

Ben Ledi View

Dec 2020/Jan 2021

Issue 315

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The *Ben Ledi View* is a community newspaper produced and distributed bi-monthly by volunteers free of charge to approx. 2,000 households and businesses in the Callander area. Letters and articles published in the newspaper do not necessarily reflect the views, beliefs or opinions of the Editorial Committee, who also reserve the right to shorten, edit or not publish any particular letter or article. Contributions will only be published if accompanied by a contact name and address; these will be withheld at the author's request. Articles and advertisements are accepted and printed in good faith.

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Cover Photo by Jamie Drummond



Hello Readers

Have you noticed that Callander's been demoted? Here was I thinking that I lived in a town, albeit a small one, and one that proudly punches above its weight. But no! I was walking up the path that leads from Tulipan Crescent to the Craggs and I noticed a new sign. One part of this sign states that the way that I had come leads back to the "Village." I think the sign might have put up by the Forestry Commission, but the National Park and Wikipedia haven't caught on yet, they still maintain that Callander is a small but bustling town. Let's see if we can regain our proper status!

In this edition I want to particularly thank the businesses and traders of Callander who have continued to advertise with us during the last nine months of doubt and uncertainty. Without the income we receive from you we couldn't produce this magazine and I know that you've all suffered financial losses due to the pandemic. The various small shopkeepers in the town have had a tremendously difficult time. They are one of the features that give the town its distinct character. I sincerely hope they see out this pandemic and begin to thrive again next year.

I would also like to commend the staff of the Callander Medical Practice, and others that volunteered to help, for the magnificent job of organising and running the several flu vaccination days in October. Both the days at the

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Kirk and the Station Car Park ran like clockwork – well done!

2020 has been a particularly difficult year for all of us and that includes the many volunteers that help produce and distribute the Ben Ledi View. Our editorial team of John, Mary and Elaine have done a great job in filling the magazine with interesting content despite the amount of activities and events being cancelled. Our advertising team, led by Wendy has been able to coax, persuade, bully, enough local traders to continue to advertise with us despite the severe financial hardship many of them are under. Then there is our distribution manager, Alan. He has ensured that the magazine has been delivered on time to the whole town (or village) despite the various lockdown restrictions and the fact that many of his distributors have not been able to deliver due to them having to socially isolate. Behind the five people I've just mentioned are a board of trustees and dozens of volunteers who have also worked very hard to produce this magazine for you, thank-you to you all.

Finally, I'd like to wish all of our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with a fervent hope that we get back to some sort of normality in 2021.

Convenor

Subscriptions

If you would like to join the BLV mailing list or send a copy to friends or family, please send your details to us Email: benlediviewsubscription@gmail.com Annual cost UK £15: Outside UK £40

Please make cheques to Ben Ledi View Community Newspaper SCIO.

Or you can ask to join our email list and we will send you out a copy by email each month free of charge.

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Citizen of the Year 2020: call for nominations

The Callander Community Council seeks nominations for its annual Citizen of the Year award. This has been a year when so many have made important contributions to the community. Please consider whether you would wish to nominate someone for this award based on their community contribution for this calendar year 2020. We expect to announce the successful nomination at our regular meeting on January 11th. Send us a brief nomination either by hand at Deli Ecosse or via email to callandercc556@gmail.com

Please provide:

- the name of the person you are nominating
- a brief statement of why you are nominating them: what they have done for the community in 2020
- your contact details

Deadline: 8th January 2021

Alex Mitchell

Secretary, Callander Community Council

CALLANDER VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE (VIC)

There are two exciting VIC developments. Firstly, in advance of the planning of a potential reopening in Spring 2021, with a professional part-time manager and, hopefully, an expanding group of volunteer staff, a Virtual VIC website has been set up, containing focussed and clearly presented information for visitors: www.visitcallander.uk Secondly, with the former RBS building at 55 Main Street, opposite the current VIC premises, on the market, the VIC Board (Callander Community Centre Ltd) viewed this as an ideal location for visitor information.

The Callander Community Development Trust (CCDT) directors agreed and CCDT put in an offer for the building, which was accepted at the beginning of October, subject to survey, agreement of missives and legal contracts. 55 Main Street will host the VIC on the ground floor and CCDT, with ideas from the wider community, will decide what to do with the upper floors.

Frank Park, CCDT Chair says: "55 Main Street is a major statement by Callander Community Development Trust for the future of Callander. This investment secures a home for our Visitor Information Centre, staffed by our amazing team of volunteers, who assist our visitors with a wealth of local knowledge and a welcoming smile. The upstairs offers an opportunity for development as residential, holiday let, education, community or business space and we will be consulting with our community and local businesses to decide the best option." If there are no problems, practical work will begin to transfer the VIC to the new building, with the aim of opening there for the tourist season in Spring 2021.

In spite of this potential purchase, there will be no change in the number or value of the Hydro Fund grants, which are administered by CCDT.

Susan Holden

Rev Richard Grosse Retirement Service

A retirement Eucharist for the Reverend Canon Richard Grosse was held at St Andrew's Episcopal Church in Callander on Sunday 25th October. In attendance was the Right Reverend Ian Paton, Diocesan Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane.

"We were unable to hold a service any sooner because of the pandemic restrictions" explained Peter Forrester, St Andrew's Vestry chairman. "We were delighted that we could finally give Richard a formal farewell service and greatly honoured that the Bishop wanted to attend. Richard served us for 16 years and will be very difficult to replace. A measure of the esteem that we had for him was evidenced by the magnificent turnout at the service. Even though attendance numbers are currently capped, our congregation turned out in force and filled every available seat. We hope that Richard's many other Callander friends will understand why they could not be invited. I know that he and his wife Melanie were very touched by the numbers of people who wanted to wish him well in his retirement."



Coffee, Cake, Chatter



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The preparation of a Will is often a simple and inexpensive process but failure to have a Will in place can pose major difficulties for those left behind. We can ensure your Will clearly expresses your wishes and how your estate should be distributed, ensuring that those individuals that you cherish will benefit.

Powers of Attorney

For many people, Powers of Attorney are seen as only being necessary for older people who have diminished mental ability through illness or simply becoming elderly. Very few people see the need for Powers of Attorney whilst they are young but unfortunately accidents can happen and being prepared for the unexpected can save a family unnecessary upset. We would be happy to assist in the preparation of the required documents and guide you through the process.

Estate Agency

McLean & Stewart are long established Estate Agents in Dunblane and formerly of Callander. We have years of experience in the valuation and marketing of residential and commercial property. We offer a free valuation of your property and will market your property at a competitive rate. We have recently launched our new Property Centre in Dunblane and our Jackie Park would be delighted to welcome you to the new office and discuss the purchase or sale of a property.

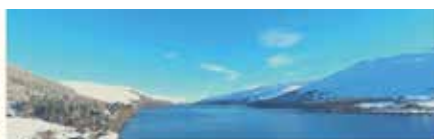
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Callander Outreach Service

Wednesday 10am – 4pm

Callander Library

Drop-in, no appointment necessary

(home visits also available)

Tel: 07931 334828)

Keep Warm This Winter - Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau, Callander Outreach Service

As winter approaches, our homes get colder. We also spend more time indoors, which means more energy usage and therefore higher energy bills. This can be a struggle for many and winter 2020/21 is set to be more difficult with the current economic uncertainties caused by Covid-19. The consequences of fuel poverty are misery, discomfort, ill-health, and debt. At Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau, we now have an Energy Team who can offer advice and assistance to support all Callander residents to keep warm this winter. Support includes:

- vouchers to top up pre-payment meters
- assistance and advocacy in dealing with energy debt
- support to access Priority Service Registers
- advice on energy efficiency measures
- support to access and apply for energy grants
- advice regarding switching energy suppliers to get the best deal
- and in some instances, we can also provide immediate cash-assistance

Please contact Maggie Magor, the Callander Outreach Worker, to access this support. Whilst the Outreach Service has yet to resume on Wednesdays at the library, Maggie Magor continues to provide support, advice and assistance on issues around benefits, employment, housing, debt and more, via phone or email.

Please contact Maggie Magor on [07931 334828](tel:07931334828) or email: Maggie.Magor@stirlingcab.casonline.org.uk.

Additionally, you can call the Stirling service on [01786 470239](tel:01786470239) and see below for more information on the Stirling CAB

Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau Energy Best Deal – 2020 campaign launches

Energy Best Deal project coordinator and session worker Kayleigh Sands is eager to help those in need in this time of uncertainty to save any extra money when it comes to energy bills. The aim is to educate that there are ways to cut the cost of gas and electricity bills. The Energy Best Deal worker can run a quick supplier analysis to make sure you are getting the best energy deal for you and discuss simple ways to keep your home energy efficient to save money. If bills are a struggle, we will look to discuss possible grants and schemes available to help as well as ways to help with fuel debt. There are things in place to help people with energy costs and extra needs and we want to help educate members of the community about the help available. Kayleigh will be available to give qualified, trusted advice on matters relating to:

- Whether you are on the best energy tariff for your circumstances
- Energy savings tips to help save money at home
- Eligibility for grants and schemes to help with energy issues and other problem debts

Kayleigh says "Stirling CAB recognises that COVID-19 has had such an impact on people facing financial problems and with people spending more time in their homes, this resulting in higher energy bills and it becoming a struggle to pay these. We want to make people aware that there is help available."

For further information, or if you would like to discuss ways to save money on your energy bills or for help to switch to a cheaper deal please call Kayleigh Sands on [07498925151](tel:07498925151) or email Kayleigh.Sands@StirlingCAB.casonline.org.uk (9.30 – 5 Monday to Friday).

Bochastle Car Park



As part of Callander's Landscape, work began in early October to upgrade Bochastle Car Park. The work will see the expansion and refurbishment of this popular car park, increasing the number of parking bays from 14 to 29. The car park is closed to the public during the expected eight-week construction period, with a slight detour in place for



pedestrians between National Cycle Net-

work Route 7 and the Great Trossachs Path. The access road to the car park from the A821 is also being resurfaced as part of the work. The upgraded car park will increase capacity for residents and visitors to enjoy the area's fascinating cultural heritage and natural environment. The car park is expected to re-open at the beginning of December, provided the work progresses as planned. Please check Callander's Landscape Facebook, [@CallandersLandscape](https://www.facebook.com/CallandersLandscape), or Twitter, [@CallandersLand](https://twitter.com/CallandersLand) for the most up-to-date information. The car park upgrade is being managed by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, with thanks to our funders Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

6 Community

Our Family John Muir Award

Over the last few weeks we've been undertaking a series of challenges and activities as a family in order to complete the Discovery level of the John Muir Award which is being delivered by Callander's Landscape. The John Muir Award aims to encourage people of all ages to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places and is named after an influential Scottish-American who is recognised as the 'Father of the National Parks'. With an almost 3 year old and a 19 month old we've been using our local section of cycle track and surrounding woodlands to complete activities over 24 hours which make up the four elements of the award: Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share.

We started our award by completing the scavenger hunt set up by Callander's Landscape in October around the Lower Craggs and the Meadows. We looked for different trees, animal footprints, counted birds on the river and learned about bats, geology and wildlife.

Since then we've learned all about John Muir and his life in Scotland and America and have spent a lot of time out and about discovering and exploring our local area. We looked for signs of autumn, finding berries, fallen leaves, toadstools, seeds and nuts, and due to the weather have been able to squelch in a lot of mud and splash in a lot of puddles! We've explored using our senses, finding things that were rough and smooth, soft and hard, squashy and solid and tried to sit very quietly listening to everything that we could hear. We then made some noises of our own, using sticks as beaters, our feet to crunch the leaves and tried really hard to blow over blades of grass to make squeaky sounds.

As we always seem to return home with things in our pockets, we decided to plant some of the conkers and acorns that we've accumulated. We're hoping that they'll grow into small saplings that we can find new homes for and then big tall trees. Some people were a bit disappointed that they hadn't grown already when we checked on them the following day!

We are lucky enough to spot red squirrels on a lot of our walks but earlier this week we spotted two greys chasing each other around a tree. When we got home we recorded our sightings on the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels website in an effort to help monitor their numbers and conserve the native reds.

