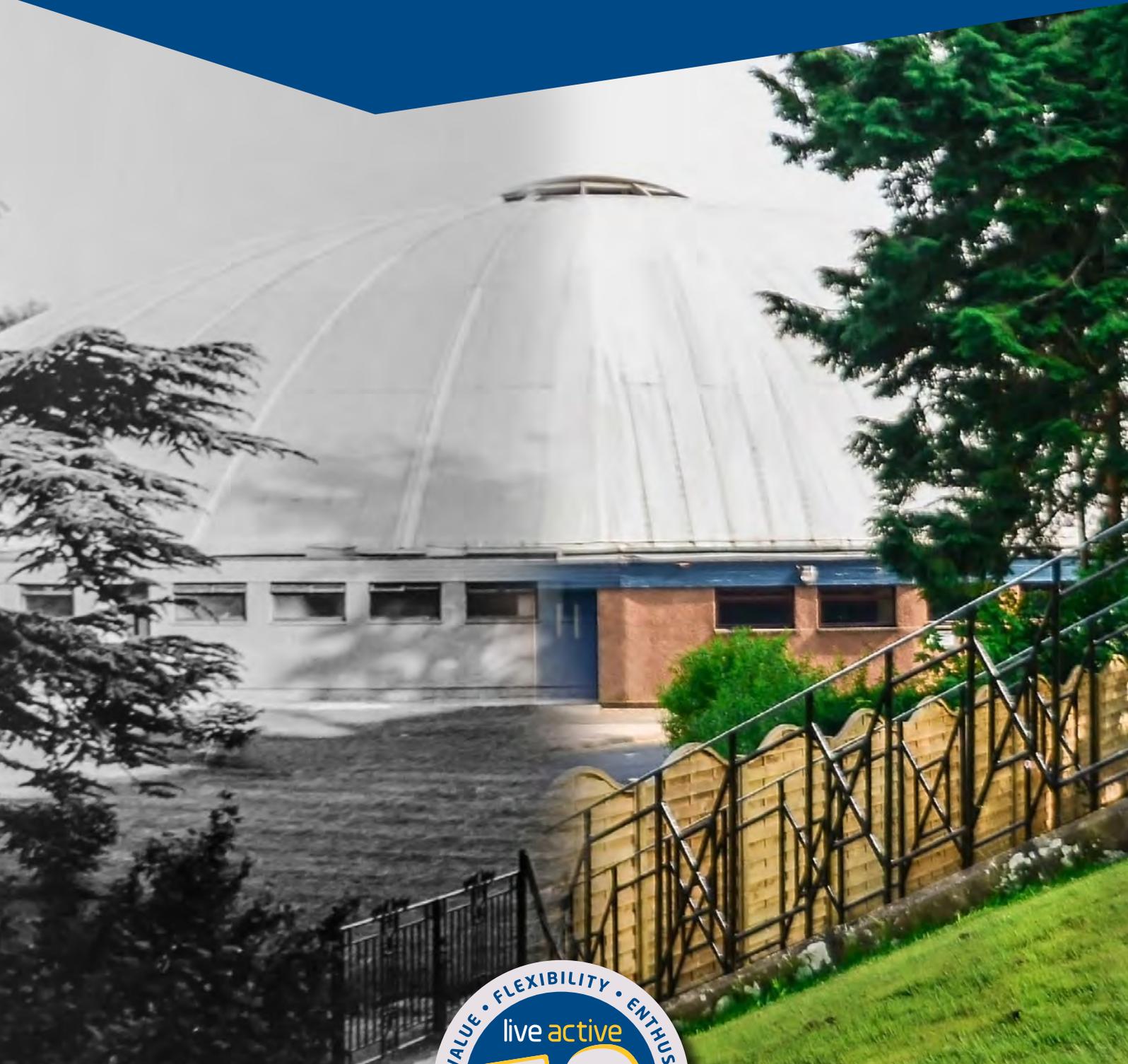


# 50 Years of Leisure in Perth & Kinross



1965



2015



Sometimes in life you come across a story that simply deserves to be told because it is special and has impacted significantly on the lives of a great many people.

Starting off in the 1960's as Bell's Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd and now recognised as Live Active Leisure, the 'not for profit' Company has consistently been a key contributor to the Perth and Kinross area being in the vanguard of sport and leisure provision in Scotland. It is therefore important that we celebrate the farsightedness and contributions of many across the 50 years.

Henry Ford famously once said: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success". How fitting that seems given that half a century ago, a conversation on a train set in motion a journey that now boasts 50 years of the Company working together within our communities.

This journey is about an organisation, many people, partners, events, challenges and opportunities over a 50 year period that have been a major influence on something we cherish; quality of life.

Creating an enjoyable account of such a journey requires not only skill and diligence, but also a real passion for the subject. Maureen Kay, the author, has displayed all in abundance and I am extremely grateful for her willingness to dedicate many, many weeks to the task; entirely on a voluntary basis - interestingly, a theme that is evidenced throughout the history of the Company.

Inevitably, it is impossible to mention everyone who has played a part in this 50 year story and equally impossible to list every key event and fact; indeed we may even find that some memories have changed with the passing of time, but I'm sure you will recognise much and enjoy many memories with us.

**Jim Moyes**

Chief Executive Officer  
September 2016

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# Introduction

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On 1 October 1965, Bell's Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd was created and in launching, set in motion a series of exciting milestones that would shape the path of sports and leisure in Perth and Kinross. From its ambitious start as the city's first dedicated sports centre to its current position that boasts the ownership of key centres and management of some eighteen venues, the story of Live Active Leisure is one that belongs to all of us.

To have reached a 50th Anniversary Year is testament to the dedication of hundreds of people; team members, managers, chief executives, members of the Board of Directors, partner organisations and of course the people of Perth and Kinross. This wonderful milestone has given the perfect opportunity to look back and reflect on how the Company has developed since 1965 to its current place as an integral part of the economy, civic infrastructure and quality of life across the 2000 square miles of Perth and Kinross and beyond. As noted, the Company was initially known as Bell's Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd, and throughout the years has experienced three key milestones:

**1983** - The creation of Perth & Kinross Recreational Facilities (PKRF) when Perth Leisure Pool (PLP) was built.

**2000** - The launch of Perth & Kinross Leisure (PKL).

**2010** - The development of the Live Active brand and Company rename to Live Active Leisure (LAL).

Today, Live Active Leisure (LAL) is an independent, multi-million pound 'not for profit' company limited by guarantee with charitable status. As a major employer in the local area it contributes hugely to the quality of life in Perth and Kinross. Working together with its customers and partners, LAL creates and provides opportunities for people to participate in sport, leisure and physical activity, thus enabling them to "Live Active".

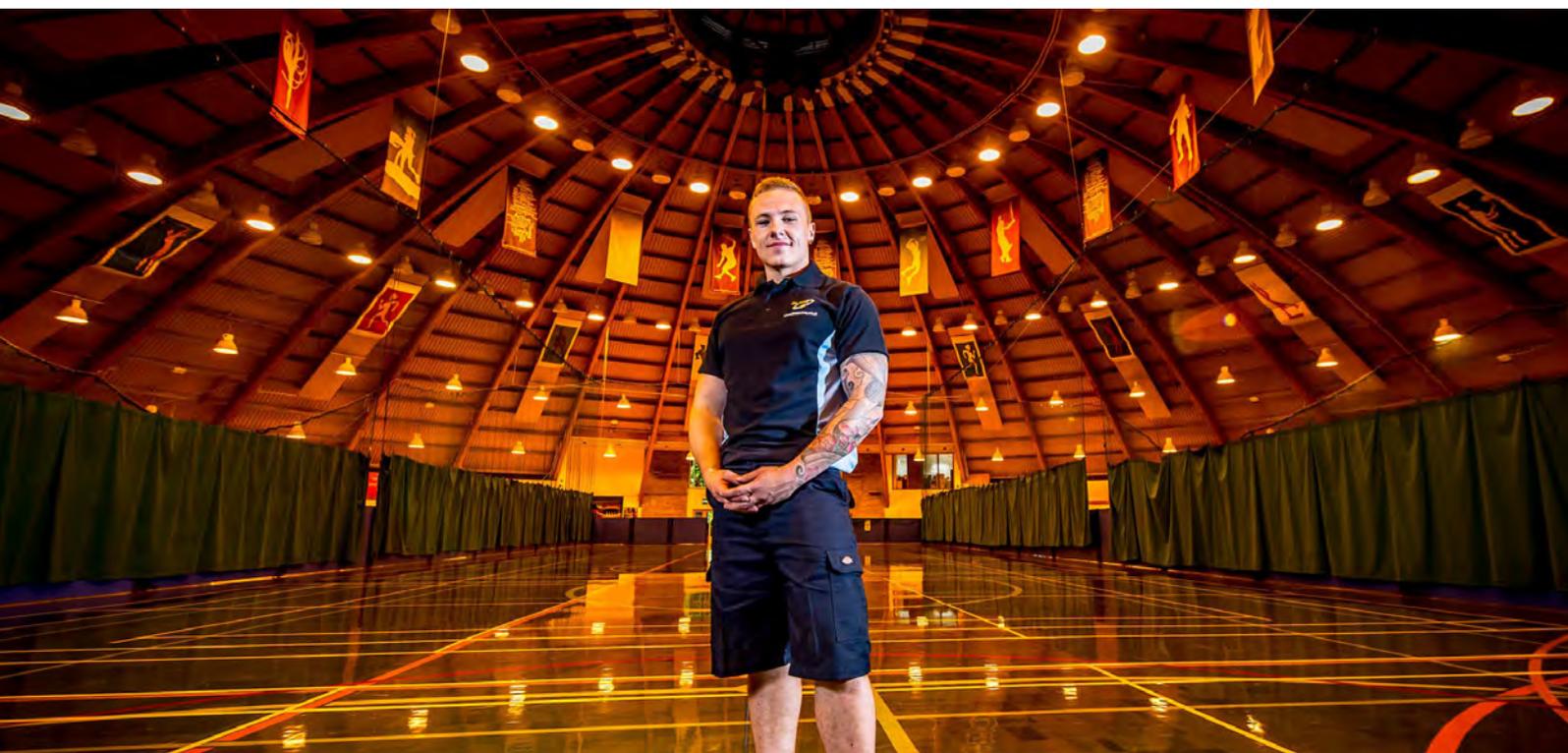
As well as demonstrating an unshakeable commitment by the Company to the local communities it serves, the 50 year history of Live Active Leisure demonstrates without question, the passion and drive each of these individual communities have shown as our understanding of health, wellbeing and sports has evolved.

