

GLENKENS GAZETTE

-SPECIAL EDITION-

News from Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Corsock, Crossmichael, Kirkpatrick Durham, Mossdale, New Galloway, Parton and St John's Town of Dalry

MAY
2020

Produced in partnership with local community councils
and funded by the Blackcraig Community Fund.



COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER



The communities of the Glenkens have come together to create an interim issue of the Gazette to inform and entertain people during these extraordinary times.

The Glenkens Gazette has pooled

its resources with local community councils to give you relevant information for people in each community, as well as what we hope are interesting, informative, fun and useful articles during the COVID-19 lockdown.

You will find the centre spread is a pull-out of community council information which you can remove and put on your pinboard or attach to the wall, or just cut out the section relevant to your community.

The rest of this short but value-packed issue is full of seasonal stories, recipes, gardening tips, foraging advice, competitions, health and wellbeing ideas, photography pointers and more that are all relevant to staying safe by staying at home at this time.

We have arranged to have this issue of to your door to ensure no one misses out. We hope you enjoy your read!

FARMING IN THE GLENKENS

A Young Farmer's View

On our farm in spring we get lots of baby animals.

It can get hectic at times but is overall fun. On our farm we have goats, sheep, cows, pigs, chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and a sheepdog. But only some of them have babies because if we got all the animals to have babies, we would be so busy we wouldn't get any sleep!

The animals that we do get babies from are goats, sheep, cows and chickens. The goat babies are called kids and are extremely cute. They will nibble you and jump on you but are still well behaved most of the time. This year we have had 11 kids and some of them can be little devils. But some of them are quite shy and will run away from you when you walk up to them but that will be because they just aren't used to people yet.

The sheep babies are called lambs as a lot of people know. They are a lot more shy than the kids but that's because we have so many that they don't get to realise that we are friendly because we don't spend enough time

with them. This year we have so far had 90 lambs and still some to come. I, myself, have four of my own lambs, three girls and one boy.

The cow babies are called calves. They can also be quite shy, like the lambs but can also be friendly. This year we have nine calves and a lot more to come. I don't pay as much attention to the calves, but I love them just as much as the goats and the sheep. I went to my uncle's to help and I was able to feed the pet calves there.

The chicken babies are called chicks. They can be friendly but unlike all our other animals we keep them with their mothers until they grow up to an adult so you usually can't get to the chicks without being attacked by the mothers. Right now, we have four chicks and some more to come. We did have more chicks but some of them died, sadly.

Me and my sisters also have some jobs we must do to help on the farm. My jobs are to fill the goats' water tub, let the ducks out and collect the duck eggs, feed some of the chickens, feed the dog and to play with the kids. The



Naomi working hard at her favourite farm task, playing with the goat kids.

last job is an unusual job, but we want the kids to be friendly when we take them to shows so we need to make them friendly by playing with them. Personally, it is my favourite job of them all.

Naomi McCreath, Polquhanity Farm

SPRING FLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY

The current lockdown is a great opportunity to hone your photographic skills.

Multi-award-winning local photographer Duncan McNaught gives some tips for getting the best snaps, even if you just have a phone camera. Duncan says:

Try and avoid bright conditions - the best light for garden flower photography is in early morning or evening when the sun is not bright in the sky, or an overcast day is ideal.

If using a digital camera or mobile phone to take your shots, try to take side-on shots rather than face-on. Get as close as you can, but not too close - all lenses have a minimum focus distance so if you get too close your shots will be blurred.

Look closely in the background of your shot before you press the button; are there any distractions such as bright highlights detracting from the focal point, twigs/leaves that don't do anything to enhance your shot, an ugly piece of fencing/shed in shot, etc. Backgrounds in any photo are just as, if not more, important than your main subject; take time to check it out well.

A spray bottle filled with clean tap water is ideal to add some sparkle to your shots; a few good sprays onto the petals or leaves of a flower can make such a difference to your photos.

Some people like to photograph butterflies - certainly not an easy subject to get right, but again early morning when they have not taken to the wing is ideal.

Dandelion season is upon us now, the seed heads make for some really creative shots, particularly if it's wet and windy outside. Just gather a few dandelion heads up, use some tape or blue tack to stick them down, place

any coloured paper, foil or clothing (I've used a blue t-shirt before) behind the flower. Again, get as close as you can, aiming to fill the frame, and take your shot. A small LED torch can be helpful to add some light; try shining it on your background rather than the subject for some creative lighting.

A bonus tip, and something I use a lot, with some really great benefits, is sweetie papers as filters. The translucent ones from Quality Streets, or similar are ideal, placed over the lens of a torch gives you some beautiful colored light. A great way to get some really creative effects, with the extra bonus that you have an excuse now to eat a few sweets too.

For the more creative approach how

This makes for some amazing abstract images.

One of the most important things in photography is to keep your camera/phone steady, particularly in shady or darker conditions, or if you are using a big heavy lens. To keep it simple, you can either use a tripod if you have one, or a bean bag - or anything that will hold your chosen camera will work too. The self-timers fitted to most cameras are perfect - just set your equipment up, get focused, press the self-timer button and step away till it takes the shot. Even on a tripod, this is an ideal way to get much sharper shots, which makes such a difference, especially if you may wish to have them printed.

Light is hugely important in taking a good photograph. If it's too bright, for example, then perhaps a different time of day would be better, or use some shade such as a piece of card, paper or even yourself to reduce the light. Equally, if it's a little too dark how about an old CD to reflect some light back onto your subject, or some tin foil, and a torch is really useful.

You can often get a better effect if you place some tissue paper or a simple clean white yogurt pot or similar over the front of your torch to create some nice diffused light.

Don't ever be fooled into thinking you need expensive equipment to take good photos as it's simply not true. Photography is more about being creative and looking for ways to use light to your best advantage in every shot you take.

Pictured are some of Duncan's close-up shots of flowers, illustrating how light and water can accentuate an image.

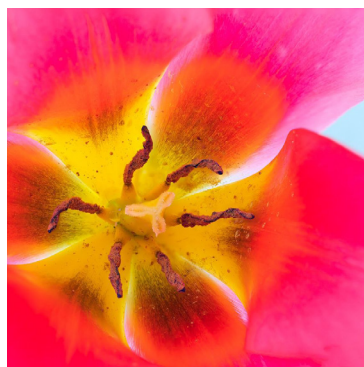
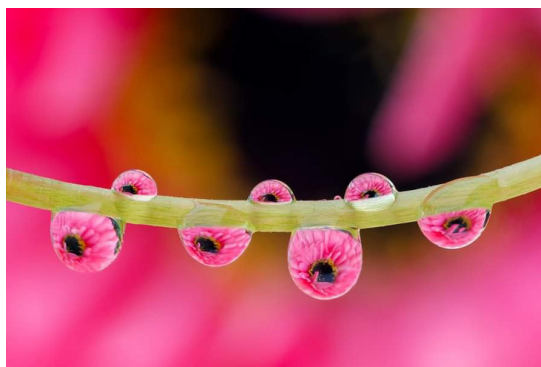
If anyone would like to ask Duncan any questions please contact him on Facebook at [Dmcnaughtphotography](#) or email me at Dmcnaughtphotography@gmail.com

Don't ever be fooled into thinking you need expensive equipment to take good photos as it's simply not true.



about a saucer of milk with a few random drops of food coloring added, then a few drops of ordinary dish soap - this makes some amazing patterns to photograph, and is a bit something different to do with the kids.

