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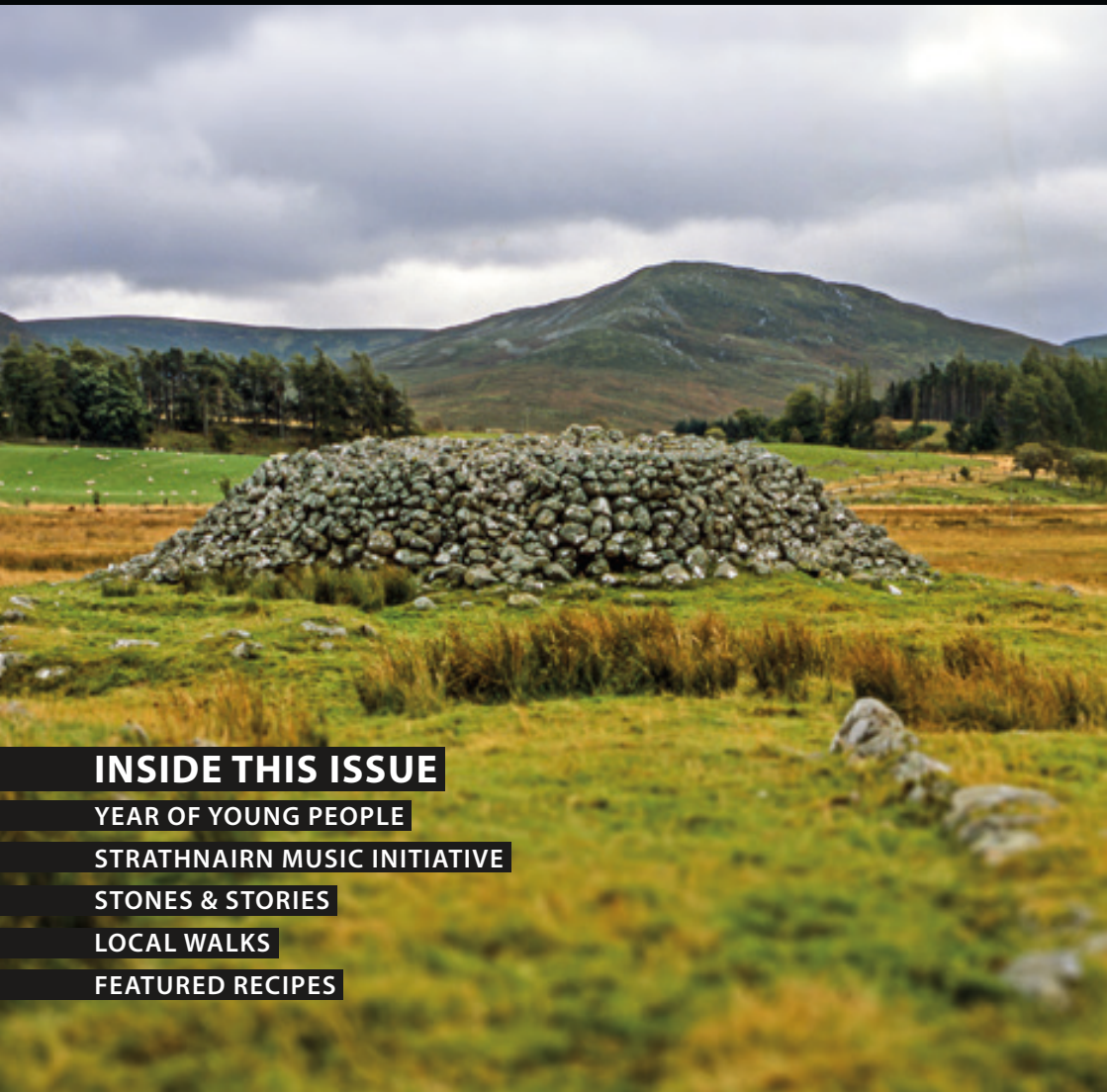
strathnairn news

Strathnairn Community Newsletter
Cuairt-Litir Shrath Narann

Issue 97, April 2018
www.strathnairn.org.uk



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

YEAR OF YOUNG PEOPLE
STRATHNAIRN MUSIC INITIATIVE
STONES & STORIES
LOCAL WALKS
FEATURED RECIPES

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CONTENTS

Your Community Council 4
What's On 5
Minutes Of Strathnairn Community Council 6
Mobile Library 11
Regular Activities at Daviot Hall 12
Strathnairn Silver Bus 12
Regular Activities at Farr Hall 12
Year of Young People 13
Care in Strathnairn 14
Glen Kyllachy Wind Farm 14
St Pauls Church 15
School Pupils in Project Management 15
Farr School & Nursery Update 17
Strathnairn Music Initiative 18
Strath Singers 18
Fearnag Growers 18
Daviot and Dunlichity Church 19
Farr Primary School Success 21
Strathnairn Community Woodlands 22
Strathnairn Vintage Rally 23
Local Walks 25
Featured Recipes 26
Stones & Stories 27
Strathnairn Community Benefit Fund 35

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the latest issue of Strathnairn News – our community magazine. We are keen to ensure that the contents reflect what you would like to read, so if there is anything that you would like to write for us, or send in for inclusion, please contact me on the details below.

If there is anything that you would like to write for us, or send in for inclusion, please contact me on the details below.

Please contact Caroline Tucker on *01808 521464* or email *caz_mackenzie@hotmail.com*

Next newsletter deadline – Friday 25th May 2018

Please note all dates and times published are correct at time of going to print, and please ensure all submissions are non-political and unlikely to offend.

Front Cover Photograph :
'The Dunmaglass Cairn' - photograph courtesy of Neil Shaw Photography

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YOUR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Community has a website – **www.strathnairn.org.uk** where full details are available. There is also a closed group **<Strathnairn>** on Facebook where useful day to day information is posted. As a closed group access is restricted to locals and once you have visited the page you will need to ask to join. That way your Facebook page will enable you to be notified of any disruptions and late news.

Anyone wishing to raise any matter with the Community Council can contact one of our elected Councillors below.

James Murray, Chairperson	01808 521205	chair@strathnairncc.com
Peter Christie, Hon. Secretary	01808 521257	secretary@strathnairncc.com
Bea Wallace, Treasurer	01463 772378	treasurer@strathnairncc.com
Douglas Henderson	01808 521323	douglas@strathnairncc.com
Ian Hunt	01463 772094	ian@strathnairncc.com
Isobel McQueer	01808 521474	isobel@strathnairncc.com
Sally Moore	01463 772234	sally@strathnairncc.com
David Maclean, Minute Sec		minutesecretary@strathnairncc.com

YOUR HIGHLAND COUNCILLORS

Strathnairn is part of Highland Council Wards 12 (Aird and Loch Ness) & Ward 19 (Inverness South). Addresses & telephone numbers are available at www.highland.gov.uk

WARD 12 AIRD AND LOCH NESS

Cllr Helen Carmichael	helen.carmichael.cllr@highland.gov.uk
Cllr Margaret Davidson	margaret.davidson.cllr@highland.gov.uk
Cllr George Cruickshank	george.cruickshank.cllr@highland.gov.uk
Cllr Emma Knox	emma.knox.cllr@highland.gov.uk

WARD 19 INVERNESS SOUTH

Cllr Carolyn Caddick	carolyn.caddick.cllr@highland.gov.uk
Cllr Ken Gowans	ken.gowans.cllr@highland.gov.uk
Cllr Andrew Jarvie	andrew.jarvie.cllr@highland.gov.uk
Cllr Duncan MacPherson	duncan.macpherson.cllr@highland.gov.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

Community Police Officer, PC Cathy McGibbon	101
Daviot Primary School	01463 772226
Farr Primary School	01808 521246
Daviot Hall booking	01463 772228
Farr Hall booking	01808 521346
SCATA Bus booking	01808 521321
NHS 24	111
Police - Non-Emergency	101

SCBF 07858 688355 www.strathnairncbf.com cosec@strathnairncbf.com

Care in Strathnairn:

Kathy Collins (Chair)	broncy53@gmail.com
Derek Rose (Community Contact Officer)	07800 796106 / 01463 772240

Strathnairn Community Website
www.strathnairn.org.uk

Strathnairn Community Benefit Fund Website
www.strathnairncbf.com

WHAT'S ON

APR – JUN 2018

NEW!

