

MERKINCH

News and Views

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



Sea cadets' new safety boat survives winter storms to arrive in Merkinch

THE Sea Cadets, who are based in Kessock Road were delighted to announce, "Our new boat is home!" After braving Arctic conditions and other challenges, Unit Chairman Tim Honnor RN and his wife returned back to Inverness after taking delivery of the unit's new safety boat from the builders in Hull. The Sea Cadets offer all kinds of skills training and lots of adventure and fun. More information can be found on their website — <http://www.sea-cadets.org/inverness> —and they can also be found on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



RIGHT... One of the works, created with tissue paper, on show at an exhibition in the Bike Shed by members of an art group which meets there. Story on page 7.

Inside this month:

Community Council's health concerns – page 3

More help for young unemployed – page 5

Nine graduate from HiFiReS course – pix on page 10

New gallery and frame-makers opens – picture on page 9

Helpline

AGE Concern – 0800 731 4931.

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

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

CITIZENS Advice Bureau – Appointments, 01463 237664

COMMUNITY CENTRE – 239563.

COMMUNITY HOUSE, Craigton Avenue – 718848.

Your local COUNCILLORS –

Janet Campbell 226598;

Donnie Kerr 225217;

Richard Laird, 07557 566552

Bet McAllister 710558.

CRIMEBUSTERS – 0800 555111.

DENTIST, Emergency – 0845 644 2271.

DOG Warden – 703134.

DRUGLINE Scotland – tel 0800 776600. Free advice on drugs 24hrs.

HOUSING Problems – 703800.

MERKINCH Enterprise – 240085. mp33 – 717639.

NEW START – 715615 or 728770.

NEWS & VIEWS – 240085, 221027.

MERKINCH Partnership Officer – 718989.

PRIMARY School, Merkinch – 232962.

REFUSE, extra and bulky collection – 230634.

ROAD to RECOVERY – Ian Polworth, Madras Street Mission, 715809.

SAMARITANS – 67a Tomnahurich St, tel 713456 or 08457 909090 (local rate).

SMOKELINE – 0800 84 84 84.

SOCIAL WORK Dept, Emergency – 0845 769 7284.

TRADING Standards – 0845 600 4222.

VICTIM Support – tel 258834.

WEBSITE, Merkinch Community — www.merkinch.info

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

WORKING For Families – Drew on 01463 728759.

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

Healthy eating for your family on a budget



THE latest news stories about horsemeat and junk food have brought attention once more to what we eat and what we feed our children. Following on from the Merkinch Partnership's free cookery course last year, the WEA (Workers Educational Association) is running a course on the same theme, **Healthy Eating on a Budget**. Pictured above are some of the course participants with leader Maureen Cusick (second left) as she shows them how easy it is to make a wholemeal scone. The kitchen at the Community Centre was also fragrant with the smell of leek and potato soup which they had prepared earlier. The course, which is also free, runs on Monday mornings from 10am to 12 noon until 25th March, and it's never too late to start. All ingredients are provided free and at the end of the course there will be a booklet with all the recipes featured in the course. For more info ring the WEA office on 01463 710577.

The dangers of buying fake goods on-line

TRADING Standards Officers at Highland Council are warning consumers to avoid being stung by sellers of poor quality counterfeit goods online or through social network sites.

2012 saw an increase in complaints and information to Trading Standards about the use of the internet to sell fake goods, especially clothing, handbags, perfume, jewellery, shoes, headphones and hair straighteners.

There are increasingly two principal methods used, as Trading Standards' David MacKenzie explained, "One way in which consumers are ripped off is through impressive-looking online "shops", apparently UK-based, selling products directly to consumers at discounted prices.

"Often these are run by scammers based in Asia and the counterfeit goods supplied are shoddy and pale imitations of the genuine product. Another scenario we are seeing more and more often is UK-based individuals selling fakes face-to-face after advertising their wares through social media."

The "Brand-I" website allows consumers to search for stockists of legitimate branded goods. If a website advertising the relevant goods is not listed with Brand-i, then the advice is not to buy as products will not be genuine.

