

# West Fife Villages Guide



- The villages in detail
- Attractions
- Community groups
- Local history
- Pupils' projects

**Free**



Members of the West Fife Villages Community Planning Group

**T**HE villagers of West Fife welcome you to explore – by car, cycle or on foot – our spectacular scenery and friendly villages.

There's something for everyone - from coastal paths past Torry Bay with its birdlife, through the reclaimed land at Low Valleyfield to the Royal Burgh of Culross that's steeped in history and on to Kincardine, the western gate-

# Welcome to the villages

way to Fife.

Visit the villages of Carnock, Oakley, Comrie and Blairhall, then walk or cycle on the path between Dunfermline and Alloa.

If hills are more to your liking, visit Saline and Steelend, under the shadow of Knockhill.

There are also woodland walks in Valleyfield Woods and Devilla Forest.

This second booklet has been commissioned by West Fife Villages Community Planning Group, made up of all 16 West Fife villages who work towards providing better facilities.

We also help improve the villages themselves, with help from the local schools, whose pupils have removed graffiti from buildings and replaced it with their own art work.

In addition, we are campaigning to get suitable housing for the elderly.

Our own website [www.westfiv Villages.org.uk](http://www.westfiv Villages.org.uk) is taking shape and we are forming links with similar groups abroad.

Sylvia Maxwell,  
WFVCPG chair



Members of the West Fife group receiving their award

## Group's efforts recognised

WEST Fife Villages Community Planning Group's work with local youngsters has been recognised by a children's organisation, Kids Club Direct, established to create a brighter future for children, who presented the group with a glass plaque and

cheque for £400.

The group has been involved with helping local youngsters undertake community projects, such as removing graffiti. Our photo shows members of the group at the Scottish Power-sponsored awards ceremony in Glasgow.



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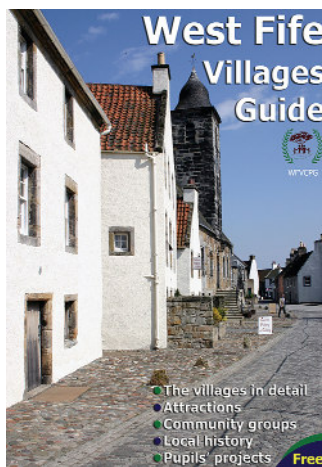
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# Norwegians like schools' project

**T**WO members of a Norwegian city council, with a special interest in youth schemes, were impressed by a project for primary school children running in West Fife villages.

Porsgrunn council members Kjell Lillestrom, childhood policy co-ordinator and deputy ombudsman, along with 21-year-old Mari Helen Varoy, who is on the committee for education and culture, visited the area in February 2005.

After seeing graffiti projects at Culross Primary School, the Norwegians met pupils and teachers from several local primary schools in High Valleyfield Community Centre, where they were welcomed by



**Mari Helen Varoy and Kjell Lillestrom (centre back) with West Fife Villages Community Planning Group members Yvette Lovelock (left) and John Le Marie (right) and Culross Primary pupils**

Fife Council Administration Leader and local member, Councillor Anne McGovern. The overseas visitors took great interest in the youngsters' work and that of the West Fife Villages Community Planning Group.

After telling the pupils about their own activities, the Norwegians invited questions from the youngsters and guests.

Before departing, Kjell said he had visited Scotland many times to attend conferences, although it was the first time he had been in Fife.

He was very impressed by the Kingdom and the commitment



**Mari was shown the West Fife Villages projects by Fife Council Locality Manager, Ray Wood**

shown in various projects, and hoped that some of the ideas and approaches adopted in Fife could be developed further through their partnership.

## Giving kids a bigger say

**PORSGRUNN** council decided in the early 1990s to give children a great role in decision making, leading to the election of several 18-year-olds to serve as councillors.

The city has flourished since, promoting its commitment to quality family life.

# A look at the villages in detail...

## ● Blairhall

**B**LAIRHALL is a quiet village, nestling south of the A907, several miles west of Dunfermline.

It was once a thriving mining community, with the local colliery situated to the south of the village, and Comrie Colliery about two miles to the north.

The Coltness Company acquired the lease of minerals in Blairhall in 1883 and, for the next 25 years, worked the ironstone and upper coal seams. In 1906 work began on sinking two deep shafts - named after the son and daughter of the Earl of Elgin, the Lord Bruce and the Lady Veronica - to work the lower measures. To meet the requirements of the new pit, the company had to transfer men from Lanarkshire but, before then, housing had to be provided for



The entrance to Blairhall from the Shiresmill road

them. Blairhall village, on the Comrie Castle Estate, which consisted of two rows of houses, was extended and soon had a population of more than 1000. Much of the former estate parkland is still in evidence, while Comrie Castle itself is actually located in Blairhall. Today, the Fife Council Local Office and Community Centre

provides residents with access to all local authority services. Blairhall Secondary School opened in 1924 but, because of a lack of suitably-aged children, became a primary school in 1945. In recent times, pupils were involved in the design of the mosaics round the memorial garden at the top of the village which records over 100 years of mining in the neighbourhood.