STRATHNAIRN SOCIAL CRAFT GROUP!

We are a relaxed, informal group providing an opportunity for fellow crafters to meet up, make and chat.

Just drop in between 18.30 and 20.30 on Tuesday 17th or 24th April and share your ideas! If our first sessions are successful, we will add further dates – keep an eye out for these.

It's £2 per session and tea, coffee and cake will be provided!

FARR CONVERSATIONS

TUESDAY 24TH APRIL, 7.30PM AT FARR HALL

Fionn MacCumhail is gaisgich eile / Fionn MacCumhail and other heroic figures. An evening of Highland legend and geography. All welcome!

STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY WOODLANDS WORK DAY

SATURDAY 28 APRIL 10AM - 12NOON

A general tidy up in School Wood, and planting some broadleave seedlings. If you can spare the time, please bring gloves and boots, no experience necessary but a sense of humour will help.

Contact **strathnairncommunitywoodlands@gmail.com**

SCOTLAND'S GARDEN SCHEME

Glenkyllachy Garden open by arrangement (min. 24 hours notice – email emmaglenkyllachy@gmail.com) daily 1st May until 30th October.

Garden Party days June 17th and October 7th with cream teas! Open 2.pm till 5.pm, Entry inc. tea £5.00, children under 16 free.

All proceeds to charity, 60% Marie Curie and 40% Scotland's Gardens. Contact **strathnairncommunitywoodlands@gmail.com**

STRATHNAIRN MUSIC INITIATIVE COMMUNITY CONCERT

SATURDAY 2ND JUNE
10AM TO 12NOON AT FARR HALL

Come and join us to hear what all of our students have been working on this year!

STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

GENERAL MEETING NO. 258

FARR COMMUNITY HALL • MONDAY 19th March 2018 at 7.30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

SCC MEMBERS PRESENT

James Murray (Chair) [JM], Peter Christie (Hon. Sec) [PC], Ian Hunt [IH], Sally Moore [SM], Bea Wallace [BW].

HIGHLAND COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr Davidson [MD].

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

1 member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from D Henderson, I McQueer, Cllr Caddick, Cllr Knox, Cllr Jarvie, Cllr Gowans.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTE OF 19TH FEBRUARY 2018

No corrections were noted.

The Minutes were proposed by BW and seconded by IH.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

IH reminded the CC that as Chair of the Community Benefit Fund he would not partake in any discussions involving the Fund.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTE

Item 4 & Item 9 under 4 from February Minute: It is unclear what SSE's arrangements are with HC and JM has had no reply to emails or telephone calls.

Items 2 & 4 from February minute – it is unclear if anything has been done about the Dalroy passing place. MD has had no response to her correspondence as yet.

Item 6 from February minute – there was some confusion about insurance costs for SNCC. BW and MD clarified that HC will pay for SNCC's insurance on SNCC's behalf and the sum due will be deducted from SNCC's grant. It was noted that SNCC is insured as long as HC pays the premium.

Item 7- HC planning has been notified about the lack of consultation and HC has responded to say that this point will be noted with the developers.

Item 7b - MD has written to the company regarding Aberarder wind farm but has not had a response yet. JM thanked MD for her action.

Item 9 - PC has not yet heard back from S Tilbury but it was agreed that SNCC would set a limit for future expenditure so that if costs fell below this amount they could be approved automatically without the need to bring them to an SNCC meeting. The limit will be set once feedback has been received from S Tilbury about the costs of renewal.

Item 13 - JM has not yet been in touch with I McQueer but will do so before the next meeting. **Action JM**

The short notice for some consultations had been raised by MD with Carron McDiarmid at HC and Carron McDiarmid advised that good practice is normally 12 weeks. She will raise this when the timing of the next round of consultations is being discussed.

PC has brought the website up to date with historical final version of SNCC minutes from 2012 onwards although some gaps remain pre 2015.

Item 18 – It was agreed to place an advert in the next newsletter asking for expressions of interest in becoming a SNCC co-opted member.

Item 19a) Cllr Jarvie was not in attendance to provide an update but it was noted that during recent bad weather ROCK vehicles had been seen using the A9.

Item 9b) The complainant had been informed of the outcome.

Item 19c) JMC and PC attended the liaison group which had been held jointly with Strathdearn CC and was a positive meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for May 2018. It is important for SNCC to have input to these meetings because of the community benefits they bring.

Item 19d) JM has spoken with W Forbes who enquired about whether he has the support of SNCC. It was agreed that he has SNCC's full backing.

5. COMMUNITY POLICING REPORT AND LOCAL ISSUES

PC McGibbon was not in attendance and there was no report. JM will raise this with Police Scotland. **Action JM**

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

a) Current funds remain £3545.17. The Ray Collier Fund monies for the memorial bench are in addition to this sum, and further cash donations are anticipated.

b) The grant from HC is £571.07 from which the sum of £86 would be deducted to cover insurance costs paid by HC on behalf of SNCC.

BW noted that SNCC's annual accounts are currently prepared at no cost to SNCC and she will make contact with the accountant to establish if he is content to continue on the same basis going forward.

7. PLANNING APPLICATION AND UPDATES

(a) Report from IH on applications

IH spoke to his report listing 3 new planning applications (erection of house at Flichity

– renewal; erection of telecommunications tower at Dunmaglass; and ground-stabilising works at Lairgandour) and 2 updates, both of which have been agreed.

It was noted that the telecommunications work at Dunmaglass would hopefully improve reception. It was also noted that the engineering work proposed at Lairgandour was to restore the access road following a land slip in made ground.

(b) Aberarder WF negotiation

This was covered under Matters Arising.

8. KNOCKNAGAEL TO TOMATIN LIAISON GROUP

JM, PC and one member of the community attended the liaison group meeting on 22 February 2018. JM has requested an electronic copy of the meeting report which will be circulated when received. The next meeting is on 9th May at the MSVE site office at Milton of Farr.

A concern was raised that work may be taking place on a Sunday which would cause upset to the land owner. PC will make clear that Sunday working must be discussed with the owner and will let MD know if there is no progress. **Action PC**

9. RAY COLLIER MEMORIAL

A supplier has been selected. Mrs Collier will be consulted about the design of the bench and the wording of the plaque.

10. REPORT OF INVERNESS AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

PC and JM attended the meeting held on 6th March at which there was a presentation about community partnerships. MD advised that there was a focus currently on adult service and mental health with Merkinch and Hilton being 2 key areas. It is important that community councils are aware of plans and have an opportunity to feed in. There was also a meeting on 7th March which neither JM nor PC had been able to attend.

11. REPORT OF MEETING ABOUT HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND FOR STRATHNAIRN

D Read and S Tilbury are leading on this for the community D Read had been unable to attend the meeting but S Tilbury attended and had reported back that there are now 2 possible contenders: Cromarty Firth and Scotnet. SNCC wish to record their support and gratitude to D Read and S Tilbury for all their efforts on behalf of the community.

12. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.

(via email unless indicated otherwise.)

a) The next meeting of the Inverness Community Partnership Wed. 7th March – this has now taken place but no report has as yet been issued.

b) Highland & Moray Local Fisheries Action Group - Recent Funding Approvals. No action required by SNCC.

c) Feedback from Council Leader regarding late notice. HC will be starting to look at revising the current Scheme from May. This was covered under Matters Arising.

d) Agenda for CC Forum on 6 March. This was covered under Matters Arising.

e) Grass Cutting for 2018. Notification has been received about grass cutting plan to include fortnightly cutting of low amenity places; identification of efficiency savings including sites to be cut; reviewing the frequency of cutting to allow the growth of wildflower and naturalised grass areas; and changing amenity levels of grass.

f) Annual Grant to SNCC. This was covered under Agenda item 6: Financial Report.

g) Road show about Aliss (A Local Information System for Scotland) on 13 March; link https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/aliss-roadshow-inverness-tickets-43473644842?aff=eac2

JM attended this but felt it may be more appropriate to Care in Strathnairn. Slides will be issued from the presentation in due course.

h) Intimation from the Inverness Snowsports Centre Association that they are no longer pursuing the idea of a sports snow centre at Daviot.

j) Highland Senior Citizens Network Spring Newsletter

k) 90 day consultation on the future of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Link <http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/transformation/public-consultation.aspx> Closing date 14 May. The consultation focus on proposals to widen the role of the SFRS to include, for example, checking homes for fire safety. MD encouraged SNCC to put its views forward.

