The Gargunnock Bugle

Issue 65 Easter 2021

Anniversaries celebrated

Andy and Ann

Meyhew met nearly 60 years ago. They were married in Gargunnock Church by Rev Turner and lived at various cottages around the village until setting in McNeill Crescent. Andy was keen that the event be marked, so this photographer happily obliged.

Robert and Liz

Petrie were married on the 3rd of March 1961 in Temple Parish Church, Glasgow. They moved to Gargunnock in 1970 with their 3 children, Robert, Duncan, and Helen and spent most of their married life in Stevenson Street since. Their daughter, Helen writes, "They celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary surrounded by family, good friends, and good neighbours, all standing in the street to hear the lovely playing from piper (Callum Wynd Bagpipe Services) who surprised them by serenading them outside the house. They have received many cards, messages and flowers and would like to thank everyone who has wished them well. In particular, they would like to thank the flower show committee for the beautiful basket of flowers that they sent to them."
They are pictured above with the card they received from Her Majesty the Queen.

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Local News

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Farmlife

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Local History

And so much more....

Editorial

Welcome to this Easter issue of The Gargunnock Bugle. Perhaps we should call it the Anniversary Issue – as it marks not just the fact that we went into lockdown a year ago, but also a number of important landmark events, like anniversaries, here too.

This last year has been unprecedented. Not for a minute, on 23rd March 2020, did we dream that we'd still be locked down a year later. This issue pays tribute to the sterling and continuing work of our own health and care professionals. But we're looking forward too – because who would have believed a year ago, that in just a few short months they would have both found, and supplied, so many vaccines. It is wonderful that we are able, albeit cautiously, to start making plans for travel and perhaps trips and holidays outside the village again.

Our theme last time was Community. And what a great community this is that responds when we ask for help. I can report that our Community Centre has a new caretaker, and, as we go to press, applicants have also come forward for vacant posts on the Trust and the Windfarm Panel.

Sadly, many of us met in the sunshine near the cemetery to say goodbye to Anne Dando. Anne was always such a staunch supporter of The Bugle – and, up until very recently, part of the committed band of distributors who delivered it to every household in the village. Our thoughts are with all her family.

On a happier note, I've been witness to celebrations of 'matches' that took place over half a century ago - those of Andy Meyhew and Ann Meyhew and Robert and Liz Petrie. Incidentally, more local models would be appreciated for my college photography project, if you were so minded.

What we do have in store for you is Easter news from church and Women's Institute; details of how the village has seen off a good many U.F.O.s in lockdown, poetry, recipes, photographs (of course) and quite a bit of local news too. The improvement in the weather brings a nervous time for farmers and landowners, a number of them who have made their own pleas for your continued co-operation and understanding.

Thanks again to everyone for your support. If what you see spurs you on to wish to contribute, the next deadline for The Gargunnock Bugle is **10th June 2021.** Any contributions most welcome.

Helen Hyland Editor

Bugle volunteers required

We all want this village newsletter to be a success, but it's going to take more than just me to keep it going. So, if you think you may have some spare time, we will need willing and able volunteers.

Sub-editors. Co-ordinating/writing/organising a particular section of the magazine (House and Garden, Sport and Fitness, The Great Outdoors, Farm and Business, Education, Youth…)

Advertising – Liaising with local firms and organisations to secure a steady income stream to keep this going on a sound footing?

If you feel that you could help, do *please* get in touch.

gargunnockbugle@gmail.com

Unsung Hero?

Nominations this time include:

Johan Mailer (nominated because there are few Gargunnock church services, christenings, weddings, or funerals that any of us can remember when she hasn't been there playing music that perfectly fitted each event).

David Hyland. My long-suffering husband for putting up with so many 'ready meals' while I've been working on this magazine.

The Gargunnock Inn, for going above and beyond to make sure that Andy Meyhew was able to give his beloved wife Ann the *exact* meal she wished for on their wedding anniversary. Matthew delivered the prawn cocktail at 6pm and steak diane, half an hour later. And Andy told me that it was, "Brilliant. A lovely meal. We couldn't ask for anything better".

Carol McGregor. I don't think any of us realised just how much work you did in her time as Administrator. And I'm so grateful for your support in helping me out of difficulties since. I take my hat off to you.

But this time's award goes to **Barbara Linklater.** Each and every week through lockdown, she (with Jill Patrick) has checked over our Community Centre to make sure it stayed safe and secure. The lack of bands of paid helpers for Glebe Park works this year hasn't put her off. Instead Barbara has drafted in friends and family and grafted with them in her determination that we WILL have wild flowers at Glebe Park. And I understand that, with the Council unable to provide plants here again, she's even agreed to sort out the borders in the Rest Garden this season too.

(Photographed here, with some help from photoshop magic, working alongside Helen Dingley).

Have you any old Gargunnock Magazines?

Maitland Clark writes

Some time ago 2 friends gifted me some editions of the old Gargunnock Quarter magazines. However, there are a few missing and I thought an appeal to the Bugle might help fill the gaps. It would be good to have a complete collection for the benefit of the village as part of its history. I've listed the ones which are missing and I would appreciate it if any of our more senior villagers may have some hidden away in a cupboard and could donate any to help complete the collection.

Winter 85
Spring 86
Winter 86
Spring 87
Spring 88
Winter 88
Winter 89
Winter 91
Summer 92
Autumn 92
Winter 92

I also have duplicates for Summer 87, Winter 2001 and Spring 2002 if anyone would like them.

Thanks and happy hunting!!

Maitland 07763098247

Meet your neighbour
Liz Wilkinson

How long have you lived in the village?

Over 12 years now, moving here in 2008. It is the longest time that Jeremy and I have lived anywhere together.

What brought you here?

We moved from the USA and were renting a flat in Stirling whilst we looked for somewhere to live more permanently. After driving around the locality, Thornhill, Kippen etc., Gargunnock appealed to us because; it was off the main road, it had a village newspaper, we visited on Gala day (I seem to remember it rained), and had a lovely dinner in the pub….what more could one want!

What do you like about living in Gargunnock?

I grew up in a very small village in South Wales, where everyone knew their neighbours, so it's a bit like coming home….except for the accent! There is a good community spirit, beautiful mountain views, rural walks in all directions from the front door, and easy access to the big wide world.

How has the village changed in the time you have been here?

People have come and gone and lots of new young families have moved in, which is wonderful.

In recent years the village has received Windfarm money enabling improvements to be made, and providing support for local organisations.

Of course, the past year with the pandemic has brought most changes with closures of the pub, church and school. But this has, on the positive, allowed more people to meet their neighbours whether shopping for them, or whilst out and about getting their daily exercise.

The footpaths have really suffered with the footfall but no problem, the Gargunnock Paths Group will deal with repairs when allowed, and we'll see people out with wheelbarrows once again, fortified with coffee and home baking.

What is your present occupation?

I'm retired now but I worked as a Chiropodist until moving to North America in 1989, where I pig farmed for a while. On return to this country I volunteered with the RVS at Stirling Royal Infirmary…..until it was knocked down.

What is your favourite part of the village?

My most favourite part of Gargunnock is at the top of Main Street. Soon after moving here I was walking up Main Street, delivering mail to the previous owners of our house. It was a cold, sunny day in November with clear blue skies. On getting to the the top I looked north over The Carse to snow-capped mountains, the first snow of the season, it was just spectacular, and has remained in my heart and mind ever since.

Have you been involved with any of the village groups? Tell us a bit about your experiences

Indeed, it was super to learn there was a choir, the Gargunnock Songsters, a great social group, which I joined very early on. I have always sung and, according to my Mother I hummed the tune to 'How much is That Doggy in The Window' at 6 months old!.

Thanks to Maitland I got roped into helping with the Gala tearoom. At that time teas were prepared in the football pavilion, I'm so glad it has moved to the Community Centre.

I've competed in the Flower and Agricultural shows and won the odd trophy or two, volunteered at Gargunnock Estate Gardens, and am convenor of the Kirk Coffee rota.

At all the above events there is always a wonderful array of home baking.

I also sing as one of the 3 Gargoyles of Gargunnock, which is such fun, dressing up in mediaeval and renaissance costumes and performing at festivals anywhere from The Borders to Inverness.

How has the current situation affected you and yours?

We've missed visiting our families, they live in the southwest of England, apart from one brother in Ireland, and 2 postponed family weddings, now looking forward to getting together sooner or later!

Being retired has certainly had its benefit with not having to homeschool, or worry about going to work!

I've been able to spend a lot more time in the garden getting to know the plants. You may wonder, in the photo, why I'm leaning on a spade! It's my favourite garden tool which I found on the old railway line behind our little farm in Ontario, Canada. It probably belonged to the farmer next door.….but he never did claim it!

What's your next challenge?

I have cupboards full of fabrics and wools collected over the years…… many years! So, my challenge will be to put them to good use, get the sewing machine out and get creative. I've finished knitting a jumper, and while I think about how to sew it together, I'm knitting a lacy scarf.

I also want to learn to play the violin. I did start a few years ago with the help of a friend and neighbour but now I can't remember how to tune the thing!w

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Apart from wishing Gargunnock was on the south side the hills so we could enjoy more hours of sunshine, I could ramble on and on but it might add a couple more pages to the Bugle!

Who would you like to nominate for the next Bugle? And why?

I would like to nominate Zoë and Allister McLean who moved to The Glebe 2 or 3 years ago. We met at the Kirk a couple of times but haven't had the opportunity to meet since. So it would be nice to get to know them a little better.