On a similar theme, for indoor photography days use a clear glass bowl, preferably not too deep (a lasagne dish for example) and place some brightly colored paper or similar underneath. Add a few drops of cooking oil to the water, give it a gentle stir, and photograph directly over the water ensuring you keep your camera/phone parallel with the water.



Supporting the Spread of Corona Kindness

Since the lockdown started on the 23 March, our Glenkens communities have been flooded with both spontaneous and planned acts of kindness.

Through initiatives that have co-ordinated volunteering offers, raised awareness of need, celebrated, thanked or promoted wellbeing, we are witnessing our community quickly and sensitively responding to our needs at this unprecedented time.

We see rainbows and pictures appearing in windows to cheer up passers-by and offer a message of hope. Christmas lights have been switched back on to lift our spirits and brighten up the streets for our NHS and frontline workers who travel past them on their way to work. Sunflowers are being planted in anticipation of the better times to come.

Our weekly diary now includes the Thursday 8pm date on our doorsteps, where we join and witness the moving sound of applause for our brave NHS and key workers. It's so great to see again a smile or wave from our friends and neighbours. For some it may be the only human contact of the week. We have even danced on our doorstep!

On our daily walking exercise, Teddy bears peer at us from windows, home-made bunting or decorated stones brighten our paths and Easter window displays are beautiful – all uniting us and providing diversions to fill our newly acquired time.

Last weekend, the Easter Bunny hopped into the Glenkens, spreading chocolate and cheer for Glenkens

children - a welcome treat following their own challenges of staying at home and not seeing friends.

Meals and cakes are being made and delivered. Phone calls and socially-distanced chats take place, making us all feel supported and grateful that we live in and are a part of this community. Our local businesses have risen to the challenge in many innovative ways, and we are grateful again for being in such a relatively self-sufficient community.

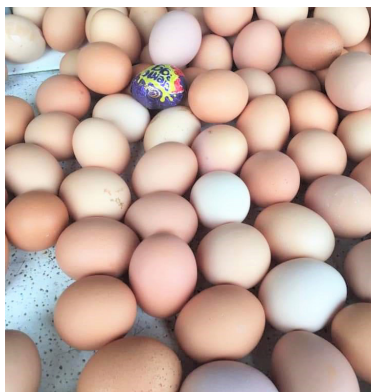
On social media we are being treated to entertaining Tik Toks (short repeated videos, often humorous) and photographs of the beautiful sights and natural wonders of our local environment, that perhaps we now have more time to notice and appreciate.

Let us not forget how we and our community have responded. Keep your pictures, videos and creations and when the time is right, we can look at ways of collating, sharing and celebrating what we as a community did in response to Covid 19.

We should be proud of all that we have done and achieved!

If anyone wishes to have or make bunting for their windows or share their photos or TikToks on social media please contact SamCEW@newgallowaycommunity.shop or call Sam on 07741 656 601. And remember to email or post anything you would like to include in the next issue of the Gazette to glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk or you can post items to CatStrand, New Galloway, DG7 3RN.

...rainbows and pictures appearing in windows to cheer up passers-by and offer a message of hope. Christmas lights have been switched back on to lift our spirits and brighten up the streets for our NHS and frontline workers who travel past them on their way to work. Sunflowers are being planted in anticipation of the better times to come.



Thomas Edgar watches the Easter Bunny through the window; rainbows have sprung up all over the Glenkens, along with Christmas lights to show support for our key workers; local businesses are going above and beyond to help (Kate's farm eggs can be picked up from the 'hutch' opposite the playpark in Dalry); Teddy bears in windows wait to be spotted, brightening up children's walks.

Tom's Feel-good Isolation Film List

So this year hasn't started off the most convenient for the human race, not just for film addicts with all the cinemas closing, but for everybody else as well.

While the world is in lockdown and we remain stuck inside away from the perils of thou-that-shall-not-be-named, it's important to keep our heads held high and our moods up. There are thousands and thousands of feel-good movies out there, films that lift the spirits, make you smile and take your minds far away to a whole other world. These are my favourite, personal picks for something to take your mind away from all that outside...

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE:

Full of great acting from people like Steve Carrell, Toni Collette and Paul Dano, great writing and hilarious gags. If the finale doesn't bring a big grin to your face then I don't know what will. (Not available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £3.99)

CHEF: What starts as a great food flick turns to a powerful story of bonding,

with great performances - a good film all round. (Not available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £3.99)

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF:

Hands-down for me this feels the most heartfelt of them all; a great hangout film, with enough action to keep you gripped throughout. (Available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £2.99)

MOONRISE KINGDOM:

Anderson remains one of the most prolific and unique directors going. Full of familiar Wes faces, **Moonrise Kingdom** is a must-see for anybody into artistic film-making and camera work. (Not available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £3.99)

LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY:

Award-winning cinema, a good 10 hours of fantasy and action that'll

transport you right to Middle Earth. (Available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £3.99 [per film])

SOME LIKE IT HOT:

A comedy classic - don't be put off by the age of the film; it's a barrel of laughs, slapstick mishaps, great dialogue. I hadn't seen something so funny in a good few years, and you can't beat the punchline at the end of the film, amazin! (Not Available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £2.99)

O' BROTHER WHERE ART THOU:

You've got to have a Coen Brothers film on the list, and while *Fargo*, *Burn After Reading* and *The Big Lebowski* are all very good, very funny films, none of them are quite as warm-hearted, merry and fun as *O' Brother Where Art Thou*. (Not available on Netflix, can be rented on Amazon Prime for £2.99)

ANY PIXAR FILM, LIKE,

EVER: I was going to try and put down a film, and then I thought; every single film is fantastic. One of my favourite studios (and I'm not afraid to say that), I have always had a blast watching through a PIXAR film.

So...there are my personal quarantine flicks - I hope you enjoy them as much as I did!

Thomas Limbey



Little Miss Sunshine - guaranteed to bring a smile...



Connecting in Communities (CiC) is a LEADER and Big Lottery funded project, aimed at improving the lives of those living and working in the Glenkens.

Targeting loneliness and isolation has been a key driver in our success over the last three years, bringing people together across the Glenkens for a wide variety of activities. But now the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a huge spanner in our well-oiled works. Just as we were celebrating the opening of the Smiddy in Balmaclellan and getting new and exciting events running, the necessary social isolation measures mean we've all had to stay at home.

Our project is all about getting people

together, lockdown is all about keeping folk apart... So, we've had to come up with new and creative ways to keep the community connected.

Men's Shedders are keeping in touch with a phone cascade system, one person rings two others, they ring two more each and so on. The singing group, adult dance and Shona's pilates class have all tried various methods of digital connection.