From fundraising for new centres, to volunteering to drive progress forward, the vision of individuals, groups and the thousands of staff members both past and present embodies the very best of the human spirit.

Without the whole-hearted local commitment that you will find unfolding before you in the pages of this tale, it could not reasonably be expected that partner trusts, statutory bodies and national companies would have been motivated to support the many projects that have gone into making up Live Active Leisure as we know it today.

The Company has always been ambitious and aspirational when it comes to its sports and leisure and a clear vision has served it well in the realisation of its innovative ideas. From the building of Bell's Sports Centre in the 1960s to Perth Leisure Pool in the 1980s, from the pulling together of local community venues to the launch of the ambitious PH<sub>2</sub>O, LAL is proud to have worked in partnership to deliver life-enhancing services for people and visitors of Perth and Kinross.

Live Active Leisure now manage 18 leisure venues throughout Perth & Kinross including Perth Leisure Pool, Bell's Sports Centre, Dewars Centre, Live Active Rodney, Live Active Letham, North Inch Community Campus, Glenearn Community Campus, Live Active Loch Leven, Loch Leven Community Campus, Live Active Auchterarder, Strathearn Community Campus, Live Active Atholl, Breadalbane Community Campus, Live Active Blairgowrie and Blairgowrie Community Campus plus the George Duncan Athletics Arena, Outdoor Centres at Kinloch Rannoch and Blackwater and also various Community Halls.



# THE BELL'S SPORTS CENTRE (PERTH) LTD YEARS: 1965-1983

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## The Company Foundation

To fully appreciate the historical relevance that Live Active Leisure holds within Perth and Kinross, we must highlight the magnitude of the vision that was created between the then Perth Town Council and the Gannochy Trust.

## The Gannochy Trust

The Gannochy Trust was founded in 1937 by Arthur Kinmond Bell, whisky magnate, philanthropist and importantly for Perth, an all-round sportsman who cited cricket as his lifelong passion. The Trust would help fund charitable and public purposes that would benefit the community of Perth and its immediate environs and over the years, has developed into one of the more substantial grant-making trusts in Scotland. Bell's Sports Centre was named as a tribute to the Trust's founder and since its inception in October 1965, the Gannochy Trust has contributed well in excess of £20 million to Company projects.

## Bell's Sports Centre

Having purchased a 4 acre piece of land on the western edge of the North Inch, adjacent to Balhousie Castle, Perth and Kinross Council cleared it of the huts that had been erected as a camp during Second World War and asked for suggestions for the site. Now, at this time in the early 1960's some English local authorities were providing sports halls in old aircraft hangars, but only the far-sighted authorities were providing purpose-built centres. The opportunity to address the lack of changing accommodation for sports on the North Inch was identified and it was agreed to proceed with a brief that would outline the provision of dressing for the sportsmen and women using the North Inch pitches. As well as this, it was suggested that a purpose-built hall be included for training and indoor games.

Lord Provost Dr Robert Ritchie was enthused by the sports arena proposal and during a train journey from Edinburgh to Perth, discussed this with the Chairman of the Gannochy Trust, Mr W G Farquharson, pointing out the benefit it would bring to the community. Mr Farquharson shared his enthusiasm and noted that the Gannochy Trust would be interested in funding the project. It was announced in September 1964 that the Gannochy Trust had offered to meet the cost of the building; then estimated at £150,000 and predicted to complete within two years. In December of that year, Dr Ritchie publicly declared plans for the centre, proclaiming that it would be named after A K Bell as a fitting memorial to his love of sport and his concern for the welfare of people in Perth.

The plans required a new Company to be established to operate the venue and thus on 1 October 1965, Bell's Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd was incorporated, limited by guarantee and not having share capital. The Company's first Memorandum and Articles of Association set out that the, "Objects for which the Company is established are to provide in the interests of social welfare, recreational facilities and leisure time occupation for members of the public at large, with the object of improving the condition of life of the inhabitants of the City and Royal Burgh of Perth, being for whom the facilities are primarily but not wholly intended..."

1965



**October 1968**

Mexico City Olympics - the highest altitude and arguably most controversial Games ever held



The design, including the revolutionary shape, was submitted by Architect David Cockburn to the Royal Fine Art Commission. It was August of 1966 before the final plans for the centre were approved by the Perth Dean of Guild Court and by then the cost of the project was estimated at £225,000, an increase of £75,000 on the original estimate. Generously, the Gannochy Trust agreed to meet the revised cost in full. The basic shape of the Centre had not been altered, but the final plans also included ancillary accommodation located outside the Dome and as a result, an entirely new structural design was required to bear weight. The impressive structure and its now iconic roof, was to house 36 laminated timber arches each 120 ft. long with the covering skin designed to reflect the sun's heat whilst permitting a 30 per cent daylight factor inside. Based on a scale model in the City Chambers, it was often referred to as the city's "sports umbrella" prompting the Perthshire Advertiser to write, "it will be surprising if the centre does not become known as Perth's Crystal Palace of Sport."

On 16 September 1966, bulldozers moved on to the site to begin preparing the ground and in December work began on the giant iconic dome as the first of 36 giant arches arrived in Perth. The scale of these arches did create some transportation difficulties, but a route from Grangemouth had been carefully planned to avoid major problems as it travelled at a speed of 20 mph via Dunblane, arriving at Broxden some four hours later. A police escort then led the vehicles into the city where large crowds gathered and traffic came to a halt as the lorries negotiated the tricky turning from South Street into Tay Street.

Bill Duncan, current Chairman of Live Active Leisure, vividly remembers as a young bank clerk in the British Linen Bank at the corner of Tay Street, watching the beams turning into Tay Street. The dome of Bell's Sports Centre began to take shape the following day; the six and a half tonne steel ring beam at the top of the dome was positioned that morning and the first of the main arches was erected. By January 1967, all of the arches were in place and the building had begun to come to life.



On 20 March 1967, with the dome already underway, the Foundation Stone for Bell's Sports Centre was laid by Mr Farquharson, Chairman of the Gannochy Trust, at a ceremony presided over by the then Lord Provost Mr David K Thomson. Before the stone was sealed, the Lord Provost, Lady Provost Mrs J A C Grant, the Trustees of the Gannochy Trust and their partners each placed inside it various mementoes of life and sport in Perth in 1967. These included tennis, golf and cricket balls, a shuttlecock, a Tay pearl, a fishing hook, 1967 coins, photographs of Mr A K Bell, Dr Farquharson and the Lord Provost, a bottle of Bells Whisky, a book of stamps and newspapers.





With the opening planned for March 1968, the first post of Manager was taken up on 1st December by Dick Farrelly. In early February 1968, Mr Farrelly announced that he had seized the opportunity of staging an international basketball match between Britain and West Germany which would be held at Bell's Sports Centre on 24 March 1968. Not only would this herald Bell's Sports Centre's first sporting event but it also marked the first time the British basketball team had ever played in Scotland and the first time the team had played together since the 1948 Olympics. The plan was to open the centre to the general public shortly after the international event. However, this was not to be as one day after this announcement, on Sunday 18 February 1968, Mr Farrelly saw a plume of smoke from the vicinity of the centre and arrived on site to find the fire brigade fighting a blaze. The blaze had started just before 11am when two workmen using a blow lamp were working on the dome and the fire spread quickly with thick black smoke rising more than 200 ft. in the air. It took the Fire Brigade nearly an hour to bring the flames under control. Damage from the blaze was estimated to run to thousands of pounds with a large section of the dome covering destroyed and most of the 36 arch rib beams badly scorched (although thankfully, mainly undamaged otherwise). The floor of the centre appeared practically untouched with no damage at all to the surrounding building but even with this, repair of the fire damage proved a slow process and took longer than anticipated.

Bell's Sports Centre opened its doors to the public on Tuesday 15 October 1968, seven months behind the original schedule. Now fully constructed, the impressive large dome was 58 ft. high and more than 200 ft. in diameter and was recognised as the largest dome in the UK; architect David Cockburn was presented with a Guinness Book of Records certificate. As a note,



this record was held until the opening of Greenwich Dome at the Millennium. The Dome's 330sq ft. of unobstructed floor space, could be laid out to accommodate courts for tennis, badminton, volleyball, netball and basketball. It was also ideal for athletics and gymnastics, with an innovative eleven lap per mile running track, 60m sprint, long, high and triple jumps, pole vault, hammer, discus and javelin all part of the centre's offering. As well as this, Perth now had facilities for indoor football, hockey, practice cricket wickets and golf. The additional benefits brought by the seating for spectators, dressing rooms for players, committee rooms for officials and a public restaurant elevated Bell's Sports Centre to a national stage and



brought together the realisation of the vision shared between Lord Provost Dr Robert Ritchie and Gannochy Chairman Mr W G Farquharson during that fortuitous train journey to Edinburgh.

On October 21, the Scottish District Basketball Championships became the first competition event to be staged at Bell's Sports Centre and this was followed by the Scottish round of the new Dewar Cup Indoor Tennis Tournament Series, which brought some of the world's leading tennis stars to Perth including Margaret Court of Australia, Cliff and Nancy Ruchey (America) Ken Fletcher (Australia) Tom Okker (Netherlands) among others. Just one week later, on October 28 1968, the centre was fully operational and the people of Perth were offered a programme for clubs, associations and individuals. Charges for entry, including use of the changing accommodation, was one shilling with an additional charge to hire courts. The shilling charge could be offset by becoming a member at a cost of £1 per year, with junior membership being twelve shillings and sixpence and family membership £2 per year.

## October 1968 Bell's Sports Centre opens

The Centre proved so popular that within five years of opening, Bell's Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd considered a proposed extension to meet growing demands, using the opportunity to provide specialised areas for new activities such as squash and weight-lifting.

After nearly ten years in the planning, on 26 March 1983, the new £1m coaching hall at Bell's Sports Centre was officially opened by Mrs Margaret Ross, wife of Mr James (Jimmy) Ross, then Chairman of the Gannochy Trust.



# The Perth and Kinross Recreational Facilities Ltd (Perth) Years

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## Perth Leisure Pool

Although remembered fondly by many Perth residents, by the early eighties the ageing swimming baths in Dunkeld Road - which dated back to 1887 - unable to meet changing demand. In a vision similar to the one held by Mr Farquharson and Lord Provost Ritchie some twenty years earlier, the then Director of Leisure and Recreation, Malcolm Wood, suggested that Perth should have a modern Leisure Pool, suitable for the new generation of recreational activity. He brought forward his concept to the Elected Members of the Council and following a visit to Leisure Pools in England, the Council's then Chief Executive Jim Cormie, Director of Finance Harry Robertson, and Elected Members were equally convinced of the merits of a Leisure Pool in Perth.

