12s & adults on Thursday afternoons for an 8 week block. Contact chris@catstrand.com to find out more.

We're delighted to have the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra's Big Ears Little Ears** trio performance coming to CatStrand on Sunday 17 March. This interactive introduction to classical music is for ages 0-12 and accompanying adults to experience the magic of orchestras. Get up close with instruments and musicians in a relaxed child friendly environment. Under 18s go free and it's only £5 for grown-ups - that's got to be a lovely way to spend a morning with your wee ones.

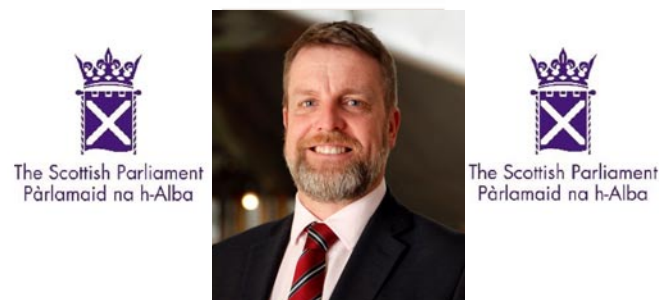
Our full spring brochures are available now from CatStrand, or take a look online at www.catstrand.com



Within This Dust © Shaper/Caper

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THE CATSTRAND YOUTH PLAYERS' SPRING SEASON

Fresh from the success of their hugely successful pantomime in December, CatStrand Youth Players move on to Festival Season with three one-act plays currently being rehearsed to take part in the Stewartry round of the SCDA Drama Festival at the end of February.

The festival, to be held in The Fullarton Theatre, Castle Douglas, from 20-23 February, is one of the biggest for many years having attracted thirteen entries. A four-night festival is very rare anywhere in Scotland nowadays, with many districts sadly struggling to even muster enough entries to have a competition at all. The Stewartry is definitely the hotbed of community drama in Scotland!

The Youth Players have been proud to represent the Stewartry District in the West of Scotland Finals on five occasions in the past ten years and this year's cast members will be trying to emulate last year's success when *Exit Stage Left*, directed by Zoe Kirkpatrick, won the Stewartry round and progressed to the next round in Stewarton.

The plays will be performed all together at CatStrand on Friday 15 March at 7.30pm and will each appear at The Fullarton during the Stewartry Festival on the dates noted beside the plays below.

The Dust of the Street by Harry Glass

A very popular festival play by renowned Scottish playwright Harry Glass. Set in the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw in July 1942 at the beginning of the Nazis'



The cast take a bow at the end of their three night run of 'Cinderella' in December - one of the most successful panto seasons to date with every show selling out! Photo by Ian Biggar.

infamous "Final Solution" pogrom, when day after day, thousands of men, women and children, innocent of any crime, were taken to their death.

The play is a moving tribute to the persistence and bravery of the children, turned smugglers, who endangered themselves countless times in order to sustain their families and the community as a whole. (*Second play on stage at The Fullarton on Thursday 21 February.*)

The Tick of the Clock by Ron Dune

This will be the first UK production of this amusing play from American playwright Ron Dune.

Being late is not just a habit for Don Hault, it's a lifestyle. In fact, being late causes him to lose his job, his girlfriend, his best friend, and his self-respect. But then, while in the depths of despair, he meets a mysterious street vendor who offers him a very special watch. Don soon finds out that this watch does not tell time, it gives it. With the simple push of a button he is able to freeze time. His new found power seems to be the solution to all his

problems, but of course, time has a way of catching up with us all. (*Second play on stage on Friday 22 February.*)

Bar and Ger by Geraldine Aron

Another well-known play telling the tender, simple story of the relationship between a sister and her younger brother. Described in realistic, down to earth language, episodic flashes of dialogue span a period of seventeen years and are linked by the sister's narrative.

Produced to acclaim throughout the world, Geraldine Aron's unique style and remarkable feeling for words ensures the play is still as fresh and poignant today as it was when it was first written in 1980. (*Second play on stage on Saturday 23 February.*)

Please come along and support the Youth Players if you can, Festival tickets are available direct from The Fullarton at www.thefullarton.co.uk and tickets for the CatStrand show can be purchased at www.catstrand.com

FINAL FLASH FICTION

This will be the last of these competitions but I'd like to thank all of those who have taken part.

It's been a pleasure to read your work. If anyone has any suggestions for a future writing feature/competition, please contact Sarah at glenkengazette@hotmail.co.uk

Ian Patrick

The winner of the December/January Flash Fiction Competition is Paul Goodwin with *Classroom Rebel* (printed below). Competition judge Ian says: "A unique approach that fits well with the theme. Congratulations, Paul."

About the author: After many years of writing about how things are... now, in retirement, I am greatly enjoying writing about how I imagine things to be. Sort of shaking off the shackles and rules; and just letting my imagination run free.

Classroom Rebel

Thank you for that introduction madam chairman...

Ladies and Gentlemen – as you know from the introduction, I previously taught maths in an inner-city school that had more than its share of challenges from the surrounding estate.

My student – let's call him Jack. He was a little less disruptive than some, sometimes he even handed in his homework although rarely of a good quality. Very soon I began to notice that he seemed to get the right answers to hard questions but get easier ones wrong. I kept my own counsel.

On one occasion Jack and another lad had been particularly boisterous so I held them back as the class left. "Consider this your last warning, any more of that nonsense and it will be detention". The other lad left

but Jack held back. "Does that mean that I get to stay behind and do more maths Mr Platts?" "Exactly," I replied. "Good," he said as he left.

I should point out here that Jack came from a well-known family. Well known to the police and social services that is. There was usually at least one of the family on remand, serving a sentence or wearing a tag.

Anyway, the very next lesson, right at the end, just before the bell, Jack stood up and threw a paper aeroplane directly at me, bold as brass. "Jack, detention!" Was my immediate reaction. He just smiled.

Jack turned up promptly for his detention and worked hard on the exercises I set him. As he left at the end, he thanked me. And as I do with all detention work, I dropped it straight into the bin while he watched – I think

the pointlessness of it gets across sometimes. He seemed disappointed but left in silence. On a hunch, I removed his work from the bin and started to look through it. I was astounded! It was almost the best work I have seen from someone of his age, not without its faults but well above the standard I had come to expect.

About a week later, Jack was again misbehaving in class, just enough to earn a detention, this time one of several students. At the end of the detention period I asked him to stay behind and he watched as I removed his newly completed work from the bin. Excellent work last week Jack, well done.

Jack soon got a reputation for being the class rebel, earning more detentions than anyone else. His maths improved as I was able to coach him when no-one else was around. You see he needed to survive amongst his peers. Jack is now at university – the 'white sheep' of the family.

The Gazette would like to give a huge thank you to Ian for running the Flash Fiction competition, and generously donating each issue's winning prize of a £10 Amazon book voucher. We've had some great entries, and hope people will continue sending in their stories.

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WHAT DID JAMES CLERK MAXWELL DO?

I've passed through Parton many times over the last 20 years, often wondering what this James Clark Maxwell actually did to warrant a sign with his name on it.

