

MERKINCH

News and Views

The Merkinch community newsletter, entirely written and produced in the Merkinch



THESE Fijian ladies attracted many admiring glances when they appeared in traditional costume at the International Women's Day event — for report and more pictures, see page seven.

Busy morning at church event

THE Trinity Church spring fayre offered not only food for the body at the home-baking stall, but also plenty of food for the mind at the bookstall. There was a barber's service and car-washing not to mention the usual stalls and a welcome cuppa.



<i>Inside this month:</i>	Community council's latest news — Page 3	Merkinch Partnership update — Page 5	Colourful day at the Centre — Page 7	New feature: household tips — Page 10

Helpline

AGE Concern – 0800 731 4931.

ALCOHOL, Inverness Council on – 34 Tomnahurich St, tel 220995.

CHILDLINE – 0800 1111. Free confidential advice 24 hours a day.

CAB, Citizens Advice Bureau – 235345.

COMMUNITY CENTRE – 239563.

COMMUNITY HOUSE, Craigton Avenue – 718848.

Your local COUNCILLORS –

Janet Campbell 226598;

Peter Corbett 238159;

Donnie Kerr 225217;

Bet McAllister 710558.

CRIMEBUSTERS – 0800 555111.

CROSSROADS Care Attendant Scheme – 2 Queensgate Arcade, tel 242112.

DENTIST, Emergency – 0845 644 2271.

DOG Warden – 703134.

DRUGLINE Scotland – tel 0800 776600. Free advice on drugs 24 hours a day.

HOUSING Problems – 703800.

HOUSING Repairs (including out-of-hours – 232675).

JANNY'S Hoose – Jean Mackay, 226348.

MERKINCH ENTERPRISE – 240085. mp33 – 717639.

NEW START – 715615 or 728770.

MERKINCH PARTNERSHIP Officer – 718989.

Emergency PRIMARY School – 232962.

REFUSE, extra and bulky collection – Ring 230634.

ROAD to RECOVERY – Ian Polworth, Madras Street Mission, 715809, Thursdays 7.30–8.30pm.

SAMARITANS – 66 Tomnahurich St, tel 713456 or 0345 909090 (local rate).

SMOKELINE – 0800 84 84 84.

SOCIAL WORK Dept, Emergency – 0845 769 7284.

TRADING Standards – 0845 600 4222.

VICTIM Support – tel 258834.

WEBSITE, Merkinch Community — www.merkinch.info

Inverness WOMEN'S Aid – Confidential support for abused women, tel 220719.

Got a contact you think we should include?
Contact **News & Views** on **240085**

Delight as Merkinch Post Office re-opens at last

THE closure of the sub post office in Lochalsh Road brought widespread consternation to all its many users. A petition attracted around 1000 names and despite reassurances local people were very concerned.

And so it was with great relief that the PO opened its doors last month, thanks to Paul McBain (pictured) and his wife Brenda who run Forres PO and operate an outreach service in Croy, Cawdor and Ardersier. They have a weekly arrangement to run the vital Merkinch service until someone permanent can be found.

This can be a fairly lengthy process as it can take up to 12 weeks to organise and train post office staff.

Mr McBain and his wife split the responsibility at Merkinch between them and they are assisted three days a week by Angus Walker who has returned from retirement — previously he was the sub-postmaster at Kingsmills for 22 years. Still on board is former staff member Doreen.



Current opening hours at Lochalsh Road

Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm; closed for lunch 1-2pm; 2pm to 5.30pm, except Wednesday when the office closes at 1pm. Closed all day Saturday.

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Girls' Brigade meets Mondays

6.30pm

Boys' Brigade meets Fridays 6pm

Induction Loop System

All Welcome

(www.trinityinverness.org.uk)

Inverness Trinity Church of Scotland is a registered Scottish Charity (SC015432)

Cleaning up at the Trinity spring event



A regular feature at Trinity church fund-raisers is the car wash, and after the winter we've had there were plenty of willing customers for some TLC on their pride and joy.

This issue's printing and collating processes are funded courtesy of the **MERKINCH PARTNERSHIP**

Young rowdies and off-sales concern, damp flats and fire problems cooling, and well-being centre closure

YOUNG people have to understand the boundaries and expectations the community has of them, and there is a need to work with parents, schools and the wider community to impress these boundaries and expectations.

So MP33 coordinator John McMurray told the March meeting of Merkinch Community Council. The council has been concerned for some time over groups of youngsters hanging about Grant Street, causing trouble.

Mr McMurray has been spending the last couple of months assessing the service which MP33 has been delivering. The premises do not have enough space for youngsters to let off steam. They are hoping to offer a wider variety of activities.

"I've been out on the streets, mainly Grant Street, Anderson, Brown and Madras streets, and I can see how young people can cause irritation. They will be out even more with the lighter nights.

"I am concerned about young people playing between cars — also their lack of commitment to their education. We are hoping to work with five young people four mornings a week after the summer."

Mr McMurray has met with police and with the street pastor Mark Hadfield who has been having success in the city centre. "We are hoping to have people

from MP33 and/or the street pastor in the Merkinch area on Friday and Saturday nights. We might possibly open up the Bike Shed to deal with youngsters who are under the influence."

"We also need to work with parents, schools and the wider community—it's about setting boundaries and expectations."

"We all have a duty of care to these kids."

Councillor Peter Corbett pointed out that quite a number of the young people causing trouble came down from Dalneigh and there was a pressing need for an indoor facility. There was a survey currently being carried out on the suitability of possible premises.

Mr McMurray said two thirds of them didn't know what they wanted to do. At MP33 they were trying to give youngsters a focus, and he added that arts worker Annie Marrs was trying to get budding musicians together.

CC chairman Gary Wells assured Mr McMurray that the community council would give any help they could.

