

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS NEWS

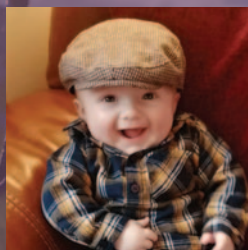
May 2021 Issue Number: 22



PREACHER'S TENT
EMERGES FROM
THE RUBBLE

REFLECTIONS OF A
FINANCE DIRECTOR

HELLO TO STRUAN



A JOY TO BE BACK

and... End of an era

SUMMER MAGAZINE SPECIAL

As you can see from the cover - welcome to a bumper version of the newsletter. We are now distributing a monthly newsletter in order that we can bring you news and information as quickly as possible. Twice a year there will be an extended version of the newsletter, in November and as you can see, in May.

Although we use these publications to keep you informed on what the Trust is up to, they are also a communication channel for individuals and groups. For you, it is a place where you can tell the world about something special, a baby, a marriage. For local organisations it is a place where you can publicise an event, promote a service or get help with a project.

There are a lot of residents who know this already! Many thanks to everyone who has contributed content to this month's publication. It is bursting with lots of news and information. Dive in and enjoy!

Gareth Jones
Director, SFCT

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The Stratherrick & Foyers news is published twice a year – online and on paper. any opinions expressed are not the views of the Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust and any businesses mentioned are not endorsed by the Trust and we do not take paid advertising.



Stratherrick & Foyers
Community Trust

CHAIR'S BULLETIN:

I have now been Chair for a good few months and I am starting to feel a little more comfortable in the role. I originally, unexpectedly, stepped up to be Chair following the last AGM in November with no idea how I would do it, if I would make a good job of it, or if I was the right person for the role; but I did know from my experience as a director that I loved to see stuff getting done. I could see the potential for lots of great 'additions' to our community and I wanted to get stuck in and help make things happen.

The Directors we have on board are a great team and we are all like-minded in

the way that we are passionate about helping our community in many different ways.

Since becoming Chair, we have worked hard to pull ideas together, being solution-driven but most of all focused on communications and letting the community know what we, and other groups, are up to. Facebook, monthly newsletters, a new website, the news magazine, and Tony's 'Five Things For a Friday' are all ways in which we are helping folk feel better informed and to share ideas.

We try to work professionally and collaboratively with all the brilliant organisations we have in our area and are here to help facilitate any plans these groups want to take forward - and there are a lot of great ideas out there! We are trying to become more reflective, take suggestions and feedback and make the processes we have in place more effective for the groups and clubs we work with.

One biggest challenges for me is being able to move projects along at speed. It can be frustrating and disheartening when paperwork and emails take over from getting out there and doing something. But we have seen a big shift in how we can work strategically and more quickly now that we have our new CEO Tony on board. His knowledge and experience have led us to become more professional in our project planning .

We know that Tony, together with a Project Manager, will really help to speed

things along and keep the pace up to completion. Having business plans in place and costings in advance, as well as match funding, will enable us to develop ideas and projects more professionally in the future.

The CAP (Community Action Plan) has been another exciting development this year. It is great that so many members of our community are actively involved. This plan will shape the way our community looks, how it is run and who we work with going forward. I love the Ideas Bank and cannot wait to discuss solutions with some of the working groups. At the end of this process, we will have clear solutions or 'projects', along with a mandate and evidence for our community projects - and we now have the staff resources to drive these projects forward and the connections to facilitate them. My hope is that this CAP will highlight all the excellent groups, clubs, and facilities that we already have in the area and encourage more people to get involved and share ideas; build relationships and connections so that groups are well placed to take forward their plans and that the Trust works in partnership with others so that we can make our ideas a reality.

I have really enjoyed my time as Chair so far and cannot wait for another busy 6 months! We are always on the lookout for new Directors so please get in touch if you would like to know more about what is involved.

Kirsty Balfour
Chair, SFCT

Loch Ness
Rural Communities

RURAL WORKERS PROTEST

On 19th March 2021 a unique event took place, entirely online. In contrast to the countryside marches of 2002, when 400,000 rural protestors took to the streets of London this protest allowed the voices of rural workers and their supporters, from across Scotland, to be heard. Young and old took to social media with photos, articles or short videos highlighting their concerns for future employment in the traditional land-based sectors, others wrote to MSPs and MPs, to the papers and appeared on radio and television.

Have you ever wondered how many people in this rural community work on the local estates, farms, in forestry, contracting and other related employment? These people may be considered as the backbone of our rural communities, they don't leave the Straths at half seven to return at six. They are here all day, all week, and all year, pulling us out of the ditch, clearing the snow, stalwarts of the local fire station and many have young families in the local schools.

But why would we need a rural protest? Increasingly, topics such as climate change, rewilding, field sports and food production hit the headlines. The rural working life is coming under increasing pressure from extremist groups and activists blaming us for everything from loss of biodiversity to climate change. Much of this is fashionable campaigning and is often coupled with factual



inaccuracy. The Revive Coalition and The Common Weal, new report (March 2021) looks at ten possible new or expanded rural industries – land management, wildlife management, commercial forestry, wood processing, deer stalking/venison production, horticulture, crofting, energy engineering, housebuilding and ecotourism. For each it estimates the maximum amount of employment which could be created and typical incomes for those jobs and it compares this to current use. All but crofting (which is

best considered a supplementary income) create higher rural incomes than current use as shooting estates and hill farming. And while it is not possible to sum up the jobs potential to get a single total (as some represent alternative possible uses of the same land), it comes to tens of thousands of potential jobs.'