17. LIST OF EVENTS, MEETINGS AND DATES FOR ATTENDANCE AND INTEREST

a) K-T Liaison Group – Date of next meeting - Wednesday 9th May 2018

b) Glen Kyllachy Wind Farm Construction Liaison Group Meeting 15th March 2018 – has taken place.

c) Highland Senior Citizens Network 2018 Annual Conference – Wednesday 25th April, Lochardil House Hotel, Stratherrick Road, Inverness IV2 4LK. Theme: Making Better Connections. Volunteers required to attend this event.

d) SSE Workshop: Managing Funds from Wind Farms, 17 April 7-9pm, venue TBC. JM and PC will attend from SNCC and IH from SCBF. SM will attend if other commitments permit.

e) Future meetings of Inverness Community Partnership. Link - http://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/inverness-community-partnership.html. If anyone is interested please note the dates.

13 June 7-9pm Merkinch (venue TBC)

26 September 2-4pm TBC

12 December 7-9pm TBC

18. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

19. AOCB

a) A letter had been received from Colin Ross about the closure of the B851 at Farr school for resurfacing, from 3-4 April between 9am and 3pm. The variable signs will be updated to this effect once the roadworks on the Errogie - Whitebridge road are completed.

b) JM advised that no meetings have as yet taken place with regards to Aberarder wind farm, although IH has made a number of attempts to make contact with the company. MD has also written to them.

c) A discussion took place about concerns raised by residents regarding potholes on the Craggie to Dalroy road. MD advised that there are some funds available for road repairs and that potholes should be reported on the HC website or via the general HC telephone number - 01349 886606.

21. DATE OF THE NEXT CC MEETING [259]

Monday 16th April 2018

The Community Council is required to issue the agenda 7 days before its meeting. To be certain that an item can be included please make sure that it is submitted ten days before our meeting is due to take place.

There is a mailing list for the issue of the Meeting agenda and minutes. If you would like to receive a copy of the meeting agenda and minutes as they are issued you should contact the ***secretary@strathnairncc.com****.*

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MOBILE LIBRARY

Moray Firth Mobile library comes every 3 weeks and carries a range of adult fiction and non-fiction in standard and large print, children's books and talking books and DVDs.

Full Information about the mobile routes can be found on the High Life Highland Moray Firth Mobile webpage: http://highlifehighland.com/libraries/moray-firth-mobile-library. Dates for 2018 will be updated in the January issue.

Mondays (Route 9): Farr Primary School - Daviot East - Moy - Brookfield - Sunnyside - Balloch

23 Apr, 14 May, 04 Jun, 25 Jun, 16 Jul, 06 Aug, 27 Aug, 17 Sep, 08 Oct, 29 Oct, 19 Nov, 10 Dec 2018.

09.30 – 10.50	**Farr Primary School**
11.20 – 11.50	**Meallmore Nursing Home**
11.50 – 12.05	**Daviot East**
12.20 – 12.40	**Moy Forestry Cottages**
12.40 – 12.55	**Moy Housebound**
14.20 – 15.00	**Culloden Brookfield**
15.05 – 15.30	**Culloden Sunnyside**
15.45 – 16.30	**Balloch Braeside Park**

Thursdays (Route 12): Daviot Primary School - Gorthleck - Stratherrick Primary School - Whitebridge - Errogie - Farr

26 Apr, 17 May, 07 Jun, 28 Jun, 19 Jul, 09 Aug, 30 Aug, 20 Sep, 11 Oct, 01 Nov, 22 Nov, 13 Dec 2018

09.25 – 10.05	**Daviot Primary School**
10.35 – 11.25	**Invernarnie, Farr Hall**
12.00 – 12.15	**Gorthleck Public Hall**
13.15 – 13.55	**Stratherrick Primary School**
14.00 – 14.25	**Whitebridge Old Post Office**
15.00 – 15.35	**Errogie Bridge before "Ark"**
16.00 – 16.20	**Farr Croft Croy**
16.25 – 16.50	**Farr Community Hall**

REGULAR ACTIVITIES AT DAVIOT HALL

Monday and Thursday evenings (October to May) – Badminton

Tuesday and Friday evenings, 7.30pm – Strathnairn Indoor Bowling Club

If you would like to book Daviot Hall please contact Christine MacPherson on 01463 772228.

STRATHNAIRN'S LITTLE *SILVER* BUS

Scottish Charity SCO45251

The minibus collects residents to take them to medical appointments in town, Tesco for shopping, visiting relatives, Lunch Club and Friendship Group for days spent socialising. The 'bus has also been booked for a variety of excursions by residents in the Strath who need to hire a little more room to drive more people around – Remember, anyone living locally, can benefit from using the bus at a cost of only 50p a mile.

To find out more on using the bus, or becoming a volunteer driver, please call Donna on 01808-521321

REGULAR ACTIVITIES AT FARR HALL

Throughout the year and during school term-time there are regular weekly activities taking place in the Hall as follows:

Second Monday of the month	*Strathnairn Community Woodlands committee meeting*
Third Monday of the month	*Strathnairn Community Council meeting 7.30pm*
Tuesday evenings from 6pm	*Highland Budokan Judo*
Wednesday evenings from 7pm	*Boleskine Shinty Club training*
Thursday mornings	*Farr Baby and Toddlers*
Thursday afternoons 2pm – 4pm	*Post Office*
Thursday evenings from 6pm to 7pm	*Community Keep Fit runs October to May*
Second Friday of the month	*Seniors Lunch Club*
Last Sunday morning of the month	*King's Strathnairn*

If you wish to book the football pitch, a room, or the whole Hall please call Maggie on 01808 521346

STRATHNAIRN NEWS IS PLEASED TO SUPPORT YOYP2018!

SUPPORTING
year of young people
bliadhna na h-òigridh
2018

Many of our readers will be aware that 2018 is Scotland's Year of Young People. Our local Ambassador for the year-long series of events, Caitie-Mary Dundas, tells us more about it:

As a YoYP2018 ambassador I would like to explain what YoYP2018 is about and show what opportunities are open for young people during the year.

WHAT IS YOYP2018?

YoYP2018 stands for the Year of Young People 2018. This means that it is a year dedicated to celebrating Scotland's youth. This is the first time a country has ever done this.

HOW WAS THE YEAR DEVELOPED?

Many organisations played a role in designing the Year, such as YoungScot, Children in Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament, however a massive driving force behind it were the YoYP2018 ambassadors and Communic18, both groups of people aged 8-26. The ambassadors, of which there are over 500, help to organise and take part in events locally, whilst Communic18 does the national work.

HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED?

If you would like to write something for our Newsletter we would love to hear from you! We know that our community has many young people aged between 8 & 26 who have a lot to share with the rest of us, from competing in local & national sporting events, interesting career choices or apprenticeships to local interests, and we would really like to hear about it! If you are a budding journalist and would like to interview a member of our community for the newsletter we would also love to hear from you! We will have a YoYP2018 feature page in each issue of the newsletter for the rest of this year dedicated to the younger members of our community, so if you feel inspired, please get writing!

There are also many events and activities happening all across Scotland during 2018, a list of which can be found at yoyp2018.scot. The website will also give you details of funding and discounts available throughout the year.

Other opportunities to become involved include:

#mystory365 - every day a different young person is given the opportunity to share their story. Check out the hashtag on twitter and Instagram to read others, or contact them to share your own!