■ The lease for the ticket office was at last in place and a users' group was to be set up as trustees. It was hoped representatives from the Trinity church and the cadets, along with individuals such as Annie Marrs and Dell McClurg would be involved.

■ Members agreed to write a letter

of objection to the proposed reorganisation of off-sales opening hours. They were particularly critical of the Sunday morning opening at 10am. At present alcohol cannot be sold before 12.30pm on Sundays.

■ The community council agreed to sign up to the new interactive website being launched by Highland Libraries.

■ Councillor Corbett is to find out about future plans for flats in Kessoek Road and to look into complaints about the very damp conditions in some of them. Both the cladding and the windows are in serious need of repair.

He reported that the Fire Reduction Group which had been set up because of the number of fire-raising incidents in Merkinch had met with considerable success. In the last five months the incidence of fire-raising had been reduced by 65% and someone had been charged.

■ Members were sad to hear that the Janny's Hoose was to cease the service it has been giving for over five years. Anne McCreadie said, "We should have been fighting for it."

■ Later Mrs McCreadie reported on the success of the International Women's Day event which had switched its venue from the Town House to Merkinch Community Centre (see page 7). The Centre is to close the week commencing 6th

April so that the foyer can be re-tiled. There is to be no Easter Jamboree this year.

■ There was no police report at the meeting because of operational needs following a hold-up earlier. The Partnership report, updated, is on page 5 and the Greenspace report is on page 6.

■ Members agreed to contribute £100 to the cost of Joshua Mitchell's memorial seat to match the £75 from SKRA and £25 from PC Connie Sinclair.

■ The next meeting is to be on 15th April at 7.30pm in the Community Centre.



ABOVE ... As we were going to press we understood that John McMurray had resigned from his post at MP33 which he only took up in mid-January. John will take up the post of Community Outreach Worker for 6 churches in the Dornoch area at the same time continuing to work in mp33 1 day per week.



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**Nicol's of 57 Grant Street,
Inverness IV3 8BP, Tel 01463 231596**

Briefs...

SINGERS from Merkinch joined others from other parts of the city — and even Dingwall — at The Big Sing which took place at the Community Centre on the evening of 24 March.

Altogether five choirs, including local group Singing for Pleasure, had an informal evening sharing their enjoyment in song with enthusiastic individuals. They not only had the opportunity to hear what each others' choirs were working on, but also the chance to all sing together.

The inspiration for the event followed a visit by Elsie Normington, who runs Singing for Pleasure, to a similar evening in the Lothians.

The previous Saturday saw a four-hour vocal workshop at the Centre.

STILL on the subject of music... around 20 signed on for a six-week Theory and Appreciation of Music class being held in the Community Centre over March and April. The ability to play an instrument was not necessary.

DATE for your diary — healer May Nicolson from Glasgow is coming to Merkinch on 1st May. Watch out for details in our next issue.

Looking forward even further — the European elections are being held on 4th June; all voters have to be registered by 19th May. If you want to check if you are registered, ring 0800 393 783. Ring the same number if you want to vote by post or by proxy.

TIME banking came to Inverness last month; the scheme was launched at Inshes Church on 12th March by Volunteering Highland. A time bank is a way for people to come together to help others and help themselves at the same time by giving and receiving our particular skills. When you give someone a helping hand, you are given a credit which you can then exchange for help from someone else. More details about time-banking from Nicola Rafferty at Volunteering Highland, Millburn Road on 01463 711393 or email enquiries@volunteeringhighland.org

Thought for the day

"It's never too late to be what you might have been."

George Eliot

Farewell from the Janny's Hoose



Judy Hamilton, Myra Campbell, and Jean Mackay

THERE has been a big question mark over the future of the Janny's Hoose recently. It has finally been decided that the Janny's Hoose staff will finish work here on 31 March and will either be found a job elsewhere in the council or paid off. As far as we are aware the baby clinic and smoking cessation will continue in the building and it may be possible for groups to use it as well.

Looking back it has been an amazing experience. So many people helped us to make the Janny's Hoose the success that it was, there was so much good will it was really heart-warming.

People despair about the state of the world, but we are convinced that there are a lot more good people willing to try and make things better for other people than there are people only out for themselves at any cost to others. So many of you have taken us into your hearts, it's felt like we've been one big happy family. We will treasure the experiences that we've had in the Janny's Hoose.

There was a time in my past when things seemed really bleak for me, and I felt that I was at the end of my tether. Someone came along just at the right moment to help me through it, and from then on I felt that I would like to help others through their bleak moments. I was fortunate to be able to do this.

It has been a huge privilege to be working in the Janny's Hoose, and most of the time we've had a lot of fun too. It worries us that we won't be here to help people any longer, but we have helped people who are now in a position to pass this on to others. We would like to take this opportunity to ask everyone who has been helped by us to keep an eye out for others who may need a little help along the way.

I would also like to pass on a few gems that I have gathered over the years. They have helped me so much, maybe they could help you too.

- How important is it? So often we let little things annoy us out of all proportion to their importance. Is it really worth getting upset over?

- First things first. Sometimes we concentrate and do the easiest things first. Are they really the most important? Sometimes we feel overwhelmed and don't know where to start. Start by doing what needs to be done first, if you don't know then do a list and do anything off it. Then cross it off the list, it feels really good to do this and you feel a real sense of achievement.

- Easy does it. Don't feel that you have to do everything at once, take your time, work out what's most pressing. Don't beat yourself up about all the things you haven't done and remember to give yourself a pat on the back about all the things you have achieved. Keep it simple. We can make things so complicated for ourselves when they don't need to be. If we stop and think a minute, even better if we can have a quick chat to someone, things become a lot clearer.

- One day at a time — today is the only day we have, yesterday has gone and we can't change it, tomorrow never comes, so why worry too much about it. If we do your best today when tomorrow becomes today we'll be able to deal with it so much better.

