



Sales administrator Allison Mackintosh meets the bird-watching Twitchers, who stopped by at the 'Strathclyde' office during their sightseeing tour of Grantown.



The Welsh musicians were given a Highland welcome by Nethybridge piper Charlotte Clark.



An unusual artwork created eye-catching attention at Loch Morlich.



The Dragon Strings electric string ensemble delighted the audience with a lively programme of music.

# Ensemble turns up heat at beach picnic

A SPECIAL PROGRAMME of summer entertainment hit a high note as an audience of more than 500 local residents and visiting tourists of all ages joined in the fun of a musical picnic held on the beach at Loch Morlich on Thursday evening.

Taking the stage were the Dragon Strings electric string ensemble, who delighted the crowd with a lively selection of music ranging from classical favourites to well known theme tunes and contemporary pop.

The talented 13-piece line-up, most of whom are classically trained instrument teachers, have been making a name for themselves playing at festivals and events travelling from their home base in South Wales.

Their concert at Loch Morlich was one of a series of performances around the area during their week-long visit to Aviemore.

As well as playing at Aviemore Highland Resort, the ensemble also entertained visitors at the Ptarmigan café restaurant at the top of Cairn Gorm, with the Music at the Loch concert, which earned them an enthusiastic standing round of applause, providing a fitting finale to what the Dragons described as a more than memorable week.

"We have really enjoyed both performing and taking the opportunity to explore the area, with the Loch Morlich concert being the icing on the cake," said cellist Clare Pusey.

"It was wonderful to have the opportunity to play in front of such a large and appreciative

audience in such a stunningly beautiful setting."

The Welsh musicians were welcomed in Highland style by young Nethybridge piper Charlotte Clark, with the event taking on a mini festival atmosphere with added entertainment provided by walkabout street theatre performers and an unusual artwork in the form of a life-size pink cow standing in the shallows at the loch edge.

The musical picnic was hosted by Carrbridge Community Arts, with the assistance of Loch Morlich Watersports Centre and the Forestry Commission.

Pleased that the evening had proved such a resounding success, co-ordinator Linda Jolly

thanked everyone who had given their help and support.

"We were fortunate to have the weather on our side and it was great to see so many people coming along with their deckchairs and picnics and joining in the spirit of the occasion," she said.

Earlier during the day on Thursday, the street performers, in the guise of birdwatching visitors, had also been out and about on a sightseeing tour of the area.

As well as creating a stir as they promenaded along Grantown High Street, the Twitchers from the London-based street performance company Cocoloco provided a head-turning performance amusing visiting tourists and locals alike as they strolled through Aviemore.