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Gargunnock Community Trust

Stuart Ogg writes

A key issue the Trust discussed recently was the publication of the Bugle. The last issue was well received by many and thanks goes to Helen, the other contributors and advertisers for a quality production. After a lengthy discussion the Trust decided that the Bugle, as one of the principal sources of information about what's happening in the village, should continue to be free to all households.

Consequently, we agreed that the production cost of the Bugle should be kept at a modest level and funded mainly through advertising and possibly sponsorship. In fact, if any reader knows of potential advertisers or organisations willing to sponsor the Bugle please let Helen know.

The Trust has taken this decision to avoid the Bugle diverting resources away from its other activities, including the Community Centre which is the main asset owned and managed by the Trust on behalf of the community. The Trust recognises it has a balancing act to achieve between publishing something which everyone can be proud of and enjoy reading while ensuring costs are managed within a budget. Of course if additional advertisers and/or sponsors can be found this would help avoid having to diminish the quality, size or frequency of the Bugle. With an AGM coming up later in the year (post Covid lockdown) we are sure this will be something which members will want to discuss.

Following conversations with Foundation Scotland, another recent action has been the adoption of a complaints policy which will be posted on the website.

Finally, following the recent recruitment drives we welcome Paul James as the newly appointed Trust Director and Ewan Hunter and Mike Fitches as members of the Windfarm Fund Panel. The Trust would also like to thank all the other candidates who expressed an interest in volunteering to help the work of the Trust and the Panel.

Paths Group Update

David King writes

In the two months since our last update plans are progressing nicely on all of the projects we are tackling. It is hoped that Covid restrictions allowing and with the weather improving we shall soon be able to proceed on running repairs to both the **Ladies Walk** and the path to the South of **Watson House**.

Assistance with the delivery of materials to the worksites has been offered by both John More and Ian Watt and this will greatly assist the volunteer workforce as well as helping to reduce the cost of one of the projects. Thank you.

We are examining various options for grant funding of the **Beeches Path** and are hopefully in the final stages of ascertaining the ownership of the various sections of this Core Path.

Charlie's Loan. I have been advised by a long-term resident that this was named after Prince Charles Edward Stewart, who passed this way from Leckie to Touch on the old Kings Highway. Match Funding for this project has been approved by the Windfarm Panel and we now await further communications from Stirling Council to allow this project to proceed.

Following a number of requests raised by village residents regarding restricted access to some of the paths in and around the village we are in the early stages of discussion with landowners regarding the possibility of replacing Kissing Gates and alternatives to stiles thus allowing baby buggies and dogs on leads improved access..

Windfarm approval for the marker posts for the **Under The Craigs Path** has been given and it is envisaged that these will be erected in the next few weeks

Further detailed discussions are ongoing on the **proposed cycle/ footpath** between Gargunnock and Stirling, involving landowners and tenant farmers, Sustrans, our two principal consultants and Stirling Council. Following strong interest in this from Kippen, Buchlyvie and communities further west we believe that we have considerable support for what could become an integral part of The Kings Highway from Stirling to Dumbarton.

As ever we acknowledge the invaluable leadership of Pete, Jeremy, Geoff, Gavin and Edmond.

Gargunnock Community Council Update

Jeremy Wilkinson writes

Road Repairs

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the resurfacing of the back road (from the top of Manse Brae to the West entrance for Gargunnock House) will have been completed.

Safety at Junction of Station Road and A811

The Community Council is still trying to meet (virtually?) with Stirling Council to discuss our concerns about the risks to vehicles joining the A811 from Station Road.

Following a residents' petition to Stirling Council about three years ago concerning safety on the A811, Stirling Council have improved the white-lining, and installed access marker bollards at the Station Road junction, however, in the view of the Community Council the visibility for drivers leaving Station Road is still not acceptable – and the risk of a serious road traffic accident remains high. We will continue to push Stirling Council for action, but in the meantime please take care if you use this junction.

Community Council Meetings

The Community Council are holding meetings virtually. If you would like to attend one of the regular meetings, please contact our Secretary, Jon Sutherland, by email at gargunnockcommunitycouncil@gmail.com, and he will provide you with a link to the meeting.

AGM

The Community Council AGM will be held at 19:30 on Monday 26th April 2021 via Microsoft Teams.

If you would like to attend the AGM, contact Jon by email at gargunnockcommunitycouncil@gmail.com for the link.

Hand painted pet portraits by Gay Burt

Windfarm Fund Update

Alison Younger writes

The Panel is responsible for directing awards from approx. £25,000 p.a. received from FALK Renewables. It is made up of a mix of volunteers - 2 representatives from both the Community Council and Community Trust, and another 6 from the wider community. Full details of the fund and how to make an application can be found on the Gargunnock Commmunity Trust website. It's an easy process – we'd love to hear from you if you have an idea!

To be eligible for an award an application must be for the benefit of residents of Gargunnock. At our January meeting the Panel considered a number of applications – from path repairs to equipment for litter picking.

Applications were approved from both Arnprior Nursery and Callander Young Farmers towards projects as both deliver activities and services for Gargunnock based families and young people.

We meet again at the end of March for another round of applications and look forward to welcoming Ewan Hunter as a new Panel member, and Jon Sutherland – replacing Julie Cole as a Community Council representative. Many thanks to Julie for all her service and contributions to the Panel. Looking head to our June meeting we're delighted that Mike Fitches will also join as a new Panel member.

Awards made January 2021

Applicant	Detail	Award
SWRI	Costs for zoom licence and speaker/materials costs	£400
Callander Young Farmers	20% costs towards embroidered tops	£319.36
Litter Picking – Gillian Bruce	Equipment for local volunteers	£461.09
Paths sub-group Community Trust	Marker poles for under Craigs path	£100
Paths sub-group Community Trust	Materials for improvement works to Charlie's Loan path	£497
Arnprior Nursery	Mud kitchen as part of wider garden improvement scheme	£355.74
Community Trust	Sinking Fund to enable repairs and maintenance of Community Centre	£25,000 (£5,000 p.a. 2020-2025)

Glebe Park Update

Barbara Linklater writes

Despite the inclement start to the year, the snowdrops and crocuses have been popping their heads up, hopefully being closely followed by daffodils, tulips and bluebells. Working with Stirling charity, On The Verge, an area has been cleared and wild flower seeds sown. On the tree front, 3 walnut trees, kindly donated by Jane Arneil and Douglas Johnston, have been added to the woodland area. All plantings have been carried out by volunteers in the village.

For that special forever gift, perfect for birthdays, anniversaries or Christmas.
Spoil yourself, or others ,with a long- lasting keepsake artwork of a well loved pet.
For further information, please email local artist Gay at glb44@btinternet.com

Easter Event
WI initiative

WI President, Anne Christie writes

Following on from the success of the "Advent Windows for Christmas" we are having an Easter project for the village, partially funded by the Wind Farm (Funded by the Falck Renewables Kingsburn Community Fund administered by the Gargunnock Community Trust).

The Easter Tree or Paskris – a popular tradition in Sweden. In the markets of Sweden you will see buckets and baskets filled with colourful feathers for Paskris. The feathers are tied to twigs and placed in a container much like a Christmas tree. You can then add decorations but this time they are all types of symbols such as roosters, hens, birds of all kinds, butterflies, and of course, eggs as colourful as the feathers. It's been suggested that the feather twigs represent the palm leaves that were placed on the ground for Jesus' donkey to walk on his triumphant return to Jerusalem celebrated on Palm Sunday. Since there are as many palm trees in Sweden as there are in Minnesota (outdoor palm trees to be precise), this was the best they could do to imitate this tradition.

© HRH Photo

WI members will be decorating a tree in their garden and/or decorating a window. Villagers are encouraged to join in and

Along at Old Leckie Farm

Alison Younger writes

With spring officially arrived, the days are notably longer. When the sun appears you can start to feel the warmth seeping in. The grass is beginning to grow, snowdrops and aconites are finished, daffodil and crocus bulbs are flowering and the hares which frolic and play in the fields are out in good numbers. The Highland cattle have been out all winter along at the most westerly end of the farm, whilst the main Limousin herd will remain in the sheds for a wee bit longer waiting for the ground to dry out a bit more and for the grass to get to a sustainable length before they can feel the sun on their backs. Spring calving is underway so our cow cam is doing a good job of letting us keep an eye on them from a distance.

Many local farms have already started their annual lambing. A busy time with all hands on deck, checking stock, assisting where required, moving animals around and ensuring everything has plenty of feed and water. At Old Leckie we don't start lambing until the end of March so as I write we are doing the usual pre-lambing prep work of cleaning out and preparing sheds and getting on top of everything else which will be have to be put on hold for a few weeks.

If you are out and about please take extra care during this time. Ideally keep dogs on leads at all times unless they are 100% reliable to walk closely to heel, and be prepared to meet moving livestock on the back road through the farm. Stand well off the road if livestock is being moved towards you, ideally out of sight in the trees or in a field. Farms are fascinating places – especially at lambing time – but please don't stop in the main yard area to get a closer look. Farm vehicles move around here with limited visibility and with cattle and sheep moving about and occasionally known to jump a gate it's good to remember it's a work place – always safer to move on beyond the main sheds if you want to stop for while.