I had heard rumours of course, "Einstein's Einstein" being the most intriguing, though I never really followed this up (given the enormity of what was implied I now can't imagine why). That was until recently when research commenced as part of our current Energise art project exploring the past, present and future of the Galloway hydros and their interactions with the local community, energy and climate change. And what I discovered has been truly amazing...

In 1861 Maxwell published a paper *On Physical Lines of Force*, which in language I can understand seems to be the discovery that electricity, magnetism and light are manifestations of the same phenomena, thinking that paved the way for much modern scientific thought and the advancement of many things we simply take for granted today. He would stand easily in a room with Franklin, Faraday or Nikola Tesla. Imagine for just a moment a world without TV or radio, electric lighting, computers, DVDs, iPhones, vacuum cleaners, air conditioning, fridge freezers, electric drills or Xboxes...the list goes on. Many of the magnificent advances in science, medicine and technology of the 20th century and the building blocks of industry were based on his discoveries.

His work led to an Electricity Act in the 1920s with the intent to form a nationalised electricity grid network linking all (almost) homes and industries across the UK to a stable electricity supply - one of the cornerstones of modern society. This in turn led to the construction of the Galloway Hydro Electric Scheme in the 1930s that now forms part of the unique heritage of the Galloway Glens and which provides power equivalent to some 59,000 homes a year from its six dams.

The hydros are now an accepted (certainly not the case at their construction) and integral part of the community, with people interacting with them in many different ways. And yet many simply take them for granted, as I did James Clark Maxwell, one of history's truly great scientific thinkers, who I consider to be one of the founding fathers to the

...the discovery that electricity, magnetism and light are manifestations of the same phenomena, thinking that paved the way for much modern scientific thought and the advancement of many things we simply take for granted today.

second industrial revolution.

But the fascinating story of James Clark Maxwell forms just one small element of the wider project, set up by Uplands Arts Development, which involves two artist residencies interpreting the themes in different ways. Explorations including community and personal identity with the scheme, the



James Clerk Maxwell © George J Stodart.

hydrological cycle, global energy, lifestyle and climate change. Our final creative bodies of work are beginning to take form, though we continue to be influenced by our ongoing community engagements and thinking. It will be very exciting to see final works evolving in the coming months.

In the next edition of the Gazette we will bring you more on the project as it nears its completion, including information on local events in the Galloway Glens to share our experiences with the community, together with details of our exhibition at Gracefield Arts Centre in

Dumfries in May. In the meantime, if you have any photos, anecdotes, stories or comments please get in touch.

But for now, driving through Parton will never be quite the same again...

Ted Leeming,
Leeming + Paterson Photography

Artists Uncover Tales of the Dam Builders

Artists investigating the story of the Galloway Glens' dams, reservoirs and power stations are uncovering fascinating glimpses of a colourful cultural past.

Ted Leeming and Morag Paterson have been talking to people of all ages across the area about their thoughts, memories and attitudes towards the huge hydro projects of the 1930s.

Morag said: "The response has been tremendous and we'd love to hear more. We've lived in this area for more than 20 years ourselves, but the stories people tell us are helping us see the entire landscape through new eyes.

"For many there is a pride in being home to a huge source of renewable energy and a real sense of the importance of green power for the future.

"Some older residents have told us about the impact that the arrival of up to 2,000 construction workers had on this remote rural area - especially when they needed to let off steam.

"We've heard how the camps had their own football teams and competed in the local league - with Glenlee winning the cup in 1932.

"And then there are stories about how the men hired a local bus to take them round the pubs and offload them back at the camps 'pickled with drink' at the end of the night.

"But there were other sides to life in the construction camps. We heard how the local minister Thomas P Hitman regularly did a round trip of 160 miles on his pushbike to attend to the spiritual needs of the men and organise recreational activities. It seems the Church eventually bought him a motorbike."

The project, called Energise,



Earlstoun dam, part of the Galloway hydro electric scheme.

focuses on the history and legacy of the Galloway hydro electric scheme, exploring perceptions and responses to climate change with specific regard to renewable energy.

The artists have engaged with young people through schools and with the general public through open sessions, and by inviting people to write using special postcards that have been distributed round public buildings.

Once their research is complete Leeming and Paterson, who are internationally renowned photographers, and Dundee-based artist Jason Nelson, along with fellow artist Cat Major, will create artworks inspired by what they have learned.

Energise has been set up by Dumfries & Galloway's Upland Arts Development organisation.

Amy Marletta, projects director at Upland Arts Development, said: "Just about everyone in the Galloway Glens has been affected by the hydro schemes. They help power people's homes, give us areas to go walking or cycling, and clearly made a big difference to local society when they were being built.

"We are really pleased that

people from the area are really getting involved and making their contribution to Energise."

The project is supported by Creative Scotland and the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership.

McNabb Laurie, Galloway Glens team leader, said: "The Galloway hydro scheme, constructed in the 1930s, continues to be a distinctive influence on the valley.

"At the time of commissioning it employed 90 staff. Automation and technological advances have reduced that to around 25 but, with an average electricity output each year of about 90% of Dumfries & Galloway's annual requirement, the technology is still performing well today and the scheme is a notable player in the national energy mix.

"Initial results from this project have been very interesting and I urge anyone interested to visit the project's Facebook page for progress."

If you would like to contact Leeming and Paterson with your thoughts, views and memories about the dams then email info@leemingpaterson.com or call 07917 102 693, or to find out more visit www.weareupland.com

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN THE GLENKENS...

VOLUNTEER A LITTLE TIME - SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY, SUPPORT YOURSELF

On this page we have an overview of the community organisations in the Glenkens who provide all kinds of services and activities to our communities.

These groups are always looking for more hands on deck as, without volunteers, they couldn't provide the services they do. So please get in touch, there's plenty of choice - they would love to hear from you!

Glenkens Community Shop

The Glenkens Community Shop in Dalry is now approaching its seventh year and what a year it is going to be, with our new renovation and refit, thanks to the Pamela Young Trust. Since opening in 2012 we have given back over £50,000 to Glenkens community projects and individuals. Here in the shop we are always looking for volunteers to help us continue in this work. It's also a great way to make new friends and become part of a thriving community. If you can spare 2.5 hours or more a week, we would love to hear from you.

Call in or ring 07955 743 022



Volunteers and regulars at Glenkens Community Shop.

Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING)

LING took over the management of New Galloway Town Hall from D&G Council nearly three years ago.

Extra volunteers would be much welcomed to help at our regular Tuesday LING Lunches, Tuesday evening Sports or upcoming Sunday Family Afternoons of Jigsaws, Board games and Pool.

'Exploring New Galloway' is a Galloway Glens project where LING volunteers are improving and maintaining the Golf Club footpaths, and footpaths and tracks within the Garroch Estate. The Walled Garden at The Garroch is also being improved, with overgrowth being trimmed back and some new climbing roses already planted. Volunteer working parties for paths and the garden take place on a regular basis and all are welcome. With more activity comes more admin and the need to keep people aware of what's going on, as well as the ongoing background committee work. So do come and join us in whatever way you would like!

Contact: ros.hill@rathanhouse.co.uk



Volunteers installing a community noticeboard outside Wright's Shop, Dalry.

Dalry Community Properties Trust (DCPT)

DCPT is a charitable organisation (SCIO) established in 2015 to own and care for community buildings and land in the Dalry area. We rely on a board of voluntary trustees to carry out our important community work which includes ownership of the Glenkens Community Centre, plus interests in two plots of village land.