Brand-i is an independent directory run by Brand Information Ltd and supported by the Trading Standards Institute, so consumers can rely on it as a source of information. The web address is: <https://www.brand-i.org/>

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."

Sunday Services 11am.
(Sunday School & Crèche during the morning service)
6.30pm First Sunday in Month

Induction Loop System
All Welcome
(www.trinityinverness.org.uk)
Inverness Trinity Church of Scotland
is a registered Scottish Charity (SC015432)

Community Council tries to find ways to help those with health and homelessness problems

MERKINCH Community Council have expressed increasing concern about the health of Merkinch residents, particularly the number of those addicted to drugs and alcohol.

On various occasions in recent months members have called for an increased input from health authorities, perhaps in the form of a doctor or nurse specialised in addiction.

So they were happy to meet with Dr Liz Whittle who has been GP for the homeless for the last eight years. With the new squeeze on benefits and the implementation of the so-called "bedroom tax", members foresee an increasing amount of homelessness among people in the Merkinch area where

there are already many with temporary tenancies.

However, Dr Whittle made it clear from the start that her focus was on dealing with the health aspects of homelessness. Highland Council had withdrawn their funding for the shelter in Waterloo Place and she now works from an office in the RNI building.

As a result there are no more drop-in facilities offering food and advice for the homeless. Members were appalled to think that the days of the soup kitchen seemed to be returning and that the homeless had nowhere to go. They see drugs, drink, depression and homelessness as elements in a spiral, but Dr Whittle did not agree with the view that a specialist ant-

addiction team was what was required.

"All people need is a bit of money and a bit of hope," she said. "They need people to help guide them out of a rut."

Community council members suggested finding and funding a place within Merkinch perhaps a couple of afternoons a week where a drop-in service for the homeless and those in danger of becoming homeless could be held. Many homeless were not signed on with a GP or did not access their GP.

Craigton Avenue's housing offices would no longer be available with it closing, but it was agreed to look into the possibility and see if they could afford such a project.

Let the Community Council know what your issues are

IF you want to raise an issue, cast light on a problem affecting your area or want to contact the Community Council, the secretary is Bryan McIlwraith and the email address is rightenough@merkincher.co.uk

He says, "Merkinch Community Council welcomes hearing from residents about any issues in the area that concern them. Just get in touch."

Conference looks at Health Inequalities

"CLOSING the Gap" is the title of a conference on health inequalities in the Highlands being held in Eden Court this April.

Ever since the statistics on public health came out last year which highlighted the shocking differences between areas such as Merkinch and more prosperous parts of the town there has been a spotlight on the efforts being made to improve public health.

Keynote speaker at the conference, which is on 30th April, is Sir Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.

Bringing a Highland aspect to the problem of health inequalities is Dr Margaret Somerville, Director of Public Health, NHS Highland/The Highland Council.

The work being done by local initiatives to reduce the gap will be the subject of a video presentation, a theatre

presentation and a discussion.

There will also be a talk on Co-production Approaches to reducing health inequalities with input on what is being done in Tayside.

More info and applications to attend from Sharon Duncan, Depute Office Manager, Public Health Dept, NHS Highland, Assynt House, Beechwood Park, Inverness

IV2 3BW or Email: sharonduncan3@nhs.net

Focus on children's health

CHILD Health will be the subject of the 2013 annual report by Dr Margaret Somerville, director of Public Health in the Highlands.

Among other subjects the report is likely to consider

- How children in their early years can be given the best possible start;
- Health behaviours among adolescents;
- Long-term conditions;
- Emotional and psychological well-being; and
- Paediatrics.

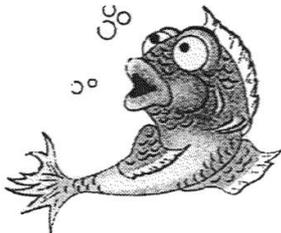
It is expected that Dr Somerville's report will be presented to the NHS Highland board at their October meeting.

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Independent distributor id 5566540.

Briefs...

■ A TOTAL of 85 patients failed to show up for appointments in January at Fairfield Medical Practice.