The Leckie Layers are getting ready to get let out from their own 'lockdown' due to high incidences of avian flu this winter. We will be rehoming some of our retiring hens early May - so no sooner will lambing be over than we will be thrown into a busy couple of weeks cleaning the new hen house and preparing for the new pullets. Our new online farm shop is now available on www.oldleckie.co.uk and folks can now sign up for regular egg, meat and salad deliveries, or can order on a more one-off basis for home delivery or pick up from the farm. It's been great to get such great support and feedback from the village – thank you!

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Local delivery every Friday

decorate a tree in their garden in order to create a bit of cheer and a talking point.

At the Village Square we will be using the tree to decorate with baubles and messages of Thankfulness.

At the church we will be having a Memorial tree for people to leave messages for relatives or friends, especially important for people who have been restricted in attending funerals during this last year.

Please email your message of Thankfulness and Memorial message which we will laminate and put on the tree to myself on annechristie1958@gmail.com as soon as possible

For the children of the village we would like them to design an A4 piece of paper with an Easter message or theme for display in their window, adding their name and age to their exhibit. If you would like to take part please email our Secretary Anne Muirhead on mrshamish@outlook.com by FRIDAY 2nd APRIL.

The Windows will be judged over the Easter weekend which will be Good Friday 2nd April to Easter Monday 5th April so all budding artists get the paints out.

Class 1) Toddlers under 5
Class 2) Age 5 to 12 Primary
Class 3) Age 12 to 18 Secondary
Class 4) Family

Please feel free to wander round the village during Easter weekend and have a look at the windows and trees. We are hoping to keep the windows and trees up for the month of April in order to bring a bit of cheer to the village.

I hope you will participate in the Easter project which is open to all in the village and look forward to walking round the village admiring the various displays.

Cartooon by Douglas Barr

Watt a lot of lambs!

Helen Hyland writes

On 14th March, the message came "Helen – that's lambing started!" Three days later I was there, up at the farm, with camera and long lens in hand.

It's some set up at Hillhead Farm. The first shed is packed full of ewes about to lamb, all comfy and cozy in their fresh laid straw. The next shed is where the action takes place – the lambing and penning of new mothers with their lambs, and then a further shed where you'll find the lamb adopter and a big pen for orphan lambs and triplets. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this magazine, all 250 of the 'half breeds' in the shed will have lambed and Ian will be turning his attention to the 720 black faced ewes from the hill. Ian's son Craig takes a fortnight off work to help with the hill sheep.

We stood and chatted. Given what they were to be facing in the next few weeks, both Ian and Sharon were calm and relaxed. As were the sheep and lambs all around us. Ian proudly told me about his new camera that relays images from the shed direct to his phone; and Sharon explained how they divided the labour between all three generations that get involved at this time.

It was a beautiful day – the sun came streaming into the shed, making it almost too warm. Cynically, Ian said that the weather was bound to turn once he turned his attention to the black faced ewes outside. I arrived just as one ewe had produced twins. She was licking one and ignoring the other, so Ian moved her into the lamb adopter to try to 'persuade' her to treat both lambs the same.

© HRH Photo

I remember helping to bottle feed orphan lambs when I was younger, but Ian said that his orphans and triplets were fed by an automated system that mixed and fed powdered milk on demand. The ewes lamb in the shed and are then loaded up into the trailer and dispersed around nearby fields.

We talked a lot about covid. It doesn't appear to have hit many farmers health-wise and has also helped the lamb trade but the downside of 'Stay at Home' legislation is the increased numbers of people taking to the hills, something that brings its own worries for all farmers. While most walkers are responsible and take care to stay well away from the farm during lambing, one walker came through the farm leaving all the gates open behind him. A ewe heavy with triplet lambs was eventually tracked down in the burn. Wrestling her out of the water took all of Ian's strength and ingenuity. She died after eating poisoned ivy when all the ewes in the field ended up in the woods behind the mill farm. All that precious time and energy wasted and an animal's life lost – all because of one person's thoughtlessness.

By the time you are reading this, many of the lambs will be out in the roadside fields where you too can enjoy them.

I could have stayed in that barn for hours, talking and snapping away, but I was conscious that time was precious to them. An hour and a half plus 297 photographs later, I came away. One very happy photographer.

Round Leckie Walk Explained

John McLaren writes

This past year lockdown has seen more of us out walking than usual enjoying the beautiful countryside in which we are fortunate to live but I wonder how many of you, perhaps new to the area, fully understand what you are seeing on the way so here is my take on perhaps that most popular of all the walks, Round Leckie Estate.

We'll start from the Square and head west along Leckie Road, immediately crossing the 1964 bridge over the burn which replaced a smaller single span version of the older Main St. bridge. Leckie Road is actually a by-pass of the steep gradient of Main St which was once the military through-road (or "King's Highway") from Stirling Castle to Dumbarton Castle. It was built around the turn of the 18th/19th centuries and sliced through a number of the 100 yd long feus belonging to Main St houses, including that of the Inn. Their owners' comments at that time must have been choice! I wonder what compensation was paid, if any!

At the end of Leckie road (for more than 100 years named School Road) is our Community Centre, built as a school in 1858 to replace one previously situated at the very top of Main St., in the house called Woodside. Continue past the old school and its playing field taking care to be mindful of traffic on the blind bend. A wooden signpost on the left points up Charlie's Loan, so called after Charlie Forsyth who ran the first village Post Office at the top of it from the mid-19th century.

Part of the 1800 Leckie estate map. Note that Leckie Road had been constructed, the absence of a road from the Bield farm to the end of the Beech Walk and the collection of buildings around the Corn Mills, adjacent to the Packhorse Bridge, named Corn Town on an earlier road map.

© HRH Photo

Past the bend a splendid view opens out across the carse to the mountains beyond. If you want to know the names of these peaks climb the stone steps up to the church belfry some time and inspect the view plate there. It's easy to imagine how the valley would have looked after the last ice age when the sea covered all of this land and whales ventured as far as Meiklewood some becoming beached there.

Continue towards the Bield Farm but note that steep field access on your right. That is on the notional boundary between Gargunnock and Leckie Estates. Within living memory, a well-used footpath ran directly across the fields there to the Kepdarroch Farm Road. Up till the 1950s school children trudged that footpath daily in all weathers from the farm and the railway cottage. In the opposite direction across the road the footpath climbed steeply up through the Loftbrae field to the top of the Main St. where the school was situated prior to 1858.

On reaching the Bield Farm look back towards the top of the village and imagine the old road heading down towards the farm somehow. No trace of it now. Here you have 3 choices, left through an apparently ancient gate, straight on via the old military road or right down Laigh Loan, (so named after a farm which once existed 500m west of Patrickston Farm and the last building to be occupied by members of the original Leckies of Leckie Estate)

Don't be fooled by the look of that old gate as both it and the first 250 metres of road have only been there for a few decades, built to bypass the road running through the farm.

The Bield is an ancient farm, originally called Nether Bield as there was an Upper Bield near the end of the Beech Walk which we will come to later. Just past the farm stands a lodge house and fine gates marking the commencement of the original parklands surrounding New Leckie or Watson House as it is now called.

The old estate map dated 1800 shows our road following a straight line from here to opposite the Watson House site then to where two bridges cross the Leckie Burn. That means it would have passed as close as 75 yards from the new house, so a diversion would have been required.

We have now climbed up a bit from the carse and our way is following the top of a cliff called Craigmakessoch. To your right you can see the remains of what I believe was once a raised footpath affording fine views to the North. The Moirs constructed many walking footpaths throughout their estate. A little further on before the junction and down at the base of the Craig there once was a fine curling pond in the wood, well protected from any rays of winter sunshine. There too is situated Lady Betty's Well, named after an old lady who lived nearby.

At the road junction the eastern end of Watson House is now visible. At one time a path led up the grassy bank straight ahead, to a road behind the big house leading down to Old Leckie (Leckie Castle) but that's long since gone. If you were to turn right here down the Avenue you would reach the main A811 Dumbarton Road, the final line of the military road determined in the early 1800s.

We will bear left instead round the bend till we join a footpath at a small lay-by. We are now back on the approximate line of the original military road once more. Watson House is now in full view sitting in its beautifully manicured grounds, which at one time extended fully up to the field boundary on our left and all the way to the bridge over the Leckie Burn which we shall soon reach.

Watson House (originally New Leckie)

Watson House was built in the style of an English baronial home

takes its name from a 40-year period after the second World war when it was the Church of Scotland David Watson Eventide Home. During the war it had been requisitioned for use as a military hospital and prior to that had been, since 1906, in the possession of the Younger Family. Now it is luxury flats.

New Leckie was built in the early 1830s by Charles Alexander Graham Moir as a replacement for Old Leckie, a short distance away to the west. The Graham Moirs were Lairds here from the late 1600s until 1906. Recently most of it was sold except Old Leckie and the working farm, market garden and Leckie Farmstay holiday accommodation.

Old Leckie is a 15th century Scottish country house from where, in 1745, after dining, Bonnie Prince Charlie wrote a letter to the City of Glasgow demanding £15,000 and whatever arms could be found in the city. Although it is claimed he spent the night here that is disputed by contemporary accounts, Touch House being the overnight location reported by one of his followers. A widow from the Bield complained to the Prince that her sheep were being stolen by his men and that resulted in one culprit being shot & fatally wounded by his Chieftain, carried off & later buried at Touch on his demise.

Just after passing the big house you will see a tennis court on your right. At one time this was available to the village tennis club, rackets

Old Leckie is a 15th century Scottish country house, shown here c1923 in an etching by David McCleary who did many local etchings and paintings. (Thanks to Liz Patterson)

and balls being kept in Willie Craik's house, Craigard, Main St.