A feasibility report was submitted in February 1981, recommending that a new leisure complex be built (at that time on the South Inch) and that the old baths at Dunkeld Road be closed. It was Harry Roberston, Director of Finance, who suggested that a private limited company be created, stressing that it should obtain charitable status, and that its objectives would be to raise funds for the provision of a new Leisure Centre in Perth. On 10 June 1981, this suggestion, together with other comments, was reported to a sub-committee, who instructed Mr Robertson to investigate further the financing of the project by way of a Trust or Company limited by guarantee and with charitable status.

## Location, Location, Location!

At the same time, the District Council agreed in principle to the construction of a new Leisure Pool Complex at the Lesser South Inch which would be capable of expansion at a future date to incorporate dry leisure facilities. However, the Scottish Sports Council suggested that the Council look at an alternative site in the western part of Perth with the consultant's report stating that, "It is estimated that 75% of the success of commercial developments is due to site position against all other considerations." The Council's then Director of Planning had commented "the facility should be capable of expansion, it should be centrally located within the city and the site should be one of a prestige nature, with accessibility for cars and public transport".

A number of sites were identified and assessed, including one possible site on South Street which subsequently became St John's Centre, the Lesser South Inch opposite the Round House, the York Place site of existing Council Offices and at Glover Street on the ground belonging to the British Rail Property Board. However, the suggestion that the former Dewars Bond site at Glover Street could provide for two buildings to be linked on the site if the adjacent land was purchased, became the deciding factor. These new proposals fed into the ongoing discussions surrounding the proposed improvements at Bell's Sports Centre and with increasing awareness for additional and improved sports facilities throughout the area it was felt that Bell's Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd, suitably restructured, would be the most appropriate vehicle for providing such facilities. Not only could it attract funding from outside the local authority (which would not have been the case if the local authority were to carry out such developments themselves) but it could also provide a financial instrument into which Perth and Kinross District Council could pay money for the purpose of providing recreational facilities. 6.25 acres of ground owned by British Rail at Glover Street in Perth was designated as the site for the proposed Leisure Pool and the Company acquired it at the valuation of £164,000.

With these decisions made, in 1983, Bells Sports Centre (Perth) Ltd became Perth and Kinross Recreational Facilities Ltd (PKRF).



Its purpose was to “build and operate community sports centres, swimming pools, sports pavilions, changing accommodation, children’s playgrounds and any other sports, recreational or leisure facilities throughout Perth and Kinross and to co-operate with and assist persons or organisations involved in the provision of such facilities.” The then Provost John Mathieson, was appointed President of the Company and the Leader of the Council Councillor James Proudfoot was appointed as Chairman of the Executive Committee. Together with eleven other Elected Members and three non-Council Members, the first board of PKRF was brought into session. Tasked with sourcing a funding partner for the Leisure Pool project, the first obvious call was to their long-standing successful partner, The Gannochy Trust. Mr James (Jimmy) Ross, Chairman of the Gannochy Trust approved the request. Perth Leisure Pool cost £6.25m, with the Gannochy Trust making a substantial contribution. Added to the Council’s considerable support and those of other partners, this enabled the project to be realised. The Company was the first of its kind to attract charitable funds and this model was later mirrored across the country.

Funding in place, Perth Leisure Pool was designed in 1984 after an architectural contest managed jointly by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and PKRF. It was won by architects Faulkner Brown who had a proven record in leisure pool design and whose design was deemed to be both “highly functional and architecturally dramatic.” Commissioning works were delegated to Council Architect Ken Dunn who, many years later, became a Volunteer Member of the Company’s Board; a position he continues to hold. The main contractor commenced building work in August 1986 and with their previous experience at Bell’s behind them, the Company’s plans progressed well. Practical completion was achieved in June 1988, it opened to the public on Saturday 30th July, and on 10 October that year, Perth Leisure Pool was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal.

Coming in on budget and on time, was only the first of many objectives set for Perth Leisure Pool. The brief was for an attraction that would appeal to visitors and tourists alike with the overriding aim to create a sports complex that would offer up an extraordinary building specific to Perth, all the while becoming an intrinsic part of everyday life of the its people. From day one, this objective was met and Perth Leisure Pool was heralded as an outstanding success. The daily average attendance in the opening month, was in excess of an astonishing 3,000 people, with visitors arriving from across Scotland to experience this unrivalled day out. The building was commended by the Perth Civic Trust and the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland and as weeks rolled into months, it attracted a level of use that exceeded the highest of any initial estimates. As well as leisure visitors, there were a number of visiting delegates to Perth from China and Russia to view the Leisure Pool and at one stage it was quoted in the Leisure Centre Directory as being the second busiest in the UK, behind only the Bognor Regis Holiday Camp.

Originally unique in Scotland, but copied elsewhere since, the venue included a sheltered outdoor lagoon of heated water and a sun-bathing area where it was possible to relax in all weathers. Visitors adored lying on the loungers on a hot summer’s day and as the autumn months arrived, there was a magical joy in braving the icy air on a cold floodlit winter’s evening, as the steam rose from the warm water. In fact, whatever the weather, Perth’s residents embraced

## July 1988 Perth Leisure Pool opens



the exhilarating thrill of swimming outdoors. Three years after it opened, in 1991, Perth Leisure Pool won the highest IAKS (International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities) Award. This international competition awards exemplary, functionally well-designed sports and leisure facilities. The venue was described as winning the award for the design of “a leisure oasis in the heart of the city.”

It is a true testament to the original vision for the combination of leisure and swimming facilities that, in 2008, the Leisure Pool had welcomed over ten million visitors. The venue continues to provide fantastic opportunity for the residents of Perth City and visitors from the wider Perth and Kinross area and beyond. Today, plans are afoot to realise an innovative project to provide for the decades and generations ahead and to renew Perth’s position as a leader in the field of sports and leisure provision.

## **A K Bell Library**

During the original discussions surrounding Perth Leisure Pool, there had been talk of a new library for the city. Harry Robertson, the Council’s then Director of Finance, reported on the financial implications of funding the much sought-after library and library headquarters in Perth, through PKRF. Changes were to be made to the Capital Control System, which meant that it was possible to fund new projects through PKRF on the same basis as Perth Leisure Pool.

The York Place site was suited perfectly to the design brief which stated the project should boast a public building with dignity, delivering an attractive urban space on a main road into Perth, and be a welcoming place for all.

On 2 May 1992, PKRF agreed to the request by the District Council to carry out the erection of a new Central Library, Reference Library and Library Headquarters centred on and incorporating the existing Grade A listed pavilion at 2-8 York Place. PKRF’s Memorandum and Articles of Association were extended at that stage to include the provision of libraries.



On 15 April 1992, the tender from Mowlem Scotland Ltd was accepted and the keys to the fine new multi-million pound District Library HQ were handed over to PKRF Ltd in April 1994. On 1st November 1994 the keys were officially passed to District Librarian, Jim Guthrie, prompting a Perthshire Advertiser headline proclaiming “A New Chapter Begins”.

The Official Opening Ceremony took place in the presence of HRH Prince of Wales on 13 January 1995 and during his tour of the building Prince Charles signed the Guildry’s Lockit Book dating from 1452, which had previously been signed by James VI, Charles II, Queen Victoria and HM Queen Elizabeth II. This book later appeared on the BBC’s Antiques Roadshow in 2013 when it was filmed at Scone Palace.



## Aberfeldy Recreation Centre

Local GP, Dr Hamish McBride, arrived in Aberfeldy in 1975, and became aware of a swimming pool fund which at that time totalled £800. As a result, a fund-raising committee was formed in 1978 with the single aim of providing the people of Aberfeldy with their own swimming pool. That same year, a feasibility study was commissioned which concluded that a recreation centre would indeed enhance the quality of life in the area and plans began progressing for a swimming pool, café bar, social areas, sports hall and rifle range with the estimated total cost approximately £1.1m. In December 1980, planning permission in principle was granted for the erection of a community centre within the grounds of Breadalbane Academy and by 1981 the organising committee formed a Limited Company with full charitable status, called Aberfeldy Recreation Centre (ARC) Ltd.

Perth & Kinross District Council had indicated their support in principle by including a provisional figure of £100,000 towards the construction of a recreation centre in Aberfeldy in the 1982/3 capital budget, on the condition ARC Ltd raised an equivalent amount by then. This led the committee to approach the Gannochy Trust which resulted in a show of considerable interest. Galvanised by this response, the local Committee raised by way of cash, promissory notes or promise of work, £85,000. Added to this, a belief that they would be awarded the maximum Sports Council Grant of £15,000 and this brought their total to £100,000.

**January 1986**  
**Aberfeldy Recreation Centre**  
**officially opens**

The fantastic work of a local community had ensured that they achieved their target. Dr MacBride described some of the fund-raising as 'crazy' with countless personal and group efforts taking place. He personally did a sponsored barrel ride down the River Tay, the Raft Race from Kenmore to Aberfeldy was an annual attraction and at the disco afterwards for twelve years the community sold hamburgers and drinks with all profits given to ARC. In April 1982, the Gannochy Trust agreed to fund the scheme to the tune of £500,000 if the District Council could meet some of the deficit on running costs. This was subsequently agreed and together with grants from other bodies - in June 1983, the Scottish Tourist Board wrote offering a contribution of 12% of the capital cost up to maximum of £100k and the Scottish Development Agency had contributed £40,000 towards site preparation - the construction cost for the Centre of £887,000 was met.

In January 1984, work started on the preparation of the site for the Aberfeldy Recreation Centre when five-year-old twins Mark and Steven Elliott, helped operate the excavator to shift the first bucketful of earth. The centre was opened to the public for viewing on Friday 21 December 1985 and was administered and run by a Management Committee under the control of ARC Ltd.

The official opening was held on 28 January 1986 and for six years the Recreation Centre was managed by ARC Ltd with the Centre Manager reporting to a voluntary Executive Committee. It was recognised at this stage, that long term sustainability and a guaranteed legacy for the community, could be better provided under the expert guidance of PKRF. It was brought into the remit of the Company during October 1990 and full responsibility was assumed in November 1990.

Through the years, major events were established and encouraged. Using the Recreation Centre as a base, the area hosted the National Iron Man Challenge, a local series of road races, marathons and triathlons and became the home base for the Scottish Triathlon Elite Squad. It was always the intention of Aberfeldy Hall Association to develop a Phase 2 dry sports facility following

completion of the Recreation Centre. A climbing wall and indoor and sports hall were included in the proposals for an extension and working closely with Perth and Kinross Council and the local community, the Aberfeldy Hall Association reached their fund-raising target of £115,000 in 2001. However, in 2005, the Board of Perth and Kinross Leisure (formerly PKRF) decided that the best way forward to ensure the long term future of sport and leisure for the Aberfeldy area was to support Perth and Kinross Council's aspirations for the new Breadalbane Community Campus. The Company agreed to the Recreation Centre being demolished after 23 years of operation and the plot of land to be gifted to the Council, on condition that Perth and Kinross Leisure be the operator of sport and leisure facilities in the new Breadalbane Community Campus. The Board had high hopes that the new Campus facilities would continue, and build upon, the significant success of the Recreation Centre.