■ THE Citizens Advice Bureau are now providing an outreach service in Merkinch Community Centre on Tuesday mornings (by appointment only — ring 01463 237664).

■ THE Trinity Church Spring Fayre is being held in the church halls on Saturday 16th March from 10am to 12 noon. Usual stalls with bric-a-brac, home-baking and coffees and teas.

■ THE Community Centre has just secured funding of £35,000 for an oral history project over the next two years, thanks to the Heritage Lottery and Highland Council's Discretionary Fund.

■ PLACES are still available at the Community Centre's Easy Exercise for the Over 60s. Movements are suitable for both standing and seated positions and take place to classic hits and popular songs. Sessions are on Friday mornings from 10-11am and each session costs £2.50.



■ SINGING for Pleasure celebrated St Valentine's Day with a special theme night. They also took the opportunity to rehearse for the Variety Concert which they are holding on 17th and 18th May. Tickets are on sale at the Community Centre now. Pictured are Sandra and Carol.

■ CONGRATULATIONS to Donna Miller, Rosehaugh Road who won last month's Nicol Killer Quiz. Well done!

Thought for the day

That which we obtain too easily,
we esteem too lightly.
Thomas Paine

New tax may affect almost one in five tenants

THE Scottish Government is giving more money to organisations such as Citizens' Advice who offer support to those worst hit by UK benefit cuts. One of the cuts due to start within the next few weeks is the "bedroom tax." Bedroom tax analysis estimates that in Scotland:

- 105,000 households will be affected by the bedroom tax.
- Of these, 83,000 will be under-occupying by one bedroom and 22,000 will be under-occupying by two or more rooms.
- With around 586,000 households in the social rented sector, it is estimated that 18% of all households in the sector will be affected.
- Depending on the measure of inflation used, the average weekly loss in 2012/13 prices

is between £11 and £12. This gives an estimate total loss of Housing Benefit to the sector of between £60 -£65 million per annum. The Bedroom Tax will reduce the amount of housing benefit support that can be given to tenants in the social rented sector by introducing new size criteria for working-age Housing Benefit claimants, who have extra bedrooms. People who are judged to be 'under occupying' their home by one bedroom will have their housing benefit slashed by 14%. Where they are under occupying by two or more bedrooms the deduction is 25%. The new criteria could mean that ill or disabled people, who use a spare bedroom for medical equipment, may all be affected.

A new approach to tackling homelessness in the Highlands

A RADICAL new way of providing temporary accommodation for people who find themselves unintentionally homeless has been proposed by Highland Councillors.

The Council has a statutory duty in relation to homeless households and one of its key duties is to provide temporary accommodation until settled accommodation can be offered.

Temporary accommodation is currently provided in a number of ways including through purchasing tendered rooms in Houses of Multiple Occupation (284).

The annual cost of the Council's current use of tendered rooms is £2.6million.

It is proposed to examine transferring this spending and investing it in building new self-contained one-bedroomed flats in small

developments across the Highlands and in Inverness, away from the city centre.

The Finance Housing & Resources Committee agreed at their meeting last month that a Project Team will look into developing a business case and bring forward detailed proposals to the next meeting of the committee in April.

Committee Chairman Councillor Dave Fallows, welcomed the development. He said: "I am very pleased that we are progressing this radical new approach to accommodating people who find themselves temporarily homeless. It is a much better way of spending public funds with the advantage of providing purpose built accommodation which can at a later time be brought into our mainstream stock of Council homes."

NURSERY ASSISTANT



Fliperz are seeking a part time nursery assistant for long term sickness cover to help with the running of our busy childcare centre. The nursery sessions operate in the morning and afternoon, with some all day care and after school cover in the afternoon. You will be responsible for the care of children across an age range of under 3 to 4 during nursery sessions and up to 11 years during the out of school sessions. Qualifications at SVQ Level 3 (or working towards) are essential along with experience. SSSC Certification is also a requirement. The rate of pay will be around £6.50 per hour and be dependant on qualifications and experience. Interested applicants should apply in writing with a copy of your CV detailing *childcare experience* with the details of two references to: The Chief Executive, Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant Street, Inverness, IV3 8BL. The closing date is Midday Monday the 4th of March 2013.