100 disrupters - If you are 26 or under and have a big idea that could change your community, then you could be awarded £1000 to make this a reality. Your application must be entered by 30 April.

CARE IN STRATHNAIRN

HANDYMAN SERVICES

Now that spring is here and we are out and about a bit more you may have noticed some little jobs around the house that need attention. If you live in the Strathnairn Community Council area and are disadvantaged by age, illness, disability or social circumstances then you are eligible to use our Handyman Services.

Derek Rose is happy to discuss with you anything that you feel might need doing. The kind of small jobs you used to tackle yourself but now need a little help with. As a former policeman he can also advise on home security and safety issues that might be worrying you.

All works carried out by Derek are free of charge, you only have to pay for any materials. If the job is outside Derek's expertise he will be happy to help you find a local tradesman to help. Give Derek a ring to make sure you stay on top of those little jobs. Derek Rose (07800) 796106 or (01463) 772240.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

As spring comes the Friendship Group is looking forward to enjoying regular outings in and around the Inverness area for good conversation over a bite to eat at lunchtime. The Group meets every other Wednesday, dates below, 11am at Farr Hall or Derek, our driver will pick you up at home.

April 11th and 25th
May 9th and 23rd
June 6th and 20th
July 4th and 18th

Ring Derek on (07800) 796106 or (01463) 772240 if you would like to join us for a friendly outing.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Care in Strathnairn Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 12 June 7pm at St Paul's Church Hall, Croachy. All are welcome.

GLEN KYLLACHY WIND FARM UPDATE

A construction liaison group (CLG) has been set up by Innogy to facilitate information flow and consultation with the local community until the wind farm is completed and fully operational. James Murray and Peter Christie are representing Strathnairn CC on the group.

The initial CLG meeting on Thursday 15 March was short, with the group agreeing its purpose and innogy's representatives, reminding all of the project details. The next meeting will take place in September 2018. Following that, construction progress reports will be made available on www.innogy.com/glenkyllachy Any queries regarding the construction should be sent to glenkyllachy@innogy.com

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

As I write this Easter is on the doorstep and despite some very frosty nights, signs of spring are all around us with the arrival of the first lambs, the lovely delicate colours of spring flowers and the longer daylight hours in the evenings. This year our sermons during Lent took us on an armchair pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Paul round Greece and this concluded with a lovely Greek themed lunch in the hall which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. For anyone interested the sermons can be found on our website www.stpaulsstrathnairn.co.uk.

With the arrival of Easter the church will be open daily from 10am to 4pm right through until October. Everyone is welcome to pop in for whatever reason, whether it be for a time of peaceful thought, prayer or just to look at the lovely stained-glass windows.

The Sunday service continues to be at the usual time of 11.00am and as ever, we look forward to meeting you when you come to share some time with us.

SCHOOL PUPILS SET TO GO FARR IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Farr Primary School pupils are working with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks' (SSEN) and its contractor, MSVE Transmission, to project manage an upgrade to their school garden.

The pupils of Farr Primary have taken the initiative to form their own project management team to make their stone-chipped school garden fully inclusive for everyone at the school and have reached out to SSEN, who is constructing a new substation and overhead line nearby, to

make their ideas a reality.

Initial ideas to improve the garden include the removal of the stone chips, lowering the flower baskets and looking at ways to attract more wildlife; particularly birds and bees. In addition to the visual improvement, the changes will provide a sensory space and better outdoor environment for everyone at the school.

Farr Primary 3/4 Teacher, Mrs Menzies, said:

"Alex, Charlotte, Magnus, Benjamin, Hannah and I along with Mrs McInnes from the nursery have been appointed as a sub-group to lead the school through the changes. We love our hard hats and working along with the engineers from MSVE Transmission, planning the new garden. We like taking charge of gathering the school's ideas, taking minutes and speaking at Assembly.

"Both companies have been extremely generous with their time and resources. It is a wonderful experience and we have been overwhelmed. The children are seeing the relevance of numeracy and literacy, in the real world and how skills transfer."

The school approached SSEN through the Farr Community Liaison Group (CLG) which has been established to ensure that the local community are kept informed throughout the construction of the Knocknagael-Tomatin reinforcement project.

SSEN Overhead Line Project Manager, Joanne Seath explains more:

"Throughout the development of the Knocknagael-Tomatin project, we worked closely with the community to keep everyone informed on our proposals. When the project entered construction, we formed the Community Liaison Group to ensure that we continued to meet on a regular basis to discuss ongoing works and to identify opportunities where we can contribute to the local community.

"When Farr Primary approached the CLG for help, our overhead line contractors, MSVE Transmission, stepped up and offered to provide the pupils with a fully interactive project management experience, from initial site survey through to design, construction and completion."

Colin Kelly, MSVE Transmission Construction Manager, said:

"To date, our team of engineers have visited the school and with the help of appointed team leaders have surveyed the garden. Layout drawings will be produced to scale allowing the pupils to interact with the current layout and design their new garden. From there, through visits with the school, we will turn their drawings into a reality showing the pupils every step involved in designing and building a project and show them the basic processes of a construction job."

Farr Primary Head Teacher, Mr Graham added:

"It's a wonderful work skills project, involving the whole school. Not only will it leave a legacy in the school, but the children are appreciating that their contributions make a difference. A lot of learning is taking place in a meaningful way."

The Knocknagael-Tomatin project has been in development since 2012 with works on site commencing at the end of 2017. The project will see the construction of a new 275kV overhead line between an existing substation at Knocknagael to a new substation in Glen Kyllachy.

To find out more about the Knocknagael-Tomatin project, please visit the dedicated project page: https://www.

ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/knocknagael-tomatin/

"In preparation for the Farr Primary School garden make-over, some of our green fingered colleagues used their Be the Difference Day on Tuesday 20th March to help with a general tidy up of the school garden. The children got involved too – it really was a team effort!

KEY CONTACTS - Our Overhead Line Supervisors are Pawel Stopnicki (Public road improvements and access tracks) and Alex Kerr (Overhead Line). Pawel and Alex are on site most days and are available to address any queries or concerns. Pawel is contactable on 07469 411792 and Alex is contactable on 07876 837465.

Jenna Black is your Community Liaison representative and can be contacted on; 07342 027725 or jenna.black@sse.com

COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP

We are holding the next Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting on 9 May 2018. The CLG comprises of representatives from the local community, representatives from Strathnairn Community Council, Councillors of Inverness South and project representatives from Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc. Meetings will take place at regular intervals to discuss any matters relating to the Knocknagael – Tomatin project during the construction period.

The community representatives from the CLG are:

Mr James Murray - 01808 521205
chair@strathnairncc.com

Mr Peter Christie - 01808 521257
secretary@strathnairncc.com

Janis Tapley
janisandiantapley@gmail.com

FARR SCHOOL AND NURSERY UPDATE

The pupils of Farr School have had another busy term, and here are some of the highlights. There have been school trips, including the P1/2 class visit to Strathpeffer Museum of Childhood and the P3/4 trip to Pitlochry Dam as part of their energy topic.

SSEN have been helping re-develop the school garden, and a team of pupils have got together to lead the project. The pupils have learnt about teamwork and have worked together with all the children in the school and nursery.

The P3/4 class have also been learning about the country of Nepal. They had a visit from Chris Dickinson, who runs a small charity called The Nepal Schools Trust, who talked to them about the child they will be sponsoring in Nepal with money the class raised from the tuck shop they had. The class have also written letters to pupils at the same school, and have now received letters in reply.

Happy holidays, and we look forward to a busy summer term!

STRATHNAIRN MUSIC INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY CONCERT
Saturday 2nd June, 10am to 12noon

We would like to invite you all to come along and enjoy our community concert, to take place on Saturday 2nd June, 10am to 12noon, at Farr Community Hall. Our students and music teachers will be playing instruments and singing songs to a variety of music. We look forward to seeing you there!