As the plans for the new Community Campus included a sports hall, the funding raised by the Aberfeldy Hall Association was no longer required. The money was subsequently donated towards the cost of providing a hoist for disabled access to the new swimming pool in the Breadalbane Community Campus.



## Letham Centre (Live Active Letham)

Meanwhile, as in Aberfeldy, other communities were planning their own facilities. In the early 1980's, it had become clear that a larger centre was needed to provide for the social and recreational interests of Letham residents. Letham and Hillyland then had twelve thousand residents, almost 25% of the total population of Perth at that time, but there was limited provision of recreation space. Councillor David (Davie) White started out by applying for a licence to increase the usage of the existing community centre. He had hoped that this would offset the cost of providing an indoor sports centre but by 1982, he had realised the need to go further and had approached the District Council on behalf of the Letham community as to the possibility of financial assistance towards the cost of the provision of an indoor sports facility.

The Letham Neighbourhood Centre Ltd was formed to take the project forward with a number of different community organisations getting involved at various stages. Thanks to this, and a proactive community, there was immediate clarity on what the community needed and wanted, making the process a seamless one. With the support of the District Council and Gannochy Trust, the project proceeded and on 18 December 1990, St Johnstone FC player and former Soviet international footballer Sergei Baltacha, cut the first turf at the site of the new Letham Community Neighbourhood and Sports Centre.



The Letham Neighbourhood Centre, which cost £500,000, opened on 29 February 1992 and was owned and operated by the Letham Neighbourhood Centre Ltd. Mrs Chris White, now in her 90's, remembers with pride the efforts that her husband had made to bring the centre to Letham, going 'door to door' seeking support. In keeping with the spirit of determined men and women before him, this was the culmination of Councillor White's vision.

A truly great community effort deserved a fitting opening ceremony and this was performed by local residents spanning four generations. The youngest, 13-year-old Barry Ward of Castle View, won the right to be part of the opening ceremony by designing a logo for the community centre, while he was a pupil at Our Lady's RC Primary School; Yvonne Graham, a mother of three from Appin Terrace, was chosen because of her position as Chairman of the Rainbow Playgroup which was housed in the centre when it opened and they were joined by Mrs Morag Murdoch of Rannoch Road and Mr Harry Johnstone, both Letham residents.

From day one, a range of activities were held in the body and fitness conditioning zone on the upper floor, including aromatherapy sessions. Early users of the Centre were the Tay Pearls Ladies' Volleyball Team and the Letham under 14's football team. In January 1994, a new Manager employed by PKRF was appointed and following a comprehensive review of the Centre's operation, it was formally handed over to PKRF with effect from 1st April 1994. By 2000, a community creche had been introduced and a youth club for 12-18 year olds, the Kids of Letham Association (KOLA) regularly used the Centre. Much work was undertaken in conjunction with Tayside Police (working with partners) and funding was secured for an Internet Cafe in October 2001 and this was operated in conjunction with Perth & Kinross Council's Community Education Section. This demonstrated the importance of partnership initiatives in developing the future of the Centre and led to further developments including After School Clubs and holiday activities, and the introduction of the Wee Springers gymnastics classes.

Both 10 and 20 year anniversaries have been held at Letham Centre, which remains very much a community centre at heart. For the two decade milestone, Mrs White and Madge Ord, one of the original fundraisers, cut a cake in front of staff, invited guests and local residents. Fiona Melloy, Operations Manager at Live Active Letham, had been employed at the Centre since it opened. In the Perthshire Advertiser on 29 February 2012, she recalled: "I first started working in Live Active Letham when it opened in 1992 and loved working with children and teaching sport in what was a brand new community facility. After 20 years I am still with the Company and have now moved into a management role. However, Live Active Letham still means a lot to me and I am proud that it has developed to accommodate such a range of different local groups"



## Rodney Pavilion (Live Active Rodney)

The first Rodney Lodge was originally known as Marshall Cottage and was an impressive building constructed in 1800 by Provost Thomas Hay Marshall. In 1866, it transferred into the ownership of John Rollo, who renamed the property after Admiral George Rodney. All was well until the route of the Victoria Bridge was approved (replaced by the Queen's Bridge in 1960) which ran directly through the middle of Rodney Lodge.

The current Rodney Lodge, or Rodney Pavilion as it became known, was built in 1932. Miss Rollo, sister of the late Mr John Rollo sold the Pavilion to General Accident as a recreation space for the enjoyment of their employees. Tennis courts and a bowling green were added in 1936 making it the earliest recorded leisure centre to become part of the history of Live Active Leisure. The Rodney building and associated grounds were acquired by the District Council in 1985 for use as a community centre when the General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation plc, provided new sports facilities at their head office site at Pitheavlis, Perth. Calling upon the now established experts, in June 1987, the Council invited PKRF to maintain and manage Rodney Pavilion as a sports hall, community centre and restaurant for a period of three years.

The Company became responsible for operating the venue in October 1987 and this new opportunity allowed them to provide a programme of activities such as fitness classes and gym provision, some of which hadn't been possible in Bell's Sports Centre. It was opened to the public on 5 October 1987 and became an immediate success. Following a three year trial, it was agreed that Rodney Pavilion should become a permanent PKRF Company facility and the Council and Company entered into a 30 year lease.

Such was the success of the venue, that after considerable review, the decision was taken to turn Rodney into a full-blown fitness centre. Following further changes it reopened as Rodney Fitness Centre on 5 May 1994 and quickly established itself as the leading venue for health and fitness in area. At this time, the "Feel Good Factor", a district-wide community health initiative aimed at improving general levels of fitness and health awareness, had taken off and Rodney became the main base for all activity.

Following flood damage at the start of 1996, an 18 week closure for major refurbishment was required for the popular Centre and this provided the opportunity to further develop and upgrade the facilities and equipment on offer. The Company continued its commitment to this increasingly successful venue and in 2014 carried out a £250,000 gym upgrade. The venue continues its success story and is a popular choice among members and guests, often operating at capacity.



## Atholl Leisure Centre (Live Active Atholl)

Bell's Sports Centre hasn't always been the sole dome in the area. During 1978, the Pitlochry and District Recreation Association erected an experimental air-supported sports dome in the Recreation Park, Pitlochry, to enable the local community to participate in indoor sports. However, the Dome repeatedly deflated and complaints were being received regarding the noise levels emanating from the air dome's fans.

The air dome finally collapsed in August 1986 when it became apparent that it had reached the end of its useful life. The site was cleared and subsequently surfaced to provide an all-weather outdoor facility for local residents. Their's was an active local committee, including representatives of badminton and weightlifting and the District Council had taken the decision that, when Perth Leisure Pool was completed, consideration would be given to supporting satellite leisure facilities. Pitlochry Leisure Company was incorporated on 30 August 1988 in order to take the project forward, with the former cinema site in Pitlochry purchased by the District Council and ready for Pitlochry Leisure Company to take over the redevelopment as the client for the construction contract. The Centre, when completed, was Highly Commended in the Hydro Electric BETA Awards 1989 in the Scottish and National Award for the Best Adaptation. The Award ceremony in London was attended by, amongst others, Councillor Kathleen Scott, who went on to later Chair PKRF Ltd.

The exciting development came to full fruition for the community on Saturday 31 March 1990 when Provost Alex Murray opened the new Atholl Leisure Centre. Such was the success that one year on, Pitlochry Leisure Company Ltd took over the day-to-day running of Pitlochry Town Hall which it incorporated into its business and community activities programme.

14 years later, in 2005, Perth and Kinross Leisure incorporated the Centre into its portfolio of facilities and took over the operation from Pitlochry Leisure Company.

## March 1990 Atholl Leisure Centre officially opens



## Dewars Rinks

In December 1986, it was announced that an approach had been made to St Johnstone Football Club offering to buy the 62 year-old Muirton Park at Dunkeld Road, Perth and turn it, and the adjoining Ice Rink and Bowling Rink into an Asda superstore. In return, St Johnstone FC would be re-housed in a brand new, 10,000 seater stadium and as essential work was required to both Muirton Park and to the roof and plant at the Ice Rink, it was clear that this presented a major opportunity. Bruce McDiarmid, a local farmer, agreed to provide St Johnstone with land at his Newton of Huntingtower Farm which would be suitable for the new football stadium (later to bear his name) for St Johnstone FC.

At the same time, Perth Leisure Pool was under construction at Glover Street, and as the area was zoned for leisure facilities it very quickly became apparent that the adjacent Dewars Whisky Bond site was an ideal location for a new ice rink and bowling facility. Still in the ownership of United Distillers, the site had lain vacant for some time and so, in April 1988, Chuck Hay, representing Central Scotland Ice Rink Ltd, approached Jim Cormie, Chief Executive of Perth and Kinross District Council, seeking support for the development of a curling, bowling and skating venue on this land. The project involved the acquisition of the whole of the Dewars site and the demolition of all the buildings including the C listed, large Bonded Warehouse.

The proposal put forward was that the shareholders of Central Scotland Ice Rink Ltd be bought out and a private company, limited by guarantee with charitable status, be formed. This would be known as Perth Ice Rink (1988) Ltd and it would carry out both the build and the subsequent operation of the development. However, it was suggested that if the District Council were prepared to give support to the project, the most appropriate way for this to be taken forward would be by having the whole development carried out by PKRF Ltd, who would remain owners of the building and lease it to Perth Ice Rink (1988) Ltd. Councillors recognised that, like the nearby Perth Leisure Pool, such a venue would be a considerable enhancement to leisure facilities in the area for local people, and a fantastic visitor attraction and conference venue.

By now, Asda had agreed to build the new 10,700 capacity football stadium and the Board of United Distillers, advised that they had agreed to sell the land for the ice and bowling rink to be developed, for the sum of £1. To mark the generous agreement the United Distillers Board was later presented with a token framed £1 coin.

Dewars Rinks has attracted many prestigious competitions over the years and is often referred to as the 'home of curling' in Scotland. It is renowned for its Olympic standard ice and was used as one of the training rinks for Eve Muirhead's Olympic medal winning team. Many top teams have competed in the arena, and Eve Muirhead won her sixth Scottish title here in 2016. Televised international competitions have attracted considerable worldwide exposure for Perth. The Centre is also the local home for indoor bowling and additionally, the large halls attract and cater for substantial conference, exhibition and events business.