Merkinch Enterprise are an equal opportunities employer.



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to deliver News & Views in

Glendoe Terrace

It will take you around half an hour, once a month.

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If you are prepared to volunteer, please ring Merkinch Enterprise on 01463 240085 or drop in to 14 Grant Street.

Merkinch Partnership...



There's lots of help for job-seekers at Merkinch Work Club organised by Merkinch Partnership in Merkinch Enterprise on Mondays and The Bike Shed on Thursdays. See ad on right or ring Anne Sutherland on 01463 718989.

Moving Forward with Confidence

MERKINCH Partnership is running a free Employability Skills course throughout March. The 4-week course starts on Tuesday the 5th and runs each week on the 12th, 19th and 26th from 10am to 3pm. At time of going to press, the venue had still to be confirmed.

If you are unemployed and looking for work, this course may be for you. Learn about:

- Uncovering negative messages
- Willingness to change
- Work and success
- Health and prosperity

To book a place on this free course contact Anne on 01463 718989/07872014520.



**Are you unemployed and looking for work?
Come along to Merkinch Work Club!**

Get help with...

- * Looking for vacancies
- * Job application forms
- * Free Internet access
- * Registering on the Government Gateway job search website
- * Producing a CV
- * Interview Skills
- * Using a computer
- * Help and advice with benefits claims.

Merkinch Work Club takes place on:

MONDAYS from 10.00a.m to 3.00p.m in Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant Street
THURSDAYS from 10.00a.m to 3.00p.m in the Bike Shed, 23 Grant Street.

For more info contact Anne on 01463 718989 / 07872014520.

Employment Support Programme



If you are aged between 16 and 24 years and not working you are eligible to take part in our Employment Support Programme. Get help with...

**Looking for vacancies *Job Applications *CVs *Interview Skills *Free Internet access*

For more information contact Peter Corbett, Merkinch Partnership, 4 Grant Street, Inverness Tel: 01463 718989 / 07771370953; E-mail: peter@merkinch.com



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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.



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Burns Ceilidh keeps Scots tradition going



NOT just a pretty face! Ian Maclellan (left) who is a well-known face around the Community Centre had a chance to share his piping skills with the audience at the Burns Celebration in the Centre. Another stalwart of the Burns scene is Hugh Chisholm who is pictured below addressing the haggis. Ian Fraser and his Trio provided the music and the Rainbow Singers and Singing for Pleasure the vocals.



Average council house rent increase pegged at 2%

FOR the third year in succession, Highland Council is recommending a council house rent increase below the rate of inflation.

The Finance Housing & Resources committee agreed to contain the average weekly rent increase to £1.35, the rent rising from £67.60 to £68.95.

A 2% increase will also be applied to hostel rents, gypsy/traveller site pitches, garage and garage sites as well as caretaking and CCTV services.

The full council confirmed the increases at its budget setting meeting on Thursday 7 February.

Councillor Dave Fallows, chair of the Finance Housing & Resources committee, said: "We have listened to tenants and our Housing & Property Service has made efficiencies which for the third year running has allowed us to contain the increase to below inflation. This is good news for our tenants."

"It also allows us to maintain the progress in bringing all our council houses up to Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 and to extend our council house building programme."

In 2013-14, the Council will spend £15,359,000 on repairs and maintenance of its stock of over 13,000 council houses. It also plans to invest £17.5m in improvements to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for existing houses and £10m to build new Council houses.



Total refurb for Merkinch streets

CAMERON Road and Cameron Square are to have double glazing and new kitchens and bathrooms. Work is due to start this month and should take about six weeks.

Councillor Bet McAllister told *News & Views*, "I had been approached by residents in regards to the amount of heat loss from windows and the rising costs of heating their homes which were single glazed."

"I suggested that perhaps at the same time that the houses could do with modern up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms, and Highland Council's Housing Department came up with the idea of doing the works at the same time to save disruption to the tenants."

