



# MERKINCH

  
*News and Views*

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

## Season's Greetings to all our readers, sponsors and volunteers

**RIGHT...** Deep in the woods at Fairburn, the Soccer Sevens lads from Merkinch are looking for adventure—see P13

**BELOW...** Come to the Merkinch Festival and meet the reindeer—see P5



★  
**Take your family to the Panto**

**ENTER NOW**

See Competition on P7...



## Helpline

**AGE Concern** – 0800 731 4931.

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

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

**CAB, Citizens Advice Bureau** – 235345.

**Community CENTRE** – 239563.

**Community DOG Warden** – 703134.

**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.

**Emergency DENTIST** – 0845 644 2271.

**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.

**Inverness NEW Start** – 715615 or 728770.

**Merkinch PARTNERSHIP Officer** – 718989.

**Merkich PRIMARY School** – 232962.

**Extra and bulky REFUSE 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.

**Emergency SOCIAL WORK Dept** – 0845 769 7284.

**TRADING Standards** – 0845 600 4222.

**Victim Support** – tel 710806.

**Merkinch Community WEBSITE**—  
[www.merkinch.info](http://www.merkinch.info)

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

**Got a story?  
Contact News &  
Views on 240085**

## New face on the beat

**JOINING PC Connie Sinclair on the Merkinch beat is Community Beat Officer Eddie MacKenzie.**

When PC MacKenzie joined the Northern Constabulary 16 years ago he was following in his father's footsteps—which means that he spent his childhood in numerous areas all over the Highlands and Islands.

He himself has served in Orkney for over six years, in Dingwall for five and Inverness for a further five. This has involved him in operations all over the city, so he is not unfamiliar with the Merkinch area.

Married, with three children aged nine to 21, PC MacKenzie's favourite pastime is fishing.



## Last dates for posting

**THE last date for posting Christmas cards to addresses in the UK is Thursday 18th December for Second Class and Saturday 20th December for First Class.**

**If you miss them—and there's always someone you forgot—you could also pay the extra for Special Delivery on Tuesday 23rd.**

**With regards to friends and family abroad, your international surface mail should have gone in October or November, but International Airmail is as follows: Friday 5th—South & Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Far East, Asia, New Zealand and Australia.**

**Wed 10th—Japan, USA, Canada, Eastern Europe. Frid 12th—Western Europe.**

**Parcels in the UK: Parcelforce 48—Mon 22nd and Parcelforce 24—Tues 23rd. Parcels abroad? Ask at the PO.**

## Work to start on Glendoe

**TENANTS** in Glendoe Terrace's six blocks have been officially advised that work to refurbish their homes with new kitchens, bathrooms, new flooring, rewiring and new decking on the communal landings will start early next year with the replacement of their windows.

But the rest of the modernisation programme on the 62 local authority flats will not start until 2010 and could take until 2015. The other 10 of the flats in the six blocks are privately owned and are not included in the refurb.

Tenants will have to move out for five months as their maisonette-type homes, which were built in the 1960s, are brought up to standard. The local tenants' association is delighted that their homes are not to be demolished. They were closely involved in deciding what work should be done and a door-to-door survey was carried out.

## Situation vacant for Minutes Secretary

**Merkinch Enterprise is offering part-time employment to a suitable candidate who would be able to take minutes at meetings for a variety of community groups within the Merkinch area. You will have the ability to accurately record and reproduce minutes in an electronic format for distribution. Computer equipment could be made available if required.**

**Remuneration is available at an appropriate rate for this work that will vary in time and over the month could average 10 hours. Meetings are normally in the evenings with some late afternoon so flexibility is a requirement.**

**For further information please contact Colin on 240085 or Anne on 718989 or pop in to the office at 14 Grant Street.**

**THE Highland Mobile Toy Library** have been awarded £5000 to spend on themed boxes of toys and equipment for children with additional support needs living throughout the Highlands, and to celebrate this Fliperz held a Pudsey Bear Party with the children and were featured on Fred McCauley's Radio Scotland show on Monday 10th November.

Mabel Ross the Toy Librarian and Jan McCormack the Project Coordinator were interviewed live on air by Fred McCauley regarding the money they had received and were able to explain that individual families, parent and toddler groups, schools and nurseries spread throughout the Highlands would benefit from the money the Toy Library had received. More information regarding the Highland Mobile Toy Library can be found on their website.



## Crime down — a bit — and festive cheer up, while ticket office concern rumbles on

VANDALISM in Merkinch was significantly down over the last couple of months, Community Beat Officer Connie Sinclair told the November meeting of the Community Council.

September and October had seen a total of 44 cases reported compared to 61 for the same two months last year. Generally speaking the number of calls to the area was down around 10%, and disturbances were also down in October. Also call-outs to the fire brigade over the firework season had been fewer.

The bad news was that assaults, thefts and domestic disturbances were all up this month, though over the two-month period assaults were lower than last year. Regarding the eight thefts, all took place within houses with the suspect being known to the complainer and one person is thought to be responsible for three of the thefts. Of the 10 domestic incidents reported to the police, seven have been reported to the courts, she said.

There were fewer reports of children and youths messing about with BB guns. The owner of Price Busters on Grant Street where some of these "toys" were being sold had been reported

to the Procurator fiscal under the Violent Crime Reduction Act of 2006 which covers the sale of replica weapons having the appearance of being real.

PC Eddie MacKenzie, who is new on the Merkinch beat, was introduced to members (see opposite page).

There was still some unhappiness over the way the old ticket office was being dealt with. Dell McClurg and Anne McCreadie, who ran it for many years on behalf of the Community Council said they felt they had been taken over.

There had been no vote at any meeting it had been at and no minutes of any vote to close the sub-group dealing with the project or to close the Number 2 account.

Those who had been present at the meeting when it was agreed to close the sub-group and the account said there had been no dissension.

It was pointed out that Gary Wells, the chairman, and treasurer Brian Cain were now handling the matter. The building was now cleared for a proper survey to be done, background heating was on to dry it out. The surveyor's report was not yet in, so it was not known what needed to be done.