We are about halfway through and still have lots of things we'd like to do to complete our award. On our list is making bird feeders using some pine cones, doing a litter pick, trying some bare-foot walking and making a piece of natural art. We've been sharing all our activities so far with all our family and friends on social media and hope that they are enjoying our adventures. We'd definitely encourage other families to take part in the John Muir Award, although be prepared for walks to take four times as long as they used to whilst you stop and look at everything on the way. It's a great way to get motivated to be outside during the colder weather and also something to achieve together whilst lots of toddler and children's classes and activities are not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions.

If you are interested in taking part in a Family John Muir Award over winter then contact Julie, Volunteering and Activities Officer, on [07709 404 431](tel:07709404431) or email julie.wilson@lochlomond-trossachs.org



Nik Cox

From Stirling Council - Laptops & Kickstart Scheme

All Stirling Council secondary school pupils have been issued with a Chromebook as the local authority continues its rollout of digital technology. By 6th Nov pupils in P7 will also be in possession of a device, whilst P5 and P6 pupils will receive a Chromebook during the current term. Every secondary school teacher has also been provided with a laptop as part of the Council's digital drive. The Council's investment in digital technology across its education settings is part of a long-term strategy to equip Stirling's young people with the skills to thrive in an increasingly digital workplace and society. It has accelerated since the national lockdown, supplemented with funding from the Scottish Government's Digital Inclusion Grant, due to the focus on increasing levels of digital inclusion to support learning.

Businesses throughout the Stirling area are being encouraged to join a new initiative to create job opportunities for unemployed young people during these difficult times. The Kickstart Scheme aims to help 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit into work by giving them six-month job placements. It boosts businesses by providing access to the talents and skills of our local young people. Funded by the UK Government, it will operate in the Stirling area through the Council's Learning and Employability Team and is part of a wider regional collaboration with Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils. First placements are likely to be available from late November, and the funding will cover:

- 100% of the relevant national minimum wage for 25 hours a week
- The associated employer National Insurance contributions
- Employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.

The Council would encourage businesses involved in the initiative to pay the Scottish Living Wage and assistance will be made available to employers who are unable to do so. If you are a local business and are interested in supporting a young person, please get in touch now by emailing: employerengagement@stirling.gov.uk



Appeal For Information

Sometime between 16th October and 23rd October a break-in occurred at Trossachs Woollen Mill, Kilmahog and a quantity of items were stolen from within. If anyone saw anything suspicious in that area or has any information, please contact Police on [101](tel:101) quoting ref no PS-20201023-2236.

Winter Road Safety

Get ready for winter

Winter is coming, which means changes in road conditions, daylight hours and unpredictable weather. Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers all have a responsibility to keep Scotland's roads safe this winter.

Here you can find advice on how to stay safe this winter whether you are travelling on foot, by cycle or car.

Advice for pedestrians

- Dress appropriately for the weather. Consider wearing reflective or bright-coloured clothing so other road users are able to see you when it's dark or visibility is poor.
- If walking home, particularly late at night, make sure someone knows when you are expected to arrive at your destination.
- Take extra care when crossing the road. Vehicles can take up to ten times longer to stop on slippery road surfaces. If possible, stick to pedestrian crossings. If there are no crossings nearby, find a place with a clear view and wait for long gaps in the traffic.
- Be careful when stepping out between parked vehicles and never cross behind a bus. If a clear place can't be found and you cross between parked vehicles, make sure there are no drivers in them in case they suddenly pull out or reverse.
- If there is no pavement, walk in single file and keep to the right-hand side of the road so you can see oncoming traffic.

Advice for cyclists

- Ensure that you and your bike are visible to other road users by using a good set of front and rear lights (white at the front, red at the back). Wear clothes that help you be seen on your bike, such as bright and light reflective items.
- Obey road signs and markings, particularly red lights. Do not cycle on the pavements, which may be slippery and can also endanger pedestrians.
- Be mindful of the effects poor weather can have on other road users and be alert to possible dangers around about you. Cars can take twice as long to stop in wet weather and braking can be unpredictable in ice and snow.

Advice for drivers

- Ensure your car is winter ready - are your tyres, brakes, windscreens, wiper blades and windows free from defects and clean?
- Drive to the road conditions. Be aware road conditions can change without warning and remember stopping distances will be affected by the weather.
- Make sure your windows are clean, properly demisted, and clear of snow and ice before you drive.
- When the roads are icy, drive at a slow speed in as high a gear as possible, and accelerate and brake very gently.
- Driving can be challenging in winter conditions. Driving distracted (by using mobile phones or devices) can cause additional stress and endangers yourself, passengers, and other road users.



If anyone has any concerns they wish to raise or information regarding criminal activity in the area please contact community officers PC Lorna Deans or PC Donald King at Callander Police Office on [101](tel:101) or TrossachsTeithCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk

McLaren High School Eco-Action Group

Many readers will already know the huge amount of work being carried out by students at McLaren High School on reducing single-use plastics in the school. We, McLaren High School Eco-Action Group, have worked on this project for over three years. As the secondary school in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, we think it would be suitable to have our school be as environmentally friendly as possible.



Over the past three years our first priority was encouraging pupils to reduce the number of plastic water bottles bought in our canteen. We have presented assemblies, sharing with pupils the impact of single-use plastics on the local environment and global environment when not recycled properly. We also made posters which were displayed around the school, each faculty having different designs of posters to suit the subjects in each faculty.

At the same time we surveyed pupils from S1 to S6; this gave us a better understanding of the single-use plastic usage in the school. To date we have carried out three rounds of surveying; first in September 2018, then in November 2019 and finally May 2020 while schools were off.

For our most recent survey we wanted to get a wider view from across the McLaren community. Surveys were sent to Parents/ Carers, Students, Staff and P7s- who moved up in August.



Since 2018, there has been a 43% increase in pupils bringing a reusable water bottle to school; this can be paired with a 70% decrease in pupils buying bottled water every day. We are very encouraged by these numbers. It is not only pupils who have been involved in this positive change. 87% of staff bring their own bottles to school, with 81% now never buying bottled water in the school canteen.

Across our school community there is support to reduce plastics in the school. Just under three quarters supporting a ban on single-use plastics in the school. But before this can happen we have lots more work to do; especially on increasing recycling and water fountains.

Over the coming months we will continue our work in the school, encouraging and supporting all pupils to have their own reusable water bottle to bring to school. We also need to upgrade our water fountain provision - to ensure that all pupils can fill up their bottles. Combined, over three quarters of Parents/Carers, staff and students agree that the school needs more water fountains, as currently we only have four, for a school of 645 pupils.

We are encouraged by the work done by Stirling Council's catering team and we welcomed discussions with them early this year. Alternative packaging will be on the canteen tables soon, combined with a larger recycling strategy across primary and secondary schools.

As a group we understand that this issue is a fine balancing act - between replacing waste with waste or negatively affecting students and staff. Many staff and pupils want to reduce single-use plastics but are concerned that alternatives are not in place. For example, if one day a member of the school forgets their bottle, does this mean they can't drink? This of course cannot be the case and we must ensure that no one is negatively impacted as we move away from single-use plastics.



This project is moving in the right direction and it is thanks to the efforts of all at McLaren. The McLaren Eco-Action Group would like to thank Harris Clark (former head boy) for his leadership over the past year. We wish him luck in the future. We would also like to thank one of McLaren's English teachers, Ms Cunningham. Thank you for supporting and encouraging us and sorry for all the lunchtimes we've stolen from you.

We look forward to reporting what we get up to in future issues.

Aidan Cronin

Another Plea from the Primary School about dog mess

We hate how some people don't pick up their dog's poo. We want people to pick up their dog's poo.

The poo that gets left on the field goes inside our lovely school, do you want our lovely school to be smelly and dirty?!?!

Some people step on the dog poo and trail it through our lovely school and leave dirty footprints. You may walk through our field but please remember to pick up your dog's poo.

Our field is used by everybody in Callander and we don't think other residents want to stand in dog poo either.

Our field is for everyone so it's not nice if you ruin it.

We are responsible dog owners and pick up our dogs' poo and so should you.

If you would like to keep using the field, please keep it tidy and look after it.

Written by Tara and Artemis (P4)

Citizenship Groups

Callander Primary School have something called Citizenship Groups. They take place every month and involve all of the children in the school from P1 to P7 in mixed groups. We cover a wide range of subjects from Sports Leaders, First Aid, Road Safety, Eco and many more. We are having to do them differently this year because of Covid-19. This year we need to stay in our class group for them. Primary Five are the reading ambassadors. We are promoting reading for pleasure to everyone at our school.

Recently we wrote a recipe for Healthy Vegetable Soup on cards and illustrated them. We are giving every class in school a copy. The class teacher will photocopy them and give them to the children to read and take home. We hope that they will follow the recipe, take a photograph of their delicious soup and send it to the school.

Our next project is:

Recording ourselves reading a book and we will send it to P1,2,3,3/4 and 4 and they can listen to a story.



They are holding their recipe cards for Healthy Vegetable Soup

by P5

9th Callander Scouts Go International

In the Summer of 2019, I and three other Callander Scouts attended an International Scout Camp at Kandersteg in Switzerland with Scouts from Bridge of Allan. We arrived at the Kandersteg Campsite after a long and boring bus journey from Scotland. We unpacked the bus and headed to our campsite where we put our stuff in our tents. Then we went down to the village of Kandersteg and went to the local swimming pool for an hour which was great fun! There was a massive diving board that everyone used. The next day we went on a hike to a lovely glacial lake with water that you could see straight through. You could see the fish swimming about in it perfectly. There was a small boat you could get on and have a ride around the lake to see all the fish and fallen trees underwater. Later on in the trip we went hiking up massive mountains near the town. I chose to go on the trip where you got to visit a cheesery at the top of the mountain and buy some cheese; we saw how it was made and where it was stored before going back down again. After that we went on a hike to Lake Oeschinen and were able to hire a small rowing boat to go on the lake, it was very beautiful. Before that, though, we went to the Rodelbahn, which was basically a metal slide all the way down a mountain. You got on a little toboggan thing with wheels and got lifted to the top, you had access to a brake so you could go as fast or as slowly as you wanted; we each got three goes and I went faster each time. On the final day we all went to a massive waterpark, which was one of Europe's largest waterslides. The park was massive and had a massive rock you could jump off into the 6m deep water below. There was a lazy river which occasionally powered up and became very fast so you went zooming round it; we all got sunburn from it, unfortunately. We had two day trips, one of which was to Bern, the capital city. We spent a while there touring the area, however, some of us had already been there because another activity we did was white-water rafting. We sailed from Thun all the way to Bern, the water was a lovely turquoise colour and was very fast at some parts. On the way home we stopped at Thun again and spent some of the afternoon there. After that we crossed over the English Channel again and we went home.

Campbell Gillan

Any queries please contact Liz Kliskey
9th Callander Scout Group
01877 331167

Life in Invertrossachs Road

Well, here we are again, summer: if you can call it that, has given way to glorious autumn, and boy what a show she is giving us this year, boosting our moods with a fantastic array of colours, lifting our spirits to help us all through the long dark nights to come.

Those of you who are lucky enough to have red squirrels feeding in your garden may have noticed their numbers have declined slightly over the last couple of weeks. This is natural and part of life's cycle. They have gone off to eat Mother Nature's bounty of fruits, berries and nuts. They will eat their fill and where appropriate stash nuts etc. for the long dark winter ahead. It is a good sign; it shows that they have not become dependent on our offerings to them. Our feeding should supplement them and not be their main food source. Give them a few weeks and they will be back on your feeders as if they had never been away.

The pine martens who come every day to our tables are doing well; the little one who was born late appears to have found his feet and now wears a splendid winter coat and a big bushy tail. I am now confident that he has progressed to such an extent that he will see his way through the coming



winter and take his rightful place in the pine marten community. He is a regular visitor, coming around 9.00 am every day.

The two mature martens are still travelling as a pair, both looking resplendent in their big bushy winter coats and tails. At around 9.00 pm they come, the female climbs into the feeder box while the male contents himself with the squirrel feeder box. They devour peanuts and sunflower hearts for between 20 to 30 minutes then depart together for the adventures of the night. I think the future of the Invertrossachs Road martens is secure, provided man does not further disturb their habitat.

Two weeks ago I spotted something in the garden that I have never seen before in the countryside; badgers and a fox feeding in close proximity to each other. Growing up in the country I was used to seeing them in the same field; the fox would be

skirting the edge as is his practice and the badgers were well away from him or her, digging for worms. You could tell by their glances they were aware of each other but they never came close.