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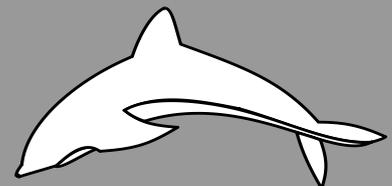
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to deliver *News & Views* in
**Madras, Nelson and
Brown Streets.**

It will take you around 30 to 40 minutes, once a month. You needn't go out in the rain and it will help keep you fit. If you are prepared to volunteer, please ring Merkinch Enterprise on 01463 240085 or drop in at 14 Grant St.

- **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* by emailing bette@merkinch.com or ring Merkinch Enterprise on 240085.



Meet the potter who is building a success in clay



IT is three months since the Clay Studio first opened its doors on Grant Street and things are now really up and running with seven groups for the disadvantaged, two night classes and two after-school classes which have just started.

Despite initial wrinkles with the kiln the sheer energy and enthusiasm of those involved has inspired all who have attended classes.

Lead potter is Allison Weightman who is supported by a team of session potters who have varying specialities and skills. Born in Carlisle, Allison was brought up in Inverness where she attended Millburn Academy (then High).

Her father was Divisional Officer in the Fire Brigade, but that was the nearest she came to fire in those days. In fact her first

job was in a bank and her first venture in clay was at night classes.

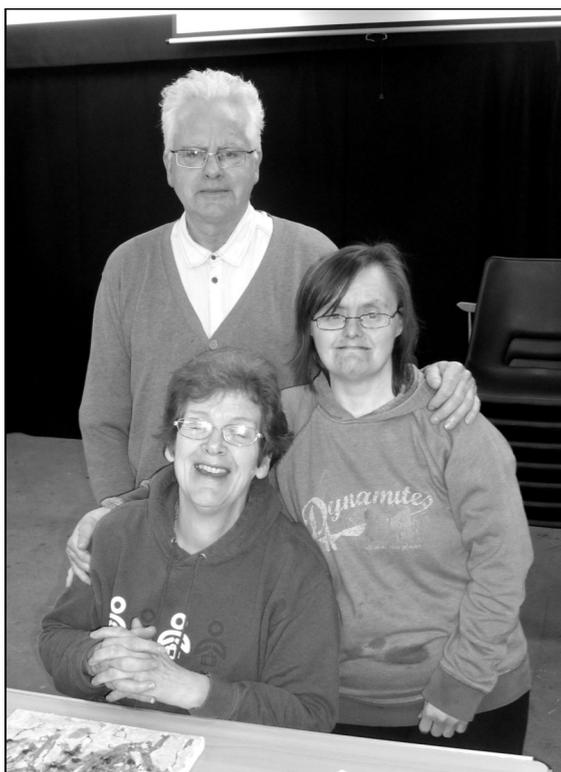
By the mid-80s she was among the pioneers who developed the remote community on Scoraig. She tried dyeing and spinning yarn and other applied arts. "But clay got me," she says. She built her own propane gas-fired kiln and learned by trial and error, chucking her disasters in the sea!

In 2002 Allison gained a BA (Hons) from Edinburgh College of Art and since then she has exhibited from London to Lewis, Aberdeen to Inchmore. She has also taken part in numerous projects including Belladrum where last year she created the Bellaphant. She's been invited to return this summer to help celebrate the festival's 10th anniversary.



Allison admires cut-out bowl made by Julian Wsocki

Day	Time	Class	Age	Description	Cost
Mon	12.00 – 14.00		Adults	Adults with physical health problems or learning support needs – agency and self referrals welcome	Free!
	15.00 – 17.00		Adults	Adults with physical health problems or learning support needs – agency and self referrals welcome	Free!
	19.00 – 21.00		Adults	Adults with physical health problems or learning support needs – agency and self referrals welcome	Free!
Tue	11.00 – 13.00			Drop-In Session	
	13.00 – 15.00		14 – 24yrs	Unemployed - not in college	Free!
Wed	16.00 – 17.00		P4 – P7	Merkinch residents P4-P7	£2
	19.00 – 21.00		Adults	Evening Class open to the public	£40 per 4 week block
Thur	10.00 – 12.00		Adults	Adults with mental health issues	Free!
	13.00 – 15.00		Adults	Adults with mental health issues	Free!
	19.00 – 21.00		Adults	Evening Class open to the public	£40 per 4 week block
Sat & Sun		Group bookings taken on request for any aspect of working with clay and ceramics			Various



Former Corbett Centre artists exhibit latest works

MEMBERS of a private group of artists who meet at The Bike Shed twice a week are holding an exhibition of their work at the end of this month. Many of those involved were part of the Corbett Centre-based group Studi'03; others attended the Highland Print Studio.