However, we already have a mosaic of land use, including hill farming and

sporting estates, coupled with the renewable energy sector, forestry, wood processing and tourism with varied employment. Our local community thrives from the funding supplied by the renewables on local estates, providing local employment through community projects like Boleskine Community Care, the envy of many. We have sustainable food production from sheep, cattle and game married with land management promoting habitat for

waders and black grouse and aiding the translocation of local Golden Eagle chicks to the South of Scotland reintroduction project, peatland restoration and new woodland planting all on our doorstep already.

Beware what you wish for and question what you are told by campaigners for change.

Jenny McCallum

THE TRUST IS THE COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY IS THE TRUST

I've enjoyed my first month in my new role as Manager at the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust.

It is understandable that community members sometimes talk to each other as 'I am a community member' and you are 'the Trust'.

The 'Trust', for me at least, is the vehicle which has to be set up to provide checks and balances to ensure nothing untoward is done. These checks and balances can seem to be overly bureaucratic (they can be and can always be improved) but they are there to ensure monies 'gifted' to the community either by community benefit from windfarms and hydro-electric schemes or from funders are managed in the right way. It also, in theory, protects volunteers and staff who run activities on behalf of the community!

The meeting structures are in place so all voices can be heard around a table and a consensus can be reached having all the information, sometimes too complex to tweet or explain in a Facebook post or describe on a website story. Not everyone will agree, but once an agreement is reached that must be the decision taken forward. So, when you might say 'the Trust should think about this' then usually one (or more) community member has suggested your comment around that Directors' table when coming to their eventual decision. Many community groups work in the same way.

The Community in 2021 may be different to the one which participated in the 2013 survey. If that is the case the Trust is not the same organisation it was a year ago. Or five years ago. Or ten years ago. The vehicle is, perhaps with the odd change to its constitution, the same but the people involved are different and adapting to the here and now and what has been learnt over the lifetime of the Trust.

For example a new website, or newsletter, a desire for a Community Action Plan or even this magazine doesn't come out of nowhere. They come from knowing people want to learn more, be engaged, be communicated to, listened to and perhaps bring a little bit of their own knowledge to the discussion. Perhaps even before joining 'the Trust' the Director also felt they weren't being communicated with effectively and decided to do something about it.

First and foremost a Trust Director is a member of the community. They don't necessarily have to have specific skills (although it helps). They just must live here and have the time and passion to make things happen. Some can be great in maintaining a collegiate way of working. Some people, well, it perhaps isn't for them. I'm sure their heart is in the right place. Or they thrive on it and bring their inbuilt skills and knowledge and make things happen that they are passionate about.

Therefore, when we say the Trust, it is an incorrect term. We mean the Community Members who are actively trying to make a difference. The Community Members who are sensitive to the community they are part of. The Community Members, one of which is bound to reflect your voice as they sit



around a table, trying to balance everyone's needs and wants depending on their life stage. They too can be frustrated at the vehicle that has been replicated throughout 300 community groups across Scotland. However, that vehicle is set up so we don't undermine the integrity, professionalism and organisation of communities and has developed over the last ten years or so.

This year, more than ever, we have seen how the community on our doorstep can pull together. The boundaries that separate Community Groups have been lowered, people with busy lives have had time to volunteer when needed, we have discovered people and things about our local surroundings that we never knew and our priorities may have changed. We have learnt that we can trust in ourselves when we need it the most, whatever the future challenges may be. Long may it continue.

Tony Foster
Manager, SFCT

A MASSIVE THANK YOU!

A bowl of soup, no matter how flavoursome, I have always perceived as basic sustenance, nothing more. Despite my longstanding scepticism of this lowly foodstuff, recently it has been promoted in my mindset. The heavenly offerings delivered by Soup to Go are a decadent treat. The piping hot nectar, which is laid before me on a Monday, with a soft floury bread roll nestled neatly aside, is a winning combination indeed. It never fails to satisfy. For optimum enjoyment, I confess to partaking in the uncouth practice of dunking the luxurious bap unceremoniously into the steaming hot broth. At this, my family look on with disdain at the dribbling wreck afore them. Only momentarily reclaiming an ounce of dignity, I then delve unashamedly into the obligatory portion of decadent cake provided, which brings this gastronomic experience to a scintillating close.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in our compassionate community, the Ladies Wot Cook are consistently creating culinary masterpieces, for those amongst us with a more robust appetite. The top-notch nosh lovingly prepared in their kitchen hits the spot of famished tums for miles around. They offer up a

vast array of hearty meals. It is a feast for all our senses when hubby tucks into these taste sensations - they look and smell utterly sublime - his speedily cleared plate is a testament to their tastiness too. Whether it's a single portion you seek or enough to feed an entire family, this non-funded organisation encourages merely an anonymous donation of however much you're able to afford.

For sheer effort and enterprise alone, both these delectable dining experiences are worthy of Michelin Stars. Painstakingly prepared by folks with evident culinary genius who genuinely care, these meals ne'er fail to deliver their promise of comforting soul food. Whichever menu suits your palate best, or, if you should so choose to banquet on a combination of the two (and why not indeed), these sumptuously divine dishes provide a pick-me-up to kickstart your lockdown week.

