

BLANE VALLEY BULLETIN

The Strathblane Community Council News Sheet Nov/Dec 2023 No 96



Angus Graham

Angus Graham, who died earlier this month aged 86, is best-known in the village for providing most of the funding for our Thomas Graham Community Library. English by birth, successful businessman, landowner, benefactor, he was a multi-faceted individual. But what sort of a man was he?

His passions extended from golf and horses through to machinery of any kind – and perhaps above all, cars. From his late teens, when he would borrow his GP father's car and thoughtfully wind back the mileometer to conceal the extent of his travels, right up to his death, he owned fast sporty vehicles. His particular love was for pre-war Aston Martin sports tourers: his last one, a rare 1936 model, was often used for drives up the Crow Road to Fintry and back via

Kippen, the car's distinctive exhaust note echoing off the hills.

Although not well known around the village, people who encountered Angus Graham found him keenly interested in them, as well as displaying a quick wit and a roguish sense of mischief.

Born in London in 1937, Angus went to the posh Charterhouse boarding school in Surrey, then trained as a chartered accountant. He built an international career as a financial manager, working in the US and Europe, living in New York and Paris for some years. From his youth he had loved family holidays at Ballewan, the 800-acre estate sprawling over the Campsies that had been in the Graham family since 1835 and that his father had inherited. Not that Angus and his three sisters lived in the main house, as that was usually let to paying tenants. Rather they lived in the draughty stables, with an ancient oil-fired stove and brown hill water in the taps, from where they roamed the hills most days.

With wife Catherine, son Simon and daughter Philippa, Angus Graham finally moved to Scotland and into Ballewan in 1977, when he started working as finance director of an Airdrie-based whisky business, Inver House Distillers. With other directors he staged a multi-million pound management buy-out in 1988, then worked to refocus the company as a producer of quality malt whiskies. Eventually they sold it at a substantial profit in 2001, after which Angus retired from business, but not from pleasure. After 30 years he and Catherine then decided to enjoy their retirement in a new, architect-designed energy-efficient house on Campsie Dene Road in 2011. Sadly though Catherine then developed dementia and had to move into a nursing home in Bearsden for several years before dying in 2018. Angus visited her every day.

Always interested in village affairs, Angus Graham came up with the concept of backing a new library project in 2019. He presented SCDT chair Margaret Vass with a £500,000 cheque to give the project wings, although he eventually contributed more than £700,000 as the project's cost rose to £1m.

It was one of the proudest moments of Angus Graham's life when he was able to declare our lovely new community facility open last April. Although already suffering from the lung disease that was to claim his life on November 2, he was determined to enjoy the occasion and to see his vision realised in the form of Scotland's first new community-owned public library.

Christmas Lights Switch On

The annual Christmas Tree light up will take place on Friday December 15th at 6.30pm in the Village Club and the usual mince pies and mulled wine will be available.

There will be a box at the door as usual for cash donations to allow us to hold the event again next year.

We look forward to seeing lots of you there.

The tree is being supplied by Duff trees and we are very grateful to them for providing it again this year.

The Strathblane Primary School Christmas Fair

The Fair will take place from 6 to 8.30pm on Friday 1st December. Come along for games, stalls, Santa's grotto, festive food and drink, and music from the Campsie Crooners! Entrance is free for children and £5 for adults (includes a free drink). Tickets available on the door. Everyone welcome!



The Blane Valley Bulletin is published by Strathblane Community Council and distributed to all households in our community council area by a group of volunteers accountable to the Community Council. Contact us at contact@strathblanec.org.uk This issue is published with the anonymous but much-appreciated support of a local resident.

Strathblane Community Council October/November Update

From Chair Julie Hutchison

JH apologised to TSAR for failing to mention that they played a major role in organising the purchase of the defibrillator cabinet at Greens and also West Group Technical service for installing it.

JH contacted Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust regarding the trial eradication of Himalayan balsam. She subsequently met with Fergus McFarlane to visit the site. He said that the eradication had partially worked but there is no money to repeat the exercise. He suggested a large work party in May or June of 2014 to pull the majority of it and he will finish it off by strimming.

Co-Option of new members

Two new members, Eleanor Balfour and Ian Boardley were co-opted at the October meeting, taking our CC to ten members, leaving one vacancy.

GE attended the Big Conversation in the library and highlighted the issues that residents still have with ambulances.

