

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



ABOVE and TOP RIGHT: NCH recently held an art project and the youngsters thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They explored making pictures with a range of mixed media such as feathers, shells, buttons, glitter and paint.





LEFT: Black **Bridge Bikes** held their December sale at Merkinch School and these two young ladies in their tinselled pushchair had a good look round. The January sale, held at the **BBB** premises on the Carse, also proved successful.

Inside this month:

Singers' CD raises charity cash — Page 2 Community council's latest news — Page 3

Win a snowboard trip — Page 12 Veteran swimmer honoured — Page 13

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.

728770.

MERKINCH ENTERPRISE – 240085. mp33 – 717639.

Inverness NEW Start – 715615 or

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 258834.

Merkinch Community WEBSITE www.merkinch.info

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

Got a story? Contact News & Views on 240085

New carer at Fliperz

LATEST addition to the crew at Fliperz child care centre is Rosemary Evans, pictured right. She started in Simpson's Lane as a childcare assistant at the beginning of December.

Originally from South Wales, Rosemary has lived for over 25 years in Scotland, mainly in Dollar, Clackmannanshire.

She and her journalist husband Peter decided to come north when he got a job with Scottish Provincial Press, which produces most of the weekly papers in the Highlands.

The couple have two daughters in their 20s.

Rosemary has worked in child care for many years; most of her time in Dollar with a playgroup, then for a couple of years latterly in a private nursery.

She shares with her husband a keen interest in hill-walking, a hobby which means they were already familiar with the Highlands before moving here. She also enjoys swimming and going to the cinema.



Charities benefit from CD sales



Altogether 10 charities benefited from the sales of the CD of songs from the Singing for Pleasure group recorded late last year. The album, which sold around 700 copies, was produced after the group did so well in the BBC's Last Choir Standing competition. Popular local entertainer Billy Nelson, seen here centre at the official cheque presentation with some choir members and charity recipients, also took part in the CD. Four hundred pounds each went to Maggie's Highlands centre for those affected by cancer, the Special Care Baby Unit at Raigmore and the Puffin Hydrotherapy Pool in Dingwall. And £200 each went to HDCD (Highland Developmental Coordination Disorder) group, Corbett VIP, Mums and Tots, Singing for Pleasure, St Mary's Dalneigh, CHAT, and Project Linus which provides security blankets in the form of blankets or quilts to children who are sick, traumatised or have problems.

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



Sports facilities and bus shelters, less crime and more recycling... and boundary issues

A FEASIBILITY study is being carried out on the potential for a playing field area at the Carse and the building adjacent to MFI being used as a sports facility.

Councillor Peter Corbett told the January meeting of Merkinch Community Council that most people would like to see something done with the field and there was not a lot of mileage in the building for retail purposes at the moment. The idea of using the field as a karting track had died the death, as it was an expensive hobby.

The state of bus shelters in Merkinch was a cause for concern. South Kessock, opposite the end of Craigton Avenue, was left with a shabby old shelter; a pane of glass was missing from the one on the south side of Grant Street and the one in Thornbush Road had been damaged by a bus! The community council is to write to Stagecoach regarding its replacement and Cllr Corbett said he would pursue the

matter of the others. New bus shelters cost around £5000 each. There was also concern about the state of traffic bollards in Thornbush Road.

- Highland Council is continuing its recycling policies despite the drop in value of recycled materials. The point of the public going to the trouble to recycle rubbish was queried if the lot was going to landfill. But Cllr Corbett said that the policy and the special collections were being adhered to. Plastic bottles and containers which form so much of our rubbish nowadays, although not collected, were accepted at the dump site in the Longman.
- Cllr Corbett reported that there were to be a number of changes at the Corbett Centre following a Care Commission report.

He also said of the imminent 4% rent rise that no one liked to raise rents but it was necessary. Around two-thirds of the tenants in the area

said.

- The matter of the change of the "official "Merkinch boundary to once again include the corner between Abban Street, Telford Street and the Friars Bridge has again surfaced. Highland Council is to send a letter to the residents affected to ask if they have any objections to this "bite" which was taken out of the official Merkinch area when council areas were shuffled. The issue was held back when it was thought that the Park community council might be revived, but this had not happened. The members were asked to indicate their view-although it was them who raised the matterand a vote resulted in six for the change and two against it. apparently because they believed it was solely in order to allow one Abban Street resident to be allowed to sit on the Merkinch Community Council.
- are on housing or other benefits, he

 Call-outs to the Merkinch area had gone down from 426 in October 2008 to 327 in December, PC Connie Sinclair reported, adding that she had no explanation for the decrease. Assaults and vandalism incidents were both down on the figures for the same period last year.
 - The bollards on Gilbert Street leading to Simpson's Lane have been satisfactorily installed but are being blocked by parked cars. It was agreed to request a sign to prevent cars from blocking this vital emergency access.
 - Santa and his "magnificent" PC Elf had held a successful grotto at South Kessock in mid-December, the area's residents' association representative reported.
 - Members received reports from Greenspace and the Merkinch Partnership, reported elsewhere in this issue.
 - The next meeting is on Thursday, 12th February.



Winners picked in charity raffle

EVERY year Lochalsh Road cobbler Jim Smith runs a 100-ticket raffle for the Oncology Unit at Raigmore and this year was no exception. Prizes of whisky and vodka were presented by Ali Williamson and his brother Ian and a bottle of wine by Jim himself. Winners were picked from the hat by Anne Sutherland from the Merkinch Partnership who just happened to be

They were: 1, One-litre bottle of whisky-Lorna McAllister; 2, One-litre bottle of Smirnoff-Nicol's Corner Shop; 3, Bottle of wine—the Model Shop.