The old broken-down boiler in the Community Centre had been taken out and it was hoped that a new one could be in by the end of the following week (21st November) or earlier as they had 90 youngsters coming for the Cello Day as well as other classes and events. Otherwise things were going very well at the centre.

There was lots of enthusiasm for the Christmas Parade and festival (see page 5) which was going to be a great event and they had a lot of good bookings for next year. Members agreed to donate £100 towards the winter festival—they heard that the reindeer alone would cost over £1000.

South Kessock Residents Association are holding their Santa's Grotto on Saturday 13th December.

Highland Council had done nothing about restoring the small corner of Abban Street and Lochalsh Road to Merkinch, members heard. The matter had been deferred until it could be seen whether the Park Community Council was to be re-established. But this had fallen through.

The next meeting is on Thursday 15th January in the Community Centre.



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## Briefs...

NESS Soaps' wonderful selection of fragrant gifts will be on sale in the Eastgate this month until the 22nd December.

**FOLLOWING on from their success in the "Last Choir Standing" programme, the Singing for Pleasure group has launched their second CD, "Christmas Bells". There are nine carols and Christmas songs on the disc which costs £5. Obtainable at the Community Centre.**

A NEW partner joined Fairfield Medical Practice last month. Dr Claire Robertson will normally work all day Wednesday and Friday and on some Tuesdays. Since June this year the practice has been running a nine-month pilot project offering a few early morning and evening appointments, pre-booked only.

**SCHOOLS break up for the Christmas holidays on Friday 9th December, and start again on Monday 5th January.**

THE next Black Bridge Bike sale is on 6th December at 19 Carsegate Road in the industrial estate from 10am-12.30pm. For more info please ring 07833346592. BBB have training opportunities for people living in Merkinch to come and learn how to refurbish a bike. Trainees can continue as apprentice volunteers and build up more bike mechanic skills by refurbishing bikes for our monthly community sales. For more info please ask for Maria Throp 01463 243869.

**THE Active Adults are holding their annual festive sale on the 9th/10th December, on Tuesday from 6pm onwards and Wednesday 9am-2pm.**

TRADING Standards is making people aware of the following scam: A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0906 6611911 (a premium rate number). DO NOT call this number. If you do you will already have been billed £15 for the phone call.

**LUCKY winner of last month's Nicol's Killer Quiz is Linda Annal of Telford Road. She wins a £10 voucher to spend at Nicol's.**

### Thought for the day

The willingness to fail gives you the freedom to succeed.  
*US entrepreneur*

## Janny's Hoose new programme

The Janny's Hoose is going all Christmassy. We're making a jolly Christmas for ourselves. Monday mornings, Tuesday mornings, Wednesday afternoons we'll be making a wide range of Christmas items, everything from Christmas cards, decorations for trees and rooms, and stocking fillers.

Why not come and join in the fun. Once we have what we need for the Janny's Hoose, you can make things for yourself.

Our parents and tots group on Tuesday afternoons will be doing Christmas activities too.

If you want to escape Christmas why not come for a walk with us? It's a perfect tonic for the

winter blues and will get you fitter as well. We set off every Friday at 9.30 from the Janny's Hoose.

Our men's group is spreading its wings and meeting Monday evenings in the Janny's Hoose and Wednesday evenings in the James Cameron Centre. Come to either or both, there are interesting activities, tea/coffee and a light-hearted blether. Both groups run 7-9pm.



*Jean Mackay  
Janny's Hoose*

*Healthy Living Centre  
Telford Rd, Inverness IV3 8HY  
01463 226348*

## Dangers of bark in playparks

AT the most recent meeting of Merkinch Healthy Network in the Community Centre one of the many topics discussed was the dangers of using bark in children's play areas. Those present, all representatives of official health and social work agencies as well as voluntary groups in the sector, heard that drug-users needles were too easily lost in such a surface. There was considerable discussion on the problem and needle exchange schemes etc.

Other topics discussed included:

- AA group for young people has been set up (For the Right Reasons).
- Harder to get appointments at Osprey House for alcohol problems than it used to be. Anyone turning up with children will be turned away. Crèche needed.

- More joined-up working, important to make links between agencies.
- Duplication of services, some people/families have many agencies helping them – leads to confusion. We should all ask if we need to be here, who is best placed to help. Helpful to have a care package coordinated by one person. We all need to look outside our boundaries.
- For the Right Reasons – reaching people who are not engaging with other services, want to set up a retreat house.
- Group is needed for young people misusing, to replace BLAST, very few resources for young people.
- Child care is a huge problem for parents misusing substances who are trying to access services.

**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**

**This issue's printing  
and collating processes  
are funded courtesy of  
the Merkinch  
Partnership**



## INVERNESS TRINITY CHURCH of SCOTLAND

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([www.trinityinverness.org.uk](http://www.trinityinverness.org.uk))

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



# Celebrate at winter festival in Merkinch

**THERE'S** only one place for Merkinchers to be on Sunday 7th December — watching the festive Parade and taking part in the fun at the Community Centre.

Everyone is invited to dress up and take part in the Parade which is to be led by Santa and his reindeer and leaves Grant Street car park at 2pm. But the organisers warn, parking is limited so please walk or use public transport.

The Parade arrives at the Community Centre where, for a couple of hours, there will be stalls, crafts, face-painting and a bouncy castle. There will also be performances from various entertainers and artistes including Singing for Pleasure.

And of course there will be refreshments.

## Other festival events...

**10th December** — 10am till 12 noon—Santa's Grotto for pre-schoolers. Toddlers will meet Santa and receive a present and an instant photo of the encounter.

From 2-4pm there is a Christmas comedy film and singalong with a Christmas tea for older people, cost £3.

**11th December** — From 2-4pm there is a Christmas comedy film and singalong with a Christmas tea for older people (£3).

**17th December** — From 1.30pm till 3pm, there is a Christmas comedy film and singalong for adults with special needs. This event is free.