Additional trustees and volunteers are now being sought to enable us to carry forward an exciting range of projects in 2019, including a community garden, local recycling facilities, a visitor bothy or camping area and a Small Business Zone. Experience of gardening, DIY, fundraising and organising events is particularly welcome, however, willingness to get involved and help out is just as important. Please contact Andi Holmes for a chat about becoming a member of DCPT and helping to shape the future of our local community.

Contact: andiholmes@hotmail.com phone: 07729292126

Dalry Town Hall

Dalry Town Hall is a fine old building that is one of the main social centres for the village and for the wider Glenkens community.

As the management committee, our job is to keep the building in good repair through hiring out the hall to others but also through organising and managing social events.

As a small but active team we presently run the Glenkens Farmers' Market on a monthly basis, fortnightly film shows, ceilidhs, craft fairs, quizzes, song & tune sharing sessions and whatever else we can think of that will appeal to the community. We are currently developing a project under the banner of the Galloway Glens that we hope will make the hall into a local heritage hub to celebrate our common history.

We are looking for others to join our team to help maintain and develop this interesting building in the centre of Dalry.

To find out more ring Jim Reid on 01644 430231

CatStrand

CatStrand relies on volunteers to help run and manage all our events and services.

So, if you could spare a little time to help out then please come and join us. We are looking for enthusiastic people of all ages to join our fantastic team of volunteers. There are loads of ways to get involved, it's great fun and training is available. You could help with stewarding at events, working in the café, bar, reception or shop, minibuss driving, or if you're under 25 come and see what the youth volunteers are up to (it involves a lot of pizza!)...

Contact chris@catstrand.com or call CatStrand on 01644 420 374 or pop in and see us.

Schools

The Glenkens partnership of schools includes Carsphairn, Dalry and Kells (New Galloway) Primary Schools, as well as the Dalry Early Learning and Childcare (Dalry ELC) which serves Glenkens children from 3-5 years old.

In addition, we have the Bright Stars Glenkens Community Nursery in Dalry, which offer places to children from 2-5 years old, and Dalry High School, now in partnership with Castle Douglas High School.

Volunteers from the community are welcomed in all these settings, to come in and work with children or support the staff. PVG checks may be required, depending on the role, but the school can help with this.

Pop into the school office or contact Bright Stars on glenkenscommunitynursery@gmail.com

Balmaclellan Community Trust

During the next year Balmaclellan Community Trust's main priority, along with Balmaclellan Village Hall Trust and the Community Council, is to continue to maintain the village hall.

We are hoping this year to facilitate the painting of the village hall and also to organise new events such as craft mornings and coffee mornings, while continuing to support existing events such as our popular quiz nights and craft fairs.

We are always looking for people who would be willing to help at any of our events or as a member of the Trust. Do get in touch if you can spare some time to help out in Balmaclellan.

To get in touch contact Julia Higgins (chair) at julia.higgins55@outlook.com



Children and parents enjoying the Bright Stars holiday activities.

New Galloway Community Enterprises (NGCE)

New Galloway's Community Engagement Worker, Sam Rushton, is working on a variety of projects and activities that are of community benefit.

Projects to date include an oil-fuel buying cooperative (see p5), a pot luck supper, citizen advice bureau surgeries, an alzheimer's information session, and football sessions in the park.

Sam needs help with things such as co-ordinating orders and deliveries for the oil buying project, administrative tasks such as photocopying and scanning, designing posters to advertise and promote community engagement projects, delivering posters around the community, and advertising events and activities, among many other things.

If you have any other skills or ideas that you feel that you could offer, please do get in touch. The shop also offers volunteering opportunities to people looking to start or re-start working in a retail job.

Get in touch with Sam on 07741656601, samCEW@newgallowaycommunity.shop or pop into New Galloway Community Shop.



This article has been sponsored by the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. One of the key aims of the Galloway Glens Scheme is to support sustainable communities, and volunteers are a key part of a thriving community.

Contact Helen Keron, the Galloway Glens Education & Community Engagement Officer, on helen.keron@dumgal.gov.uk for more details.

Please get in touch if we have missed your community organisation and we'd be happy to include it in a future issue of the Gazette.

GIVING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE A VOICE

It's an exciting time to be involved in schools in the Glenkens – there are challenges as always but also, very importantly, lots of positive dialogue, creative ideas and action for working together to move forward with energy and enthusiasm.

That's what makes our schools a positive place for our children, a positive part of the community and attracts families to the area.

With this in mind, the schools will be working with the Gazette on a new section, starting next issue, entitled 'Pupil Voice'. Glenkens pupils have lots to say and we are keen that they have a strong voice within their schools and in the wider community, so we are supporting pupils to take the lead in contributing not only school news but also their views and opinions on school life and beyond. It can also be a space for parents, staff and other community members who are involved to contribute constructive news and experiences. **Watch this space - and please do get involved!**

*Mary Smith, Kells Parent Council chair
Ian Johnston, Dalry Parent Council chair
Irene McCeath, Carsphairn Parent Council chair*

Schools Competition

S3 pupils from Dalry Secondary School enjoyed a taste of college life when they participated in the Schools Competition.

In their teams, they went to different workshops at D&G College. Everyone learned new skills and enjoyed working in a team. Some comments from the students were:

"I learned a lot and it was cool to be in a real studio," "We should do it again next year!" "It was really fun and you made friends," "I enjoyed the experience because we got to learn a new trade and meet new people."



Dalry pupils having fun.

Special congratulations go to our prize winners Hana Ade-Macrae & Sarah McCreath who received 1st Prize in Digital Photography; Andrew Ramsay & Andrew Burrows who received 2nd in the Wallpapering Challenge; Grace Jeffery Temple & Euan Hockey who received 3rd Prize in Visual Communications.

Kells Christmas Concert

This year for the Kells Christmas Concert we had loads of different songs that we learned.

We sang The Snowman, The Penguin Song, Rocking around the Christmas tree and everyone loved The Hippopotamus for Christmas. It went very well.

In the Snowman there was an actual snowman on stage and the Megan did a brilliant job making the face. The Penguin song had loads of penguins. Jake and Sanna were both really brave being chiefs of the penguins. In the Christmas tree song everyone had loads of fun! When we played the saxophones AKA: carrots and parsnips, everyone gave it their all. Finally the Hippopotamus song that everyone enjoyed some people were dancing and there was a hippopotamus going up

and down the hall. I felt happy and proud, especially when I played the clarinet, Fiona played the violin and Rosie the piano.

The songs were the best bit and everyone sang to the best of their ability. At the end the audience got mince pies, drinks and biscuits. I'm sure that the parents all enjoyed the show. I think that it was the best Christmas show we have ever done. I hope we have the same fun next year. *Sophie Roberts, Kells Primary*



Kells Primary pupils performing at their Christmas concert.

Carsphairn Primary News

It was a busy term two for us here at Carsphairn.

We made our Calendar which celebrates memories of our 295 year old school (available to pick up for free in the village hall). We also put on a play called A Christmas Saga - it was a challenge with our small numbers but with the use of technology we put on a great performance!