The village has a general store, newsagent and Post Office, off-licence, general store and public house. Just over a mile south of the village (on the road to Culross) is the 17th century Blairhall House, birthplace of Sir William Bruce, Surveyor General to King Charles II. Bruce, an architect (born in 1630), who made frequent trips abroad, gave advice to his friends of the Scottish nobility and is credited with extending and rebuilding Holyrood House in Edinburgh. He also built some of Scotland's finest country houses, including Kinross House and Hopetoun House.

## ● Bogside

**B**OGSIDE is a scattered and attractive settlement on the main A907, west of Blairhall.

The former mining village lies near Devilla Forest, whose

tracks are enjoyed by countless walkers and cyclists. The forest includes a number of attractive small lochs, such as Peppermill Dam and Moor Loch, while cyclists can reach the Millennium Cycleway through Bogside.



One of the attractive houses in Bogside



## ● Cairneyhill

**THE 1800s weaving village of Cairneyhill lies on the A994 between Crossford and Torryburn.**

In recent years, with its close proximity to Dunfermline, it has seen considerable residential development.

The busy village, with several shops and a small industrial estate, also has a golf course. Its Parish Church dates from 1752.



**A colourful Cairneyhill**

## ● Carnock

**Located on the Carnock Burn, just over two miles west of Dunfermline on the A907, Carnock is a pleasant, well-situated village which still retains its historic core.**

It was at the forefront of the Reformation in Scotland and regularly hosted enormous gatherings. Its 'Preachers' Tent' is now in

the National Museum of Scotland but visitors can still access Preachers' Brae with its 400-year-old 'Lady Beech' tree via the track next to the Primary School.

The Church of Scotland's first historian, John Row (1568-1646), who was also the local minister, is buried in the old churchyard, his gravestone bearing Latin and Hebrew inscriptions.

The Parish Church was built in 1840, with the ruins of the original 12th century church still



**Historic Carnock Church**

standing in the old churchyard, which was rebuilt in 1602 by Sir George Bruce of Culross.

## ● Comrie

**THE former mining village of Comrie, sitting west of Oakley on the main Dunfermline-Alloa road, grew up in the 1930s.**

When Comrie Colliery was opened west of the village, it provided many jobs in the area, but they came to an end in the mid-1980s with the closure of the mine.

In its heyday, Comrie pit was the

showpiece for the British industry, the colliery being the first in Scotland to use skip winding.

The remains of Comrie Castle lie west of the village, near Blairhall.

Today Comrie is largely residential, with a few businesses.

A new purpose-built community



**Comrie Community Hall**

centre was opened a few years ago.

It has a large hall and kitchen, together with showers for use after sports activities.

## ● Crombie

**THE village of Crombie lies on the A985, just west of Charleston.**

The very attractive Crombie Point, south-west of the village, was, in the 18th century, a busy

harbour, with ships loading iron and coal from the surrounding area.

The village was also once the base for an MoD armaments depot, built into the cliffs, which had its own rail connection.

Its small and colourful church was built in the early 1920s by the Admiralty.



**Crombie school**

## ● Culross

**I**n many ways the Royal Burgh of Culross is a living museum of 16th and 17th century life in the coastal village, with many of its buildings restored to their former glory.

A monastery was founded by St Serf in the village in the 5th century, but it was during its time as a bustling port, exporting coal and salt, that Culross really put its name on the map. Merchant Sir George Bruce was responsible for the 'Palace' or 'Great Lodging,' built between 1597 and 1611 through the success of his ventures.

Many of the building materials came from the Low Countries, including the Dutch floor tiles and glass in the merchant's house.

Culross Abbey, founded as a monastery in 1217 by Malcolm, 6th Earl of Fife, was dedicated



**Culross Abbey**

to St. Mary and St Serf.

The tomb of Sir George Bruce and his family can be viewed in the abbey.

Another notable building is the 1626 Town House, now used by the National Trust for Scotland as a visitor centre.

Also worth seeing are the many fine preserved small houses within the Outstanding Conservation Area.

Culross harbour is believed to be one of the oldest in Scotland, first used by the monks of Culross Abbey.

The pier is now in a state of deterioration, but that could change with a project set up to restore the harbour.

Visitors are well catered for in Culross, with accommodation available and some interesting shops.



**Culross Town House**



**The Tron in the centre of Culross**



## ● Gowkhall

**G**OWKHALL sits just west of Dunfermline on the A907.

Formerly known as Balclune, it is a popular residential village, being near Dunfermline but surrounded by countryside. Once a village of hand weavers, each house at that time had its own well, while a shop sold weavers' cloth to merchants.



**Residential Gowkhall**

## ● Kilbagie

**K**ilbagie, about a mile north of Kincardine, is noted for its paper works, being the base of Kilbagie Recycled Fibres Limited.