On the night my wife and I spotted them the badgers, (the boar, the sow and one of this year's youngsters) came out of our boundary hedge and started to feed. The fox then came out of one of the internal hedges, looked long and hard at the assembled crew. He then started eating peanuts. They all kept a cautious eye on each other as they continued to feed for approximately fifteen minutes. At this point the fox departed, back out the way he came, while the badgers continued with their supper. I have not seen them together since that night, albeit that both come each night looking for some free grub. Both the badgers and the fox look very well fed, fit and healthy and toned up for autumn and winter.

It just goes to show that we think we know nature or have seen most things, then along it comes and proves us completely wrong and so it should, as it helps to stop us from being complacent.

Walter Anderson

Callander Meadows Ponds Restoration

You may have noticed a lot of activity in Callander Meadows over the last few weeks in the wet area inside the loop walk and behind the playground. The site is owned by Stirling Council and is the responsibility of Stirling Council Ranger Service but, due to budgetary constraints, it has been undermanaged for a number of years. This recent work is part of a new project (Come Forth for Wildlife) funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and managed by Froglife, in consultation with Stirling Council.

The existing overgrown and silted up ponds have been dug out and a

viewing platform built over the large pond behind the playground. Scrapes and four new ponds have been created which, combined with woodland and grassland management, will generate a network of habitats for amphibian species, also being beneficial to aquatic invertebrates, birds and mammals.

The completed site also offers opportunities for volunteer involvement and public educational events. Importantly, the site will continue to be managed. Froglife staff will revisit in years 1, 3, 5 & 10 to carry out monitoring surveys and



assess management requirements.

James Stead of Froglife is managing this project and has offered to write a more detailed article, hopefully for the next BLV February/March issue.

The A84 toad patrol organised by the Callander SWT group has seen a continuing annual reduction in the number of frogs, toads and newts crossing the A84, now only a fraction of the huge migrations of the past. This habitat restoration will hopefully help to reverse that trend.

Lesley Hawkins

Lampreys and Fresh Water Pearl Mussels in the Teith

Long before the days of lockdown, the Callander SWT met in February to hear a fascinating talk on lampreys and fresh water pearl mussels from, Jo Girvan of the Forth Rivers Trust.

The river Teith in Callander is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), primarily due to its Atlantic salmon but also for three species of lamprey; river (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), brook (*Lampetra planeri*) and sea (*Petromyzon marinus*) which require the same conditions as salmon and trout. The brook lamprey is the smallest at 25cm long, the river is up to 50cm, with the chunky sea lamprey up to 120cm / 5kg. All have a life span of around 6 years and are Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Lampreys are an ancient jawless fish, around since well before the dinosaurs and among the first backboned animals to evolve. In folklore they are called "nine-eyed eels" from the seven external gill slits plus one nostril and one eye, along each side of a lamprey's head section. They have a remarkable ability to heal even after severe nerve damage so are of medical interest for potential healing of spinal cord injuries.

Lampreys have long been food for humans: they were highly appreciated by the Romans and in the Middle Ages were widely eaten by the upper classes on account of their 'meaty taste and texture'. King Henry I of England is claimed to have been so fond of lampreys that he said to have died from eating "a surfeit of lampreys"! They are still consumed in several countries; in Finland they are pickled, but in Britain are mainly used as bait for catching fish.

They are found only in temperate regions as the larvae (ammocoetes) don't tolerate high water temperatures. Their distribution is



Sea lamprey on brown trout

adversely affected by overfishing and pollution so cleaner rivers are restoring their spread, along with improving fish bypasses to aid migration to spawning grounds. While brook lampreys remain in fresh water, river and sea lampreys migrate from the sea to the upper reaches of a river from spring to the end of June, spawning in pairs and laying eggs in scrapes in gravel.

Having spent several years burrowed in silty beds, feeding on algae and bacteria, the young metamorphose to adults before migrating downstream. There are good numbers of river lampreys between Callander and the sea, seen near Deanston distillery and in Loch Lubnaig tributaries. River and sea lampreys develop a toothed, scary-looking sucking mouth used to move gravel (Latin *lampetra* may mean "stone licker"). However, its main use is to attach to fish, rasping away the skin and sucking bodily fluids, to the detriment of the fish. Sea lampreys range far and wide and have even been found hanging onto basking sharks.

Fresh Water Pearl Mussels have been a protected species since 1998 but they are not included in the Teith SAC designation. A recent survey identified a number of small juveniles, suggesting a strong population. They are very vulnerable to disturbance and, as they are filter

feeders, can only tolerate a limited amount of silt in water. They live in river beds of coarse sand, fine gravel and larger stones where they are generally sedentary but can move and reattach to stones. They take 10-15 years to reach maturity. Many in local rivers are 70 years old but they can live to 100 years old – all adding up to a very vulnerable population which will not recover quickly if damaged. They are therefore a wildlife crime priority. Before dwindling populations led to their protection, they were legally fished by families in Callander, housed in what is now Pearl Street.

They mate in June/July, not exactly amorous as the males eject sperm which is ingested by females via a syphon. The microscopic larvae (glochidia) have a high mortality with just 6 days to be inhaled by juvenile trout or salmon, they 'snap shut' on to the gills where they live in a high oxygen environment. They don't appear to harm the fish and the following spring, before the fish return to the sea, they drop off as a small mussel but must end up in the right gravel to survive.

Fresh water pearl mussel populations can be increased by assisted or captive breeding but water quality is essential, fencing out cattle and stabilising river banks, to reduce silt and nutrient runoff.

For details on the range of wildlife in and around our rivers, see <http://forthriverstrust.org/rivers-wildlife/learn/wildlife/>.

Lesley Hawkins

Tree Pests and Diseases Fact Sheets

Scottish Forestry has produced a series of user-friendly factsheets to raise awareness of some of the pests and diseases affecting or threatening Scotland's forests. They can be used in schools or with children and young people in other settings to raise awareness about tree health. The move is part of activities for the International Year of Plant Health 2020, which is a global initiative to celebrate the benefits of healthy plants, including showing how protecting our forests and woodlands can contribute to a better environment. <https://forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/tree-health/>

CALLANDER MEDICAL PRACTICE

Attending the Practice

Our main door is open, but we request that patients do not attend the practice without an appointment. Prescription requests can be placed in the box in the front foyer but should you wish to make an appointment, please telephone the practice.

GP Appointments

We continue to minimise the footfall into the practice and are offering telephone consultations in the first instance. Should the GP feel you need to be seen they will offer you a face to face consultation. Our nursing team is continuing to carry out health reviews for chronic disease. We are still limited in the services we are allowed to offer but should you wish a review of your chronic disease, please contact the surgery and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Flu Vaccines

We have successfully carried out a number of flu vaccination clinics over the last few months. As a practice we opted to carry out our own vaccination programme. All Forth Valley practices were offered the opportunity of a

centralised team carrying out their vaccines. No guarantee could be given that this would be done locally. We also wanted to ensure our patients were immunised in a timely manner.

We decided to invite our “shielders” first to the surgery, spaced out appointments when few other patients were around. Then we progressed onto our 2-5 year old patients. Again this was done in the practice and we tried to make the process less daunting for the kids.

We then decided on trialing a “Drive-Thru” vaccination clinic and after agreement from Stirling Council this was run in the Station Road Car Park. We were

very lucky with the weather. This proved very popular and we have had lots of positive feed-back. There are a few things we would tweak for next time but on the whole it seemed to have worked well. A big thank you to Stirling Council for allowing us to use the car park and providing us with the traffic management equipment and signage & also a big thank you to the Round Table and Rotary for assisting us with traffic management on the day.

We then moved on to our indoor venues. We did 3 days at the Kirk Hall, again all by appointment to ensure social distancing. This worked well and our patients seemed to like it. Thank you to Linda and the committee for allowing us to use the hall. It provided an ideal, safe venue for our patients.

We did a smaller clinic at the unit across from the surgery which belongs to Trossachs Search and Rescue. We are again very grateful to Trossachs S & R for allowing us to use their premises. We have a collection tin at the Practice to raise funds for this fantastic team. They have been providing an invaluable service to the local community during this current pandemic on top of all the wonderful work they already do.

At date of submission of this entry to the BLV we have yet to receive our supply of vaccines for the new cohort of patients aged 55-64 with no eligible underlying chronic health conditions. Once we have notification of their delivery date we will schedule in some more clinics to vaccinate these patients and also anybody eligible who did not make an appointment for the clinics we have already run. By the time of issue we would imagine that these clinics would be underway. These will be shared on our website and social media and in local shops but we ask if you could spread the word to those who maybe don't have access to these platforms.

(continued on page 15)

COOK'S CORNER by Audrey Corrieri

BLACK FOREST TRIFLE (Serves 8)

Ingredients:

100g bar dark chocolate
500g carton ready-made custard
4 chocolate muffins, cut into thick slices
4 tbsp Kirsch liqueur
410g can black cherry fruit filling
300ml double cream

Method:

Chop 75g chocolate and melt in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Pour the custard into a bowl, stir in the melted chocolate, cool then chill. Place the muffin slices in the base of a trifle dish and sprinkle with the Kirsch. Spoon two-thirds of the cherry filling onto the muffins, then top with the chocolate custard.

Whisk the cream until soft peaks form, then spoon onto custard, leaving a gap in the centre. Spoon remaining cherry filling into centre of cream. Grate the remaining 25g of chocolate and sprinkle over the cream.

Chill for 2 hours or, even better, overnight.



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111

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Merry
Christmas



We would encourage anyone who lives in the same household as a “shielder” to have the vaccine, along with anyone who is a carer, even if not officially employed as such ie if you look after elderly relatives in your home or are their regular sole support. We cannot vaccinate everybody due to supply so would appreciate it if only those who fit the strict criteria request vaccination. If you do not fit the tight criteria for the vaccine through the NHS, local pharmacies may be able to offer this service at a small charge. Anyone working for health or social care who has not received their vaccine through their Occupational Health Departments can also make an appointment also.

Mental Health Nurse appts available

My name is Michael Griffiths and I am the Mental Health Nurse at Callander Medical Practice. My full title is Primary Care Mental Health Nurse and this is a fairly new role that has been introduced in many medical practices across Forth Valley over the past 2-3 years.



My job primarily is to support GPs in caring for patients within the practice that present with mild to moderate mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and stress.

I am a nurse prescriber which means that I can prescribe a limited range of medicines used to treat common mental health problems. Furthermore, I have a good knowledge of low intensity psychological therapies which means I do brief interventions in the practice and signpost to self help resources. In addition, if someone requires longer term treatment, I can refer to other more specialist services.

I work in Callander on a Tuesday and you can book an appointment with me directly through reception in the same way that you would book an appointment with your GP.



Holidays

The practice will be closed from lunchtime on Thursday 24th December 2020. Should you require a GP urgently please call the Practice and your call will be transferred directly to the doctor on-call. We are also closed on Friday 25th and Monday 28th of December. Should you require urgent advice please dial 111 or in the event of a medical emergency dial 999.

The following week we are closed from lunchtime on Thursday 31st December 2020. Again, should you require a GP urgently please phone the practice and your call will be transferred directly to the doctor on-call. We are then closed on Friday 1st January 2021 and Monday 4th January 2021.

Prescription Requests

The local pharmacies are very busy at the moment with prescription requests and would ask that you allow a minimum of 72 hours before attending to collect your prescription. If you run out of medication, depending on the type of medication, you can obtain an emergency supply from the pharmacy until your prescription is processed.

In the run up to Christmas and New Year please ensure you allow sufficient time to process your request and for any medication you require to be ordered and delivered to the pharmacy. We issue 2 month supplies of most medication so there is plenty of time to get your requests in.



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Callander Cricket Club

In August the club were able to return to playing cricket, albeit under strict guidelines. The Senior XI got some form of a season. With no official leagues being run, our shortened season was made up of friendlies against local teams. The emphasis very much put on getting players as much game time as possible by rotating the squad each week rather than picking a Best XI. Although we didn't manage to pick up a win, match days were a lot of fun catching up with our cricket friends and allowed us to bring through a few more juniors to experience the recreational & development level of the sport.