THE STRATH SINGERS

We have had a great year so far with our new singing leader, Jessica Bates. She makes every session fun, and manages to draw a good sound out of our group. We still meet every two weeks in Farr Hall on a Thursday evening as that seems to suit the current members. We may be able to adapt this to the needs of future members, and we are looking to expand the group, so any feedback is welcome.

Our next date will be 19th April, after which we will be meeting every two weeks. We aim to perform a few tunes at the Strathnairn Music Initiative concert on 2nd June, but if you just want to come along for a sing, there is no pressure to perform at the concert.

We just ask for a £1 donation per session. The group is otherwise supported by the Strathnairn Music Initiative, which is largely funded by the Strathnairn Community Benefit Fund.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

KIRSTY ADAM OF FEARNAG GROWERS

Fearnag Growers had their first meeting of the season in the middle of March – our Editor popped down to see what it was all about.

‘’SO, WHAT IS FEARNAG GROWERS?

Fearnag Growers is a community run allotment and gardening project. It’s a chance to grow fruit and veg for yourself or for the wider community. We took our name from the river which runs beside the garden.

WHERE IS FEARNAG GROWERS BASED?

You can find us at the beautiful Walled Garden on the Farr Estate. It has been very generously leased to us in the long term by Phillip and Emma Mackenzie. The garden has been worked for more than 200 years and consequently the soil is amazing. The garden is a peaceful and relaxing place which brings great pleasure to those who visit and work there. We find the social and physical benefits of the garden to be immense.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

We meet at the garden on the last Saturday of every month from April to October when we work together to tend to the garden. Garden members are free to visit the garden at any time during daylight hours. The Wee Growers club meets on the middle Sunday of the month

from May to October, from 12 noon to 2pm. Activities include seed planting, science experiments, treasure hunts and craft activities. The club is open to children of all ages and is free. We'd love to extend our membership and extend an invitation to any and all who might be interested in joining us.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

It is free to join the community garden project. Should you wish to rent an allotment we have growing plots in a variety of sizes, fees start from £25 a year for a small plot and go up to £50 a year for a large plot. We also have a large polytunnel which can be used by our members.

WHAT'S COMING UP?

We have received funding from Tesco's blue token scheme in order to expand our children's garden. We have lots of plans including a playhouse, a sandpit and raised beds for the children. We are planning some science, art and yoga workshops throughout the Summer for the children. Last year we ran some very successful events which included an open day, Artist's day workshop and a guided walk looking at Gaelic plant lore of the area. More adult events are planned for this season.

HOW DO I GET IN TOUCH?

For more information on growing plots or the project in general, or to join our mailing list, you can contact me, Kirsty Adam, on 01808521361 or at kirstyadam@ymail.com, or Raghnaid Sandilands on 01808521341 or at raghnaid@icloud.com.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page 'Fearnag Growers-Lios na Feàrnag' for information on upcoming events. Looking forward to seeing you at the garden!'

DAVIOT & DUNLICHITY CHURCH – FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE!

Something happy, something sad for our churches. The happy is that this year we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the union of Daviot and Dunlichity Churches – the oldest union in the Church of Scotland. We want to make the most of this, as the sad news is that under the new Presbytery Plan, Dunlichity is to be closed. We have been given a stay of execution until early next year because of the anniversary, but after that it will not be allowed to continue as a place of worship in the Church of Scotland. However, we would love to find ways to retain it, not

least because of the connection with local clans, especially the clan MacGillivray, and all its historic associations and interest to our community – going right back to the first church in the days of St Finnan in 575 ad.

To begin the celebrations there will be a special service at 11.00 am on 3rd June in Dunlichity Church, followed by a picnic. This, we hope, will be a special community event to which everybody is invited, so do come and join us!!

Also, inspired by actions of other congregations in other places setting up community trusts to keep their churches open, we are looking at that possibility for us. For this, we would need support from other groups and individuals from the community, and encompass wider interests. Meantime, we would like to enable both buildings to be open at times during the week so that people could explore their historic interest – or just visit to enjoy the quiet for a time – more details of opening times to follow …

One definite date, is 10th September, when both churches will be open for Doors Open Day.

Because the manse at Daviot has been judged as not fit for purpose, we are not allowed to call a minister meantime. There is even a suggestion that Daviot church could face closure at some time in the future. However, we are not all doom and gloom, and are looking forward to finding new ways of outreach and being a church for this community, working together with the Community Church and St Paul's.

Meantime, we will, of course, continue with services of worship in Daviot Church at 12 noon each Sunday – with an interesting and varied selection of Pulpit supply! – and on the first Sunday of each month at Dunlichity at 6.30 pm, until October. We would love to see you at either or both Churches – and of course, don't forget the special date of 3rd June at Dunlichity!

Kathleen Matheson
and Joyce Mitchell

FARR PRIMARY SCHOOL SUCCESS AT INVERNESS MUSIC FESTIVAL!

Farr School entered 3 teams in to Inverness Music Festival this year, all of whom performed exceptionally well!

The P3/4 class took art in the 'Choirs – Action Songs' category with their version of The Lewis Bridal Song/ Mhairi's Wedding and awarded Distinction and won The Northern Meeting Trophy.

Two teams were entered in the Scottish Dancing Competition, the younger group danced to A Reel for Jeannie and received a Merit and the older group danced to A Jig for Mrs Dunn and received a Commendation.

Well done to all the children involved, they all performed extremely well and were a credit to the school in both their performance and their behaviour.

STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

A QUICK UPDATE.

450m of deer and rabbit fence have been erected in School Wood in the windblown area, by Mike Gibson local fencing contractor, to protect any Scots pine (SP) natural regeneration from herbivore browsing (see pic). The fenced area needs monitored, and any SP regeneration will benefit from hand weeding to reduce competition for nutrients, light and water from surrounding grasses, and invasive/ non-native species e.g. gorse, beech.

Highland Surfacing Contractors asked to use the School Wood car park as a construction laydown area for their plant, equipment and the spoil arising from the footpath construction to Farr Primary. This co-operation helped them build the footpath, and in return they've agreed to dress the car park surface with a layer of Type 2 hard core.

SSE offered to provide some of their own staff to help SCW with forest maintenance. On 20 March, 10 SSE employees volunteered to help remove redundant tree tube shelters from broadleaves planted in Milton Wood during 2005. The tubes protect the young trees from browsing and encourage growth in its sheltered micro-climate. This is extremely beneficial in the first 5 years, and the tubes are designed to break up under UV and split off the emerging tree. Some 6,000 trees were planted – although the tubes won't harm the trees, they've done their job and the wood looks better without them. SSE's contribution is much appreciated.

A new timber rail fence was installed by fencer Mike Gibson at the entrance to Milton Wood, approx. 1 mile south of School Wood. (see pic)

General maintenance includes removing beech seedlings from the Scots pine in School Wood. Beech looks majestic, but nothing grows under its dense shade, and is not deemed native in Scotland. (Species spread north from the 'land bridge' before the last Ice Age melted - whatever was growing when it melted is deemed 'native'. Beech didn't make it into Scotland at that time.) Also removing tree seedlings from the wetland areas.

Saturday 28 April 10-12 we'll be doing a general tidy up in School Wood, and planting some broadleaf seedlings.

Litter picking, beech removal, seedling removal from the wet heath area, and probably sweeping out the cabin. If you can spare the time, please bring gloves and boots, no experience necessary but a sense of humour will help. Contact strathnairncommunitywoodlands@gmail.com.

See photo (above right). A red rust has made home on this Douglas fir in Milton Wood. Not a parasite, but any answers to strathnairncommunitywoodlands@gmail.com.

STRATHNAIRN VINTAGE RALLY – ADVANCED NOTICE

This year's Vintage Rally will take place on Saturday 29th September at Daviot Estate, and the theme for this year will be 'The Fordson Tractor'. If you have any photos, records or history of the Fordsons in the Strath please let us know. All other makes are also very welcome!

Our display will include a wide range of vintage machinery from the early 20th Century onwards.

Daviot Primary School will also have a stall at the event and are very much looking forward to being involved.

Proceeds from this year's Auction will go towards MFR Cash for Kids, and other local children's charities.