Our heartfelt thanks go to both these selfless organisations for kindly keeping our tummies well fed, our tastebuds truly tantalised and our spirits raised. We are perhaps less enamoured by the lockdown pounds which continue to pile on evermore. Ach, you only live once - as long as it's within healthy parameters - I say, dig in and enjoy!

Siobhan Beith



COMMUNITY PLAYS A SWEET TUNE

Hello !

My name is Julie and I recently moved to Whitebridge with my partner Mark.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone we have met so far and who have made us feel so welcome, especially in these unusual times!

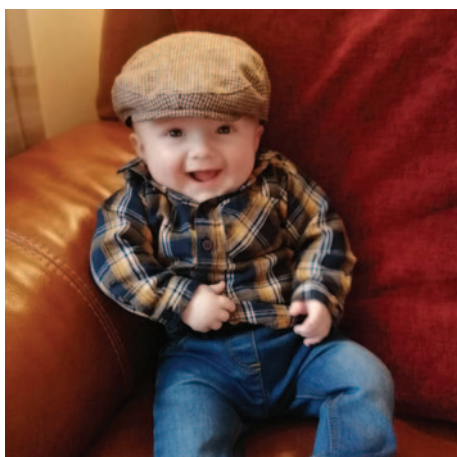
We've relocated from the Scottish Borders with our two rescue donkeys, hens and bees. We are both musicians. I teach piano, singing, flute and beginner's guitar (all online at the moment!) and ran a community choir and a children's choir in the Borders both of which I started from scratch. I also work with a Scottish charity called The Cheyne Gang which uses singing to help with breathing and lung health. Singing for Lung Health | The Cheyne Gang | Edinburgh

Although performances and live music events have been on hold for a while, we have kept busy settling in and exploring the beautiful countryside on our doorstep.

I am looking forward to resuming teaching face to face but currently have some lesson slots available online for those of you who want to discover your hidden talents or brush up your skills!

You can find me at www.JulieNessMusic.co.uk

HELLO TO STRUAN!



STRUAN JOHN ROBERTSON

Rachel Pinkerton of Foyers Primary School and her partner Raymond welcomed Struan John Robertson into the world on the 15th of September 2020.

ROY AND ANNA TIE THE KNOT



Roy and Anna Peterkin were married on the 18th December 2020 at the Loch Ness Country House Hotel. Lily, Anna, Fearne, Roy Peterkin's now live at Croftdhu.



**WILLIAM JOHN
MACKINTOSH,
NEWLANDS, ERROGIE**

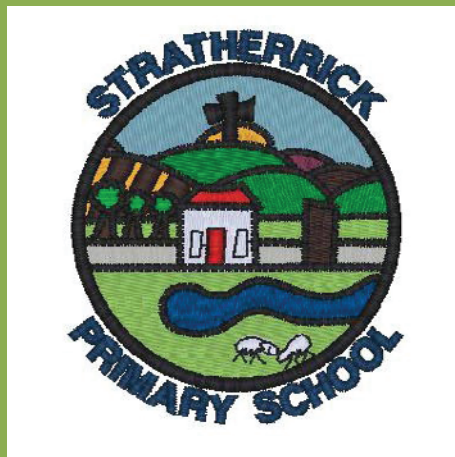
Born 29th September 1933 died 17th August 2020

Willie “Mac” was the youngest of two brothers and three sisters brought up on the family croft at Newlands and was one of the older generations of Errogie and Stratherrick locals. His first school was the old village school in Errogie where he was renowned for the neatness of his exercise books and from there he moved down to Foyers for his secondary education.

He was an enthusiastic crofter who loved to attend marts from Inverness to Corpach and revelled in the social interaction with other farmers and dealers. Despite being single handed he ran stock on many other areas of land from Whitebridge to Gorthleck, Trinloist and Aultnagoire and could always be relied upon to provide help and advice on all matters agricultural from hay making to clippings and dippings.

His other great interest was Stratherrick Clay Target Club originally known as the Gun Club and before that the Stratherrick Glass Ball Club where he was chairman for many years alongside Secretary Murdo Campbell from Torness. Despite spending his later years in sheltered housing in Inverness, Willie kept in close touch with his former neighbours and could always be relied upon to attend local funerals immaculately attired and wearing a distinctive “Homburg” hat; not a style much in evidence in present times! Ironically, attendance at his own service had to be limited by Corona virus restrictions and I regret that we never did manage to make our planned trip to the annual Lairg lamb sales.

Alex Sutherland



Stratherrick Primary School

SCHOOL BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF

“After a strange but rewarding start to the New Year, we were really happy that we could do our bit to support the community by being open for vulnerable and key worker children. We have been able to get all pupils back in school from February! They were all so happy to see their friends and start to learn in class again.

Last term in the nursery we saw lots of new starts and everyone settled in well. Our group has expanded from 4 to 10 and, although this changed the dynamic initially, everybody settled into the warm school environment. We are

all looking forward to the Summer term, when we will be able to take our learning outdoors and enjoy the beautiful weather and environment.

We have been doing lots of Science and Technology Challenges in school recently. One of them was to create (using art straws) the tallest structure that would remain standing overnight. There was some great teamwork and thinking involved in this! Also, just before Easter we all had an Easter Egg Challenge as well. The pupils had to design a vessel to contain their eggs that would protect them when dropped from height! This was great fun and involved lots of critical thinking and problem solving. And we also decorated our eggs – just for fun!