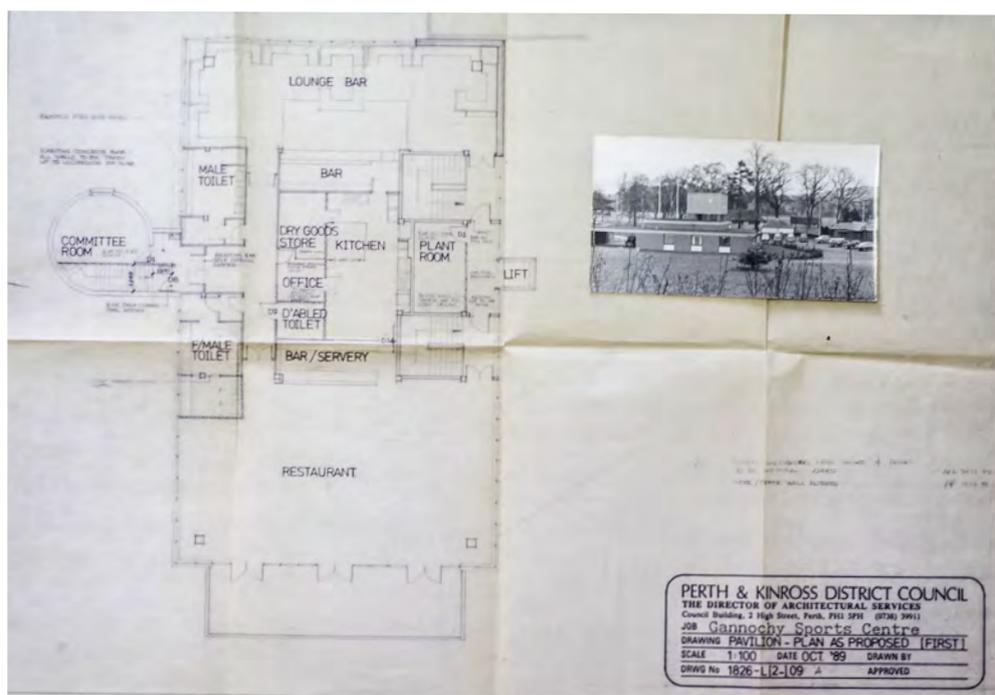
In 2012, Live Active Leisure took over the management of the building from Perth Ice Rink (1988) Ltd which was then dissolved. Several of the people involved in the operation by PIR (1988) Ltd continue to support the venue in a variety of ways ranging from Sports Specific Advisors, event management and coaching development and delivery. Among these people is David Hay, a world standard curler and son of Chuck Hay who played that vital role in the early development. Bill Duncan, current Chairman of Live Active Leisure is also a keen curler and remains active in attracting large, globally recognised tournaments such as the Perth Masters.



## Gannochy Trust Sports Complex

In September 1987, the PKRF Executive Committee decided in favour of establishing a golf pavilion and at the same time called for closer ties with the Rugby and Cricket Clubs using the Gannochy Pavilion. A meeting was held with the Clubs on 20 January 1988 to discuss closer links and the Gannochy Trust indicated their willingness to fund such a development.

March 1988 saw a fire destroy the old wooden North Inch Golf Pavilion, adding impetus to these discussions. All sides were keen to establish a positive link between Bell's Sports Centre and the Gannochy Pavilion with a view to creating a single all-purpose indoor and outdoor sports facility that could serve all sporting activities on the North Inch.



The proposals were awarded outline permission in June 1989, and linked the two buildings with a tented roof structure. The main entrance to the Centre would replace the existing entrance on the Hay Street side of the Centre, turning the building back to its original entrance from the North Inch. The ground to the front of the new complex would undergo extensive landscaping to enhance its appearance from the North Inch. However developments did not go completely smoothly as before construction began, Bell's Sports Centre was extensively damaged in the floods of February 1990. Additionally, during the construction of the tented mall, overnight security staff were required as the glass wall for the foyer had not yet been fitted. However, on a cold night, one security guard drove his vehicle into the foyer area and for warmth he had the engine running which caught fire. Thankfully, the guard was unhurt but the tented roof of the mall was destroyed.

The parallel with the fire affecting the original construction of Bell's Sports Centre was not lost on those involved and it is worth noting that Bell's Sports Centre has overcome significant flooding and fire over the years. During the construction works, builders unearthed the time capsule which had been placed in the foundation stone and this remained in safekeeping until it could be restored to its original position. The new-look Gannochy Trust Sports Complex (incorporating Bell's Sports Centre) opened at the end of March 1991 marking the latest milestone in PKRF's continuing programme of leisure provision. Over £1million was spent creating this iconic, single, multi-sports and recreation venue and for the first time since 1983, the entire complex had its main entrance from the North Inch. As the new-build section was unveiled, a programme of refurbishment began in the main arena and at the same time, the first two squash courts, both with viewing galleries, housed behind the main foyer were opened to the public. The entire complex was completed to great applause and excitement in August 1991.



## Loch Leven Leisure (Live Active Loch Leven)

During the mid-eighties in Kinross, support within the local community to have their own swimming pool was growing rapidly and following a public meeting in April 1987, a Committee of local people was formed to progress a swimming pool project similar to the one in Aberfeldy. Once again, the Committee established a Company with charitable status; Kinross Recreation Centre (Ltd) with an objective to find a site and raise the funds required to construct and implement the running of a recreation centre for the benefit of the whole of Kinross-shire.

In assessing the suitability of various sites, the Committee had approached a number of landowners with their proposals. They had identified that if they could secure the support of a private sector partner who was building a supermarket or a housing development locally, this could assist them by reducing the level of funding to be raised. At that time the Walker Group was proposing construction of 140 houses on a three acre site at Lathro, north of Kinross. They offered to provide £450,000 towards the cost of constructing a swimming pool and, subject to planning approval being obtained, to donate land for both a leisure centre and a health centre, to the community.

On 19 October 1989, Tayside Regional Council Planning Committee backed the Sub-Committee decision in favour of the new residential development with associated health centre and sports facilities, including a pool, submitted by Walker Homes. Local Councillor Bruce Crawford, who later became PKRF Chair and is now an MSP, was a committed supporter of the proposed project believing that "since 1954, local people have been raising money for a swimming pool in the area. These proposals will provide Kinross-shire with the long-awaited leisure facilities".



### July 2001

Goran Ivanisevic wins his first and only grand slam as a wildcard entrant to Wimbledon

2015



50th Anniversary: 1965-2015



Harry Robertson, who by then was the Company Secretary, reported to PKRF on the proposal on 1 March 1990, and tribute was paid to the efforts of the late Councillor Mrs Rosemary Ferrand and Councillor Bruce Crawford towards the realisation of the project.

By the time full agreement had been reached, overall funding for the complex in Kinross had come from a mix of public and private sector partnership. The main contributors were Perth and Kinross District Council, PKRF, the Gannochy Trust, the Arthur and Margaret Thompson Charitable Trust (Kinross), Todd and Duncan Ltd, The Scottish Sports Council, and the Walker Group (Scotland) Ltd. There were also numerous local donations.

The Scottish Sports Council were keen that sport and leisure facilities were readily and safely available to everyone within the community and the innovative moveable floor allowed Loch Leven Leisure to cater for the quite specific needs of very young swimmers and those with restricted mobility. The Centre was the first in Scotland to have such a floor and submersible boom as integral features of its 25m swimming pool. It also housed two glass-backed squash courts, a health suite, solarium, sauna, steam rooms, jacuzzi, showers and relaxation areas, a cafe and reception and office.

The new Loch Leven Leisure was officially handed over on 30 November 1992 by Mike Walker, chairman of the Walker Group (Scotland) Ltd, who had built the Centre, to Councillor Angus Baillie, then Chairman of PKRF Ltd. The £2.1m Loch Leven Leisure opened to the public on 1 December 1992.

Bruce Crawford MSP said recently "The development of the Loch Leven Leisure Centre was a vital step forward for Kinross-shire as it has greatly enriched the sporting and social life of the area. The capital financing for the Centre was, at the time of its building, a new way forward involving a partnership funding arrangement with the local community, Perth & Kinross Council, PKRF, the Walker Group as well as various Trusts. Without this arrangement, which was controversial at the time, I doubt that this fantastic facility would ever have become a reality."



## Strathearn Recreation Centre (Live Active Strathearn)

As in other areas, by 1979, the Rotary Club of Crieff, found itself responding to a growing expression of disquiet from many community interests at the lack of community provision. The committee called the first public meeting to discuss the possibility of building a community centre for the 75th anniversary of Rotary International and this resulted in the formation of the Crieff Community Centre Steering Committee. Local requests for the development of the Centre had first been raised 50 years previously by a local resident and went back to the time of Crieff Burgh Council. It had not been pursued because of concerns over running costs but by 1985, a study on sports demand and provision in Tayside concluded that, on the basis of unsatisfied demand, Crieff was the most favourable site in Tayside for a new sports centre.

In August 1987, following an offer of a site at Crieff High School from Tayside Regional Council, the Committee, chaired by David Crosbie, formed itself into a Company with charitable status; Crieff Recreation Centre Ltd (CRC). One of the Company's objectives was "to raise, in association with the community, a minimum sum of £50,000 as an indication of serious intent" and "to raise by direct appeals, grants, commitments and covenants the sum of not less than £2,000,000 towards the capital costs of a community centre". An extensive feasibility study was then commissioned in 1988, investigating the notion of providing a multi-purpose sports complex. What followed was, by this time, almost a 'textbook' plan for fund-raising. Fund-raising was split into local, national, Trust Fund, and Statutory Body fund-raising, overseas sources and philanthropists. Whilst it was acknowledged that the target figure of £2 million could never be achieved from local resources alone, it was also accepted that local fund-raising had to be given the highest priority. As well as local initiatives, the campaign was supported by author and broadcaster Miriam Stoppard and actor Denis Lawson, who came from Crieff.

In 1990, the Scottish Sports Council confirmed that the Strathearn area could sustain a swimming pool but in 1991 a group in Auchterarder was also pursuing a pool. Both Crieff Recreation Centre Ltd and Auchterarder and District Swimming Pool Fund approached PKRF for support in developing a swimming pool for their local areas. At that time, in addition to Perth Leisure Pool, there were community pools being developed or already operating in Aberfeldy to the North, Blairgowrie to the East and Kinross to the South. The provision of a pool at either Auchterarder or Crieff in the West would provide coverage for the whole District.