The performance was followed by festive beverages and snacks, before we started our amazing Christmas Quiz. Well done to all the teams that took part but it was Hillbillies that came out on top.

Thank you for everyone's continued support.

*Naomi & Crawford, P7,
Carsphairn Primary*



Attendees enjoying Carsphairn Primary's Christmas events.

Kells Primary's New Adventures

The Primary 4-7 class at Kells have been doing regular Forest Friday sessions.

These are amazing opportunities giving us the skills to become confident individuals; learning happily together, taking risks, making decisions, solving problems and living! A few activities we have explored are: cutting wood, building bridges (not walls!), lighting fires, cooking out and building together - we even went on an expedition to find the North Pole (well done Rosa)! Last week we decided as a class that we should stay at base and explore the gazebo (see last issue), also there was a weather warning and we have to respect that.

We drew concentric circles on the floor and we applied geometry to measure shapes! We formed a mandala (a Buddhist design based on circles and the universe). When the entire floor was completed it looked like a pebble had just been dropped into a pool of sparkling water! Next we wrote important ideas, connecting our words. Sticking with earth themed thoughts and things that we

had learned about life in school...

like: when all the space was filled with ideas, the words written in chalk, so that one day they would all disappear... we stood around this piece of artwork, we were all so connected it felt as if we were all holding hands. We took turns to walk into the centre of our mandala and have a chance to read something out loud, something we felt deeply. Some of the adults and children were in tears, this was such a beautiful thing - it was like we were a big family - connected!

We know that things begin and things come to an end. What we believe is that they last. As a connected team we have understood so much together. We are so grateful for this process and we couldn't have achieved this without Mary who led the mandala activity and is always (up to her neck!) in the river with us and happy to help in any way, Sam



Ideas and connecting words written in chalk in the concentric circles of the mandala in the Kells Primary gazebo.

who is always there by our side when we need him, Ms Harper who is an amazing person to have around and is wonderful at looking after us if we need anything.

But... finally a huge thank you to Mister Thompson for the last two years as our teacher, we feel as if we have finally climbed to the top of the biggest mountain out there with you... however, you have also taught us that we can still climb higher, to always look up, to strive and to believe. Thank you for helping us realise that life is so meaningful and more fun than we expected; it is a fantastic view from here!

Fiona Edgar, P7, Kells Primary

Dalry Primary Christmas Show

When it came to the time when we had to start thinking about our Christmas show, the P6/7 decided to write it by ourselves.

We decided to base it on the film The Greatest Showman, but with a difference - The Greatest Snowman - and we also changed up the characters a bit.

Everybody was snow people, and we had The Greatest Snowman and the singing lady, a snow-wife, three snow children and people like that. Everybody went to the North Pole in the play so it was all polar bears and snow people.

On the journey to the North Pole they met a polar bear that is vegetarian, a rapping sloth, Santa, a snowman with a yellow birth mark, a reindeer with a blue nose, a very tall elf called Torrance (which means tall) and a singing lady. Two people also made up the dances for some of the



Dalry Primary performing The Greatest Snowman.

songs and we changed most of the song words as well. We made all of the props and painted them and stuff like that.

It went really well because everybody learned their lines in such a short amount of time, and they remembered them all really well. Everybody had so much fun when we

practised it, and when we showed everybody that came to watch it.

We did our Christmas show two times, on a Monday night and a Tuesday afternoon. On the Monday we did one of the songs again because everybody loved it so much.

Lola & Joe, P6, Dalry Primary

BUSINESS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

This section showcases a different local business each issue, giving readers a taste of the diverse and flourishing entrepreneurial world of the Glenkens.

If you would like to feature your business, please email an article of up to 500 words with a photograph to glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk

Hello, I'm Rachael and I just moved to Galloway in August.

I am loving it here. All the wide open spaces, the water, the landscape and the sheer vastness of nature! We moved here quite by chance, upon finding a property at the top of Woodhall Loch whilst looking for something with all of the above, but a little nearer to our previous home in Yorkshire. And so far it doesn't disappoint. We were looking for somewhere with space and community and I am very much enjoying becoming part of the community up here too.

I am already teaching yoga at Balmaghie/Laurieston Village Hall, and we have a little group that's slowly growing. It's perfect for complete beginners, and we are learning about our bodies and how to move in slow, gentle, compassionate ways to create more peace and stillness in our minds, better movement and freedom in

Rachael Hattersley: Dru Yoga Teacher

our bodies, and a smile in our hearts.

I have also been offering my first treatments from the spare room at home overlooking the loch, which makes the most wonderful picturesque treatment room and is a total joy.

Yoga is a practice of union or balance. Of bringing mind, body and spirit together so we can be at one with ourselves and the world. It can literally help with anything. Anything physical, from stiffness, pain and injuries to diabetes, high and low blood pressure, migraines and headaches; right through to mental and emotional challenges. And is particularly great at giving us the space to breathe and to be, when life is getting on top of us.

The style of yoga I teach is called Dru Yoga which means 'still point'. It is yoga combined with Tai Chi to create beautiful, flowing movements that allow our bodies to soften, relax and flow and really focuses on the energy of the practice and on feeling on top of the world. The beauty of this is that it makes it accessible to anyone and everyone - all ages, shapes, sizes and conditions are welcome. It is very modifiable, and there is always something we can do and join in with. My classes are about creating a welcoming environment, a place we can learn about ourselves and our bodies and about coming together as a community.

The type of treatments I offer are also about working with energy and bodies and minds. Bodies often know what they need and minds are often desperate to switch off! It's been a



Rachael with her class at Laurieston Village Hall.

total re-education for me over the last 12 years, learning to listen and respond to my body and mind and to give them what they need. And I am all the happier for it.

I love the work I do, and I love seeing people become happier and healthier and more at one with themselves, and know that it ripples out far and wide in to all areas of their lives. From work to relationships to how confident they are in themselves, and that is a beautiful thing in the world.

The work I do has helped me to find my natural flow, just in the same way nature has hers, and it's nice to bring these things together here in Galloway.

Classes are on Thursdays from 12.30-2pm at Laurieston Village Hall, and treatments are available to support physical, mental and emotional health (visit my website www.aspiretobe.net to find out more) at my home in Mossdale - please get in touch on 01644 450 269 or rachael@aspiretobe.net

Rachael Hattersley

What's Happening With Watson Birds

Many readers may have thought the Watson Bird Project had died a death, but no - it is still alive and kicking, and we are hoping for faster progress this year.

In autumn 2017 we held two one-day workshops on raptor research. For the first time, we held an event outside the Glenkens, at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. Led by internationally renowned raptor scientist Ian Newton, eight speakers brought the 70-strong audience up-to-date on the latest raptor science research. The following day we repeated much of the programme, but also added speakers who discussed local bird watching opportunities. Again, an audience of 70 were present. At both events pictures and books by Donald Watson were available to purchase, which, combined with participants fees, support from two sponsors and an entrance charge meant that we more than covered our costs.

We did not run the Watson Raptor Science Prize in 2018 as two of our three judges have asked to stand down,

and it has not been possible to recruit replacements as yet.

Preparations are underway for the Watson Birds component of the Dalry Heritage part of the Galloway Glens scheme. Waymarking for two trails, preparation of a commentary on an app, recording of oral history of the Watsons and development of an orientation hub at the Town Hall are the key elements which are the Watson Birds contribution.