Part way along the path you are now on you will see another branching off to the left through the wood. This one came into regular use when a fallen tree temporarily blocked the main one a few years ago and is now a popular diversion leading down to a delightfully sheltered spot on Leckie Burn where an ancient Pack-horse Bridge slumbers by two equally ancient corn-mills.

This bridge has a Latin inscription, almost unreadable now on the topmost stone of the upstream parapet which says *E Bono Volentia ob Salutem* (literally. *Out of good will for safety.)* and dates to the 1600s.

Beware though! The nearby corn mills, while picturesque are badly deteriorating. There are danger signs on the nearest mill, but they are overgrown. Do not enter please!

The other corn mill further upstream was fed by an aqueduct so this must have been a busy area at one time, indeed it is named "Corn Town" on one old 1777 map I have seen.

Cross the bridge and re-join the old military road now at the west end of the larger bridge then walk past the wooden bungalow. I have no idea when the large bridge was built, probably 1800s. We are going to turn left here but pause for a moment and take in what you see.

The old road is very plain in front of you heading westwards to the hamlet of Burnton, on the Glinns Road and thence through Boquhan Estate to the village of Kippen, less than 3 miles away. To your left is Gallow Hill, perhaps an ominous reminder of the days when the local Laird had the ultimate power over his people!

Turn left now heading towards the hills with the wood to your left. I believe this to be the first part of the bypass of the newly-developed park-lands of New Leckie in the early 1800s. It is initially the road to Knock o

The Pack Horse Bridge dates back to the 1600s

Ronald Farm, shortly to be seen up on your right and beyond to the hills.

Soon you will pass the rear of the old mill and it's here, in February/March, that there is a magnificent display of snowdrops each year. The field on your right was the venue for many years for Girl Guide annual camps (and a magnet for local lads!) Further on at the end of the wood, almost invisible now, is the silted up Leckie dam where water for the mills was temporarily stored.

Following the burn we come to a gate just before an old sawmill. An unusual feature of this sawmill is that it is powered by water. There were two machines in there; a circular saw and an electric generator dating back to the early 20th century which once powered New Leckie, but it hadn't sufficient power to support everything which could be switched on and so black-outs were common. "Only the head gardener understood it and could reset it," Lord Younger once told me.

Nearby Sawmill Cottage is where the rolled up 1800 survey of the estate was discovered in the loft. It is now properly framed and preserved. Where the cottage stands is shown on the map as another water storage area for the corn mills, fed from the burn.

Turn left over the bridge, a pedestrian gate on your right. This is a path leading up to a reservoir which fed the sawmill and past the site of a 2000-year-old broch, apparently destroyed by the Romans around 100AD. In Spring the bluebells in the woods here are a sight to be seen.

Back in the 19th century an extensive network of paths, created by Moir, followed both sides of the burn right up past Knock o'

The Beeches Walk

Ronald to St Colm's Glen (Colm = Columba) but they are long disused and overgrown.

The next 300 metres of curved road wasn't there in 1800 so had to be constructed to complete the by-pass and to hide it from view of the new mansion house a bund of earth about 2 metres high was deposited on its north side. The large house up on your right was constructed by Lord Younger as a family home about 60-70 years ago.

At the end of that 300-metre section the drive up to the house is evident on your right. It once began down near Watson House and continued up into the woods to an area called Lime Craig, near the reservoir. Now it accesses two private houses and on a different line the forest, looping round to the reservoir and the footpath leading back down to gate near the bridge over Leckie burn, a walk for another day. There is also an ancient, much overgrown, private graveyard of the Moir family in those woods too.

Stroll yet another 300 metres onwards to where the road turns 90 degrees to the left back down to the Bield Farm and Leckie Road and you would be at the end of the bypass, ready to retrace your steps to our starting point in the village.

But the Beech Walk footpath (pictured above) beckons (very rough in places, watch your footing) leading straight on from here. Where its trees stop is that old boundary again between Leckie estate and "the Barony Lands of Gargunnock." Here, beneath that first house on your right, was the site of the Gargunnock Curling Club's rink in days long gone.

A short distance beyond, on your left, lies the bottom end of more of the top of Main St feus first let back in 1777, now unused. Drummond Place is soon reached where a left turn will take you to Main St then back to the Square where we began, just a little bit more knowledgeable about your surroundings than you were.

I trust ywwou enjoyed the ramble and I hope to be back with more.

www.gargunnockvillagehistory.co.uk

Photographs and illustrations sourced/taken by John McLaren unless otherwise stated.

WRI news

Gargunnock WI President, Anne Christie, writes

We now have a Zoom licence which has allowed us to keep in contact with our members, even although this time last year most of us had never heard or participated in Zoom before!! Member Johan Mailer said "my family never thought at 80 I would be able to master Zoom." Where there is a will there is a way!!. Our thanks go to Janet Iffla who is hosting our Zoom meetings and is extremely patient. Each meeting we are learning something new about Zoom!!

We managed to secure funding to pay for the Zoom licence, assist in providing craft starter materials for the Easter Project for members and secure expenses for Speakers for future meetings. This has been partly funded by the Falck Renewables Kingsburn Community Fund administered by the Gargunnock Community Trust.

Hopefully you will have heard about the Easter Project with details which are on the Gargunnock Facebook Page and the village Noticeboard – villagers are encouraged to decorate a tree in their garden, hang a message of Thankfulness on the tree at the Square, Memorial messages for friends/relatives on the tree at the Church , Easter A4 drawing competition for the budding artists, children and families to take part.

Members meet up for our monthly WI meetings on Zoom which are on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. Please feel free to join us by contacting myself on annechristie1958@gmail.com

Our February meeting was on Shrove Tuesday with all our members getting pancakes made by their committee "buddy" and a shortbread heart biscuit made by myself for their cup of tea.

Janet Iffla demonstrated how to make flowers from wool which we can use for the Easter Project (see separate article and example shown in photograph right). We had lots of fun and laughter showing our finished articles and I must say I've made a few just watching TV at night and found it relaxing.

We are also having drop in chat sessions morning coffee/afternoon tea, where members can chat to one another which is proving to be popular. Feel free to join us, by contacting Janet Iffla on jniffla@aol.com

Members or anyone can access previous craft sessions at Scottish Women's Institutes TV on www.youtube.com. I thoroughly enjoyed Sculptural cakes by Tracey Mckay who is self taught with characters, animals and structures she has brought to life. My life with Alpacas with Lynne from Bierhope Alpacas was also very interesting. She had formerly been a social worker but changed direction to follow her dream!

Such events are on Zoom and have the same login details – see www.theswi.org.uk for details any time, plus watch out for updates at the beginning of the month.

Many of our members have been busy during lockdown making fishermen's hats (pictured) and snoods for the Blythswood Shoebox Xmas appeal.

Light is at the end of the tunnel with many of us having had our vaccination and hopefully we await lockdown restrictions being safely removed and we can meet up face-to-face.

Stay safe, take care.

Hopefully Make A Difference!

Janet Iffla writes

Sometime during September/October last year (don't ask me where I cannot remember, it takes me to remember what day it is sometimes just now, if it was by email, or one of the craft sites that I have joined...) there was a call put out for people to sew Stoma bags. …. I can do that, better use of my free time of which I have a lot of right now I thought, rather than make another, quilt, teaching myself how to make Dorset buttons, trying needle felting, or making yet ww ..

I had never heard of Friends of Anchor and duly asked Mr Google, who has become my best friend during lockdown…… Friends of Anchor (Anchor which stands for Aberdeen North Centre Haematology Oncology Radiotherapy) was established to support North east Scotland's oncology and haematology department which is based in Aberdeen Royal Hospital.

I replied saying I wold be happy to be part of this, and I received an email back thanking me for agreeing and they would be back in touch in due course.

Some two months later, I received an email saying that this was still going ahead but during lockdown it was difficult to get a seamstress to design the bag, but as soon as it was available they would be back in touch,

Then last week, email arrived with pattern asking if I could make 10 bags, a mixture of bags for both male and female… excited to be doing something worthwhile, out came my stash of fabric, designs picked for both male and female chosen, the bags were made in two days, sealed in plastic bags, dated and posted……and it felt good to have been part of something that would "make a difference" for someone.

Dear All,

Staying Alive at Alvie (sorry, that's really bad isn't it!)

I've moved to an Estate in the middle of the Highlands. And boy what a difference! Don't get me wrong - the work I do is pretty much the same, but the way the estate is presented is totally different. As is the weather - I've spent over 300 quid on thermal undies plus a good pair of snow boots to survive winter here!

Alvie and Dalraddy Estates lies just 4 miles south of Aviemore near the village of Kincraig within the district of Badenoch (the geographic centre of Scotland). The Estates extend from the River Spey, between Loch Insh and Loch Alvie, North West into the Monadhliath mountains. Most of the properties on the Estates face South East, many with spectacular views of the Cairngorm Mountains.

One of the largest parts of the Estate is Dalraddy Holiday Park first established by the current Laird's father the same year I was born. The park is set over 97 acres and offers fully serviced static holiday caravans and chalets, as well as secluded pitches for touring caravans, motorhomes and facilities for up to 50 tents. The delicious menu at Alvie Forest food shares seasonal ingredients foraged, grown and reared on the estate so there really is no reason to leave the park! During lockdown I got the chef Chris to make my dinners - oh my word - the best decision ever.