**19th and 20th December**—Merkinch community pantomime, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" - lots of fun and jokes with Merkinch Theatre Group. There are three performances—on Friday evening at 7.30pm, and on Saturday at 2pm and again at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 for adults and £3 for concessions (under 16s, students and OAPs) and can be got from the Community Centre or Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant Street (01463 240085).

■ **RIGHT...** We caught Snow White and The Huntsman at a pantomime costume fitting. Book your tickets soon to get the performance that suits your family.



## A WATCH FOR CRIMBO

Take a look at our new selection of Bench, Ben Sherman, London ID and Wingmaster watches at **BIG BARGAIN PRICES** — Ben Sherman's at **ONLY £17.99** — **WOW!**



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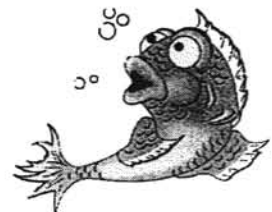


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# Greenspace review an exciting year



"WE have made an incredible number of improvements in the past year," Greenspace chairperson Ali Locke told the AGM at the end of October. Among the achievements were:

- Refurbishment of the play park at Benula Rd,
- Resurfacing of Coronation Rd,
- Improvements at the Corbett Centre gardens,
- Clean up of the riverbank at Friar's Shott,
- Hard landscaping of shrub beds in Grant St,
- Provision of hanging baskets at Glendoe Terrace,
- Supporting other groups in the Corbett centre gardens.

The main focus was on the West Field and Merkinch Local Nature Reserve was formally designated on 28th November 2007, the 50th in Scotland and the only one in the Highlands.

It covers an area of some 54 hectares which include mud flats/sand banks out to the low water mark, marsh land, lagoons, woodland and open green areas and abundant wildlife.

All of this came about as a result of Merkinch Greenspace setting up a steering group to work in partnership with Highland Council, British Waterways, Scottish Natural Heritage, Merkinch Partnership, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Green Inverness and the local community.

Some of the first achievements were the installation of two monoliths, one at the Caledonian Canal and one at the Kessock Road entrance, the installation of carved wooden benches designed by Merkinch Primary pupils, and the installation of dog bins as well as a major litter clearance.

### The Green Gym

Greenspace is also supporting the BTCV



Some of the volunteers who have been turning up on Wednesday mornings to work on the nature reserve.

Green Gym on the Reserve as it did during the previous period at the Corbett Centre gardens.

### The Near Future

An interpretive plan is being commissioned for the reserve and a species and habitat survey

is in the process of being carried out. "We are also in the embryonic stages of looking at building an information centre on the Reserve," said Mr Locke. A celebration day for the LNR is planned for Saturday 13th June, 2009.

## December/January timetable

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

Activities over the next two months are planned as follows: DECEMBER 3rd—Creation of habitat piles; Bird-watching with the RSPB. 10th—Create our own Christmas garland; Learn about the folklore of plants we use. 17th—31st December—Festive break.

JANUARY 7th—Litter pick and exploring wildlife on reserve. 14th—Footpath improvement, environmental art at the reserve.

21st—Habitat management work. 28th—Gems of Merkinch walk, exploring the reserve in winter. Contact Ullie at the office on Mondays to book a place on 01463 811560 or 07739 447987 or e-mail [u.wenzel@btcv.org.uk](mailto:u.wenzel@btcv.org.uk)

All these activities are suitable for all abilities but involve some walking to the site.

**Green Gym**



## Latest work at nature reserve

BTCV have started the major path upgrades in the Merkinch local nature reserve. This involves widening to a minimum 1.5 metres, installation of motorcycle calming measures, resurfacing of paths and building of a ramp at the board walk.

This is designed to allow the disabled access to the reserve as well as providing an all-weather, safer surface to walk on.

Elsewhere, some may have noticed the clearance work on the river bank at Friars Shott.

Said Ali Locke of Greenspace, "Our thanks go to

Lorne MacMillan of Garden Services and his boys for the brilliant job they have done for us.

"So many people have congratulated them on the work. And the Waterfront Bar supplied them with some welcome hot soup etc— appreciation indeed!

"Our thanks also go to the councillors who awarded Merkinch Greenspace the funding to carry this out from their ward budget.

"Merkinch Greenspace hope to revisit Friars Shott every three months with the view to keeping it clear of growth."

# Win a night at the panto *Aladdin*

EDEN Court invites you to meet Aladdin, Widow Twankey, Wishee Washee and The Beautiful Princess Jasmine in this traditional, fun-packed, family pantomime based on the timeless tale of A Thousand and One Nights.

Eden Court's special family pantomime is a treasure trove of jaw-dropping jokes, superb songs, dazzling dance, spectacular special effects and audience participation galore – it's sure to be Eden Court's most amazing panto yet!

*Aladdin* stars Alastair Bruce (Aladdin), Keith Warwick from *My Parents Are Aliens* as Wishee Washee, Billy Riddoch as Widow Twankey and Louise Bolton as The Beautiful Princess Jasmine.

Thanks to the generosity of Eden Court, *News & Views* has TWO family tickets (for four people — no more than 2 adults).

**These are for Friday 5th and Saturday 6th December evenings only. Be sure you are free on the dates of the prizes as these dates cannot be transferred.**

Answer the question below and submit your answer to Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant Street or by e-mailing [bette@merkinch.org.uk](mailto:bette@merkinch.org.uk)

**by 4pm Wednesday 3rd December.** Winners will be notified that evening.



**EDEN COURT**



What pops out of the magic lamp when it is rubbed?:  
A—A Genie; B—A Fairy; C— A cup of tea.

Name.....

Address .....

Phone number .....Answer:.....

Evening that suits us best: .....Friday 5th.....Sat 6th.....

The logo for mp33, featuring the letters 'mp' in a purple oval and '33' in a white oval.