Run by the LPC Group, the waste paper recycling plant has the capacity to recycle 50,000 tonnes of waste paper into cleansed pulp every year.

The majority of the pulp is used by the group's Leicester-based paper mill, but there are plans to develop a new state-of-the-art mill on the site.

In the latter part of the 19th century, the village had, in a converted mill, its own grain whisky distillery which was thought to be one of the largest in the country.



**Kilbagie's claim to be at the centre of the world!**

Grain from the distillery was used to feed 7000 cattle kept in outhouses at the distillery.

The village was also home to rope and sail manufacturing as well as the first paper mill, opened by James Alexander Weir in 1874.

For a while a mile-long canal ran

between the distillery and Kennetpans on the Forth for the transport of grain. It operated for about 80 years from the 1780s. A tram was also used for a while, as was a rail link to Kilbagie, established by Weir, providing the required transport for the finished paper.



**This road between Culross and Bogside provides outstanding views**





**Kincardine Bridge**

● **Kincardine**

**K**INCARDINE, an Outstanding Conservation Area with many fine buildings and lanes, was developed on reclaimed land.

The village, probably best known for its famous swing bridge and towering Longannet Power Station, has a rich history, becoming a Burgh of Barony in 1663.

Once a thriving port with active boat-building and salt pan industries, Kincardine today is an attractive village with a good range of businesses and facilities.

Kincardine Bridge, opened in 1936, was designed as a swing bridge but has been in a fixed position since 1988.

To ease congestion in Scotland as a whole, a second bridge at Kincardine was given the go-ahead in 2005. The proposed route is through the disused coal yards of the former Kincardine Power Station. Recently, visitors' enjoyment has been enhanced by the construction of a bypass for most

through traffic.

Among Kincardine's notable buildings are the Gothic Tulliallan Parish Church dating back to 1832 and Tulliallan Castle, home to the Scottish Police College since 1952, designed by William Atkinson. The 17th century Mercat Cross, with its Corinthian pillar, bearing the arms of the Earls of Kincardine carved on the capital, can be seen in the High Street.

Tulliallan Churchyard is the finest preserved example from

mediaeval times.

Important sons of the village are James Dewar, best known for inventing the vacuum flask, born in 1842, and Sir James Wylie, physician to three Russian tsars, whose importance is reflected in a major statue in St Petersburg. Kincardine recently lost its active link to Fife's mining heritage with the closure of Longannet, Scotland's last remaining deep mine. The village has its own 18-hole parkland golf course.



**The Scottish Police College at Tulliallan**

## ● Newmills

**L**OOKING out on to Torry Bay and Bo'ness, on the other side of the Forth, is Newmills.

The village, a community which developed round the former mining industry, sits between Low Valleyfield and Torryburn. It is served by a number of shops and businesses scattered along the main street that snakes its way through the village.



The entrance to Torry House, Newmills

## ● Oakley

**O**AKLEY'S origins stretch back to the once-thriving iron industry, when the village, sitting on the A907 to Dunfermline, could boast several blast furnaces.

Oakley Iron Works were established in 1848 but had a fairly brief life, although employing hundreds until closure in 1869. One hundred and eighty-foot stacks towered from the works and the six furnaces, with the engine house being a particularly fine sandstone building. The Oakley Colliery Company worked coal and ironstone between Oakley and Saline, but the venture was not viable because of the depth and faulting of the seams.

By the end of the same century, coal mining began at Kinneddar, continuing until the 1930s. When operations ended there, many locals found work at the nearby Comrie mine. With the decline of the Lanarkshire coalfield in the late 1940s, a large number of miners moved to Fife, a reminder being the outstanding Church of the Holy Name, built to the south of Oakley in the mid-

1950s.

It is a listed building with fine stained glass windows by Gabriel Loir from Chartres.

Visitors can park in the church grounds.

Funding for the church was donated by the Smith-Sligo family, but it was not built immediately, because of a dispute over where it should be sited.

However, when it was constructed it was consecrated immediately, which was quite unusual at the time, because it had no debt.

Inzievar Woods welcome visitors and access has been

improved. Jules Verne once visited the original estate house, now converted to private houses.

A community company, Scottish Woods, is based on the eastern part of the estate.

The woods are linked to the Millennium Cycleway via paths through the grounds of Holy Name Church.

There is little trace of the mining industry in the village today, but it is still an active place with its community centre, Blairwood Park, folly (Blair Tower) and Holy Name and Inzievar Primary Schools.



Church of the Holy Name, Oakley



## ● Saline

**THE picturesque village of Saline dates back to at least the 13th century and probably existed many centuries before this time.**

Originally involved mainly in agricultural businesses, weaving was carried out in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and later the opening of coal mines in the area resulted in the growth of the population. Saline has a number of fine 19th century Jacobean-style cottages in its main street, and North Road boasts a row of well-preserved weavers' cottages.

Novelist and poet Sir Walter Scott often stayed at Nether Kenneddar, a house located a short distance south of the village. This was the residence of his friend William Erskine, Lord Kinneddar.