By far the most popular method of getting together digitally has been using the online platform Zoom (see article on p6). In February most people in the Glenkens had never heard of Zoom (it's a video conferencing platform generally used for business), but by April loads of people were using it on a regular basis. It's nothing new to Brian and Chris, both of whom have a background in telecoms, so we've seized the opportunities Zoom offers to get our activities on-line and back into the community.

So far we have Amy's Tuesday night yoga class on Zoom, instigated a Wednesday night pub quiz, got the

photography group zooming their photographs to each other and, working with John from JP Fitness, have started three different fitness classes. If mental and physical workouts aren't your thing, we've also got a plant-pot challenge - check out our Facebook page @connectingincommunities

Obviously not everyone has the technology to utilise Zoom, or even Facebook and email, but we're working with our funders to see what other solutions technology can offer. Meanwhile stay home, stay safe, and shop locally - the village shops are doing an absolutely brilliant job of keeping us supplied; thanks folks, you really are lifesavers! Please look out for your neighbours too, even if it's just a chat on the phone or over the garden wall (from a safe distance). Isolation can be really hard, and a simple chat or act of kindness can keep spirits up.

CiC is here to help in these difficult times, so if you have a good idea to help the community or need some support in something you're already doing, please get in touch. To find out more about any of our activities please contact Brian or Chris on brian@catstrand.com or chris@catstrand.com Chris Jowsey, Volunteer & Participation Officer

The Reality of Exercising at Home

Well it's week four of lockdown and life has certainly changed for us all.

The gyms are shut, exercise classes cancelled, the golf course is out of bounds...

This has resulted in me engaging in ONE Oti Mobuse Dance class, watching Joe Wicks whilst drinking tea and eating my fifth biscuit, making an unrealistic pledge to exercise every morning starting from 'tomorrow' and spending hours on end watching people on YouTube finding innovative and often hilarious ways of exercising.

We all know the importance of exercise and the health and wellbeing benefits that this brings. However, at this time of uncertainty, stress and change to our daily routines, physical activity and exercise may not always be happening.

I have known for a long time that I partake most readily in 'exercise in disguise', such as engaging in physical activities such as walking the dog whilst chatting to a friend or dance classes where I am learning a new routine or dance style. The reality is that my motivation to exercise comes from supporting others in their physical activity, social interaction achieved through group exercising, peer pressure of regularly attending, the joy I find in music and the reward of a cuppa and chat following the class. Therefore, I am

in total admiration and awe of those who are continuing their exercise journey in their makeshift gyms and using their permitted one hour of exercise productively.

At this point my regular class participants will now be chuckling at the fact that I am not even following my own advice and raising my baked bean tins above my head to tone my arms.

So, my four-week 'research period' has ended and 'tomorrow' has arrived and for those who, like me, would like to exercise in their home, I am sharing the following information

- Turn on the BBC1 at 6.55am or 8.55am Monday, Wednesday or Friday and join the Green Goddess or, if that's too early, join Mr Motivator on BBC 1 each day on HealthCheck UK Live
- Contact Connecting in Communities (brian@catstrand.com or chris@catstrand.com) for their increasing programme of online classes including kettlebells, circuits, yoga and Zumba (see page opposite for more)
- Visit the NHS online www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise for a wonderful range of exercise activities suitable for all levels of fitness, including sitting exercises, strength exercises and gym-free workouts
- Take a step outside or open your window and take five deep breaths, do



four shoulder rolls and three stretches, notice two things around you, and have one positive thought.

Remember - keep it simple and safe, set realistic goals, and even a little movement or exercise will make us feel a lot better.

So, to my class attendees, friends, local instructors, Local Initiatives in New Galloway, Connecting in Communities - "Thank You" for what you are offering us at this time, and I look forward to seeing you again when our 'in person' classes and activities resume!

Sam Rushton

Maria Yerburch is offering free live 30-minute yoga sessions on Sunday mornings at 11am.

Follow 'Barwhillanty Estate' Facebook page to join the sessions.

Writing in a Time of Crisis

The Glenkens Writers Group is no longer meeting but some members are sharing their writing on-line as they experience the Coronavirus crisis.

This group has been joined by others who feel drawn to write about what is happening.

"We are all in a very strange and unprecedented situation, which may not feel great but could galvanise some interesting writing," says Margaret Elphinstone, who convenes the Glenkens Writers Group. "Many people find writing about these difficult times extremely helpful. It also provides a historical record of what people locally are experiencing and their reactions to events."

Articles, in prose or poetry, can take the form of a diary, observations or reflections and

opinions. The only requirement is that contributions must be of less than 500 words and submitted electronically.

Group members share their writing with one another and discuss their writing online. They agree not to circulate other people's work outside the group without the writer's permission.

We have space for a few more writers, but may have to set an upper limit if the editor is inundated with applications.

To find out more, contact Margaret on margaret.elphinstone@dircon.co.uk



FOOD BANK

On behalf of Stewartry Food Bank, (SFB), I would like to thank everyone in your communities, large and small, who have so generously supported us.

Donations of goods and cash have poured in - so much so that our bank balance has increased, the stock room is full, and we have had to begin storing food in another room so please, no more donations of food at present.

We could not achieve anything without the ready support of so many volunteers - thank you.

SFB, Stewartry Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) and Heart of Galloway Food Bank in Castle Douglas are now trying to coordinate referrals and deliveries. This initiative is in its early stage but should you or anyone you know be in need of help, please contact Heart of Galloway on 07730 788 335.

Again, thank you all for your support - keep safe and well.

Marian Dixon, SFB

WILDLIFE WATCHING

What a very strange start to spring we've had, four weeks into lockdown as I write.



Peacock butterfly © Andrew Bielinski

Just as the dry, warmer weather arrives, we're all confined to our homes and the immediate countryside around our villages – but nature is in full swing and we can all enjoy the wildlife around us and the early signs of the season.

The dawn chorus of our resident birds such as robins, blackbirds and song thrushes is being joined by willow warblers and chiffchaffs, whilst swallows and house martins are beginning to appear in the sky.

The newts have small larvae (sometimes known as efts) – we have palmate newts in our pond and this is the most frequently found species in this part of the world, although smooth (or common) newts and the rare great crested newt are also found in the Glenkens. Searching

around ponds at night with a torch is a good way of finding newts, as they come into shallow areas to carry out their courtship dance.

Hedgehogs are also active in the garden at night, having emerged from hibernation a few weeks ago – tell-tale black, sticky droppings on the lawn are evidence of their nocturnal foraging.

The great daytime foragers are the bumblebees and other early insects busy gathering nectar and searching for places to make their nests. Big queen red-tailed bumblebees are especially active at the moment, but look for the smaller mining bees and hoverflies that are also on the wing. Butterflies are also back – small tortoiseshells and peacocks and, my favourite early spring butterfly, the orange tip.

Yes, spring is here – let's enjoy it!

Andrew Bielinski

How to Have an Online Coffee Morning

Ok, so you've phoned your parents/children/grandchildren/friends... but wouldn't it be nice to actually see them, even in lockdown?

Well if you have a computer, tablet or smartphone with a working camera, then you are in luck as you can make a video call. If you have a choice of devices I would recommend using the one with the biggest screen. All of these apps are free and using them is free if you connect via broadband and it is within any allowance you have.