Council Chief Executive, Jim Cormie advised that realistically only one facility could be provided and in March 1994, the Sport and Recreation Strategy for PKRF Ltd gave commitment to support a swimming pool in the West of the area. At this point, Crieff Recreation Centre Ltd changed its name to Strathearn Recreation Centre Ltd to reflect the wider area to be served and it was agreed that the pool would be developed in Crieff.

It was reported that funding for the £2million Centre project came from major funders, including £50,000 from the Foundation for Sports and the Arts, £800,000 from the Scottish Sports Council Lottery Fund, £473,000 from PKRF Ltd including £200,000 passed from the former Perth and Kinross District Council and its accrued interest, £200,000 grant and £200,000 loan, £25,000 of which later was converted to grant, from the Gannochy Trust, £65,000 from the Executors of the former Strathearn Institute of Crieff, £22,000 from Scottish Enterprise Tayside towards landscaping, the James Gibb Kerr Bequest and a staggering £222,000 raised locally.

**February 2002**

The all-Scots curling team win gold at the Winter Olympics

2015



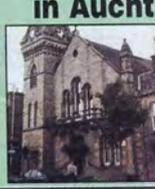
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**Sports** page 20**School pics**

pages 10 &amp; 11

**Win £50 to spend  
in Auchterarder**see  
special  
feature  
pages 6 & 7*This copy of the  
Strathearn Herald  
entitles a group  
of four people to  
a free swim.*

# A PROUD DAY FOR STRATHEARN AS SRC OPENS DOORS

A twenty year old dream finally came true when Strathearn Recreation Centre opened to the public on Monday 31 August 1998. It was officially opened at a formal ceremony on Wednesday 28 October 1998, hosted jointly by SRC Ltd and PKRF to thank all major fundraisers. David Crosbie, Chairman, in welcoming the guests said "This is the culmination of a lot of hard work and determination from across the community, in partnership with other agencies, the efforts of which will be of benefit to the community of Strathearn for years and generations to come."

There followed a number of community gifts, commemorating the efforts made by the people of Strathearn. A tapestry by Heather Moir was unveiled in the Centre on 3 December 1999 and Dr Christine McEwan, who collated a history of the project, and her sisters Janet and Mary, presented PKRF with a memorial clock on February 2000 to be located in the grounds near the entrance. Buchan Way, the footpath which leads from Pittenzie Road to the entrance, was named in memory of the former Regional Councillor Bob Buchan, who had been a member of the original Development Committee and a Director of SRC, and was opened on 22 May 2000. In 2001, SRC Ltd was wound-up and the assets transferred to PKRF Ltd. PKRF Chair Councilor Alexander Stewart and Company senior representative, Peter Bing, paid tribute to all those in Crieff and Strathearn without whose contribution over many years, it would not have been possible to provide the Centre. Particular mention was made of the efforts of Dr McEwan and David Crosbie and the Board of SRC Ltd.

In 2003, there was a short informal ceremony for the closing of a Time Capsule placed within an internal wall of the Centre. The Time Capsule consisted of a cover illustrating various sporting activities, a protector case filled with 69 items from the period since 1979 relating to the history of the Centre's development. Amongst the contents were copies of relevant reports, surveys, fund raising and other activities, gifts to the Centre, grants from major funders, photographs, and cuttings and issues of the Strathearn Herald. These were collected together with the design booklet from the architect and design team containing graphic illustrations of the stages in the design of the Centre; a photo history of the Centre's development; a selection of leaflets ranging from the opening of the Centre to the present date and a small album of cuttings. The capsule also contains the minutes of the final meeting of the Directors of SRC Ltd and a history of the development of Strathearn Recreation Centre compiled by Dr McEwan MBE and is a fitting tribute to the endeavors of the community and its supporters.



## The Flooding of 1993 & A Silver Jubilee

Along with the many developments of local communities and the immense fund-raising campaigns which saw collective dreams turn into very tangible projects, there was one additional, major incident which must be recorded during the PKRF years. The roof of Bell's Sports Centre dome was due to be replaced at the beginning of 1993 to address the issue of leaks which had caused many problems over the years. However, in January of that same year flood water once again engulfed the Gannochy Trust Sports Complex and at its height, lay five and a half feet deep in the main arena, taking over 36 hours to recede completely.

The entire city was brought to a shocking standstill; the 'once in 100 years' floods of 1990 had been made to look like a practice run as strong gales, heavy snow and rain lashed over the entire area causing the River Tay to rise to an incredible 15 feet above its normal level. This time the results of the flood were far more serious and like many families and businesses in Perth, Bell's Sports Centre ground to a halt.

It was announced that the flood damaged Centre would remain closed for six months, not re-opening until September. Many local, national and international sporting events had to be cancelled including the prestigious annual Gymfest, the Scottish Open Volleyball Tournament, Five nations Gymnastics Championship and the Scottish Youth Clubs finals. The five new squash courts which had recently been completed were badly hit with the floors ruined and a huge amount of equipment rendered useless. Amazingly, the main arena floor once again survived being submerged.

The Centre re-opened on 22 September 1993 and just a few weeks later, Bell's Sports Centre celebrated its Silver Jubilee. A weekend of celebrations was organised, aimed at all ages, and the party marked not only the silver jubilee of Bell's Sports Centre, but also the official re-launching of the entire Gannochy Trust Sports Complex after the floods. The re-opening was commemorated by the unveiling of a plaque and the list of invited guests included Provost Jean McCormack and Russell Leather, Chairman of the Gannochy Trust.

Worries that the centre might struggle to regain its position as a venue for sporting and non-sporting events following the 1993 flood damage proved unfounded and every event lost to the floods signed-up again for the following year.

**January 1993**  
**River Tay flooding**



**May 2005**  
Liverpool beat AC Milan,  
to win the Champions League

2015



50th Anniversary: 1965-2015



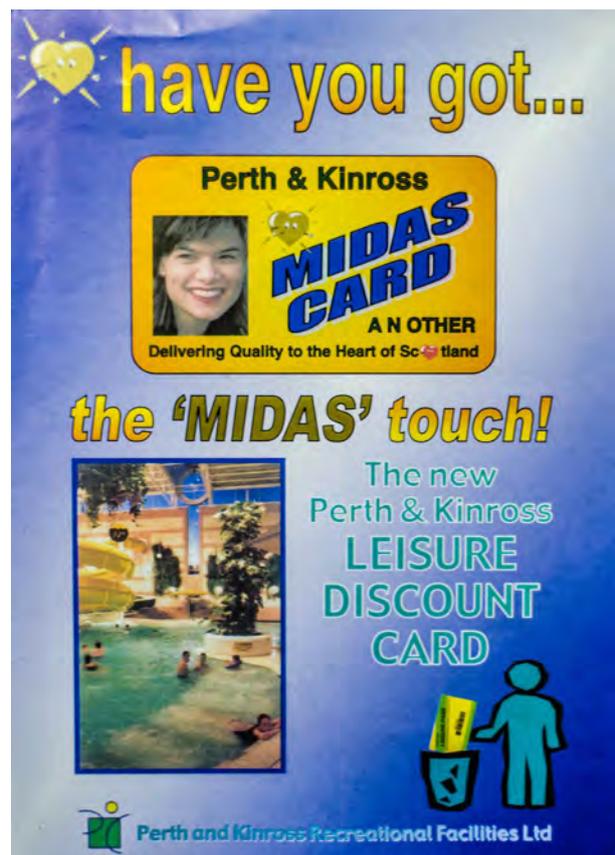
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# The Perth and Kinross Leisure Years

In October 2000, a new Company base was established in the former Banking Hall on the ground floor of Council Headquarters at 2 High Street, Perth. The Company's expansion at that time was a result of the absorption of services previously offered by Perth & Kinross Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Department. A major restructuring exercise within Perth & Kinross Council had transferred these to PKRF Ltd and the first Company Chief Executive, Peter Bing was appointed; having transferred from a senior position within the Council and with a long historical association with the Company and many communities. By this point it was recognised that sports and leisure services provided by PKRF Ltd were fundamental to the social and recreational make-up of the communities that they served. The facilities, many of which had been created via local fundraising, had been entrusted to PKRF and they provided an important community focus and a local resource which was available to everyone. They also functioned as venues for a range of events and services essential to the pursuit of healthy lifestyles. Then, as now, these facilities and services were an essential contributor to the acknowledged quality of life experienced by residents of, and visitors to, the Perth and Kinross area.

In 2001, the changing nature of Government and the desire to place people at the centre of the decision making process changed the focus of service provision. PKRF had a significant track record in ensuring the highest standards of facility and service delivery. Despite ongoing resource pressures, the Company continued to enjoy an enviable reputation as a market leader in terms of quality and innovation. With this, it provided an extremely efficient and effective means of delivering a sports and leisure facility service on behalf of the Council and the communities of Perth and Kinross. The change of name to Perth and Kinross Leisure officially took place on 20 April 2001.

Following a review by The Scottish Charity Law Review Commission and to comply with legal advice, the membership of the Company's then Executive Committee - which acted as the Board and Trustees of the Company - was changed to nine members. Three of these members were appointed by Perth and Kinross Council with the remainder being independent. This brought to the Company a wealth of expertise and wide-ranging experience, a tangible benefit that remains evident to this day.



## Community Campuses

From 2007 to 2011, a total of six new education and community facilities were built through Perth and Kinross Council's Investment in Learning Programme. LAL was appointed as the management and operator of the sport and leisure facilities. These are in Kinross (Loch Leven), Crieff (Strathearn), Blairgowrie, Aberfeldy (Breadalbane) and Perth (both Glenearn and North Inch).

### George Duncan Athletics Arena, Perth

The long awaited athletics venue in Perth was developed and owned by Perth and Kinross Council along with a variety of ancillary facilities and the main stand being supported by the Gannochy Trust; once again, on the basis that Perth and Kinross Leisure manage and operate the venue.

The venue was to be named the George Duncan Athletics Arena (GDAA) as a tribute to long-time athletics, track and field servant. George Duncan was a Perth man who although never an athlete himself, proved to be an outstanding Strathtay Harriers club servant, becoming its secretary for 25 years and coaching a succession of outstanding competitors. He went on to hold just about every post of responsibility in the Scottish Athletics Federation and was twice awarded the 'Tom Stillie Memorial Trophy', presented annually to the Scot deemed to have contributed most to athletics (the only other two time winner being Allan Wells). The myriad of clubs, schools, groups and individuals who regularly use the venue boast great personal achievement from local to Olympic level.



**August 2009**  
Usain Bolt makes new world record  
of 9.58seconds in the 100m

2015





## Perth Concert Hall

In July 1996, the Executive Committee of PKRF considered a report for "Putting a New Heart in Perth." The Gannochy Trust had been a major supporter of the project from the outset, and enabled PKRF to acquire from General Accident, a property at Mill Street/Horsecross which would provide a site suitable for the construction of a new city concert and conference facility. By March 1997, PKRF concluded the land assembly for the Perth 2000 project, later to become known as Perth Concert Hall.