The well-known novelist Annie S. Swan also has connections with the area as, in 1927, she purchased Bandrum, a house and estate located close to the village.

Saline Hill commands a beautiful and extensive view of the Forth Valley. On clear days Ben Lomond, Stirling Castle, the Wallace Monument, Edinburgh Castle and the Pentland Hills



**Some of the original cottages in Saline**

can all be seen.

The Stone men of Saline are located in the private gardens of Kirkland House, which are only open to the public on certain days of the year. It is possible to see them over the wall of the ancient graveyard in Saline.

These famous, larger-than-life statues are of Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny, two well-known characters from Robert Burns, and two others are of Simon and Bauldy, characters from the poem 'The Gentle Shepherd', by Allan Ramsay.

The sculptor of all four was Robert Forrest, 1790-1852. Saline Glen, owned by Peter and Gill Hart, is one of the few remaining areas of naturally-regenerating ancient woodland.

Several years ago a survey was undertaken of the flora which revealed that there are at least 90 types of plants, 32 species of trees and 12 species of ferns.

The proprietors have provided free and open access to Saline Glen for a quarter of a century, and it is now possible to walk the glen from Saline or Steelend.

The ruins of Killernie Castle sit at the southwest extremity of Saline Hill. The castle was once known as the Castle of Balwearie. It was owned by the Scotts of Balwearie, one of whom was Sir Michael Scott, renowned knight and wizard.

The ruins now consist only of fragments of two towers, of which the southern is said to be the more recent, bearing the date 1592.



**The centre of Saline, with the Ochils in the background**

## Read more on village

A large part of the information above was extracted from John Crane's *'The Saline Parish Historical Trail'* ISBN 0-9546920-0-4

## ● Steelend

**S**ITUATED a short distance east of Saline on the B914, Steelend was originally a mining village, developing from a number of collieries in the area.

Faults in the coalfield, however, frequently caused difficulties in the mining operations.

Steelend remains a close-knit community and facilities include a football club and a popular miners' social club.

Saline Glen provides an attractive walk between the villages.



**The main road through Steelend**

Steelend takes its name from a farm that was originally called

"Stalend" and indicates a place for putting up horses.



**Torryburn as seen from Preston Island**

## ● Torryburn

**T**HE former mining village of Torryburn grew up as one of

the busy Forth ports with the export of salt and coal, from the salt pan operations, in the 1600s.

Torry once belonged to the Wardlaw family, Henry being the Bishop of St Andrews between 1404 and 1440. Walter Wardlaw was the Bishop of Glasgow from 1367-1389 and was promoted to Cardinal by Pope Clement

VII.

Notable buildings include the Parish Church of Torryburn and Newmills, dating to the early 1800s and Craigflower House (now flats) with its crowstepped gables, on the shore.

A project has been set up to upgrade the coastal path from Crombie Point to Valleyfield Woods and reinstate parts of the sea wall to its original appearance.

As part of the Torry Bay Enhancement, tourist routes through the village will be improved.

Many visitors make tracks to the village for the popular walks.



**The historic Craigflower House**



## ● Valleyfield

**V**ALLEYFIELD, overlooking the Forth, is split by the B9037 which links to Dunfermline.

Low Valleyfield was built on the shore of the old hamlet of Valleyfield, which between 1663 and 1760 was a Burgh of Barony.

During the period in which the Valleyfield Estate was owned by Sir Robert Preston, the acclaimed landscape gardener Humphry Repton was employed



**Well-tended gardens in Low Valleyfield**

to design a number of features on the estate.

The famous Repton Garden was one of his projects and there is still evidence of the Repton artifacts, along with some rare and invaluable natural habitats in Valleyfield Wood. To the north of the wood, Riding for the Disabled provides an important amenity.

Preston also dabbled in mining, and he sank three pits on Preston Island, just off Torry Bay. These were later to be abandoned following a fatal explosion in 1811.

Preston Island was a conspicuous landmark relied upon by navigators. Today it is an important industrial archaeological site where visitors can see mediaeval mining and salt industry buildings. It can be accessed via Scottish Power's ash lagoons.

Other former Valleyfield industries include brick, tile and pottery works, along with weaving of cotton goods for Glasgow manufacturers and table linen for the Dunfermline market. High Valleyfield came into being in the early 1900s with the expansion of the local coal mining industry.

The Valleyfield pit disaster of 1939 claimed the lives of 35 miners. In July 1978 the Valleyfield pit closed, the site today being marked by a monument.

High Valleyfield has a number of businesses, along with a community centre, miners' welfare club, council offices and health centre.

Low Valleyfield, which has its own small industrial estate, offers visitors fine walks through the ash lagoons with their thriving wildlife.



**A memorial stands in High Valleyfield for the 35 killed in an explosion at the former colliery in 1939**



**The path and cycle track between Culross and Low Valleyfield offers great views**

# Make your next stop Lathalmond

**S**ITTING in the hills above Dunfermline is one of Scotland's more unusual museums – one devoted to the preservation and display of vintage buses.

The Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, located in a former Ministry of Defence store facility at Lathalmond, has been attracting a growing number of visitors since it opened in 1995 and is now the largest museum of its type in Britain.

Today, the 49-acre site houses nearly 200 vehicles, most of which were built or operated in Scotland. They range



from dilapidated buses awaiting restoration to fully restored and running examples.

Lathalmond, with its network of internal roads, street lighting and some nine hangar-style buildings, proved an ideal choice for the museum. Surplus and often obsolete spare parts regularly find their way to the museum, as do the vital workshop equipment to maintain the vehicles.

One of the largest buildings acquired at Lathalmond was turned into an exhibition hall,

which also boasts a shop and café, while two other hangars have been turned into workshops, where everything from minor maintenance and MoT preparation to complete rebuilds take place.

The most important component, however, is the

wide variety of skills of members and the on-site professionals, with their very positive 'can-do' attitude.

But it's not just buses that are to be found at Lathalmond.

The Shed 47 Railway Restoration Group came into being after securing an agreement to use a conveniently-located building at Lathalmond, which now houses a small steam loco and a diesel shunter, which run on tracks leading from the shed.



**It's not only buses at Lathalmond**

## Log on to museum

THE museum is open every Sunday from about Easter to early October.

For further details phone 01383 623380 or visit [www.busweb.co.uk/svbm](http://www.busweb.co.uk/svbm)

The museum has also produced a comprehensive guide book which is packed with articles and photos looking at the background to the facility and development of Lathalmond.





# Preston Island to get circular route

**ONE of the most popular walks in the area, which offers visitors spectacular views and a chance to see wildlife at close quarters, is to be improved.**

At present, the Torry Bay Local Nature Reserve route to Preston Island, from Low Valleyfield and Culross, is not a circular one. This will change, hopefully by the spring of 2006, when new paths on the eastern side of the Valleyfield ash lagoons are opened.

The actual reserve, established in 1996, stretches from Logannet Power Station to beyond Comrie Point, with the ash lagoons and Preston Island forming a focal point. There are various flat and wide, easily-accessible routes along and through the reserve to suit everyone, including wheelchair users.

The mud flats provide an

abundance of food for the birds, such as shelduck, wigeon, curlew, redshank and dunlin that overwinter at Torry Bay. In the autumn, sandwich tern, ringed plover, ruff and greenshank can be seen. Pockets of saltmarsh contain colourful flowers such as sea aster, thrift and scurvy grass. The ash lagoons are reclaimed land, created from the coal burning operations at Longannet. The ash is mixed with water and pumped along pipes to the artificial lagoons - now a haven for wildlife, thanks to extensive tree planting.

Preston Island, although no longer surrounded by water, features several well-main-

tained ruins of early 19th century industrial use.

A coal mine, established by Sir Robert Preston, was shut following an explosion, but the buildings were later to accommodate an illicit distillery. Fife Council Countryside Ranger Stephanie Little is excited by the latest developments at the reserve.

"Local people have wanted a circular walk for some time and it will be a real improvement, being a lot more open, with far fewer fences and a grass area at Preston Island where people can enjoy a picnic."

The work is being funded by Scottish Power, who manage the ash lagoons.



**The historic industrial buildings at Preston Island**

# RDA volunteers' 21st anniversary

**A** VITAL West Fife voluntary group, which allows disabled people to experience the joy of riding, recently celebrated its 21st birthday.

Dunfermline Group of Riding for the Disabled Association is based at a specially-built centre nestling in protected woodland at Shiresmill, south of Blairhall.

Founded in 1984 under the name of Sandydub group, it was originally based at Shieldbank Riding Centre before moving to a field at Rhynd, by Bandum, where it operated for six years.

A fund-raising campaign was mounted to allow a purpose-built centre to be constructed,

## Group seeks members

**VOLUNTEERS** are the lifeblood of the RDA group - and anyone who would like to become a member should contact the Secretary, Rona Gerrard, on 0845 2414369.

It is also planned to create a 'Friends of Dunfermline Group' and anyone wishing further information should contact Rona on the same number.



**A local girl enjoys her time at Shiresmill**

the resulting Shiresmill complex being opened officially in 1996 by HRH The Princess Royal.

Shiresmill now boasts an impressive large indoor arena, outdoor arena, paddocks, stable yard and block, rest room and storage building - all managed by a highly enthusiastic band of volunteers.

The helpers, of all ages, enjoy the rewarding work of looking after seven horses / ponies and assisting the riders of all ages in progressing their skills.

Other duties carried out by the volunteers include laying out the arena for the rides, cleaning tack, making tea, helping with maintenance, and fund-raising to allow the centre to function.

Everyone receives basic training and those who wish to fur-

ther their skills can progress towards becoming RDA instructors within the group. The Dunfermline group is one of several in Fife and comes under the umbrella of the national Riding for the Disabled Association, although it is a charity in its own right.