If you have any information or photos that would be of interest to any of these themes, or if you would like to support the event in any way please contact Ray Smith (Chair) on 01463 790325 or Email strathnairnfarmers@hotmail.co.uk.

STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Based upon its population, Strathnairn is allowed 9 representatives to serve on its Community Council. Representatives serve for four years and will stand down in 2019.

The Community Council meets for approximately 2 hrs every month except July & December. Currently your representatives are James Murray; Peter Christie; Bea Wallace; Doug Henderson; Ian Hunt; Isobel McQueer and Sally Moore.

Accordingly, there are two vacancies to be filled.
If you are interested in representing the views of your neighbours and able to spare the necessary time the existing councillors would welcome your support. In the first instance please inform the Chairman by sending an email to chair@strathnairncc.com.

Mr. Peter Christie, Hon. Secretary, for Strathnairn Community Council.
www.strathnairn.org.uk/strathnairncommunitycouncil.asp

THE STRATH SINGERS

WE MEET EVERY SECOND THURSDAY IN FARR HALL, 8 - 9.30PM
ALL WELCOME!

NO PRIOR SINGING EXPERIENCE NEEDED
JUST A £1 DONATION REQUESTED PER SESSION

For more information see website www.strathnairn.org.uk/smi under Open Music Sessions or contact strathnairnmusicinitiative@gmail.com

PART OF THE STRATHNAIRN MUSIC INITIATIVE, FUNDED BY THE STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

LOCAL WALKS

APRIL'S FEATURED WALK IS CULLODEN WOODS

Directions: (NH719456) From Inverness, take the A96 towards Aberdeen and after about 1 mile (1.6 km) take the 2nd roundabout exit towards Balloch, Culloden and Smithton. At the second set of traffic lights turn right towards Culloden Moor and Croy. The car park is on your left after ¼ mile (400 metres).

TRAILS:

There are two trails marked on this map, the Red Trail, which is 0.4km and the Yellow Trail, which is 2.4km.

There is also a longer walk 'The Culloden Wood Trail', which is 3.6km and is noted as a 'Moderate' walk.

Right on the edge of Inverness, this popular forest is a great place to walk, run or ride. It's also full of history: the trees cover part of the site of the battle of Culloden, and the Prisoners' Stone (now hidden amongst the trees) is a grim reminder of that fateful day. Victorious Government troops shot 17 Jacobite prisoners here on April 17th 1746 – the day after the battle. Nearer the car park, the Lord President's Seat is dedicated to the local laird Duncan Forbes who helped the Government side.

St Mary's Well has a Christian name, but it's a reminder of pagan traditions. It's still used as a place to make a wish and leave a scrap of cloth as a healing charm.

OS Landranger 27 (Nairn & Forres)

Each walk we feature is suitable for all abilities and can be used for cycling, running and horseriding as well as walking.

Please remember to follow the Outdoor Access Code when enjoying our countryside – further details can be found at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com. If you have a particular favourite route that you would like to see included please contact The Editor.

Map and image courtesy of Forestry Commission Scotland.

Correction: In the last issue we advised that you turned right out of the car park to head up the hill past Loch Ruthven, this should have been left! Apologies to anyone that this affected.

FEATURED RECIPES

Due to popular demand, we are pleased to include a new Recipes feature. Please send through any recipes you would like us to include.

MACARONI LEEK BAKE

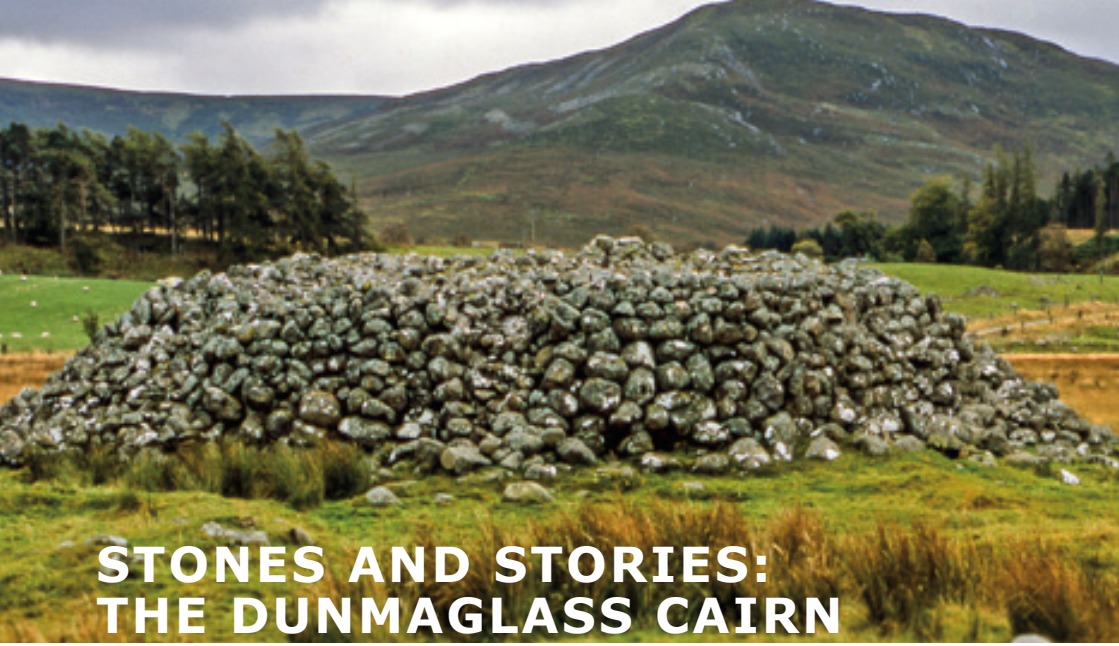
(serves 4), sent in by Carol Hammond

INGREDIENTS:

- 200g (7oz) Macaroni
- 300g (11oz) frozen Cauliflower (or fresh chopped into small florets)
- 2 small leeks
- 1 x 30g pack of mature cheese sauce
- 300ml (half pint) milk
- 2tbsp crème fraiche
- 50g (2oz) grated cheese
- Snipped chives to garnish (optional)

METHOD:

1. In a large pan boil the macaroni, cauliflower and leeks together for 10 mins.
2. Make the cheese sauce in a separate pan according to packet instructions.
3. Drain the pasta and vegetables and mix with the cheese sauce and crème fraiche (add seasoning if required).
4. Spoon into four small ovenproof dishes or one large one, sprinkle with the grated cheese and bake for 20 minutes at 200 degrees centigrade.
5. Garnish with chives if using and serve with roasted vegetables.



STONES AND STORIES: THE DUNMAGLASS CAIRN

'The third in a series of brief essays on place names and stories from Strathnairn and places nearby.' Compiled by R. Sandilands.

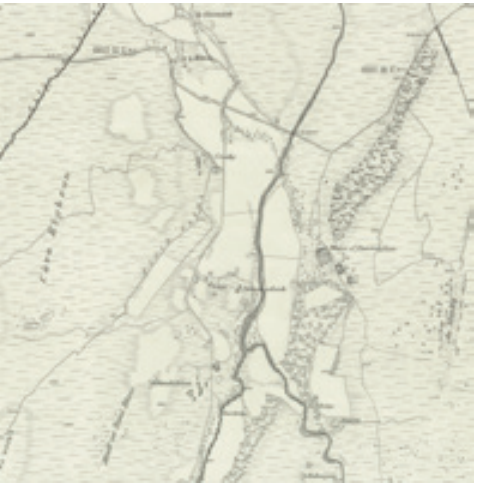
"One of the most starkly dramatic of all the clearance sites" in Scotland lies in Strathnairn.

I chanced upon these words in Rob Gibson's 'Highland Clearance Trails' last month; a guide to clearance sites in Argyll, Perthshire, Skye and Raasay, the Outer Hebrides, the Northern Highlands and the Great Glen and Strathspey. It's a compelling read that details the fraught history of the Highlands. I was struck to think that on our doorstep was a dramatic, tangible and unchanged memorial to the social past of the Highlands in the form of a cairn, 30 ft in diameter and 6ft high and yet, I had heard nothing about it.