Unfortunately, due to having no home ground of our own we were not able to get any junior outdoor training or matches. because COVID-19 regulations do not allowing ground-sharing. This highlighted the need for Callander Cricket Club to have somewhere here in Callander for all members to train and play. Positive conversations continue with the relevant organisations to get the Club a home ground and training nets which would provide not just us but also the High School and Primary School with state of the art outdoor facilities to use for their teams.

The club finally got back to being able to deliver its junior cricket programme with a 6 week block of indoor training for both U12s and 12+ age groups.

The research into the history of cricket within the town continues and hopefully soon we will have a complete history of the town's cricket.



In October, the club installed its first Women & Girls Officer, with McLaren High School pupil Eve McCulloch taking over the running of our female section 'The Valkyries'. We are looking to increase the opportunities for women & girls of all ages in our community to try the sport by offering female only training sessions. Formats such as the Weebash which is a 6 a side softball social tournament for all ages, ideal for grans, mums & daughters to play a team sport all together with games lasting around 45 minutes. In 2021 we will introduce CricHIIT, a high intensity exercise program incorporating basic cricket skills. For more details on The Valkyries email Eve McCulloch callandercricket.womenandgirls@yahoo.com For general enquiries about cricket email: callandercricket.secretary@yahoo.com

We hope for a more successful 2021 season.

Barry McGeachy

Callander Target Sports Club

Club Update:

Unfortunately, we are all still suffering from the confines of Covid-19. The restrictions mean that we are currently closed but hopefully we can reopen again shortly and our members can enjoy their shooting. We have had to cancel our yearly Kandahar Cup competition, along with our Xmas shoot which incorporates the Stephen O' Keefe Trophy shoot in memory of Stephen who has sadly passed away.



The club suffered an arson attack last Christmas day from a local man to whom we had refused access to the club. This man appeared at Stirling Sheriff Court recently when he pled guilty and had his sentence deferred to April for good behaviour. We hope he has learned his lesson.

In the meantime we still manage to carry out minor updates to our clubhouse whilst adhering to social distancing. Our message to all is - Please stay safe.

Competitions and Leagues:

Both our Perthshire Association and Cumbria & Northumbria are trying to provide leagues and competitions to those clubs and individuals that wish to take part. However, there are several of our members that either cannot or do not wish to take part this season, resulting in our entries and expectations being reduced. The club wants our members to both be and feel safe whilst taking part in our sport.

Progress:

The Long Barrelled Pistol and 50m Outdoor Benchrest disciplines, have managed to shoot round one, which has been sent off to the scorer. Finally, we await the cards to start the Perthshire leagues.

For further club details, contact our secretary Bob Farquhar 07721-744229.

John Russell

Callander Thistle Football Club

Youth Teams



Over the last year our youth section has gone from strength to strength. In February 2020 we formed our first two youth teams. In March 2020 our new teams played their first ever match before lockdown was upon us and we had 26 disappointed young players and 6 volunteer coaches who had to wait until September before they could begin training again. These teams came back as enthusiastic as ever and gave it their all in their pre-season matches and first games of the season.



Building on this pathway, we have recently expanded to cover children born between 2009 & 2014 bringing the total to over 60 youth players. Children across all year groups are having a great time playing football. It's not over yet We have plans to further expand the club offerings including the introduction of a preschool soccer school and 2015 section. If successful, then Callander Thistle will have grown from a one team club to having football available to children of all preschool and primary school ages!

Become a volunteer

The running of these teams is no mean feat and we wouldn't be able to take on this huge project without our many wonderful volunteers. Our volunteers ensure that we can continue to offer football to the children of our local and surrounding communities. If you are interested in joining our band of merry volunteers ,please contact us on the following email callanderthistleafc@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you!

Sponsorship

We have great sponsorship packages available for businesses who may be interested in sponsoring one of our new teams. Sponsorship means that we are able to provide our teams with matching kit and training equipment. If you are interested in sponsoring one of our new teams, please get in touch on the email above.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to our players, parents, guardians, volunteers and local community for your support, we hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you again in 2021!

David McLean

McLaren Leisure

Well, what a year it has been, never did we think we would have spent most of 2020 closed to the public and how we missed you all. We are so pleased that we have been able to re-open our doors in the later part of 2020 for lane and family swimming, fitness suite and most recently junior swimming lessons.



FESTIVE OPENING HOURS

Monday 21st - Wednesday 23rd	07:30-21:00
Thursday 24th	09:00-15:00
Friday 25th – Saturday 26th	Closed
Sunday 27th – Thursday 31st	09:00-15:00
Friday 1st - Saturday 2nd	Closed
Sunday 3rd – Wednesday 6th	09:00-15:00
Thursday 7th	Normal opening hours resume

View your timetable & bookable slots at
www.mclarenleisure.co.uk

It has been great to see everyone back enjoying their lessons after 7 months off. Our junior swimmers returned to show us some spooktacular swimming for Halloween week practising their funnybone floating, pumpkin bobbing and broomstick flying. They have enjoyed finding their confidence in the water again, playing games and learning with friends. Though 2020 will not bring the usual Christmas celebrations to McLaren Leisure, we are looking forward to spreading a little Christmas cheer during our themed swimming lessons and hopefully we will be reintroducing more activities and facilities soon. We look forward to welcoming back more of our community.

Over the last year we have been part of the Co-op local communities fund and thanks to you, our wonderful community, we have raised a grand total of £1890.04. These funds will allow us to purchase new sensory and softplay equipment, allowing us to expand our soft play offering. We can't wait to share this new equipment with you and hopefully welcome you back to soft play soon.

Finally the staff and the board would like to say a huge thank you to all of our customers and the wider community for their support this year. We are here for your physical and mental wellbeing and we look forward to bringing you more activities in the new year. Stay safe and have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Rachel McLean

Callander Shops 50s & 60s More meandering

It seems difficult to believe that the location of CCW was occupied until the early 60s by two old single-storey cottages. These made way for a modern petrol filling station under the National Oil Company operated by Mr Tait. He was followed as I remember by Kenny Morrison, who added car sales and a driving school to the business. Later taken over by John O'Kane who added a workshop, then converted the forecourt to a self-service restaurant.

The next unit held two shops with a V shaped entrance, first a ladies and gents hairdresser, Mr & Mrs Vezza, assisted by their niece Esther. Mr Vezza was dapper in his three-piece suit, and elegantly styled hair; he would stand on the doorstep, trying to entice trade in his heavily accented English. We did not see so much of Mrs Vezza who had an even more heavy accent. Esther, I think, must have grown up in Glasgow and as a result was much more sociable. The second shop was an electrical retailer, Batchelor & Buckling, managed by Mae Wilson. This was a big attraction for local kids in the evening. TVs were left switched on after the shop closed giving us the opportunity to practice lipreading as we had no TV at home.

The DVD or District Farmers Dairy run by Harvey Kennet, assisted by his wife Isobel and daughters Jennifer and Margaret. The shop was so named as it distributed milk from local farms to the doorstep. Harvey had expanded into ice cream making, fish and chips and a café with a juke box, a big favourite with local teenagers. After Harvey's premature death the business was sold to Harold and Peggy Forbes. With other parts of the business expanding it was decided to give up milk deliveries, so no more early mornings after late nights. Everything seemed to be going well until Harold was struck by illness, passing on Christmas Day 1971. Peggy soldiered on, helped by the family, until 1975 when the Chan family took over and opened The Hong Kong, Callander's first Chinese restaurant and takeaway.

Wilson Woollens, the shop on the corner. This small shop was on the corner of Main Street and North Church Street. This shop changed little over the years, a compliment to the quality shop fittings originally installed, as to, the quality stock and well-informed ladies who worked there.

Ronnie Forbes

Callander through the 20th Century



Considerate Parking?

The driver of the car in these pictures, taken on Friday 16th October, seems to have been really keen to visit Callander Kirk. Unfortunately it was closed.

The car was registered in Preston.

Alma Cadzow



Britain and the Holocaust

Hi readers, hope you are all doing well and staying safe! I received a very positive response from my last Holocaust article, so in this edition I have decided to write about another topic that isn't very widely spoken about. I (virtually) attended the first Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassador Study Session recently, which was on the subject of "The British Responses to Nazism and the Holocaust". Within the wide and diverse secondary school history curriculum, a range of topics are covered to do with the Second World War, such as "Nazi Germany" and "Life in the Trenches". However, "The British Responses to Nazism and the Holocaust" is a topic that isn't covered in great detail. I hope you find this article interesting and learn something new too!

The Study Session began by looking at a photograph of a group of men, all dressed in football strips and doing the "Sieg Heil" Salute. We were then asked to consider who these men were and after a short discussion, we were told that they were in fact the England Football Team photographed in Berlin in 1938 during a tour of Germany organised by the German Government. This raised a serious question - why were a group of Englishmen doing this salute? The answer was made clear in this quote by famous English footballer Stanley Matthews who said "An FA official visited the dressing room and instructed the players to give the Nazi salute - an order which caused every one of us to stop what we were doing and look up in some alarm...it was pointed out that when the British athletics team had given the eyes right salute at the Olympics Games in 1936, many Germans took it as a deliberate snub." There had in fact been a great deal of pressure on the players and in order to keep the peace, they had all done the salute, but they were possibly unsure of the full significance of what they had just done.

Many British people did not properly understand the meaning of the new Nazi flag - in Cardiff, the day after the

Munich Pact was signed in September 1938 (the Munich Pact was an agreement signed by the British and French prime ministers and Hitler in order to avert the outbreak of war, which also gave Czechoslovakia over to German conquest), the Mayor of Cardiff raised the Nazi flag above Cardiff Town Hall. He reportedly did this as a sign of joy over the peace that this appeasement was going to bring, but many people were unhappy about this decision, with reports of one man even trying to shimmy up one of the drainpipes to get rid of it!

A lot of the Jewish children who came over on the Kinder Transport were treated extremely well by their foster families, but some were not. One example came from a Jewish refugee who said that whilst he was sent to school and was taught English, his sister was made to work. Right up until his death, he was extremely angry about the unfair treatment she was given. As well as this, when Jewish refugees were put on the train to Britain, they were all given booklets telling them how to behave in Britain.

They were told not to speak German in the streets and to try and embrace British culture as much as they could. This was reiterated by giving the refugees booklets in a language that many could not understand, particularly the young children.

Although Britain made mistakes, for example in their responses to Nazism and the Holocaust, overall, the British people actually made a positive contribution in many ways. For example, the British Army were part of the Allied Forces who liberated many of the concentration camps and many British people risked their lives to help and assist Jewish people. For those interested in learning a little more about Britain and the Holocaust, I would highly recommend both the book and the film version of "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society" which, whilst telling a heart-warming story, is also very informative about the Channel Islands' involvement in the Holocaust (another interesting area within this topic).

Bethany Jones



"The Study Session began by looking at a photograph of a group of men, all dressed in football strips and doing the "Sieg Heil" Salute."

Jean Smith



Our mother has now moved from Marshall Crescent to Parklands Home, Alloa, after a spell in hospital and markedly declining health. Jean moved to Callander nearly 30 years ago and was involved especially with her community in Marshall Crescent, with the lunch club and – formerly – as a volunteer for the Ben Ledi View and a member of the Rambling Club. She also maintained strong links with Ashlea Nursing Home, where her husband John stayed before his death in 1997. Many neighbours and passers by will have admired her lovely garden over the years. Jean is being very well cared for in Parklands and celebrated her 97th birthday in the summer, but we are sad that she is having to leave her many good friends in Callander. Thanks to all for your care and friendship; let's hope that visiting restrictions are lifted soon.

Chris (chrismr566@gmail.com), Liz and Helen

Some things that are on

Wednesday 13th January 2020: Online Guest Talk: Roman Camps in Scotland by Dr Rebecca Jones. Online booking at Callander's Landscape website. <https://www.callanderslandscape.org/events/>

Tuesday 9th February 2020: Online Guest Talk: Gaelic in Historic Perthshire by Aileen Ogilvie. Online booking at Callander's Landscape website. <https://www.callanderslandscape.org/events/>

Sad News from Trossachs Search + Rescue

We were very saddened to hear of the recent death of Stuart Ballantyne from Covid-19. Stuart was Secretary of The Trossachs Search + Rescue Team and was a friend and much loved member of the Team.

At the time of publication Stuart's funeral will have taken place, However the family have asked that anyone who wishes to make a donation to the Trossachs Search + Rescue Team in Stuart's memory can do so by using the Just Giving page at www.justgiving.com/campaign/inmemoryofstuartballantyne.