Altogether £106 was raised.



JON H. MEMORIALS

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Briefs...

LUCKY winners of our Eden Court Christmas Panto competition were Debbie Hargreaves of Ord Terrace and Liza Innes of Harbour Court. Thanks to the generosity of Eden Court the two winners received family tickets for the opening week of the panto.

THE schools' February holiday commences on Thursday 12th and pupils return on Wednesday 18th. Parents' evening for S4 pupils at IHS is on Wednesday 4th February.

CONGRATULATIONS to Gary Bissett (34.) a trainee mechanic and father of four from South Kessock, was runner-up in the Over-26 category of the UHI Business Idea Competition 2008. Gary's idea was a child safety device for use in

MORE volunteers are needed to help with the Falcon club for two hours on Tuesday evenings, supporting folks to enjoy the activities. A part-time (eight hours weekly) person is also sought to run the club.

DISCUSSIONS are to be held between Merkinch Partnership and Capelinch Residents Association regarding the purchase of a community noticeboard and a potential location.

ARTS worker Annie Marrs and the **Community Warden Claire** Henderson are continuing to deliver the first part of the Heartstone Art Project in Merkinch School, working with pupils in art workshop sessions. The community groups will start to get involved in January. Heidi Jones, Trinity Church parish assistant, is also involved.

MERKINCH Partnership funded a oneday Emergency First Aid Training course for local project workers.

INVERNESS High School parents are urged to let the school know their email addresses so that, where suitable, communications from the school can be sent electronically and help save the environment.



Thought for the day

To do all the talking and not be willing to listen is a form of greed.

Democritus 5th century BC

Janny's Hoose new programme

NEW Year resolutions. We all make them at some time or another, but how easy are they to

I always start the year off with good intentions, but can always find a good excuse not to follow them through.

However we have no excuse this year. The Janny's Hoose has lots of activities and groups to help us achieve what we want for our health this year.

- For those wanting more exercise there is a free bus going to the Aquadome every Monday at 9.15am for a swim or to the gym. We're back around 11am and if you can prove you're on benefits it will only cost you
- We'll be running more cookery classes, and one especially for men, why not come and

find out more, then you can cook cheap, easy and tasty meals for yourself, family and

- If you want to find out more about how you can improve your health we have separate men's and women's groups who look at different aspects of health in a light and friendly manner.
 - Want to stop smoking? Chrissie can help you with hints, tips and support.
- If you want to take up a new hobby, learn something new or find

out more about any of the activities why not pop in and see what we have to offer.

> Jean Mackay Janny's Hoose Healthy Living Centre Telford Rd, Inverness IV3 8HY

Top marks for Merkinch pupils

A VISIT to Inverness High School earlier this winter by the Scottish Bible Society's Bibleworld Studios, a special classroom trailer designed to bring a fuller understanding of the Bible, went down well with the pupils, including a group from Merkinch Primary. And the youngsters from Telford Road made quite an impression, according to Trinity Church minister Rev Alistair Murray. "They were said to be a credit to their school in being so attentive and wellbehaved. Mrs Broadley and her staff are to be congratulated."

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 Merkinch Enterprise on 240085

Enterprise tutors awards' success

THE two tutors at Merkinch Enterprise -Martin McLauchlan and Rhonda Philip have been recognised for the excellence of their training by the Highland Community Learning and Development Strategy Partnership. They were nominated by the Highland Lives Coalition Partnership and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and received their awards at a ceremony in the Ironworks in December. Merkinch Enterprise chief executive Colin Downie commented that it was a reflection of the quality of ME's training provision and they were proud of them.

INVERNESS TRINITY CHURCH of SCOTLAND

"We aim to be a welcoming fellowship, proclaiming in worship the gospel of Jesus Christ, ready to serve with compassion the needs of the community."

> Your Parish Church Rev Alistair Murray BD.

Sunday Services 11.00 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. (Sunday School & Crèche during the morning service)

Girls' Brigade meets Mondays 6.30pm Boys' Brigade meets Fridays 6.00pm

Induction Loop System

All Welcome

(www.trinityinverness.org.uk)

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

Latest Partnership report shows breadth of influence in improving local quality of life

MERKINCH

PARTNERSHIP

AT the Partnership meeting on 3rd the number of December members agreed to the proposal for Arts in Merkinch to come under the auspices of the Partnership. A steering group is being formed which will draw up the arts programme for the Merkinch area.

- Members were informed that the Inverness Amateur Boxing Club would no longer be locating in the For The Right Reasons premises in Grant Street. Instead the Partnership will be looking to set up boxing club sessions in the area, in order to allow local young people access to the sport.
- The Partnership approved funding for improvements to the Ferry Ticket Office in South Kessock, with recommendations that a Users Group Committee is set up and a Management Plan completed.
- Graham Ross, Highland Council Community Learning officer, informed the meeting that environmental and sound engineering evening classes will be starting shortly in the area.
- The Partnership officer presented her regular report to members, which included updates on local projects. Partnership members were impressed with the update on the Merkinch Enterprise IT training programme for the unemployed, in particular

trainees accessing employment and education opportunities.

- Citizens Advice Bureau continues to deliver outreach sessions in Merkinch on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Anyone wishing to make an appointment with the CAB should contact them on 01463 237664.
- The Partnership is continuing to work with the Janny's Hoose on the Merkinch Healthy Network. A meeting was held on 5th December looking at the issue of mental health, there was a very enlightening presentation by volunteers from SMART Recovery UK.

