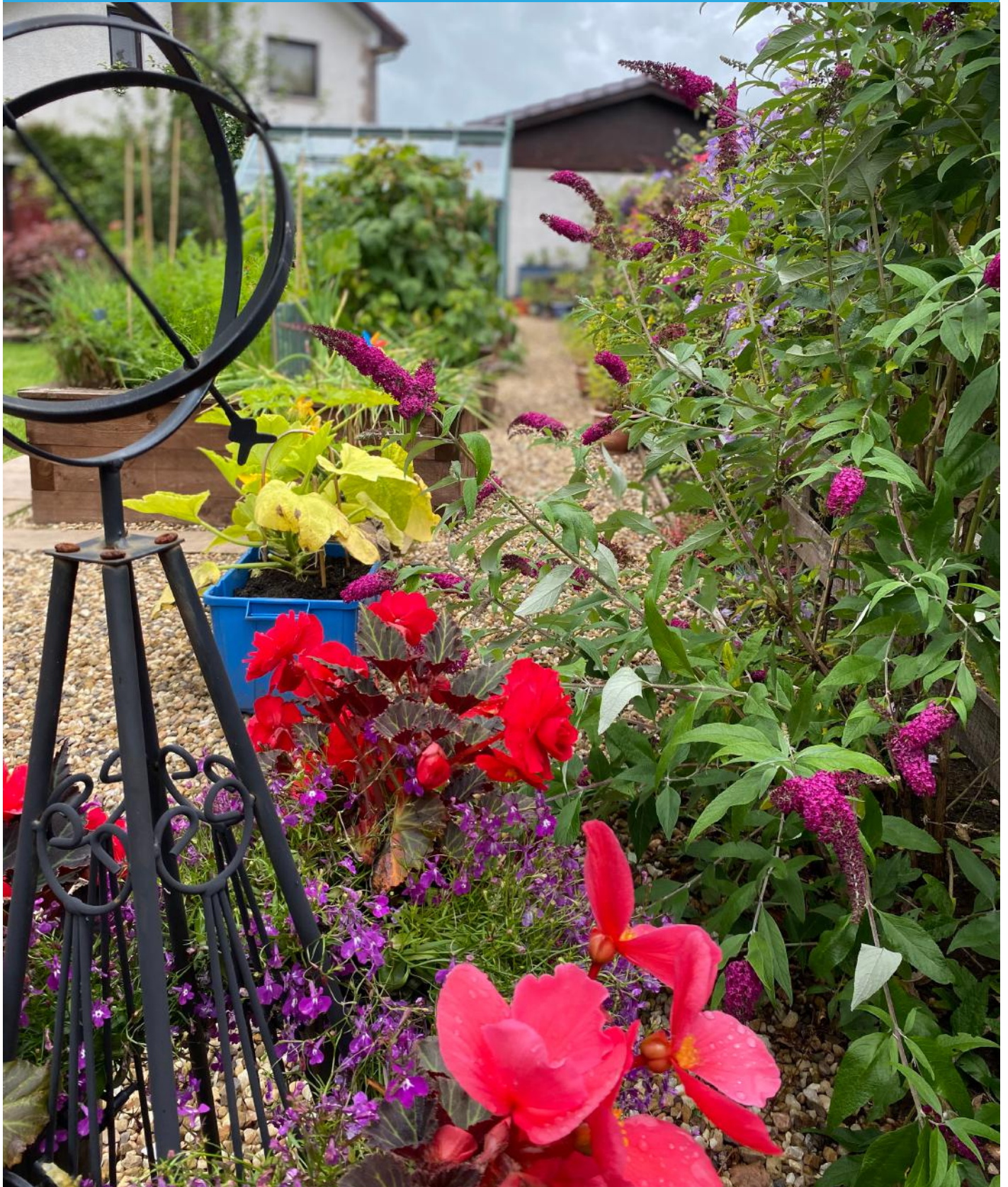




ISSUE 65

SUMMER 2026

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Noticeboard

29 Aug **Killearn Horticultural Society** 160th Annual Show. Village Hall and Kirk Hall, 2pm–4.30pm. Restricted mobility visitors from 12.30pm. Scarecrow competition in car park, entries before 1.30pm. For further info, see www.facebook.com/killearnhorti or www.killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk.

Summer Craft Fayre Village Hall Garden Room and back green, 12.30pm–4pm.

Colourful Killearn plant sale at the Horticultural Show, from 12.30pm.

11 Sept **Killearn Malawi Group** Annual Gathering, Kirk Hall, 7.30pm. Speakers, refreshments. All are welcome to hear about our work in Malawi.

15 Sept **Strathendrick Stitchers** Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. Sarah Strachan will give a talk 'From cocoon to cloth: a craft and textiles tour of Odisha, India'. Also, a display of our modern take on 'pockets'. The sales table and library will be available. New members and visitors welcome. Contact strathendrickstitchers@gmail.com.

16 Sept **Killearn Community Council** Meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. For link to join live stream, email contactus@killearncc.org.uk.

17 Sept **The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley** Lecture by Julia Marwood, 'William McTaggart – The Water and the Light'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am–12.15pm. Visitors and guests welcome. Visit theartsocietystirling.org.uk or contact artsocsfvmembership@gmail.com.

24 Sept **Drymen & District Local History Society** Talk by Murray Pittock, 'Scotland, the global history, 1603 to the present'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm. Membership £12 per annum or visitors welcome, £5 per visit. e-voice.org.uk/drymenhistory/ or follow us on Facebook [@drymenhistorysociety](https://www.facebook.com/drymenhistorysociety).

2 Oct **Strathendrick Film Society** showing *Hamnet*. Balfron High School Theatre, 7.30pm. See strathfilmsoc.org.uk to join.

4 Oct **Killearn Kirk** Harvest Thanksgiving service, 10am. Gifts of tinned and dried food accepted to be donated to Start Up Stirling.

16 Oct **Cycling Killearn** 'Dr Bike' & 'Donate a Bike' event, Garden Room, Village Hall, 10am–3pm. For further info, see www.cycling-killearn.org or email cycling@kcfc.co.uk.

17 Oct **The Arts Society Stirling and Forth Valley** Lecture by Sam Moorhead, 'Wonders of the Roman Empire – off limits'. Albert Halls, Stirling, 11am–12.15pm. Visitors and guests welcome. See 17 Sept for contact details.

20 Oct **Strathendrick Stitchers** Kirk Hall, 10am–2pm. AGM at 10.30am, followed by an introduction to the group project: Dorset Buttons. New members and visitors welcome. See 15 Sept for contact details.

21 Oct **Killearn Community Council** Meeting. Garden Room, Village Hall and live stream over Zoom, 8pm. See 16 Sept for contact details.

22 Oct **Drymen & District Local History Society** Talk by Denis Kearns about the ongoing restoration of the 'Maid of the Loch'. Drymen Village Hall, 7.30pm. Membership £12 a year. Visitors welcome, £5 a visit.

27 Oct **Colourful Killearn** Autumn meeting. Village Hall, 7pm.

1 Nov **KCFC bonfire and fireworks** The Glebe, 7pm. Display at 7.30pm.

6 Nov **Strathendrick Film Society** showing *The Battle of Wallis Island*. Balfron High School Theatre, 7.30pm. See 2 Oct for contact details.

7 Nov **Colourful Killearn** work party tidying up the war memorial, 10am.

Autumn Craft Fayre Village Hall, 11am–4pm.

8 Nov **Killearn Kirk** Remembrance Service, 10am followed by Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial at 10.45am.

13 Nov **Killearn Malawi Group** ceilidh. Village Hall, 7.30pm–11.30pm. Dance to the band Tarnach. Tickets £20 available from committee members of Killearn Malawi Group. Raffle, light snacks, BYOB.

If you have any dates for the winter issue of the Noticeboard (mid November to mid March), please contact Heather McArthur (07985 082678; heather.mcarthur1@outlook.com).

Killearn Village Hall Classes and Clubs

MONDAY

Joimove Dance and Breathwork Class Garden Room, 10.30am–11.30am. Contact Claire McRobbie (claremcrobbie9@gmail.com).

Monday Club: Main Hall and Garden Room, 1pm–4.30pm. Badminton and bridge.

TUESDAY

Badminton: Main Hall, 9.15am–10.15am.

Foot Health Clinic: Committee Room, 9.30am–2pm. Contact Jacqueline Morton for availability (07703 799112).

Little Buds Music Class: Garden Room, 10.15am–11.45pm. Contact Clare (claremondaymusic@gmail.com).

Townbreak Stirling: Garden Room, 2pm–4pm. Contact Lesley Milne (www.townbreak.org/contact).

DIY circuits: Main Hall, 6.30pm–7.30pm. (Outdoors) Everyone welcome to join in. Contact Fiona (fiona.rennie@btinternet.com) or Nick (07860 700928).

Killearn Bridge Club: Club night in the Garden Room, 6.30pm–10.30pm. New members welcome. Contact Gavin Hunter (gavin.hunter1@gmail.com).

Adult Jazz Dance Class: Main Hall, 7pm–8pm. Contact Yasmin (07979 856837; yasmin@throthegrapevine.co.uk).

WEDNESDAY

Yoga Class: Main Hall, 9.30am–10.30am. Suitable for all. Contact Sarah (sarahfleming99@yahoo.com).

Ear Wax Microsuction Clinic: Committee Room, 9.30am–2pm. Contact Jacqueline Morton (07703 799112).

Endrick Writers Group: Garden Room, 2pm–3.30pm fortnightly. Contact Anne Marie (endrickwriters@gmail.com).

Lynda Turner School of Dance: Main Hall, 4pm–5.30pm. Contact Lynda (01360 770390; geolyn2000@hotmail.com).

THURSDAY

Mother Nature: Garden Room, 10am–11.30am. Group for soon-to-be and new mums with babies less than one year. See poster in foyer for group QR code.

Lynda Turner School of Dancing: Main Hall, 4.20pm–5.20pm. Pre-school dance class. For contact see Wednesday.

Dance with Julie: Garden Room, 5.30pm–7.15pm. Contact Julie (jjsymmonds36@gmail.com; 07496 231913).

Traditional Music Session: Monthly, Garden Room, 7.30pm–9.30pm. All instruments, abilities, singers, players welcome. Info available from Jackie (01360 550576).

Line Dancing Class: Village Hall, 8pm–9pm. All abilities welcome. Contact Calum at (cjeventsscotland@outlook.com) or CJ Line Dancing on Facebook and Instagram.

FRIDAY

Yoga Class: Main Hall, 9.30am–10.30am. Suitable for all. Contact Sarah (sarahfleming99@yahoo.com).

Dancercise (adult 50+ fitness class): Main Hall, 10am–11am. Low-impact dance-based exercise and routines for over 50s, ladies and gents. For contact, see Tuesday (Adult Jazz Dance).

SATURDAY

Killearn Country Market: Monthly. See posters for details or contact Megan (dunmoredesigns@gmail.com).

Editorial

Hello and welcome to Issue 65 of the *Killearn Courier*. Issue 1 was launched in March 2005, and the fact that we are still going is due in no small way to the hard work and dedication of our production team. Many have been with us since we started. However, our longevity is not just due to the team, but also to our advertisers, deliverers and you, our readers and contributors. We are very grateful to all of you.

There has been a lot happening in the village since our previous issue. One major milestone is the Village Hall's 200th anniversary, and this issue includes plenty of information about the birthday events that have already taken place or will come your way later this year. These apart, the hall is very much an integral part of Killearn life, given the number of organisations that use it on a regular basis as well as the number of events it hosts.

Thinking of anniversaries, Killearn Bridge Club held its inaugural meeting in the Black Bull in October 1976, so this year marks its golden anniversary. The club now plays in the Village Hall and you can learn more on page 16 about its regular tournaments and the planned anniversary celebration. Killearn Tennis Club is over 100 years old and officially celebrated its centenary in 2024 – all very interesting you might think, but did you know that it was threatened with closure by an unnamed party who wanted to replace it with houses? Thanks to the dedication of its members, along with support from some residents, the club is now classed as a Rural Activity Site. This means that planning permission for any development by outside bodies will not be granted and the club is safe.

This issue also celebrates some of the annual events that take place in the village, many of which attract attendees from far and wide. For instance, participants in the Killearn 10K come from all over and the event is so popular that places sell out on the day entries open! On the same day as the 10K, the Old Mill participates in the Beer Festival (which unfortunately had to be cancelled this year) and again attendees come from far afield, so much so that sometimes the queue stretches as far as the war memorial!

Much of what goes on in the village relies on community support without which there would be no Killearn Community Futures Company, no Community Council, no flower shows, no Scouts and Guides, to name but a few. We must 'use them or lose them', so do get involved if you can. This said, you can enjoy Killearn even if you can't get out and about. For example, why not browse the 'Wild about Killearn' website? See page 18 for details of this recently completed project.

The important thing is to enjoy our beautiful village and, I hope, also enjoy this issue.

lan

Cover

Our cover image is courtesy of Paul Searle. It was taken at one of the gardens participating in Killearn Gardens Open Day. Look out for more photos from this year's event in the next issue of the *Courier*.

Celebrating 200 Years of Killearn Village Hall



What better way to help celebrate 200 years of the Village Hall being part of the local community than to receive some funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. We're very grateful to the National Lottery for their support, which we're already making good use of. We've used some of the funds to support community gatherings and activities in the Village Hall and some to start tackling the repairs and refurbishment that will help to ensure that the hall stays available to the community over the next 200 years.