We also have self-catered accommodation in Alvie House - a traditional shooting lodge, as well as several holiday cottages. I've stayed in 2 of them now and the views towards the Cairngorms are gorgeous. My favourite thing to do is to wrap up and sit out on the picnic bench and just bask in the light from the full moon or just stargaze.

After being cooped up for over a year, I know that you'll be wanting to escape for far away lands. When you can, please do think about coming up here. We've got loads to keep you all entertained - pony treks, zip-lining, gorge-walking, paintballing, white-water rafting, backcountry survival skills, clay pigeon shooting, archery, quad-bikes, fishing, as well as access to the Speyside Way. We are well placed also for the Highland Wildlife Park and Loch Insh Outdoor Centre, not to mention Landmark Adventure Park 15 minutes away at Carrbridge.

So when you do get allowed out to play - do come to our back yard. We'd love to see you - and if you do come up, please can you bring me a bag of kindling from Dad!

All the best from CJ x

Alvie & Dalraddy Estates, Kincraig, Kingussie PH21 1NE
info@alvie-estate.co.uk Telephone 01540 651255

Busy Bees!

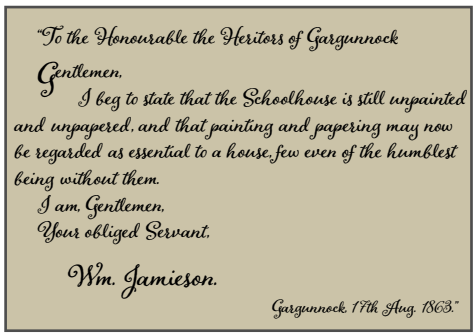
Gargunnock Beekeepers, March 2021.

We're excited to let you know that our first colony of bees will take up residence in the Glebe Park apiary late March/ early April, with more hopefully joining them in June. We have been busy constructing hives, clearing the ground and creating a workspace to allow us to get started on the practical phase of our beekeeping tuition, under the expert mentorship of experienced members of Dunblane and Stirling Beekeepers Association (DSBA).

The hives are situated well away from the path, and the bees will still be mainly indoors - at this time of year the hive consists only of female bees who are keeping the queen and other members of the colony warm, and starting to prepare to care for the new brood once the queen starts to lay again in the spring. Foraging will begin in earnest once the first plants bearing pollen and nectar begin to flower, and at this time there will be more visible activity around the hive. Although the bees will be focussed on their foraging duties, please keep a respectful distance from the enclosure and remind children not to enter or get too close, as with any type of livestock.

Unfortunately due to Covid our learning so far has been 100% theory based, so it is an exciting and daunting prospect to put on a suit and get hands on with the bees! We are not being dramatic in admitting that our goal is simply to still have thriving colonies this time next year – there are challenges, some of which are unavoidable such as extreme weather or an unfavourable hive site, and some of which can be managed with experience; diseases and pests like the Varroa mite are unfortunately now endemic in the UK, and also pose a serious threat to our wild honeybees.

Since our first Bugle article we've had a few enquiries from villagers about getting involved – this is the eventual goal of the project however we ask for just a little more time to improve our skills and knowledge so that we can safely and confidently engage with others who would like to join in. Rest assured we will keep you updated of our progress, and are already thinking of future initiatives to get the whole community involved in supporting the bees! If, in the meantime you are keen to learn about beekeeping a great start is the course we are taking with DSBA - https://dunblanebeekeepers.com/home/newbeekeepers/



"To the Honourable the Heritors of Gargunnock

Gentlemen,

I beg to state that the Schoolhouse is still unpainted and unpapered, and that painting and papering may now be regarded as essential to a house,few even of the humblest being without them.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obliged Servant,

Wm. Jamieson.

Gargunnock, 17th Aug. 1863."

Gargunnock Community Centre

Douglas Johnston writes

On 16th March 2012 Stirling Council transferred ownership of Gargunnock Community Centre to Gargunnock Community Trust and for the last nine years Gargunnock Community Trust has owned and managed the Centre. The building the Trust inherited was in a very poor condition as very little work had been done on maintenance over the previous 20 years.

As many of you may know, the Centre was the old primary school with the headmaster's house and main school being built in 1858 on ground donated by James S. Stirling of Gargunnock and paid for by the owners of Leckie, Boquhan, Gargunnock, Meiklewood and Touch estates. The Architect was Dr Robert Logan who was also a surgeon. The construction was carried out by a local team of James Mitchell, Mason in Kippen, Kemp Murray and Nicolson, Joiners, Stirling. The plasters and plumbers were also from Stirling. The total cost of the project was £463.50p. However, the work was not completed to the satisfaction of the headmaster who wrote the letter shown left. Clearly not a very happy man.

The building we now know as the Drop-in was constructed in 1911 and was split in two; home economics in the north section for the girls and joinery in the south for the boys.

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Gargunnock Community Centre
(continued)

It must have been a great relief in 1928 when toilets were finally installed for the pupils. If you go round to the back of the Drop-in you can still see where the boys' toilet was, the concrete area just before you step up onto the field.

In 1976, the new primary school was opened and it was discovered that the Council intended to sell the old school. However, after a spirited and apparently very audible display by Gargunnock residents at the Council offices, this idea was dropped. In 1978, the building was converted into the Community Centre and the community was granted a 20-year lease of the building at a peppercorn rent.

Following 1998 Council made no attempt to renew the lease and for a while did not respond to enquiries from the community. When negotiations were finally started the only option presented by the Council was a full repairing lease where the Community Centre Management Committee would have full responsibility of the maintenance and repair of the building but without ownership would have no access to grants to improve the centre. This was followed by another long period of silence. Then, in 2006, a sympathetic Council officer suggested that it might be helpful to submit a formal 'Access to Information Request. This revealed that the Council had valued the site for housing and that it was included in an asset plan for disposal. However, in March 2012, after six years of negotiation, the centre finally transferred to the ownership of Gargunnock Community Trust at nil value.

These six year swere not wasted with the community in Gargunnock raising over £30,000 through a music festival, 150th anniversary celebrations in 2008, and many other fundraising events. Gargunnock Estate Trust were also very generous giving £90,000 for the renovation and improvement works and this was then used as match funding for FVL LEADER £186,000, Climate Challenge Fund £79,000, People and Communities Fund £90,000, Stafford Trust £20,000 as well as grant from Awards for all, Creative Scotland and the Development Trusts Association which enable the Trust to let contracts to the value of £610,000 to extend and improve the centre to the building we have today. The cashflow for the contracts was greatly helped by a loan of £50k from Social Investment Scotland. The main building had to be closed for a year but we managed to keep things going by improving the Drop-in centre first and making it available for groups while the other work was being carried out.

The Centre was re-opened 9th March 2013, one week short of a year from becoming owners of the building.

The Community Centre is the major asset owned by Gargunnock Community Trust for the benefit of the village. The main part of the building is over 160 years old and has recently been re-decorated ready for re-opening when Covid-19 regulations permit.

Early last year a detailed fire risk assessment was carried out and we have already completed most of the works identified. In order to ensure the building is kept up to high standard in future a detailed building condition survey was carried out and this identified the urgent, medium and long-term repairs and improvements that will be necessary to achieve this. To plan for the future and ensure that we have the resources to tackle unforeseen repairs a sinking fund has been established with the help of the Falck Windfarm fund this fund will ensure that the building can be maintained to a high standard for future years.

It is the Trust's intention to move the building to be as carbon neutral as possible for an old building. We already have a biomass boiler that now has a state-of-the-art controller, and it is our intention to further improve its efficiency by converting to a pressurised system. We will also be looking at what contribution elements such as solar panels and other energy improvements can make to achieving this objective.

We also have a new Caretaker, Lee Masson (pictured below) to help look after the building. He is a very welcome addition.

If you would like to book the Centre you can do so through the Trust's website at gargunnock.org where you can see the diary and request a booking. All of us have had a very difficult year but it will be great when we can have all our activities running in the centre again and make proper us of the asset we own as a community.

The Gargunnock Inn

Good Food, Good Beer, Good Friends, Good Times

REOPENING 26th APRIL!!

We've been busy making some changes!!

Our new Covered and heated beer garden will be ready to welcome you back as we all strive to get our lives back to normal.

We've been making some changes inside the bar, increasing seating capacity and creating a more welcoming environment for you to spend a cosy evening.

And for everyone that likes the chatter at the bar, we are currently replacing the bar top, with some great natural wood instead of the tiles.

New TVs in Bar and Beer garden, ready in time for Scotlands Euro 2020 matches!!

In the meantime, please continue to support us by ordering our takeaways and deliveries every Friday and Saturday. Order online (www.gargunnockinn.co.uk) or call 860333 from 3pm.

Gargunnock Playgroup and Toddlers Now Re-opened!

Clare Rolley writes

The Gargunnock Playgoup and Toddler committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Gargunnock and the wider community for all their support and donations. This time last year we faced closure and it is due to the generosity and involvement in events such as the Duck Race which have allowed us to be in such a positive position now. We are looking forward to seeing you all at our future events!

Gargunnock Playgroup and Toddlers runs sessions weekly throughout the year for all children up to school age. If you are new to the village and have young children or are expecting a baby please do get in touch.

Gargunnock Playgroup runs every Monday and Thursday from 9:30-12pm during the school term in the Community Centre. Our qualified staff run a varied set of activities suiting all ages and interests. We are an independent Playgroup, registered with the Care Inspectorate, managed by parents and welcome children from 2½ yrs to pre-school. Please contact playgroup@gargunnock.com for more details.