33 Grant Street  
Inverness  
IV3 8BN

Tel: 01463 717639

Fax: 01463 717723

# SEASON'S GREETINGS

involving young people in Merkinch

December 2008-January 2009

[www.mp33.org.uk](http://www.mp33.org.uk)

Whilst we're in the festive frame of mind, mp33 would like to extend a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our young people, indeed everyone, and wish you all the best for 2009. Reflecting back over the year, there are some positives and negatives perhaps. On one hand, we are currently operating at half the staffing levels that we had at the start of the year, though, thankfully, a new member of staff, John McMurray, will be joining us sometime in January 2009 - we look forward to meeting him and welcoming him to the team. On the other hand, numbers attending mp33 have increased dramatically in recent months, representing the broad range of ages within the 'youth' umbrella, and a regular and committed group of girls has also been established, something which was previously lacking and sporadic. On that note, therefore, we can look forward to an exciting and eventful 2009. Until then, we would wish everyone health, wealth and happiness, despite the crunch!



## Guitar Club

Mondays 2-4pm

LEARNING TRICKS AND LICKS ON THE STRINGS

The guitar group is now a firmly established group at mp33, as people who visit mp33 on occasion may have already realised - forgive the cocophony at times, but we are slowly and steadily improving, which is always a sure sign of progress and development! As in many groups, attendance has dropped recently, but we do have a handful of committed players, who are already demonstrating their rapidly acquired skills, honed through countless hours of lonely and painful practice.

We are, nevertheless, always on the lookout for new members. Regardless of ability, the group offers tutoring from experienced guitarists, and a wide variety of playing styles are explored. If you are interested in playing guitar and have a few hours to spare, why not make your way down to mp33 and start strumming along with us. If you do not personally own a guitar, we have some you can borrow, and, if you happen to be left-handed, we have not one but two members that play left-handed guitars, and have had another one who had learned to play a right-handed guitar upside down!

The guitar group are also looking into going 'electric', and forming a band, based in the bike shed. Watch this space.

## The BIKE SHED

### TEMPORARY CLOSURE

#### STORM & FLOOD DAMAGE

No sooner had we got it up and running again, when a gale descended and heavy rain managed to get past the cladding of the roof and down into the WC. The damage, however, is not too severe, thankfully. A mysterious hole has also appeared though the wall below the fuse box, allowing ingress of water from outside, though only in severe downpours - we still haven't quite figured out how this has happened, but we have our theories.

Sadly, all bookings for the shed have been cancelled pending repair work. We hope to have this resolved as soon as possible so that the facility is available for use again.



#### ALL THE BEST TO DANNY

Everybody at mp33 would like to wish one of our regular visitors, Danny Mitchell, whose company we have enjoyed over the years, all the best as he leaves Inverness for a new life down south. Danny is joining the hospitality team at Glasgow's largest and most prestigious night-club, 'The Palace'. Danny has already had a number of years experience in retail and the bar trade, including a brief stint with ScotRail, where he experienced a rather tragic and messy conjunction of a high speed train and a stray dairy cow on a stretch of track further north - good yarn that, Danny!

Anyway, every best wish Danny, and be sure to visit us when you're next in Inverness.

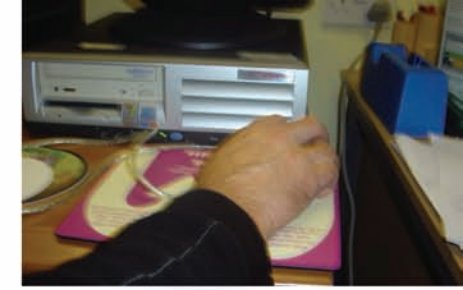


Visitors to mp33 will no doubt have noticed the addition of a smily new face recently. Lucy Huggett, from Fortrose in the Black Isle, occupies the post of Active Schools Co-ordinator for the Inverness High School area, and is helping co-ordinate sporting events and activities in the community. Lucy is a keen sports woman, and - listen to this - runs approximately 6 miles almost every day! She is due to run the London Marathon in 2009, but recently injured her knee badly. We wish her swift convalescence, and that she can get back into training soon.



## Want to do a course?

Come along and try some taster sessions at mp33.  
**Wednesdays 3-5pm**



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## Film Makers' Club

The film makers' club is currently reviewing the footage that has been taken so far, and is now exploring not just one but three separate strands of film-making - yes, we really are that ambitious! The first is a small action short, based on Mission Impossible. The other is to compile a selection of short 'rant' style video dialogues from young people, and the last is a sci-fi comedy, involving more technical input.

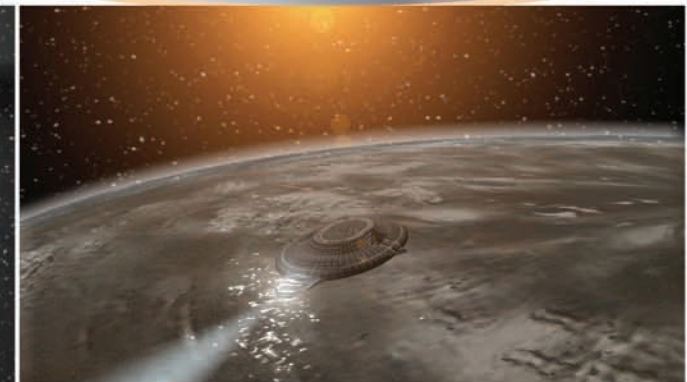


**Mission Impossible** - Angus and Del launch into a stunt fighting sequence. Andy Jessiman, our Drama Worker, helped co-ordinate the action. Del, who is a highly competent break dancer, demonstrated his 'Ninja' style skills in the fighting scenes. The scenes were great fun to arrange and act out, and everybody enjoyed the experience.



**Mission Impossible** - Jordan takes on the role of the Mad Professor in Mission Impossible, and delivers an impressive and convincing performance - indeed, he was pretty scary!

This short will be edited and finished in coming weeks, and we will have a showing on the last Friday before Christmas at mp33.