The Spring Tea Party (see opposite) brought over 100 local people and volunteers together to enjoy a cheery afternoon of tea and cake, and while those eating the cake were having a good time, some of the biggest smiles were from those serving the teas and rushing in with their baking to help support the event. They say it takes a village, but it also makes a village.

We also supported the Killearn 10K, offering a prize to the runner who finished in 200th position. The prize was kindly presented to the winner by long-standing Village Hall volunteer Peter Wilks.

We've asked local trades people for help with necessary repairs to doors and damp patches. With the support of the National Lottery Community Fund, we can work through some of our growing list of repairs and improve the look and feel of the hall for all our users.

Other events include working with the Killearn Horticultural Society to bring a 200th anniversary theme to their annual show at the end of August and supporting a local resident to plan an open day – an 'Autumn Pause' – to celebrate wellbeing through movement, creativity and connection. You will find details of this initiative on page 39. We're looking forward to seeing how this can perhaps be a start for more events of its kind promoting that wellbeing message.



We'll be back with more stories and photos in the next issue of the *Courier*, but thanks again to the National Lottery for their support and for continuing to fund projects like ours that bring people together and help communities across Scotland thrive.

A huge thanks also to the team at the Village Hall (pictured above). These are the folk who work extremely hard behind the scenes to manage our bookings, funds and bins – and all the other activities that it takes to keep the hall in working order. Every one of you is a star!

As a village hall and a community facility – it's what we stand for – we bring local people together, enabling them to meet other people and connect through activities, events, exercise, etc. So, come and join us, and if you need space for something, come and ask about our spaces.

www.killearnvillagehall.co.uk/book

HERE'S TO 200 YEARS AND 200 MORE!

Killearn Village Hall

2026 ...

**Celebrating 200 years at
the heart of the community**

200 years

1826-2026

Killearn Village Hall

DATE	EVENT
August	Killearn Cottagers' Horticultural Society Annual Show
October	Autumn Pause – a community wellbeing gathering
	History weekend – in conjunction with Killearn Primary School, Killearn Heritage Trail and the Strathendrick Heritage Group
November	Annual Killearn Fireworks
December	Killearn Village Hall/Primary School Advent window

... and landscaping works to provide a whole new community space looking out to Loch Lomond and the hills

Spring Tea Party

Our Village Hall was alive with smiles, happiness and conversations as more than 100 folk from across the village came to the Spring Tea Party – at what has become an annual village tradition.

Planning for the Village Hall's 200th birthday party was started by the volunteer team who, in winter, run the 'warm and friendly space' events in the hall.

They were joined by a fantastic team of volunteers and cake bakers to whom we are very grateful.

Some great prizes for the prize draw were donated by local businesses, raising money for the Village Hall 200th birthday fund.* The fund will be used to create a more welcoming and accessible outside space and to cover essential repairs and ongoing refurbishment.

And lastly, some funding from National Lottery players helped the Village Hall celebrate.

Thanks to:

- ★ Endrick Blooms for the bud vases on the tables
- ★ The Almost Credible String Band
- ★ The volunteer bakers
- ★ Killearn Kids Hub for their lovely cakes
- ★ Killearn Co-op
- ★ All the volunteers who helped on the day
- ★ The National Lottery Community Fund
- ★ And everyone who supported the party behind the scenes.

* To donate to the Village Hall 200th birthday fund, visit www.kcfc.co.uk/donate-200th

PAUL SEARLE



Lara and Indiana were just two of the children at Killearn Kids Hub who supplied cakes.



Above: Well done and many thanks to all the bakers who supplied such a fantastic array of cakes, scones, fairy cakes and tray-bakes and to the volunteers who ran the kitchen behind the scenes.

Left: Anne Trew, the Co-op's Member and Co-operative Engagement person, who donated lovely goodies for the prize draw.

News in brief

Although the outcome wasn't what Scotland fans hoped for, at least Balfron lad Findlay Curtis can boast that he played against a determined Haiti in the World Cup and acquitted himself well. An exciting continuation of his international career..

Stirling Council has launched a literary walking map to encourage avid readers to trace the steps of Scotland's great writers and visit places that inspired them. Along with four main walks in Stirling, there are also three country walks, two set in Aberfoyle, as well as a 40-mile Trossachs Trail. Maps can be found in local libraries as well as on the Council's website at tinyurl.com/47jxsryh.

FADS Panto – Kick off your 2026 festive season with FADS' production of the magical and hilarious panto, *Sleeping Beauty*, written by Alan P. Frayn. (Production by arrangement with Stage Right Creative Ltd.)

Thursday 26 – Saturday 28 November

Thursday 3 – Saturday 5 December

Evenings at 7.30pm plus Saturday matinees at 2pm
Menzies Hall, Fintry

Tickets will be on sale from mid-October – follow us on Facebook or subscribe to our blog to be notified:
fintrydrama.org.uk/subscribe

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Horti Annual Show – get ready to enter

Keep an eye on your doormat as the countdown to Killearn's favourite summer tradition has officially begun. By the time you read this, the Horticultural Society's free Annual Show schedule will have landed on doorsteps across the village, packed with everything you need to know about this year's big event.

Mark your calendars for Saturday 29 August. Taking over the Kirk, Village Hall and Church Hall, the 160th Annual Show will be a very family-friendly afternoon out. But it won't just be an event for spectators – the Horti wants you to be part of the day.

Whether your talent lies in growing veg, baking the perfect scone or capturing stuff on camera, there is a category for everyone. This year's competitive classes span horticulture and produce with cut flowers, pot plants, vegetables, fruit, preserves, homemade wines or cordials and home baking, as well as the creative arts with craftwork, fine art, photography and floral art.

The Horti is especially keen to inspire the next generation of green thumbs and creatives.

'The show is really about people,' says Horti chair Paul Searle. 'We're always keen for youngsters to get involved, and we've been working closely with the award-winning Killearn Nursery to ensure our youth section is fresh and exciting. We've introduced some brand-new classes this year – including a Lego competition for adults, to go head-to-head with the one for youngsters.'

Paul adds, 'If you are a parent, grandparent or carer, now is the time to get the kids plotting their masterpieces. To make it easy, a handy, downloadable A4 guide to the youth section is available on the Horti's website. And if you're a regular entrant, remember, all 12 competitive sections are browsable on the website too.'

Taking part couldn't be simpler. There is no need to pre-register your entries. Bring your exhibits to the halls either



No Lego was used in the making of this AI generated photo

on the Friday evening before the show or, from 7.30am, on the morning of the show itself.

For just £3 per household, visitors and entrants will receive a 'wearable sticker' granting full access to the kirk and halls. (Of course, if you'd like to slide a little extra into the donation pot, the society is always incredibly grateful.)

And for those who want a head start on the action, the Horti's popular 'My Garden' online photography competition kicks off in late July. Dust off your camera, snap your pride and joy and upload your best shots to the website. The winners will be announced on the day of the show.

Get ready to plant, bake, make and create, Killearn – let's make this year's show the best one yet!

Plant Sale

The Horticultural Society's plant sale in May was a resounding success, raising a spectacular £1,468, over £400 more than any previous sale!

The money will help to fund August's Annual Show and support local initiatives, including village planters at Turnip the Beet and the village phone box. A donation of £200 will be made to the Shire's seed libraries, including one at Killearn Village Hall.

Horti chair Paul Searle expressed his gratitude to Benview Garden Centre and to all who donated plants, with a special thank you to 'local gardening hero' Morna Knottenbelt for contributing over 100 plants. Morna



Ewan (11) and Hamish (7) are showing off the Horti's schedule. They sold 19 bags of kindling at the Horti plant sale, giving 10% to Killearn seed library and to Killearn Nursery.

and Derek's Gardeners Cottage walled garden on Ballochruin Road is open by arrangement from 15 June to 15 October and is well worth a visit.

Huge congratulations also go to Killearn Primary's P7 pupils, who raised £300 selling coffee and cakes at the plant sale, as well as raising over £700 from their tombola and 100 square. This money will help to fund their upcoming leavers' party.

To volunteer or learn more, please check the Horti website or get in touch via email (details below).

PAUL SEARLE

info.kchs@btinternet.com
killearnhorticulturalsoc.co.uk
Facebook "killearnhorti"

The KMG jumble sale at the end of February again made a great impression on everyone in the community who was involved. It brought many people together, and there was a great atmosphere and lots of sales. Did you know that the Scots word for a jumble sale is a rummle? Such a great word! This year, the Killlearn rummle brought in an amazing £2,600!

There are so many people to thank – the people organising publicity and videos, the organisers on the KMG committee who brought everyone together, the yellow t-shirters on the stalls and the many people who set out the hall on the Friday and cleared away what was left. And of course, a big thank you too to the generous donors and to Cancer Research UK who uplifted our remaining goods for recycling.

The funds raised help to finance the work of the KMG in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in Africa. Our main project, building a girls' hostel at Nkhonde secondary school in southern Malawi, will encourage more girls to stay on in education, giving them a safe place to stay. It is now at the second phase, building the walls to roof height. We are just awaiting new batches of bricks to be made locally after the rainy season.

Last year we arranged for computers to be provided for Nkhonde school, free through the Turing Trust in Edinburgh. All the students are now being taught computing and the S2 class of 44 are set to sit the Junior Certificate computing exam for the first time.

Part of the deal is a five-year maintenance contract – about £10 per computer per year. How would you like to sponsor a



computer at Nkhonde school? It makes such a difference to the students there. Details for donations are below.

We also continue to fund Chrissie's Meals in northern Malawi, now run by Rachael Banda, Chrissie's daughter. This supports a group of widows with funds for food and also some orphaned children at secondary school.

All these activities are possible because of the funds we raise at the jumble sales and at last year's ceilidh. Because that ceilidh was so successful, we are organising another one in the Village Hall, on Friday 13 November, again with the dynamic ceilidh band, Tarnach. Let's fill the hall, raise the roof and raise funds for the projects we run in Malawi.

Everyone is invited to the Annual Gathering on Friday 11 September in Killlearn Kirk Hall. You're all friends of KMG! We hope to have speakers to tell us about their experience of Malawi and to report on our progress. Refreshments, including Malawi gin, are served! Donations for our work at Nkhonde school may be made through [givey.com/killlearnmalawigroup](https://www.givey.com/killlearnmalawigroup).

KMG: small charity – big impact

KEN ALLEN



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INGROWN TOENAILS

Jennifer Malley, BSc(Hons), RCPod, hpc registered,
11 Main Street,
Killlearn, G63 9RJ.
01360 888 111
jennifer@killlearnpodiatry.com



Advent Windows



The Advent elves are starting to plan Killearn's Advent window trail and need your help.

Each evening during December, decorated and illuminated Advent windows will be revealed throughout Killearn, with the aim of raising money for Shelter Scotland.

Although some people say they can't match the artistic talent displayed in previous years, it's not a competition and the elves are just happy that folk want to take part. They can always advise on ideas to help newbies – just contact them by 'elf-mail' below. Last year more than £3,200 was raised and the elves were delighted to have so many window openers.

The elves are looking for residents and businesses across Killearn who can decorate their visible-from-the-street window for this popular village tradition. Whether you're a regular or want to join in for the first time, the

elves welcome everyone who is interested

One elf commented, 'We'd like to know by mid-October so we can plan the trail. We'd also like to thank all the individuals and families, organisations and businesses that have already helped light up Killearn on gloomy December evenings.'

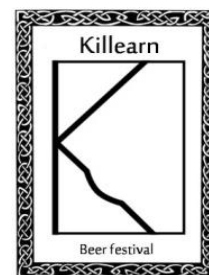
For more information, especially if you're uncertain what it involves, please get in touch by elf-mail at killearn.advent.windows@gmail.com

KILLEARN ADVENT WINDOWS ELVES



Killearn Beer Festival

As readers will be aware, this year's Beer Festival unfortunately had to be cancelled due to licensing issues. Although attempts have been made to arrange an alternative date later this year, this has not proved possible. Instead, we will concentrate on returning with the festival next year.



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The Weather Channel

Our climate in Killearn can be described as warm, temperate and rather wet. We have around 1,350mm (52 inches) of rain each year and although we tend to think of our winters as being cold, the table shows that we do not fare badly when compared with other places that are as far north (56° North) as we are.

	Latitude	Average annual temp	Winter (Nov. to Mar. av. temp)
Moscow	55°N	6.3°C	-2°C
Quebec	53°N	4.2°C	-3°C
Killearn	56°N	8.1°C	+4°C

I remember being told in a geography lesson, as a schoolboy, that our climate was warmed by an ocean current called the Gulf Stream. This current brings warm water from the tropics up to and beyond the west coast of the UK. It turns out, though, that this is only partly true!

The Gulf Stream is a small part of what climate scientists call the Atlantic Meridional Circulation or AMOC. Think of the AMOC as an ocean conveyor belt driven by differences in temperature and the salt content of the water. As warm water flows northwards from the equator it cools and partly evaporates which makes it saltier. The salt content and the ocean cooling result in a higher density which causes surface waters to sink down into the deep ocean and eventually be conveyed back southward at depth. Much further south the dense waters are then pulled back to the surface where they warm in a process that oceanographers call upwelling.

The transfer of heat from the ocean to the atmosphere that takes place within the AMOC is at the heart of one of the most important components of the Earth's climate. Pertinently for Killearn, it is one of the reasons for our temperate climate.

Scientists are increasingly concerned that the AMOC is weakening as the planet warms. Some computer simulations warn that it could eventually reach a tipping point and lose much of its strength.