Gargunnock Toddlers provides lots of toys, snack time and a warm welcome for parents-to-be, parents and children from 0-5, or their grandparents/childminders etc. Every Wednesday morning (10-11.30am) in the Community Centre. Sessions are £2 + 50p for siblings. Why not come along and see for yourself!

We are following all regulation and guidelines around Covid-19. At time of writing (16 March), playgroup is up and running and the toddler group is meeting outside in Community Centre garden (due to regulations around the number of adults allowed indoors). Please contact us for the latest information!

If you want to get in touch at any time please contact;

Rea Gourlay (Playgroup Leader)
07851175815, playgroup@gargunnock.com,
Debbie Masson (Chairperson)
07779727209, debstarmasson74@gmail.com,
Carmel Cawley (Toddler Representative)
07971482408, carmelcawley@yahoo.co.uk

Picture 1. A double wooden multi activity tower with stainless slide and steps leading up to one tower, a rope bridge with barrel tunnel underneath, a rock climbing wall (not shown) and rope ladder leading to another tower with a roof on it.

News

Gargunnock Playgroup and Toddlers Group is delighted to announce that we have received a £10,000 National Lottery award from The National Lottery Community Fund to build new wooden outdoor play structures in the Gargunnock Community Centre garden. We are hugely appreciative of the Gargunnock Community Trust and local residents who have informed and supported our plans. We are hopeful to be able to open the structures in the summer and depending upon Covid-19 restrictions we would seek to have an open afternoon so that the community can come and use them. We are all looking forward to the structures being in the garden and watching the children play, learn, and develop by using them.

The National Lottery Community Fund, Scotland Chair, Kate Still: said: "In these uncertain times our priority is to ensure that National Lottery money continues to flow to charities, voluntary sector organisations and grassroots groups . I would like to congratulate Gargunnock Playgroup and Toddlers on their award, theirs is an important project and will support people now and in the future when they can physically come back together to make great things happen in their community."

Picture 2. A mud kitchen with two units, one with a sink and the other with a cooker on it.

Helen's Therapeutics

Reopening for treatments the week beginning
26th April 2021

It has been a long time since Christmas and I'm sure lots of you have aches and pains in places you didn't even realise existed!!

Some of you may have been working from home where the workspace is not ideal, Others may have been doing far more exercise than usual and now the good weather is here it is time to overdo it in the garden or dare I say the spring cleaning.

Over the last 10 years I have added several techniques to my toolkit and a few of these are Myofascial release, Oncology massage, Pelvic Floor, Scar tissue treatments along with Sports & Remedial massage.

If you wish to be added to my waiting list or would like more information on the treatments I provide please contact me on

07729 490764
info@helenstherapeutics.co.uk

Gargunnock's tribute to our Covid Carers

Helen Hyland writes

Just over a year ago, we went into full lockdown in Scotland. In the weeks that followed, many of us came out into our streets to show our appreciation of the work that our healthcare workers were doing in the Clap for Carers.

Whilst the clapping stopped many months ago, the care has gone on. Much provided by health and care workers from Gargunnock. I canvassed a few to get their thoughts on the year that has passed.

Although she qualified as a nurse, Gilly Bruce (pictured below) has worked mostly in health promotion - largely in tobacco control, for much of her career.

Sharon Taylor (pictured far right) is a Palliative Care Community Nurse Specialist working for Strathcarron Hospice and travelling to the homes of patients in the Braes area of Falkirk.

In March, Gilly was transferred to wards providing nursing care to patients who might not require intensive care, but who were still battling the illness. It was gruelling and emotional work made all the harder by the weather: while those of us not working were thoroughly enjoying last summer's hot weather, she and her colleagues struggled in greenhouse-like temperatures in full PPE because the hospital insisted that patient doors remained firmly closed to control infection. Nurses and patients all found it distressing that contact had to be limited. Sadly, some of them didn't make it. Gilly says, "We wanted to spend time with them, to talk to them about their families, and be with them at the end. I would say that I didn't know of anyone who was alone when they passed, we always tried our best to monitor patients and to ensure that a member of staff would be there".

Thanks Gilly for the smiling welcome you've given to us nervous Gargunnions arriving at Forth Valley College for our jags recently.

Sharon's experiences were different. Lockdown for her meant that she was shielding and worrying that she couldn't be there in person to give advice and support to people in their declining months. Being limited to giving such advice as she could over the telephone was hard. Now back at work in person, she too has had to face a good number of changes in order to carry out her work safely. She says that, professionally, she is missing things she took for granted – like starting and ending each day meeting colleagues at the Hospice – and now realising just how much support they gave her. But personally, she doesn't miss the rush and pressure to get herself and her child out of the door in time enough for her to reach Denny by 9.00am.

In October, Gilly began helping with the flu vaccines and then in December, transferred to the covid vaccination team where she worked with health and army staff getting the college campus vaccination centres up and running. She now co-ordinate the clinics, ensures smooth running and correct procedures for vaccine storage and medical use.

I asked how difficult it had been to adapt to the change in circumstances. Gilly found it hard to get back up to speed and date with nursing care on the ward after 26 years away, and also with having to deal with abrupt changes shift patterns. Sharon admitted that anxiety levels were raised significantly at the outset as daily routines were thrown into disarray.

Caring for others necessarily brings its own stresses. I asked them, if 5 is the usual level of stress of your work, what score (between 0 and 10) would they give it for the present situation? Gilly responded saying, "On the ward was a definite 10 at times, as has been a couple of instances in the Imms clinics – when you get sent 60 vaccines that expire in 80 minutes and you need to try and use them it's quite stressing but when the clinics are running smoothly, I would say most days are a 7. There is always something happening." And Sharon said 8/10 because of the uncertainty of the situation. But on the positive side, both ladies had found online working, meeting colleagues through Teams, to be positive and beneficial.

What has helped them get through this? For Sharon, it's our village and its supportive community spirit, as well as having the local countryside to escape into to wind down. She says, "I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported the Hospice during this time when the usual fundraising events are not able to happen without this support. We could not continue to support so many people. I was very aware last year at the beginning of lockdown many people chose to support us." And Gilly responded, "I have been able to get out, meet different people and provide care that's needed. Giving vaccines that people have been so eagerly awaiting has been a privilege."

© HRH Photo

My questions were answered separately and independently, but when I asked what they had struggled with during lockdown, both ladies responded that it was hard not spending time with family – Gillly's daughter Chloe moved out to protect herself while Gilly worked on the Covid ward and Sharon is missing her trips to family and friends up north. Given all that she and other medical professionals are still going through, Sharon has found it hard to understand, and indeed to explain to her young daughter, why some people haven't followed the rules as closely as they should.

It's the simple things in life that both are looking forward to – like hugs, cake and coffee - once the outbreak is finally over.

Thank you to everyone in health and care work for all you continue to do for

My Favourite Recipe

Helen Rowell writes

I've baked this every week since lockdown started! It's a recipe that one of my friends at Stirling City Choir gave me but I've tweaked it a lot to get them as Pete and I like them. So, here it is!

CHEESE OATCAKE THINS WITH SEEDS

Ingredients

200gms rolled oats
30gns mixed seeds,
(supermarkets sell mixes)
60gms plain flour
60mls rapeseed oil
100mls boiling water
100gms grated cheese,
(I use a mixture of cheddar, gruyere, parmesan)

Life during the pandemic

Angus and Bridget Scott both work for Forth Valley Health Board, Angus as an eye surgeon and Bridget as an orthodontist.

Bridget Scott writes.

Early in 2020, reports started coming in about a lethal virus in China. Ach ,we thought, that was far away and, like other serious infections (like Ebola), not an immediate threat to us. Then it spread to Italy and Angus started receiving e-mails from Italian colleagues describing how COVID was rampant; hospitals were being overrun and Doctors were dying. "Your government is ignoring this – please make them take it seriously" were the pleas.

At the beginning of March, I was supposed to be teaching an international group of Orthodontists, but some were stopped from coming by their governments while others developed symptoms and had to isolate in their hotels.

At Forth Valley Health Board, there was a meeting of all senior staff. COVID was about to hit the UK and the hospital was put on high alert. All routine work to stop; clear the beds; prepare for the onslaught - we must not be seen to be treating patients in tents like Italy.

Aerosol (fine mist) generating procedures were seen to be very high risk – so all dental surgeries were shut down. Just before the deadline (when we didn't appreciate the risk), we were frantically racing to remove as many patients' braces as possible, because we knew they might not be seen for a while. One colleague caught COVID and nearly died, his life only saved by being transferred to Aberdeen where the doctors put him on one of the few extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) machines in the country. (ECMO is used when your heart and lungs fail. It takes blood from your body, loads it with oxygen and pumps it back in via tubes). He spent 3 months in intensive care but survived, thankfully, due to the persistence of his wife and diligence of the medical staff.

With my everyday orthodontics work paused, I volunteered for re-deployment to the wards and took blood samples from patients. As no visitors were allowed and everyone was wearing masks, there were some very lonely, isolated folk in hospital, so lonely that they welcomed someone coming in to jab them with a needle!! At least there was a bit of chat whilst the blood was withdrawn and we even had a song or two from patients in one ward.