This is going to be a different summer term, due to Coronavirus, because now parents and visitors aren’t allowed into school. So, we may have to find another way of doing our Summer Sports! Hopefully, the weather will be good, and we will (like the Nursery) get out as much as possible. We also are going to learn about The Stone Age this term! We cannot wait to get stuck into this – hopefully, it will not be too much of a ‘rocky experience’ for the pupils and we can ‘dig up’ lots of tiny ‘pebbles’ of information.”

Alan Graham
Head Teacher





Foyers Primary School

BIG FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mrs Robertson writes...

We are all delighted to be back at school and learning together again. There has been a great deal of effort from parents over lockdown. Online learning has been a great way to keep in touch, but it is just not the same as interacting with a class of pupils face-to-face. There is a particular value when learning is just like a conversation between the teacher and the pupils - and I have missed that so much!

At Foyers Primary we are re-establishing the school routine. After being at home with family for so long, pupils are getting used to being together with their classmates and getting to know each other again.

This term we are having a big focus on health and well-being. Pupils need the time and space to re-adjust. We know some of our youngsters have really benefited from learning at home and enjoyed baking or playing outside. We have maintained a wide variety of lessons on-line during lockdown. Soon we will be picking up some more academic parts of the curriculum back in school. Our older pupils are planning a community project. They will be working together to tidy up around the fence and stone-built 'Falls of Foyers' sign opposite the shop and hope to plant some flower pots to be sited around Upper and Lower Foyers.

We have ten pupils currently at Foyers. One new P1 pupil has enrolled this January. Our three Primary Seven pupils are all heading for the Inverness Royal Academy after the summer holiday. Emily Thomas has been covering as a supply teacher for the past year. We are expecting Miss Pinkerton to return to teach for three days a week from August 2021. We rely on Belinda Sanderson in the Office and Mrs Kirkland in her three vital roles as Pupil Support Assistant, Cook and Cleaner.

Thanks too to everyone in the community who supports our school.

Louise Robertson
Head Teacher

Stratherrick Parent Council

A JOY TO BE BACK!

So 2021 came round fast. Not returning to school after the Christmas Holidays was expected by the teachers and pupils at Stratherrick Primary School. However, now all experts at online learning and working from home from the last lockdown, the challenge didn't seem too daunting. Though probably for most, there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm the second time around. It all was not for too long and returning in February was well needed by all. As a mother and the dinner lady at the school, it was a joy to be back myself! After the confusion of days, weeks or month and the dissipating motivation of getting dressed into something other than comfies it was great to get back into a routine again!

Being in the kitchen at school I have seen just how much every child

thrives on the interaction between friends, play and learning.

In the classroom this term they have been learning about transport. The different methods; land, sea and air and the impact on the environment; pollution and waste. With the parent council funds we will provide new, more comfortable headphones for the children's chrome books to make it easier for them to continue learning skills.

Also, for the end of term they were able to enjoy an Easter Party celebration. They enjoyed decorating their own Easter biscuits and an egg hunt around the grounds of the school. They also did group egg displays with some amazing ideas and creativity!

Now to enjoy the two weeks off with the fantastic, ever undecided changing Easter weather.

Morven Moffat



REFLECTIONS OF A FINANCE DIRECTOR

When I retired from my accountancy practice in 2004, I swore that I would never look at another Balance Sheet again for as long as I lived. In fact, I said that I would pay someone to file my tax return. It did not work out like that. Word got around that a retired Chartered Accountant was living at Easter Boleskine and I was soon invited to help several local groups with their finances. One such group was the newly formed Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust. It had just received £22,000 from RWE Npower and was about to receive the first payment from Glendoe.

I confess that I was quite anti windfarms at that time, proudly displaying my car sticker saying, "Say No To Dunmaglass". But I was persuaded that more good could be done in the community by negotiating substantial benefit payments than the temporary disruption to be caused by the constructions. The turbines will be removed when no longer used and nature has a way of reclaiming the access paths.

No community stays the same however much its residents would like that to be. Economically it either grows or declines. Stratherrick and Foyers had been in economic decline since the aluminium factory closed in the 1960s. After all, it used to have a sports field, tennis courts, a thriving shinty team, two community halls, at least one more bar than now (Foyers Hotel), 2 more churches, a petrol station and, for a while, an ecological training centre at Wildside.

Here was an opportunity to make a change, to protect the schools and the doctors' surgery, to improve facilities, to support local groups and to encourage families to remain in the area and, indeed, to encourage new families to join us.

In those days the Trust had an eight-year residency qualification for directors and I joined as Treasurer. I have enjoyed six years in that post and six years as Finance Director with a short break of two years in between.

In that time the Trust has gone from an annual income of £22,000 to over

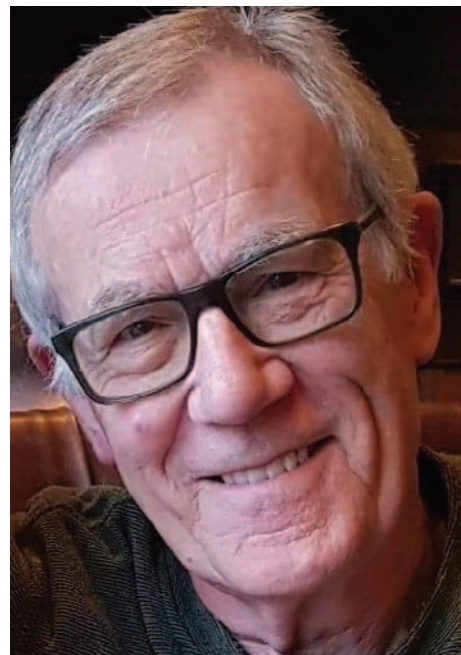
£600,000 and assets in the Balance Sheet from nothing to almost £2 million including freehold and leasehold property, the Legacy Fund investments and of course cash.