A recently published study by Niklas Boers in *The Scientific Journal of Nature* projected that if the AMOC collapses, the temperature in north-western Europe could drop considerably, plunging the region into a new ice age.

However, the projection that the AMOC is going to collapse is controversial in the climate modelling world. Model simulations are highly uncertain about the future of this ocean system. A full collapse is unlikely, but a weakening is probable at some point.

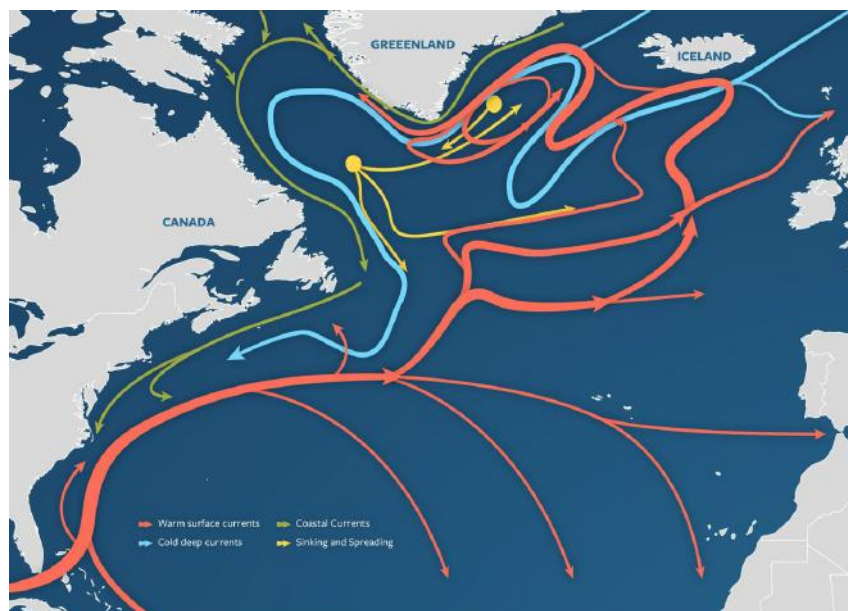
Much attention is being focused on the waters around Greenland, for example the East Greenland Current which runs southward along the country's eastern continental shelf. This area is covered by sea ice each winter which prevents ocean heat from escaping. However, with the rising temperatures over the past few decades the ice cover has been shrinking exposing the current to cold polar air. This may make the AMOC more resilient to climate change.



The RV Konsprins Haakon (pictured above) is a Norwegian ice breaker that was making its way in February 2025 in a project known as Rover. The ship spent two months collecting oceanographic and meteorological data as it crossed back and forth over Greenland's continental slope in the areas of pack ice. The data will add to two decades of direct current measurements and should throw more light on how the AMOC's headwaters are changing in a changing climate.

Anyone tempted to read further about meteorological and oceanographic research in the Arctic is recommended to read a paper called *The Iceland Greenland Seas Project*. The paper is by I. Renfrew et al and is published in the 2019 edition of the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*.

TOM RENFREW



Left: Illustration of AMOC by Eric S Taylor of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Half-Yearly Summary for Killearn (2026)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Highest Temp	9.4	11.1	17.5	21.8	27.7	29.9
Lowest Temp	-5.3	-4.5	-2.3	-1.8	1.1	6.6
Mean Temp	3.2	4.8	6.3	8.4	11.3	14.4
Days Below Freezing	5	5	5	1	0	0
Highest Wind Gust	34	28	30	28	19	21
Monthly Rain	172.5	132.6	155.2	141.2	63.8	172
Most Rain in 24 hrs	67.3	13.2	20.3	43.7	25.9	38.4
Days without Rain	13	5	9	8	10	10
Cumulative Rainfall	172.5	305.1	460.3	601.5	665.3	837.3

Temperature in °C, rainfall in mm and wind speed in miles per hour

Colourful Killearn: Litter-picking and Beyond

At the end of May, 16 hardy souls braved threatened rain to clear litter from the streets of Killearn. As part of a Stirling Council supported campaign to Keep Scotland Beautiful, Colourful Killearn organised a village-wide clear up. They collected 15 bin bags full of litter, mostly from the main road approaches, that the Council then carted away.



We are pleased to report that the core village and main walking routes are remarkably free of rubbish (with a couple of notable exceptions). The main problems appear to be motorists jettisoning stuff out of their car windows. So, huge thanks to individuals who routinely pick up rubbish as they walk around the village!

Conscious that litter clearance is a never-ending battle, we intend to arrange further events, particularly once the vegetation has died back to reveal what lurks beneath... Contact us if you would like to join us next time.

Folk who attended the Village Open Garden Day on 26 July may well have found their arm twisted to make a (bargain) purchase from the fundraising stall we ran on the day. We are extremely grateful to the organisers for nominating Colourful Killearn as one of the beneficiaries of this wonderful event and pledge to put the money to very colourful use!

Looking ahead, we will be fundraising again at the Horticultural Society's annual show on 29 August. Donations of plants and offers of help would be most welcome.

Our autumn meeting and AGM will be held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 27 October at 7pm. All are welcome to come along and help steer our direction looking forward to spring 2027!

We hope you have all noticed the evolution of the pollinator-friendly flower beds at the War Memorial – two years on from planting they are looking great and buzzing with insects!

Our autumn work party on 7 November (10am) will focus on tidying up the memorial site to present it in the best possible light for Remembrance Sunday the following day. We'd welcome extra hands and be delighted to see you there! Contact: colourfulkillearn@gmail.com.

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A Busy Final Term in Killearn Primary

The last term of the year has been busy but filled with fun as the whole school took on a World Cup theme – learning about different countries. We enjoyed Sports Day in the sun and all classes were involved in habitat walks around the village.

P1 Scotland

This term Primary 1 have been learning about tadpole life cycles and watching caterpillars turn into butterflies. They went on a trip to Stirling Castle as part of their learning about Scotland.

P2 Canada

Primary 2 did some amazing under the sea Canadian artwork and decorated their classroom door in a Canadian style. They enjoyed a visit to Kelvingrove Museum, which they found extremely fascinating.

P3/4 Egypt

Primary 3 have especially enjoyed learning about modern day and ancient Egypt. They experienced real artefacts at the Glasgow Resources Centre, which inspired them to share their learning in an assembly.

P4 France

Primary 4 have been loving their topics on Vikings and learning about France – including learning about French landmarks, food and language and exploring the regions in France. They visited Vikingar in Largs and had a great visit from Jullien's who told them all about catching frogs in France!

P5 Japan

Primary 5 have been doing some fabulous work this term. They are learning about Japan, so they made some awesome Japanese fact files. They are even lucky enough to have had an amazing YES DAY and went for a fun and inspiring trip to Stirling Castle. P5 are excited to become Big Buddies for our new P1s joining school in August.

P6 Australia

Primary 6 have been learning things about the World Cup, aboriginal art and *The Final Yearbook*. They expertly organised Sports Day and Health Week before completing Bike Ability training.

P7 Mexico

Primary 7 have been having tons of fun learning about Mexico – creating Frida Kahlo artwork, learning about Day of the Dead and Cinco de Mayo and tasting chillis! They made new friends during transition days at High School and marked the end of term with a slip and slide fun day. Their Leavers' Assembly brought a tear or two before being piped out on the last day!

We finished the year with Mrs Craigie's amazing whole school fun day. The playground was filled with inflatables, we took on Mr Rae in 'beat the goalie' and enjoyed smoothies from the Kitchen Window food truck. It was the best day! Now we are all looking forward to the summer holidays and hoping for some more nice weather.

PRESS GANG (KEIRA, FLORA, CHARLIE AND EMILY)



Killearn Primary bid farewell to Mrs Craigie

After 14 years as head teacher of Killearn Primary and Nursery, it is time for Mrs Craigie to move on to pastures new. Staff and children marked her last day with a special yoga-themed assembly, before presenting some special gifts and keepsakes to mark her time with us.

During her time in Killearn, Mrs Craigie has led the

school, playing a huge role in guiding many of our children on their journey from Nursery through Primary School and beyond. All the children and staff would like to say a huge 'thank you' to Mrs Craigie and wish her every success in the future.

AILSA WOODROW (KILLEARN PRIMARY)



Killearn students volunteering trip to Kenya

Next year, three students from Killearn, Hannah, Freddy and Jamie, will be going on a once in a lifetime trip to Kenya with 17 other young people. They will be travelling there as part of a volunteering expedition that will be supporting local schools in Kenya where they will experience different cultures and hopefully make a positive impact on the local community.

While in Kenya, they will be working with younger students in classes, teaching them musical instruments, coaching them in sports and building improved facilities. They will be developing valuable skills in teaching, building and communication as well as leadership.

The trip will also allow them to experience a day trip to the Great Rift Valley, a safari and a lake-side journey where they will be spotting wildlife.

Freddy, Jamie and Hannah hope to share photos of these experiences in future *Courier* issues. On this journey they will be developing strong bonds with classmates and

creating unforgettable memories with each other.

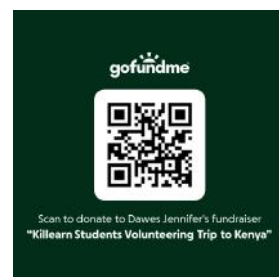


chocolates and champagne!), as well as a football last man standing competition. This has given their fundraising a very strong start.

Fundraising will be continuing through this year and into next year, so please look out for the group at local events and come and say 'Hello'.

Should you wish to support three local adventurers you can donate through their GoFundMe page by scanning the QR code or at gofund.me/94c6ede2f.

So far, their fundraising journey for this trip of a lifetime has included activities such as a Killearn Christmas Market tombola, a 'Tropic Skincare' night (supported by Freddy's aunt who also volunteered in Kenya as a teenager!), a ladies movie night (which included



FREDDY, JAMIE & HANNAH

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Endrick Writers' Group

I established the creative writing group, Endrick Writers, last year because I wanted to bring something that I love and value – creative writing – to my community. It is not a therapeutic group, but I think it is a reflective group. The words 'gentle and supportive' are at its core.

I chose the name Endrick Writers to honour the river that runs through the villages the group serves, and to signal that the group extends to the wider Endrick community and beyond.

We meet fortnightly in the Village Hall's Garden Room. It is a beautiful space with views of Ben Lomond and the surrounding hills. If you squint, you can see Loch Lomond shimmering in the distance. The sessions run on the first and third Wednesday of the month from 2pm to 3.30pm.

On arrival, we grab a cuppa, settle down and do some free-writing. This is a warm-up and not shared. Then we read a poem and later a short story or novel excerpt. We discuss and consider the words and their impact, what it makes us think, feel, etc. We take a line from the readings to kick-start our writing. Everyone is invited to share what they have written; however, there is no pressure to do so. I frequently marvel at the conversation and the writing produced; it is incredible how differently we respond to the same prompt. It can feel quite magical.

We are currently a group of seven. Our commonality is a love of writing and a willingness to engage. We adhere to the rules of courtesy and respect. One additional rule we follow is that we do not apologise before reading out our writing. There is an understanding that we are all, to some extent, showing our vulnerability; we are all in the same boat. No apology is necessary.

Following our summer break, we return on Wednesday 2 September. New members are welcome, both beginner writers and experienced writers.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Anne Marie at: endrickwriters@gmail.com

ANNE MARIE LYALL

What brings me to Killearn Hall?

I come along to Endrick Writers. We meet in the Garden Room, looking out to Ben Lomond and the ever-changing seasons. It has the most conducive writing space – quiet, open and 'that view'; a community of writers who enjoy using this beautiful space.

We explore a wide variety of themes through our writing, leading on to a great exchange of ideas, opinions and observations, as we all come round the table. The writing brings us together for a brief hour or so, but often the thoughtful conversations stay long after.

The hall hosts so many others too, as can be seen from the busy noticeboard. What changes have these walls seen over 200 years? Historical events, family gatherings, church-based gatherings, charity events, men only spaces?

Not being a local, I wanted to check out the history of Killearn. I found a very interesting website Kiddle Encyclopaedia, Killearn Facts for Kids. One name stood out, George Buchanan (1506–82), a historian and a humanist scholar who lived well before this hall was in use. It may be whimsical, but as a thinker who focused on human values and achievements, his influence is much needed in our modern world. Writing is one way of spreading those values.

LUCY FRASER-GUNN

Cycling Killearn

Record-breaking generosity in Killearn!

A massive thank you to everyone who supported Cycling Killearn's spring Dr Bike event. A total of 18 cyclists had their bikes health-checked ensuring they are safe and roadworthy. Plus, we are thrilled to announce that we received 50 bike donations, absolutely smashing our previous record!



We were overwhelmed by the generosity of residents in Killearn and the surrounding villages. Hearing stories of

how these bikes were once loved and seeing the desire to pass them on to new owners was truly heart-warming.

The 50 donated bikes are now in Stirling with our partners, Recycle-a-bike, where they will be refurbished and given a new lease of life. This eco-conscious charity works hard to promote sustainable transport, improve health and prevent waste.

Missed out?

Don't worry, we'll be back on Friday 16 October.

Help us reach 200!

At the start of the year, we set a 'stretching' target of 200 donations to celebrate the 200th year of Killearn Village Hall. Our tally at the time of writing was 181 (collected since our first event in 2023) – so we are incredibly close to that 200th-bike milestone!

For more info, follow us on [@cyclingKillearn](https://www.facebook.com/cyclingKillearn) on Facebook/Instagram, check our posters, or visit cycling-killearn.org. Alternatively, email us at cycling@kcfc.co.uk for details.