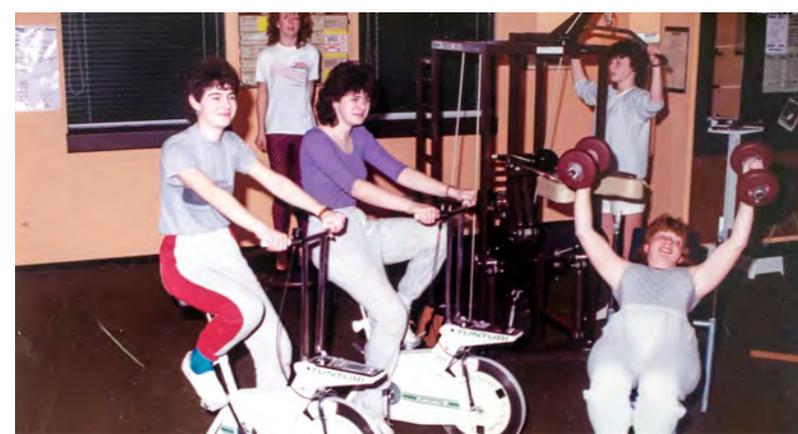
**June 2005**  
**Perth Concert Hall officially opens**

The proposal was for the building to be procured by PKRF and leased to Perth and Kinross Council; this was an imaginative approach to service provision which maximised the benefits and cost effective provision of Leisure and Recreation services for the Council. An International Architectural Design Competition for Perth 2000 was launched in 1998 and received submissions from architects throughout the UK, Europe, Japan and Canada. The winning entry chosen by the jury and announced in November 1988, was the submission from the Building Design Partnership (BDP) of Glasgow. Their entry provided a contemporary design that fully achieved the objective of providing Perth with an iconic building, created a visual impact whilst blending with a variety of architectural styles that existed within the townscape of Horsecross. Sir Robert McAlpine was selected as preferred bidder for the construction of Perth Concert Hall.

Before work began on the new Concert Hall, an archaeological dig was carried out by the Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust (SUAT) Ltd. There were some significant finds with the dig uncovering evidence of a medieval castle, first documented in the 12th century. This was an earth-and-timber structure which was washed away by floods in 1209. Other finds included an arched stone bridge, metal objects, coins, leather, wood, pottery, stone and bones, clay-lined tanning pits and stone-lined wells. A series of burials identified a chapel dedicated to St Laurence which was first mentioned in 1328, and was given to the Dominican friars in 1405. Until the dig, no archaeological evidence of the castle or chapel had ever existed.

The 'topping-out' ceremony was held on 30 September 2004 and the opportunity was taken to mark the launch of Horsecross, the organisation that would operate the venue. Construction was completed in February 2005 and Horsecross took up tenancy on 1 April 2005. The venue was officially opened by Her Majesty officially in June 2005 and the formal opening took place over the weekend of 15 September 2005. Perth & Kinross Council went on to purchase Perth Concert Hall on 28 March 2008.





### **Blairgowrie Recreation Centre (Live Active Blairgowrie)**

Blairgowrie Recreation Centre was originally developed between 1982 and 1984 by the Local Authority on the basis of providing a joint use facility for both the local community and Blairgowrie High School. As early as April 2000 the Company's Executive Committee considered the feasibility and potential benefits of transferring Blairgowrie Recreation Centre's management and operation to the Company. However, it was 9 years later before the advantages and standards of provision and operation were to be realised. In 2009, the strategic provision of sport and leisure in Blairgowrie completed the Company's reach across Perthshire, ensuring the residents of and visitors to East Perthshire were met with the same efficient, effective and consistent service as other communities in the area.

**February 2010**  
The Winter Olympics are held in Vancouver

2015

50th Anniversary: 1965-2015



# The Live Active Leisure Years: 2010-Present Day

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Following a re-branding exercise, Perth & Kinross Leisure changed its name to Live Active Leisure Ltd on 1 September 2010. The decision to change the name of the Company was made to reflect its main purpose which is to work together with its customers and partners, to create and provide opportunities for people to participate in sport, leisure and physical activity and therefore "Live Active".



## Financial Benefits Provided by the Company

The Company has, from day one, provided an invaluable vehicle for securing innovative funding packages and approaches many of which would not be made available to a local authority. This has enabled local project developments of significant monetary, social and economic value to take place, often acting as a catalyst for wider inward investment.

This innovative thinking set Perth and Kinross in the vanguard of provision, realising the significant benefits of charitable status. Live Active Leisure is exempt from Corporation Tax, VAT on entrance fees and has the ability to secure rates relief and to attract sponsorship in view of the tax relief on charitable donations. Significantly, such status also enables the Company to seek to attract funding from grant giving organisations. The realisation of such benefits has continued throughout the 50 years of the Company's existence and has enabled the delivery of huge and varied benefits to the Perth and Kinross communities it seeks to serve.

## Expertise

The Company's Management Team and staff have decades of specialist experience in providing public services uniquely combined with a market driven approach. This ensures effective management whilst at the same time, understanding the social and community drivers of the services they provide. There is currently a Board structure of eleven Directors all with specific contributions to make. With this being three Elected Members nominated by the Local authority, and eight Volunteer Independent Directors, there is a vast combination of public and private sector expertise, skills, knowledge and experience which provide an innovative, powerful resource, clear direction and sound governance for the Company thus ensuring effective services and greater prospect of sustainable delivery.

It is worthy of note and a great credit to past and present members of the Board, that Directors receive no remuneration or reward for serving the Company and community and commit their hours and expertise willingly even though, like many of us today, they lead increasingly time-pressured lives. The contribution of the Directors is of incalculable benefit to the Company and to Perth and Kinross.

The current Chairman, Bill Duncan, was recently the first recipient of the Sport and Recreation Trust Association (SPORTA) UK Trustee of the Year Award, which highlights and typifies the quality and level of contribution made by the Company's Board of Directors for the benefit of Perth and Kinross communities.



The Company also enjoys the support of a number of ambassadors, including Eve Muirhead, Stephen Milne and Pete Wishart to name but a few. These ambassadors are high profile supporters and assist greatly in raising the profile of the Company, its achievements and ambitions and in highlighting the value the Company brings to both individuals and the many aspects of Perth and Kinross life.

## The Company Model

Like most things in life, the Company model has seen considerable change from its original form in the 1960's. It has been a 50 year evolution as it has reinvented itself to ensure relevance, sustainability and maximisation of opportunity. The most recent evolutionary phase came on 20 June 2013 when the Company held a General Meeting to consider a special resolution that would see Live Active Leisure become a Sole Member Company with Perth and Kinross Council as the Sole Member. This special resolution was passed.

Councillor Ian Miller, Leader of the Administration, said he recognises all the benefits that the Company has brought to Perth and Kinross. In more recent times, the national health improvement agenda coincided with Live Active Leisure's priorities. Because the Company is run at arm's length from the Council, it allowed them to have a different perspective as a community organisation reflecting the views of the public throughout the area. Councillor Miller said that he believes the Company is irreplaceable as without it, many international and other events, as well as life-changing initiatives which have taken place, couldn't have been contemplated.

The Company is a key strategic partner, delivering increasingly varied services through a contract with the Council and other organisations and the current model continues to enable Perth and Kinross to enjoy significant activity opportunities and increasingly wider benefits.

Bruce Crawford, MSP and former Chairman of the Company said recently, "It has become clear to me just how central a role the Company plays in the life of Perth and Kinross. It is at the forefront of helping to provide the quality of life we rightly cherish. In its own way, the Company is also a considerable generator of economic and tourist opportunity attracting visitors from far and near".



**April 2011**  
Rory McIlroy becomes the youngest  
US Open Winner since Bobby Jones in 1923

2015



50th Anniversary: 1965-2015



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## A Venue for the Future - PH<sub>2</sub>O

The need to consider facility development within a strategic framework is greater than ever before and the Company must consider this when reviewing its approach towards the effective and efficient ongoing provision of key venues. It is not difficult to imagine that since its inception some 50 years ago, some of these facilities are ageing and therefore increasingly inefficient to maintain and operate. It also stands to reason that they do not all provide the flexibility required in the 21st century.



In 2012, it was announced that PH<sub>2</sub>O was the Company's vision for delivering a sustainable hub of sport, leisure and physical activity at the Perth Leisure Pool and Dewar's Centre site. This project is not just for Perth but for the whole of the Perth and Kinross area, and aims to maximise engagement from the entire community and its visitors in the heart of a healthy and vibrant city. The project is planned to complement Bell's Sports Centre as the Company's other City flagship venue.

Live Active Leisure aims to transform the existing Dewars Centre/Perth Leisure Pool site. Plans are at the development stage but hopes are high that the significant reconfiguration and redevelopment will be realised and will be a fitting reflection of the success and gains that the current site venues have delivered for almost 30 years; not least of which, the enjoyment and fun provided to millions of users. The project will form an integral part of ambitions to see Perth become one of Europe's most vibrant small cities and with that, residents will enjoy many wider benefits.

As always, fund raising is a key requirement and under the Project Board Chairmanship of LAL Director Mike Robinson, the project is a reflection of the necessity of partnership commitment and support towards a common goal with wide-ranging community rewards.

The Council's then Lifelong Learning convener and now Provost, Councillor Liz Grant shared the Company's vision when she said, "In making this capital commitment, we are determined that our leisure facilities continue to improve to meet the challenges and needs of the future. It is time for more radical change to keep our ice rink and swimming pool at the forefront. I look forward to working closely with Live Active Leisure to make sure we have the best possible facilities for residents and visitors alike".

For those that don't know, the project is currently known as "PH<sub>2</sub>O" as an extract from the site postcode and the coincidentally appropriate inclusion of "H<sub>2</sub>O" given that water and ice facilities form such a central part of the current and future attraction.



# Our Achievements



Whilst to many it may be considered as stating the obvious, arguably the greatest 'gift' the Company has delivered and increasingly offers, is improved health and wellbeing. Live Active Leisure recognises it has a fundamental role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of our local communities. The Company now has a long and proven track record in providing services that have a positive impact across our communities, most obviously through the core business streams of Fitness, Wellbeing, Sport, Children and Young People. Every experience with LAL results in a positive physical, mental or social benefit and in excess of 1.3 million customers across all life stages each year; including many thousands on targeted or supported Wellbeing Programmes work with us to gain these benefits.