- Let it be — there will be some things you can't do anything about, you need to accept them. If you can do something to make a situation better then do it, no point in just worrying. The most difficult thing is deciding which category the situation fits.

- Remember you only get one life, this is not a rehearsal, it's the real thing. Be all you can be and seize opportunities when they come. Although you may feel scared, we have found most people are a bit scared, those who appear confident are just able to hide it better.

Best wishes from all at the Janny's Hoose.

*Janny's Hoose Healthy Living Centre
Telford Rd, Inverness IV3 8HY*



Partnership update: funding, advice, training... and future plans

MERKINCH Partnership held an "Away Day" on 11th February at the Netley Centre in Inverness.

The agenda for the day included presentations on Partnership projects, Annual Reports from Merkinch projects funded by Fairer Scotland Funding and future plans and priorities.

Bob MacKinnon, Highland Council, gave an update on the Fairer Scotland Funding and John McMurray, Highland Council Youth Worker, gave a presentation on mp33, the youth drop-in centre in Grant Street.

The Partnership has funded a range of projects in the past year - arts, sports, the environment, training courses, drug and alcohol support work, Social Enterprise and money advice.

Other issues discussed during the meeting included the future role of the Partnership, its relationship with Inverness Partnership, working with community groups in other areas of the city and passing on knowledge and expertise.

■ The normal monthly Partnership meeting was held on 11th March in Merkinch Community Centre. In her report to members the Partnership Officer highlighted various local plans and developments: She said,

"The Merkinch Healthy Network held a meeting on 19th February to look at funding issues. As a follow-on from the meeting I met with Crossreach Beechwood House and Action for Children to assist them with an application to the Central Ward Budget, which was approved.

"I am working with WEA on an Inverness-wide proposal to deliver employability courses

funded by Fairer Scotland.

"The lease for the South Kessock ticket office has been agreed, funding is in the process of being drawn down and a Users' Group will be selected at the next Community Council meeting. The Users' Group will be responsible for drawing up a management plan for the building and is likely to include myself and arts worker Annie Marrs.

"I have had several meetings with the new manager at the Corbett Centre, who is keen for the Centre to be more involved in the local community.

"We discussed how Centre staff and users could get involved in the community garden, Inverness Green Gym and the Local Nature Reserve.

"I also attended a staff meeting to do a presentation on the work of Merkinch Greenspace."

■ The Central Ward Manager Jimmy Flint is based in the Partnership office one day per week, normally Thursdays; the sessions are useful for sharing information and fact finding.

■ The CAB Outreach sessions are currently being delivered in the Craigton Avenue Housing office, Inverness High School S3 and S4, Women's Aid and the Bought Stop.

■ The Partnership has funded a two hour minute-taking course for the Capelinch Residents



MERKINCH PARTNERSHIP

members of the group have agreed to undergo Walk Leader training, in order that the walking programme will be organised by the group and not paid Walk Leaders. This will mean less funding is required and is a big step forward for the members of the group.

Association secretary and an Environmental Volunteers' course is starting on 18th March.

■ The Escape Group held a meeting on 4th March. All the

■ The next Partnership meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st April in the Community Centre.

For Sports Update please see page 12.

AiM plan to run Saturday afternoon arts workshops for children and families

WITH the Janny's Hoose preparing for closure, Arts In Merkinch have decided to take over the popular Friday morning ceramic class in the Cameron Youth Centre which attracts between 10 and 12 women each week.

AiM has been given the green light on the proposed Saturday afternoon art workshops in the Motorbike Shed in Grant Street. These will be aimed at children and their families and some will be led by the arts worker, Annie Marrs, and others by paid tutors.

Five sessions have been planned over the next 10 weeks to assess demand. The sessions will be advertised through the schools as well as using *News and Views*, posters and other press.

■ The Merkinch Theatre Group continues to go from strength to strength. The Junior group has a regular attendance of 15 and is working on a production of *The Gruffalo*, which they will perform during the summer festival in July. The Junior Group is also working with Sita Kumari and the Ganga and the Shark dance. The Senior group continues with its regular attendance of between 10 and 15 and is progressing well.



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OUT OF SCHOOL



History and comedy, food and books, sport and dance

AS from 8th April, school dinners are to cost £1.65, parents are being reminded.

- There was a meeting of the Parent Council on 10th March when behaviour management in school was high on the agenda.
- History re-enactor Ray Owen visited Merkinch Primary P3-P5/6 on 26th March to enrich the children's understanding of their People in the Past projects.
- Earlier in the month, pupils celebrated World Book Day, sharing their favourite book with others and writing a report on it. The best reports in each class received a £5 book token, and all the pupils received vouchers towards specially recommended books.
- If you spotted children running around in their pyjamas one day last month, it wasn't that they had

forgotten to dress before they went out, it was Red Nose Day, and they, along with the staff, were encouraged to "something funny for Comic Relief"... not that too many staff in their pyjamas were to be noticed in Grant Street after school that afternoon!

- Teams from P3, P4/5 and P6/7 represented Merkinch in the MacRoberts Cup for cross-country running on 20th March. And pupils from P4, P5 and P6 took part in a potted sports event at Dalneigh the following week. And on the 26th, P7 pupils joined S1 pupils from Inverness High for a basketball tournament at the Sports Centre.

- Following last year's success, dancer Frank MacConnell is returning to work with some senior pupils during PE classes.

Lucky winner spends prize



AS reported last month, the main winner of Nicol's Killer Prices free prize draw was Mrs Diane MacDonald of Telford Street and she is seen here (centre) with the Nicols when she dropped in to spend her prize voucher.

■ You can win a £10 Nicol's voucher — see page 11.

Embryonic earth ship idea taking off

A BENCH in memory of murder victim Joshua Mitchell has been installed and the dedication ceremony was due to take place on Saturday 21st March, Ali Locke of Greenspace reported to members of Merkinch Community Council at their March meeting.