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Killlearn Bridge Club – Golden Anniversary

It is 50 years since Killlearn Bridge Club opened its doors to a few local, enthusiastic players and quickly grew into a vibrant club. At the time of inauguration there were many bridge clubs in the area, and competition grew between them with trophies and shields competed for. Today, Killlearn still competes for the Lorimer shield every year against Drymen, as the only two local clubs that remain.



Killlearn Bridge Club meets on a Tuesday evening in the Village Hall's Garden Room. It is a friendly club, welcoming players of all levels. The club meets weekly throughout the winter with a mixture of face-to-face sessions and Real Bridge online sessions. During the summer months the club has been meeting twice monthly for face-to-face sessions with particular emphasis on helping less experienced players improve their skills.

Like many other activities bridge has seen a drop in player numbers. To this end, the Scottish Bridge Union has set up events to highlight the positive aspects of the game and has been supporting clubs to encourage new players. In 2024, the club held an open day event in the Village Hall, attended by many enthusiastic learners. A series of classes was arranged as follow-up with 20 learners enrolled, many of whom have now joined the club. The club would

be happy to repeat the classes, should the demand be there.

A study at the University of Stirling has highlighted the skills that playing bridge brings – reasoning, planning and problem solving, together with cooperation and patience. They highlight that AI is negating the need for these skills and, as a result, reducing our cognitive ability. So, bridge is not only a fun game but is also helping keep our minds alert.

In recognition of our golden anniversary the club will hold a celebratory event during the autumn, to which all bridge players will be welcomed – not just members of the club. This will be an afternoon event with time for informal socialising as well as a fun bridge competition. Food and drink will be provided.

Please contact Susan Horsburgh for more information about the event, the club or possible classes (susanhorsburgh17@gmail.com or 07930 946607).

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The Real Deal

There are many features to be admired in the recently revamped Co-op, especially the extensive chill cabinets with proper handles. It is also surprising how quickly the new layout has overtaken the old one in the visual memory of the average shopper. (I have done no research on this, but I do regard myself as an average shopper.) The designers are also to be congratulated on the provision of self-checkouts, which not only speed things up but also leave enough space for customers to greet each other/indulge in conversation/spend half the day in philosophical discussion. The Co-op is much more than a grocery store. I suggest it is the hub of village life.

I recently had occasion to visit Milngavie for a regular eye check-up and, like most people, made a list of all the things I could do while I was there. For a start, there are products in the supermarket you can't get in Killearn. Then M&S is always worth a visit, as is Driftwood, which stocks really pretty clothes. And, of course, if I went to the bank, I would get the opportunity to discuss my finances with a real person.

I completed most of my other assignments before I got to the optician. The eye test went well and I did not have to order new lenses, but of course I was advised not to drive for one to two hours, to let the eye drops wear off. So, the obvious thing to do was to check out the new Greggs, where I got a seat with a panoramic view of one section of the precinct, foggy vision notwithstanding. Within one row of shops and businesses, I could have gambled away my life's savings or booked myself an exotic holiday and bought the luggage to go with it. Or I could just have sat in the breezy



The Copland & Lye clock in Milngavie.

sunshine and enjoyed an ice cream. As it was, I sat in the warmth and embarked on my hot chocolate and pineapple tart.

All sorts of humanity were in the coffee shop mid-afternoon. Two retired gentlemen were sorting out the football while demolishing highly scented sausage rolls. A bunch of schoolboys at the next table was just too far away for me to hear their conversation, or it could have been the racket of their crisps obliterating everything else. On my other side, three schoolgirls discussed their classwork, while checking their make-up and comparing nail polish.

A chap at the window spotted a friend in the precinct with whom he exchanged an enthusiastic wave. I spotted Pat from our village, but she didn't look my way, concentrating on not being blown over by the aforementioned brisk breeze.

I was in fact looking at a successful community, shopping, meeting each other, getting on with life. In many ways, Milngavie looks like the ideal place to live. Apart from a few empty units, the precinct has pretty well everything, including a kiddies' play park and an intermittent open-air market. Transport links are brilliant. And it's pretty. But I would suggest that it's more of a leafy suburb than a village proper. Killearn is the real deal, surrounded by farmland, with limited transport and limited shopping, though of an extremely high standard, naturally. Let's stay where we are and enjoy Milngavie from a distance.

Of course, I could be wrong. I was home before I realised I'd forgotten to go to the bank. As Charlie Brown would say when frustrated – Rats!

JOYCE BEGG

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WILD ABOUT KILLEARN – WOODLAND HABITAT

The Wild About Killearn section of the Killearn Heritage Trail website is now complete!

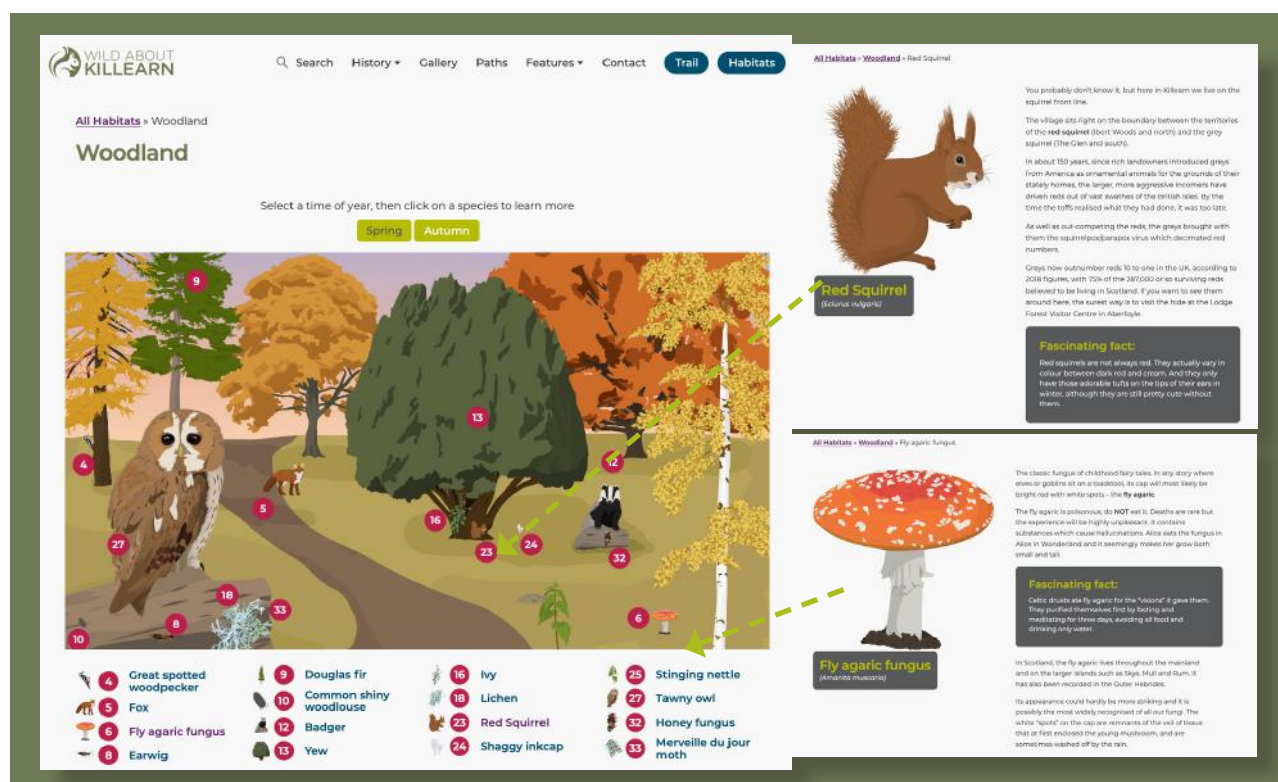
A total of 150 species, all observable (sometimes!) in our local area, is explained with beautiful graphics, produced by Martin Winter, together with descriptions of their features, facets and fascinating facts.

Each species appears in one of five local habitats: Woodland, Moorland, Garden, Farmland or Waterside in one of two time zones: day/night or season.

Over the next few issues, we are going to feature one of these lovely pages. This time we are showing the autumn scene from the Woodland habitat, highlighting two perennial favourites – the red squirrel and the fly agaric toadstool.

Why not explore the website – maybe with your friends or family – to find out more about the natural world around us?

killearnheritage.org.uk/habitats



Classes from Killearn Primary School are already enjoying walks on the wild side! Experts from the Wild About Killearn project have been leading them on annual walks through all five habitats, explaining the special features of the flora and fauna that they come across. Fresh air, sunshine, worms and 'slaters', newts, stinging nettles, 'sticky willy' and streams: what is there not to love?

Photos: Above left: P2s observing garden creepy crawlies with Nick
Above right: P5s inspecting insects in moorland above the village with Jackie



The Killearn Heritage Trail and Wild About Killearn were funded by the National Lottery Fund and the *Killearn Courier*.



If you go down to the woods today...

...you might be in for a bit of a shock.

Here, we continue the theme of our previous piece on invasive species, this time with the focus on woodlands.

Instead of just the beautiful native trees we expect to see around Killearn, you will find that our woodlands have an increasing problem with highly invasive non-native species. And they are not just in the woods; if you go onto the moorlands around Killearn, you will find that these woodland invaders are spreading there too. We highlight two species, one a shrub (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and the other a tree (*Sitka spruce*). Both are major threats to nature throughout Scotland, and very substantial sums are spent by both environmental charities and government agencies on their removal.

Rhododendron ponticum

Worldwide, there are over 1,000 species of *Rhododendron*, many of which are shrubs grown in gardens for their large and colourful flowers. But *Rhododendron ponticum*, still for sale in garden centres, is one of the most destructive of the invasive non-native species that occur in the UK.

Native to southern Spain and Portugal and introduced here in the 1700s, the original plant did not tolerate cold winters. But breeders hybridised it with North American species, turning it into the thug that is choking our woodlands. It rapidly forms large bushes, its leaf litter is toxic to other plants, it harbours fungal diseases that kill other plants, and its dense foliage blocks out light. This is why you see nothing growing underneath it.



Rhododendron ponticum growing in woodland close to Killearn



Self-seeded *Rhododendron ponticum* growing on the moorland above Killearn

Rhododendron ponticum is difficult to kill, and its large purple flowers shed seed prolifically – even its branches can

take root. Many organisations, like the Woodland Trust, the National Trust for Scotland, the John Muir Trust, Trees for Life, the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest and Forest and Land Scotland, are struggling to contain and remove *rhododendron* (a big operation often needing heavy machinery), spending millions of pounds in the process. We have it in many woodland areas around Killearn, although it can be successfully removed, as in Drumore Wood.

Sitka spruce

The invasive tree that most threatens our woodlands is the North American *Sitka spruce*. This conifer is the tree that is now most commonly planted in commercial forests, since it is fast growing, tolerates our climate and soils and can be planted in dense plantations that are clear felled to provide timber for a variety of uses. *Sitka spruce* now makes up nearly half of all the woodland area in Scotland. It starts to produce abundant seeds in its cones long before it is harvested. These seeds are carried (by the wind or birds) into surrounding habitats, leading to spruce trees popping up far beyond the original plantation. Go onto the moorlands above Killearn and you will see them spreading there.



Sitka spruce growing on the moorland above Killearn

In woodlands, the fast growth of *Sitka spruce* means that it can quickly outgrow and shade other trees, and it is rarely eaten by deer. Other species do not like it either – it supports much lower biodiversity than Scots pine or broadleaf trees. Being a designated timber tree, it is exempt from legislation that prohibits planting of non-native species in the wild. This has the unfortunate consequence that the timber industry is not required to control its spread beyond plantations. So, we have the ridiculous situation where the government gives grants to the timber industry to plant *Sitka* and grants to conservation agencies and local communities to remove it. While the timber industry is increasingly recognising the issue and seeking solutions, the problem is growing in that the existing planted, and now also self-seeded, trees are spreading seed far and wide.

We do still have beautiful woodlands in the parish, and we need collective action to conserve them.

PAT MONAGHAN & NEIL METCALFE



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Managing the Black Bull – Rolf Winkler

Back in the 1960s Killearn's Black Bull hotel was owned by the Glasgow Public House Trust (PHT) – a rather unusual organisation that was founded from the temperance movement. Its objectives were for pubs to be 'places of refreshment' rather than just drinking dens and for community benefit rather than for the profit of private owners. PHT owned several hostelrys in the area and wasn't too happy with the performance of the Black Bull and so, in 1969, asked Rolf Winkler and his wife Marian to move from the Gartocharn hotel and take over.

Given Rolf's slightly less 'accommodating' professionalism than his predecessor and his German heritage, the couple were not initially made welcome by some of the regulars, but in time they became popular, effective landlords in what was, at that time, the village's only pub.

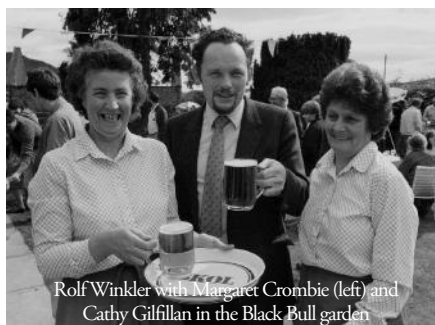
Now, 57 years on, Rolf and Marian still live happily in Killearn and have seen a lot of changes in their time here. In 1969 most of the customers in the public bar came from 'the scheme' – the still relatively new council houses in Graham Road and Buchanan Road. The housing around Allan Road was less than a decade old, and the area around what is now Beech Drive was still fields.