**Cosmic Universal Mission 1 - The Prequel to the Sequel** - Described as the cross between Red Dwarf and Lord of the Flies, this is the most technically intensive project that the Film-Makers Club is undertaking, though the final production is some way off yet, due to the complexity of some CGI scenes in the piece. This introduces new tools into the editing environment, from special effects to 3D animation. We are always looking for anybody in the community who has an interest in this field, because there are plenty of learning opportunities at mp33 to apply that interest practically on our multi-media suite. We possess a host of multi-media applications for creative use. We just need the heads to get into them.

Interested? Just contact Gus on (01463) 717639. Our Film Makers Club meets every Friday 6pm-8pm at mp33.

## Partnership latest

### Community Conversations

The results of the community consultation undertaken during the summer have been circulated to the local community via a double page spread in the November issue of *News and Views*.

There will be two sessions with the relevant agencies during November/December, when the issues and concerns raised by the community will be addressed. Agencies will include the Police, NHS, Highland Council, and Albyn Housing.



### Sports Development Plan

David Paulin, our sports co-ordinator, has been settled in well. He is currently based in Merkinch Enterprise and works 20 hours per week. David's remit is to set up sports clubs in the area, source volunteers and work with other agencies to co-ordinate activities. On 15<sup>th</sup> November at Westfield young people had the opportunity to take part in football, rugby and basketball for ages 13-16. The following Friday evening, 21<sup>st</sup> November the same sports were played, but in their popular "street" form.

Track and Field, Shinty, and Mountain Bike clubs are in the process of being formed so if you are interested in playing or helping out in any of these please get in touch. David can be contacted on 01463 240085.

### Community website

The community website is being regularly updated by myself and Arts worker Annie Marrs. The website gives information on community news, the Partnership, training opportunities and what's on in the local area as well as providing information on local groups and their activities and minutes of meetings.

### Albyn Housing

I am having discussions with Albyn Housing regarding local groups applying for the Wider Role Funding.

### Merkinch Healthy Network

I am working with the Janny's Hoose on this project, the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November – representatives from various agencies met to discuss the issue of drugs and alcohol in the local community and the effect they have on community health.

### Community Council

I am assisting Julie Vivers in her role as Secretary, we have had a couple of meetings, agendas will continue to be circulated by Merkinch Enterprise.

*Anne Sutherland, Partnership Officer.*

## 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.'*

## Have a happier Christmas!



ARE you looking forward to the Christmas holidays or does the mere thought fill you with dread?

Often we think we have no choice or are able to change events, WE CAN. We get ourselves into a pattern of behaviour without really thinking how we got involved in it in the first place. You have probably heard yourself saying "I've always done it that way" but did you actually sit down and consider all the options before you started? Firstly what is it you fear, is it that the kids will be bored and drive you crazy, will you have to put up with relations that you don't get on with, maybe you will be alone at Christmas, whatever it is plan to change the situation before it happens.

Take a couple of minutes and think about all the possible solutions to your problem, let's take the argumentative relations, here is a list that I have come up with, you will have more, don't discount any ideas until you have thought them through:

Set down rules on behaviour before the day; Speak to the relation and ask for their ideas on avoiding flash points

Don't invite them or go away yourself

Tell them you have been invited somewhere else

Don't allow them to stay/ book them into a hotel

Only invite people who are fun; Invite your neighbour who lives alone, someone new to talk to.

Work or volunteer over Christmas

Hide the booze

Now decide which solution is best for you. At this point you are probably thinking of all the reasons why you shouldn't implement the solution to the problem, your motivation will be how much you want to avoid the problem in the first place. You could close your eyes and visualise what difference the change would make, this will help you make up your mind whether it is the right decision for you or not.

If after all this things still don't turn out as you would like, take some time to relax, nip into another room, put your feet up and do a relaxation exercise, if you are not sure where to start you can get a book from the library, you can listen to guided meditations free on the internet, you could even ask Santa to bring you one as a gift. Going for a walk can also help defuse stressful situations; it's also free and will help to work off the excesses of Christmas.

Whatever you do at Christmas I hope you have a happy, healthy and peaceful time. If you want to know more about life coaching you can contact me on 0790 8809991 or by e-mail (see below)

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# You and your health



## Colitis can be nasty

ULCERATIVE colitis is a superficial inflammation of the large intestine which results in ulceration and bleeding. The patient experiences alternating periods with no or few symptoms and periods with frequent stomach pains and diarrhoea mixed with pus, blood and mucus.

The exact cause of ulcerative colitis is unknown. It is not caused by bacteria. However, hereditary, infectious and immunological factors have been proposed as potential causes.

The condition can lead to thinning of the bowels and sufferers have an increased risk of developing a certain type of cancer.

The symptoms of ulcerative colitis are: Periods with diarrhoea, mixed with pus, blood and mucus which alternate with few or no symptoms.

When the colitis is active, the patient often has mild stomach pains, loss of appetite, weight loss and sometimes a fever. The symptoms vary according to the extent of the disease.

The consequences of ulcerative colitis are: Malnutrition, inflammation of joints, eyes and skin and an increased risk of cancer of the colon. In rare cases life-threatening internal bleeding can occur.

Flare-ups cannot be prevented but the severity of the attacks can be reduced. It is important that affected people follow preventative treatments carefully.

Severe, acute flare-ups may confine the patient to bed. When the symptoms ease they should be able to resume their normal activities.

Most patients with ulcerative colitis do not need to restrict their diet as changes in diet have little effect on ulcerative colitis.

Ulcerative colitis can be treated with anti-inflammatory medication such as corticosteroids and aminosalicylates. Low doses of these drugs can be used to prevent flare-ups. These drugs need to be used correctly, so please consult your pharmacist for advice. In extreme cases surgical treatment, where part of the large intestine is removed, is necessary.

### Pharmacist's Advice

If you are suffering from the symptoms of ulcerative colitis you should consult your doctor.

If you are prescribed any medication to help treat and prevent ulcerative colitis our pharmacist will be able to advise you on how and when best to take your medication.