In Dalry, it is particularly pleasing to see the work at Barone by new owners, the Wests, in preparation for the Watson Bird Garden. They are very committed to public access to the garden, which stretches alongside their house from the street to the northern boundary wall. Graham has been working to the plan drawn up by Chris Rollic, Andrew Bielinski and myself. Car parking will be provided, and we have just signed an agreement between Watson Birds (through the Glenkens Community & Arts Trust [GCAT], our parent organisation) and the Wests to complete the garden arrangements, which in turn will mean that it can be grant-aided. Additionally, the Wests intend to establish a café in Barone.

This is a facility that many in the village have been wanting for a long time. It

will be an opportunity to promote the project and the related activities, and to display some of our Watson paintings.

We have agreement from the Pamela Young Trustees to use the memorial garden for project work and will be in discussion with the school about various partnership working possibilities next year.

Bird boxes will be placed around the village to cater for the many different species - we are likely to contract the Men's Shed folk in Balmaclellan (if they are up for it) to undertake this work to designs provided by Andrew Bielinski.

With the agreement of the Dalry Town Hall Committee, we have installed a superb painting of raptors by Donald Watson in the Town Hall, along with a description of Donald.

Finally, the conversion of the Smithy in Balmaclellan as a GCAT project gives us an opportunity to have some of Donald's archive on display, and hopefully, this will come to fruition later this year. Spreading the project around the Glenkens is most appropriate as Donald painted throughout the area.

Thank you for your continuing interest and support - we look forward to keeping you updated as works progress.

Roger Crofts

Photo of the Issue *Sponsored by the Ken Bridge Hotel*



This issue's winner is Robin Hood with this beautiful shot of a rainbow over Loch Ken.

Robin wins a meal for two at the Ken Bridge Hotel's Sunday carvery. Competition judges Dave and Sue said: "Such a stunning picture, and it really lifts the spirits, perfect for this time of year."

How to Enter: any photos taken in the Glenkens can be entered - landscapes, wildlife, portraits, action shots... Email them to glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk

If you are a winner the Gazette will send you out a voucher - please call the Ken Bridge to book your meal, and make sure to take your winner's voucher along with you.

DEE & GLENKENS WARD

Councillor Dougie Campbell

is available for consultation on any Council/Public Service matter.

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TREASURES AND NAMES IN HISTORY

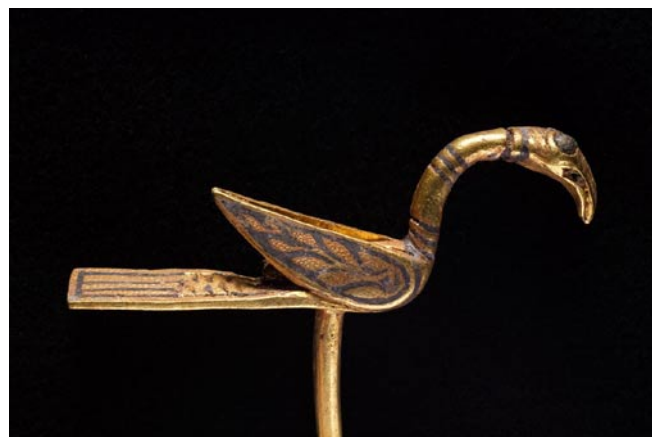
The Glenkens Story history group starts the year with a couple of lectures, returning to the amazing story of the 'Galloway hoard' and discovering what place names can tell us about our history.

In September 2014 Derek McLennan and a group of fellow metal detectorists searching in a Galloway field discovered the richest collection of rare and unique Viking-age objects ever found in Britain and Ireland.

The Rev Dr David Bartholomew, who was one of the detectorists present at the discovery, will reveal new details about the collection when he speaks at the CatStrand on Sunday 24

February. His talk, *The Galloway Hoard – The Story of its Discovery and its Astonishing Treasures*, will discuss the different theories on how it came to be buried there and explore some of the unanswered questions that it raises.

Gilbert Márkus is currently working as a place-names researcher with the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership. A Medieval historian and affiliate researcher at the University of Glasgow, he has published and lectured widely on place-names as a window onto the past. On Saturday 30 March he will speak at the CatStrand on *Hearing their Voices: Place-*



One of the stunning treasures from the Galloway Hoard.

Names and the People of Galloway. Exploring the place-names in this area, he will shed light on two thousand years of history, describing the way people named their landscape and how names helped to create the world we now live in.

Both lectures begin at 2.30pm and tickets, priced £5, are available from CatStrand, New Galloway on 01644 420374 or www.catstrand.com



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LOCAL HISTORY with TED COWAN GLENKENS THE MOVIE?



The latest Scottish-themed movie to pop out of my TV is one entitled *Outlaw King* (2018) starring Chris Pine of *Star Trek* fame in the title role featuring one of Scotland's genuine heroes, namely Robert Bruce.

Thankfully Chris's Scottish accent is actually quite good, better than Mel's in *Braveheart*. Overall the film is well cast with the usual parade of hairy,

bearded Scottish thespians grunting and slashing their way to glory. The story takes place in the period 1306 to 1310, from the murder of

John Comyn at Dumfries through to Bruce's victory at Loudon Hill, a battle which the movie greatly hypes as a kind of forerunner of Bannockburn four years later. In fact, the cinematic events focus on what might be termed Bruce's Galloway years which, as attentive readers will doubtless recall, was discussed in this column some years ago. That short article discussed the battle of Glentworth in 1307 suggesting that legends about the victory gave rise to the tradition of another battle successfully fought by the king at Moss Raploch, at one time known as the battle of Craigenallie, beside what is now Clatteringshaws reservoir. Later tales related that the three sons of the widow of Craigenallie were rewarded by Bruce with a grant of the estate of Cumloaden. The sons supposedly

recommended that Bruce should order his men to round up wild and tame horses, as well as goats, to provide the appearance and sound of a large army. The English, unnerved by the all-night din, broke when attacked at daybreak. According to 17th century testimony, "there is a very big stone in the centre of the flow, which is called the King's Stone to this day, to which he leaned his back, till his men gathered up the spoil", an account that reeks of invention. Heroes do not rest while their men do the tidying up! More convincing is the information, if true, that many weapons had recently been found in the moss by peat-cutters but no trace of

Meccas.

It is not all bad news, however. The recent BBC series on The Galloway Forest produced some excellent television, as well as promotion for Galloway. Paul Murton recently introduced his viewers to Galloway lochs and most of his career has been about Scotland and her history. But one disappointment is *Outlander*. Professionally, I have sometimes felt deceived to death first by the books and now by the TV series. A frequent question is, "how authentic is the series?" Answer, "just as authentic as you would think concerning the story of a woman who travels some

hundreds of years back in time from 1945 to Jacobite Scotland when she touches a prehistoric standing stone!". There are legions of *Outlander* tours all

When Walter Scott was at the height of his fame as a novelist, folk wrote to him suggesting that his next book be based on their area once they realised that he had single-handedly turned Loch Lomond and the Trossachs into tourist Meccas.

them (the weapons) is known to have survived.