He pointed out that, at the end of the day, the gesture was not about what Greenspace or the residents' group had done, but about the tragic, innocent victim of a knife crime and the community remembering him and showing support for his family and friends.

Greenspace has been successful in securing funding from SEPA to clear litter, which has now been carried out.

The interpretation plan for the reserve is at the draft stage and consultant Verity Walker has been out and about talking to everyone she can about it. When complete it will have action points, timetables and costing that the Local Nature Reserve management team can take forward.

Path building is continuing, with the wheelchair access ramp to the board walk nearing completion.

The Earth Ship feasibility study was due to take place on the 20th of March after *News & Views* went to press. "Even at this embryonic stage," said Mr Locke, "the amount of interest it is generating via email and text from the



press, radio and individuals is quite amazing."

April timetable

All meetings are on Wednesday mornings from 10am to 1pm and participants meet at the Turning Circle at South Kessock.

Activities this month are planned as follows... Wed 1st: Clear up the woodland by the canal bank; Environmental art. Wed 8th: Create habitat piles in Woodland by canal bank; Wildlife survey. Wed 15th: Easter Special – Healthy Walk with picnic; Decorate your own Easter Egg. Wed 22nd: Habitat management work; Tree ID session with the Rangers. Wed 29th: Footpath/ Woodland – tbc; Frogs, toads and newts in the reserve.

All these activities are suitable for all abilities but involve some walking to the site. Please be advised that on occasions there may be a change to the day's activities. Pick-up from Inverness bus station can be arranged. Joining the Green Gym also offers the opportunity to take part in the John Muir Award scheme. Please contact the office (01463 811560) on Mondays to confirm tasks/ book place/ arrange pick-up/ find out about the John Muir Award Scheme. Ullie can also be reached on 07739 447987 or at u.wenzel@btcv.org.uk

Green Gym®



Women's Day event is roaring success

MERKINCH Community Centre has seldom seen anything quite so exotic — the colour of all the fabrics, the smells of scrumptious food, the movement and colour of the children performing Chinese dances — all contributed to a memorable atmosphere.

Besides the dancing and food there were demonstrations of basket-making and yarn-spinning, henna-painting and other crafts. There were samples, including a selection of Fairtrade drinks from the Co-op. But no sales tables!

Pictured RIGHT... Just some of the food of all nations that was available for lunch.

BELOW RIGHT... Henna painting is always popular and this henna artist was kept busy all day.

BELOW LEFT... Artisan Threads from Nairn demonstrated the art of spinning.

BOTTOM... The young dancers were equally skilled at dancing with fans and ribbons, Chinese-style.





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Tel: 01463 717639
Fax: 01463 717723

It seems 2009 is already proving to be a busy one for mp33. Our current weekly programme is rapidly expanding, including more evening and weekend work. As part of our focus on raising achievement and employability, we are currently liaising with local schools, including the Inverness High School and the Inverness Royal Academy, to host groups of young people and support them in exploring alternative learning opportunities for their personal and vocational development. We are also in the preliminary stages of planning the High School ILC's Summer Programme 2009 - details of which will take a little time to amass, but should be available by May. The Programme will include a variety of sporting/outdoor activities and cultural/arts related events, which should cater for most tastes. We look forward to a busy Summer ahead.

Coming activities and events... Winter-Spring Programme 2009



Unfortunately, not much interest has been taken so far in the formation of a youth choir for Inverness, which is disappointing, but with everything else going on in a fairly busy cultural calendar, it is perhaps to be expected.

We will continue to try and promote the idea for the time being. If you are interested, please contact Gus or Andy at mp33 01463 717639.



Our guitar club, on the other hand, is attracting quite a lot of attention. We will be meeting briefly every Monday afternoon at 4pm for the next few weeks, just for an hour, in order to establish a start date for our foundation course in acoustic guitar, possibly in late April or early May.

The course is primarily designed to equip beginners with some basic guitar playing skills, whilst introducing them to basic theory. By the end of the course, participants should be able to play a variety of rhythms using a number of different chords, and manage some basic picking and fingerstyle. They should also be able to read chord blocks and tablature reasonably well. Whilst we appreciate that there will be varying levels of ability within the group to start with, which we will try to cater for, all participants will be requested to follow the lessons at group meetings during the course.

Spotlight on...



...John McMurray, Youth Development Officer

Another new cheery face has been seen around Merkinch lately. John McMurray has joined the mp33 team as a Youth Development Officer, working with Gus MacIver and Naomi Hyslop. His focus will be one of coordination of mp33 and developing the services for local young people.

John enjoys working with young people on the streets and hopes to provide additional activities along with Gus, Naomi and other staff members, Kerry, Violet, Andy and Del. He has a grown up family of his own (two girls aged 26 & 21) and his main hobby is golf, although he has been a badminton coach, enjoys sea canoeing and once ran an outdoor pursuit centre when he was in his twenties. John has had long experience in working with young people, more recently in Paisley. Once you meet him you will quickly realise he is not from these parts due to his strong Northern Ireland accent.



The Film Factory is up to full production at the moment, with a number of shorts being produced by the Film Makers' Group on Friday evenings, plus a documentary by the Inverness High School's Pupil Council, containing interviews with pupils and staff, which was shot over 2 afternoons, and will be edited into a 20 minute presentation to be showcased sometime mid-May. The finished production is aimed at informing future pupils of the IHS, currently attending feeder Primaries, about what the IHS has to offer, and to reassure them during the momentous and intimidating transition from primary to secondary education.

The Film Factory is a regular group which meets on Friday Evenings, 6-8pm. We are always looking for new members. It's a great chance to meet new friends and get into creative film work. Contact us and get involved - 717639.



mp33 was honoured to host a brief visit and basketball demonstration by players from the Scottish Rocks Pro Basketball Team recently. The players were in Inverness to promote Twilight Basketball, completely free weekly training sessions and games held at Inverness College's Longman Campus on Friday evenings from 6-8pm.