If you have Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp on your phone, you can use these to have video calls, and you can create a 'group' and have more than one person. Messenger also works on your computer/tablet – if you are able to access Facebook, you can make

Messenger calls.

Skype is a great all-round video call platform, and there are versions for Apple products, Windows and Android devices which all work together. Just download the app from skype.com or Apple's App Store or Google Play (Android). You will need a Skype account to make calls.

If you want to have more people on a single call (a party!) then Zoom is very popular. The person setting up the call will need a Zoom account – setting it up is all very straightforward. Once you have started your meeting, you can send out invites by email (best to phone people and ask them to check their email and click on the link). Note that anyone with the link will be able to join the meeting/party but they don't need to have an account.

So now you can see the people you care about – see that gap where the grandchild's tooth fell out, the rainbow they painted or the Lego castle they built. You can have a virtual party with

the grown-ups; or pour yourself a cuppa (or something stronger) and just hang out and chat. How about sharing a baking session with youngsters or oldies? Or a game of chess?

Some obvious security advice – don't give out personal details over Skype or Zoom, don't click on a link unless it is one that you were expecting, and remember that the camera is on while the meeting is active and everyone on the call will be able to see and hear everything!

Paul Goodwin



Zoom call discussing this article.

Maintaining Our Local Lifelines

Many of our local grocery shops are continuing to provide a vital service for our rural communities, either by delivering orders or by making a rule of one or two people in the shop at a time.

Those that are remaining open to customers are having to deep clean regularly and, with many more customers than usual, they are working very hard on our behalf.

Please help them help you by planning your shopping in advance so that multiple trips are not required, and remember that we should only be shopping for essential food supplies.

Government rules on social distancing in order to limit

face-to-face contact are vital here. Our local shops are small businesses and if one member of staff displays COVID-19 symptoms, then the whole shop may have to close until the quarantine period has expired. This would leave our communities even more isolated.

So please, take the time to plan before you venture out to the village shop. Let's respect our key workers during this difficult time.

Community Information Pull-out

This page has information relevant to the whole of the Glenkens, with specific community council area information on the following pages. Please pull out this centre spread and keep it somewhere to hand for use over the coming weeks.

MEDICINE

GLENKENS MEDICAL PRACTICE

Prescription collection is from the window next to the main door. Please maintain social distancing (at least 2 metres) while waiting to collect medicines.

Four working days notice are necessary for repeat prescriptions so remember to order the week before you run out. No supply problems are anticipated so no need to order extra.

Volunteers from Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Dalry and New Galloway are able to collect and deliver your prescription to your door. When you phone the surgery (01644 420234) to order your repeat prescription, please find out when it will be ready. Then call the number relevant to your community (see following pages) to arrange for its collection. You will need to provide your name, date of birth, address and telephone number.

Government rules on preventing the spread of the Covid virus are to avoid physical contact. Volunteers will therefore ring your door bell, step back 2 metres, and wait for you to collect the items. If no-one is available to answer the door, we will have to take the items away but will telephone you to rearrange delivery.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Dumfries & Galloway Council will support families with children in education who have 'Free School Meal' entitlement.

To register go to www.dumgal.gov.uk and look for 'Schools & Childcare' under the COVID 19 link on the Home Page or call 030 33 33 30000

SUPPORT WITH MEALS

FOODBANK

If you are struggling to feed yourself or your family please contact Heart of Galloway Foodbank on 07730 788 335.

They are based in Castle Douglas at the Heart of Galloway Visitor Centre on Market Hill and are open from 12noon to 2pm, and can deliver.

THE FOOD TRAIN

For anyone over the age of 65 unable to shop for themselves. Stewartry Branch: 01556 288427 Email: everything@thefoodtrain.co.uk

GLENKENS-WIDE FOOD DELIVERIES & COLLECTION

FOOD DELIVERIES

Many local shops and food providers have set up stysems for ordering food in advance which can then be delivered to your door. Delivery is on different days for different communities so please check when phoning through your order.

(Village shops are listed on the following pages, under their specific area.)

- **Ballard's Butchers:** orders can be made online at www.ballardsbutchers.co.uk or call 01556 502502 (they also deliver groceries)
- **Grierson's Butchers:** 01556 502 637
- **Henderson's Butchers:** 01556 502 654
- **Mitchell's Greengrocers:** 01556 502 077

PLEASE ORDER IN ADVANCE FOR:

- **Fleet Fish:** order before 9pm Sunday evening for delivery the following week. Delivery days can be found when ordering at www.fleet-fish.co.uk or call 07966 103 912
- **Roan's Dairy:** orders can be made at www.roansdairy.co.uk - please call on 01556 620 374 to check delivery times in your area.

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

In our remote and rural parishes it is unfeasible for many of us to attempt to offer support directly. Many community councillors are within the high risk categories themselves and thus will also be self-isolating.

At this difficult time we would implore members of the community to be 'guid nychburris', the very best neighbours you can be.

A large proportion of the community does not have access to the internet and may need help the most. Please at this time spread the word and explanation of what we are doing to those who need it, ie your family, friends and neighbours. We would like to work together and ensure no one goes without food or important household necessities and even just a friendly voice. Isolation can be lonely and we are in it together.

GENERAL SAFETY FOR DELIVERIES

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness.

Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly.

Government rules on preventing the spread of the Covid virus is to avoid physical contact. Volunteers delivering goods will ring your door bell, step back 2 metres, and wait for you to collect the items from your doorstep.

BALMACLELLAN

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, dropping off newspapers or magazines, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.

Balmaclellan Shop Opening Times: Mon-Sat 8am-3pm, Wed half-day (closes 12.30pm) and Sun 9-11am



- Debbie (shop hours): 01644 420 321 or 07709 009 147)
- Ailsa Malone (BCC secretary): ailsamalone@aol.com or 01644 420 480 or 07485 079077
- Martin Warnock (BCC chair): lochbank@pm.me or 07939 261 391
- send a message to the community's Facebook page 'BalmaclellanCC'

CARSPHAIRN

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, dropping off newspapers or magazines, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.

The Carsphairn shop now has an excellent stock of groceries plus fruit, vegetables and meat and is offering a delivery service as follows: fruit, vegetables and meat are available for deliveries at the beginning of the week, orders to be made by Friday 2pm by emailing lindsayduncan23@hotmail.co.uk or calling 01644 460 568 or Facebook message. Grocery deliveries are available 7-days a week from 9am-9pm. Payment can be made via BACS or card payments can be taken over the phone.



- Matt Hickman: 07531 035824
- Liz Holmes: 07718 358160
- Christine Whipp: 01644 460577
- Carsphairn Community Trust: carsphairn.trust@gmail.com
- Further information is available at www.carsphairn.org

CORSOCK & KPD

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, dropping off newspapers or magazines, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.