The BLV sends our condolences to Stuart's family and the Search + Rescue Team.

Charity offers support to help older people in Scotland stay safe, well and warm this winter

Many older people aren't prepared for the winter months ahead, like stocking up on emergency supplies and essential food items, and getting their boiler and heating serviced.

Almost one in five (19%) over 70s in Scotland have no friends or family nearby to support them this Covid winter.

New Royal Voluntary Service advice booklet provides practical tips on staying safe, warm and well this winter and signposts help if needed.

Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) will help older people stay safe, warm and well this winter with advice and practical help for those lacking support.

To help older people and their friends, families and neighbours prepare for when temperatures drop, Royal Voluntary Service and Yakult have produced a short, practical advice booklet to staying safe, warm and well this winter. The booklet is available to download from royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/safe-warm-well, along with a short animation.

St Kessogs needs You!

Stirling Council and the nominated representatives on the St Kessog's Community Working Group seek to recruit an additional community member to support and lead in the delivery of a project to bring St Kessog's back into use as a Digital Business and Community Hub.

We are keen that all the views from the community are represented and it is critical that if this project is to be a success then a collaborative approach is adopted.

We are therefore inviting applications from the wider community to join the working group. Applicants should be independent and not affiliated to any of the constituted community organisations in Callander.

To apply, or to discuss further, please email macdonaldst@stirling.gov.uk detailing why you wish to participate on the project by Friday 11th December. The successful applicant will be selected by the existing members of the working group.

Steven MacDonald

Royal Bank Building

The Callander Community Development Trust have purchased the old Royal Bank building. The intention is to move the Visitor Centre from its existing shop into the ground floor of the bank building. A decision on the use of the upper floor has not been made.

Comment: we had been under the impression that the long-term objective was to move the visitor centre into the refurbished St Kessog's. which we thought was an ideal and iconic site for it.

How will this decision affect, if in any way, the progress of this project?(see top article in this column) I hope not at all, because the refurbishment of St Kessog's is very important to Callander.

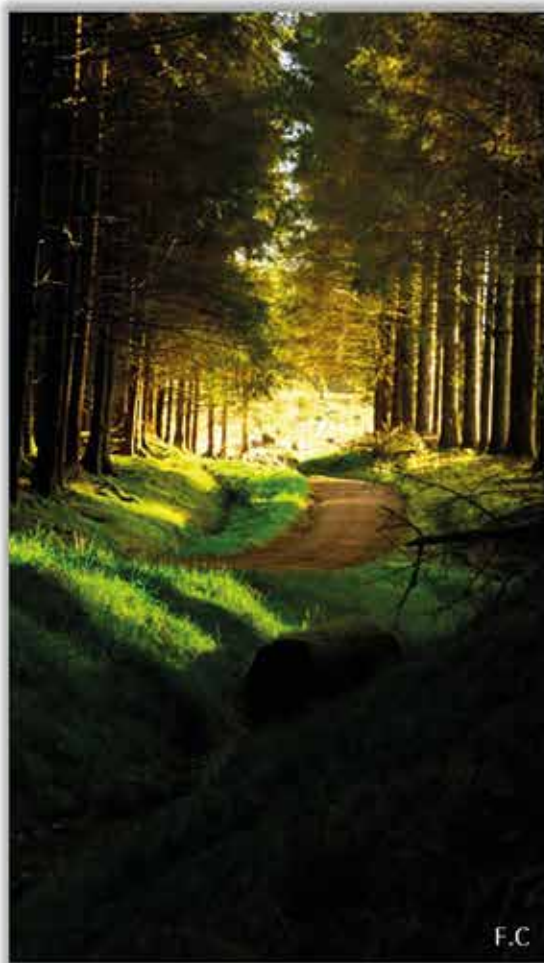
Editor

CALLANDER IN PHOTOS

Our first photographers page was featured on the front cover last edition as I'm sure some of you will have seen. We thought it looked too good not to! This page is brand new and is all about showing off Callander to anyone currently living here or just a random person wanting to know what Callander has to offer. The 'Callander in Photos Page' is focused on photography and therefore photographers but to be a photographer you just need to have a photo that you're really proud of, that means anyone could be on this page. This edition we have a handful of amazing young people all under 18 but next edition it could be anyone, why not you?

With Subject of Callander In Photos

Send in your photos to editor@benlediview.org





This is your Soapbox. It is here to allow you to express your point of view as long as it is within the current acceptable standards. This view is yours and may not be those of the editors or the Trustees. Responses to the magazine are welcomed if sent to the editor.

Social Media

In the past, before telephones and TVs and other digital conveniences, folk in small towns used to gossip round the well, or in the washhouse, or gather in the pub to discuss local issues and air grievances. It was very much face-to-face, which meant that people had to exercise a certain amount of social restraint, follow conventions of acceptable behaviour. It wasn't all ideal. Goodness knows, we all know how unpopular women (and men) got accused, often fatally, of witchcraft. But not often. There then grew up more civilised periods when witchcraft was no longer an issue and social constraints worked more effectively. Today, we have Facebook. Lately there has been a proliferation of Facebook pages dedicated to Callander issues. They have started out so useful, as their creators intended. And enjoyed by many.

But how swiftly people started to make complaints, drumming up partisan comments, countered by accusations and hints of dubious behaviour. It seems to be a free-for-all. With few constraints. People happily join the fray and take sides. Before we know it the town is divided between those on our side and those "others". Dirty linen is aired in public, people feel they have permission to add their comments, nasty, besmirching things usually kept for private conversations between friends, but now out there for all to see. I have seen several of these spats taking root on the Callander Facebook pages. Sadly, this seems to be the nature of Facebook. Structurally it gives people permission to show their ugly side, without shame. This is not conducive to a civilised community. Let's all learn a better etiquette for commenting on Facebook before it destroys our community.

Disgruntled, Callander

Not Welcome in Callander

I have lived in Scotland since 2015, moving to Callander in 2018.

I am a single parent to two teenagers, both of whom are on the autistic spectrum. Their dad passed away in 2018, aged 43, having suffered ill health as a result of three failed heart valve replacements. I had hoped we would be able to settle down here. I rent the property I live in and it is because of this that I believe the following event occurred.

On September 8th my son alerted me to the fact that there was a woman in our back garden. On confronting this person, I was advised that my neighbours had employed her services as a gardener, to lop the trees between the properties. These trees are in fact located in the garden of the property I live in. The trees were clearly cut from my garden as the cuttings were abandoned there. When I pointed out she shouldn't have been in my garden and asked what was going to happen to the cuttings, she replied it was my problem, she wasn't paid to take them away! She also acknowledged that she had not been able to contact the property owner but carried out the job regardless.

So, this is where I question the actions of others. I was brought up to be respectful, polite and to treat others as I would hope to be treated. At no point did my neighbour or the gardener knock on my door to advise me of the situation. She just walked on and off the property I live in, no thought or courtesy given. This has left a very bitter taste in my mouth. I still have the matter of the tree cuttings to deal with.

Have we all forgotten how to speak to and treat other people?

I will be moving out of Callander as soon as this pandemic allows. I sincerely hope that the next person to occupy the house I live in, receives a warmer and kinder welcome.

Name Supplied



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10.00AM - 4.00PM

10.00AM - 3.00PM

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Book Club Review

This issue's book review title is *A Half Baked Idea* by Olivia Potts (Penguin, 2020). Or to give the book its full title: *A Half Baked Idea: How grief, love and cake took me from the courtroom to Le Cordon Bleu*. The book recounts the sudden death of the author's mother at 52 years old. Potts was a 25-year old trainee criminal barrister at this point, living and working in London, when one day her world changed forever.



The author recounts how she dealt with the shock of her beloved mother's death by pushing her grief to one side (thereby not dealing with it at all). Yet working in the highly pressurised environment of criminal law, Potts increasingly began to realise she wasn't coping. Full of anxiety and frequently tearful, she was questioning her whole value system. After seeking counselling, and dealing with her grief, she eventually made the big decision to leave the courtroom altogether and follow a very different path into cake-baking. However, not one to do things by halves, Potts enrolled onto the first-class patisserie course at Le Cordon Bleu in London.

A Half Baked Idea is therefore the coming together of two worlds that rarely collide – courtrooms and cookery. Much of the mystic of the courtroom is unravelled, as Potts gives explanations of the system,

Its traditions, conventions and, within this, the work of barristers. The writing is loaded with humorous anecdotes, and Potts has a self-degrading style that belies the fact she achieved so much professionally at such a young age. Moreover, whilst Potts consistently discusses her emotional shortcomings, this book suggests otherwise, as the insight into her grief shows emotional maturity beyond that of an average 25-year old.

A Half Baked Idea was shortlisted for the Fortnum & Mason's Debut Food Book Award and, in my view, quite deservedly received such critical acclaim. Poignant, reflective and vulnerable, there's an energy in Potts' writing, which at some points could be described as almost frenetic, but maybe passionate is a better choice of word. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

The next BLV book club review will be *The Last Adventure of Napoleon Sunshine* (Abacus, 2020).

Maggie Magor

Wellies

I have a twin. We are identical but sort of opposite. Lime-green with a dinosaur at the side. We are owned by Torran. He sometimes puts us on the wrong feet and when the woman says "Torran, you have them on the wrong feet" he looks down and says "oh yes". He says that if he is asked if he wants more melon. "oh yes". Never "yes". Always "oh yes". This week we visited the old woman. The young woman looked for us for a long time. "Torran, do you know where your wellies are?" "Oh yes," and he fetched us. We were hiding inside some big black wellies. Torran likes to hide things in the woman's wellies, and sometimes that means us. Squished in and out of sight. Sometimes it's a big yellow spider that he puts in there, and sometimes it's a spoon. Anything really. He hides us in different places. He put us in the old woman's cupboard where she keeps her pots and pans.

They have gleaming sides and lids on. He put us neatly, side by side, as smart as the pots. It made a nice change from sitting beside smelly trainers. The worst time was when he splashed in some puddles and made us wet. He put us in the old woman's aga, but he chose the wrong part and we nearly melted. Luckily the old woman caught us just in time. She said, "I'm jolly glad you didn't burn yourself". She was talking to Torran. She didn't say that about us.

He often makes us wet, but that's ok. Every time he sees a puddle, in he goes. He does it. Every. Single. Time. It makes us very dirty. Then he stamps and kicks and laughs and shrieks. And then he does it again. That makes the old woman stamp and shriek, but in a nice way. It makes her laugh. We think she thinks she's two too. But she's not. She's older than that. The young woman just smiles. The man keeps looking at wild life with his binoculars. Though sometimes he lifts us up, bringing Torran too, and we dangle from his shoulders. Then we all go home and we get put into the right part of the aga. To dry.