*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 Friday 14th November.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. What is a cor anglais?</b><br/>                 A: A woodwind instrument<br/>                 B: A custard pudding<br/>                 C: A wildflower.</p> <p><b>2. What famous picture did Sir Edwin Landseer paint?</b><br/>                 A: The Mona Lisa<br/>                 B: The Sunflowers<br/>                 C: Monarch of the Glen.</p> <p><b>3. Where in the body would you find platelets?</b><br/>                 A: In the blood<br/>                 B: In the knees<br/>                 C: In the wrist.</p> <p><b>4. What is the biggest island in the world (after Australia)?</b><br/>                 A: Taiwan<br/>                 B: Great Britain<br/>                 C: Greenland</p> <p><b>5. How long is the Suez Canal?</b><br/>                 A: 30 miles<br/>                 B: 100 miles<br/>                 C: 300 miles.</p> <p><b>6. What did Alexander the</b></p> | <p><b>Great call his horse?</b><br/>                 A: Narcissus<br/>                 B: Bucephalus<br/>                 C: Trotter.</p> <p><b>7. Who was Bertie Wooster's servant?</b><br/>                 A: Jeeves<br/>                 B: Charles<br/>                 C: Glossop.</p> <p><b>8. Who played Indiana Jones's father?</b><br/>                 A: Kirk Douglas<br/>                 B: Sean Connery<br/>                 C: Gregory Peck.</p> <p><b>9. When was Prince Charles born?</b><br/>                 A: November 1958<br/>                 B: April 1953<br/>                 C: November 1948.</p> <p><b>10. What is the name of the child in the film The Omen?</b><br/>                 A: Damien Thorn<br/>                 B: Gregory Thom<br/>                 C: Daniel Peck.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....

## Last month's quiz check

1. The Land of the Rising Sun is Japan
2. Gurkhas come from Nepal
3. The River Liffey runs through Dublin
4. The Forbidden City is Peking (Beijing).
5. Sri Lanka used to be called Ceylon.
6. Amundsen was the first to reach the South Pole.
7. The phoenix is said to be reborn in fire.
8. A greenstick fracture is a crack in a child's bone.
9. The word that means "detached" is spelt "separate".
10. The Land of the Midnight Sun is Norway or Greenland — or even Sweden. But not Japan.



# Seasonal gifts for all the family



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 Tel: 01463 232217

## Spotlight on the Lilywhites

### Adam Naismith



**Nickname...** Adz

**D/o/B...** 26-08-89

**Birthplace...** Inverness

**Favourite Club...** Newcastle United

**Favourite Player Growing Up...** David Beckham

**Favourite Football Moment...** Winning the SFL league cup with County under 17s

**Funniest Member at Club...** Obviously me!

**Favourite TV Show...** Top Gear

**Ideal Meal...** Macaroni Cheese

**One Player You Wish To Sign...** Kaka

**iPod Tune...** Chris Brown, "Wall to Wall"

**Favourite Sport/Hobby...** Football/Football!

**Season Expectations...** Top Three

**Messages For Fans...** Keep doing what you are doing, get behind the boys!



MERKINCH Sports Bebo page is up and running — this is your opportunity to say what sports you want, where you want it and when, all at [www.bebo.com/merkinchsports](http://www.bebo.com/merkinchsports).

### Jaguars in action

● Merkinch Jaguars Football team began their season in style despatching Delta Force in a convincing 5 to 2 victory, the following week, however, in atrocious weather conditions the Jaguars lost out to the Bears 4 to 2. You can see the Jaguars in action and keep up to date with their games on [www.bebo.com/merkinchsports](http://www.bebo.com/merkinchsports).

### Sports Scholarship Scheme

● Merkinch Partnership is proud to announce the launch of its Sports Scholarship Scheme, this scheme is intended to support and assist talented athletes from the Merkinch area in their chosen sport. For those lucky enough to win a Sport Scholarship they will receive, where appropriate guidance in choosing athlete pathways, financial assistance, access to specific sport equipment and high quality coaching which will enable the recipient to achieve their maximum potential. The first recipient of a Sports Scholarship is Jordan MacDonald whose chosen field is athletics, Jordan's potential was first noticed by coaches from Inverness Harriers when he was participating in a primary school sports taster day, this was then followed up when Jordan was asked to attend Inverness Harriers where he was put through his paces by their coaches.

### Athletic Club launch

● Wednesday evenings are set to change in Merkinch with the launch of Merkinch Athletic Club, at present the club is only open to Merkinch Primary School children but under the guidance of Head Coach Alister Cameron it is hoped to allow access to club to whole community. If anyone is interested in participating or volunteering please contact David on 07951 977 922, Jordan has already stepped forward and has offered his time to help get the club up and running.

### Get on your (mountain) bike

● Merkinch Mountain Bike club will have had its first excursion to Abriachan by the time this article goes to press if you want to try this exhilarating sport the next trip is planned for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Anyone interested in joining should phone David on 07951 977 922.

### Keep up on Bebo

● If you have any views, suggestions or just want to keep up to date with sport in Merkinch go to the Merkinch Sports Bebo page [www.bebo.com/merkinchsports](http://www.bebo.com/merkinchsports).

## Soccer lads lift the treble

MERKINCH Football Club, pictured last month, who are coached by Brian Duncan and Robbie Williamson, have plenty to celebrate after their showing this past season.

They kicked off by lifting the Hamish Fraser Memorial Cup. In the Seven-a-Side tournament they met Thistle Colts in the final and were victorious again. With Shaun Riley being voted Player of the Tournament.

Merkinch also sealed the League Title after a great season to complete the treble. In the League Cup final they met Speyside United and beat them 6-3—Scott Shields was voted Player of the Year.

Well done lads and may you go from strength to strength!



**Brian Duncan**

## Thornbush Stores

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# Sports News... Sports News

## Soccer Sevens day out



**MEMBERS** of the Merkinch Soccer Sevens had a great day out at Fairburn centre, trying out a range of activities from archery to avoiding getting too wet!



## November results in the Inverness City Taxis Darts League...

### 6<sup>th</sup> November

A League: Legion A 2 Uncle Bob's 10, Tarra-dale 5 Culloden Moor Inn 7, Chieftain 0 Portland A 12.