The players had a discussion with the Boys Group about Basketball at mp33, and then took the boys down to the park to play a quick game, before presenting them with a free basketball. Hopefully it will encourage more to take up this tremendous opportunity to play basketball under qualified instruction.



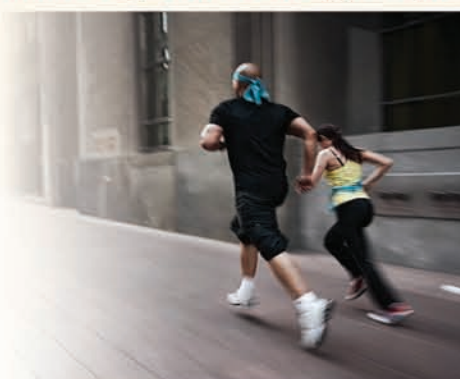
Want to get fit, lose weight, meet people and make new friends?

Join a local JogScotland group.

We have completed JogScotland's Jog Leader training, and will be inviting potential participants to help form a local Merkinch JogScotland jogging group in 2009. mp33's group will be for young people 13-25 years.

JogScotland groups are designed to cater for a wide range of people, from absolute beginners to experienced and seasoned runners. Interested? Contact Naomi or Gus at mp33 on 01463 717639.

Our next meeting is on Monday 13th April 2009 at 6pm, at mp33.



Granny's favourite household tips

THE soap and household cleaning products manufacturers have us all convinced that our homes should be 99% germ free. Not only is this questionable, but the use of all these chemicals is also unnecessarily expensive and frankly, not very green. For many of our sprays and creams could be replaced by much cheaper alternatives that you may already have in your kitchen cupboards — salt, vinegar, sodium bicarbonate, lemon juice, ammonia, to name but a few. Here are some tips that were well known to house-wives 50 or more years ago... and some for the DIY fan and the gardener too!

Cleaning windows

Use bicarbonate of soda in water to remove dirt from windows. Alternatively, mix one tablespoon of vinegar for every pint of water to clean and de-fog them. Finally, once they are washed and dried, polish them up with a crunched up sheet of newspaper—it's something in printer's ink that does the trick.

Decorating

Don't struggle removing old wallpaper. Mix a solution of white vinegar and hot water and, using a roller, soak it thoroughly. It should peel off easily.

When painting windows, don't bother with masking tape. Tear or cut strips of newspaper, dampen and stick to the window next to the wood — it'll do just as well.

When roller-painting, cover your paint tray with kitchen foil — you can pour any excess back in the can, then bin the foil. To keep left-over paint, fix the lid securely and store it upside down. And to revive hardened paint brushes soak in hot vinegar then wash in warm soapy water.

In the garden

We all know slugs can be caught because of their liking for beer, but equally, they hate eggshells, so try crunching up some shells and scattering them around your precious plants. And drink the beer yourself!

Madras Street Hall

welcomes you to the Merkinch!

We are the local Free Church of Scotland in this community and have been working in the area for over 100 years. Come and visit us at any of the following meetings which take place regularly in the Madras Street Hall.

Sunday Services 5pm

Sunday School 5pm (ages 4-12)

(Children meet during Sunday Service)

Bible Discussion Group

'Road to Recovery' Meeting

(support work for alcoholics & drug addicts)

For meeting times or other inquires please contact:
Rev John Wagner on (01463) 223199

Jesus said: 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.'

Residents Round-up

Latest news from local tenants' and residents' associations in Merkinch

ACTRA

MEMBERS have been lobbying for some time about the noise from the traffic going over Friars' Bridge, now over 20 years old. So they are pleased to see that Highland Council has men working on the offending loose expansion rods at night when they will cause least disruption.

Residents on the area bounded by the south side of Abban Street and east side of Telford Road have received letters from Highland Council asking if they have any views on being officially "returned" to the Merkinch area. This chunk of Merkinch became part of the "Park" ward prior to the new ward arrangements brought in at the last Highland Council elections. Merkinch Community Council raised the matter with Highland Council and residents were given 21 days to reply. At time of going to press it was not known if there had been any objections.

ACTRA has not met for a while, but there is to be a meeting soon.

Glendoe Terrace

RESIDENTS are pleased to see a bus shelter installed on the Terrace, albeit the perspex panels looked decidedly second-hand and had to be replaced. They are also delighted that they have had new windows installed.

The residents' association are working to brighten the area up, and to this end they hope to once again have hanging flower baskets this summer.

The residents' association meets every six to eight weeks.

Capelinch

CAPELINCH residents have long been concerned for the safety of children around the Anderson Street complex and are pleased that speed bumps are to be installed under the arches there. With the ever-increasing traffic due to all the new building in the area, and the lighter evenings, traffic hazards are of considerable concern.

The association has complained to the council about the state of the playpark which has a lot of rubbish and dogs' dirt.

The next meeting of Capelinch Residents will be in the Community Centre on 16th April at 7pm. All residents welcome.

Calling all residents' groups

Tenants and Residents Associations within the Merkinch area are invited to get in touch with News & Views with a view to regular coverage of their issues. Ring us at Merkinch Enterprise on 240085 and leave your name and phone number and the editor will call you back, prior to going to press, so that we have the latest news from your association. Alternatively, email or hand in a report/minutes of your latest meeting.

**Do you have a story for us?
An achievement to tell us about?
Do you want to have your say about
local issues?**

**Contact News & Views at
Merkinch Enterprise on 240085**

You and your health



If your feet have started to pong...



ATHLETE'S foot is a contagious, irritating, fungal infection which affects the skin of the feet, particularly in between the toes. It usually occurs when feet are continually in a moist environment, especially with excessive trainer wearing. Most people recognise athlete's foot and will ask for a treatment over the counter by name.