The days are long gone when the benefit monies could be distributed in grants to support local groups, it is now essential to move forward with Legacy Projects, projects that will make a lasting improvement for generations to come. It has been said many times, we either spend it or lose it, always being so incredibly careful that we do not breach our funder's conditions.

We have gone from writing out 3 or 4 cheques at the monthly Board Meeting to setting up 10 or more BACS payments every week. Our income is not spread evenly over the year with the majority of benefit payments due in the last quarter of our financial year, April to June. Hence, we need 9 bank accounts to spread the money around the system to stay within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. We have a current account at Santander Corporate but also deposit and savings accounts with other banks and building societies ranging from call accounts to 100-day notice accounts. As our finances are at the lowest in March each year, we need a budget and two-year cash flow forecast going forward to ensure that we always have sufficient cash available to meet our commitments.

The Legacy Fund is our "pension scheme", there to ensure that there are sufficient funds to support local groups and projects when the community benefit funds finally end. We receive excellent advice from Clarendon Financial Planning Ltd and the investments are held for us by Standard Life. We make monthly investments to take advantage of averaging, avoiding going into the stock market at the very top or the very bottom. Standard Life collect the dividends which are automatically reinvested but a detailed record needs to be kept of costs and dividends to comply with Companies Law and tax regulations.

We currently have four major funders and 2 smaller funders. SSE requires detailed separate annual reports for the three funds of Glendoe,



Dunmaglass and Stronelairg including details and values of new applications and grants approved, a summary of each grant project including total value, details of ongoing commitments and liabilities and an evaluation of the fund. Greencoat requires ad hoc reports for Corriegarth with similar information.

The Finance Director is ultimately responsible for managing these funds and reports. We have a Financial Management Policy and a Statement of Investment Principles that are strictly followed and regularly reviewed.

However, time has caught up with me and, with great regret, I need to stand aside for a new Finance Director to be appointed. Without doubt, this has been the most rewarding job that I have had in my life. The opportunities for Stratherrick and Foyers will continue to grow for many years yet. There are so many exciting ideas being discussed right now and such a young and enthusiastic Board to take these ideas forward. It has been a privilege to be part of the journey this far and to have received the continued support and confidence of the community that welcomed Kate and me 20 years ago when we first arrived.

I therefore end these reflections with an appeal. Is there anyone in the community with the time and skills to take on the role of Finance Director? I am sure that you will find the position as satisfying as I have done.

Frank Ellam

WILDSIDE CENTRE NEWS

We have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure the Wildside Centre is ready for groups to use when restrictions allow indoor gatherings. Many of you will not have had a chance to see the inside of the building since it had a make-over last summer and we look forward to welcoming people back to take advantage of this fantastic community facility. We are now focusing our efforts on sprucing up the grounds around the building and have cleared two lawn areas ready to install benches so that folk can gather and use as and when they want to. We hope you will use the space and let us know how we can further develop the building and grounds so that it is suited to everyone's needs and a useable space for many. Have a look at our website for more in-depth information on the early plans and ideas. [WildsideLandscaping.pdf](#) www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk. We are also extending the Broadband so that it can be accessed from outside the building, this is based on feedback from some events held last year. The outdoor space is an important asset for many activities and safe place for recreation.

We have a Steering Group in place who meet on a regular basis to discuss plans going forward. We have a vision as to how we want the place to look and feel and what facilities we might see there in the future. After the lawn areas and opening of outside spaces, we hope to create a natural, accessible space with distinctive features for all ages. We are always



looking for innovative ideas so get involved if you would like to help us out and have some input.

Several groups are planning ahead and have already booked Wildside for different events. Look out for Soup-to-Go/Lunch Club events, SOSA courses, Green Team activities and more! If you would like to hold an event at Wildside or use the building, then please get in touch with Laura at admin@sfctrust.org.uk

Steven Watson our Community Liaison Officer will be back in the building from mid-June. Steven is available to help with any grant applications. Please book a call or a chat by calling 07525 120966. Tony Foster, the new Trust Manager will also be in the building soon.



HOW TO BOOK THE WILDSIDE CENTRE!

We are very excited to open our doors again and hopefully welcome many of you into Wildside over the coming months! We have a range of rooms that can be hired out for many an occasion, event or meeting.

Wildside comprises of 3 main function rooms:

- The Board Room
- The Lounge
- The Lecture Theatre

THE BOARD ROOM

This is a fantastic meeting room, ideal for a community group meeting, it can hold up to 20 people. It is a bright, spacious room with views into the fields at the rear of Wildside.

THE LOUNGE

This is the 'dancefloor!' It has a wooden laminate floor, antler wall lights, a hatch door to the kitchen and views onto the fields at the rear of the property. It currently has a range of soft seating and tables as well as folding corporate tables and chairs. This room would be

ideal for children, fitness classes or social events as well as many other things.

THE LECTURE THEATRE

This is a mirror image of 'The Lounge', it faces onto the front of the building. It is a carpeted large spacious room. It contains many tables and chairs making it an ideal space for a large meeting, classes, tutoring, and almost anything!