The next meeting of the Network will focus on homelessness and how it impacts on the health of a community.

- For news on the Partnership sports project in Merkinch, please see David Paulin's report on page 12. A steering group has been set up to look at the feasibility of an indoor sports facility in Merkinch.
- The Merkinch School Parent Council is up and running, with eight members so far. Officebearers have been elected and members are looking at ways to raise funding for the school as

with parents and pupils as to how the money raised should be spent. The Parent

Council has donated £600 to the school to purchase books for the Reading for Pleasure scheme.

- **Highland Buildings** Preservation Trust is carrying out a feasibility study with a view to returning the Welfare Hall in Grant Street to community use. Consultants have been selected to do a Business Plan and building contractors and an historical architect are in place. The feasibility study will be completed by summer 2009 and will include funding recommendations. Merkinch Enterprise is liaising with HBPT on behalf of the Welfare Hall Trust; the building has been cleared to allow a structural survey to be carried out.
- A Book Club is being set up in the area, the first meeting will take place on Tuesday 3rd February.
- The Partnership officer supports a wide range of projects and groups in Merkinch, some of which are funded by Fairer Scotland

well as consulting Funding; others receive funding from a variety of other sources.

> If you have a project or an idea which you would like to see developed or seek more information on the work of the Partnership please contact the Partnership Officer Anne Sutherland on 01463 718989.



Ness Soaps, an MDV venture, had a very successful pre-Christmas season with a presence in the Eastgate shopping centre throughout much of December. Their colourful range, pictured here in the marquee at the Winter Festival, proved popular for gifts.

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



Nursery garden launched for school tinies



Earlier this winter the Nursery at Merkinch Primary launched their new garden. Despite a bitterly cold day there was a good turnout of parents and pupils from the primary



classes. Besides seeing round the garden, visitors were able to have a welcome cuppa with delicious cakes and enjoy a programme of entertainment. Pictured left are two of the

nursery pupils who carried out the ceremonial planting of bulbs. Pictured on the right are a few of the visitors being entertained by a poetry reading.

FIRST of all: sadly Peter Corbett has resigned as a director of Greenspace to avoid possible conflict of interest issues between Greenspace and Highland Council.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers are continuing with the paths and hope to start the construction of the disabled ramp soon, the bad weather we have had lately has hampered them.

Green Gym are going from strength to strength with up to 20 volunteers doing various tasks within the Reserve. In the coming year the Green Gym will also be working outwith the reserve in, say, the Community Garden and Carnac Point etc.

The Merkinch Local Nature Reserve management team has awarded the contract for the Interpretation plan and work on this has started—it is expected to be completed by April 09. The LNR management team is a sub-group of Merkinch Greenspace with a membership made up from Greenspace directors, Highland Council ranger service, HC biodiversity officer, and representatives from British Waterways, Inverness and Culloden Rotary Club, BTCV, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, our local councillor Peter Corbett, and last but not least Merkinch Partnership officer Anne Sutherland. We are fortunate I feel to have such a broad level of expertise on the management team.

The new path connecting the board walk path to Carnac Crescent is also nearing completion. When this is completed, along with the new ramp at the board walk, a circular route will have been created as well as a second disabled access into the Reserve.

We are looking at the feasibility and cost of removing the tar on the roundabout at the ticket office with a view to filling it with top soil and sowing a wild flower mix, similar to the successful roundabouts on the southern distributor road. We would then place a couple of carved roe

deer in a lying down position on the roundabout in amongst the wild flowers, these will be carved by chainsaw carving specialist Ian Chalmers and present a better looking arrival at the Reserve.

The management team are also commissioning a



feasibility study, into the building of an earthship centre on the Reserve, This will be carried out by "Sustainable Communities Fife" which built the first earthship in Britain. An earth ship is not a conventional building: it is constructed using waste materials such as tyres, bottles, cans etc. as well as proven sustainable materials and normally it is built by volunteers, though not always. Most earth ships—though not all—are completely self sufficient i.e. water supply from rain water collection, power generation from solar wind, hydro etc. They are not usually connected to any services whatsoever. If we decide to go ahead we would hope to hold presentations where people can get info about earth ships and also find out how to get involved hands on in the construction, the community council being one of the first ports of call.

A.L.

February timetable

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

Activities this month are planned as follows: Wed 4th: Gems of

Merkinch Walk with wildlife spotting; Wed 11th: Session cancelled; Wed 18th: Footpath improvement work with creating a map of the reserve; Wed 25th: Habitat improvement work and continue work on the map of the reserve

Green Gym

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



Festive fun indoors and out





AMONG the highlights of the festive season in Merkinch were the Winter Festival complete with Santa, his splendid sleigh and real reindeer, and the pantomime "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs". Both were very well attended and received and both overcame the cold weather to add to the warmth of the festive season.

ABOVE: Santa arrives at the Community Centre.

RIGHT: The reindeer soon made themselves at home.

LEFT: Some of the leading lights on stage in the panto.

BELOW LEFT: The Dame turns out to be Superman in disguise to the delight of the dwarfs.

BELOW RIGHT: Some in the parade at the Winter Festival got into the spirit of the event by dressing up in fancy dress.