Pharmacist's Advice

- Wash your feet morning and night.
- Dry the feet thoroughly, particularly in between the toes.
- Use a separate towel for the affected area.
- Wear a clean pair of cotton socks each day.
- Use the preferred treatment for the stipulated time. Ask your pharmacist if you are unsure.
- Use athlete's foot powder to prevent re-infection.



- Diabetics should ask the pharmacist to check their feet before treatment. If symptoms do not improve in three months, ask your pharmacist for advice.

Remember – people are all different. Some of the information given above may not be right for you. Ask your pharmacist when you need advice.

Prize Quiz

This month quiz fans once again get a shot at winning the Nicol's Killer Prices' prize of a £10 voucher. When you've answered all the questions, fill in your details and send it in or deliver to Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant Street to reach us no later than Wednesday 15 April.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. How is 555 displayed in Roman Numerals?
A: DLV
B: VVV
C: DNA.</p> <p>2. How many individual pieces are there in a set of dominoes?
A: 18
B: 28
C: 38.</p> <p>3. In Muslim countries what is the equivalent of the Red Cross?
A: The Red Moon
B: The Red Crescent
C: The Red Croissant.</p> <p>4. What does a cutler make, sell or repair?
A: Scissors
B: DIY tools
C: Knives.</p> <p>5. What term is used to describe an old song re-recorded by a new artist?
A: Copy
B: Rework
C: Cover.</p> | <p>6. Which country's national symbol is a Lotus flower?
A: Cuba
B: Ethiopia
C: India.</p> <p>7. Which alcoholic spirit is derived from rye and juniper berries?
A: Gin
B: Bourbon
C: Vodka.</p> <p>8. Which company made the first tea bags?
A: The Coop
B: Lipton's
C: Tetley's.</p> <p>9. What industry is associated with Hatton Gardens?
A: The millinery trade
B: The diamond trade
C: Gardening.</p> <p>10. What variety of mandarin takes its name from a city in Morocco?
A: Satsuma
B: Tangerine
C: Valencia.</p> |
|---|--|

Name.....

Address.....

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Rowland's Pharmacy
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Tel: 01463 232217

Last month's quiz check

1. Rainbow Warrior was the Greenpeace trawler sunk in July 1985.
2. The colour of the zero on a roulette wheel is green.
3. The Archbishop of Canterbury has his official London residence at Lambeth Palace?
4. The legal drinking age in the USA is 21.
5. Leonardo da Vinci painted The Last Supper.
6. The syrup drained from raw sugar is called molasses.
7. In clothing care symbols a plain circle signifies dry clean.
8. Before the Euro, the unit of currency in Italy was the lira.
9. The Kessock Bridge opened in 1982.
10. Artist Salvador Dali was Spanish, from Catalonia.

... Sports News ... Sports News ...



Youngsters turn out for soccer and athletics training



LEFT... young athletes in training at the Merkinch Partnership-funded Merkinch Amateur Athletics Club.

ABOVE... Coach Martin Goodenough with the lads who turned out for football training on a decidedly chilly Saturday morning.

Sports matters

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ESPAR® There for you

MEMBERS from the Merkinch Facility group met with Brian Woodrow from Genesis Consultancy for an initial meeting to discuss the terms and outcomes for the feasibility study for a Sports Facility based at Carse Park.

After meetings with Peter Corbett and John Beaton the idea of forming a Merkinch Football Academy run by Clach youth coaches has had to be reconsidered after Clach Youth felt they did not have the coaching resources to take this on.

After a meeting in MP33 it was decided there was sufficient interest to form a Merkinch Street League team with around 14 players signing up. Two new coaches have been selected.

The Leisure League continues with the Merkinch team who have a regular turnout of around 10 players

Merkinch Mountain Bike Club organised a local trip to Craig Phadrig on 15th February which attracted 10 participants;

however the most recent trip only had four participants on 7th March.

The Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership continues to run every Monday from 4pm to 6pm with 7 participants.

To increase interest in the Twilight Basketball sessions at Inverness College, visits from the Scottish Rocks Basketball team were arranged for 10th March at the Community Centre and to MP33 on the 11th March.


**MERKINCH
PARTNERSHIP**

... Sports News ... Sports News ...



In very wet and wintry conditions on Sunday 8th March, nine players from the Merkinch Primary Soccer Sevens along with coaches Peter Corbett (right) and Sean Ross (back left) completed the Inverness 5k fun run route and in the process raised some sponsorship money for funds towards kit, transport and so on for their Soccer Sevens season.

The team were all grateful to Liz Murray who came along to help with transport and support those running.

Unfortunately, two players were unable to attend on the day but did the 5k Fun Run on the following Sunday along with coach Peter Corbett – again!

In the Inverness Primary football league, with two games to go against Culloden and Croy/Cawdor, Merkinch primary school were – at time of going to press – in with a chance of winning their league. There is also a Cup competition still to be played end of March or early April.

Latest results in the Inverness City Taxis Darts League

Results for 12 March

A League: Uncle Bob's 6 Portland A 6, Tarradale 8 Legion A 4, Culloden Moor Inn 1 City Taxis 11.

B League: Portland Spikey's 5 Brockie's Lodge 7, East End Arrows 9 Deeno's 3, Raigmore B 11 Caley Club 1.

C League: Legion B 3 Portland X 9, Portland Club 11 Raigmore A 1, Thistle 4 Clach Club 8.

Portland A lost their 100% record when they were held to a draw by Uncle Bob's but this point was not enough for the Nairn team to stay in the race for runners-up spot – that goes to City Taxis and Bob's will be third and Culloden Moor Inn fourth. At the other end of the league Chieftain must win their last game to have any chance of avoiding last place.