CORSOCK:

- Julie Garton (community councillor): gartju27@gmail.com or 07769 647 702
- To stay up-to-date join 'Corsock community' and Kirkpatrick Durham' Facebook groups, or follow 'CorsockKPD' on Twitter

KIRKPATRICK DURHAM:

- Heather: burnbrae-australianlabradoodles@hotmail.co.uk or 07551 639 629
- Susan: susan.pery@btinternet.com or 08837 243 348
- Hazel: hazelj.young@btinternet.com or 07872 503 130
- Dee: CusackDAM@gmail.com or 07900 902 732

CROSSMICHAEL

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, dropping off newspapers or magazines, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.

Crossmichael Shop is open between 6.30am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday, and 7.30 am to 4pm on Sunday. You can phone in orders for collection (01556 670 424); or Alan will do his best to deliver.

The Thistle pub is doing take-away meals on Fridays and Saturdays, between 12.00 midday and 7.00 pm. Just turn up to order or phone in (01556 670 203). You can find the menu on Facebook. Jim will deliver up to a reasonable distance.



- **Richard Middleton (CC chair): richardandjane@phonecoop.coop or 01556 670 691**
- **communitycouncil@crossmichael.org**



Order repeat prescriptions from the Health Centre in Castle Douglas (01556 505 682 or 01556 505 666, depending on the practice) as normal, then phone a volunteer to arrange collection from the pharmacy. The volunteer will need your name, date of birth and address in order to be able to collect the order - phone or email Richard (above) to arrange.

DALRY

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, dropping off newspapers or magazines, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.

Wrights (01644 430 225) and Londis (01644 430 669) will take orders over the phone and a volunteer can then deliver your groceries to your door. However, to avoid disappointment, please phone to check availability of fresh items, or to order in advance. When you make your order, ask them when it will be ready for collection and then phone one of our volunteers to arrange delivery.

Note: Post Office/banking services at Wrights are continuing as normal but customers are asked to be vigilant regarding the social distancing rules when entering the shop.

The Clachan is offering a takeaway menu on Thursdays to Sundays, 5pm to 8pm. Card payments will be taken over the phone when ordering (Thursday to Sunday after 3.30pm on 01644 430241 or 07769 229005). Local delivery is possible at set times. The menu changes weekly and can be found on their Facebook page (see The Clachan Inn). Collections are carefully timed to keep social contact to a minimum.



- | | |
|--|--|
| • Will Adam: 01644 430 338 | • Col Sweeney: 07808 807 946 |
| • Fiona Davidson: 01644 430 414 | • Graham West: 07899 599 092 |
| • Morag Paterson: 07917 102 693 | • Nicolette Wise: 01644 430 218 |

LOCAL SHOPS ARE OUR LIFELINE - LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY!

Our local shops are providing a vital service. Please help them help you by planning your shopping in advance so that multiple trips are not required. Government rules on social distancing are vital. If one member of staff displays COVID-19 symptoms then the whole shop may have to close until the quarantine period has expired.

This would have a critical effect on the resilience of our communities.

MOSSDALE

Mossdale Shop is continuing to serve its customers via an ordering and collection system. Orders can be phoned in (01644 450 281) any morning between 9am and 11am (any day except Wednesdays) and can then be collected from a cabinet outside the shop.

NEW GALLOWAY

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.

New Galloway Community Shop will open from 27 April for counter service on Mondays and Wednesdays 1.30-5pm and Saturdays 10am- 2pm. Counter service will be for small orders up to 8 items. The shop continues to focus on Home Deliveries by volunteers throughout New Galloway & Kells. To order, email shopteam@newgallowaycommunity.shop or put your order in the letterbox of Stroan, next to the shop. Or call 07464 551 936 between 10:30 - 12:30 and 1:30 - 3:30 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays or 9-11 on Saturdays. Deliveries are made every day except Wednesdays and Sundays.

The Smithy Tearooms – takeaway service available 5-7pm Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Phone 01644 420 269 to place your order and book your collection slot in advance. Delivery can be made around the Glenkens but 2 days' notice is required.

The Post Office is open normal hours with all services, but is restricting attendance to one customer at a time.

Love To Eat has a stock of home-cooked frozen meals that can be ordered on 07393 199 702. They can be delivered around New Galloway, Dalry or Balmaclellan.

KEY CONTACTS

- 07741 656 601 or email ngcommunityhelp@gmail.com
- New Galloway volunteers are also supporting the community shop by taking and delivering orders. We can always use more volunteers – if you have any time or ideas for supporting our community, do get in touch.

PARTON

We can help with collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries to your home, dropping off newspapers or magazines, posting mail, dog walking or do get in touch for anything else, even if you just fancy a chat.

A community mailing list for Parton has been created to provide a vehicle for sharing local news and information that is proving very useful in allowing quick dissemination of information about what's happening with regard to local shopping and also the circulation of contact details for anyone volunteering help with collection of prescriptions, medicines, etc. Anyone in Parton parish wishing to be added to the list please email suzymercer@googlemail.com

KEY CONTACTS

- Erica or Brian: 01644 470 277
- Gilli: 07894 867 450
- Mungo: 07711 539 220
- Paul: 07711 663 603
- Richard: 07517 601 788
- Suzy: 01644 470 130
- Tom: 07835 821 976
- Anne: 07788 474 551
- parton-community@googlegroups.com
- Parton community WhatsApp group - send a text to Suzy on 07801 258 292 and she will add you to the group

DALRY ELC UPDATE

Within Dalry Early Learning & Childcare (formerly Dalry Nursery, although we cover the whole of the Glenkens) we have a closed Facebook page which has allowed staff to keep in touch with the children and their parents.

This enables us to provide activities that parents can do with their children. It is also a way of sharing pictures with each other so the children and parents don't feel so isolated, in these times it is important to think about everybody's wellbeing and mental health.

In March we were due to have our annual Easter bonnet parade. This obviously didn't go ahead, so we asked the children to post a picture of their bonnet if they had already made one. Staff joined in too, just to say hello. We also joined in with supporting the keyworkers with rainbow pictures, sharing them with everyone. Another time we asked for the children to post a picture with their pet. Doing these activities enables us to keep the links with the families, supporting them through this hard time and enabling the

children to see each other.

Everyone handles this situation differently - some may be enjoying the solitude, time to relax, however, others may be anxious and struggling, our children will be feeling these emotions too.

Having a younger child, trying to keep them occupied can be exhausting to a parent. Try not to do 'everything' for your child though. I have found that sitting back and letting the child take the lead in their play is actually rewarding.

All children love to dig! Give your child a patch in the garden, a tyre filled with soil, a bucket - anything. Give them real tools to dig with; a hand trowel is just the right size and just watch. You can also add natural materials, spoons, bowls, pans and turn it into a mud kitchen. And not forgetting water - a bucket of water and your child will play for ages. Try not to worry about mess - children like to explore and investigate their environment and left to enjoy will discover many new things.



Dalry ELC also has an open page on Facebook which everyone can look at for ideas and information and keep the community together in this time of uncertainty.

Julie Moore, Dalry ELC

Pictured: Archie and his rainbow; Scarlett with her Easter bonnet; Elliot and his dog Buster.

Art Activities for Children

Start a Sketchbook

Sketchbooks are great for developing our drawing skills, being creative and exploring ideas. Don't worry about mistakes and not all sketches need to be completed.