February 2009 www.mp33.org.uk



33 Grant Street Inverness IV3 8BN

Tel: 01463 717639 Fax: 01463 717723

Well, we hope everyone has had a pleasant festive break, and that we have all returned to routine life feeling refreshed and reinvigorated. All the best for 2009! May it be a good year for us all. Now that we are looking forward to a new year, we are in the planning stages of future programmes at mp33. There are a number of novel ideas being explored, from the formation of a Youth Choir to puppet making workshops. Our new member of staff, John McMurray, starts on the 19th January, and will improve our capacity to open for more sessions during the week. We are looking into the possibility of running a breakfast club for 12-17 year olds, before they head off for school, and of hosting a morning session for school leavers and young adults. If you live in the area, and are aged 12-25 years, please feel free to drop in and chat to us about how we may be able to help you.

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



We are looking to forming a Youth Choir at mp33. This involves a lot of commitment on the part of choir members to attend practice sessions, and will take time to train up properly. We already have a number of girls interested in the idea, but need more males. If you are aged 12-25 years, get in touch and get involved.

Automatonicons will incorporate a series of puppet making workshops, finishing off with a performance during the Summer Programme. A variety of types of puppet making will be explored, including life size puppets. Details of the workshops will be distributed once the programme has been finalised.





Once the Bike Shed has been repaired and is back up and running again, we intend to host a series of Art workshops there, ending in an open exhibition, perhaps in the Spring. Different media and styles of art will be explored, from traditional still life to cartoon graphics. If you want to discover your inner creative self, get involved.

ReFuse is an innovative idea involving making music using recycled junk, from old pots and pans to pipes and plastic containers. Eventually, we hope to expand the idea, using standard music instruments. Once again, the workshops will finish off with a public performance during the Summer Programme.







Our budding film makers at mp33 are currently looking at forming a film factory to create and produce short films by and for young people. After having explored the Horror genre, with a host of Zombie related shorts, the group are currently producing a Film Noir, in the vein of a 1930-40s American Private Detective movie - a good excuse for a lot of tongue in cheek cod American accents and high criminal jinx on the lean mean streets of ... erm... Inverness.

Plans are afoot to produce an epic Sci-Fi short (if that makes sense?); a half hour movie, involving some complex CGI sequences. mp33 has a number of CGI software titles that can render highly realistic virtual environments, and we would hope to develop this aspect of the group in the months ahead. We may incorporate CGI workshops as part of our Arts & Crafts workshops if there is a demand for it.

The Film Factory meets at the Film Makers Group on Friday evenings 6-8pm.



Merkinch Youth Club is undergoing a change of image at the moment. Now permanently based at mp33, we are also looking into providing a chill out zone at the bike shed.



Film Makers' Club



The Film Makers' Group held their Premiere Night on Friday 12th December 2008, showcasing the movie making talents of the group. The theme was Horror, with a smattering of tongue-in-cheek Black Comedy, and everybody seemed to enjoy the showing. We look forward now to improving production quality over the coming months, and also hope to conduct movie making workshops as part of our Summer Programme 2009, and then host another showcase sometime during the Arts in Merkinch Festival. Eat your heart out, Spielberg!



Despite various leaks and other mysterious holes developing in and around the bike shed, we have had the builders in and hope to have it available for use again very shortly. We are currently chasing up the possibility of acquiring a drum kit and a piano, along with other instruments as part of our forthcoming music projects.

*WIN A SNOWBOARDING EXPERIENCE ... Creative Writing Competition...

500 words or less of Creative writing based on the theme Discrimination...

Your writing could take the form of a letter, a page from a diary or a story; it could even be made out of newspaper clippings. It could be personal, historical or futuristic, based on fact or fiction; in fact it can take any form you wish so long as it is centered on the theme Discrimination...

"Discrimination towards or against a person or group is the prejudicial (harmful) treatment of them based on certain characteristics. It can be positive behaviour directed towards a certain group, or negative behaviour directed against a certain group. The latter is the most common meaning, i.e. negative discrimination. Discrimination on grounds such as race or religion is illegal in most Western societies."

Wikipedia

Things to think about... Characters, Emotions, Settings, Plots, Thoughts, Actions, Presentation; How would it feel to arrive in a strange place, or even a planet, miles away from your home? You have no friends. You don't know anyone. Maybe you can't speak the same language..? What would you do to get accepted..? How can you fit in..? How do others perceive you..? How is your reader going to feel..? Why is the discrimination taking place..? Be as creative as you can in your writing and presentation and think about how your tale will stand out from the crowd.

Closing date: Wednesday 14/02/09. Open to Age group 12 – 21 from the Inverness Area. Pick up entry forms at mp33

Girls' Group



No! The Girls Group haven't taken to Gothic fashion and gone all pale on us, but have been trying out some beautifying face masks as part of a seasonal pampering session before the Christmas break - as if they really needed it, eh?

The issue of personal safety was raised by the group recently after an incident involving an adult male making suggestive remarks to young girls in Grant Street and attempting to lure them into his car. We would advise anyone to report such incidents to the police immediately, regardless of how plausible this character might seem. Certainly do not take up his offer of a lift.

The Girls' Group meets every Tuesday afternoon, 4-6pm at mp33.

Residents' and tenants' groups

Capelinch group campaigns for revival as population continues to grow

SURELY one of the fastestgrowing areas in Inverness is Capel Inch, or Capelinch? The six streets-Anderson, Brown, India, Jamaica, Madras and Nelson, names which reflect the area's seafaring history -have seen a flurry of building activity.