In the B League East End Arrows and Raigmore B both had comfortable wins and they meet each other in the last game with everything to play for. Finlay's will be third.

Portland X beat joint leaders Legion B and this allowed Portland Club to return to the top of the C League but they have completed their fixtures. They are a point ahead of Portland X with Legion B a further point behind but both of them have one game to play.

180s were scored by Michael Hillan (Portland Club), Sandy Morrison (Culloden Moor Inn), Steve Ross (Culloden Moor Inn), Roy Younger (City Taxis), Nigel McEwan (City Taxis), Alan Fraser (Tarradale), Brian Fraser (Tarradale),

Tommy Macdonald (Legion A), Barry Maclean (Portland A), John Saint (Caley Club) and Jason McAskill (Raigmore B). The latter also had an unrecorded maximum last week as did Derek MacLennan and Gregg Hughson.

The top finishes of this week were Derek MacLennan (Deeno's) 141, Michael Hillan 122, Andy Leckie (City Taxis) 116, John Macleod (Portland X) 111 and Paul Clark (Legion A) 110. Barry Maclean hit a 12-dart leg.

The Inverness Singles, the Ladies Singles and the Junior Singles were all due to take place at the Clach Club after we went to press.

Results 7 March... Inverness Fours

Old rivals Portland A and City Taxis contested the Inverness Fours final and the Portland quartet of Jim Hunter, Davey Fraser, Shane Wharton and Peter Macdonald beat Kevin Clark, Andy MacKintosh, Derek Maclean and Nigel McEwan by 4-2. It was the second win in succession for Jim Hunter and Peter Macdonald.

The results from the quarter final stages were City Taxis 2 bt Finlay's, Portland A bt Uncle Bob's 1, Legion A bt Uncle Bob's 2, City Taxis 1 bt Culloden Moor Inn. In the semis Portland A bt City Taxis 1 and City Taxis 2 bt Legion A.

Results 7 March... Clach Shield

There was a tremendous entry for the Clach Shield with 20 fours taking part this compared well with last year's entry of 12. The results from the quarters were East End Arrows 2 bt

Culloden Moor Inn, Raigmore B bt Chieftain 1, East End Arrows 1 bt Portland X, and Spikey's 2 bt Chieftain 2.

In the semi finals Raigmore bt Culloden and Arrows bt Spikey's. After a lot of earlier rounds going to the roll-up the final was won 4-0, the winners being the Raigmore four of Kevin Gibson, George Main, Jason MacAskill and Lawrence Woolley with Lawrence ensuring victory in the fourth single with a 98 check out. The runners-up squad was Richie Ansell, Dave Chisholm, Mark Fraser and Alan Fraser. Keith Robertson had played in the earlier rounds for the winners.

Saturday 28 February

Raigmore A played host to Legion B in a fancy-dress charity darts match. The proceeds were split between RNLI (Raigmore) and Earl Haig Poppy Fund (Legion) with the winning team's charity getting two thirds of the total and the losers' one third.

Results 26 February

A League: Chieftain 2 Uncle Bob's 10, Tarradale 3 City Taxis 9, Portland A 12 Culloden Moor Inn .

B League: Caley Club 6 Portland Spikey's 6, Finlay's 7 East End Arrows 5,

C League: Raigmore A 12 Smithton 0, Portland Club 8 Portland X 4, Clach Club 4 Legion B 8.



Have a sports story to tell? Ring us on 240085

Consumer advice...

New hotline opened to combat the evil misery that loan sharks bring

HIGHLAND Council Trading Standards are seeking help in the fight against illegal money lending.

The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) launched their national hotline to combat illegal money lending last month for consumers across the entire UK.

Specialised trained staff offer advice and support to callers who have fallen victim of loan sharks.

During 2007-08 more than 7000 victims of illegal money lenders were helped under the pilot help line run by BERR.

This figure could be set to rise, however, due to increased levels of unemployment.

The confidential help line also assists in intelligence gathering about illegal money lenders practices and enables *Stop Loan Sharks* teams to collate information and take action against bogus lenders.

Since the set up of the *Stop Loan Sharks* teams, by BERR in 2004, over 60 people involved in illegal money lending have been prosecuted and a further 90 prosecutions are currently underway.

More information is needed by consumers to crack down on this despicable crime which can cause years of misery for individuals and families throughout the UK.

Consumers who suspect an illegal money lender is operating in their area are being encouraged also to contact the team using the confidential help line.

Most consumers may not know that lenders are legally obliged to be licensed by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in the UK.

Before any person or company can be granted a credit licence, however, individuals, partners and associates of any business applying for a credit licence must go through a stringent vetting and checking system to ensure that they are deemed fit to hold a licence.

Regular requests for information are made by the OFT to the police and local trading standards services regarding information held on previous convictions.

Individuals who have committed criminal offences relating to fraud or dishonesty or have a criminal record relating to violence are automatically debarred from holding a licence.

Consumers who succumb to an illegal money lender may suffer in a number of ways, as follows:

- Illegal money lenders rarely give any paperwork to the people they've loaned money to. This makes it very difficult for debtors to keep track of how much money is owed, how long the loan will last as well as the amount and timing of the repayments.

Licensed credit providers are regulated and have prescribed documentation which includes consumer's rights and obligations as well as detailed information about interest payable and repayments as well as the full term of the loan.

- Threats of violence made by loan sharks are not uncommon if payments are missed and they may take away a person's bank card as "security" of a loan. This means, in effect, the loan shark has complete hold over of the consumer's spending.

- Loan sharks charge extremely high rates of interest and also add other "charges" to loans whenever they want. Debts can become "life-long" and impossible to pay off. Families and individuals can be trapped in a life time of misery with no way out.

- People involved in illegal money-lending tend to be part of other criminal activities, too. This can include gun and knife crime, counterfeiting and drug-dealing.