Yesterday the young woman said "Torran, I think these wellies are

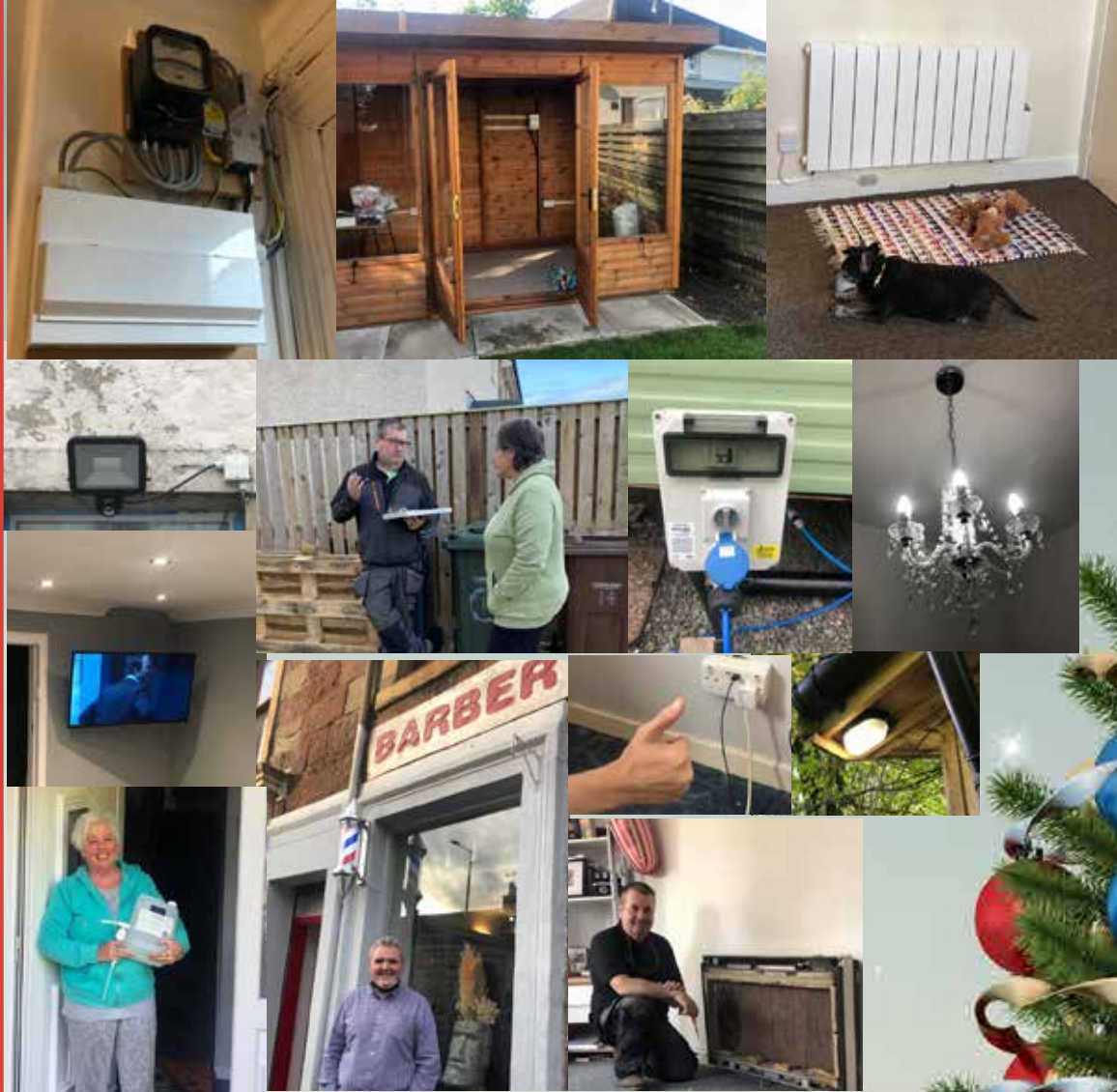


getting too small for you." Are we shrinking? I look at my twin. He seems the same size. "You need new wellies. I will put these aside for when Fingal is big enough". Then she put us in a bag and threw us into the cupboard. Its dark here.

Who is Fingal?

Elaine Martay

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Merry Christmas!



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Callander and West Perthshire U3A

Technology has been vital in keeping members in touch during lockdown. Our U3A has recently purchased a Zoom subscription, which enables interest group leaders to hold online group meetings, making the autumn and winter months the best they can be. Nine groups are currently 'meeting' virtually on Zoom. Communication via group newsletter, email or telephone is also working very successfully for other interest groups. A monthly series of speaker events covering a range of interesting topics which will appeal to our membership is underway. We are very lucky to have our online 'Chatterbox' which has kept us informed, entertained and challenged. The most recent addition was a section entitled 'Antiques & Treasures'. U3A members have shared photos and some information about items from the past that have a personal meaning. Members can access National U3A material – U3A Radio was launched recently and the first U3A radio podcast is available on YouTube.

New members are always very welcome. Contact details can be found on the C&WP U3A website.



Joy Henderson



Callander and West Perthshire Rotary Club

Callander and West Perthshire Rotary Club is still reduced to our monthly council meetings on Zoom. We still cannot carry out our usual fundraising events so we are very limited in being able to support our usual causes.

I thought that for this edition I would bring readers up to date on one of the international causes that we had been supporting before the lockdown in March.

Over the past three years Callander and West Perthshire Rotary has been supporting Mary's Meals by sponsoring a school in Liberia. At present the Beh-Sao Primary School has a roll of 246 pupils. As you may know, Mary's Meals provides nutritious food for the children, allowing them to receive an education otherwise denied them. The Charity's work is based entirely within the community, allowing local people to provide and cook the food necessary. 93% of the donation goes directly to the project.

Liberia has suffered greatly, first from Ebola and now Covid, the misery increased by civil war. However Mary's Meals continues to operate, the meals being served in the children's homes.

Recently the actor Gerald Butler visited Liberia and went to a school very much like the Beh-Sao. His experience can be seen on Youtube and is to be recommended. (Simply google Gerald Butler Liberia and watch the official Mary's Meals video).

Callander Rotary's contribution to helping the poorest in the world may be small but it is good to know that, as a result, at least some children may be getting a chance of a better life.

Keep safe and well, we will get back to normal but meanwhile we wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. If you would like to find out more about Rotary, please look at our website, www.callander.rotary1010.org or on Facebook.

Derek House

German Speaking Group in Callander

Am 18. Dezember werden wir sowohl das folgende Thema diskutieren als auch an unser gewöhnliches Wortspiel teilnehmen:

Was für Hobbys und Freizeitbeschäftigungen hast du als Kind genossen? Machen einige immer noch Spass? Welche sind inzwischen dazu gekommen? Inwiefern haben deine Hobbys dein Leben bereichert?

Falls Sie entweder im Dezember oder im Januar mitmachen möchten, schicken Sie mir bitte im Voraus eine Email, um den dazugehörigen ZOOM Link zu kriegen: (jenshearer@gmail.com). Wir freuen uns auf noch ein ,entferntes Wiedersehen'.

Das übernächste Treffen, noch einmal mit ZOOM, findet am 15. Januar 2021 statt.

Jen Shearer

Air Ambulance - Hug a Bear



Crews at Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance's (SCAA) Aberdeen and Perth bases joined in the fun to mark international 'Hug A Bear' day in November. SCAA's own branded Teddy Bears provided the perfect hug for our paramedics. In fact a SCAA teddy flies on every mission with the airborne life-savers, ready to provide comfort and distraction as a gift to any young patient.

The charity-funded air ambulance crew has given away dozens of little bears to child patients since the service launched in 2013. The bears are also sold as fundraisers through the charity's website - www.scaa.org.uk/browse.



Christmas in Callander

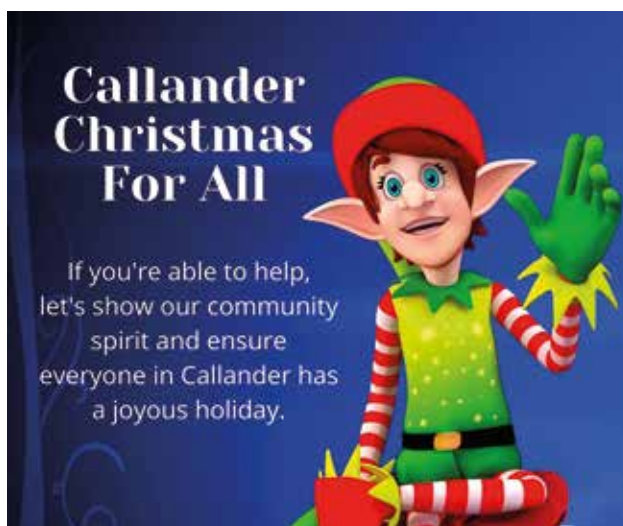
During the Christmas season in the olden days (read pre-covid) Callander folk girded their entrepreneurial loins to produce gifts for local people. Many activities took place, like creative fairs, celebrations and parties. These all contributed to the Christmas cheer and brought the people of Callander together in joyful carousing.

People have started to wonder what would happen in this Year of Covid. Would it be dank and dark and lonely? People are suffering financially, and many families can barely get a feast together, much less fill Christmas stockings. But the good people of Callander have not been fazed by this. Christmas can still happen. In the absence of the Christmas Craft Fair creative people have organised the Callander Crafters Online Christmas Craft Fair to support those crafters/makers who usually do fairs at Christmas and obviously now can't. Crafters can display their wares on Facebook and take orders on private messaging.

Parties of course are out, but the kids can see Santa at their own door by booking a visit from him. Visit includes a socially distanced meet & greet with Santa with a small gift included. Strict Covid-19 guidelines apply. Details can be found on the Callander Information page on Facebook.

Local shops are still making celebration cakes and Christmas puddings. Local meat and sausages are also available. It is enough to make one hungry!

But there are still families and others who have been badly hit by lockdown, and perhaps cannot afford these things. Again, Callander has met the challenge with the "Callander Christmas Exchange", where "Callander Christmas Elves" collect non-perishable food and toys and clothes for distribution to families in need. Details can also be found on the Callander Facebook pages.



Monitoring our animal companions' ins and outs tells us so much about their wellbeing. Part 2

Last time I started to talk about how useful it is to monitor your pets ins and outs. Figuring out what is causing your pet's illness is a bit of detective work and we rely so heavily on your observations, so here are the important things to keep an eye on and record. Accurate information can make all the difference in getting to the answer fast and getting your animal better fast. It often eliminates the need for unnecessary tests. So here is a quick check list of things to note:

Food in. Look for a change in food intake and when it happened:

1. How much they are eating, increase, decrease, sudden stop, gradual decline in appetite. Are they selecting certain food over others. Did you offer something different, did they pinch something they should not or did they eat something out in the garden or out in a walk?

2. How they are eating is important. Are they dropping food out of their mouth, eating on one side of their mouth, salivating, gagging, choking or swallowing hard.

3. The pattern of eating may have changed. Do they eat all in one sitting, is it slower than normal or faster than normal or are they coming and going, opting to snack/pick at their food?

Water in. Again, look for changes:

1. Drinking more? Try and measure it. Remember sometimes they drink outside. Sometimes cats drink out of the dog bowl or your glass!

2. Drinking less? Again, did it happen suddenly or gradually, or are they just drinking from elsewhere, or have you changed them to wet food and they are getting some of their water from there?

3. Again, when did it start, has it built up gradually or suddenly?

Vomiting:

1. When did it start and how often? (Remember cats do vomit from time to time for lots of normal reasons so it is a change we are looking for).

2. What does it look like, what is in it, colour, volume (how much each time) any blood?

3. Does any water stay down, does any food stay down?

Faecal output:

1. When did it start to change, was it gradual or suddenly?

2. How often and the volume?

3. What is the consistency, colour, mucus/jelly present, blood through it (on the outside, at the end) pick it up in a see-through plastic pack and squash it between your fingers. Anything abnormal in it?

4. Any straining? Can we make it through the night without the need to go?

Urine output:

1. Has it increased or decreased in total volume passed over the day?

2. Is this matched with an increase or



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decrease in thirst, or is there a mismatch?

3. For cats, how wet is the litter tray these days? Has a cat that urinates outside started to urinate inside? Has a litter trained cat started to urinate outwith the litter tray? For dogs, are they having accidents in the house when they were house trained before?

4. Is there an increase or decrease in frequency and amount each time?

5. When did it change, was it sudden or gradual?

6. Any straining? Is there a change in stream of urine from a male dog?

7. Any changes in colour?

Also, a seasonal point, please keep a close eye on your pet for chewing/eating things they should not during this festive period. Look back at previous articles, know what is harmful/ toxic for your pet and have your vet's contact details and out of hours arrangements to hand for over the festive season.

Hopefully, this information will help you to help us to provide even better care for your pets. Wishing you a safe, happy and healthy festive period with your animal companions from Marlaidh and all the team at Riverside Veterinary Clinic.

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Rural Stirling Housing Association aims to support local communities by providing quality homes at affordable rents for families, couples and single people in housing need.

We currently have over 600 rented houses and flats. Around 40 of these become available for rent each year. We currently have properties in the following communities:

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Balfour	Drymen	Kinlochard	Stronachlachar
Buchlyvie	Gargunnoch	Kippen	Tyndrum
Callander	Gartmore	Locheenshead	
Deanston	Killearn	Strathblane	

We may be able to build in other communities in the future – please let us know if you want to live in a village that is not listed above. Information on local housing need and demand helps us plan for the future.

