



ROSS HOUSE HOTEL, DORNOCH Some pre-1964 Dornoch Academy pupils who stayed in the girls' hostel in days of yore took time off from last month's reunion, held in the village's Royal Golf Hotel, to pose for our photograph. L to R ON STAIRS (at back) (maiden name, with home village where known) Patsy MacDonald, Ishbel MacLeod (Kylestrom), Doreen Mackay (Tongue), Jane Morrison, Margaret Campbell, Iris Mather (Durness). ON STAIRS (front) Ruby Munro (Durness), Margaret Morrison (Durness), Ray Anderson (Stronchrubie). STANDING (in front of stairs) Christine Gunn (Skerray), Janet MacDonald (Scourie), Agnes Morrison, Diane Flett (Scourie), Myra Mackenzie (Stoer), Pamela Bowker (Tongue), Anne Mackenzie (Skerray). SECOND FROM FRONT (seated) Dona Campbell (Rispond), Barbara Mackay (Bettyhill), Joan Mackenzie (Skerray), Sheena MacLeod (Stoer). FRONT Violet Morrison (Durness), Barabelle Mackenzie, Marigold Mackenzie.



Swede competition

The Guinness Book of Records has slipped up on the biggest swede in the world, or at least on the Back Coast. Yes, we scooped them with this giant from the no 3 Borgie croft of ace agriculturist, Freddie Robertson. Have a go and enter our competition to guess the weight of Freddie's giant, photographed

by Lina Mackay, Tongue. Lina is a native of Borgie and the "owner" of the enormous vegetable.

If you guess the weight, and also tell us why Borgie made the news in 1992 you will receive a £12 cheque. Send your "Borgie Swede" entry to reach us by Wednesday, May 21. The immediate families of the grower and owner are not eligible to enter!

▼ Swedes are biennial plants belonging to the cruciferous genus *Brassica*. They are usually called "roots", but the fleshy portions are in fact enlarged hypocotyls and contain little true root tissue. Their habit is to store up large quantities of food material in the first year of their growth and to develop their reproductive parts and to ripen their seed in the second season.

North West Sutherland Council for Community Action • Voluntary Groups-East Sutherland • Highland Council Community Education Service

A VAT WORKSHOP

for charities and voluntary organisations

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Presented by Nick Preece, a Better Business Services consultant

- Do charities pay VAT?
- What is zero rated?
- VAT on building works?
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Application forms & further details from:
Ann Keatinge, VG-ES, 95 Main Street, Golspie (tel 01408 633001), or Donald MacLeod, NWSCCA, Schoolhouse, Strathnaver, by Kinbrace (tel. 01641561214).

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: MAY 11

Sponsored by CASE, The Highland Council and LEADER II



Former Dornoch Academy pupil who stayed in Earl's Cross Hostel, were photographed at the reunion of pre-1963 pupils held in April. In our photograph we have identified the following: ON STAIRS (from top) Willie Morrison (Durness), Michael Mackay (Bettyhill), Tom Mackay (Strathnaver and Melness). IN FRONT OF STAIRS L to R: James MacNab (Lairg), (?), Alasdair Mackay (Bettyhill), (?), Colin Mackenzie (Lochinver), George Gunn (Melness), Lachie Ross, Achriesgill (with hand on knee), front:(?), (?), Alec Dingwall (Bonar Bridge), David Morrison (Durness), Murdo Mackay (Strathnaver), Donnie Mackay (Rosehall), John Mackay (Badcall Inchard). Corrections or additional names would be appreciated. A photo of the girls appeared last month.

Nature designation consultation launched

AGAINST A continuing background of opposition from Highland Council, Scottish Natural Heritage this week begins its largest consultation yet in its North Highland Area with over 600 people being mailed about the proposed Caithness and Sutherland Special Protection Area, writes DAVID JARDINE.

The SPA would cover 145, 547 hectares — 2% of Scotland — made up of thirty-nine Sites of Special Scientific Interest from Grudie by Loch Shin to A'Mhoine in the North West to Stroupster near John O' Groats. The area is more than a third of the blanket bog which covers half of Caithness and Sutherland, the largest of its kind in Europe.

The best examples of blanket bog, lochs and lochans are already included within a candidate Special Area of Conservation under the EC Habitats Directive and as a Ramsar Site, according to SNH.

Highland Council has lodged a "holding" objection with the Scottish Office against the SAC designation of the f lough country. This move is seen as part of the campaign by the council planning committee — chairman Francis Keith, vice-chairman Michael Foxley — to gain greater influence over SNH and nature designations like SSSIs and SPAs.

Ten bird species qualify the peat-

lands as a SPA. Most numerous are the estimated 1,064 pairs of golden plover (Gaelic feadag bhuidhe), 5% of the UK breeding population, and the 1,860 pairs of dunlin (luatharan glas, literally "swift grey one"), 20% of the UK and 18% of the world population. Rarest are the one to five pairs of wood sandpiper and the thirty pairs of "North Scottish" greylag geese (5% of the UK and world population). The others are red- and black-throated divers, hen harriers, golden eagles, merlins and short-eared owls.

"Things are not going to change all that much," said SNH north Highland manager, Terry Keatinge. "There are good opportunities for crofters and others with the Peatland Management Scheme and the designations provide opportunities for developing eco-tourism. There are also marketing opportunities in "badging" local produce. The purpose of this communication is to explain the principal of the European SPA

conservation status and how it relates to land management practices. We are also keen to allay fears that some people may have about their own activities being affected.

It is a matter of having confidence that there will be some sort of support from Europe for these areas," Dr Keatinge said.

Scottish Crofters Union North West Sutherland Area treasurer, Rex Norris, Tarbet, Scourie, commented: "We see a lot of these things being almost unnecessary in that much of the land is managed by crofters in a way which preserves or even enhances the wildlife anyway.

"What is going to change because of the work done by SNH in measuring the flora and fauna?" he asked.

The RSPB's north Scotland manager, George Campbell, a former director of the SCU, said: "This is one of the most superb areas for wildlife in Britain. It is a tribute to the stewardship of those who own and manage the peatlands that the site can be

formally recognised as being of international importance".

The consultation period is three months.

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Tel 01571
855 348