There are the recently-opened flats at The Moorings off Anderson Street and around another 14-16 new Cairn Housing flats on the former Bon Accord lemonade factory site on the corner of Jamaica and Anderson streets. Then the Elgin-based Springfield are going ahead with their development adjacent to Gael Force Marine. And besides a few new private houses, there are plans for more developments at the riverside when the financial climate takes an upturn.

This is one of the reasons that the Capelinch Residents Association is campaigning to raise awareness of the value of supporting them. To this end they are going to run a leafleting campaign and go round all the doors in the area to boost their membership.

The association has already quite a few successes under their belt: dogs' mess in the children's playpark has been eradicated with the erection of a fence; walls in

India Street have been renewed: raised beds causing dampness have been removed; signs slowing traffic in Anderson Street have lessened the dangers to young children, over-enthusiastic clematis removed, and so forth.

However, the problem of heavy vehicles delivering to Gael Force Marine, building sites and other South Kessock destinations, vehicles which cannot go under the Thornbush Road railway bridge and have to negotiate Nelson and Anderson streets, is still very worrying. "I am concerned that it will take a fatality before something is done about it," says the association's chairperson, Cathy Mackay. In the meantime members are pressing for traffic-calming measures to be installed along Anderson Street.

The Capelinch Residents Association meets every six weeks-they were due to hold a meeting on Thursday 29th January after we went to press, and their March meeting will be on Thursday 5th in the Community Centre at 7pm. Meetings usually last about one hour.

"We would like to see more folk show an interest and take pride in their surroundings, and hope we can stir up more support," says Mrs Mackay.

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.'

Don't beat yourself up

let-down

OK, it's New Year and I'm desperate to know how your New Year resolutions are going? Well done to those that are making the change, stick with it. Some surveys suggest it takes six weeks to form

a new habit, that suggests that it takes six weeks to break an old

Hang on in there and don't give up, if you do have a slight lapse and turning to the thing that you are trying to avoid for comfort, don't beat yourself up, praise yourself for what you have already achieved and start again.

If you have already given up, what or who stopped you from reaching your goal? In many cases the answer will be OUR SELF! We begin by setting our self up to fail, we all know that eating nothing for a week in the hope that we will lose three stone is not realistic.

Giving up smoking but not seeking help or substitutes, packet of cigarettes still in our bag, just in case, is the most difficult way to stop. Wanting to change a relationship but unwilling to talk to the other person. Change can be scary!!

As human beings we like routine and patterns, it can make us feel safe, not making the change will not take us out of our comfort zone, we may still be unhappy but we know where we

So if we want to make a change, begin with the end in mind, what does success look like to you? I'm going to take the example of weight, let's take the focus away from losing weight and on to having a healthy body, everyone will have a different definition, what does a healthy body mean to you?

What difference would it make if you had a healthier body? That is your motivation for change.

Our beliefs are also involved when making changes, you know the ones, "I'm big boned", "I can't help myself", "I don't eat anything", and these are all excuses made by us to keep us in the old comfort zone. As easily as you learned your old beliefs you can learn new ones, start today, positive affirmations are known to help people achieve their goals.

If you are trying to lose weight, be kind to yourself say "I have a healthy body" or "I look after my body well", before the old negative thought kicks in, yes you do have a healthy body, as you are already working towards change.

Good luck with whatever you plan to change.

■ If you would like to take part in group coaching in the Merkinch area, let me know at the contact below.

Win a FREE 3-session coaching programme

Coaching can be face to face or by telephone coaching session lasts 45 minutes.

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

To enter e-mail cath@uniqueness.org.uk, through Cath's web site www.uniqueness.org.uk,



IniqueNess

or by post Merkinch News & Views, c/o Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant St, Inverness IV3 8BL. (No cash alternative will be offered.)

January/February 2009

You and your health



Stiff or sore joints? It could be arthritis

ARTHRITIS is an incurable condition that is a major cause of disability in the UK. In simple terms, arthritis can be described as an inflammation of joints that causes swelling, pain, redness, rashes, deformity of bones, stiffness and a subsequent reduction in flexibility.

The most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Many people with arthritis live relatively active lives unhindered by their condition. However this only becomes possible through treatment. If left untreated arthritis can cause severe health problems and must be treated swiftly.

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis and usually effects weight-bearing joints such as knees, shoulders and fingers. It is most common amongst people over 45 years of age. It is caused by the erosion of the cartilage in the joints—as we age, the cartilage becomes weakened and as osteoarthritis worsens, bones at a joint may begin to rub against one another. Eventually the bones may grow together forming "spurs" which in turn cause the pain and swelling that is a characteristic of the condition.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an auto-immune disease meaning that it is the result of a defect in the immune system. The immune system produces antibodies that attack an infection. However, in the case of rheumatoid arthritis, the antibodies are sent to the joints although there is no infection. The chemicals in the antibodies cause damage to the joints.

Early symptoms of arthritis are pain or stiffness of the joints. Initially these symptoms may come and go, but it doesn't mean the condition has gone. If you experience pain in your joints or difficulty in moving, you should consult your doctor.

There are a number of factors that make a person susceptible to arthritis. Family history of arthritis and being overweight are both factors. Damage from sports injuries is sometimes a cause.

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





CELEBRITY SLIM is a sassy new diet approach based on science. CELEBRITY SLIM is designed to help you control your weight and, more importantly, to maintain it. Simply replace two meals each day with our delicious CELEBRITY SLIM meal replacement products. Eat one balanced meal each day and snack on a variety of allowable foods. When you reach your goal, CELEBRITY SLIM will help you maintain it, with a comprehensive lifestyle plan aimed at keeping you feeling great and looking CELEBRITY SLIM!