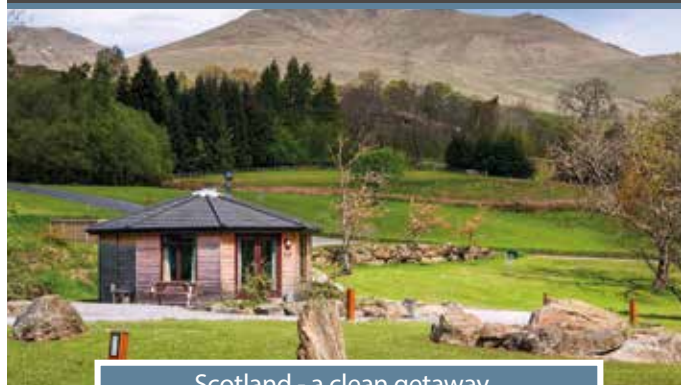
If you are interested in renting one of our properties when they become available please contact us:

Rural Stirling Housing Association
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Planning Applications submitted to the National Park since the last issue

Erection of single storey ancillary building

Craignethan 3 Tulipan Crescent Callander FK17 8AR

Ref. No: 2020/0189/HAE | Received: Sat 15 Aug 2020 | Validated: Tue 08 Sep 2020 | Status: Current

Lawfulness of proposed installation of velux windows

40 Robertson Way Callander FK17 8JF

Ref. No: 2020/0221/LAW | Received: Thu 17 Sep 2020 | Validated: Fri 18 Sep 2020 | Status: Current

Erection of shed and greenhouse

East Mains West wing Manse Lane Callander FK17 8AG

Ref. No: 2020/0243/HAE | Received: Thu 01 Oct 2020 | Validated: Fri 09 Oct 2020 | Status: Current

Extension to car park and upgrade of vehicular access

Ben A'an Car Park Loch Achray Brig O'Turk Callander

Ref. No: 2020/0261/DET | Received: Mon 12 Oct 2020 | Validated: Mon 12 Oct 2020 | Status: Current

Replacement of windows, front and rear doors and external painting

Brook Linn Cottage Leny Feus Callander FK17 8AU

Ref. No: 2020/0272/HAE | Received: Sun 25 Oct 2020 | Validated: Wed 28 Oct 2020 | Status: Current

For further information on any of these applications go to <https://eplanning.lochlomond-trossachs.org/OnlinePlanning/?agree=0>

Callander Community Council & Callander Community Development Trust

Where did they come from?

Back in the good old days (It was actually prior to 1976) the town of Callander had its own Town Council. It had many powers in that it received money from the rates, it could own property, it could raise money for projects. It also had responsibilities, as it was responsible for many of the tasks around the town - street cleaning, grass cutting etc. It was local, answered to the people of Callander and its officials were probably personally known to a majority of Callander's population

The then Scottish Government decided in 1975, as it would save a few million pounds a year, to abolish local democracy and get rid of all such local councils to be taken over by district councils, as we have at the moment. Their solution to the local democracy was to have a Community Council in each area. These community councils have, however, no powers, unlike the old town councils. They are there to establish the consensus of the population of Callander on any proposals that come up in the community, to scrutinise them, to inform the populace and to establish a majority view, to be then reported back to the district council - who have the authority to make decisions.

In a good number of communities under the new regime it was realised that this had its drawbacks and the decision was taken to form Community Development Trusts to fill the gap. Thus Callander Community Development Trust was born.

Callander Community Development Trust (CCDT) is a registered charity, to which anyone living in Callander can join, I believe it has about 70 members at the moment, and was formed by concerned local citizens along with the then Callander Community Council and many council members were involved in getting it started. It is however completely independent of the Community Council.

What is a Development Trust?

Development trusts are about active citizens coming together to address local issues creatively using self-help, trading for social purposes and ownership of buildings and land to bring about long-term social, economic and environmental benefits in their community.

Operate in both rural and urban areas, often in neighbourhoods which have experienced the worst economic decline.

Are independent, but work with the public sector, private businesses and with other community groups.

Are community 'anchor' organisations, delivering services and facilities, finding solutions to local problems and helping other organisations and initiatives succeed.

Create wealth in communities – and keep it there.

(from CCDT website)

Callander Community Development Trust have been very effective and successful over the years with the Hydro Scheme being a good example

Up until the end of 2019 I regularly attended Callander Community Council (CCC) meetings for the BLV. I had to stop going when my ankle gave out on me and due to a wait for an operation, a long recovery and then Covid-19, I have not been back since.

But even then there was an element of distrust apparent between the CCC and the CCDT. This seemed to be around the CCC believing that the CCDT were not showing they had a majority support for their projects and the CCDT resenting the CCC scrutinising their projects and having the ear of the district council on their opinions.

As we enter the season of goodwill to all men, this seasonal feeling seems to have completely disappeared in the CCC at the moment. At the last election a number of new councillors were elected who also hold posts in the CCDT and the accusations appear to be

that this group are attempting to push through CCDT programmes without proper scrutiny or consultation.

I cannot say whether this is true or not as I have not been attending the meetings, but what is obvious is that there are problems, with many accusations and personal insults being bandied around both within the CCC and on social media (two social media groups have closed and removed posts about this as they have become very heated and vitriolic). We have in the recent months had two high level resignations from the CCC. In a previous issue we printed the resignation of the then chair of the CCC in which he gave his reason as because of a group of obstructive Councillors stopping all progress, and in this issue (on the next page) we have the Secretary's resignation statement (along with her letter of resignation) stating that her reason for resigning was because of some councillors having a conflict of interests. This is followed by a statement from the new chair of the CCC in response.

What I will say, however, is that a councillor is elected by all of the people to uphold their interests. If any councillor is using their position to push through proposals that have not been scrutinised and they have not ensured that the majority of the people in Callander are in favour of it, then that is undemocratic and wrong.

Equally if any councillor is blocking good proposals just because of where they come from, this is equally undemocratic and wrong.

This furore is very important for Callander. One way or another it has to be resolved, as the present infighting is not good for the town. Please I beg you, read the next two pages to see what conclusion you come to - and if you are a councillor think hard on whether you could be guilty of taking up any of these positions.

John Nelson

Lucia Bobkova Luti's Statement to People of Callander

It has been brought to my attention that Callander residents were keen to have a sight of my resignation letter and my reasons for stepping down from my role as Secretary of the Callander Community Council (CCC) as well as a community councillor. Following a call for my resignation letter in a social media discussion, it was suggested to me that my reasons for leaving should also be made available to those who do not use social media. Before you read my resignation letter, I would like to make a couple of additional comments as follows:-

Firstly, I would like to thank all the community organisations for all their hard work over the years. All our community organisations have over the years been able to deliver fantastic work and projects. I don't seek to diminish all the good work by this discussion, but it is nonetheless an important discussion.

Secondly, I would like to make a correction in relation to the statement that playpark funding has been lost due to CCC not being able to act quickly enough. It was my understanding at the time of writing from the report submitted to CCC, which stated that "Stirling Council no longer has the resources to design and install play equipment since Covid-19" that the funds were no longer available. It has since been clarified to me by the writer of the report that the original funding sum to purchase the equipment is still available, but Stirling Council no longer has additional sums for design and installation. In any event, internal bickering should not have prevented us from timeously delivering this project, which was started just before this community council was established almost exactly 2 years ago.

Lastly and most importantly, I would like to provide a clarification of my views on conflict of interest, as the letter merely touches on them. I work as a solicitor in the public sector. I am well versed in the topic of conflict of interest. The test for conflict of interest is the objective legal test, which essentially means viewing the circumstances from the standpoint of a hypothetical reasonable person. Could a reasonable member of the public, knowing all the facts, conclude that an individual's conduct, judgement and decision-making could be improperly influenced by their other interest(s) (including interests of another organisation they are a member or a director of)? Community councillors are not prohibited from being members of other community organisations. However, in my view, this allowance is based on the premise that all the community councillors will be objective, honest and unbiased; especially if they hold positions of directors and office-bearers in other organisations, potentially finding themselves in a conflict of interest situation.

One would think that there shouldn't be any conflict between two community organisations supposedly working towards the same goal - best interests of the community. However, sometimes cooperation between local organisations may become difficult if an organisation does not appear to appreciate the same values of complete transparency and honesty. Each case of a potential or real conflict or interest is considered on its own facts and on its own merits. Of course no one likes to be told that they appear biased or influenced by their other activities, but it has become obvious to a number of community councillors that the judgement, views, decision-making and sincerity of some community councillors with dual office bearers positions are indeed being influenced by activities and interests of the other organisation.

4 out of 5 new office bearers of the CCC are also directors of the Callander Community Development Trust (CCDT). The CCDT's Code of Conduct for directors requires them to always act in the best interests of CCDT. So I find myself asking whether they would disclose matters to CCC which may be of interest/importance to the community and CCC, but reflect badly on CCDT and/or weaken their position in any discussions? Could they reveal information that CCC is privy to to CCDT before it is appropriate to share it, or to strengthen their position?

In the eyes of a reasonable member of the public, knowing all the facts and background, including community councillors' difficulties with transparency and provision of information when it comes to CCDT, it may be seen to be difficult for the community councillors and the new Chair to effectively scrutinise their colleagues on the CCDT if required, especially if the matter involves a project that they themselves may be involved in (Coilhallan Wood project could be used as an example). The public may consider that it could be difficult to separate the two interests properly. I have experienced their reluctance to do so.

For these reasons and my experience of working with the current community councillors, I am genuinely concerned about the magnitude of the potential for conflict of interest here.

Lucia Bobkova (Luti) Former Secretary of the Callander Community Council

Lucia Bobkova Luti's Resignation letter sent to community councillors:

Dear all,

Please accept this email as my resignation as Secretary of CCC and a community councillor with immediate effect. Susan, all our online meeting minutes, with the exception of September ones, have been sent to SC. I will email separately with passwords for the email account etc.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words. I am going to be pretty blunt, to be honest. You may well not agree with me, but these are my views and I am not the only one in the community who thinks this.

There are currently some very good community councillors on the CCC in my view, so I would like to express my respect

to those. It has been a pleasure working with you. But I also feel that there are some not so great community councillors and some very bad ones. Although I am sure the majority's intentions are well-meaning.

My priorities have shifted in the last few months and I have found myself questioning whether my involvement with the current make up of the CCC was worth all the time and effort. Unfortunately, I no longer think it is. Especially following the last few months of more of the usual "escapades", which have been getting worse, not better, ever since this community council was founded. I don't believe that things are going to change, no matter who the new Chair and office bearers are, particularly due to a number of, in my view, close-minded individuals currently on CCC, who seem to have made it their mission to criticise, argue, nitpick, dwell on unimportant details, and sabotage any good idea or work if it doesn't accord with their personal views and their way of doing things. It seems more important to them to prove themselves right than to get the best outcome for the community. They don't value complete openness and transparency (despite claiming they do). And they continue to put their own personal views and aspirations (and views and aspirations of other groups that they are affiliated to) before the views of the community and before the best outcomes for the community. As the Best Practice document for the community councillors states:- "Experience shows that if the views of individuals on the community council are allowed to take priority then the community will very quickly lose confidence in the community council and its work may subsequently be devalued." And that is exactly what I think has happened here and it has damaged the reputation of the CCC and the good work done by the community councillors. And it will continue to do so as long as people continue living in their alternative universe where they see no inappropriateness, lack of transparency and what can be seen as a conflict of interest.

I am not even going to get into the whole conflict of interest and CCDT and directorships/office bearers thing. All that comes to mind here is the saying "don't confuse your Google search with my law degree". It has been interesting to watch the community council argue about whether there was a conflict or not. I have been trained to a very high standard (both at university and on the job) in the specialist subject of conflict of interest. It is my job to spot any potential for conflict of interest if it is in front of me. If you can't see conflict here, then you are either blind, or you don't want to see it on purpose. And by burying your head in the sand you are not going to instil confidence in the concerned community showing that despite potential for conflict, you are acting appropriately and are not getting influenced by your competing interests.

I also think that the CCC has been operating extremely inefficiently. It has become a talking shop. A lot of talking and very little action and outcomes. Endless debates. Discussions about discussions and meetings about meetings. There has been so much scrutiny, overanalysing, overthinking and dwelling on every tiny little detail of every email, report, event, action and opinion, that people have lost sight of what actually matters, and that is getting the best and quickest outcomes for the community. We haven't even been able to act quickly enough to use money that was handed to us on a silver platter to renovate a playpark for children and have now as a result lost that funding after Covid.