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

The Wildside Centre has a fully functioning kitchen with large double oven, dishwasher, fridge, microwave, water urn, pots, pans and many utensils as well as a large crockery set and cutlery, mugs and glasses etc. There are also toilets, an accessible toilet and baby changing facilities. There is a Petanque Court available for use to the rear of the property and access to the river. The grounds are in the process of being developed to create safe seating areas with benches and picnic benches.

Book Wildside by contacting Laura at admin@sfctrust.org.uk – website details at The Wildside Centre | Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk





RIVERSIDE FIELD

After what feels like a long stand-still, plans to progress with sports facilities at Riverside Field are now on the way. After several public consultations, the final Masterplan incorporating the community's ideas has been submitted

to The Highland Council for planning. This process takes around 12 weeks, and we are receiving continued feedback from the architect developing the project. If the final Master Plan is approved, then this gives a green light for the proposed recreational areas on the field. We will also be given a Planning Officer which will help to speed up processes and decisions.

The lead Directors and Trust Manager Tony recently held a successful 'Virtual Tea Break' focusing on the issues and plans on the field. We were delighted that lots of Foyers residents turned up for a chat, as they have a particular need to be kept informed about decisions and progress. There were concerns raised regarding implementation of the Master Plan and worries that the field may be overdeveloped and underused. To confront these issues, we have set up a Steering Group, open to all. Foyers residents are particularly welcome, and we hope to hand over some key decision

making to them. This includes things like: What would you like to see on the field first? Would you like developments to be rolled out in stages? Would you like to see everything put in place at the same stage? What can we do to minimise impact on residents? How can we make sure the facilities are going to be used by the community? If you would like to get involved with the steering group, please visit the Trust website and click 'Join the Team'.

Restriction have eased, the days are getting warmer, and we would like to see the field being used by the community. This could be anything from a game of Rounders to Yoga or outside benches to sit and bletcher. Let us know if you would like to set up an activity or mow a space on the field for a run-around. Get in touch to share your thoughts.

Catriona Fraser
Director, SFCT

BROADBAND

The current pandemic has forced many of us to rely, more than ever, on our digital connection, whether it has been via online learning, enforced home working or to maintain connection with friends and loved ones via Skype, Zoom or Teams.

However, a fast broadband connection has long been a concern for the residents of Stratherrick and Foyers, and a survey conducted by the Trust in 2016 indicated that 93% of households wanted faster broadband. This was a time without widespread 4G coverage, no Universal Service Obligation to offer all homes a 10Mbps minimum connection and no certainty that that our area would benefit from any upgrade of the universal network any time soon.

In response, the Trust funded Cromarty Firth Wireless Network (CFWN) to build a network that would allow access to faster broadband. To date £110,000 has been spent on this, 65 households are connected to the network and faster speeds than ever are available through a fibre connection to the network.

Unfortunately, the expansion of the network to the northern part of Stratherrick, and also Loch Ness-side households, has been stymied by protracted negotiations with the Dunmaglass Estate about the siting of a

critical mast on a hill. During this time Broadway Partners started to provide wireless broadband access to Inverfarigaig and parts of Foyers and 4G broadband has proliferated. The good news is though, that a lease has now been agreed with Dunmaglass Estate which will enable many more households in the Stratherrick area to connect to the network.

In the summer of 2021 Openreach will confirm whether they intend to extend the Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) network to any part of our area that doesn't have it; Inverfarigaig and Boleskine currently do have FTTP because of a Highlands and Islands Enterprise initiative. This would be part of the R100 - Reaching 100% Programme - which is a commitment to provide access to superfast broadband of 30 Mbps to every home and business in Scotland. The R100 rollout in the North of Scotland was delayed by litigation from an unsuccessful bidder but Openreach has now been given the contract. The completion of this rollout in the North of Scotland is likely to be 2026.

The Trust has opted to delay the expansion of the network until the R100 plans for our area are announced in the summer as any households that wish to connect to the network now would have to use their Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (SBVS) Main Voucher, worth £5000, to purchase receiving equipment



for their homes as interim vouchers are not available yet. In doing so that household would then preclude themselves from connecting to any fibre connection that might pass their home as double funding is not allowed. Not only would that preclude access to the R100 connection for that household but may curtail collective area-based endeavours utilising the aggregation of SBVS Main Vouchers by households. The Trust's position accords with the advice of independent experts.

Notwithstanding this, 2021 is set to be a year when more of us get connected to fast broadband, and government vouchers, rather than Trust money, will expand the network further.

If you have any questions, please email Chris Gehrke at chrisg-dir@sfctrust.org.uk

FOYERS BAY

On Wednesday 28th April the Trust held the first Community Steering Group for Foyers Bay. This was the first of two initial meetings to bring community members up to speed on the project.

There is a 'vision' for the area but this will need consultation along the way to establish need. At present the only agreed current action from the community is putting in the slipway.

What is clear is community need, planning, match funding, a robust business/service plan and any substantial spend of community funds have to be agreed with our funders. The land is only leased and this will determine future developments beyond the slipway, if any.

After a number of investigations the British Waterways standard fresh water slipway has been recommended.

£70,000 of match funding has been agreed with Highland Council to meet the cost of this. The architect Mike Lawson has been approached to take planning forward and construction work required is being investigated.