**A rewarding moment at the centre**



# Safe cycling for all ages

The cycle route between Culross and Low Valleyfield

**Cyclists are spoilt for choice in the West of Fife, with a number of official routes in existence.**

One of the most popular is the West Fife Cycle Way which runs from Dunfermline to just west of Bogside, a distance of eight miles.

It is a fairly easy off-road run, even for young children, getting under way at William Street car park in Dunfermline

and following the former railway to Alloa.

Leaving Dunfermline, the route skirts south of Carnock and Oakley before passing by the outskirts of Comrie and Blairhall, and, a few miles further on, the finishing car park at Bogside.

It also cuts through sections of the Cairneyhill-Crossford-Crombie and the Culross-Cairneyhill-Torry Bay cycling routes, giving anyone the chance to head to the coast and back.

The old Dunfermline-Alloa railway line opened in 1850 and was closed, like many others in Fife, in the 1960s.

Cyclists will pass by Inzievar Woods at Oakley, once visited by novelist Jules Verne, and cross over the eight-arch Comrie Dean Viaduct.

The on and off-road route, starting from historic Culross and best tackled on all-terrain bikes, is suitable for families with older children.

It covers just over 13 miles

and takes in the nature reserve at Torry Bay where there is a chance to see birds such as oystercatcher, shelduck and goldeneye.

The Cairneyhill route, for all-terrain bikes, starts in the village Main Street and can be enjoyed by families with young children.

Its nine miles again take in a section of the West Fife Cycle Way before heading to the coast and a visit to Charlestown.

## Route maps available

ANYONE considering any of the routes should obtain a copy of Fife Council's excellent West Fife Cycle Route Map, available in Tourist Information Centres.

For further detailed information, visit [www.fife-cycleways.co.uk](http://www.fife-cycleways.co.uk)



**A cycle path near Crombie Point**



# Knockhill proves winning formula

**F**ORMULA One drivers Jenson Button, Kimi Raikkonen, David Coulthard, Takuma Sato and Narain Karthikeyan have all raced at Knockhill.

## More than just racing

IT'S not just racing which is the big attraction at Knockhill. There's a host of fun driving courses to try – everything from a 4x4 off-road course, to a purpose-built skid pan, a performance driving course and even a chance to get behind the wheel or be a passenger in a Ferrari 355 supercar. Motor cycle enthusiasts are well catered for too, with former Superbike champion Niall Mackenzie running several courses. Visit [www.knockhill.co.uk](http://www.knockhill.co.uk)

It shows the stature of the brilliant 1.3 mile circuit, which sits above Saline, and brings in a considerable amount of revenue to the West of Fife.

The undulating track which provides probably the best trackside viewing in the whole of Britain, regularly hosts rounds of the top national and international championships – several of which are the training ground for today's Grand Prix drivers.

And it's not just racing on four wheels which pulls in the crowds to the popular Fife track. Each year Knockhill plays host to the exciting British Superbike Championship, which has a huge following, including many who follow the series

on TV.

Knockhill was created in the 1970s by local farmer and motor cycle racing enthusiast Tom Kinnaird, who had the inspired idea of linking a narrow service road to a disused railway line, forming today's demanding layout of twists, drops and climbs.

It was from 1983, however, that the circuit really started to get into top gear, under the ownership of motorcycle and car racing competitor Derek Butcher, who is still at the helm today, carefully guiding and developing the impressive complex.

Several million pounds have been spent in improving Knockhill, turning it into Scotland's national motor sport centre.







# Sun shines on children

**G**ROUPS and organisations cater for a host of needs and activities across the area, but one focusing on the very young is proving especially popular in Oakley.

Ochilview Creche, based in the Community Centre, caters for children aged from six weeks to eight years.

The creche is registered with the Care Commission for a maximum of 24 youngsters in each session and provides

places for children of user groups within the centre and outside agencies, as and when required.

Main user of the creche is the Sunshine Club, for children from two years old until they have a place in a school nursery.

Each child can have up to four sessions each week at £3 per session. The creche is open to all children in the West Fife Villages.

During the summer holidays a 224 Club is run as a playscheme for children aged from two years to four years, again open to all youngsters within the West Fife Villages.



# Keeping history of district alive

**W**EST Fife's wealth of history is kept alive in many ways, such as the restoration of buildings and historic sites, but its proud past is often a lifetime's passion for some in the area.

That is certainly the case with Peter Baillie, who has been involved with Torryburn and District Local History Group for almost 16 years. Peter chairs the group, which has a thriving membership of 84, drawn from as far afield as Dunfermline and Clackmannan.

Over the years Peter has built up a massive collection of carefully-filed historic photos and postcards, backed up by an impressive collection of books.

That knowledge, coupled with information passed on to him by local folk, gives him a unique insight into days gone by in the area.