What is disappointing is that the movie makers came nowhere near Galloway in the making of the film. Glasgow University cloisters stands in for Greyfriars, Dumfries. There are many glorious shots of the Highlands. Something could surely have been made of Kenmure Castle or Threave. The scenery around Glentworth and the mountainscapes behind Clatteringshaws are as pristine as they are stunning. Movies play a huge part in the promotion of tourism these days. When Walter Scott was at the height of his fame as a novelist, folk wrote to him suggesting that his next book be based on their area once they realised that he had single-handedly turned Loch Lomond and the Trossachs into tourist

over the Heilands but few of them, though I hope I am wrong about this, ever comes to the Glenkens where the star of the show, Sam Heughan, was born - in Balmacellan.

The Old Man of Storr in Skye has now featured in so many films - *MacBeth*, *Game of Thrones*, etc that he had to turn visitors away, telling them the island was shut. The message seems clear - tourists may or may not visit places seen in movies, but they are much more likely to follow-up on named sites. If film makers can go to Skye they can certainly make it to Galloway, where places must be named from here on in and local enterprise should pick up the sword for Bruce and the Glenkens alike.

Ted Cowan

Language Conference Planned on Galloway Scots

The first ever conference on Galloway Gaelic, staged at the CatStrand last September, was a sell-out event, attracting widespread interest and much praise for its comprehensive range and the quality of its presentations.

Fired by the experience, the organisers, Ted Cowan, Michael Ansell and Mike Brown, are planning another day-long event focussing this time on the

distinctive Scots tongue - the leid or language of the southwest.

Gallovidian Scots is still spoken, but for the last few hundred years, like other variants of Scots, its relationship with English has been fluid. For many speakers it survives as an enrichment of their English vocabulary or as a second language they use in parallel with English, preference being given to one or the other depending on circumstance and context.

All over the world languages and dialects are under threat and fears have been frequently expressed that the native "Speak" of Galloway is dying out. This conference will assess its historic, current and future status.

The conference, planned for the CatStrand on Saturday 7 September, will explore the origins of Galloway's distinctive branch of Scots, the way it has both co-existed with and borrowed from other languages, and has, for several centuries, competed with English, and indeed influenced the English spoken in these parts. Surveys, some conducted recently, have mapped the use of Gallovidian Scots and the conference will draw on this work to assess the current health and future prospects of the language.

Programme details and booking arrangements for The Speak of Galloway event will appear in the next edition of the Gazette.

UPDATE FROM THE GLENKENS AND DISTRICT TRUST

The Glenkens and District Trust (GDT) have held two board meetings.

Fiona Smith, the new chairman, has also attended the majority of the Community Councils making up the membership and plans are in place for her to attend the rest.

Representatives of all seven Community Council members of the Trust attended the board meetings.

The meetings were very positive, covering a wide range of topics with contributions from everyone present. The cohesiveness of the group was apparent, with a shared view about what GDT should do and a strong wish to work together for the benefit of our communities as a whole.

Key areas of agreement related to the purpose of the Trust, the need to open up our membership to individuals and the need to develop good and transparent processes and criteria for awards. Detailed feedback is being

provided to the Community Councils.

However, the immediate priority is to get a decision from Temporis Capital (TC) on who they wish to use to distribute the community benefit payments from Blackcraig.

Representatives of GDT, individual Community Councils and local organisations met representatives of TC in a series of meetings at CatStrand over 17 and 18 January. These were helpful and constructive meetings, with TC restating their commitment to the payments and also their wish for the decisions on how the money should be spent to be made locally by people who know the area. They also support the awards being based on merit and want the money to be spent for the benefit of our communities.

GDT set out their position, what they have achieved to date and what they have planned to ensure that they would be in a position to distribute the money effectively later in the year. While GDT accepted that they have no

track record yet they explained that, as this was the first wind farm to make community benefit payments in this specific area, this was not a surprising position and they had the capability, experience and mind set to make it happen. In view of the very tight timescales GDT, if appointed, would also expect to work with TC and other third party providers to get all the necessary arrangements put in place. TC wants the fund to be open for applications in May.

The Fund Catchment Area (the area that awards would be made to) is a topic that is being carefully considered by TC. The seven individual community councils and GDT set out what areas they thought should be covered. GDT reiterated how the seven community councils are working well together and to have any excluded from the Fund Catchment Area would be divisive in our communities.

A decision from TC is expected in February.

Fiona Smith, Chair, GDT

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES: JENE CHAMBERS

I have wonderful memories of growing up on a fruit and vegetable farm in Kent, with my sister who was older than me, and brother six years younger.

My father did not own the farm, he managed it for the elderly farmer. We were there when war was declared in 1938. Our cottage was the far end one of three. All three had connecting cellars, useful during air raids. Entrance was made by ladder, made by my father from the room above. A trap door was also at ground level in all three cellars leading outside.

We were on high ground and could see across to the River Thames to London. We were able to see the German bombers, following the Thames to London, and the guns firing at them. As time went by the few Spitfires we had, that early, flying down at them. When the German planes were damaged, they would turn to their nearest way back to France which was Kent, and drop their bombs. We were in direct line of them. It was a large farm, and had craters in fields around us. Our cottage being on the far end, had bombs so close nearest at the top of the garden. I remember we children were in the cellars mostly on our own. The adults had to keep the produce going on the

farm. The raids were coming morning, mid day and evening regularly.

We had to organise getting to school. There were four of us girls around twelve years old. All gathered together. My brother also now ready for school, there were no other boys. It was a two mile plus walk along country road. We had four houses only on the way to school. We tried to make it to one of them otherwise we scrambled under the hedge with the noise of dog fights in the sky overhead. I remember, clearly, and can still visualise her, Mrs Puxley, a homely middle aged lady. Her house was halfway down a hill, long garden path to her front door with steps. We would try every time to get to her, as she would somehow feed us lemonade and biscuits.

One Saturday afternoon, no one was at work. Dad saw what he thought was an incendiary bomb coming down. They always come by parachute. He came back with a German airman. He was badly injured in a thigh. Mum took him in the kitchen and did what she could for him.

Richard Hearne, the actor who knew dad, came and took the airman to hospital. He was the only person with transport. We children were looking out of the trap doors from the cellar. The airman was very young and fair haired. He looked straight at us. My father was told



Jene Chambers

some time afterwards that he did not survive.

At school we sat in the half finished concrete shelter, those of us who could not get home for lunch. We had a Scottish teacher who sat with us. One end was open to the sky. The raids were usually on during our lunch break. Some of the German planes made a screaming noise as they dived. On one lunch time the local swimming pool was bombed. No one was hurt.

Many thanks to Jon Nimmo and Teri O'Loughlin for submitting this story from Jene of her childhood memories. If you would like to submit something to the Gazette, please do get in touch either by email at teriandjon@tiscali.co.uk or call 01644 420 247.

What is This Mystery Object...?

Do you know what this metal implement, or part of an implement, may have been used for?

It was found by metal detector, about a foot underground, in a farmer's field in the upper Glenkens. It measures around 14 inches, and is made of a cast bronze.

Perhaps readers might be able to shed some light on the object's useage as, so far, it's a mystery...



KEN WORDS WRITING PROJECT

Ken Words is a newly-funded Galloway Glens community writing project which hopes to nurture response in words to place and landscape.