The Trust appreciates this project up to this point has taken time. To support volunteers the Trust is putting forward (staff) to support volunteers and develop project and business plans. We do believe once the slipway is put in the users may consider further development of the site if it is possible.

THOUGHTS FROM MEETING

After the initial presentation we asked participants the thoughts on what they had heard.

- It was felt the project was starting to address some concerns previous to this meeting.
- Starting with the slip is a good starting point and will provide a better foundation for what people will want next. It was noted the current lease only allows for the slipway and storage/parking and the slipway is all that has been evidenced what the community wants at this stage.
- A step by step approach is welcome Harmony between Foyers Bay and Foyers Pier would be welcome.
- People getting engaged on improving the look of the site now would also be welcome so there is a sense of 'ownership'.
- Abandoned boats and owned moorings should be considered. It was clarified fisherman are already paying a nominal rent on land leased by the community.

- Those who attended would be keen to use current slipway and access to secure compound. Maintenance of area after slipway built is more challenging than building the slipway.
- Those attending were advised to engage with the current Community Action Plan, as this will establish 'need' in the community.
- The Group of Directors have been concerned at the pace of moving projects forward and have taken on staff such as the Trust Manager, Project Manager and Project Plans over last six months. We are also aware some legacy projects are perceived by some that they have not been rooted in the community and community need. The Community Action Plan (CAP) may evidence that but we are also engaging community steering groups such as this so they help drive it forward, encourage people to help and guide the Trust Directors when making decisions.

It was noted that £70,000 of the £80,000 cost of the slipway is being covered by Highland Council. The CAP will establish community need on several projects. Advised everyone to engage with CAP. If there is no evidence of community 'need' or community engagement this will make match funding difficult for any project.

It was decided to proceed with planning application for the Slipway in the first instance.

Thanks to everyone who attended the meeting, and we hope to organise a second opportunity to hear about the current plans for Foyers Bay soon.

Lorraine Lewis and Russell Bain



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

As I'm writing this in the clear chilly spring sunshine of early May, we've just held the first of five themed workshops to build the Community Action Plan. Eleven local folk came together to discuss "Better Connections": what practical actions are needed for transport, roads, paths and broadband.

Once again, my belief in the power of local folk to develop workable solutions was affirmed. Over the course of a fascinating and rewarding 2 hours, we developed a set of realistic actions. A community transport initiative as an alternative to driving, broadband in every home, better pedestrian safety, roads and paths - each of these is

achievable. More planning is needed and things won't happen overnight, but we have some solid proposals to share and test at the second Community Assembly on Thursday 27 May.

By 27th May, we'll have practical suggestions on the other big themes that came out of the community survey: housing, outdoors and nature, community life and organising ourselves as a community. All we need is you to tell us whether things are going in the right direction, what's missing, and what should be the priorities for the community.

Book your online seat now at www.communityfuture.net/book!

Nick Wright,
independent Community Action Plan team lead

VIRTUAL WORLDS HARNESSED TO DESIGN ERROGIE CHURCH TRANSFORMATION

The Errogie Church steering group held its second meeting last month and discussed a number of guiding principles that should underpin the transformation of the building. These included the importance of providing a highly flexible space in order to support as many activities as possible, retain a large space on the ground floor, provide a balcony overlooking Loch Mhor and avoid duplicating of activities across other sites the Trust is currently developing.

The primary outcome of the meeting was to establish a number of working groups to drill down into the detail of the building should be used. Seven teams were establishing covering the design and build, arts and crafts, heritage, music and drama, hobbies and social events/meeting people.

The purpose of the teams is to prioritise and list the facilities that will be required to support the activities suggested in the local and Community Action Plan surveys. This information will be provided to the architects to help them design a building that meets the requirements of the community.

Meanwhile the architects are moving forward on developing the plan for Phase 1; carrying out essential repairs.

Technicians have been in to make an accurate 3-D model of the building. This will enable the designers to play around with different ideas and identify potential design problems before they become actual issues. By putting all the pieces together in a 3D world, the community will be able to walk through a virtual view of the building.

This month the structural engineers carried out a detailed inspection of the fabric of the building. As you will recall the restoration of the building is being tackled in two phases - essential repairs first and then the transformation of the building. The Trust's has sent letters to a dozen architects around Scotland (including local ones) to ask if they would be interested in the project. The Steering Group will then select from a short list the practice that will take responsibility for the second phase.

The Trust has also recently put in place two key resources. The first is a caretaker/facilities manager who is busily bringing the various buildings the Trust owns up to scratch and will be handling tasks like finding storage for the historical artifacts that need to go into safe keeping. Alister and his Heritage team found some ancient bibles and pewter chalices under the rubble. They also pieced together a mobile pulpit from a pile of timber. The second resource is a grounds maintenance company - recently appointed by the Trust to keep the grounds around its properties in good shape. Part of the contract is to tame the saplings and scrub that has taken hold around the church. Please shout if you would like input into how they should approach this task.

A reassurance for those people who are concerned about the north of the Strath potentially doing its own thing! We are working alongside the team that is developing the Community Action Plan to ensure that the plans for the Church are fully integrated into the overall Community Action Plan.