Create a sketchbook page showing signs of spring. Think about including



notes to go with your sketches.

Tip: Try and sketch lightly with your pencil. This way you don't need a rubber! You can go over the lines you are happy with to make them stand out.

Create a Butterfly Collage

A collage is a work of art made by gluing pieces of different materials onto a flat surface. Collage comes from the French word "coller" which means glue.

Draw the outline of a butterfly. Try and make it symmetrical so it looks the same on both sides.

Tear or cut pieces of coloured/magazine paper and arrange to create your collage. Try to make your collage symmetrical as well.



Tip: If you cut out your butterfly then it doesn't matter if you go over the edge.

Gazette Art Competition

Create a butterfly collage, take a photograph and email it to glenkensgazette@hotmail.co.uk by Friday 15 May.

We will have a winner in the under 12 category and a 12+ winner, so adults please do have a go too!

We're looking forward to seeing your creations, which will be printed in the next issue as well as the winner in each category receiving a £10 cash prize provided by Dalry Community Council.

Healthy Baking Options

Currently with the COVID-19 outbreak we are possibly focusing more on our health and the health of our families than we have for a while.

Due to restrictions placed upon us we might be turning to eating more biscuits and sweets to give us a 'lift' but what healthier options can we treat ourselves with?

As you have more time at home maybe you would like to bake something delicious? Here are a few of my favourite recipes...

GROUND NUT, PEAR & POLENTA CAKE



Ingredients:

8oz butter
6-7oz sugar – ideally dark brown or coconut sugar
4 eggs
2 tsp vanilla essence
6 oz polenta
8oz ground nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc)

1 Tsp baking powder
2 chopped fresh organic pears or well-drained tinned pears, cut into bite-size

Method:

Put all the ingredients together in your mixer except for the pears and mix for roughly 4-5 minutes or until light and fluffy looking. Remove and fold in the chopped pears. Bake in a 8 inch wide cake tin lined with greased parchment (brown) paper. Bake between 1 and 1¼ hour at 180C. If making the cake with ground almonds it may be more appropriate to use natural almond essence.

SUGAR FREE DATE & WALNUT CAKE

Ingredients:

225g dates
55g walnuts (or pecans) or more if you love a lot of nuts
90g butter
285ml water
110g raisins
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp nutmeg
pinch salt
200g flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

Method:

Chop dates and nuts. Put the dates, butter, water and raisins in a large saucepan. Bring to the boil and then gently simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from the cooker, cool a little and stir in the remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. If mixture appears too thick add a little more water. Turn the mixture into a greased, lined 8" cake tin. Bake at 375/190/gas mark 5 for 45 minutes.

PECAN DROP SCONES (PANCAKES)



Ingredients:

2 oz ground pecans (almonds or walnuts can be substituted)
4 oz wholemeal flour
1 heaped tblsp dark brown sugar
1 heap tsp baking powder
1 organic egg
1 tsp vanilla essence
5 oz milk to mix (any milk or alternative milk will do)

Method:

Mix all the dry ingredients together and make a well in the centre. Mix the egg and milk together and pour into well and mix the ingredients till they resemble a very thick batter (make sure it's not too runny). Heat and grease a thick-bottomed frying pan or griddle and pour dssp of the mix into the pan. After a few mins or when you see a bubble turn over the pancakes and cook for a minute or so on the other side.

Place cooked pancakes on a wire rack with a clean, dry cloth and cover the pancakes with this after putting on rack.

For more ideas on how to stay healthy sign up to my Facebook page @The Food Clinic

Lorna Willock, Nutritionist, Dalry

Cooking With Kids: Anne's Pizza Swirls

Anne McEwan from Dalry posts the most amazing homemade food pics on her Facebook page, so we asked her for a child-friendly recipe. Here are her pizza swirls (makes 12).

Ingredients:

750 gr plain flour
1.5 tsp salt
10g dried active yeast
20ml olive oil
1 tsp sugar

450 ml luke-warm water
100 gr grated cheese
200 ml double concentrated tomato paste
1 tbs Italian herbs

Method:

For the dough - mix the yeast and the sugar into the luke warm water and leave it to activate for 10-15 min. Mix the flour and salt, add the yeast mixture and the olive oil and mix together into a smooth dough. Knead the dough for a minimum of 5 minutes. Leave the dough to rest for 1-2 hours in a warm place until doubles in size.

Knock back the dough and roll it out into a large rectangle.

Spread the dough rectangle with the tomato paste and sprinkle the Italian herbs and the cheese on top.

Roll the dough up going along the longest side of the rectangle. Cut the roll of dough into 12 equal pieces. Place the swirls onto a baking tray spaced well apart. Leave them to rest for 15 min. Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until they start to brown on top. Can be eaten hot or cold. Enjoy!



Immune Boosting Garden Nibbles

Whether you're looking for something green to replace currently hard-to-get shop vegetables, or just fancy practising garden foraging skills, these 'weeds' are far from thin on the ground!

Take a two-minute stroll outdoors avoiding areas frequented by the local canine population, examine any green patch (which you know hasn't been peed on) and you're highly likely to spot one of these.

Brimming with antioxidants, calcium, magnesium, vitamins C, A, K and iron, these pesky, uninvited garden inhabitants will enrich lockdown lunches.

Most Common: Hairy Bittercress

It would be more of a challenge to find a patch of ground without hairy bittercress! This tiny cress flavour-bomb is a typical brassica and may be protective against cancer. It's around all year and makes an exceptionally good egg-and-cress sandwich.



Most Plentiful: Nettle, Ground Elder & Wild Garlic

Early in the year when the wild garlic is around (February-April), the young leaves of nettles and ground elder are also appearing, and are perfect to add to any soup/stew. I particularly love these three ingredients and will use them daily. Outwith their season, we love them fermented (kimchi) or as pesto.



Nettles contain polyphenols and there is research showing that they may help to prevent and manage inflammatory diseases such as certain types of cancer, heart disease and diabetes whilst wild garlic lowers blood pressure.

Most Surprising: Rosebay Willowherb

Extremely common, the beautiful willowherb you will be most familiar with towards the end of summer when it displays its striking and prodigious pink flower spikes, is also useful. Young shoots can be treated like asparagus; boiled briefly, drizzled with lemon juice and smothered in butter. Historically and currently, the leaves are rolled, fermented and dried to make a tea. The stems of mature plants can also be split to reveal the white fluffy interior pith. This can be scraped out and eaten



and has a pleasant, sweet flavour with a similarity in flavour to cucumber and melon. It can also be used to thicken sauces and you may feel free to 'take the pith' as there is no shortage of this plant!

Most Tasty: Japanese Knotweed

It may well devalue your property, or prevent you re-mortgaging if it infests your garden, but young shoots (under 10 inches long) of this striking plant are extremely delicious. It is also, interestingly, used in Lyme disease treatment, and recent research claims that it is beneficial for the health of our lungs. When eating, treat it as you would rhubarb.

Notes of caution: Knotweed is extremely invasive and legislation covers its control. Don't pick more than you need, and never put any parts on your compost heap or into the bin as they'll regrow! Also, it is often sprayed with herbicide, so be sure that the patch you pick from is untreated.



