



Atholl Centre Pitlochry

*Time Out
Time Away
Time Together*



June 2009 – News & Prayer letter

Spring is now well established. The trees are looking beautiful with a combination of pink and white blossom and the fresh green of new foliage & the woodland floors are carpeted with bluebells. Local ducklings have hatched and the swans are back and sitting on their nest. Although we are open all year round we tend to find that like most businesses in Pitlochry spring heralds the arrival of lots of guests and so for the Centre this is when we really feel the adrenaline rush of “all systems go”. To give you a picture of what it’s like here and the difference our ministry makes in people’s lives we asked some of our guests to tell their own stories of their stay at the Centre. We hope you can see how we are fulfilling our vision as we support these groups.

Lodging House Mission Retreat to Pitlochry

“Just after Easter 2009 a group of eight set out from the Lodging House Mission, (a drop-in-centre for homeless and hostel dwellers) in Glasgow for a short Retreat at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry. This is what they said about their visit:

Our three days in Pitlochry staying at the Atholl Centre were as close to perfect as they could be. The accommodation was just what we needed, the food was wonderful and we were made so welcome that we felt at home right away. Even the sun was shining for us and we were able to enjoy the beautiful countryside as we watched the sheep with their lambs in the surrounding fields.

We had come from Glasgow to take time to reflect on life in the light of our Christian faith and we found the peace and space that we needed. Life for the men and women who come to the Lodging House Mission is never easy and it was so good to have a place we could come for peaceful reflection. All of us who were there felt blessed by our time and more ready to return and face daily life back home reminded of God's constant care and love for us.

The setting and the staff at the centre made our stay easy and they were so helpful in every way - now we are looking forward to the next time!”

The Atholl Centre’s subsidy fund came into its own with this group. Thanks to a generous gift to the fund we were able to offer a significant reduction to their bill. Their leader comments: “It wouldn’t have been possible for us to come without that help.” In supporting this group for their holiday, we not only give them respite from the harsh conditions of their daily life, but we help them to feel normal, like a part of mainstream society, by treating them with respect and encouraging them to feel valued. This builds bridges in their lives and can give them the impetus to be encouraged and move forward.

Scottish Christian Women’s fellowship

“What a difference! We had been to the Centre before and were disappointed when it closed and we had to find other accommodation. Now it’s great to be back & it’s even better than before. The meals were fantastic and the staff were wonderful – we could have anything we asked. The way the staff accommodated all our needs and promoted such a helpful and caring atmosphere really helped us to get more out of our conference. The ladies enjoyed their visit thoroughly.

This year we had the Rev David Jenkins from Newcastle, the moderator of the URC, as our speaker. He was a great inspiration to us, but the Centre itself inspired us too. There was such a feeling of tranquillity, and the atmosphere of peacefulness and reverence made our communion really meaningful. One of the special things about the Centre is the views from the lounge and when you are meeting there for prayer you can look out and bring the world in. We left feeling on top of the mountain and our only question was “When can we come back?” Don’t worry ladies, it’s already booked for the next couple of years.”

We feel privileged to have been able to support these ladies in their retreat as they took time together to grow in faith.

So what else has been happening. Over £250,000 was raised for the Macmillan Cancer Trust by the Etape Caledonia cycle race for which we have been the Control Centre for the last 3 years. You may have seen on the news that one detractor tried to sabotage the race by scattering tacks on the road. Many tyres were damaged, but fortunately no-one was injured as a result and the race is still coming back next year.

It's been brilliant to work with the local business community as part of Pitlochry Partnership, giving mutual support and receiving training in running a business, which all helps to make us more effective. Our fundraising & marketing volunteer (Iain's wife), has been on a website development course through Perth College and is planning a new look for our site which will hopefully be more attractive and informative. We have gone onto 2 new schools trips websites as well to make the Centre better known. As for fundraising, our TSB application towards the en-suite showers has been received and will be considered this month, and we received 2 sizeable donations as a result of letters sent at the beginning of the year. We're especially thankful for a significant bequest which will cover our interest-free loans and start off our shower fund.

We had a sponsored walk round Loch Faskally on the 23rd May and it's not too late to sponsor Ian Docherty retrospectively for doing the 8 mile walk on an overcast but largely dry day. The money raised by that will go to improving our disabled facilities and specifically to making a required £2000 upgrade to our lift, which allows those with mobility problems to access the first floor where the conference room is. So far the walk has raised £750 and we have had a further donation of £1000 towards the lift. so not much more to go.

B&B at the Centre

We are open for B&B in **July** and **August** and also in **October (19th -22nd and 26th -29th)** and **November (2nd -8th)** giving you an opportunity to enjoy two autumn productions here in Pitlochry. First up is the **Enchanted Forest** which runs from **16th October - 1st Nov**. This is a son et lumiere production set in Faskally woods where lighting and sound create a magical atmosphere on a specially designed forest walk. In addition there will be a craft fair taking place in the Atholl Centre. Then there is **Perthshire Amber**, a music festival celebrating traditional and modern Scottish music, organised with the help of Dougie McLean (who wrote "Caledonia", the song used by Scotland's Homecoming year). It runs from **Fri 30th Oct - Sun 8th Nov**.

Coming Up

We have spaces on an **autumn retreat with Edwin Gunn (13th - 15th Oct)** **Mental Health in the Church** will be led by Marion Carson, lecturer in New Testament and Pastoral Care at International Christian College, Glasgow, who has recently brought out a book called "The Pastoral care of People with Mental Health Problems". It promises to be a challenging and enlightening conference in an area of ministry often neglected. Details to be finalised.

Centre Apartment Available

Sleeps 4 (or more if a family) & costs
2 nights (W/E) £175 3 nights £215
Whole week (7 nights) £295

This Spring we tried to set up 2 mid-week programmes: Spring Watch – a wildlife break and Spring Retreat – a combination of relaxation and meditation with Willie Wright. Unfortunately both had to be cancelled due to lack of take up. Were people too busy, or were they just not aware these breaks were on offer? We need to make sure that people are receiving the information we pass out, so we really appreciate your feedback about our news. At the bottom of this letter will be a slip asking you whether you would prefer to receive our news by email in future and asking for email addresses to send it out to. If you pass this letter out to others in your church, could you ask them too? Thanks for your help.

Yours in his service

Iain

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