

# Award hits right note with couple



By Pat Scott

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**A COUPLE devoted to music and the arts in Huntly are the 2015 Citizens of the Year.**

Keith and Pam Cockburn received the award from last year's recipient Anne Lyne during Huntly Rotary Club's coffee morning last Saturday.

The couple were warmly applauded as Rotary president Yvonne Brodie made the announcement.

Huntly born and bred Keith and Pam, from Shetland, said that they were hugely honoured to have been selected for the award.

Keith said: "We do what we do for the town. We love Huntly and want it to be a pleasant place for local people and visitors."

Pam said: "It is an amazing honour, we are both astonished. We want people to see Huntly in a good light and for people to be involved in music and the arts which add so much to Huntly's vibrancy."

Over 50 nominations were received for the couple by Huntly Rotary Club, highlighting three particular reasons why they deserved the recognition.

They are key to the success of the annual summer music school, play a

pivotal role in Strathbogie Fiddlers and most recently have taken the reins of a community garden team in Deveron Street, where they live, ensuring colourful floral displays throughout the summer.

Their work on behalf of the community extends beyond the three areas and they were musical ambassadors during an Huntly and District Development Trust exchange with Finland and a visit from Nepalese musicians. Keith is a stalwart of Huntly Folk Club, they support Huntly and District Tourism Action Group's summer ceilidhs, host artists in residence through Deveron Arts and provide entertainment at a host of Burns Suppers every year.

The nominations highlighted the time, talents and ideas which they devoted to Huntly, their selflessness and their over arching desire for music and the arts to be inclusive. They were described as inspirational individuals and great ambassadors for Huntly.

In addition to an engraved glass bowl as a keepsake, the Citizens of the Year receive a cheque for £200 to donate to an organisation of their choice.

Keith and Pam have chosen to donate the money to Huntly Summer Music School.

■ Read more about the 2015 Citizens of the Year on page 12.

The popular choice of the community as Citizens of the Year, Keith and Pam Cockburn.

Picture: Lyn MacDonald. Image No. 031790



# Musical duo hit right note to be Citizens of the Year

## Pair make success of fiddle group

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CITIZENS of the Year Keith and Pam Cockburn met through their mutual love of music, and music is at the heart of their life.

Key figures in the Summer Music School, they developed the idea along with artist-in-residence, Emily White who wanted her stay in Huntly to have a lasting legacy.

After much discussion the summer school idea was born and with their extensive contacts in the world of music, Emily, Pam and Keith have been able to bring some top tutors to Huntly.

Each year, Keith and Pam provide bed and board in their home for visiting tutors.

Pam said: "The concept was a not-for-profit organisation for all ages and all, or no, ability. We wanted everyone to be able to have a go and to build confidence in people. Emily has secured some inspirational tutors for us who all wanted to share their knowledge and expertise. It has been a success beyond all expectations."

The first summer school was held in 2008 and each year the number of students attending and the range of instruments on offer has grown.

Fees are kept to as low as £40 and through the winter and spring, Keith and Pam, complete grant application forms and organise fundraisers so that the cost of attending, which could be as high as £600 for the week, can be low.



Citizens of the Year Keith and Pam Cockburn centre, with last year's title holder Anne Lyne, left, and Huntly Rotary Club president Yvonne Brodie, right.

Picture: Lyn MacDonald. Image No. 031790

## Guerilla gardeners help town be a growing concern

CITIZENS of the Year Keith, a retired shoe shop owner and Pam, who works as a health visitor, are the guerilla gardeners of Deveron Street.

Their house overlooked a neglected area in Deveron Street which was the catalyst

for a string of projects which lead to the area twice winning a community garden award.

After turning the derelict space into an attractive area overflowing with flowers, the couple decided to ask others on the street if they would

like to become involved. Overwhelming support resulted in Keith making hundreds of window boxes and planters from scraps of wood.

They receive plants from Aberdeenshire Council but supply the compost and fill

the planters which extend the length of the street.

Keith said: "The plants have cheered up Deveron Street and it is a much better looking approach to the town centre, it's a growing success you could say."

STRATHBOGIE Fiddlers have grown from strength to strength due to the energy and enthusiasm of Citizens of the Year Pam and Keith Cockburn.

Shetland fiddler Pam is the group's conductor and Keith works behind the scenes on administration, taking bookings and planning the annual rally.

Pam joined the fiddle group at a time when its membership was in decline and the existing leader was ready to hand over the conducting baton.

Her ethos of involving all has seen the group grow its membership who speak of the confidence she has instilled in them.

Unlike many similar groups there are no barriers to joining Strathbogies Fiddlers, a desire to play sees all comers receive a warm and encouraging welcome from Pam.

Pam said: "My ethos is come along, if you need a hand, you'll get it. We are very relaxed. Huntly Summer Music School has helped us attract new adult members."

Nothing pleases Pam more than seeing the stage at the Stewart's Hall crammed with fiddlers during the annual rally.

She said: "Some groups won't let you play at a rally unless you have reached a certain standard and know all the tunes. I believe we have sufficient numbers for a tune to be played by most if not all of the group and still make a great sound. If someone plays a bad note, I won't be giving them a row like some conductors might."

A nomination from a Strathbogies Fiddler said: "They are passionate about music and do everything they can to encourage less confident folk."

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Pam Cockburn