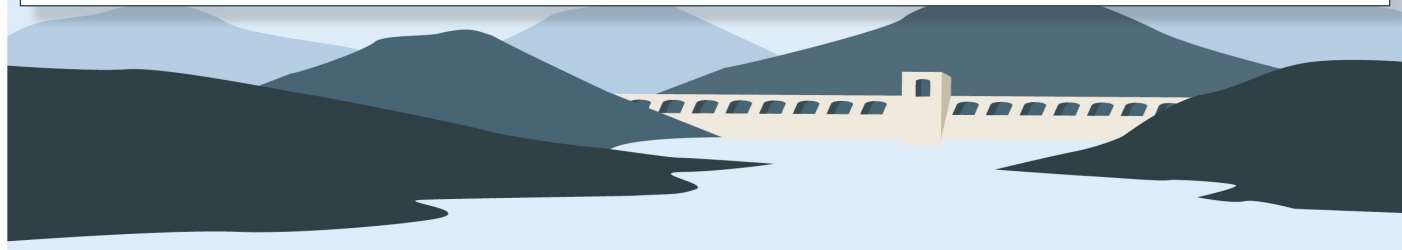
Pictured: Egg and cress sandwich; wild garlic, nettle and ground elder soup; 'wilted' willowherb with lemon and butter; Japanese knotweed crumble

Emma Gibson

For more about foraged goodies visit Emma's Instagram: [eat_weeds_emma](https://www.instagram.com/eat_weeds_emma)

The Galloway Glens team would like to send its best wishes to all the residents of the Glenkens at this difficult time. Thanks as ever to our amazing project volunteers and staff who are working so hard to keep their projects going as well as possible.

We're working to support you, and we will get through this!



GALLOWAY GLENS

Landscape Partnership

Bringing the CatStrand Home

We may feel we're missing out on the buzz of what's on at CatStrand as the building sits empty and posters for events that should have been are covered up with cancellation signs...

But new things are stirring beneath the surface as we look at ways to keep you entertained and connected from home.

CatStrand's 'Arts Cast' has launched, with our April edition available now, and May edition coming soon. These are podcasts which CatStrand volunteer and part-time radio producer

Anthony Bird has been helping us put together from his home studio in



Kirkcudbright. Anthony has been producing hospital radio and online radio shows for many years. Working with Aidan at CatStrand he has been assembling tracks, interviews, excerpts and reviews sourced from our line-up of artists and their agents to share a flavour of what's been missed this month whilst our doors have been closed.

Last month's Arts Cast had over 60 listeners and members of our audience seem to be appreciating this downloadable slice of CatStrand's unique programme. In our April Arts Cast you can hear jazz tracks from Mezcla and pieces from Roddy Woomble's new album, as well as a behind-the-scenes look at the film *In Our Hands* with film-maker Jo Barker and a discussion piece on the film from Evi Landay of the Stewartry Climate Group, who would have been helping us arrange our post-film discussions.

One of our youth volunteers, Arran, has produced film and game reviews, features in the April Arts Cast. The review podcasts are also available separately on our mixcloud site and CatStrand Youth Arts website (www.catstrandyouth.co.uk) where you can read blogs from our new film programming intern Tom about his trip to the Glasgow Film Festival and his

top isolation movies (see page 4).

Speaking of films, we're delighted to be adding an event to our calendar instead of cancelling one as we're able to host the online screening of the Exhibition on Screen film *Matisse* on Tuesday 26 May. Visit ticketsource.com or www.catstrand.com to book your tickets for these online events, where you'll be sent a link and password on purchase of your ticket which will give you access to the film on the event date at 7pm. You'll also be able to join us at CatStrand's virtual cafe/bar for a chat after the film at join.me/catstrand where friendly barman Ian Biggar will be there to greet you with a smile and maybe offer us a recipe for an artist-inspired drink to finish off the evening. Arts manager Aidan will also be in the virtual cafe/bar from 6.45pm to welcome you to the screening and offer a short, but hopefully welcome, introduction to the film. Exhibition on Screen are including notes on the film that will also be sent out to audience members on purchase of their ticket so you can delve deeper into the world of the artist they are exploring.

As we work through new ways to bring you a little bit of CatStrand at home we hope you are keeping safe and look forward to welcoming you to some of our online events soon.

10 CREATIVE CHALLENGES

1. Draw a SELF PORTRAIT without taking your pen off the page

3. Write A LETTER to someone you've never written to before

2. CREATE A MINI MODEL OF YOUR IDEAL WORLD USING (CLEAN) RUBBISH

4. Rearrange your bookshelf so the spines are in RAINBOW COLOUR ORDER

5. Rewrite the lyrics to a popular song so it celebrates your favourite VEGETABLE

7. DRAW A CARTOON STRIP SHOWING YOUR FIRST DAY OUT OF QUARANTINE

6. Put on an art exhibition in your home

8. DRESS UP for an imaginary occasion

9. Learn how to say 'I love you' in a new language every day

10. DESIGN A RECIPE FOR A NEW CAKE INSPIRED BY YOUR FAVOURITE CHARACTER AND BAKE IT

flash fiction

Write a short story or poem of 500 words or less based on this photo. You can write from any perspective and tense, be funny, serious, use description, dialogue etc. It's up to you! Send your story to katy@catstrand.com for a chance to get it published on our website.

CATSTRAND YOUTH

Hello all

We hope you're well and staying entertained and creative at the moment. If you'd like some inspiration, have a go at our 10 Creative Challenges. There's also a flash fiction prompt for all you writers.

Our Sketch group, Random Writers, Jumpcut Filmmakers, Choreoskills Lab and Youth Volunteers have moved online. If any young person (12+) would like to be involved in these and respond to briefs, just get in touch.

We are also creating two magazines for young people and welcome all writing and art submissions. For U12s the theme is *The Future* and for 12+ it's a creative response to the current situation. You can email work to katy@catstrand.com

You can also find more resources and updates on our website and social media pages, including how to carry on with your Arts Award at home (ages 5-12) and some links to cool online stuff including free theatre to watch at home:

<https://www.catstrandyouth.co.uk/copy-of-what-s-on>

@catstrandyouth



Hello from LING

Our regular Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING) activities have stopped for now, and the village hall is looking rather forlorn with its doors closed.

However, spring has sprung and the flowers on the window sills and the tubs are giving a lovely display.

Keep an eye if you can on the LING Facebook page with lovely flower and landscape photos and also for fun, have a look at the Virtual Lunches... Do feel

free to contribute your own photos and comments.

We've been told not to forget to exercise. With none of our usual groups such as table tennis, carpet bowls, Zumba or circuit training this can be difficult, but at least we have outside spaces to keep going. Sam Rushton has an article on p5 on keeping fit at home. Also, the great work done by the Golf Course Working Party of Exploring New Galloway, a Galloway Glens Project, has greatly improved the paths, providing access to the woodland around the golf course without going on the road and there is enough space to social distance. No doubt you'll all be fit as fiddles when we get back!

If the art group and others can keep painting, drawing and photographing, we can arrange a COVID -19 exhibition.