We contacted SC on behalf of the Paths Group about the poor state of the path in Milndavie Glen.

In November it was nice to meet the two Community Police Officers who attended the meeting.

JH met Steven Robertson from land Services to look at problems of overgrown trees in various areas of the village.

We have sent a letter to the District Nurse team regarding the moving of services to Killearn health centre. We would encourage residents to contact the team if they have concerns about the loss of services in the village.

AOCB

Another defibrillator has been donated to the village and will be situated inside the VC until funds are raised for an outside cabinet.

JH has spoken to Duff trees. They are no longer able to fund the full cost of the tree so the CC will contribute to the cost.

Date Of Next Meeting: December 4th 2023

GET IN TOUCH

SCC Email at contact@strathblanec.org.uk or via our website www.strathblanec.org.uk

Your Community Councillors

Julie Hutchison 770791 Andrew Thompson 770838 Rob Davies 771921 Pam Lee 07801 417655
Grace Edmonds 770800 John Gray 771031 Kate Ramsden 07801372588 Graeme Kemsley 07709 676766
Eleanor Balfour and Ian Boardley

Additional Sources Community Website www.strathblane.online

Library; Notice boards; Shops; Local weekly press & the Facebook Strathblanefield page

Strathblane Community Development Trust

Email: scdt@strathblane.online

Website: www.strathblane.online

We deliver projects with grant funding to enhance the village. Please consider joining if you are not already a member.

Enquiries and Booking Contacts

Edmonstone Hall

Kim Jones via info@edmonstonehall.co.uk

The Village Club

Check schedule @www.villageclub1911 or

Email: stathblanec@gmail.com

Heritage Society News

On Monday 19 February 2024 Strathblane Heritage will welcome Eddie Edmonstone to give an illustrated talk about the **History of Duntreath Castle and Estate**, which have been in his family since 1434. This is a change to the advertised programme.

On Monday 15 January, the society will present another **Vintage Film Night**, using material from the Moving Image Archive, with a focus this year on childhood. Meetings are at Strathblane Village Club. Doors open at 7pm. Annual membership £10. Guests £3 per meeting.

Tennis Club Festive Family Tea Party

As the Festive Season approaches, Tennis Club members and friends will be enjoying a **Family Tea Party on Sunday 3rd December from 3pm to 5.30pm in the Edmonstone Hall.**

Anyone interested in coming along to find out more about the club on the day will be welcome.



Strathblane Tennis Club

New Writing Group

Do you enjoy a good story? Want to try writing one for yourself?

Then spend an hour finding out how we can do that together in our beautiful new library here in Strathblane.

The kettle will be on... biscuit box on the table. Warning! It may not contain biscuits!

Come ready to chat and be prepared to put pen to paper, or finger to laptop.

Thursday 7 December at 11 a.m. In the Hugh Fraser Room Thomas Graham Community Library

Places will be limited to 10 spaces. This will be a self-funding community group.

Contact Lucy: 07711 404848 to book or for more information.

Strathblane Community Development Trust (SCDT)

Your Chance To Make A Real Contribution To Village Life

The SCDT is the main vehicle for enabling change to our village, raising funds and managing projects - helping the community to help itself. We need new Board Directors including a Company Secretary/Treasurer who are also charity trustees. The retirement of a number of directors next year provides an exciting opportunity to help steer the development of the village over the next few years. Recent successes include the new library, the Bothy and many excellent paths, but this is your chance to set the next agenda.



Having delivered these great projects it is vital that SCDT maintains the momentum and continues to sustain our subsidiary Thomas Graham Library Ltd (TGLL) which owns the library on behalf of the community. As an established charity we also provide overarching support for many local groups such as the Blane Valley Allotments, the Campsie Crooners and we hope soon to add Strathblane Heritage.

How do we operate? The Board provides the overall governance of the organisation and our working or associate groups deliver our projects. No new project starts without volunteers to deliver them. The Board is likely to meet 4-6 times a year and will give advice and receive reports from groups on their progress and will approve grant applications.