Rowland's Pharmacy 54 Grant Street, Inverness Tel: 01463 232217

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 Monday 16 February.

1. What British city has	6. Bewick and Whooper are
more canals than Venice?	types of what bird?
A: Edinburgh	A: Swan
B: Birmingham	B: Domestic fowl
C: London.	C. Goose.
2. What is Dr Roger	7. The bat is the trademark o
Bannister famous for?	which drinks company?
A: Discovering penicillin	A: McAllan's
B: Inventing the nuclear bomb	B: Bacardi
C: Running the four-minute	C: Guinness.
mile.	8. What is the relationship
3. What river runs through	between Prince Edward and
New York?	Lord Linley?
A: The Hudson	A: Cousins
B: The Dee	B: Brothers
C: The Amazon.	C: Uncle/nephew.
4. From which country does	9. In which year did the
the lambada dance originate?	Channel Tunnel open?
A: Chile	A: 1986
B: Mexico	B: 1994
C: Brazil.	C: 2002.
5. Whose birthday is	10. How many teaspoons mal
celebrated on 25th January?	a tablespoon?
A: The Queen	A: Four
B: Robert Burns	B: Six
C: William Shakespeare.	C: Eight.

Address	
Phone	

Last month's quiz check

- 1. A cor anglais is a woodwind instrument.
- 2. Sir Edwin Landseer painted the image of a stag, *The Monarch of the Glen*.
- 3. Platelets are found in the blood.
- 4. The biggest island in the world (after Australia) is Greenland.
- 5. The Suez Canal is a little over 100 miles long.
- 6. Alexander the Great called his horse Bucephalus.
- 7. Bertie Wooster's man servant is Jeeves.
- 8. Indiana Jones's father was played by Sean Connery.
- 9. Prince Charles was born in November 1948.
- 10. The name of the child in the film The Omen is Damien Thorn.

Sports News... Sports News...

Win a snowboarding trip in our great sports competition

TELL us about your sporting vision, in no more than 100 words describe your sporting highlight or ambition and see it in print right here. It may already have happened or it might be something you dream of doing. The top two entries chosen by the judging panel will win a trip snowboarding at Badaguish 27th Feb-1st March. Plus loads of runners-

The competition is open to age groups 12-21. Please include your name, age, address, and telephone number.

All entries to be handed in to MP33, Grant Street or Merkinch Enterprise 14 Grant Street, or e-mail them to david@merkinch.org.uk last date for entries is 12th February 2009.

Twilight basketball comes to Inverness in sensational style

THE launch night was on the 23rd of January and featured the Scottish Rocks players, Rockettes cheerleaders, music and focused on various fun games. Twilight Basketball will be held every Friday from 6pm -8pm in the Sports Hall at Inverness College, Longman Road, entry is free and is open to anyone aged 11 to 21.

Jaguars' hopes are high

MERKINCH Jaguars six-a-side soccer team continues to make waves narrowly beating the Citadel, losing out to Drumnadrochit Hotel, drawing with the Waiters, destroying Lifescan and so far the only team to take a point off the high-flying Outer Milan team. Now sitting in fourth place in the league the Jaguars' hopes of making one of the two play-off spots are still high.

Bikers go on the wild side

Merkinch Mountain Bike club have had two great trips, the first out to a snow covered Abriachan and the second to Torvean Quarry both venues provided participants with a venue to let rip down hill sides and plenty of jumps.

Thornbush Stores

Thornbush Road Inverness



Gift Cards for Debenham's, Argos, W.H.Smith, Homebase NEW - Bingo Lotto - £2 a shot - as seen on TV Toilet rolls, all colours - 6-for-4 pack £2.99

Groceries, news & mags, sandwiches, E-top-ups, wines, beers and spirits

Open Mon-Frid 7.30am — NOW 9.30pm, Sat 8am-8.30pm, Sun 9am-7pm

cash from our machine for free!

Withdraw your Tel: 01463 250350

BEPARD There for you



In search of Young Leaders

MERKINCH Partnership is hosting a Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership. This is a nationally recognised qualification that enables successful candidates to lead small groups in simple sport and recreational activities whilst under the direct supervision of their tutor. The course is open to anyone aged between 14 and 16, and will run at Inverness High School from January 24th.

Community Conversation

IN response to the recent Merkinch Community Conversation, action is being taken to make improvements in the sports facilities at Carse Park, with temporary improvements happening in the near future. A consultation process is also being set up to look into long term improvements.

Good New Year?

With all your New Year resolutions made, and perhaps many already broken, why not get fit and healthy and join our jogging club which meets up at Carse Park, Wednesday at 7pm, starts 11th February. All are welcome, from beginners to club athletes. Join in, socialise and get fit.

...And Finally

Have your say on the Merkinch Sports Bebo page or add your ball to the Wall www.bebo.com/merkinchsports.



Pictured are members of the Wildcats who helped Santa with his sleigh the Christmas Festival at the Community Centre in December.

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Sports News... Sports News

Merkinch swimmer honoured





ONE of the highlights of Alex Sutherland's long swimming career was representing Bomber Command in a tour of America and Canada organised by the United Nations during World War II.

That is until now—for Alex, aged 86, a resident of Lochalsh Road, was awarded a well-deserved Member of the British Empire medal (MBE) in the 2009 New Year's Honours List.

Alex is well-known in Inverness as a founder member of the Inverness
Swimming Club. But he is also recognised internationally as a champion Masters swimmer and he still goes to the Aquadome three times a week.