The PEEPs group of parents with young babies under one had just started meeting when things had to close up. With six participating families in New Galloway, we are looking into ways they can keep linked; is there anyone else from outside New Galloway who would like to be part of the group?

We would like to say a big "Thank You" to the Community Shop and the Community Council and volunteers who have arranged so quickly such an efficient and helpful order and delivery service, as well as to the other businesses who deliver.

*With best wishes and stay safe,
Ros and LING Trustees*

Accessing Glenkens Churches

Churches have suspended their services, but around the Glenkens they are working hard to offer alternative options.

David Bartholomew (minister of the Church of Scotland congregations of Balmaclellan & Kells, Dalry and Carsphairn), Pam Swift (rector of St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church in New Galloway) and Sally Russell (minister of Corsock, Kirkpatrick Durham, Crossmichael and Parton) have all put together resources to nourish the spiritual life of people in the Glenkens.

David and his wife Heidi are preparing weekly reflections that can be accessed

on YouTube under 'Balmaclellan, Kells and Dalry linked with Carsphairn'.

David can also email these directly - DBartholomew@churchofscotland.org.uk or paper copies can be provided - just call 01644 430 380 if you would like to receive these resources, or simply if you would like to have a chat.

Pam is sending out a weekly email with scripture readings - if anyone would like to join the mailing list please email her at pam.swift@live.co.uk. She is also happy to talk on the phone about anything that might be concerning people, or just for a chat, on 01644 420 467.

Sally is also sending out a weekly email to her congregations with prayers, readings and reflections - SRussell@churchofscotland.org.uk, or call 01556 503 645.



Easter Sunday at Parton

LOCKDOWN GARDEN SPOT

As I write this, I look around my garden and see evidence of nature taking over.

Signs of mice and wood pigeons in the garden and even a rabbit hole appeared in the front garden! Nature is getting bolder and the flowers don't know about the lockdown.

If you have children at home (or you feel like being one yourself) then get a shallow plastic dish, fold about six layers of kitchen roll to cover the bottom and wet it well (don't cover

with water). Sow mustard or cress seeds on the surface, keep it damp and on a windowsill; within seven



Freshly planted mustard and cress seeds

days you will be eating home grown food. You could also try peas the same way; they take a little longer - cut the shoots when a couple of cm high and add to salad.

Finally, as we can't get out so much, take a chair into the garden for a while with a good book and a cuppa and enjoy the seasons and the wildlife. You might find your neighbour is doing the same and you can chat over the fence. Don't think of it as sunbathing, just keeping your vitamin D levels up.

The Intrepid Gardener

Easy-peasy Homemade Newspaper Seedling Pots



Season's Chorus in the Glenkens

I first moved to Dalry from Ochiltree (Ayrshire) in December 1991, following my appointment as RSPB Conservation Officer for D&G almost a year earlier.

In 28 years with 'the Society', the increasing duration of my time in Galloway was occasionally mentioned by some colleagues. Understandably perhaps, such questions were sometimes raised by superiors with more ambitious career objectives, but also by some more like-minded friends (peers) I'd made in different parts of the country. However, a few days spent in this area, with its space, scenery and variety of birdlife, soon answered such queries any might have, as it quickly became clear to them how privileged they themselves were to be here!

I'm sure many of us will have similar stories, but I have no doubt that all of us will feel privileged, this year in particular, to be living in the Glenkens, and with spring coming on, too.

Following a mild winter, as the daylight lengthened, birdsong began early with skittery felties (mistle thrushes) first to join the tiny group of deep winter songsters - mainly robins and wrens. I always think skittery's songs are like truncated, unmusical blackbirds, and their main attraction

for me is in the reminder that better things are yet to come. Blue dykies (dunnocks) followed soon after with their long, level twittering warbles, so cheery and perhaps reminiscent of the much smaller yet louder and more varied wrens. Of course, this will all be Greek to those who know nothing of birdsong beyond the sheer joy in listening to them, but this needn't always be the case.

The lockdown presents many of us with more 'time to stand and stare',



Returning swallows traditionally herald the start of summer...

and to listen, while the gardens and village environs of the Glenkens host impressive birdsong choirs, especially in the dawn chorus and in the gloaming. Space doesn't allow a description of them all here, but there are a few standouts to listen out for. Perhaps the most musical of these are the thrushes - the loud, fluted song of the blackbird always seems louder and more melancholy after rain; and its cousin the magnificent mavis (song thrush), my own personal favourite, with its repeated phrases, usually in threes or fours. Have a go at

repeating some of these by whistling and, depending on your skill, you may catch his interest. With practice, and a certain degree of madness and/or magic, it is possible to make up your own similar phrases and take delight as the mavis builds them into his own repertoire, much in the way some have recently done with the calls of red kites, for example.

These birds usually sing from above head height, which makes it easier to pick them out and confirm their identity if unsure. Other birds more often sing from lower down, like the aforementioned blue dykies. So too does a bird which is disappearing at an alarming rate down south, but which is astonishingly abundant with us, the weetie or willow warbler. A small greyish brown-green warbler with a very distinctive descending cadence of weet, weet, weet, weet, weetweetweettttt, which always reminds me of a small feather falling to the ground, first one way, then the other, then back again etc, the notes getting softer and lower as the feather falls. They are wonderful and can sing all day long for a few weeks in spring.

Anyway, with Burns I must say 'But here my Muse her wing maun cour'. Suffice to say there is a wonderful world of birdsong out there for us all, and open doors and windows into this fascinating and health-giving world for those seeking delight, which I think is just about all of us. Go on, give it a go. I promise you won't be disappointed and you just might find a certain kind of magic that lasts forever.

Chris Rollie, Dalry



Grow a Sunflower Competition

Dalry is calling all Glenkens gardeners and non-gardeners, young and old...

Who can grow the tallest sunflower? Or even the smallest?

We are all spending more time at home and some of us are now turning

to our gardens, terraces, window boxes and plant pots to help lift our spirits.

So to lift all our spirits, why not plant a sunflower seed and watch it grow. Great fun for kids (and educational too - a bit of home horticulture!) and great fun for grown-ups. If you are struggling to get seed then let us know and we can send you some out - email lesleyblissett52@gmail.com with your name and address.

Think of it as growing sunflowers to shine a light on our saviours in the NHS and the shop workers, carers,

volunteers and all the ancillary staff who are helping us stay healthy and safe.

So let's get growing and have some fun!

Email in photos of your flowers once they're in full bloom (by 5 September, including height and diameter of flower head) and photos will feature in the October/November issue of the Gazette.

Lesley Blissett
lesleyblissett52@gmail.com

Supported by an award to Dalry Community Council from Blackcraig Wind Farm Community Fund with funding from Blackcraig Wind Farm (Scotland) Limited, administered by Foundation Scotland working in partnership with The Glenkens & District Trust. The Community Response, Resilience and Recovery Fund administered by Foundation Scotland also covered the additional costs of the last edition of the Gazette which made mailing it out door-to-door possible, for which we are very grateful.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Submit events, activities, news stories, cartoons, reviews, tips & techniques, fiction, photos, ads or ideas...

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