Rolf and Marian were responsible for all aspects of running the Black Bull: the public bar and the cocktail bar, the restaurant and the rooms – at that time there were 12 bedrooms sharing just two bathrooms! Quite a lot of the hotel trade came from people visiting patients in Killearn Hospital, which occupied the site of Cala's Ballagan Woods until 1973. The hospital closed but the expansion of the village continued with house building of the 'Trees Estate' (Beech, Alder, Elm, Cedar, Elder, Rowan, Birch, Oak, Maple). The pub was busy at 5pm every weekday with the building workers, Simpson's joiners and BT engineers. In those days licensing hours were quite strict, and the pub was only open from 11am until 2.30pm and from 5pm to 10pm (later 11pm) in the evening.

Rolf and Marian initially lived in at the Black Bull (which the PHT owners preferred for security reasons), but when housing was planned for just across 'the big park' in Birch Road, they put a deposit down, moved across in 1975 and have made that their family home ever since.

After a challenging start, Rolf won over the locals and the Black Bull became a social hub as the home of the village snooker and pool clubs, the bridge club, the darts team

with its league matches (and, at one time, a 24-hour fundraising marathon) and the venue for the Rotary, Round Table, Probus and Inner Wheel lunch clubs. There was limited public transport in those early days, less car ownership and no computer games so a great deal of community life centred on the local villages: guides, brownies, BBs and scouts as well as the Killearn Football Club. The Black Bull supported various good causes including arranging a fete for Lomond Mountain Rescue team.



Rolf Winkler with Margaret Crombie (left) and Cathy Gilfillan in the Black Bull garden



In those days there was a post office in the village (opposite the Health Centre and then where the Kids Hub is now), a bank (West Homes), a butcher (along from the Co-op), a scout hut and two village stores: the Co-op and Murray's, later the Spar. The Old Mill opened in 1980.

Investment in the Black Bull was always rather piecemeal, but Rolf and Marian ran a thriving business there until they retired in 1994. After they left, with the change in drinking and social habits and the hotel's limited facilities, the establishment went into decline, and in 2016 and after 200 years of existence, the Black Bull finally closed its doors to be replaced by the Killearn Court development – which replicates its more attractive features!

NH



Darts and snooker team with trophy



Darts team complete

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Travels along the Silk Road

What is the Silk Road? In popular imagery, it is the route cut by Marco Polo in the 13th century as he travelled eastwards to the court of Kublai Khan. It is the route he retraced on return from China, bearing bales of the precious fabric and tales of unimaginable splendour. It is a route that crosses featureless plains, vast deserts and high mountains and exposes the traveller to every conceivable peril.

Marco Polo's bravery is beyond doubt, but in every other respect the popular image is wrong. The route he followed was not cut by him but was one that traders had already been using for more than 1,000 years. It was also one of many such routes, for there have long been multiple trade routes across Asia. Silk was not the only traded commodity, and arguably not the most important. Pearl, ivory, gemstones, spices, fur, artwork, pottery and base metal were also transported, as were animals and, sadly, enslaved people. The 'silk road' concept is thought to be a 19th-century invention.

Furthermore, it was rare for one trader (or even one group of traders) to bring goods all the way from China to Europe. Rather, goods were transported (in both directions) to centres along the routes. There they would be sold and carried by different traders to further centres, whereupon the cycles of sale and transfer would repeat. Settled for centuries, these centres evolved beyond trade during the early Islamic period, becoming known for cutting-edge work in science, medicine and mathematics.

Many of the buildings associated with the early days of Islam still survive, particularly in Central Asia. Many are regarded as architectural masterpieces, and as awareness of their beauty and uniqueness has grown, so has interest in visiting the region and learning about its historic and modern cultures. Among those recently inspired to visit are members of our *Courier* team, for earlier this year and unknown to each other at the time, several of us made the trip.

In early May, Christine and her husband Willie flew from Edinburgh via Istanbul to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and by far the largest city in Central Asia. Destroyed by an earthquake in 1966, Tashkent was rebuilt while Uzbekistan was still part of the Soviet Union. Ceramics on the walls of one of its metro stations depict famous Russian cosmonauts. Yet, while mainly modern, Tashkent also contains many reminders of its past, particularly of Timur (aka Tamerlane), the blood-thirsty founder of a vast 14th-century empire and now a national hero.

Timur's capital (and burial place) was Samarkand, to which Christine and Willie travelled next. The Registan in Samarkand is probably the most iconic Silk Road monument of all. It comprises three one-time madrasas, all



Above: The Registan in Samarkand; Right: Detail of mosaic lion-like animals



studded with fabulous mosaics and one, unusually for Islamic art, depicting lion-like animals. The oldest building was constructed under Ulug Beg, Timur's grandson and a renowned astronomer. His calculations were more accurate than those made by Copernicus and it took modern computers to surpass them.

Moving westwards across increasingly desert-like landscapes, Christine and Willie went next to Bukhara and then to Khiva. There, the sense of the ancient Silk Road was, if anything, even stronger than in Samarkand, for both cities have extensive networks of historic alleyways and squares. Khiva is walled. Every street seemed to lead to a historic mosque, madrasa or palace, each heavily decorated. The old markets are still in use, and silk is not simply sold there but also produced. The Kalyon minaret in Bukhara so impressed Genghis Khan that he spared it, while leaving the rest of the region in ruins.



Above top: City walls Khiva;
Middle: Silk worker Bukhara;
Bottom: Kalyon minaret

A month before Christine and Willie's trip, Nick and his wife Jackie embarked on their own Silk Road tour, visiting Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan as well as Uzbekistan. Unlike Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan is largely mountainous with the spectacular snow-capped Tian Shan range rising to



over 7,000m and deep valleys lacing the country. The phenomenal Issyk-Kol freshwater lake is 180km long and 60km wide. Kyrgyzstan's principal natural resource and export is gold.



Kazakhstan is fringed by sandstone hills, canyons and gorges and – as the ninth largest country in the world – has vast expanses of open steppe grassland. It also has large reserves of oil. Uzbekistan is richer and more fertile and, diversifying from a cotton monoculture, it exploits its food production and natural gas fields. Diet in the Stans may be meat-based – including horsemeat – but wonderful fruit, vegetables and spices are abundant.



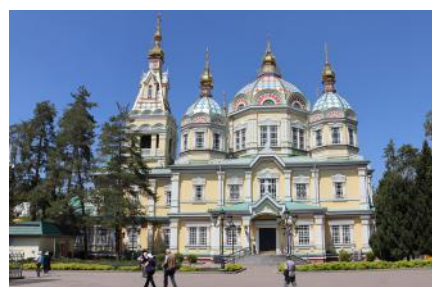
Yet national boundaries have always been fluid in Central Asia, resulting in similarities across the countries as well as the differences. Empires shaped by conquest have played a part here – witness Genghis Khan and Timur – but the indigenous people were nomadic in any case, emanating from Mongolia. An animal herding existence was widespread until well into the 20th century. Livestock – sheep, cattle, camels and, crucially, horses – have long been the lifeblood, grazing the valleys of Kyrgyzstan or the steppes of Kazakhstan. Associated traditions like yurt making, textile crafts and eagle hunting continue.



Above Eagle hunters

The absence of settlements across these wide-open areas must have been as overwhelming to ancient Silk Road travellers as the spectacular cities.

In the more recent past, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have a shared identity as former Soviet republics. As such, they experienced the negatives of Soviet rule – centralisation, destruction of mosques and churches, forced collectivised farming – but also the positives – universal



Above Russian Orthodox church Kazakhstan

education, much improved healthcare, massive investment in transport infrastructure.

To this day, each country has two official languages: Russian and their own. Many people speak both but, in rural areas especially, some older folk know only their own, native language. Sunni Muslims predominate, but there is a significant minority of Slav origin: historic migrants from Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia. All three countries use Cyrillic script (although Uzbekistan also uses Latin script).

The Berlin Wall came down and the Stans became independent in 1991. Yet economic and political links with Russia remain strong, although Putin's invasion of Ukraine is not supported. But Russia has few available resources, so the considerable construction and infrastructure programmes underway are managed and funded by China. When young people learn a foreign language other than English it is frequently Mandarin or Cantonese.

In the past, allegiance has been to Russia to the west – but China to the east is playing the long game and has increasing influence.

The past year has been busy and again dominated by concerns around planning, both specific local issues and those of wider concern. Strongly held views have been expressed that Stirling Council planning decisions appear inconsistent, and when conditions seem to be breached, enforcement is difficult to apply. Widespread concerns exist around the felling of trees for development and the lack of protection afforded to wooded areas, which, once lost, diminish local biodiversity.

KCC met with Sharon Marklow, head of planning and enforcement at Stirling Council, to discuss residents' concerns. We heard that our views are shared with other communities, and she is involved in the development of a Stirling-wide tree and woodland strategy, aimed at improving accountability across all council departments regarding their duty towards preservation. This is welcome news, as there is indeed wide local concern that our trees are worthy of protection and that current tree protection orders (TPOs) do not go far enough. Trees within the conservation area are automatically protected, but few individual trees beyond this are. We have requested and been granted an early review of trees in the village and immediate area, and we are hopeful that this will soon take place.

Stirling Council is in the process of preparing their local development plan (LDP), to be in place from 2028 to 2038. This will set out which areas should, and should not, be developed over the whole council area, excepting that part which sits in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. The local place plan, which took up much KCC energy last year, feeds into this plan by providing local opinion.

Five of the proposed sites fall within Killearn's area. Stirling Council has emphasised that all site proposals are published to maintain transparency – none have yet been endorsed by the Council or approved by the planning authority. Work will now be done by the Council on each site, to examine suitability for development per se before specific use of the land is considered.

Additionally, the Stirling Council Spatial Strategy Survey has looked at the proposal to create hierarchies of importance among Stirlingshire settlements, which will inform the distribution of new infrastructure and resources. Under this scheme, Balfron will form a hub, with smaller villages like Killearn forming satellite settlements. Surveys on both the spatial strategy and the sites published were open over the summer period.

Speeding remains a huge cause of concern within the village, with both lack of enforcement and lack of signing causing frequent comment. There is a proposal for the current 20mph zone to be extended along Balfron Road towards Balfron, with a 40mph buffer zone created beyond that. A similar 40mph buffer zone would be in place from the end of the 20mph zone beyond the Branziert, along the A875 to Westerton Farm. Speeding surveys have also been promised for Killearn and neighbouring villages. The results are awaited.

Further road-related problems relate to the Blane Smiddy bridge and the road conditions on either side. The bridge itself reopened after significant repair and the traffic lights were removed. This led to widespread concern that the priority system was inadequate to ensure safe traffic flow. Stirling Council reviewed the situation and recommended no change to the road layout and no traffic light requirement. However, shortly afterwards, the bridge sustained further vehicle damage, and the traffic lights are back and at the time of writing the bridge is under repair. Further consideration of safety here has been promised!

Happier news includes the erection of new road signs at Ballagan Woods – Graham Road, Bruce Court, Teasdale Street and Templeton Avenue. The names were proposed by friends and family of those who were staff when the site was previously used as a hospital, and CALA held a reception to allow them to celebrate. It was a very happy occasion.

As always, we are in debt to all of you who help us to represent the interests of the village to Stirling Council, whether by attending our monthly meetings, in person or by Zoom, or by contacting us directly with concerns.

We shall be back in the Village Hall's Garden Room from September, meeting on the third Wednesday of every month. We are looking forward to another busy year.

ELIZABETH JONES
KCC



Support for Unpaid Carers in Killearn

If you support a loved one who could not manage without your help due to serious illness, disability, frailty, addiction or a mental health condition, you may be an unpaid carer. Many people do not consider themselves to be a carer so miss out on vital support.

Unpaid carers may provide practical help such as shopping, household tasks, personal care, attending appointments or managing finances, as well as emotional support like companionship and reassurance. Carers can be partners, parents, siblings, other relatives, friends or neighbours. You might live with the person or drop in to check on them. You might provide a few hours of support each week or care full-time.

Whatever your situation, we are here to support you Stirling Carers Centre offers a range of free and confidential services to help you manage your caring role and your own wellbeing. These include:

- Carer Support Plans
- Form filling support
- Information and signposting to relevant services
- Peer support groups to connect with others
- Short breaks grants and opportunities
- Young carer services (ages 7–17)
- Wellbeing support, including counselling, yoga and complementary therapies

You don't need a formal referral to access our services. Just give us a call or visit our website to register.

Killearn lunch group

Our monthly lunch group takes place usually on the second Wednesday of the month in Killearn Village Hall. Meet with other local carers, have a chat and something to eat and have a go at an activity. You're welcome to bring along the person you care for.



Rural carers' yoga

Unpaid carers can claim a free weekly yoga session with Endrick Yoga at Killearn Village Hall. Sessions take place on Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Get in touch

If you think you might be an unpaid carer or would like to find out more about the support available, our team is here to listen and help you access the right support for your situation. Contact the Centre on 01786 447003, email info@stirlingcarers.org.uk or visit stirlingcarers.org.uk.

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The Cost of Wine

You are not imagining it – your bottle of wine keeps getting more expensive. That bottle of merlot you have been picking up for years has quietly crept up in price, and it will probably do so again before the year is out. The answer, bluntly, is tax. Read on to discover a simple trick that can get you more for your money.