Their exhibition which is launched on Monday 25th, from 10am to 2pm and will open all week until Friday 29th (times yet to be confirmed).

Perhaps best known of the group is Rhona Joan Macleod (pictured left standing) who has exhibited to acclaim in Inchmore Gallery and An Talla Solais in Ullapool.

Others include Margaret Mackenzie (pictured left seated), Cindy Macleannan, Julie Fairlamb, Flora Macdonald and Laura Black.

Also in the picture is Billy Coghill who leads the group.

Pictured right... One of the tissue landscapes in the show.



You and your health



Hot lemon drinks and staying warm indoors will help beat the viruses

COLDS and flu are both caused by viruses and there have been a lot of them around this winter. You will get better with or without a medicine, but over-the-counter remedies may help relieve your symptoms.



- ★ Cold and flu products may improve your symptoms.
- ★ They contain many different ingredients: ask your pharmacist for the best product for you.
- ★ For severe colds and flu, have plenty of rest and drink lots of water.
- ★ If symptoms are severe or include a rash, confusion or drowsiness, ask your pharmacist for advice.
- ★ If you are diabetic, elderly or have a long-term chest or heart condition visit your doctor for a flu jab every year.
- ★ Colds and flu rarely need antibiotics from your doctor. Indeed, it is rather antisocial to spread our viruses, coughing and sneezing in the doctor's waiting room.
- ★ If you have just returned from a country where malaria is a problem and have flu-like symptoms contact your doctor.

If you are worried about your symptoms, ask our pharmacist for advice.

Children usually feel very tired when they have colds or flu. They can be given cold and flu products to lower their temperature and cold remedies can help with other symptoms.

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



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Prize Quiz

Quiz fans once again get a shot at winning the Nicol's Corner Shop prize of a £10 voucher. When you've answered all the questions, fill in your details and send your entry in or deliver it to Merkinch Enterprise, 14 Grant Street to reach us no later than

1. A 1918 PR campaign to get women to smoke was called...?
 A: You're never alone with a fag
 B: Torches of freedom
 C: Keep slim with a puff.
2. In what book would you find the Eloi and the Morlocks?
 A: The Time Machine
 B: The War of the Worlds
 C: Around the World in 80 Days
3. What are the secondary colours?
 A: Purple, Orange, Green
 B: Red, Yellow, Blue
 C: Black, White, Grey.
4. What was the name of Sonny Crockett's pet alligator in the TV series Miami Vice?
 A: Liberace
 B: Dylan
 C: Elvis.
5. Which are the busiest airports in Europe?
 A: Gatwick/Schiphol/Wick
 B: Madrid/Munich/Rome
 C: Heathrow/Paris CDG/Frankfurt.
6. What is Occam's Razor?
 A: An unsolvable problem
 B: The principle that the simplest explanation is most likely to be the correct one
 C: A new bathroom gadget.
7. McAvity is a character in what?
 A: Glasgow cop show Taggart
 B: TV soap River City
 C: The musical Cats.
8. What is panna cotta?
 A: A pottery clay similar to terracotta
 B: An Italian dessert
 C: A Spanish cradle.
9. What is the surname of the identical twins that are the Irish pop act Jedward?
 A: Grimes
 B: George
 C: McAvity.
10. Which chess piece can only move diagonally?
 A: King
 B: Queen
 C: Bishop.

Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....