His home village of Torryburn



**Valleyfield House which was demolished many years ago**

- like several along the Fife coast - was infamous in the mid-1500s for witchcraft, when Alan Logan was the self-appointed witch-catcher. Any suspected witches met a grim death, usually being publicly burnt at the stake or drowned, generally at Dunfermline or Edinburgh. It was during the same era that Torryburn and Culross were hit very hard by the plague when everyone rallied round to offer some nursing care in hopeless circumstances.

A particularly well known nurse hailed from Torryburn, Alison Cunningham, whose dedicated work was acknowledged in the 1800s by the

famous Scots writer Robert Louis Stevenson, best known for 'Treasure Island.'

As a token of thanks for the nursing he received from 'Cummy', he dedicated his book 'Children's Garden of Verses' to her. A copy is still held by a family in the village. Torryburn was also famous for its shipping and exporting, with 13 ships registered in the village in 1810.

Coal was one of the main exports to the Continent, with the ships being loaded at the long-gone Torry Pier at Newmills.

The worldwide-known phrase "Women and children first," cried out by captains manning



**Cairneyhill Church and Manse, 1922**



**Torryburn Church when it was covered in ivy**





**Woodhead Street in High Valleyfield early last century**

their sinking ships, can trace its origins to Torryburn. Captain Salmond, from the village, is credited with mak-



**Captain Graham Ford and his wife**

ing the remark when his 'Birkenhead' troop ship ran aground in South Africa and he was organising the transfer of everyone

to rowing boats.

The Royal Research Ship Discovery, made famous by 'Scott of the Antarctic,' even had local links. Captain Graham Ford, who took the helm in 1905, was from Newmills and married a local lass.

Peter, who spent much of his working life down the local coal mines, also has great interest in the industry which once dominated the area. "At one time, when a colliery was sold, its workforce was

sold with it, although that changed in 1779. It was also quite common for women and children as young as five to work in the mines."

While the postcards provide a fine record of life 100 or so years ago, they had a far more important role in the early 1900s.

Peter explains: "There would be four or five deliveries of mail a day between the surrounding villages, and families used the postcards to keep in touch like we use the phone today."



**The Croon of the Causeway, Culross**

## Get along to meetings

**TORRYBURN and District Local History Group meets every fortnight between October and March, in Torryburn Hall.**

**The group invites speakers, with slides presentations often shown.**

**Anyone wanting further information should contact Peter on 01383 881869.**

# Promoting great natural heritage

**L**OCAL children have been helping Valleyfield Environment and Recreation Trust (VERT) to raise awareness of Valleyfield's rich natural and man-made heritage.

Pupils of St Serf's and Torryburn Primary Schools have taken part in VERT's improvements to the western end of the village by producing artwork that has been incorporated into an information panel.

The panel designs can be seen at the entrance to the recently tarred track leading off Woodhead Street (beside the historic West Lodge buildings), at the Newmills entrance to Valleyfield Wood and at the car park serving



**In recognition of the hard work and enthusiasm of the teachers and pupils, half-size replicas of the boards were presented to the schools by Mrs Margaret Dean, Lord Lieutenant of Fife (pictured)**

the wood in Shiresmill.

VERT chairperson, Sylvia Maxwell, said: "We have received funding from Fife Council, Fife Environment Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage, plus help in kind from Bracken Lea Homes Ltd,

to improve access to the village from the west and into Valleyfield Wood. "Many people are unaware of the wood's importance and the panels are intended to overcome this by depicting the wildlife that can be seen there and outlining the history of the for-

mer Valleyfield Estate."

A class from each of the schools worked hard to create the artwork, which depicts the flora and fauna that can be seen in Valleyfield Wood.

As part of the project, the pupils first visited the wood with John Le Marie from VERT and Fife Council Ranger, Stephanie Little, whose knowledge of natural history was taxed to the full as the children's keen eyes spotted things requiring identification.

"We have been able to give the children a greater awareness of the environment on Valleyfield's doorstep," says John, "and hopefully their enthusiasm will be maintained, especially as their efforts will be permanently displayed in the village."



**The path through Valleyfield Wood**





Cairneyhill pupils at the ski centre

# Pupils slope off!

**P**primary school pupils in the West Fife Villages have been making the most of skiing opportunities - but not on the slopes outside their doorsteps!

Thanks to continuing financial support from the Community Safety Fund and Fife Council's West Fife locality budget, youngsters from all 11 primary schools in the area have been enjoying skiing activities at Fir Park Ski Centre, Alloa.

All primary six and seven pupils - including the disabled - are given the chance to take part in the youth ski project which helps to build inter-village co-operation and encourages the youngsters to take pride in their area.

Since the project got under way, there has been a marked reduction in vandalism at schools, thanks to the self-confidence, self-control and positive frame of mind gained through the ski project.

West Fife Villages Locality Manager Ray Wood commented: "The children participated in an eight-week basic ski training session, which incorporated integral team building, leadership and personal social development elements."

"The outputs anticipated were those of early intervention - allowing young people and

children to work with other villages, building relationships, friendships and working together.

"It also allowed the children to learn about the benefits of a physical activity on their well-being and health.