A standard bottle at the UK average price of around £7 carries roughly £4 in government charges: excise duty, calculated since 2023 on the strength of the wine, plus VAT charged on top of everything including the duty. From February this year, duty rose again in line with inflation, adding 13p to a typical bottle of red. A new environmental packaging levy has quietly added another 10p to 15p per bottle on top of that.

This brings us to a rather startling fact. On a bottle at the UK average price, only around 62p is spent on the wine itself. The rest covers the glass, label, lorry, retailer's margin and the Treasury's cut. You are, in effect, paying handsomely for a very attractive tax receipt.

Here is where it gets interesting. Because duty, packaging and logistics are largely fixed costs that do not rise much with the price of the bottle, every extra pound you spend goes almost entirely towards the quality of what is inside. Spend £12 to £15 and the amount reaching the actual wine jumps to roughly £3 to £4. At £20, it climbs to around £6. That is nearly 10 times the liquid value of a £7 bottle, for less than three times the price.

The sweet spot sits between £12 and £15. At this level, the winemaker finally has enough margin to do something interesting: lower yields for more concentrated fruit, longer ageing or the freedom to source from a better vineyard. It is the tier where everyday wine stops being ordinary.

For a special occasion, a £20 bottle delivers real value and is worth the stretch. But for a Tuesday evening or a casual dinner with friends, the message from the numbers is simple: step off the budget shelf, spend a little more, and the wine in your glass will improve out of all proportion to the extra you have paid.

In a market where HMRC first take their share and only ask questions later, knowing where the value lies is perhaps the most useful thing that a wine drinker can know.

ELAINE TAYLOR

Killlearn Guides and Rangers

Guides and Rangers are thriving in Killlearn and have an exciting and hugely varied programme of activities, events and trips where they will make lifelong friends in a safe girl-only environment.

Guides are girls aged 10–14 and Rangers are girls aged 14–18. While the Guide unit in Killlearn has been going for over 100 years, the Ranger unit has only been running for a few months. Both sections follow a programme that enables the girls to work towards badges as well as doing other activities. Over the last year there have been three gold awards, the highest award in the Guide section, and a silver award and programme badges.

All the girls are keen to be involved in community activities such as helping at the Killlearn 10K, taking part in the Christmas windows and helping other community groups deliver leaflets.

The units meet in Killlearn on Wednesday evenings. The programme for the Rangers is self-led but adults are around to help and advise as necessary.

Guides and Rangers offer fantastic opportunities for local girls to meet new friends, have amazing new experiences and learn new skills while growing in confidence and self-belief. There is also the possibility of attending camps at home and abroad.

Our unique programme includes learning about world issues and science, and participating in social action, adventure sports and international travel. We also enable those doing Duke of Edinburgh awards to do their service.

Why don't you join us as a Guide? If you want more information contact us at 1stkilllearnguides@gmail.com or if as a Ranger then contact us at 4thendrickrangers@gmail.com. More information can also be found at the girlguiding website www.girlguiding.org.uk where you can register your interest to be a Guide or Ranger member or as an adult volunteer.

Are you an adult who would be interested in helping with either the Guide or Ranger units? Contact as for Guides and Rangers above.

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More Than Just Books

Libraries – a wealth of infinite knowledge, a cornucopia of emotions and intrigue – but there’s a lot more to them than just lending paper books. They have been a traditional part of our communities, but what of their future as technology and lifestyle progress at an ever-faster pace?

Libraries have been around for over 5,000 years – early ones were discovered in the Assyrian empire, modern day Iraq. They’ve evolved from scholarly clay tablets to global institutions that embrace publicly available knowledge for all. Scots-born tycoon and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie championed public libraries, funding over 2,500 worldwide, but it was the Public Libraries Act 1850 which made it a legitimate charge on public funds to provide freely available public libraries.

It is under the Public Libraries Act that Stirling Council provides local libraries in Strathblane, Balforn, the mobile van and until July 2024 Drymen which closed when the property lease expired. In total there are 16 libraries and two vans in Stirlingshire. Strathblane’s new community library featured in Issue 63 of the *Courier* and is believed to be the UK’s first new public library in recent times to be funded by voluntary donation.

Libraries have moved on. Gone are the days of ‘Silence’ signs rigidly enforced by stern librarians and the terror of not replacing a book in the absolutely correct Dewey decimal-indexed position. Nowadays you’re more likely to see toddlers at a Bookbug stories and rhymes session led by our community library officers, Christina in Balforn and Beth in Strathblane, assisted by Pamela.

These days, libraries are a frontline service and seen as a haven, a safe place where people can go to work, read, study or just relax without necessarily having to use the library’s services; there’s even a coffee machine to help with this. Staff are friendly, welcoming and helpful, whether it’s finding a book, using the computers, printing or photocopying or dispensing hearing aid batteries or ferrules for walking sticks.

Our local libraries are unique and respond to their communities’ needs. It’s not just lending books or computer access – they host meetings with the Citizens Advice Bureau, ESOL English Learning and the LEAP Learning and Employability Scheme which offers help to job seekers. ‘IT and me’ sessions within the library are a one-to-one voluntary-run service to help with IT issues and can be booked at the library. Balforn also hosts the G63 seed library and many heritage and ancestry sessions.

A 30-strong book group previously based at Drymen now meets in Balforn library. In fact, the Stirling Council



Christina Sinclair, Community Library Officer at Balforn

libraries website hosts a book group collection where multiple copies of a book can be requested for book group readings. The website also has an amazing array of resources including study aids for language skills, driving theory tests and citizen tests and information on access to academic research, local history and genealogy.

So how has Stirling Council library service evolved to cope with the established trend of using e-readers such as Kindle or audiobooks like Amazon’s Audible? Well, they have – there’s Borrowbox for free access to audiobooks, the Libby app for digital reading books and Pressreader for newspapers and magazines from all over the world. All you need is a

library membership card! Visit the Stirling Council libraries website.

For those not able physically to visit a library, there is an outreach service run by volunteers who will deliver book orders to your home. The mobile library van will also carry on board any specific requests or a genre that you are interested in. Emma on the mobile library regularly visits our local primary schools.

The library van stops in Killearn at the locations and times in the table below on the following Thursdays – 20 August; 3 and 17 September; 1, 15 and 29 October; 12 November.

STOP	ARRIVE	DEPART
Branziert Road	1.30pm	2pm
Beech Drive	2.05pm	2.35pm
Graham Road	2.40pm	3.30pm
Allan Road	3.40pm	4.10pm

Having talked about the evolution of libraries to include the digital age, the question remains – are people interested in reading books, whatever the format? The dopamine-addiction from reading short social media blurb inhibits our attention span, making lengthy books or articles more arduous to digest. At the same time, digital reading, whether by e-reader or audible, has been widely welcomed into our modern fast-paced lives whether it’s commuting on a train or sitting around a pool on holiday.

Nevertheless, there remains a place in our lives for the calm, focused benefit to our mental health obtained from reading traditional paper books. A bit of research suggests that comprehension is six to eight times better with physical books as we absorb and recall content more efficiently, and the physical act of turning pages creates an ‘index’ in the

Open Studios Stirlingshire

brain, mapping what we read visually to a particular page and anchoring our memory.

Research also shows that people still prefer printed books to e-readers. There is sensory engagement in holding a book, feeling paper and seeing your exact progression. It is an immersive reading experience which tunes out external digital noise, prevents us from switching to quick scanning of messages and with no light emitted helps limit visual tiredness after long reading sessions.

Unsurprisingly then, the uptake in usage that our local libraries have seen in recent years indicates a continuing and substantial preference for paper over digital books – 92 per cent paper book lending vs 8 per cent e-book. The growing number of ‘help-yourself’ book stands provide further evidence for the continued valuing of physical books. There are at least five such facilities within a 10-mile radius of Killearn and two in the village itself – Book Nook in Coffee & Crumb and Killearn’s Little Library in the Village Hall.

So, libraries have come a long way from clay tablets and they continue to evolve to remain relevant to our changing lifestyles. The service is mostly free which is impactful in a cost-of-living crisis, and the central library and headquarters in Stirling importantly continue to hold archives and historical reference material for generations to come.

All you need is a library membership card.

GS

The popular artists trail is back with open studios and events, this time taking place later in the year instead of June. For 2026, the dates are Saturday 19 September until Sunday 27 September. Between the Campsies and the Trossachs we are treated to over 50 talented artists and makers showcasing their work, the spaces where they make their work and an insight into how living in the country and local landscapes have often inspired their work.

There are two studios within the Killearn parish, Lorna Mackay and the Art4You art school at Oakwood Garden Centre. Other studios are nearby, and the complete route map is available at:

scenestirling.com/open-studios-stirlingshire.



Borders Tree by Lorna Mackay



Lorna Mackay



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Strathblane	Strathyre	Stronachlachar	Tyndrum	

Further new build developments are being planned for Killearn, Balmaha and Tyndrum. Please let us know if you want to live in a village that is not listed above. Information on local housing need and demand helps us to plan.

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From the Archive – 1881 Census

This article is a summary of the Killearn data from the 1881 census, which was taken on the night of Sunday 3 April 1881.

The number of people recorded in Killearn was 1,131 of whom 17 were visitors. The 1891 census recorded 1,182 but included over 100 pipeline builders.

There were 583 males and 548 females compared with 635 and 547 in 1891. The average age was 27, and the oldest person was James Liddel of Craighat Cottage who was 83.

Of the 1,131 recorded people, 1,091 were born in Scotland, 23 in England and 17 in Ireland. There is no-one recorded as being born outside the United Kingdom. Of those born in Scotland, 720 were born in Stirlingshire with 531 of those born in Killearn.

There were 322 married people, 337 single people, 49 widows and widowers and 423 children under 16. Among the children, there were 233 scholars and 160 of pre-school age. The other 30 may already have been working.

The number of separate households was 234 compared with 299 in 1891. There were however only 224 heads of household as some properties were occupied by farm workers.

Surprisingly, there were 28 masons in the village on the date of the 1881 census. The reason for this is likely to be the construction of the present church which was completed in 1882.

There are 105 people who were recorded as living-in servants.



Killearn Primary School between about 1885 and 1895 with Alexander Stephen, the school master, on the right. The little girl in front may be one of his daughters.

These include both domestic and farm servants.

The most common occupation was working or being connected with the land. Including immediate family members, there were some 200 farmers, shepherds, gamekeepers and dairy maids.

Other occupations tended to be support roles such as shopkeepers, carters, blacksmiths and shoemakers. There were weavers at Gartness and railway workers at Dumgoyne and Killearn stations. The landlord of the Black Bull was also described as a cattle dealer – was he involved in the final years of the droving trade?

Killearn House was occupied by two Blackburn brothers: James, a barrister, who was running the estate along with his widowed mother and Andrew who was described as an Australian sheep farmer. Sadly, Andrew died at sea in 1887 aged 37 – was he

travelling to or from Australia? The first stained glass window on the left in the church is dedicated to him.

The minister, Colin MacNaughton (1871 to before 1883), was not at the manse at the time of the census, but there was a visiting minister in residence, who may have been on supply. The Free Church minister, John Fiddes (about 1858 to 1901), was at home with the sister who lived with him.

The schoolmaster, Alexander Stephen (1873 to 1909), was living in the schoolhouse with his wife and the first two children of his family of nine. He is on the right in the photo of the school above.

If anyone is interested in having a copy of our extraction of the census details, please contact the Archive Group.

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Start of the 2026 Drive-it-Day
Photo by Iain Anderson

Our winter programme closed with a short run followed by the AGM at Ross Priory. Our first summer event was Drive-it-Day, and this year we went to Oban. Drive-it-Day is run as a charity event and the 30 members driving 17 cars raised £800.

The main event in May was the overnight trip to Elgin and Nairn, which again luckily coincided with good weather. A devious route went through Glencoe, Fort William and Spean Bridge before heading along the south shore of Loch Ness to Nairn. Our party split up for the middle day, some staying in Nairn while others headed to Lairg or Ullapool.

For the third day the whole party went to the Moray Motor Museum, which has a wide selection of vehicles. This includes 'bubble cars', in complete contrast to our own cars, and cars of all ages, the oldest being 1904 and modern ones from the 1980s and 1990s.



Photo by Iain Williamson

At the end of May there was a shorter trip closer to home for 14 members who went for lunch in Crieff via Loch Earn and on to Drummond Castle and its gardens. The last May event was in support of Drymen Show and

this was followed in June by an evening run for a meal in Rosneath. The weather this time was quite overcast but several members bravely had their roof down, at least for the outward run over the Luss hills.

The final June event, supported by a small number of the more competition-minded members, was the Doune hill climb.

By the time you read this, we will have had our annual Car-BQ in July and the annual tour specifically for Pre-World War II vehicles, together with mid-week trips to Loch Katrine for lunch on the Sir Walter Scott and, in August, to Ayr.

For more information and to read the monthly club magazine, *Overdrive*, go to www.strathendrickcarclub.uk. New members are welcome, with or without cars. Contact the club secretary at SCandSCC.Sec@gap-group.co.uk



AwayDays Start – Brace of Aston Martin DB6, Morgan +8, Bristol 410, Aston Martin DB7, Aston Martin Vantage Photo by Iain Williamson



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Curling Sweep Up

The 2025-26 season finished very differently for the Mixed and Ladies sections.

The Mixed section has recently been struggling for numbers and we had to reduce the spring league to three teams playing each other twice. All three teams managed to tie on four points, so the winner was decided by the number of ends won. This was Rosemary Miller's team of Andy and Helen McKinnell and Gill Smith.