B League: Finlay's 7 Deeno's 5, Brockie's Lodge 3 East End Arrows 9, Portland Spikey's 2 Raigmore B 10.

C League: Portland Club 6 Legion B 6, Portland X 11 Smithton 1, Thistle 6 Raigmore A 6.

Portland A continue their devastating form and lead the A League by two points with Culloden Moor in second and City Taxis and Uncle Bob's a further two points behind in joint third.

A slight consolation for the chasing teams is they have all played a game less than the leaders. It is a three-way tie at the top of the B League with East End Arrows, Raigmore B and Finlay's but the latter have played a game more, Deeno's are in fourth two points behind.

C League leaders Portland Club took a 4-1 lead over Legion B but Legion then took the next five games to go ahead 6-4 and spoil the leaders 100% record. However, Portland came back to take the last two doubles and rescue a point. They retain their lead one point clear of Portland X but have played a game more.

Raigmore A are in third three points behind the leaders but they too have also played a

game less.

180s were scored by Barry Maclean (Portland A), Steve Donald (Culloden Moor Inn), Garry Henderson (Culloden Moor Inn), Peter Woolley (Raigmore B) and Joyce Elder (Portland X).

### 23 October 2008

A League: Culloden Moor Inn 8 Chieftain 4, Portland A 10 Legion A 2, Uncle Bob's 5 City Taxis 7.

B League: East End Arrows 11 Caley Club 1, Deeno's 8 Brockie's Lodge 4, Raigmore B 11 Finlay's 1.

C League: Thistle 3 Portland X 9, Clach Club 6 Raigmore A 6, Smithton 3 Portland Club 9.

Top game of the week came in the A League when City Taxis travelled to Nairn to play Uncle Bob's. The hosts lost the first single but then moved into a 2-1 lead before being pegged back, and this was the pattern in the singles. Bob's went one ahead on three occasions but in the end the singles were shared.

The visitors proved stronger in the doubles taking the first three to secure both points. This game produced five maximums two ton-plus finishes and a 15-dart leg in the singles and a 21-dart leg in the doubles. Taxis now share second place in the A League with Culloden Moor Inn and they are two points behind Portland A but Culloden have played a game less.

Four teams share the lead in the B League but Raigmore B and East End Arrows have played a game less than Deeno's and Finlay's. Portland Club retain their lead at the top of the C League.

Alex Fraser of Chieftain hit two 180s this week and one each came from Shane Wharton (Portland A), Ally McGinley, Bomber Godsmann, Roy Younger and Andy Mackintosh all of City Taxis, Jim McNair (Uncle Bob's), Alec Gilham (Deeno's), Lawrence Woolley (Raigmore B), Jason MacAskill (Raigmore B) and Simon Gow (East End Arrows).

### 30 October

There was an increase in the entry for the league singles from 85 to 95 with the B League going from the poorest entry to the best.

Barry Maclean (Portland A) won his fourth A league singles title in total and the second in succession. This year's final was a repeat of the Inverness Singles final at the end of last season when Dougie Milne (Uncle Bob's) beat Barry.

Dougie took the first two legs but Barry was determined not to have a repeat result and took the third leg hitting a 180 in the process he then hit a 13 dart leg with another maximum to level matters Dougie also had a 180 in that leg. Barry took the fifth and deciding leg to clinch his fourth title.

The losing semi-finalists were Steve Falconer (Portland A) and Sandy Morrison (Culloden Moor Inn). Jim MacNeil (Portland Spikey's) beat George Main (Raigmore B) in the final of the B League this was his second win in this event. The losing semi-finalists were Derek MacLennan (Deeno's) and Hugh Graham (Finlay's). Walter Frost (Clach Club) won the C League singles beating Davey Scott (Legion B) in the final, the losing semi-finalists were Barry and John Duncanson of Portland Club.

## Consumer advice

### Shopping tips for your Christmas list

IT'S the season to be organised, when doing your Christmas shopping. Trying to buy gifts for everyone can be a bit of a headache. As the big day gets closer the temptation is to panic buy which can lead to things going wrong. It is always best to be prepared... if you can. So here a few tips on how to keep on top of your Christmas... instead of letting it get on top of you!

**1. Avoid impulse buying by making a list of everyone you wish to buy for and how much you are going to spend on each person. Keep to this list and you are less likely to overspend.**

**2. Start shopping as early as possible to take advantage of pre-Christmas sales and the widest choice.** Shopping hours too may vary from normal times so take advantage of this and avoid getting flustered. If some shops open early or stay open late consider visiting them at these times to avoid queues where possible.

**3. Always shop around. Not only on the high street but on the internet too. Traders can and do charge different prices for the same items. There is nothing wrong in this practice as it is legal.**

**4. Be careful when buying from markets and/or car boot sales.** The goods might look okay and you may think you are getting a bargain. However you could find you have bought dodgy or counterfeit goods. Look out for counterfeit goods such as, clothing, CDs, computer games, DVDs this Christmas, which will be of poor quality and not gratefully received as a gift. Also beware of buying cosmetics which could harm the user if they do not meet safety standards for use, causing painful rashes or reactions.

**5. When internet shopping protect yourself against on-line fraud. Make sure you buy from a secure site. Avoid sending your credit card details by email or over the phone, unless you are sure you know you are dealing with a reputable firm.**

**6. If you buy on-line you will have rights relating to distance selling in most cases.** (One of the exceptions being however, perishable goods, such as flower and food items). Check out your online shopping rights BEFORE you buy by logging on to Consumer Direct Scotland. [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/)

**7. If buying on the high street, check out the shop's policy on returning goods. You do not have an automatic right to a refund if you change your mind about the goods you have bought. This is legal. Some shops offer refunds on unsuitable goods while others just offer credit notes or exchanges. Some may not offer anything. Check the time periods for returning unsuitable goods or unwanted gifts. This can vary from shop to shop.**

**8. Keep all receipts.** You will need the receipts if some presents are unsuitable and the shop is prepared to offer an exchange. It is always useful to have receipts if you have bought something that is faulty. If you pay by credit card check your receipts against your statements.