Last month's quiz check

1. The Sagrada Familia is a famous church in Barcelona
2. In Greek mythology the minotaur is half man, half bull.
3. Di-hydrogen monoxide is H₂O, the chemical name for water.
4. Kids TV's Sponge Bob Square Pants lives in a pineapple.
5. Kylie Minogue has sold 70 million records.
6. A Methuselah champagne bottle holds six litres.
7. Liverpool FC's song *You'll Never Walk Alone* is from the musical *Carousel*.
8. Pyro is the Greek word for fire.
9. Mariposa, Farfalla, and Papillon are all butterflies.
10. The name of Barbados in the Caribbean stems from the Portuguese for "bearded ones".

Keep fit with the Green Gym

March activities

- Wed 6th** – **Dunain Community Woodland**
Woodland Management Tasks
Work Club (pm)
- Wed 13th** – **Merkinch Nursery School**
School gardening
Work Club (pm)
- Wed 20th** – **Culloden Battlefield**
Restoration of battlefield
Work Club (pm)
- Wed 27th** – **Inv High School Real Project**
Organic Food Growing
Work Club (pm)



Green Gym

Participants can meet at Inverness Library at 9.45am or South Kessock turning circle at 10am and on finishing at 1pm there is the opportunity to go on to join the GG Work Club in the afternoon where there is help with moving towards employment. It runs from 1.45pm to 4pm. Please bring a packed lunch. For more info ring the office on 01463 811560.

Get involved, keep fit, do something useful and learn some new skills!

For more info ring, 01463 811560 or email Ullie at u.wenzel@btcv.org.uk

New gallery and framers opens in Grant Street



Grant Street has expanded its artistic facilities with the opening of a new bijou art gallery and frame-makers at No.45. The Aquarius is an independent gallery owned by Ray Martin which exhibits a range of work from paintings, pastel drawings, photographs and ceramics by various artists with local connections. Pictured above is Ray (right) with one of the artists, Jay Muirhead, and a friend John. More information about the gallery can be found at www.spanglefish.com/AquariusGallery ... Or just drop in at Number 45.

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

Humour on the 'Net

Meet the class... a really clean joke

A new teacher came to teach a class of 12-year-olds. As it was the first day, she gave her intro. and asked all the students to introduce themselves with name and hobby.

She said, "Let's start with the boys first."

The boys start giving their intro...

First boy: "My name is John, and my hobby is to see bubbles in the bathtub."

Teacher was somewhat confused but said, "Interesting. Well, OK. In fact, we must be honest in telling our hobby. And after all there is essentially a child in each of us. So it's OK John. Yes next."

Second boy: "I am Peter and my hobby is to see bubbles in the bathtub."

Teacher was now quite surprised and said, "Good. I like the spirit of supporting a friend. OK, next."

Third boy: "I'm Smith and my hobby is to see bubbles in the bathtub."

Teacher: "Guys are you joking or what? Please be honest. OK next."

This continues... and the last boy stands up "I'm Harry and my hobby is to see bubbles in the bathtub."

Exhausted, the teacher said, "I don't think I will be able to teach such idiotic boys for long. Anyway, now the girls please."

First girl: "I'm Julie and my hobby is to watch birds."

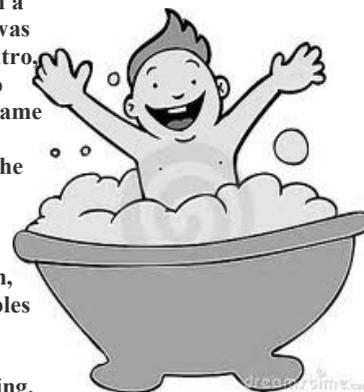
Teacher: "Good. At last I got something sensible. OK next."

Second girl: "I'm Ruby and I like to collect perfume bottles."

Third girl: "Please miss, I'm Sophie and I like to play hockey."

Teacher "Now this is more like it – you girls are quite grown up. OK next, yes you, the blonde girl with the red top sitting at the back..."

The most beautiful girl in the class replied, "Madam, my name is Bubbles, and my hobby is to take a bath three times a day."



Latest on football, angling, and a jogging invite



Football

The **Youth League** and the **Street League** kicked off their 2013 season with a meeting at Clach Park before heading to Carse Park for tryouts.