Bridget pictured all gowned up for doing an 'aerosol generating procedure' (using the dental drill)

Dentistry re-started in July, with air exchange systems, masks and gowns for any work which might create an air/water spray and a long time between patients to allow potentially infected droplets to settle and be wiped away from all surfaces in the room. We could only see emergencies and there was a big backlog of untreated patients.

Other hospital departments were affected too, they'd had long waiting lists of patients before COVID, then several months when no treatment could be done, and then routine theatre lists were cancelled as theatres and wards had been taken over for COVID patients. When would we get back to 'normal'?

Then just as we were getting our heads above water the New Year (2021) dawned with another spike of COVID infections. Again routine treatment was suspended and this time I volunteered to give vaccinations. It was an interesting time, being met with a joyous welcome by patients on the wards all wanting their arms jabbed. Some had stripped off as soon as it was announced that I was on the ward!!

Now in March we are trying to catch up with our routine patients again, the government has offered extra funds and we are working all hours to get as many patients in as possible before the funds run out at the end of the financial year on 5th April.

After that who knows??

Method

Oven temp 180C

1. Mix everything together and add the water last
2. Give a good mix in your mixer or by hand
3. Cut 2 pieces of baking parchment
4. Roll out half the mix between the layers as thinly as you can
5. Peel off the top layer and cut into squares with a pizza cutter – use it all as you can still eat the misshapes!
6. Put the sheet of paper with the rolled out mix onto a baking sheet.
7. Cut another sheet of paper and repeat and put the 2 sheets into the oven for about 10 to 15 minutes
8. The high fat content can cause burning so keep an eye on them
9. Cool on the paper until cold enough to keep there shape then on a rack

Try not to eat them all at once!

Editor's note - tested and approved.

Tutoring Services

Julia P D Anderson

With pupils returning to schools and predicted grades being assessed, never before have studies been so important. So whether you'd like a helping hand in your studies or an hour of musical relaxation, I am here for you!

I have worked as a piano and music theory teacher at Stirling Rock School since 2016, and have been tutoring countless people in Maths, Biology, English and more for several years now!

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jpd.anderson23@gmail.com

U.F.O.s no more in Gargunnock?

To the uninitiated, U.F.O. stands for Unfinished Object.

Rowena Barnet wrote

How often have you heard the phrase, "be careful what you wish for". In the past my wish was to have lots of free time to indulge in my sewing hobbies. With lockdown there has been so much time to fill, confined to the house and garden my wish came true.

Last summer we were fortunate with good weather to have a large garden to keep us busy, and of course the lovely local area to explore. With colder weather sewing became my way to fill the time. Patchwork and quilting have been my favourites for many years and with a new grandchild due in October there was the need for a quilt. Small babies shouldn't sleep under a quilt, they overheat, but each new member of the family gets a bright cover that makes a great play mat.

As the baby grew his big sister moved to a new "big" bed requiring another quilt and this time she got to choose the colours, Pink was requested, although mum suggested some variety. Several other quilts have also been created, and to my embarrassment the cupboard is still full of fabric, perhaps I am really a collector rather than a stitcher after all.

Now I have a new wish. When lockdown ends I am looking forward to being able to travel to meet our new grandson who is growing fast and rolling on his play mat.

Another noteable craftswoman is Anne Muirhead. This is a footstool that she recently completed.

Sadly, your Editor has been too distracted with her photography to get around to finishing off this patchwork top that she pieced together from Mr Hyland's work shirts when he retired... One day perhaps..

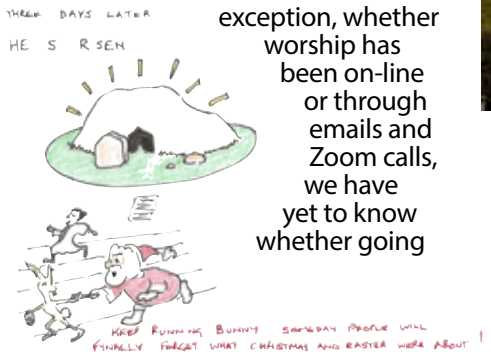
Easter Message from the Kirk

Val Rose – Interim Moderator writes

At the time of writing, we have now reached a year since the Church buildings have been closed for gathered worship. The longest time I suspect in its long history that the Church has not been open to the community of Gargunnock.

The latest guidance from government is that we will be able to gradually see the opening of Church buildings again, but until the worship space in Gargunnock Church can be compliant with COVID distancing restrictions we will have to be patient for a few months longer.

They say that it takes 21 days to form a habit, and we have just had 365 days of the Pandemic! If we think of how the pattern of our own lives have changed over this time it seems inevitable that the repercussions of the lock-down will ripple through all our lives for years to come.



Churches are no exception, whether worship has been on-line or through emails and Zoom calls, we have yet to know whether going back to normal will exist, and whether people will have formed new habits of listening to a service on-line instead of turning up at a Church. The Churches may have had to close their doors, but we have witnessed the 'doing' of God in the ordinary things during this past year – the support of friends and neighbours, the dedication of key workers, the patience of 'home-schoolers' and 'working-from-homers' and the way that many in our own communities have looked for ways to lighten the dark days of isolation for those who are housebound or ill.

In Gargunnock Church we have also had our heroes, those who have been keeping people in touch, looking after the Church buildings and grounds and generally keeping things going, You know who – so our grateful thanks.

Whatever the future, when the restrictions are finally lifted it will be joyous, and just like the message of the Christian Easter, it will be joy after darkness and hope after despair.

I hope you will join us in celebration when we reopen our doors!

Until then, I wish you all a very Happy Easter.

Cartoons by Douglas Barr
Sunset photograph by Morag Park

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Wildlife in April

Anne Marie Stewart writes

April is the time for lots of colour: - bluebells, daffodils, wood anemones and wild garlic all burst into flower.

Queen bees will be venturing out looking for nectar to recharge their batteries so they can look for new nesting sites.

Jenny wrens will be laying eggs later in the month – five to eight eggs will be incubated for 13-18days with fledglings leaving the nest 15-20days later.

Tawny owl chicks hatch mid-April. They can be spotted when branching out from the nest. They cannot fully fly till 5 weeks old. When they fall out of trees, they will be fed by parents and can climb back up.

Cuckoos can be heard making themselves known when arriving back. And in late April, swifts and swallows return too. You'll also hear chiff chaffs and black caps that will have returned from the Mediterranean and North Africa.

Red squirrels have their young kittens between February and April. The kittens are born with no hair or teeth, both blind and deaf. It takes 31 days for hair to grow, 3-4 weeks before eyes open and they can hear too. Look for young kittens in May, playing in sunshine. That's something to look forward to.

Hedgehogs will be a welcome guest to our gardens coming out of hibernation. They will be grateful for snacks of dry cat biscuits or meat-based cat/dog food if people are kind enough to feed them. Leaving out a shallow dish of water is good if you have left dried food. Their normal diet is earthworms, beetles, caterpillars, slugs, millipedes and earwigs. It's nice to be able to help endangered species like this.

Photographs of nuthatch, red squirrel, buzzard and hare by Anne Marie Stewart.

Police Report

Community Engagement and Reassurance

PC Steven Graham and PC Gary Martin are based at Balfron Police Office and can be contacted on 101 or at ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk.

Please remember that we regularly publish useful information and updates on social media, including appeals for information, updates about road closures and crime prevention advice.

Our Facebook and Twitter pages can be found at:
www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision
www.facebook.com/policescotland
www.twitter.com/stirlingpol
www.twitter.com/policescotland

Fraud

A fraud reported in Gargunnock involved a company offering a service to negotiate reductions in Council Tax banding and possible backdated rebates if errors were found. The company took a fee of £195 for this service without the approval of the customer.

Other forms of attempted fraud carried out in other local villages include Bitcoin investment and the sale of puppies.

Fraudsters can make contact with you by phone. The caller might pretend to be from your bank and ask for personal information such as bank details; they might offer you a deal or a prize; or they might pretend to be from HMRC stating that there was a warrant out for the receiver of the call and asking them to contact the number given.

Please take heed of this advice:

- Consider making your phone number ex-directory.
- Don't give out any personal information unless you are the one who made the call and you are certain of the identity of the person you are speaking to.
- Don't give out your credit card or bank card details to strangers on the telephone.
- NEVER tell somebody your bank PIN number, even if they claim to be the bank or police. If the caller is genuine they will never ask for this information.
- Don't give out information

Where is this?

Maitland Clark sets this puzzle. Your answers to Gargunnockbugle@gmail.com please.

Your Gargunnock Bugle in numbers

24 pages

32 articles submitted totalling 12361 words

260 emails to and from contributors

14 advertisers

6 ¾ pages of adverts

which may infer that you live alone, are older or vulnerable.
- Never send money to anyone who claims to have a prize for you.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Contact local trading standards – they may be able to use approved 'call blocking' technology.

Sheep Worrying

This time of year presents the problem of sheep worrying. If a dog worries sheep on agricultural land, the person in charge of the dog is guilty of an offence.

Sheep worrying includes attacking sheep, chasing them in a way that may cause injury suffering, abortion or loss of produce or being at large (not on a lead or otherwise under close control) in a field or enclosure in which there are sheep.

In some circumstances, **farmers are legally entitled to shoot dogs** if they are endangering their sheep.

It is vital that you keep your dog on the lead around livestock, even if you can usually trust it to come to call. If you live in or near a farming area, you must make sure that your dog cannot escape from your property, as it may find its way on to land containing sheep.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) offers guidance for people enjoying the countryside with their dogs and says: "In exercising access rights, you must keep your dog(s) under proper control. You must also ensure that your dog does not worry livestock."