Who are we looking for? Enthusiasm - Experience as a charity trustee would be helpful but not essential, as would finance and accounting skills and someone that is great at organising. Contact scdt@strathblane.online to express interest in joining our Board. Please join SCDT as a member on our website: www.strathblane.online

Paths Group

We are still working on the plan for a new track through to the West Highland Way at Dumgoyach, which we're now calling the Blane Valley Link. We are keen that Strathblane should not shoulder the whole burden of trying to create the route, along 2.5km of old railway track now partly improved by the new Scottish Water track. As well as talking to grant-givers Paths for All, we have walked the route with Sustrans reps, including their embedded officer at Stirling Council. We are now trying to engage other communities. We have written to community councils and development trusts in Killearn, Balfron, Drymen, Milngavie and more, and already received some positive responses. We are working on a survey of views which will obviously gauge local people's views, and will contact local businesses, but vitally we also want to engage with "communities of interest". We are already talking to the Westies running club in Glasgow and the Ramblers, but we need to know of others – cyclists, mountain bike groups or clubs, runners, walking groups, nature lovers, disabled activity providers (we hope to create an all-abilities track) and more. If you can think of anyone with an interest in the route, email me at baynesania@gmail.com.

Satellite CLL with the Thomas Graham Community Library in Strathblane

We are delighted to be delivering a small selection of our adult learning classes from the Thomas Graham Community Library. Due to the fantastic success of our pilot classes this autumn, we will be offering continuation classes of the Spanish and Italian beginner's classes. We also hope to have some additional new classes commencing in January.

We have had a highly positive response from both students and tutors.

"I am at the Italian class which is fabulous. The class offers intellectual stimulation in a friendly atmosphere. It allows an appreciation of other cultures and allows an understanding of Italian geography and history. There is a lot of interest in a second set of lessons." **Deborah Mack (Student)**. Hear what our tutors have to say about the classes...

"It's exciting to be part of this new venture. To people considering taking up a class there, I'd point out these and other benefits, such as its accessibility and the opportunity to meet and study alongside like-minded people who live in the same area." **Ana Richardson (Spanish Tutor)**.

"I have just started teaching Beginners Italian in Strathblane and it is great to see the enthusiasm of the group."

Giovanna Vignati (Italian Tutor). For more information, visit our webpage (where you can click on the link to book classes):

[Satellite CLL | University of Strathclyde](#)

Thomas Graham Community Library

01360 770737, strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk

Trial of new Library Opening Hours - From Monday 4th Dec we are piloting changes to our opening hours. We will still be open for the same number of hours per week- but will have one **9am opening on a Monday** meaning that people dropping at school can pop straight in. We will keep one late night **on a Thursday till 7pm**. We will monitor feedback and footfall. Best wishes, Beth & Lynne.

Thomas Graham Community Library Strathblane Opening Hours from Monday 4 th December 2023		
Monday	9am-1pm.	2pm-5pm
Tuesday	10am-1pm	2pm-5pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday	10am-1pm	3pm-7pm
Friday	10am-1pm	2pm- 5pm
Saturday	10am-1pm	

We have a selection of charity Christmas Cards to support Strathcarron Hospice and Spinal Injury Scotland for sale in the Library.

Thomas Graham Community Library Events 01360 770737, strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk

Please contact the library for further information / to book. Unless stated, all events are in the library and there is no charge to attend.

Day / date	Event	Time	Details
Friday 15 th Dec	Christmas Bookbug	2.30-3pm	Songs & stories for toddlers & pre-schoolers, all welcome.
Tuesday 5 th &19 th Dec	Games for Grown Ups.	10.30-12.30pm	Fortnightly boards games chess/ scrabble, jigsaws/ cards/ dominoes etc. Just drop in.
Thursday 7 th Dec (please confirm with library)	Stirling Citizens Advice	2-4pm	CAB fortnightly information and advice, just drop in
Tuesday 28 th Nov & every second Tuesday morning	Knitting / Stitching Group	10.15-12.45	All knitters/ stitchers welcome, just drop in.
Tues 28 th Nov then fortnightly (please check & book with library beforehand)	Library IT volunteers	10.30-12noon	Want to access free e-books/magazines/newspapers? Need a hand with your tablet or computer? Book a slot with an IT volunteer
Tuesday 5 th Dec & first Tuesday of the month	Film Discussion Group	7.30-9pm	We talk about a chosen film. Contact the library
Tuesday 19 th Dec & third Tuesday of the month	Book Group	7.30-9.30pm	Book discussion group. Contact the library

Tackle the Winter Blues - Library SAD Light Lamp

You can now book a slot to sit and enjoy the glow of a SAD lamp. Pop in, read a book or the paper and get the glow! Even a short time can leave you feeling more energised and uplifted. Contact the library to find out more.