**9. Take extra care when buying toys.** Always check for the CE safety mark and make sure the toy is suitable for the child's age.

**10 Use cash for small purchases and check your change.** Use your credit card for items over £100 for extra protection.

## Humour on the Net

### It's the car that counts...

FIVE men in an Audi Quattro arrived at a border checkpoint. The officer stops them and tells them: "It is illegal to put five people in a Quattro, Quattro means four."

"Quattro is just the name of the automobile," the man retorts disbelievingly. "Look at the papers: this car is designed to carry five persons."

"You cannot pull that one on me," replies the officer "Quattro means four. You have five people in your car and you are therefore breaking the law."

The man replies angrily, "You idiot! Call your superior over; I want to speak to someone with more intelligence!"

"Sorry," responds the officer, "He has just booked two guys in a Fiat Uno. And now he has stopped a Cinquecento."

...And now a page from Tommy Cooper's joke book ....

I went to the butchers the other day and I bet him 50 quid that he couldn't reach the meat off the top shelf.  
He said, "No, the steaks are too high."

**My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli.  
A strong currant pulled him in.**

A man came round in hospital after a serious accident. He shouted, "Doctor, doctor, I can't feel my legs!"  
The doctor replied, "I know you can't, I've cut your arms off."

**I went to a seafood disco last week...and pulled a mussel.**

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly.  
They lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it.

**So I was getting into my car, and this bloke says to me  
"Can you give me a lift?"**

**I said, "Sure, you look great, the world's your oyster, go for it."**

Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other:  
"Does this taste funny to you?"

**Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, and the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.**

You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen; it said "Parking Fine."  
So that was nice.

**A man walked into the doctor's.  
The doctor said: "I haven't seen you in a long time."  
The man replied, "I know I've been ill."**

# 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.



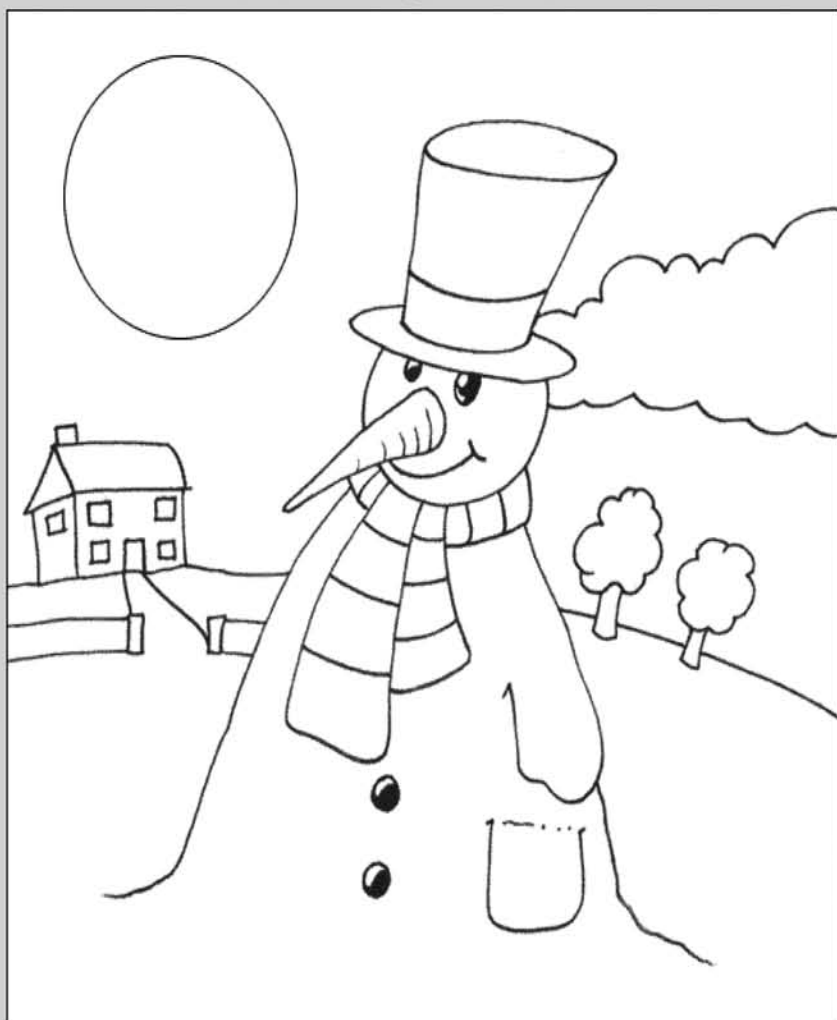
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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

# DIW

# THE FLIPERZ PAGE

*A Happy Christmas to all  
our younger readers*



## JOKESPOT

**Doctor, Doctor, I feel  
like a pack of cards.  
I'll deal with you later.**

**Have you ever hunted  
bear?  
No, but I've been  
shooting in my shorts!**

**Knock Knock  
Who's there?  
Nuisance!  
Nuisance who?  
What's nuisance yesterday!**

### Fliperz Daycare Enrolment

If your child became 3 years old between 1st March and 31st August 2008, 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.

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

*Fliperz staff would like to thank all who have helped Fliperz or given us items over the year. We are still waiting for the games we ordered with the Tesco vouchers.*



## Heigh-ho! Heigh-ho!

IT'S off to work they go. Hard at work rehearsing for the pantomime "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" are these young members of Merkinch Theatre Group. This year they are to put on three performances as part of the programme of Winter Festival events. See page 5.



BELOW... One of this years success stories has been Black Bridge Bikes. Now they are running courses on bike maintenance—see details in Briefs on page 4.



## Sun shines for school parents' fundraiser

MERKINCH Primary School's Parent Council held a fundraising car boot sale last month in aid of the school's library. They were blessed with dry, if chilly, weather... and if people got cold going round the outside stalls, there were more indoors, including fresh vegetables from the Inverness High School's project. And, of course, the welcome cup of tea.

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