'Proper control' means different things in different situations, but when around sheep you should:-
- Not take your dog into a field where there are lambs. Go into a neighbouring field or onto adjacent land. In open country, keep your dog on a short lead (2 metres or shorter) when there are lambs around and keep away from them.
- Keep your dog on a short lead or under close control if you need to go into a field where there are sheep. The SOAC defines 'under close control' as close at heel and responsive to your commands. Stay distant from the sheep.
- Keep your dog under close control in more open country where there are sheep and stay away from them.
- If you are handling a group of dogs, make sure that they do not cause alarm to livestock.

Road Safety

The Central Scotland Safety Camera Partnership have continued to operate on the A811 and local officers have and will continue to carry out high visibility patrols to improve road safety. We have got access to a "Pop up Police officer" which has been used in village within the Forth and Endrick area. It seems to be having the desired effect of slowing traffic down.

The Phased Reopening of School

Gargunnock Primary School Headteacher Janine Rushton writes

On 22 February, as per government guidelines, we welcomed back all of our boys and girls in the P1-3 class. It was a real joy to have them all back in school, alongside our small bubble of P4-7 children of key workers. For three weeks P4-7 continued to learn remotely. During these weeks we introduced a Friday morning, live, active session via Google Meet with Angela Hunter; our Active Schools Co-Ordinator. This was a real joy! Also, the whole school were able to continue to come together each Friday for a live assembly; it was a highlight to virtually open the doors of assembly each week and see lots of boy and girls waiting, ready to flood in.

On 15 March, we were able to welcome back the remainder of our pupils, P4-7, for in school learning. The children have been absolutely fantastic in adapting to

being back in school with their class.

All of our safety mitigations remain in place. These include keeping each class separate in their class bubble, using different entrances, exits, toilets and playground spaces. Windows and doors are open throughout the building to increase ventilation. Hand sanitising stations are used frequently along with increased handwashing. Additional cleaning takes place throughout the day. School staff wear facemasks and try to maintain 2m

distancing from pupils where possible.

Our pupils seem very happy to be back at school, and have been fantastic at following the extra guidelines in place. There continues to be a little sadness and frustration that they cannot mix with friends in other classes, or access all areas of the playground or school spaces, but they understand the reasons behind the guidelines in place. To bring some extra cheer to lunchtimes, each of the three classes has one day of music in the playground. This never fails in bringing smiles and joy.

We are ever hopeful that the easing of restrictions throughout Scotland, will begin to filter to schools soon. In the meantime, we are very grateful to be back together in the way that we are.

World Book Day 2021

Instead of dressing up as our favourite book characters this year, we decorated hard boiled eggs in that theme. We sent our pictures into school and voted on a winner for each class. Winners were Jack Young P1 with Wonky Donkey, Nelleke Younger P4 with Elmer the Elephant and Stacey Clifford in P6 with a Minion. There were many FABULOUS entries!

Comic Relief

We supported Comic Relief this year by coming dressed as Superheroes, or wearing red, and we learned more about what the charity does during assembly time. Our boys and girls love a 'dress down' day, and along with the beautiful weather on Friday, this created a lovely occasion for the end of our first week being all back together.

The Energetic Eight

By Miller, Bodhi, Riley, Cameron, Rachael, Katie, Eilidh and Jasmine

Lately, 'The Energetic Eight', our p7's walking group have raised over a thousand pounds walking around Gargunnock. While we set out to walk a hundred miles collectively, only twelve and a half miles each, we soon set a bigger target. Our new target was to try and walk a hundred miles each and we have been meeting up and going on collective walks as well as walks with family and friends.

We're all really glad that we have done so well and are aiming to walk seven hundred and fifty nine miles (from Stirling to Europe) altogether.

Thank you to everyone who has donated and is helping us with our ambitious goal. We are really grateful for all that everyone has done to help us achieve our goal and our fundraising target. Your support has been very much appreciated by all of the P7s.

The money we have raised will help us have some fun at the end of the school year. We are all very determined to reach our goal and to complete 759 miles and all have fun achieving our goal.

© HRH Photo - College Project - 'Village People'

Your editor, Helen R. Hyland, is currently studying photography HND at Forth Valley College. **My final year project is to be 'Village People'** - celebrating our community by taking doorstep portraits of families, or village groups from Gargunnock (using photoshop to bring you together if covid is keeping you physically apart. If you would be interested in being photographed, then please contact me at hrhphoto@outlook.com or through my facebook page.

If you would like to see more of my work, please see my website - hrhphoto.co.uk - or follow my social media pages.

And if you would would like to discuss a possible commission, order a copy of any images, or a pack of village Christmas cards showing the Advent Window, please contact me for prices. Thank you.

p.s. If you share my images through social media, *please* credit me.

Photography

Some really wonderful images have been sent over.

They show, in particular that wildlife photography is not as simple as it looks! Anne-Marie Stewart makes it look so easy. But for those of us who have been trying emulate her recently, we've learned the hard way that you need:-

- patience
- time - and speed
- to know where to look
- a steady hand
- a good long lens
- practice - and lots of it.....!

Some of us have had more success than others. The (slightly) blurry goldfinches are Maitland Clark's, and the deer (below) were alll could catch as they ran through Ken and Sally Stewart's garden.

But the fine cormorant, and cheeky robin were amongst many sent in by Hamish Whiteford.

And the final photograph for this time, was taken by Simon Sharp on his phone.

Photographic Challenge

For next issue, try to emulate Simon by taking your own landscape photographs taken in portrait orientation - with camera or phone.

Send please to Gargunnockbugle@gmail.com

Good luck!

Parent Council Update

Grania Watson writes

Firstly, on behalf of Gargunnock Primary School's parents, we would like to pass on thanks to the teachers and school for their incredible hard work over the lockdown period, enabling successful online learning and for the safe and welcome return to class for the pupils. It has been much appreciated by all.

The objectives of the Parent Council are:

· To promote a partnership between the school, all its pupils and parents.

· To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of all the pupils.

· To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents.

· To raise funds for the school which support the education and welfare of all the pupils.

· To identify and represent the views of parents on the education that is provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of all the pupils.

The Parent Council meets once a term and has an AGM in September. It consists of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraiser and Class Representatives. Meetings are open to all those who wish to attend.

This year, Nicola Brodie has taken on the position of Fundraising Coordinator and has organised a successful Christmas raffle and an ongoing monthly 200 club draw. We have been supported so generously by the local community, residents, friends, families and work colleagues, so again a huge thank you. We have also received grants from RBS and matched funding from Diageo.

The money raised goes towards supporting the education and welfare of all pupils enabling them to take advantage of ad hoc opportunities not funded by Stirling Council. The pupils', School's and parents' views are all taken into consideration when allocating funds. This year the main priorities that have been identified are: repairing the wooden playground obstacles, new reading material for the school library, chrome book covers and supporting transport for trips (when applicable).

So far we have purchased 25 chrome book covers, a new bench for the playground and enabled the pupils to enjoy an online pantomime with snacks. We are currently underway with costings for the playground which will enable us to proceed with the other priorities and any other additional needs that are identified.

Parent Council: Ali Tunnah, Alison Younger, Grania Watson, Helen Haddow, Kat Hansra, Nicola Brodie, Jacquelyn Marshall, Aston Goundry and Janine Rushton.

Advertising

The Gargunnock Bugle needs advertising income to cover its costs.

Advertising rates are competitive - from just £15 per issue - for a newsletter that reaches nearly 350 homes in the village of Gargunnock plus its worldwide digital audience. Deadline for booking space in the Summer Issue is 10 June 2021.

To advertise in The Bugle, please contact gargunnockbugle@gmail.com.

Advertising rates **per issue** are:

Full page - £45

Half page - £25

Quarter page - only £15

Pandemic Tragedy

John McLaren writes

Sadly 2020/21 has seen many tragedies due to the Covid19 pandemic and their repercussions are likely to echo down through many years to come.

Just over 100 years ago, in 1920, a similar tragedy befell two young parents, William & Margaret Scobie, in Mains Cottages Gargunnock who perished due to the flu pandemic which raged throughout Europe after the First World War thus orphaning their two young children, James & Janet.

"Never in my knowledge of the Parish has the scourge of influenza been so malignant," said the local minister at the time in his Parish magazine.

The fact that this gravestone is in such good condition and so well maintained is surely testament to the lasting effect of the tragedy on their descendants.

Most flu outbreaks disproportionately affect the young and the very old, with a higher survival rate for those in between, but the so-called Spanish flu pandemic resulted in a higher-than-expected mortality rate for young adults as demonstrated here. Approximately 250,000 people perished in Britain in the period 1918-1920.

The effects of that pandemic were largely censored by European governments at the time to avoid panic but the press were able to report on the situation in Spain which did not, giving rise to the impression that it was primarily of Spanish origin.

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The Bugle
is a free Community Newsletter published five times a year by Gargunnock Community Trust Ltd.
Its aim is to provide news, views, information and entertainment for the residents and friends of Gargunnock and the surrounding area.

Editor:
Helen Hyland
gargunnockbugle@gmail.com

Deadline of next issue
Photographs, letters, articles, adverts & submissions may be made at any time before
10th June 2021

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Contributions will be attributed to the author. However, at the Editor's discretion, a contribution may be printed anonymously, but the author's name, address, and phone number must be supplied to the Editor.

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Compliments or Complaints:
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