"It was felt that bringing these young people together at an early age would begin to break down the inter-village rivalry."

## Posting graffiti message

**POSTERS produced by pupils at Saline Primary**

**School, as part of the West Fife Villages Graffiti**

**Project, were displayed in the Round Hall at Dunfermline's Carnegie Centre.**

The pupils produced four large posters as part of the scheme, which has led to a substantial reduction in vandalism.

Pupils are pictured in the Carnegie Centre with two of the posters, which have also been displayed in Saline.



# Enterprise putting new life into area

**T**HE gradual demise of coal mining in the West of Fife in the late 1970s and early 1980s was a huge blow to the area, with employment opportunities being greatly reduced.

Thanks to some positive thinking, however, it was decided in 1983 to establish a community-based regeneration organisation, West Fife Enterprise Ltd, which has now helped more than 1000 local people to gain access to training, further education and employment.

The not-for-profit organisation has grown from strength to strength over the years, providing a high-quality employment development service,

## Get on road to success

**AN impressive 90 per cent of those who attend a WFE programme achieve Scottish Vocational Qualifications.**

**Seventy one per cent move into employment and 12 per cent go on to Further Education.**

**For more information, contact Sandra Beveridge on 01383 881364**



The new WFE building

designed and delivered where it's needed – in the local community.

WFE's award-winning programmes combine vocational training, occupational qualifications and work experience to ensure those taking part are fully equipped to compete for jobs in the open labour market on a fair and equal basis.

This year (2005) has been a particularly notable one for the organisation

which has seen it develop and enlarge its premises and facilities at Forthview Industrial Estate, Low Valleyfield.

The hi-tech site, which includes all the services offered at WFE's former Torryburn office, boasts a purpose-built, lifelong learning and employment centre.

Sandra Beveridge, WFE community liaison officer, points out that, essentially, they provide local people – of all ages and abilities – with core skills. "We are successful because our programmes are tailored for the individual.

"Some people arrive here thinking they have no skills and it is only when you point out to them what skills they do have that they grow in confidence."



A trainee tackles some welding



## CHURCHES

### Church of Scotland

#### **Cairneyhill and Crombie** -

Rev. Norman M. Grant. Sunday services at Cairneyhill (3 Main Street) 11am; Crombie (Ordinance Road) 6pm on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

**Carnock and Oakley** - Rev. Elizabeth S.S. Kenny. Sunday services at Carnock (Main Street) 11.30am; Oakley (Station Road) 10am.

#### **Culross, High Valleyfield and Torryburn** - Rev. Thomas Moffat. Sunday services at Culross Abbey (Kirk Street) 11.30am every Sunday; High Valleyfield (Woodhead Street) 10am on the first and third Sundays of each month; Torryburn (Main Street), 10am on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

**Saline** - Rev. Robert P. Boyle. Sunday service in Parish Church (Main Street) at 10.30am.

**Tulliallan and Kincardine** - Rev. Jock Stein and Rev. Margaret Stein. Sunday service in Parish Church (Kirk Street) at 10am in summer; rest of year 9.30am and 11am.

### Roman Catholic

**Oakley** - Church of the Holy Name, Station Road - Father Michael Carey. Saturday - Vigil Mass 6.30pm; Sunday Mass 10.15am.

**High Valleyfield** - St. Serf's Church - Father Mulholland. Sunday service at 12 noon.



The Scottish Bus Museum at Lathalmond

## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE

### NUMBERS

**Police, fire, ambulance service** - 999

## HEALTH CENTRES

**Kincardine Health Centre**, 17 Kilbagie Street, Kincardine. (01259) 730398

**Oakley Health Centre**, Wardlaw Way, Oakley. (01383) 850901

**Valleyfield Health Centre**, Chapel Street, High Valleyfield. (01383) 881155

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### Bowling Clubs

**Oakley Bowling Club** - Main Street (open April - October). Details from Treasurer Donald Waite. (01383) 850638.

**Tulliallan Bowling Club** - Secretary A. Fairbairn. (01259) 307772

**Valleyfield Bowling Club** -

Secretary I. McIntosh. (01383) 881699

### Cycling

*Assisted cycling events* - Mark McConway, Cairneyhill. (01383) 880744

### Golf Clubs

**Forrester Park Golf Club**, Pitdinnie, Cairneyhill. Eighteen holes, visitors welcome. (01383) 880505

**Saline Golf Club**, Kinneddar Hill, Saline. Nine-hole course, visitors welcome. (01383) 852591

**Tulliallan Golf Club**, Alloa Road, Kincardine. Eighteen holes, visitors welcome. (01259) 730396

### Riding for the Disabled

**Dunfermline Group**, Riding for the Disabled Association, Shiresmill Centre. 0845 2414369

## MUSEUMS

### Scottish Vintage Bus

**Museum**, Lathalmond. (01383) 623380

## TOURIST INFORMATION

### Kingdom of Fife Tourist

**Board**, 1 High Street, Dunfermline. (01383) 720999



Tulliallan Golf Course