The written updates (reports) that started off as an excellent idea to make things easier and meetings shorter have become longer and longer and quite frankly a hindrance, redirecting attention from important matters. In my profession, time is money. Lack of efficiency and outcomes is not valued. Meetings are concise and straight to the point. Identify the problem, solutions, act and move on. The community council has to become more proactive, quicker to act and more outcome and solution-focused. It has to start looking at the bigger picture.

Lastly, we have tried hard to open up the community council to the public, yet we now have community councillors who repeatedly talk about having to be careful how we word things for the public, how we frame the minutes, office-bearers having pre-meetings before the meetings and meetings about meetings discussing "how they will manage" certain uncomfortable aspects of the meetings. And I don't think Roger's paper is going to solve the situation and tensions between the groups either (sorry Roger). Especially if framed in the way it is, repeating that CCC is not here to govern, which can be and will be interpreted by many local groups as CCC not being able to scrutinise their actions, when in my view, as the only elected body answerable to the community, it should be doing just that, because there are groups in Callander that wish they could just do what they want and how they want without much consultation with the wider community.

All this has made me realise that I don't wish to continue as a member of this community council. I can put my time to better use elsewhere. I also think that the way CCC operates at the moment would drive any young(er) person away after some time. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours. No doubt our paths will cross at some point or another in such a small town.

Kind Regards
Lucia

CALLANDER COMMUNITY COUNCIL: MOVING FORWARD

In 2018, for the first time in recent years, the current Community Council was elected by a ballot of the whole town. At this October's AGM, a new set of office-bearers was elected by these councillors. During our first meeting, in November, we voted in a new co-opted member with the requisite two-thirds majority. We hope that our second vacancy will be filled at the December meeting, and welcome the increased range of relevant cross-community experience. This article was written immediately after the November meeting.

Looking ahead

The context in which we are all now living and working is central to the Community Council agenda. The changes in individual needs over the past year have produced a new awareness of ways in which groups of people can and must support each other. This was demonstrated in the Callander Support scheme, organised by the Town Coordinator working with volunteers, and the FETCH delivery service, operated by High School students, as well as by many other individual acts of kindness. By focusing on both emerging problems and practical solutions, we can identify our activities for the months ahead.

Listening

Much of the meeting was taken up with listening: listening to those members of the community who came to ask questions, air personal concerns and to challenge. To accommodate this, we had already adapted the Agenda to give increased time for public input early in the meeting.

Listening is important for the whole community: it is a central feature of the work that the Town Coordinator is starting on the new Community Action Plan (CAP), now renamed Local Place Plan. This will replace the current 2017-2022 version. The initial stages involve analysing the current and evolving nature of the community, listening to its concerns and needs, and identifying how these may develop into the future. The aim is to involve as much of the community as possible in this analysis. The Community Council look forward to participating in this, alongside other local organisations.

Similarly, listening is at the centre of an evolving document, 'A Consideration of CCC – purpose and practices' - produced by two community councillors, Roger Watt and Brian McKay, and reviewed monthly by the Community Council. This examines the range of organisations across Callander and their relationship with each other and with the Community Council. How do they listen to each other? How do they listen to the rest of the community? How does the Community Council facilitate this? This document will grow and evolve over the coming months.

Conflict

Much has been said recently about perceptions of 'Conflict of Interest'. This has usually centred on the nature and make-up of the CCC and the Callander Development Trust (CCDT) and the fact that five of the current councillors (myself included) are also CCDT directors. Most of the comments have misunderstood the nature and purpose of community councils and development trusts – of which there are over 200 across Scotland, many including members of both bodies. At the meeting, we were reminded by a member of the public that community councillors being simultaneously directors of CCDT has been the norm for over 15 years, ever since the CCDT was founded.

To clarify the position for everybody, we had asked the Governance department at Stirling Council for a clear ruling. This was read out at the meeting:

For the sake of clarity, there is nothing in the Scheme that states that on being elected as a Community Councillor you have to forego/give up your involvement/membership/affiliation with other organisations/bodies in community/civic/political life, nor indeed any private commercial interests. There is also nothing in the Scheme which states that if elected to an office bearer position on the Community Council, you cannot hold an office bearer role in another organisation.

Thus, at the start of meetings, or before the discussion of any specific items, councillors must declare any potential areas of conflict of interest. They then do not vote and only speak if invited.

Language

The less acceptable feature of this perceived conflict has been the personalised nature of many of the comments posted on Facebook by a few people, based on misconceptions but also, more seriously, attacking individuals either directly or through insinuation. The tone and content of some of these attacks moved a number of other people to respond with their own queries, opinions and – above all – disgust at the nature of many of these postings.

At the meeting, we stated clearly that, while welcoming questions and appropriate criticism, we will not tolerate personal attacks or misinformed statements on social media or through print. In fact, the Chair has the ability to close down meetings if comments disrupt proceedings.

It also needs to be remembered that councillors, like members of other groups, are giving their time and energy to local projects and issues. Any problems are best solved by discussion, rather than by accusation.

The future

I hope this clarification of the ways in which the newly elected group of office bearers and the reinvigorated CCC are planning to move ahead will reassure any members of the community who were unsure of our remit and purpose. We are happy to answer questions posted on www.ourcallander.org.uk or via email – or in person. Our aim is to work together for the whole community in these evolving and uncertain times - above all, by listening.

Local Information

Emergency Services: 999

Callander Police: 101

Local Council Office & Registrar:
[01877 33004](tel:0187733004)

Social Work: [01786 471177](tel:01786471177)

Post Office: [01877 330267](tel:01877330267)

Stirling Council: [01786 404040](tel:01786404040)

National Health

Callander Medical Practice [01877 331000](tel:01877331000)

Prescriptions [01877 331001](tel:01877331001)
(10.00am till 3pm)

District Nurse [01877 330150](tel:01877330150)

NHS 24 [111](tel:111) or www.nhs24.scot
www.nhsinform.scot

Callander Dental Practice [01877 330703](tel:01877330703)

Chemists

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Trossachs **M-F** 9-1 2-6 [01877 330016](tel:01877330016)

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McLaren High: [01877 330156](tel:01877330156)

Callander Primary: [01877 331576](tel:01877331576)



Callander Kirk

The Church of Scotland,

South Church Street, Callander

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Every Sunday 11.15

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50 maximum

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Rev Leszek Wiecek, S.A.C

[01877 330702](tel:01877330702)

Bin Collections

December 2020

Grey/Blue bins Sat. 12th
Brown bin/Blue box Sat. 5th, 26th
Brown/ Green bins 19th

January 2021

Grey/Blue Bins Sat 9th, 23rd
Brown bin/Blue box Sat. 2nd, 30th
Brown/Green bins Sat 16th

February 2021

Grey/Blue Bins 6th, 20th
Brown/Blue Box Sat 27th
Brown/Green Bins Sat 13th
www.stirling.gov.uk/waste

Lagrannoch WRC Opening times

- Monday - Friday 5.00pm to 8.00pm
- Saturday 10.00am-2.00pm
- Sunday closed
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777000 (Functions as emergency
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lection of wheelie bins.)



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For information please contact:
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www.standrewschurchcallander.org.uk

Interim pastor Rev Alison Peden

alisonpeden1@gmail.com



Callander Baptist Fellowship

Weekly Services:

During the Covid restrictions we
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Sundays@Six Online is on our face-
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each Sunday from 6pm.

Our Prayer times on Mondays and
Thursdays at 8pm are held on Zoom.
To contact us:

Pastor Brian Gooding tel [07885 465399](tel:07885465399)

brian.gooding@stirlingbaptist.co.uk

www.callanderbaptistfellowship.org

Facebook: [@callanderbaptistfellowship](https://www.facebook.com/callanderbaptistfellowship)

Recreation

Rail Enquiries: [0845 7484950](tel:08457484950)

Bus Station (Stirling): [01786 446474](tel:01786446474)

Travel Line Scotland: [0870 6082608](tel:08706082608)

Leisure Centre: [01877 330000](tel:01877330000)

Library: [01877 331544](tel:01877331544)

Visitor Information Centre: [01877 330342](tel:01877330342)

Floods & Environment

SEPA emergency: [0800 807060](tel:0800807060)

SEPA website:

www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/index.htm

Floodline: [0845 9881188](tel:08459881188) Select
option 1 followed by: 06213 121 (the
Teith at Callander)

Scottish Water emergency
information re flooding from mains
or sewers: [0800 0778778](tel:08000778778)

Location of defibrillators

Dreadnought Garage

Callander Golf Club

McLaren Leisure Centre

The Post Office

Ancaster Square

West Dullater House and Grace's

Cottage Invertrossachs

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BLV DEADLINES

The next issue of the Ben Ledi View
will be published on **Friday 5th
February 2021.**

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We request full payment before we
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publication.
Editorial copy
All editorial contributions for the
Feb/Mar issue should be emailed to
editor@benlediview.org or handed
in to the Callander Library by **Friday
8th January 2021**

Items received after the deadline
may be held over to next issue.

A BIG THANK YOU TO CALLANDER

This lockdown has been very hard on all of us, but it proved especially so for someone I love. They went missing for 29 hours which was agonising for me and my family.

In those 29 hours I was utterly amazed by how Callander came together to support us.

I don't know if I can ever express how thankful I am to everyone, from those who shared details on social media, to the mountain rescue team, the police, people who searched and for the support offered by friends and neighbours.

To do all that during this very difficult time is really incredible. I am also hugely grateful for the support we've received after they were found safe.

Callander is a beautiful place and we really feel like part of a special community.

Thank you, thank you, thank you

Forever grateful

Catherine McAlpine (Cath)

On behalf of the McAlpine family, I would like to thank everyone for their kind messages, flowers, cards and thoughts that we have received after Cath passed away on the 3rd August 2020, 3 days short of turning 91, a great long life.

Living in Callander for the majority of her life, most of you will remember her from delivering the milk with her husband Ludovic (Vic) or working in Addison's newsagent or seeing her actually doing a paper round or two if one of the paper boys did not show up for work.

To see everyone lining the streets of Callander on the day of the funeral was very heart warming and would have made Cath feel very humble knowing that she had touched so many people.

We would like to thank a few people: Ross Anderson of Anderson & Sons, without their guidance and expertise things would've been much harder on an already hard day, the Roman Camp Hotel who catered for us and a special mention to Tricia Aitken and her

fantastic team at Ashlea Care Home, for looking after mum and providing great end of life care.

Bobby McAlpine

Isobel Ritchie 1924 - 2020

We would like to sincerely thank all those who so kindly sent messages, cards and letters following the death of our mother, Isobel Ritchie. Sadly due to the pandemic only a small funeral was permitted but we were very touched by those who came to pay their respects at St Andrews.

Additional thanks go to Ross Anderson for his dignified care and support; to the Rev'd Canon Richard Grosse for conducting the beautiful service and the Rev Alison Peden for her words of welcome the evening before. Also we would like to thank all the staff at Wardside House in Muthill for the quite outstanding love and care they gave Mum in her last few years.

Our mother, and father Alastair, had been part of Callander since moving there in 1965. They loved the town, the community and all it offered and had many, many friends who remained dear to them until the end.

Jane and Colin Ritchie



with so many who would have wished to pay their respects.

With her family roots in Canada, Isobel with her husband Alastair made a happy and fulfilling life in Callander, welcoming endless visitors from abroad as well as always having time for their many local friends. Her varied interests and activities touched many aspects and brought her into contact with so many people, so that it was a shock to hear that in 2016 this greatly-loved member of our community was leaving Callander for Wardside House in Muthill, but with failing eyesight and increasing frailty the time had come for her to make the move, and with admirable grace and positivity she embraced her new life in a way which was so typical of Isobel.

On hearing of her passing, the recurring reaction from everyone was "she was such a lovely lady" - the perfect epitaph for a very special person.

Ailsa Bradley



Gregor and Sandra Aitchison

Stuart, Karen and Ian proudly announce that their parents, (Gregor and Sandra Aitchison) have reached a major milestone, celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on November 3rd)

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Hopefully we can all get together to celebrate with you both soon.

With love from all the family xx

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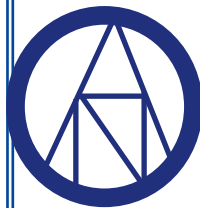
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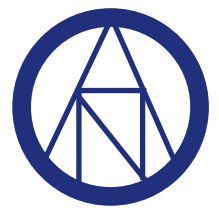
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