I decided to dedicate this article to finding out what I could about this site and what happened to the people of that township at the turn of the century. I've spoken to people and looked at maps, censuses, photos, newspaper accounts, place-name books and history books in an effort to gain an impression of the people and the forces at play and how such history could be almost forgotten and barely recorded.

The information gathered locally by Gibson was in relation to this significant cairn on the Dunmaglass estate; 'The last MacGillivray chief, John William XIII, at the age of 26 sold Dunmaglass to an Englishman, Colonel Sopper, in 1890. Some years later the Colonel had an altercation with a tenant whom he regarded as having been impudent. The tenant was given notice to quit, but other MacGillivray tenants objected so all were evicted. Their homes were demolished and the house stones piled high in one great heap, presumably so that the tenants could not return.'

Rob Gibson was told this by Bob Mulholland, Farr who most probably had heard it from Andy Cumming, Croft Croy. I made some phone calls and spoke to another local who recalls hearing accounts of this in his youth from older members of the community. Those accounts would conceivably have been from living memory. One additional detail



that he told me was that the estate workers who were made to raise the houses and clear the stones, burnt their fingers with the heat still in them.

I went then to the satellite images of Dunmaglass estate. Silently winging down from space, with the help of google earth, it was startling to see the large cairn of stones and all of the base stones of the township clearly visible. It's a very instant sort of archeology and a view that illustrates clearly the scale of the settlement.

At a busy meeting of South Loch Ness Heritage Society, at Gorthleck Hall, on a snowy afternoon, and standing under a brass plaque to Sopper's memory, I learnt a few other things; that there were in fact 3 cairns, that Sopper styled himself 'Lord Strathnairn' and that he had also owned Easter Aberchalder at one time. I asked one of the local historians how such an event as the clearance of people could be almost forgotten - he suggested that people would have kept quiet 'about such matters' and there would have been, he thought, an element of shame about it as tenants beholden to and employees in the pay of the landlord would have been hard placed to take in expelled relatives or clansmen.

I went then to the National Map Library website to access the old OS maps. The cairn is about 400 yards on the right of the road up to Dunmaglass lodge and visible by the B851. The settlement had a name; Crochy (not Croachy). The map website has a facility that allows you to marry the satellite image to the old OS maps - and the three cairns, of which Crochy is by far the biggest, correspond exactly to the three settlements of Crochy, Milton & Clovendale. It's perhaps best to describe the evidence from this and other on-line sources in terms of a timeline.

1871 6-inch OS map: - The area was surveyed for the first edition OS map. There are 7 settlements on the estate - Crochy, Milton, Clovendell (Anglecized from Dail Sgaoilte), Lagg, Drumnacloich, Achnaloddan and Balnagaig.

1876-8: - The settlements are described in the OS place name books e.g. Crochy - crofters houses and offices and other dwelling houses. 1 storey high, thatched. Achnaloddan - applies to 2 small farm houses with their offices together with a collection of dwelling houses. Fair condition etc.

1878 1-inch OS map: - all 7 settlements are visible.

1890 - John William MacGillivray, 13th Chief of MacGillivray sells to Lt. Col. Frank

W. Sopper, ending 400 years of Clan MacGillivray's connection to the land.

1891: - the census documents people living in these settlements - I have yet to gather the figures and calculate the rate of change in population about this period.

1894 6-inch map revisions: - Outlines only remain for the settlements - apart from 3 roofed properties at Clovendell.

1899 revisions: - I spoke to a map expert at the Map Library in Edinburgh who explained that the outlines of the stones on the ground would have also been mapped. This is what is shown in the 1899 OS map, as there are no shaded buildings (shaded buildings indicating roofed properties).

1901: - interestingly at this census, all original place-names have been erased and descriptions are given only for properties on the estate e.g Dunmaglass Ploughman's House, Dunmaglass Gamekeeper's House, Dunmaglass Shepherd's House etc.

It was a time of upheaval and rapid change all over the Highlands. Alan Lawson in 'A Country called Stratherrick' tells us that 'the last MacGillivray laird of Dunmaglass could maintain with indignation to the Crofting Commission in the 1880s that no tenants had been turned off the estate. At the beginning of the century there were 7 townships or holdings on Dunmaglass, all tenanted by MacGillivrays, in groups or singly, while at the close of the century no croft or small holding remained and the estate itself was in the hands of strangers.' As Lawson has it 'It was the end of an old song'.

Lawson describes the changes that came to the Straths of South Loch Ness: 'Local estates were now valued as mainly sporting properties. The wild North was a sportsman's paradise waiting to be exploited... the 'gentry' and wealthy industrialists from the South flocked to the Highlands, to the hill estates they bought or rented. Shooting lodges of impressive size were built in remote glens and in the late summer were briefly graced by stylish ladies and tweedy gentlemen breathing blood and gunpowder with their retinue of personal servants. Local men found employment as keepers, stalkers, water-bailiffs, stablemen etc. but others, not employees, were unwelcome. When Foyers estate came up for sale in 1895 the prospectus made the point that there were no crofters or cottars on the Wester Aberchalder and Garrogie portions, similarly Farraline estate.'

Another phone call and a visit, this time to Willie Forbes, Farr, who told me about a Sopper family photo album. It had been sourced by Hilda Hesling who had been instrumental in setting up the Strathnairn Heritage Association with him. She directed me to the album which she deposited at the Highland Archive but, before doing so she had 20 photos of interest from it copied. The album has since been taken back by the Sopper family.

On closer study of one picture and using the OS map and the angles of the ditch, wall, building and sky-line as bearings, I'm almost certain that this photo shows buildings at Crochy.

There is also a photo of the young MacGillivray, John William the 13th chief, who sold up at 26, presumably to cover debts and fund his life elsewhere. One wonders if he felt uneasy here, a curio on display. He himself was deceased in London at 50, with no heir.

I cycled up the drive to look at the cairn. One could almost assume it was a field clearance cairn, commonly of Bronze Age origins, when fields were cleared of stones; indeed one local I spoke to believed it to be such and had never

queried its existence. Another thought it to be a cairn in memory of the Clan MacGillivray. Seemingly on the estate itself it is referred to as 'The MacGillivray cairn', assumed to be a memorial to the Clan.

The new searchable newspaper archives are revealing new sources. I came across an account of Sopper's welcome party given by the tenants of the estate on 20th December 1889.

The Inverness Courier describes that the day was given as a general holiday and on the occasion of his welcome flags and banners containing words of welcome were erected on points running up the road. A procession headed by a piper marched to the lodge to 'welcome their new landlord with ringing cheers'.

The tenant's address is most deferential and carefully worded. '...it is not out place here, we think, to allude to the fact that for a series of years past agriculturalists of all classes have been passing through a very severe and trying ordeal but we believe that better days are at hand and we have every reason to anticipate much prosperity and contentment under your regime as our landlord'.

They finish by asking that the 'Giver of all Good may abundantly bless you and your household, this is the earnest prayer and fervent wish of all your people'. How swiftly these hopes of a happy regime would have to be checked. All evidence seems to suggest that within 4 or 5 years many of their townships would be demolished and settled communities of people disbanded.

The article concludes 'The night being dark, the colossal bonfire was visible at a distance of many miles. The company danced merrily around the fire to the music of the bagpipe, played ably by Mr. MacTavish'.

The newspaper archive also revealed a new source for the history of the Straths; The Deer Commission gathered evidence in Strathnairn, Strathdearn and Stratherrick in 1894. Gladstone's ministry had heard the anguished cries of the crofting population. The widespread land raiding of 1891 in the Isles had failed to bring about any significant change towards a fairer distribution of the available land resources and a Royal Commission of Inquiry was tasked at looking at the unchecked expansion of sporting deer parks in the Highlands and Islands, and earmarking land which might be suitable for small-holdings.