This year the Youth team will be headed up by coaches Peter Corbett and James Hudson and the Street League team by coaches Victor Leslie and Sean Ross.

January saw two coaches, Sean Ross and Peter Corbett complete their Level 1 development activities course with several more coaches hoping to develop their coaching skills by completing other courses in the near future.

Merkinch Soccer 7s continued their season after the Christmas break with their latest game being against Muirtown. Both teams had had disappointments in their first matches so both were keen for the win. Merkinch had to make some changes in players due to absences. Primary 5 player Liam Wilson stepped up and played well in an attacking defensive role.

Merkinch took the lead halfway through the first half with a good ball from the wing from Martin Robertson for Paul Reid to tap in.

Merkinch went into the second half leading, but some nice passing from Muirtown lead to them making it 1-1. It was end-to-end stuff but some good saves from Iain Devaney on his

debut kept the game a draw. Well played to all the boys in what was a close game!

Angling

The newly-formed South Kessock Angling club had their first trip of 2013 to Achnagour Trout Fishery last month and although the temperatures plummeted well below zero and ice was forming on the rod rings the intrepid fishers did not leave empty-handed with Graham Ross netting the first fish of the year award with a fine 3lb rainbow trout.

The club would like to thank Dougie and Gordon from Go Outdoors for sponsoring the awards as well as Eddie's minimart on Benula Road. The club would also like to thank Merkinch Partnership who have assisted in both the setting up and running of the club.

The next trip is on the 16th March to Achnagour Fishery. Meet at Grant Street car park at 8am and the cost will be £20.

HiFiReS

Mid-January saw the completion of the third HiFiReS course run in partnership with the Highlands and Islands Fire Service and Merkinch Partnership. This time the course produced nine graduates (pictured above) who

during their 10-week course learned a variety of skills including hose work, First Aid and a bit of fire-fighting.

Early morning jogging

Anyone interested in a bit of pre-breakfast exercise can join me *en route* every Tuesday and Thursday at Carse Park at 7 am, Grant Street 7.05am and then along the riverside. Or contact David on 07951 977 922



Each participant on the HiFiReS course receives a certificate on graduation.

CHECK on the Merkinch Partnership Sports pages on Facebook: just search for Merkinch and look out for the Merkinch Sports page, Merkinch Football Academy and Merkinch Mountain Bike Club. All have sporting videos, pictures and news. Or contact David on 01463 718989 or 07951 977 922.

THE FLIPERZ PAGE

Hi my name is Kitty! I love to cuddle and play with my toys! Can you help to put some colour back into my life? Usually my colour is tortoiseshell (brown and black) but you can make me any colour you like.



JOKESPOT

Why was six afraid of seven?

Because: 7 8 9

What do elves learn in school?

The elf-abet

Why did the boy bring a ladder to school?

He wanted to go to high school

Fliperz

- If your child was born between **1st September 2009 and 31st December 2009** he/she will be eligible for a funded place in **January 2013**.
- Born between **1st January and 28th February 2010** will be eligible for a funded place in **April 2013**.

When enrolling please bring along your child's Birth Certificate.

You may call into Fliperz and have a look round at any time. Fliperz also provides:

- Day Care
- Nursery sessions
- After School Care
- Holiday Care.

Contact: The Childcare Manager, Fliperz Day Care, Merkinch Hall, Simpson's Lane, Inverness Telephone 01463 234232.



Local firms sponsor angling club awards

THE angling club have received sponsorship from Go Outdoors and Eddie's Mini-mart. The club's season has started well—see report on page 10.

Knitting for charity

LEFT... A generous donation of wool is keeping hands busy at the Golden Times knitting group. The ladies, some of whom are pictured here, meet on Monday mornings at the Community Centre and the sessions are free. The results of their efforts are donated to the charity Cargomm, formerly Cross roads) - recently this was estimated at over £600.



Are you looking for FREE IT training with recognised qualifications?

Are you unemployed or working 16 hours or less per week and living in the Inverness area?

Applicants must be between 16 years old and retirement age to qualify.

If the answer is YES, contact
MERKINCH ENTERPRISE