Jane Weir, Jean Wesley, Gill Smith and Tony Flisch with the Mixed Closing Bonspiel trophy

The Mixed closing bonspiel was played by two teams of five – we took turns to play, also swapping places within the team. The winners were Tony Flisch, Gill Smith, Jean Wesley, Susan Ross and Jane Weir. Afterwards, we adjourned to Springkerse View for a drink.

The Mixed club held their AGM in March at the Gargunnock Inn. The Mixed curler of the year was Gill Smith. We sadly took the decision not to book ice for the 2026-27 season, due to the lack of players, although we will continue to compete in Province and other external competitions.

The Ladies section has played two leagues since the last article. The Lomond Quaich league was won by Diana Cheyne's team of Jean Leitch, Penny Evans and Liz Paterson, who scored seven points from a possible eight. The Rowan Salver league was a win for Margaret McLean's team of Katherine Kelsey, Nicola Ferri and Susan Ross, who also scored seven out of eight points.

The Ladies pairs was won by Jean Wesley and Deborah Macken who won all six ends.

The Ladies closing bonspiel was played by six teams. The winners were Sally Macfarlane's team of Jean Wesley, Anne MacKay and Terrie Lynn Thompson who won four out of five ends and were four shots better up than the runners-up. Easter eggs were drawn for and won by Annette Rogers, Anne MacKay and Katherine Kelsey. The bonspiel was followed by the AGM and lunch at the Lion and Unicorn. Curler of the year was Patricia Brown.

In external fixtures, the club lost in the Low Road semi-final of the Province knockout to the eventual winners, Gargunnock. They were also part of the Forth and Endrick Province team that won the Forth Valley Area bonspiel.

The club was delighted to win the Gordon Mitchell rosebowl bonspiel for the first time since 2012. The rosebowl was presented to the Province in 1938 by Rev Mitchell, who was the minister of Killearn from 1898 to



Gill Smith, Penny Evans, Anne Reid and Gillian Kingslake with the Chris Gardner trophy

1931 and a very keen curler. We hope to have it on display at the Village Hall event in October.

Jane McLaren was in the team that won the Stirling Ladies Open.

The Winnock Shield was won by a team including our own Jean Leitch. Over £800 was donated to Strathcarron Hospice.

For more information about our curling activities, please visit www.strathendrickcurling.org.uk. We are a very friendly club and would welcome more members. Our curling standards cater for all ranges of abilities so if you are interested and want some exercise in a friendly atmosphere, contact Jane Weir (07900 555906) or Gill Smith (01360 550726).

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Killlearn 10K 2026

The Killlearn 10K and Mile once again demonstrated what makes this event so special. Bringing together runners, volunteers, local organisations, businesses and supporters, the day showcased the teamwork and commitment that underpin one of Scotland's most popular village races.

This year, 221 runners crossed the 10K finish line, up from 204 in 2025, with around 140 entrants coming from Killlearn and the surrounding area, alongside visitors from across Scotland and beyond.

The day began with the popular Mile fun run, before runners set off on the beautiful trail route through the countryside surrounding Killlearn. Thankfully, the weather was kind, providing ideal conditions for our athletes.

In the men's race, Killlearn's own Gregor Yates (Inverclyde AC) retained his title in 34:15. Gregor's course record of 32:45, set in 2024, remains unbeaten. His victory was all the more impressive given he had recently completed a remarkable 420-mile challenge – effectively running a marathon a day for 17 days – to raise funds for Strathcarron Hospice in memory of his late mum.

Brian Mulgrew (Bellahouston Road Runners) finished second in 36:11, with Ross Anderson (Westerlands Cross Country Club) taking third in 36:47.

The women's race was won by Amelia Matthews (Bellahouston Road Runners) in an impressive 40:17. Local runner Catriona Tennant (Garscube Harriers) finished second in 44:11, closely followed by Suzanne Rae (Garscube Harriers) in 44:16. Scarlett McQuillan's women's course record of 39:29, set in 2025, also remains intact.

There were outstanding performances across the age categories where our local runners did us proud. Lewis McGarry claimed the men's U20 title and the Killlearn FC prize, while Peter Harper won in the V50 category. In the women's categories, Catriona Tennant secured both the V40 and G63 titles.

While the prize winners deserve recognition, one of the greatest pleasures of the Killlearn 10K is seeing runners of all



abilities take on the challenge. First-time participants and seasoned club runners all lined up together. It was fantastic to see families embracing the event too, with the Newmans, McGarrys, Hills, Yates, Roditis, Barnetts, Hollis sisters and Pettigrews all represented on the start line.

We were particularly delighted to welcome a record 38 runners from Bellahouston Road Runners, who continue to support the event. Killlearn FC once again brought great energy and enthusiasm to the course, while the Killlearn Run Training Group was well represented.

Events like this simply could not happen without the support of local businesses. We were especially grateful to Cala Homes, our headline sponsor this year. We also extend our thanks to West Homes, the Old Mill and Killlearn Pharmacy for their sponsorship. We especially loved that the West kids, Matilda and Henry, got involved in the kids' race and even helped start the main race!

Thanks also go to Chris from Active Stirling for supporting the Mile, Lomond Mountain Rescue for their reassuring presence throughout the day, Colin Banks for his trademark banter, David McKay and Alastair Mair for

capturing the event on camera, Stevie Crawford and Stevie Fraser for risk assessing the route and Graham Nicolson for delivering vital hydration to the pipe track.

We are grateful to our race day sweepers, Carol Murray, Jamie Kingsley and Louise Jones, to the Guides and Scouts for helping with medals and water and to our fantastic team of marshals, whose encouragement kept runners going from start to finish.

Special thanks must also go to Nick Hawkins, Pascal and Emily Holt, Giles and Olly Roditi, Kirstine and Alastair Mair, Susan McLaren, Lesley Svensson, Ros Searle, Alison Cairns, Carl and Kieran French, Brendan Richardson, Emily Skinner, Fraser Kingsley and Cammy Holt for their work behind the scenes.

Our appreciation extends to Caroline's yoga and Tricia Thompson for helping runners warm up and recover,

Strathendrick Rugby Club for keeping everyone fuelled while raising funds for their under-18 tour, Co-op Killearn, Tunnock's and Killearn Kids Hub for their generosity, and also our community partners – Killearn Village Hall, Balfron 10K, Killearn Community Council, Killearn Community Futures Company, Killearn For All and the *Killearn Courier* – for their ongoing support.

The Killearn 10K is also proud to give something back to the organisations that support our community. This year we have been able to support a number of worthy causes, including Lomond Mountain Rescue, Killearn Guides, Killearn Scouts, Fields in Trust and Strathcarron Hospice. At its heart, the Killearn 10K is a community event, so being able to support local groups and charities along the way means a great deal to us.

Planning is already underway for next year's event. The first release of places for the 2027 Killearn 10K will open on Thursday 3 December at 8pm, with additional entries being released closer to race day. As always, we hope to see strong local participation and to ensure that as many places as possible are filled by runners from Killearn and the surrounding communities.

From the organising committee – thank you for helping make the 2026 Killearn 10K another event to remember.

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Bronze success for Killearn pupils at National Pop Lacrosse Championships



On Thursday 25 June, a group of eight P5 and P6 pupils from Killearn Primary School travelled to Stoke-on-Trent to compete in the National Pop Lacrosse Championships.

The team was incredible. They worked exceptionally

hard in very warm conditions and were rewarded with third place in the Plate competition, bringing home bronze medals and plenty of smiles!

Strathblane Primary School was the only other Scottish school taking part and they finished an outstanding third overall.

What made the day even more special was seeing the two schools come together to represent their villages and Scotland with such pride. They truly embodied the spirit of the Tartan Army throughout the competition.

Adding to the occasion, Ruth, a P6 pupil from Killearn, piped both teams onto and off the pitch, creating a fantastic atmosphere and making the event even more memorable.

The children and their families were incredibly fortunate to have the support and leadership of Ali McLean. Everything was brilliantly organised, and thanks to her dedication, the children (and the mums and grandparents!) had an unforgettable experience.

Special thanks too to Nicole Clark Watson for helping secure funding and organising brilliant transport!

The trip was made possible with thanks to generous support from the Arnold Clark Community Fund and a very successful bake sale held by the children and their parents at Sports Day.

A great 50th year – now onwards and upwards

Strathendrick Rugby Club enjoyed a fantastic 50th anniversary year. Off-the-pitch highlights included a tremendous autumn festival in September with rugby, plus family entertainment, a band, bar and stalls. The club archive evoked memories of days gone by as past players returned to join the celebrations.

In February, Fintry Sports Club hosted one of the best club dinner dances ever with 300 people enjoying excellent food, chat, a few drinks, a great band and informal speeches by 'Endrick heroes' retelling Club stories – all masterminded by Lesley Moir.

On the pitch achievements were spread across the age-groups. Both the men's 1st XV and 2nd XV finished in creditable fourth positions in their respective leagues. Two Strathendrick RFC alumni, Eve Mackay and Lucy Ronald, represented Scotland's U18 women at the recent Six Nations festival, with Eve captaining the side throughout. Three U18, four U16 and four U15 girls reached the regional Scottish pathway squads, and the girls' U16 squad had a great season finishing as the Caledonia Cup U16 bowl winners.

Strathendrick's Midi boys were top of the inspiresport boys' West Schools Conference for 2025-26: a composite



league combining results from each age group from S1–U18. Ruairidh MacKay played for the U17 Glasgow Warriors pro alignment pathway and Blane Forbes Hayes played for the U16 Glasgow Warriors pro alignment pathway. Ruairidh, Blane, Andrew Falconer and Cameron Moir from Strathendrick all attended Glenalmond College.

The annual Strathendrick Minis charity tournament was again a resounding success with hundreds of youngsters from clubs across the area plus parents and supporters descending on Fintry in April, raising funds for local hospices.

So, the Club looks forward with eager anticipation to the year ahead with further sporting success and memorable social experiences on and off the pitch.

Pre-season training is well underway but new players are always welcome at all levels. Please visit www.strathendrickrfc.com for details and contacts.

Looking even further ahead, tours are a brilliant part of youth rugby, and the U18 boys and girls are planning a visit to Australia's Gold Coast in 2027!

NH

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Killearn Tennis Club

A busy spring/summer season of tennis kicked off with a very successful open day, drawing lots of new members to our wonderful club.

Pictures, paint and club-coloured bunting decked the walls to welcome everyone to our Wimbledon warm-up event at the end of June, a little social tennis rounded off with strawberries and cream!

Both our men's and women's teams have finished off their fixtures in the Central Scotland summer leagues. Our men's team, led by captain John Forshaw, achieved fourth spot in the league with two wins, two losses and a draw. A big shout-out to John for achieving top player in the league, numero uno out of 66 players.

After an overall third place in the league last year for our women's team, their sights were set high! With three wins, one draw and one loss, the team secured second in the league and will be promoted next year.

Further congratulations go to Heather Maxwell and Alex Stuart who were in the top three players in the whole league and to our captain Gillian Johnstone, who came in at ninth. A big accomplishment for three lassies from Killearn out of 95 players in the league.

Well done to all those who competed, helped with match teas, drove and of course shout-out to our cheer leaders for supporting us at all our home games.

Keep your eyes peeled for further events: we are currently running a monthly 'sip and serve' – social tennis with the option to BYOB for after.



Coach Shaun Tulloch has his kids' camps running throughout the summer, and the club championship games will now be underway.

Some busy courts and lots of tennis over these next few months, and if you want to get involved don't hesitate to contact us or you can use our newly installed pay-as-you-go box at the entrance to the courts.

Information on the club and memberships is available at clubspark.lta.ork.uk/KillearnTennisClub and any future events will be shared via facebook and on our Instagram [@killearntennisclub](https://www.instagram.com/killearntennisclub).

For professional and affordable coaching, all year round, contact Shaun Tulloch at www.10outoftennis.com.

Killearn Football Club

The 2026 Forth and Endrick season has seen a vast improvement for Killearn FC when compared with 2025. Recruitment of new players has led to a healthy squad being available for most matches, and it has also been brilliant to see the emergence of so many young players. These, combined with last year's core, have made the team far more competitive and seen us towards the top of the league instead of the bottom half.

Team spirit is high and with a bit of luck this may be the year we finally break our run of trophyless seasons. A good run in one of the cups looks to be the best opportunity, as on our day the team can compete with anyone.

Thanks again go to our supporters, as numbers watching the games at the Field of Dreams have been superb. This, combined with our loyal away support, has been a great boost to the guys.

Off the pitch we again saw a healthy team of Killearn FC players and supporters take part in the Killearn 10K, raising over £1,000 for the Beatson cancer charity and also boosting the profits of one of our valued sponsors, the Old Mill, after the run!!

Speaking of sponsors, we should like to thank Endrick Vets, CS Landscape Services, S.Mac Joinery Solutions, A Total Clean (ATC) and VSN Sports for their continued support of the club.

Finally, two of our stalwart players tied the knot this year, our congratulations and best wishes going out to Craig and Morgan Norvall and to Stuart and Rhona MacDonald.

Wishing everyone a wonderful summer and remember you can keep an eye out on facebook and Instagram for all things Killearn FC.



Football club's 10k runners



Football club in action



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Autumn Pause

With support from Killearn Community Futures Company and the *Killearn Courier*, I am creating Autumn Pause – a day to celebrate wellbeing, through movement, creativity and connection. The event will be held in the Village Hall on Saturday 17 October.