His splendid voluntary contribution to the sport down the decades has been recognised by the naming of the refurbished Aquadome boardroom after him.

Alex had not been swimming more than a few years – he was a teenager when he first learned – when war was declared and he served as aircrew from 1941-46. However, although 30% of the club membership had to leave in 1939, the conflict did not dampen his passion for swimming. Indeed it has continued all his life and he has the medals to show for it.

The number of golds he has won over the years are too many to enumerate, but he currently holds seven Scottish Masters records, was presented with an Unsung Hero award earlier this winter and attended the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards in Liverpool.

Alex does not yet know the date he will be presented with his medal; his wife Rhoda, also a keen swimmer, hopes it is not too soon as she has injured her arm and wouldn't want to appear with her arm in a sling on Alex's big day.

Following the announcement of his MBE Alex received 50 cards from friends and well-wishers. One from former provost Allan Sellar and his wife Brenda says, "We are so proud of you."

And that goes from Invernessians everywhere, and particularly Merkinchers. Congratulations, Alex!

Latest results in the Inverness City Taxis Darts League...

RESULTS for 8 January in the Inverness City Taxis Darts League are as follows:

There were no surprises in the A League with the three teams from the top half of the table beating the bottom three. B League leaders East End Arrows were idle and Finlay's join them at the top after beating Caley Club. Portland Club were sitting at the top of the C League with an unbeaten league record but that record went in no uncertain terms when they crashed 11-1 to Clach Club. There is now only three points separating five teams at the top of the C League.

A League - Legion A 3 Culloden Moor Inn 9, Tarradale 1 Portland A 11, City Taxis 8 Chieftain 4. B League - Portland Spikeys 5 Deeno's 7, Caley Club 3 Finlay's 9, Brockie's Lodge 5 Raigmore B 7. C League - Portland Club 1 Clach Club 11, Raigmore A 3 Legion B 9.

180s were scored by Gordon Morison (Portland A), Barry Maclean (Portland A), Don Maclean (Tarradale), Andy Leckie (City Taxis) Alex Fraser (Chieftain) and Lawrence Woolley (Raigmore B). The top finishes were Andy McMahon (Chieftain) 119, Andy Mackintosh (City Taxis) 114, Donnie MacKenzie (Tarradale) 113 and James Macmillan (Chieftain) 101 the latter also recorded a 15 dart leg.

Results 4 December:

Last week completed the first half of league fixtures and all teams have played the same number of games. The top of the A League has a very symmetrical look Portland A lead with City Taxis second Uncle Bob's third and Culloden Moor Inn fourth and there is a two-point gap between all those positions.

Chieftain are no longer on their own at the bottom of the league after collecting their first points of the season and are now level with Tarradale whom they beat and Legion A. East End Arrows had to play second fiddle to Raigmore B in the C League last season but in their first meeting in the B League it was the Arrows who gained the upper hand to take both points to leapfrog their great rivals into first place. Finlay's keep in the hunt in third place just a point off second. In the C League Portland X beat Raigmore A and move above them into second place and now only three points separate the top four teams.

Most teams started the festive break this week but City Taxis, Uncle Bob's, Chieftain and the holders Portland A contested the Supreme Cup at the Thistle Mayflower Lounge and the Consolation Shield took place at Raigmore. Taking part were the holders Legion A, Raigmore A, Portland Spikey's and East End Arrows.

A League - City Taxis 7 Legion A 5, Culloden Moor Inn 4 Uncle Bobs 8, Tarradale 5 Chieftain 7.

B League - Raigmore B 5 East End Arrows 7, Caley Club 8 Brockie's Lodge 4, Portland Spikey's 5 Finlay's 7. C League - Legion B 8 Thistle 4, Smithton 4 Clach Club 8, Portland X 8 Raigmore A 4.

There were no 180s recorded but there were several big finishes Kevin Clark (City Taxis) 160, Peter Blanusa (Legion A) 123, Paul Power (Smithton) 119, Hugh Graham (Finlay's) 112, Darren Shaw (Smithton) 110 and Roy Younger (City Taxis) 104.

Results 27 November:

The League Doubles had a slight increase in entries over last year and for the second year in succession East End Arrows were the best represented team.

The A League final was nearly a repeat of last year with the holders Gordy Redmond and Sandy Morrison (Culloden Moor Inn) taking on one half of last year's runners-up, Stevie Falconer (Portland A). But this year Stevie was partnered by Ewan Callander. And this year the result was an exact reversal with the Portland pair winning 3-1. This was Stevie's third final in succession and after finishing second in the previous two he finally notched his fourth win in this event.

The losing semi-finalists were Dougie Milne and Michael Maclean (Uncle Bob's) and Gil Graham and Don Maclean Sen.(Tarradale). Peter Jack and Derek McLennan of Deeno's picked up the B League title beating Liam McAskill and Daniel Bell of Portland Spikey's in the final the losing semi-finalists were Dave Chisholm and Simon Gow (East End Arrows) and George Main and Jason McAskill (Raigmore B). John Duncanson and Michael Hillan (Portland Club) beat Walter Frost and Graham Munro (Clach Club) in the final of the C League the losing semi finalists were Willie Erskine and Wayne Ridgers (Legion B) and Barry MacDiarmid and Stuart Mackintosh (Portland Club).