LAL commissioned the first 'Social Return on Investment' study in 2013 to measure the impacts of its sport, leisure and physical activity programmes and venues. The findings contained in this study, based on assessment of a range of LAL's programmes and services, represent only approximately 70% of its activities, and suggests that the true impact of LAL is expected to be much higher. The study gives a clear indication that monies invested in LAL provide a social return value of at least £11.8 million on the areas studied and adds significantly to the wellbeing of our communities. It is notable that these are very conservative evaluations. The report highlights that irrespective of the challenges of the economic climate, monies utilised by LAL represent a true investment in the wellbeing of the people of Perth and Kinross. The Company appreciates that through partnership and with the ongoing support of other organisations, the key challenge is to extend this positive and potentially life-changing impact to those who are not currently active and ensure it helps people maintain an 'active life for life'. Linton Scarborough, a past Chairman of LAL, reflected the views of Directors past and present, when he spoke passionately about the fact that with increasingly sedentary lifestyles, use of cars, home entertainment, and risk-averse choices, the best way to divert children away from inactivity is through an exemplary provision of sports and activity choices.



A key example of this is the long established partnership between Live Active Leisure and The Gannochy Trust which has continued to deliver significant benefits to the sporting community of Perth and Kinross. Investment in programmes that support local people to achieve their full potential through sport as athletes or volunteers has contributed to positive outcomes for individuals, clubs and communities. The generous funding provided by The Gannochy Trust is used to support an annual programme for Sport and Active Recreation Initiatives. These initiatives offer a diverse range of opportunities and support mechanisms provided by a variety of stakeholders including schools, clubs, community organisations and services to inspire participation in sport and active recreation in many ways and at all levels.



August 2012  
29 gold, 17 silver and 19 bronze medals  
for Great Britain at London Olympics

2016



50th Anniversary: 1965-2015



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In addition to delivering a myriad of health benefits on a daily basis, the Company in partnership with our local community, volunteers and funders, has delivered and hosted a number of key events throughout our venues. Bell's Sports Centre and Dewars Centre have been and continues to be the host to many national and international events in curling, squash, gymnastics and badminton to name but a few. Highland Perthshire venues have been delivering sporting events for over 25 years and have a reputation for presenting some of the highest quality events in the UK, winning two significant Event of the year Awards in 2014. The staff team, along with community support, deliver two triathlons in Aberfeldy and a 10K Road Race in Pitlochry on an annual basis and all events delivered or hosted by Live Active Leisure have a positive impact across a range of measures including boosting the local economy; profiling events and venues and the wider Perth and Kinross area to visitors, tourists and residents; and access through linking indoor with outdoor events and programmes. The Company has sought to move with the times, recognising that trends are constantly changing and that flexibility of services is key to ensuring relevance and in delivering real change and benefit for the people and communities it serves. When it comes to 'the offer' Live Active Leisure constantly changes and it is clear that after 50 years of doing so, the one thing that can be guaranteed, is further change!

To conclude, there seemed no better way to show the positive impact that Live Active Leisure has made over the previous 50 years than to use the words of many of its customers.



## **Emma Burtles** - Mum to Alfie and lead on the All Abilities Cycling project

Emma Burtles is the lead on a current Live Active Leisure project, All Abilities Cycling. The project has successfully been supported by the LAL Wellbeing team and recently purchased five tricycles (two of which are electric), a tandem, a side by side bike, some folding bikes and a KMX. They await delivery of a large side by side, a tandem trike and a hand bike. Next on the shopping list is a child's supported tricycle, a semi-recumbent tricycle, a wheelchair bike and another tandem.

Emma knows only too well the huge benefits cycling can bring to a young child. Her son Alfie has Cerebral Palsy and is unable to walk or support himself physically.

"Alfie loves the No Limits Cycling group and in fact, it's the only time he is independently mobile. He uses a Race Running bike which he pushes along with his feet and this has been amazing for his leg strength. We're a family of enthusiastic cyclists and I always felt it was a real shame we couldn't enjoy a day out altogether. It's a really difficult thing for able bodied people to appreciate, but this group has made a big difference to all of us."





### **Stephen Milne - LAL Talented Athlete**

Perth teenager Stephen Milne represented Scotland as part of the Aquatic Team in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014 and a Silver Medal in the men's 400m Relay. In 2016, he went on to represent Great Britain at the Rio Olympics and won silver again, this time in the 200m Freestyle Relay.

This young swimmer, may have been a key part of the Scottish Gold Squad for the past five years but whenever asked, he attributes his success to his ongoing membership of Perth City Swim Club, an organisation he has been proud to represent since he was only nine years old. Stephen continues to train with them weekly at LAL's Perth Leisure Pool.

His training is supported by the Institute of Sport via Live Active Leisure; strength training at Bell's Sport Centre with Gil Stevenson and Lifestyle coaching are all part of his busy schedule. The key element, however, is swimming, with six of his nine current weekly water sessions taking place in Perth Leisure Pool. He is directly supported by Live Active Leisure's Talented Athlete Scheme.

### **Graham Kilby - GP Referral Client, Live Active Loch Leven**

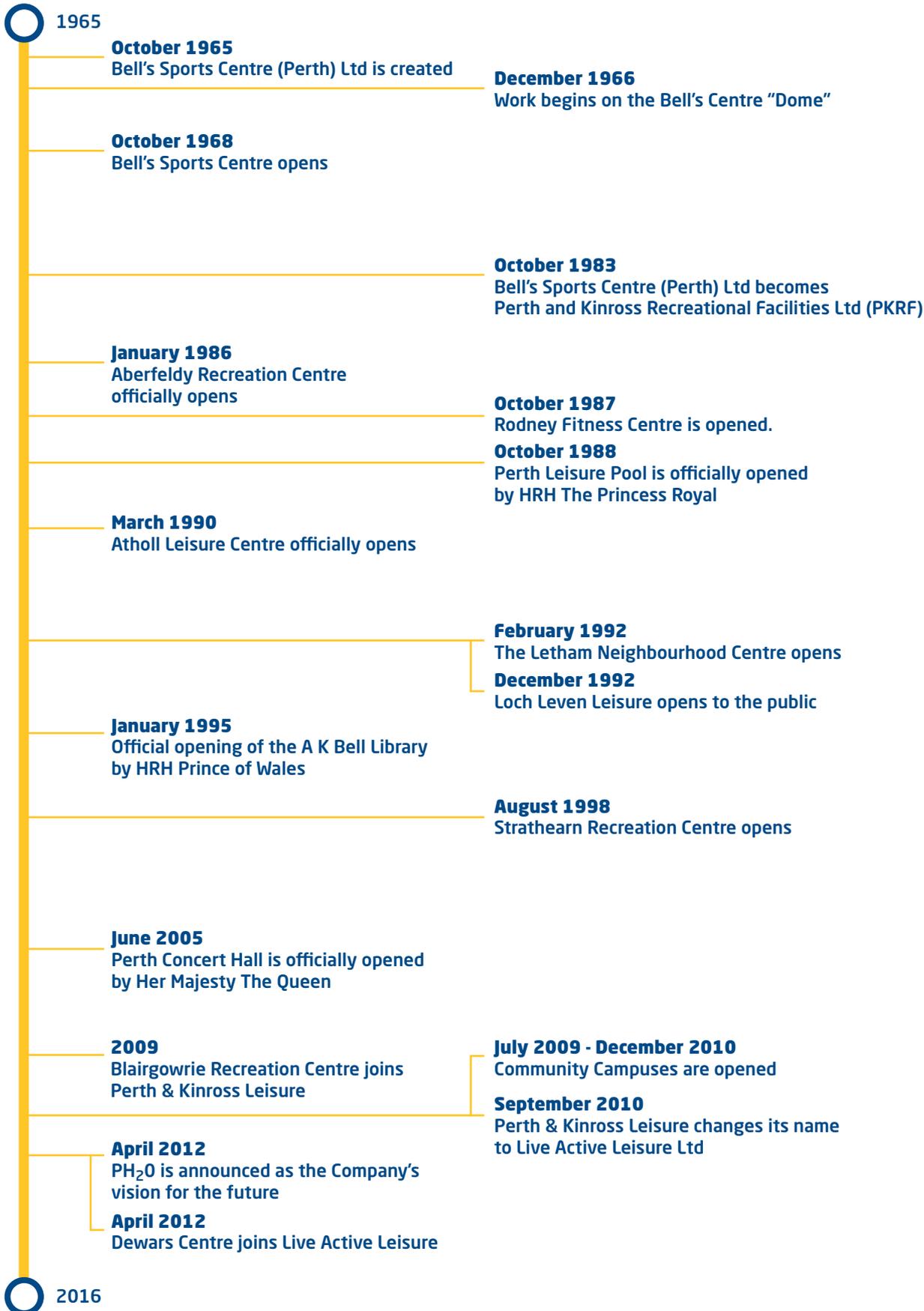
Graham Kilby started with LAL as part of a GP Referral group; when he joined the class he was overweight and had been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes; a result of his inactive lifestyle and unhealthy eating. During his 12 week programme, Graham proved to be an inspiration to other clients, by losing over 3.5 stone going from 18 stone to a much trimmer, 14.5. After six months, he completed a 50mile charity bike ride, ran a 5k race and signed up for Football Fans in Training with St Johnstone FC.

Graham said: "I started the class by attending twice a week. I was given a programme to follow which was monitored and adjusted as my fitness improved. I thoroughly enjoyed the 12 week programme and have now taken out a gym membership and attend the gym on a regular basis."

He continued: "The staff are extremely approachable and knowledgeable not to mention encouraging. Everyone in the class was so supportive of each other and the 'banter' made the programme an enjoyable experience. None of this would have been possible without taking that first step and attending the referral classes. It's not been easy and you do need a lot of self-motivation and determination, however with the encouragement from the Live Active Staff anyone can do it".



# Our Journey



**July 2013**  
Andy Murray beats Novak Djokovic to win Wimbledon singles

2015





September 2014  
Gleneagles hosts the Ryder Cup's  
return to Scotland



50th Anniversary: 1965-2015





## **Celebrating**

**Perth Leisure Pool**

**Bell's Sports Centre**

**Dewars Centre**

**Live Active Rodney**

**George Duncan Athletics Arena**

**Live Active Letham**

**Live Active Loch Leven**

**Live Active Blairgowrie**

**Live Active Atholl**

**Live Active Auchterarder**

**North Inch Community Campus**

**Strathearn Community Campus**

**Loch Leven Community Campus**

**Breadalbane Community Campus**

**Blairgowrie Community Campus**

**Glennearn Community Campus**

**Nine Community Halls**



**[www.liveactive.co.uk](http://www.liveactive.co.uk)**

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Working in partnership with Perth & Kinross Council