If consumers know any information about an illegal money lender operating in their area they should contact the national help line to spare other individuals or families falling victim.

Confidential information can also be passed to Highland Council

Trading Standards anonymously, by letter or by phone regarding unlicensed money lenders.

The confidential national help line is **0300 555 2222** and the website is: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks>

Consumers can also text **loan (space) shark (space) and your message** to 60003.

Consumers resident in the Highland area can also write or visit:

Highland Council Trading Standards,
38 Harbour Road,
Inverness,
IV1 1UF

Or contact by telephone through Consumer Direct Scotland on 08454 04 05 06.

Poetry on the 'Net

Forgetfulness

The name of the author is the first to go followed obediently by the title, the plot, the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never even heard of, as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbour decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain, to a little fishing village where there are no phones. Long ago you kissed the names of the nine Muses goodbye and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag, and even now as you memorise the order of the planets, something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps, the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay. Whatever it is you are struggling to remember it is not poised on the tip of your tongue, not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen. It has floated away down a dark mythological river whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall, well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle. No wonder you rise in the middle of the night to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war. No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

MIC

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Merkinch News & Views always welcomes input from readers. If you have an idea for an article, any comments or questions, please get in touch with us at the above address.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor, or of Merkinch Enterprise.

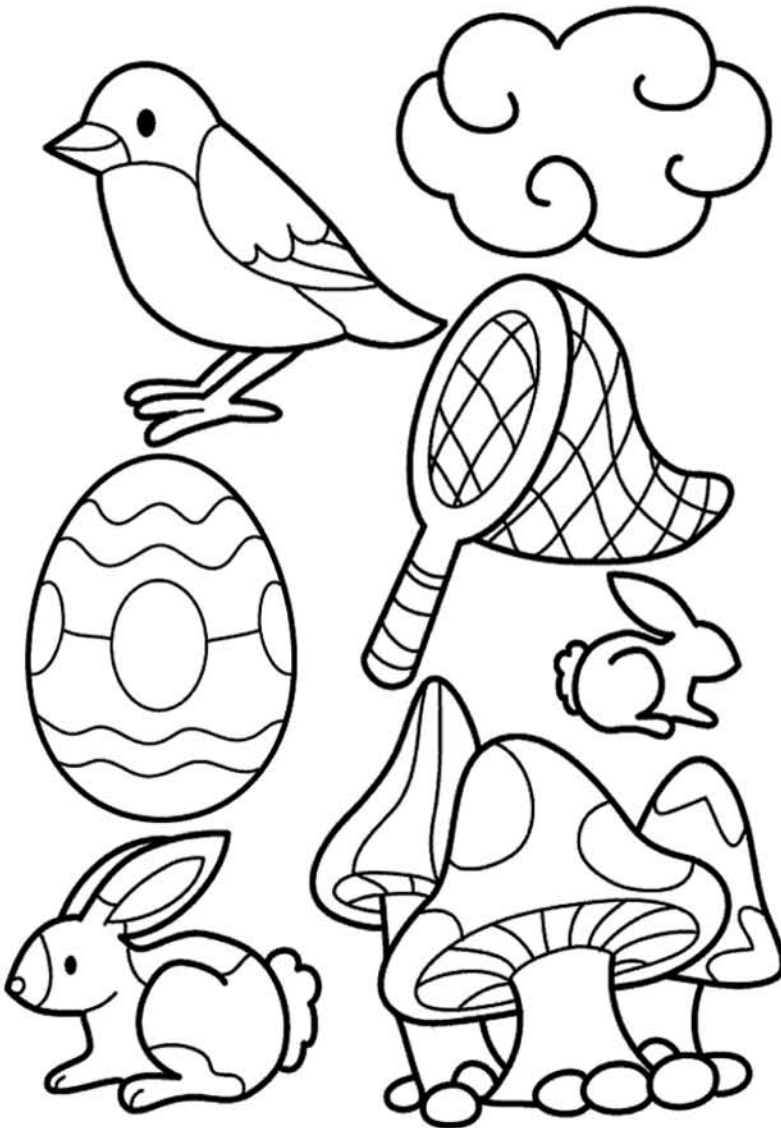
DIW

THE FLIPERZ PAGE



JOKE SPOT

Lots more spring pictures including an Easter egg and bunnies. Colour them in whatever colour you like.



Who is the cats' favourite actress?

Nicole Kitten!

Doctor Doctor I swallowed a bone.

**Are you choking?
No, I really did!**

Why did the knight run about shouting for a tin opener?

He had a bee in his suit of armour!

Fliperz still has a few vacancies for this term—contact Denise on 234232.

Fliperz are collecting Tesco vouchers for schools and children's clubs. Please hand in at Fliperz or Merkinch Enterprise.

Fliperz Daycare

Enrolment

If your child becomes 3 years old between **1st March and 31st August 2009**, you can enrol him/her for a Funded Nursery place now. Four-year-olds can also be enrolled. When enrolling please bring your child's Birth Certificate.

You may call into Fliperz and have a look round any time.

- Daycare
- Nursery Sessions
- After School Care
- Holiday Care

Contact: The Childcare Manager
Fliperz Daycare,
Simpson's Lane.
Telephone 234232.



All set for a spin

LEFT... First to arrive at the Bike Shed for the March outing of the Merkinch Mountain Biking club was John Gladstone. Also taking part were (left) Euan Wilson and Steve Morgan. Despite poor weather those who took part had a good time



THAT'S the way to do it! Lads from the Merkinch Street League team are pictured at a Saturday morning training session. The season begins with the cup competition on Tuesday 14th April. Martin Goodenough has taken charge of the team and there will be regular coaching and friendlies over the coming weeks for the Merkinch boys. If you wish to get involved this season contact Merkinch sports officer, David Paulin at Merkinch Enterprise at 14 Grant Street. Mores sports news on pages 12 and 13.

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