Results 20 November:

Supreme Cup - City Taxis 7 Culloden Moor Inn 5, Chieftain 9 Deeno's 3, Portland A 7 Raigmore B 5, Uncle Bobs 9 Tarradale 3. Consolation Shield - East End Arrows 9 Clach Club 3, Raigmore A 7 Smithton 5, Portland Spikeys 7 Portland Club 5, Legion A 7 Finlay's 5.

Consumer advice

Don't be conned by bogus holiday bookings

SMALL bed & breakfasts, guest houses, small hotels and some selfcatering establishments are being targeted by scam emails trying to book accommodation.

Highland businesses have been contacted initially by email using a range of enquiries such as availability of accommodation for either one week up to three weeks during peak holiday times.

An accommodation provider will usually respond to such a request by stating availability and rates as in the normal course of their business. Once the Highland business responds then further emails are sent by the bogus holiday maker.

Further emails from the bogus emailer continue to confirm booking details such as number of persons staying, booking period and cost. The scammer also promises, at this stage, that "there is a cheque in the post", which may or may not arrive.

One Highland self-catering provider, who heard nothing after receiving such a promise and booking, contacted the person booking via their email address given to say that the booking could no longer be held. The Highland business then received a cheque for a higher amount than was agreed. He decided not to cash this cheque as the name of the account holder did not match that of the person booking the accommodation.

A further email offered compensation to the local self catering business if they cashed the cheque of £200 which would be wired via Western Union Money Transfer. The self-catering business decided not to cash the cheque or take up the offer of compensation as he suspected this scam was either part of a money laundering set-up or he would become a victim of ID fraud.

Other similar scams of this nature have been highlighted in the past but scammers change tactics in order to be one step ahead of the authorities. Highland Trading Standards warns all accommodation providers to be on their guard and if they receive suspicious looking emails offering block bookings to check these out carefully before accepting payment in advance.

Business scams can be referred to the International Liaison team under the Office of Fair Trading by Highland Trading Standards.

Businesses who are concerned about being a scam target can contact Highland Trading Standards for advice at: Highland Trading Standards Unit, 38 Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UF or you can telephone 08454 04 05 06.

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, hand in a report/minutes of your latest meeting.



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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.





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



Humour on the 'Net

Great truths little children have learned

- 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptise cats.
- 2) When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4) Never ask your three-year old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- 6) Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- 7) Never hold a vacuum cleaner and a cat at the same time.
- 8) You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- 9) Putting more salt on your food doesn't cool it down.
- 10) The best place to be when you're sad is granny's lap.

Great truths adults have learned

- 1) Raising teenagers is like nailing jelly to a tree.
- 2) Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3) Families are like fudge... mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4) Today's mighty oak is just vesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5) Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.
- 6) Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fibre, not the toy.
- 7) You're never old... just on the nether slopes of middle age.

Great truths about growing old

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.
- 3) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 4) You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 5) It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 6) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 7) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.
- 8) Once you become good at doing something no-one asks you to do it anymore.

Four Stages in a Man's Life

- 1) You believe in Santa Claus.
- You don't believe in Santa Claus.
- 3) You are Santa Claus.
- 4) You look like Santa Claus.

Success in Life is...

At age 4 success is ...
At age 12 success is ...
At age 17 success is ...
At age 35 success is ...

not piddling in your pants. having friends.. having a driver's licence. having money.

At age 50 success is ...

having

At age 70 success is... a driver's licence.

... having ... having

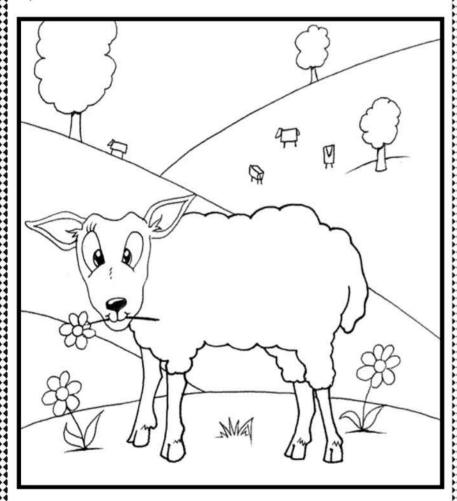
At age 80 success is ... friends.
At age 90 success is ...

At age 90 success is ... having any friends left... and not piddling in your pants.

Oh, and being alive!



Although the weather is still pretty wintry, it will soon be Spring and there will be lambs playing in the fields. Here we have a sheep... and what is she eating? A flower! Colour her in, and all the flowers and trees as well.



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.

JOKESPOT

"Doctor, I can't pronounce my F's, T's and H's."

"Well you can't say fairer than that then."

Which is faster - hot or cold?

Hot—you can catch a cold!

Man goes to the doc's, with a strawberry growing out of his head.

Doc says, "I'll give you some cream to put on that."

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.

Cheque for good reasons

RICHARD Burkitt from For the Right Reasons, seen right, received a cheque for £1400 on behalf of the Grant Street charity from Grahame Harrison (left) manager of the Lochalsh Road branch of Ladbroke's from the bookmakers' chain charity fund. Looking on are Merkinch Traders' secretary Anne Sutherland and chairman Jim Smith. The money will go towards FTRR staff training in counselling at Inverness College.





Heigh-ho, it's panto time

STRIPED socks were the cool thing for dwarfs this season when Fairyland's littlest stars marched off to work.

The Merkinch Theatre Group's pantomime had a much higher profile this year, with three performances. The group has already started its 2009 sessions which are held on Thursday nights.

December also saw the Winter Festival, the first of its kind... for more coverage of both events see page 7.