Five years ago, shortly after the lockdowns, I moved to Killearn from Glasgow, looking for a closer connection to nature and a healthier lifestyle while working from home. Like many people at that time, I was rethinking what wellbeing meant in daily life and I felt drawn to somewhere quieter, greener and more rooted in community.

From the moment I arrived, I was struck by how welcoming and community-spirited the village is, receiving cards and flowers from neighbours in my first week here. It didn't take long before I began exploring local wellbeing activities and groups, including the run training group, Cycling Killearn, yoga with Caroline and Yoganni and markets at the Village Hall, as well as enjoying the nearby forest trails and lochs. Whether through movement, art and creativity, celebrating heritage or connecting over coffee, it became clear to me that wellbeing was already deeply present in village life.

Living in Killearn has had a real impact on my own wellbeing and it's also inspired my journey as I explore and develop my practice in health and wellbeing. This community has played a meaningful role in that path. So, I am organising Autumn Pause to mark both the fifth anniversary of my time here and the 200th anniversary of



the Village Hall.

The intention is simple: to celebrate a selection of the many forms of health and wellbeing here in the village and to create a shared space for connection, movement, creativity, nature and rest – a seasonal pause before winter arrives from the pace of everyday life, experienced through movement, creativity and connection. So, please save the date – Saturday 17 October.

As a community-focused event, I warmly welcome local health and wellbeing practitioners, facilitators or creatives who wish to be involved in this or future events to get in touch. Email abigailellenatwork@gmail.com.

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Malcolm Newman 1946–2026

Malcolm Adrian Newman was born in Leeds and grew up first in Birmingham, where he became part of the Orthodox Jewish Community, and then, as he reached his teenage years, Brighton.

He was offered a place to study at university, but tempted by both a car and pay, he chose to move to Glasgow to sell pots and pans instead. And thus, his career as a salesman started. He continued to work for himself in sales throughout his life, with his voice and telephone as his main tools.

In 1973, Malcolm met Barbara and so began a devoted partnership of over 50 years. They were inseparable and loved each other deeply, and Malcolm often remarked that marrying Barbara was the best thing he ever did. They set up home in the outskirts of London and lived there for more than 30 years, welcoming sons Nolan and Ed, and then daughters Sarah and Kate. Their home was always filled to the brim with people, animals, art, music, antiques, noise and love.

Malcolm was a huge personality – a funny, impetuous, caring and eccentric man who liked to be surrounded by people and to be the centre of attention.

His language of love was to shower people with gifts and to make them laugh, and he kept his many friends amused by telling them lengthy jokes. He was an excellent host and liked to party with a crowd of family and friends, ensuring that everyone was included. He was also a collector; you



name it, he collected it – from art and antiques to cars, ties and even friends.

He loved to travel and go on holiday, returning to favourite locations such as Tregenna Castle in Cornwall and Cannes in the South of France year on year. In 1989 Malcolm and Barbara bought a holiday house in Glenbuchat, and from then onwards, many holidays were spent in the glen. This undoubtedly led to three of his children studying at Scottish universities and now living in Scotland.

In 2009 Malcolm and Barbara became grandparents, a role they loved. The family continued to expand as more grandchildren arrived, nine in total. Malcolm was a funny, silly and loving grandfather who positively encouraged his grandchildren to be naughty.

Ten years ago, Barbara and Malcolm moved to Killearn to be near to son Ed and his family and were delighted when daughter Kate and her family moved closer too.

As old age caught up with Malcolm and Barbara, the village of Killearn, from the medical staff to their neighbours, supported them until Malcolm passed away on Sunday 5 April 2026, just shy of his 80th birthday.

Deeply loved, he will be hugely missed by his family but will live on in their memories and the stories of his repartee and escapades.

THE NEWMAN FAMILY/HMCA

Moira Kirton 1932–2026

Moira Kirton was brought up by her grandparents after her father died young. She had fond memories of her childhood, one of her favourites being of a Christmas morning when a knotted rope, hanging from the chimney, led her via soot footprints to a wooden pram for her favourite doll.

She was a scholar at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and sang with Scottish Opera for several years. She continued to sing all her life.

Moira and her flatmates had numerous parties and one night a young man called Ian turned up with another girl. He returned the following day to ask Moira out and the rest was history. Marrying on 15 January 1965, she changed her name from Bell to Kirton and the young couple became devoted.

Moira worked as a clerk until she and Ian opened a hardware business on Cowgate in Kirkintilloch, opposite Woolworths. She always remembered their ever-present and well-loved dog Chang welcoming customers with a nonchalant lift of his head.

The early 80s were not an easy time to run a business, and Moira returned to being a clerk, this time in the NHS. She and Ian moved into Harpers Road, Killearn in 1989. She was a member of Killearn and Drymen Kirks and loved the arts in all its forms.

When Ian passed away 2021, Moira took up residence in Milngavie Manor where she passed away peacefully on Wednesday 27 May 2026.

This is part of a poem that Moira wrote:

*Each precious moment I will guard
With every passing thought
And I won't waste a second
Till my time has come to naught.*

THE KIRTON FAMILY/HMCA

David (Dai) Davies 1938–2026



Dai was born and went to school in Wales. After finishing school, and following in the family tradition, he went on to study medicine in London. He worked at St Mary's Hospital and the Hammersmith before moving to the Western Infirmary Glasgow in 1968. In due course he became a senior lecturer in medicine and a consultant physician with a special interest in hypertension and endocrinology.

He met and married Catherine, and they had one daughter who now lives in Vancouver, Canada with her husband and two children.

Dai and Catherine moved from Glasgow to Killearn in 1991. His many interests included rugby, music and horticulture. He retired in 2000 and had more time for these together with photography and extensive travel. He was a member of the Milngavie and Bearsden Camera Club and enjoyed entering their competitions.

After retiring he liked nothing better than pottering in the greenhouse. Dai was on the committee of the Killearn Horticultural society. He enjoyed showing and helping with the annual show as well as growing numerous plants for the sale. He was a member of the Scottish Rock Garden club and other plant societies.

When he was able to leave his plants unattended, Dai and Catherine travelled to many, many parts of the world and of course to Vancouver often. They were very happily married for 57 years, and he is greatly missed by all his family and friends.

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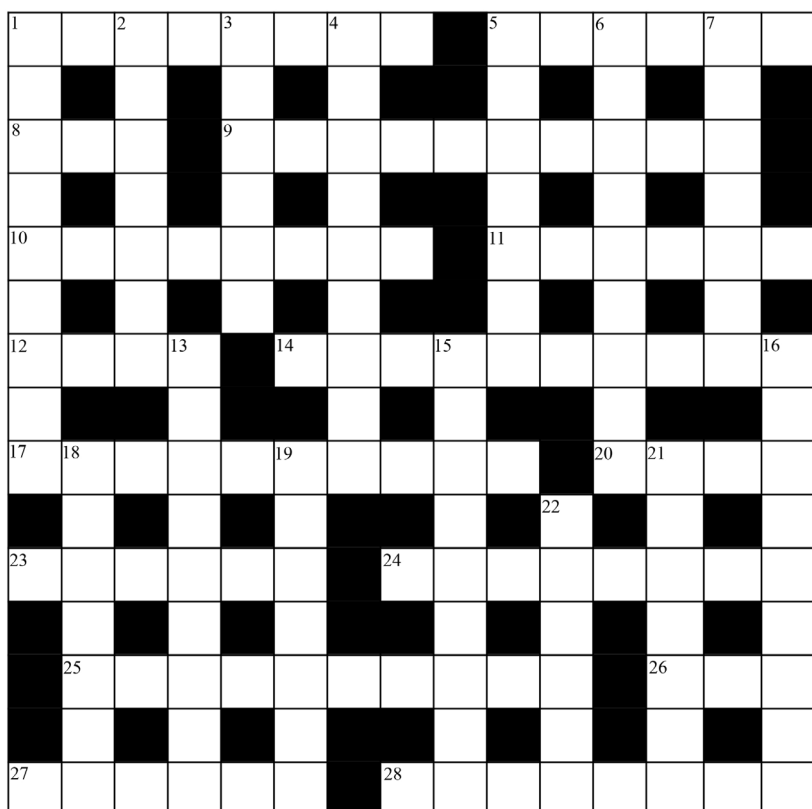
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Cryptic Crossword *Set by Peewit*



ACROSS

- 1 Messy car crash after switching a direction makes a Scottish 9 (8)
- 5 Headgear that contains work (3,3)
- 8 A light strike on 20 (3)
- 9 Intern must play music on this (10)
- 10 In a maelstrom bonehead you'll find this brass 9 (8)
- 11 I hear the stain has gone to fade away (3,3)
- 12 Figure when a German says 'no' (4)
- 14 Unused spot can be great (10)
- 17 An urge to deal with scum in pool (10)
- 20 Barrel is 9 you can hit with a stick (4)
- 23 Primate bachelor is a blessing (6)
- 24 Red wine within musical 9 (8)
- 25 Enterprise when I invite naked laity around (10)
- 26 Gershwin – an Irish trouble maker (3)
- 27 Fight before month without no return of affection (6)
- 28 An ancient stringed 9 that expresses uncertainty within coarse humour (8)

DOWN

- 1 Pet gets a restorative but remains unresponsive (9)
- 2 Swiss 9 is a vinyl record hooter (7)
- 3 Pass quietly empty bay before lager is up (4,2)
- 4 Doctor's record stored while he eats scone up (4,5)
- 5 Move slowly when held nurture back (7)
- 6 Falsely claimed to have nursed before PR event beginning (9)
- 7 Told of insect who said he flew off to get vaccine (7)
- 13 Big brass 9 call I, um, hear from Europe (9)
- 15 Advertises for demands (9)
- 16 Law to prevent extravagance found in puma's yurt (9)
- 18 Musical 9 makes love in a car abroad (7)
- 19 Somewhat extended when desire is at the start of holiday (7)
- 21 Computer program takes this long, about a minute right! (3,4)
- 22 A trying experience when looking for dealerships (6)

Solution to the last crossword:

Across: 1 cat; 5 crown; 3 horn; 8 dolphins; 9 went in; 10 inmate; 11 reawaken; 12 donkey; 15 everyman; 16 Startrek; 19 tirade; 21 composer; 22 saddle; 24 Malawi; 25 olive oil; 26 dhal; 27 event; 28 dog **Down:** 1 clown; 2 top rank; 3 crime; 4 observe; 5 newsagent; 6 Hungary; 7 Rhineland; 13 osteopath; 14 Yorkshire; 17 Raphael; 18 karaoke; 20 redhead; 22 swift; 23 lying

Wordsearch



Fifteen Scottish ports are hidden in the grid. To start you off, Brodick is in the middle. Can you find the other fourteen? They can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.

Sudoku

	3	9		6		2	5	
	1	5			9			
			5				6	
					2			6
			4				8	
	7	6		9	5			
		8		2				7
3	9			7	4		2	
4			6		3	8		

Fill in the blank squares so that upon completion, each row, each column and each block contains all of the numbers from 1 to 9.

Solutions to these three puzzles may be found at tinyurl.com/kcsoled65.

Mr Plover Lover

By my reckoning, this is my 50th nature-related article for the *Courier*. When I started penning these in January 2010, not long after we had moved to Killearn, my first inside back page documented the surprise appearance of a spotted sandpiper on the River Endrick that winter. A very rare wading bird from North America, this was quite a find and augured well for what wildlife encounters Killearn would offer over subsequent years. And so, for this 50th article, it seemed only fitting to cover my more recent discovery of another interesting wader, albeit a much commoner one, on the outskirts of the village.

Earlier this year I found a little ringed plover, a summer visitor to Britain from sub-Saharan Africa, feeding along the muddy edges of a field pool close to Killearn. Like other types of plover, this species is relatively short-billed and short-necked with a rounded head and rather tapered horizontal body. It is not dissimilar to our resident ringed plover in that both are sandy brown above with contrasting white underparts and black facial markings and breast band. However, as well as being slightly smaller and more slender, little ringed plovers differ by sporting a distinctive yellow eye-ring as well as lacking a wing-bar in flight. They also have greyish-pink legs and an all-dark bill whereas ringed plovers have orange legs and some orange on their bills.

The two species differ further in choice of habitat during the breeding season. The ringed plover is primarily a coastal breeding species, and I have never seen one around Killearn, even on passage. On the other hand, the little ringed plover prefers proximity to fresh water, naturally favouring riparian islands and shingle. It has subsequently adapted to seeking man-made gravel pits as an alternative to riverbanks, undoubtedly aiding a range expansion in Britain in recent decades – including in Scotland where it previously only bred in very low numbers.

The bird I found frequented the same muddy pool for several days but was never accompanied by another



of its kind. However, one or two pairs have enjoyed breeding success at a spot not too far from Killearn in recent years. My plover probably hailed from that breeding site and was simply visiting the pool to feed rather than seeing it as a potential nesting location.

Indeed, waders such as plovers, sandpipers and the like are always drawn to mud and spend most of their time probing bills of various shapes and sizes into the stuff to Hoover up invertebrates. The same field held oystercatchers and common sandpipers, while at other times curlew, lapwing, redshank and snipe have paid a visit. Though not as scarce as little ringed plovers, or anywhere near as rare as spotted sandpipers, these birds also remain a treat for the eyes after all these years.

MARTIN CULSHAW

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Anyone wishing to contribute to the winter edition of the *Courier* is reminded that it will be distributed from 14 November 2026.

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Contributions and letters to the editor should be in the hands of the editorial team by 25 September 2026.

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