You'll find details of its on-the-ground activities in the CatStrand spring brochure, and keep an eye

out for pieces of new writing in future issues of the Gazette...

If you're interested in finding out more, please feel welcome to get in touch with me, Jane McBeth, at jane.kenwords@gmail.com or leave a message at the CatStrand (01644 420374) and I'll get back to you.

whisht!
the river would speak
with our silence

An Interview with Actor Scott Kyle

Local author Ian Patrick interviews Scottish actor Scott Kyle, who featured in shows such as *Outlander* and *The Greater Game*.

What project(s) are you working on now?

This month I wrapped on season two of the hit television show *Trust Me*, in the show I play (Bobby) who is the best friend and best man of Richard Rankin's character (Alex). It was great to film some scenes with Richard who I went to school with, did pantomime with and worked on *Outlander* with.

I've also just completed a critically acclaimed sold out run of *The Greater Game* where I starred alongside *Harry Potter* actor James Phelps in the west end of London. The show is scheduled to tour the UK in 2019. Keep an eye on @GreaterGameplay on Twitter for more updates.

I have been booked to do some more filming in 2019, but at this point I can't share the details, and I have two other projects that I'm really enjoying being part of. Keep an eye on my website for full details - www.scottkyle.co.uk

What part of Scotland are you from?

I'm from Glasgow and it's a city I love to call home, every time I'm away from home I always tell the people I meet how great Glasgow is.

What's your fondest memory of living in Scotland?

There are so many magical moments from over the years, but probably my fondest memory would be meeting my now wife for the first time in our local swing park. As soon as I met Karen I knew she was my

soul mate and the girl I wanted to be with for the rest of my life.

As a writer I spend the majority of my time at home. I wondered how much time you spend away from home and how you cope with this?

It really depends on the project, through my acting work I have been fortunate enough to travel to some amazing places (America, Canada, Germany, France, Jordan, Italy, Finland and England).

The toughest one was probably recently when I was away for six weeks in London, because I felt near, but it wasn't close enough to go home on my one day off.

What book are you reading now?

Finding Your Own North Star by Martha Beck. This was a gift from actress Victoria Gibson who I worked with on *The Greater Game*.

What music are you enjoying?

I enjoy a whole range of different music so it's difficult to list just one, but if I had to I would say Bruce Springsteen.

Which scriptwriter do you enjoy working with and why?

I enjoyed working with an author called Des Dillon the most as we developed a play together called *The Blue Hen*. It was the first time I had been involved so heavily with a writer developing a script.

If I'm having a bad day I can sack writing and start again the next day. How do you manage this, as an actor, when you just don't feel like turning up but have to?

It's easy if you just put yourself in the shoes of the audience who are running in or attending a performance to try and forget their troubles for a couple of hours. I also turn myself over to a higher power and ask it to make me an instrument of...

As an actor do you prefer stage



Scott Kyle.

or film?

Stage in my 20s film and television in my 30s so not sure what my 40s has in store.

Who inspired you to act and whom do you enjoy working alongside?

The person who inspired and invited me to act was my wife Karen, who suggested I go to college and give it a go. Along the way I have learned from everyone I have worked with and enjoyed in some way the process of collaborating with them.

The experiences that stand out to me though would be working with director Ken Loach on *The Angels' Share*. The other one would be working with director Philip John and actor Stephen Walters on *Outlander*, as they were incredible professionals whom I learned so much from.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

In the garden with Karen and hopefully a couple of kids, being visited regularly by Jess the neighbour's cat - I wouldn't care what job I'm doing if I can achieve this goal.

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1915	Mossdale	2100
1925	Lauriston	2050
1930	Townhead of Greenlaw	2047
1937	Castle Douglas (Market St)	2037
1940	Castle Douglas (Tesco)	2035

Booking not required

Weekly - Thursdays

Glenkens - Castle Douglas Day Centre

Passengers not attending the day centre may also use this service.

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Glenkens to Newton Stewart

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New Galloway (Town Hall) 0940, (CatStrand) 0942
Return Pickup Newton Stewart (Aldi Car Park) 1130
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Monthly

Glenkens - Ayr - Saturdays

Usually the last Saturday of each month
see www.glenkenstransport.org for dates
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FEBRUARY & MARCH

JANUARY

Fri 31, Business Academy: Maximising the Income of your Accommodation Business, 5.30pm, Clachan Inn, Dalry, see p6

FEBRUARY

Fri 1, Reiko Fujisawa, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Fri 8, Within This Dust, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Fri 8, Within This Dust Dance/Movement Workshop, 11am-5pm, New Galloway Town Hall (book via CatStrand)

Fri 8, Dalry Police Station Drop-in, 1-2.30pm with PC Dingwall

Sat 9, Glenn Wool, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Sat 9, Glenkens Farmers Market, 10am-12.30pm, Dalry Town Hall, see p2

Tue 12, Play & a Piece, 1pm, CatStrand

Thu 14, Stewartry Birdwatchers Talk, 7.30pm, Kells School, New Galloway

Sat 16, Dark Sky Jazz Club: Strata, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Wed 20, Open Stage, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Sun 24, Glenkens Story: The Galloway Hoard, 2.30pm, CatStrand

Tue 26, Exhibition on Screen: Young Picasso, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Thu 28, LING AGM, 7.30pm, New Galloway Town Hall

MARCH

Fri 1, Dalry Police Station Drop-in, 10-11.30am with PC Dingwall

Sun 3, McGoldrick, McCusker & Doyle, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Thu 7, Play & a Piece, 1pm, CatStrand

Sat 9, Glenkens Farmers Market, 10am-12.30pm, Dalry Town Hall, see p2

Wed 13, Blue Rose Code, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Thu 14, Stewartry Birdwatchers Talk, 7.30pm, Kells School, New Galloway

Sat 16, Fancy Dress Disco, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Sun 17, Big Ears Little Ears, ages 0-12, CatStrand

Wed 20, FILM: The Rider, 7.30pm,

CatStrand

Tue 26, Play & a Piece: Rapture Theatre, 1pm, CatStrand

Wed 27, Dalry Film Club: Mamma Mia 2 - Sing Along, 7.30pm, Dalry Town Hall

Fri 29, Ross Ainslie & Ali Hutton: Symbiosis, 7.30pm, CatStrand

Thu 28, Stewartry Birdwatchers Talk, 7.30pm, Kells School, New Galloway

Sat 30, Glenkens Story: Place-Names and the People of Galloway, 2.30pm, CatStrand

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8-10.30am – Dalry
10.30-11am – Glenlee Area
11am – New Galloway
12noon – New Galloway Shop
2pm – Mossdale area
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CatStrand, New Galloway:

Film Makers' Club, Mon 7-8.30pm

Exercise to Music: Mon 9.30-10.30am

Margaret Morris dance 1: 3-7yrs, Mon (term-time) 3.45-4.30pm

Margaret Morris Dance 2: 8-16yrs, Mon (term-time) 4.30-5.15pm

Youth Volunteer Meet-up, 1st Tues of the month, 6-8pm, FREE PIZZA

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

Animation Club, Tues 4-6pm (starts 12 Feb then fortnightly)