William MacGillivray, Balnabeeran farm, aged 32, gave evidence that tenants were cleared by Sopper the previous year 'under circumstances of severity'. It must have been an intimidating arena. The Sheriff court in Inverness was packed. The notable attendants were listed; sheriffs, M.P.s, church representatives and many factors and also famous agitators for land reform and crofters' rights. His hope was to help improve the lot of the local crofters and to perhaps help reclaim for farming, land previously given over to sheep in the first round of clearances and for sporting pursuits in his own time.

In reference to tenants cleared from the settlement of Achnaloddan on Dunmaglass the year previous MacGillivray recounts that they each had '6 or 7 cows, a pair of horses and 200-300 sheep'. He also tells that 'at one time the farm was occupied by 20 small farmers and crofters. It was now solely in the hands of the proprietor. The tenants who were removed had not fallen behind in their rents.'

Another man, James MacDonald of Aberarder describes how there were only half a dozen farms on the estate when there used to be 'a great deal more' and when asked how the farms had fallen out

of cultivation he replied 'the people could not afford the increased rents and had to leave'.

I have yet to get through the full details of the evidence taken from the Deer Commission but, in the newspaper's summary of evidence from other parts of the Highlands, where mention is made of Glen Calvie and Sutherland and Raasay - places infamous for the severity and brutality of their clearance - it was arresting to see mention of Dunmaglass.

What recourse would the people have had? The Napier Commission had reported, the Deer commission had heard their story but, in reality, what could the people have done? I asked this question of Rob Gibson, a long time land-rights activist and historian of clearance. He said, in reality, very little. It has been suggested that crofters failed to appreciate that the remit of the Commission only asked them to schedule, or identify, the available land. They were not asked to create new landholdings.

I have been helped by Lynn Shaw Reid, a descendent of some of the MacGillivray's from Dunmaglass whose labour of love has been to trace back her family connections and gather together a sizeable online forum from the diaspora. She was able to tell me that the 2 farming brothers that were cleared from Achnaloddan in 1892/3 were living on Aberarder in 1901 and had died from pneumonia in 1903 aged 55 and 68. Their 'deplenishing sale' was held in May of 1893 - they sold the mechanics of their working lives, their horses, ploughs, ladders, turnip drills etc. There was another 'deplenishing sale' the same month; a Mr Robertson of Dunmaglass auctioned 10 horses and 30 cows.

It would seem many MacGillivrays left the Strath for New Zealand about this time. A published work on family trees from Dunmaglass 'The Hills and the Heather', written in New Zealand, makes only passing reference to the 'clearance cairns'. It was the end point of the MacGillivray connection to the place and one wonders if to have investigated it further might have tarnished the romantic idea of home and clan.

One reason I was gripped by this story is, I think, that it illustrates how easily our own history can be forgotten and overwritten. Another is that the huge cairn and neatly levelled stone footprints are unlike other remnants of settlements that we are so used to seeing in the Highlands. It could be seen as a statement of sorts. It's still there, strangely, the stone has not been repurposed and it is easily mistaken for a pre-historic feature; it's as if Sopper was saying; I have erased you into pre-history, your connection to this place and community are of no importance now.

In weeks where a lead item in one national newspaper reports on the 'Scottish estate owners' fear at reversing Highland Clearances' and there are moves to have cleared land mapped, it would seem this is an issue as alive as it's ever been. One wonders if the efforts being made, and hope invested, will resolve themselves differently than they did in William MacGillivray, Balnabeeran's day.

I'd be glad to hear any other information people might have on these matters and hope to expand upon this piece in a blog soon.

References; Alan Lawson 'A Country called Stratherrick', Mary Miller Neé MacGillivary 'From the Hills and the Heather of Scotland', Edward Meldrum, 'From Nairn to Loch Ness', Inverness Courier 1894, Angus Macleod archive.

Thanks to; Lynn Shaw Reid, Alister Chisolm, Willie Forbes, Hilda Hesling, Rob Gibson, Gwen Bowie, Liza Mulholland, Neil Shaw photography & other local sources.

WANTED!

70 years ago this year the Highland Show was held in Inverness. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth paid a visit, and it was after this visit that the Show was re-named The Royal Highland Show.

Do you have any records, photographs or memories of the event?

If so, please email Pete Small at peterjsmall@btinternet.com

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STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

BOARD MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY – DECEMBER 2017

The December 2017 Board Meeting was held on 13 December in Farr Community Hall following the 2017 Annual General Meeting. There were two apologies.

GRANT ACTIVITY

No grant applications were received.

OTHER BUSINESS

- New Board Member Trevor Slade was welcomed to the meeting.
- Isobel McQueer was thanked for Chairing the organisation over the past year and had indicated she didn't not wish to stand for re-election.
- Annual Office Bearer election: Ian Hunt was elected as Chair. Scott MacDonald was elected as Vice Chair.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY – JANUARY 2018

The January 2018 Board Meeting was held on 25 January in Farr Community Hall. There were four apologies.

GRANT ACTIVITY

No applicants were invited to attend the meeting to discuss applications. The table below shows the grants that were approved at the Board meeting.

Applicant	Value	Type of Grant
Daviot Primary School Parent Council	£7,300.00	Towards various extra-curricular educational activities and experiences
Farr Primary & Nursery School	£22,425.00	Towards various extra-curricular educational activities and experiences
Mark Burton	£226.57	Energy Efficiency Grant
1 applicant*	£500	Supplementary Home Heating Grant
1 applicant*	£1,076.22	Hardship Grant
H & I Hunt	£500.00	Energy Efficiency Grant

*the applicant(s) name has been withheld as part of a Board's decision to protect vulnerable groups

OTHER BUSINESS

- £96,382.01 was received from Ventient Energy which is now responsible for the

Farr Wind Farm contribution to the Fund.

- The Foundation Scotland Fee Review paper was agreed.
- It was agreed Scott MacDonald will be the Board Member leading on the proposal to set up a Development Trust for Strathnairn.
- Various articles to go in the February edition of the Strathnairn News were agreed.
- An updated Operation Statement was agreed

BOARD MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 2018

The February 2018 Board Meeting was held on 28 February in Farr Community Hall. There were two apologies from Board Members.

GRANT ACTIVITY

No applicants were invited to attend the meeting to discuss applications. The table below shows the grants that were approved at the Board meeting.

Applicant	Value	Type of Grant
2 applicants*	£500 x 2	Supplementary Home Heating Grant

*the applicant(s) name has been withheld as part of a Board's decision to protect vulnerable groups

OTHER BUSINESS

- Two representatives from Ventient Energy who were due to introduce Ventient Energy to the Board and make a presentation had submitted apologies due to the poor weather affecting other parts of the country.
- The Board agreed to transfer £200,000 into the SCBF investment account.
- Updates to the Code of Conduct for Board Members were agreed and the document adopted.
- From March, Board Meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month. Publicised deadlines for the year will remain the same.

2018 DEADLINES

16 May, 12 June, 11 July, 14 August, 12 September, 16 October, 14 November, and 28 November.

For more information on Strathnairn Community Benefit Fund and the Grants that are available, our contact details are as follows:

Website: www.strathnairncbf.com; Facebook: www.facebook.com/strathnairncbf; E-mail address: cosec@strathnairncbf.com; Tel: 07858 688355;

Freepost address: RTTJ-HBSK-RRUU, SCBF, Po Box 5783, Inverness, IV1 9EW.

Remember: Please use SCBF's Freepost address and not Farr Hall for all correspondence, saving you postage and ensuring a faster response.

AN OPEN INVITE...

An open invite to a community consultation afternoon to all insterested individuals and community groups - it would be great to see you!

You are warmly invited to a meeting regarding the creation of a new development trust for the area - working title - Project Strathnairn.

Project Strathnairn would seek to set up and deliver projects identified through ongoing consultation and involvement with the community.

Come along for some tea and cake and hear presentations by;
Janet Miles of Gairloch and Lochawe Community Enterprise
& Development Trust Association Scotland

A great opportunity to put forward ideas and be inspired by the possibilities for the future!

What: Community consultation event
When: Saturday 28 April, 2-4pm
Where Farr Hall, Strathnairn
Crèche available, teas and cake too!

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