Gentle Tai Chi: Wed 10am

Wendletrap Tai Chi, Wed 2-3.30pm

Game Tech, last Wed each month, 6-8pm

Writers' Cafe, 2nd Thurs each month 7-9pm

Sing it Out, Thurs 11am -12pm

CatStrand Ukes, 1st & 3rd Thurs each month, 1-3.30pm

Yoga, Tues 6.30-7.30pm & Thurs 9.15-10.45am

Learn the Whistle, (starts 28 Feb; 8-week block. Ages 4-12 - 3.45-4.30pm; Age 12+ & Adults - 5-6.30pm). Contact chris@catstrand.com to find out more

Zumba Gold, Fri (term-time) 9.30-10.30am, CatStrand, 16+

Glenkens Community Centre, Dalry:

Paint & Art, Mon 2-4pm

GCC Playgroup, Tues, Wed & Thurs 9.15-11.45am

Guides, Tues 6-8pm

Yoga, Wed 7.30-8.45pm, for info call Carylann on 07817 400 287

Brownies, Thurs 6-7.30pm

Kickback Martial Arts, Thurs 7-9pm

Thursday Craft Group, Thurs 2-4pm
Glenkens Children's Club, Fri 10am-12noon

New Galloway Town Hall:

LING Elevenes & Lunches, Tues 11am-2pm

Fat Broadband Access, Tues 11am-2pm

Table Tennis & Carpet Bowls, Tues 7-9pm

Circuits, Tues 5.30-6.30pm

Zumba, Wed 7.30-8.30pm, 11+

Circuits, Sat 8-9am

Family Games: Jigsaws, Games & Pool, Sun 2.30-4.30pm

Various Locations:

Hatha Yoga, Mon 10-11.15am, Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn

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

Dalry WI, 3rd Tues each month 2pm, Dalry Town Hall (except Jun, Jul & Aug)

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

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

Mossdale Painters, Wed 9.30am, Mossdale Village Hall

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

Youth Writing, 1st Thurs each month (during term time) 3.30-5pm, ages 10-15, Dalry Library

Kettlebells, Balmaclellan Village Hall, Thurs 6-7pm

Carsphairn SWI, 3rd Thurs of the month, Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn, for further info call Christine on 01644 460 577

Coffee & Craft, Fri 9am-12noon, Lagwyne Hall

Folk Music Session, 4th Fri each month 7.30/8pm till closing, Ken Bridge Hotel

Scouts, Thu 7-8.30pm, New Galloway Scout Hut

Dru Yoga, Thu 12.30-2pm, Laurieston Village Hall

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

Golf Junior Coaching, Sat 10-11:30am, New Galloway Golf Course, see p8

Restoring Footpaths, Sat 10am-1pm, phone 420 632 to confirm

Junior Golf & Come-and-Try for all ages, New Galloway Golf Course, Sat 10am

Men's Shed, Old Smiddy, Balmaclellan. Opening times: Mon 9.30am-4pm & 6.30-8.30pm; Wed 9.30am-1pm & woodcarving from 2-4pm; Fri 9.30am-12noon.

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Glenkens Community Councils

Balmaclellan Community Council Meetings: Last 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 9.45am: 1st. Carsphairn 11.15am: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th. Dalry 9.45am: 2nd, 4th. Kells 9.45am: 3rd. Kells 10.30am: 5th (Mar) **Special Services/Events**: Holy Communion, Kells Church, 17 Feb, 9.45 am. Beetle Drive, Dalry Town Hall, Fri 22 Feb,

7pm. World Day of Prayer Service, Carsphairn Church, Fri 1 Mar, 2.30pm.

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

WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT CARSPHAIRN PRIMARY? *A personal view...*

When I heard recently that Carsphairn Primary School is once again at risk of closure, I felt my heart sink.

This has been the case in the past, when numbers were low. But the community would rally round to ensure this key element wasn't lost. So I wonder - is today's Carsphairn community strong enough...? I'm hopeful that it is, because saving the school is really key to safeguarding the community as a whole.

Carsphairn village is situated on the picturesque north-western edge of our beautiful region, and has been providing primary education to Glenkens children for almost 295 years. One might think such an expansive legacy, coupled with the reputation

of providing high quality education, would be enough

to encourage a steady flow of new parents and children to the community. But, as with so many areas of rural Scotland, the proportion of families with school-age children is dwindling. Yet all over the UK the dream of so many people is still that, when they have children, they would like to live in the countryside, perhaps in or near to a small but well-appointed village with beautiful landscapes and nature on their doorstep, yet with easy road access to nearby towns and facilities... Carsphairn ticks all these boxes. It's less than an hour from Ayr by A-road, and only an hour and a half from Glasgow, so commuting distance if you work in the city. But the full potential of this village can only ever be realised if younger generations once again make their lives here, ensuring a vibrant, thriving community.

In considering a school for their children, reservations are often held by parents in regard to low pupil numbers in small schools. There is, however, no

evidence that larger schools are any better educationally - in fact, smaller schools often come out on top both academically and in the wellbeing stakes. Ofsted (the national office for standards in education) themselves have reported the following:

"The quality of teaching is generally better in small schools rather than larger schools", that small schools have a "positive ethos", "provide an important place in the community", and that they consistently return "good standards of behaviour in children".

Not so long ago, tutors were recognised as the best means of educating children whose parents could afford it. Today, the bespoke teaching experience offered at a school such as Carsphairn is quite unique, and not unlike this privileged



Carsphairn Primary School ©
www.carsphairn.org

communities these days. Relying on a school to provide all of a young person's needs is a rather unrealistic and also dangerous strategy in which any school is likely to fall short.

You would be hard pushed to find an ex-pupil of Carsphairn Primary who did not benefit greatly from their time at the school. Call me biased, as an ex pupil myself, but the education and experiences offered are, in my opinion, worth fighting for and protecting

for future generations - I, for one, would like to send my own children there.

The school is

not only an educative hub, but is vital to this rural community in so many ways - without it the village risks dropping into an indefinite hibernation, with no pull for new families to make their home in the parish.

The low numbers of families and children in the upper Glenkens is only the current scenario, which we know from experience will change with time - in our rural areas there are always ups and downs in the number of children. But facilities like the school are vital to a community and, once lost, are gone forever. They also can't just sit awaiting possible future interest, as it's just not realistic to have an empty school - the community needs to pull together now and recognise the value of the school as a part of the whole, and its necessity to a healthy and vibrant community. So I suppose the million dollar question is...how do you draw the younger generation back to Carsphairn...?

A former Carsphairn Primary pupil

The school is not only an educative hub, but is vital to this rural community...

teaching scenario. Large schools are forced, through necessity, to deal with 'crowd control' as a main imperative in the classroom, with very little time for each individual pupil and their particular needs. In a small school, the teacher has time to give each child the individual attention they deserve, allowing them to flourish academically as well as receive the support necessary to grown into confident, capable members of society.

The idea that children will lack appropriate socialisation is another oft-held misconception. Having just a few children in the school, along with teachers and staff, gives plenty of opportunity to build confidence and social awareness. In the Glenkens we are very lucky as the primary schools work together as a 'cluster'. This means lots of opportunities for students to mix with pupils from the other schools. And of course school isn't the only element to a child's life - there are lots extra-curricular activities available for children within easy driving distance of our Glenkens

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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