Gareth Jones
Director, SFCT

GRANTS AWARDED

January – April 2021

The following grants were awarded at the Board meetings held on 13 January, 3 February, 3 March and 7 April 2021

STUDENT GRANT

Alannah Graydon £500
Gill Gray £500
Millie Ferguson £500
Ruaraidh Macdonald £500
Hannah Kelly-Tay £500
Kirsty Balfour £500
Caroline Mortimore £500
Roxana Elgar £500

LARGE GRANT

Stratherrick and Foyers
Community Council £58,000

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (MULTIPLE)

£11,800
(provided by Greencoat, Corriegarth)

HOUSEHOLD EXPENSE GRANTS (MULTIPLE)

£1,900
(administered by the Knockie Trust using SFCT funds provided by SSE)

Details of the purpose for which the grants were awarded are recorded in the minutes of the Trust's Board meetings

The next Grant Meeting will be held on 2nd June 2021
The deadline for applications to be submitted to the Administrator was 21st April 2021

The Grant Application Forms can be downloaded from our website www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk or email admin@sfctrust.org.uk



OUR COMMUNITY OUR FUTURE

ERROGIE - FOYERS - GORTHLECK - INVERFARIGAIG - TORNESS - WHITEBRIDGE

OUR COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY 2

**THURSDAY 27TH
MAY, 7:30PM**

**Reserve your online seat at
communityfuture.net/book**

**Everybody is welcome, whether you want to
contribute or simply listen to what's going on.**

This second Assembly will move from exploring ideas to agreeing actions. We'll focus on the practical solutions that will tackle the community's big challenges and aspirations: community transport, affordable homes, a community ranger and more besides.

**HAVE
YOUR SAY!**



**DON'T
MISS OUT!**



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

WHAT COP26 MEANS FOR US

This autumn we will all be made very aware of the importance of local action when the UN Climate Change Conference takes over Glasgow. From Monday 1st November to Friday 12th November the world will be focussed on Glasgow and what can be done at all levels to combat the crisis which most folk agree is making it harder for so many communities around the world to live a decent life. Whether it is too much or too little water, too much pollution or crop failures and inundation by the sea, there are things we can do in our lives that will lighten the burden we place on our planet's finite resources.

Some people are adapting to aspects of climate change or trying to make themselves more resilient to the changes in our weather or contributing to a reduction in carbon release by adopting and acting on zero carbon policies. Here in Foyers and Stratherrick we can't be chastised for not producing enough clean energy, but the next step for places like us is to look how we can avoid fossil fuels and cut down our own personal emissions.

Foyers and Stratherrick have been at the forefront of renewable energy development since 1895 when the Aluminium Smelter and first hydroelectric plant were constructed. It was a world first. Electricity is essential to produce the metal and ingots were made at Foyers. When aluminium production ceased in 1967, the original hydro plant was retained and upgraded. This plant still produces power every day from the Foyers River and Fechlin catchments.

The new power station at Foyers came on stream in 1974. Now rated at over 300MW, this is a pump storage scheme which pumps water up the pipe to Loch Mhor when electricity is in surplus on the grid. When the grid is short of power the generating station uses the water in Loch Mhor to generate power making a valuable contribution to peak demands. You can view the pipe connecting the loch and power station from the Glenliath road – the back road between Foyers and Inverfarigaig and the Hen Bridge. SSE is upgrading the dam at Glebe to make sure no water is wasted.



Above Whitebridge and Fort Augustus the Glendoe Hydro Scheme has a maximum output of 100MW. Water drops 600metres from the dam to Loch Ness along an 8-kilometre tunnel. It was opened by the Queen in 2009.

Smaller hydro schemes have been added on the Loch Killin Road and at Knockie.

Windfarms around Stratherrick make a substantial contribution to Scotland's renewable energy generation capacity. Corriegarth, Stronelairg and Dunmaglass turbines churn away supplying the grid with clean power. Solar panels on some buildings and homes also make a local contribution.

This link takes you to the official website. HOME - UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) at the SEC – Glasgow 2021 www.ukcop26.org

For a variety of up to date postings about the COP26, the Twitter hashtag is a good start.

COP26 (@COP26) / Twitter

This link takes you to a presentation on Highland hydro power which includes Foyers and Glendoe.

Highland Hydroelectric Power (arctis.com)

Peter Gilmour, manager of Foyers Power Station for SSE Renewables, said: "Pumped storage schemes such as Foyers have a crucial role to play in helping Scotland and the UK meet their targets to reduce carbon emissions. Foyers is one of many clean energy installations which SSE Renewables operates in the Great Glen and we are proud of the area's important contribution to changing the way we provide and consume energy.

"We are continuing to look at ways we can bring positive change to the UK's energy supply. Operations in the Great Glen are an important part of our plans for the future. Our proposed pumped storage scheme at Coire Glas, near Invergarry, is the first scheme of its kind to be brought forward in this country for more than 30 years and has the potential to make a profound difference to the energy market in Scotland, and the UK as a whole. We're looking forward to working with communities in the area as we take our Coire Glas proposal forward."

Regarding this year's COP 26 event, Peter added: "COP 26 is a unique opportunity to take decisive action on climate change and make bold decisions that will shape our future. We are excited to be involved as a key partner at the Glasgow conference and we're looking forward taking part in shaping the future of energy."



CRAFTERS GO VIRTUAL TO BEAT THE LOCKDOWN

Hello Crafters,

I know a lot of you have been busy with your various crafts because I have seen pictures of the amazing results on the various local Facebook posts. We are blessed to have so many talented folk living in Stratherrick.

Wild Crafts is open to all the community of Stratherrick, young and old but the pandemic has meant that Wild Crafts regular face to face drop-in days had to be suspended in February 2020.

Following the success of our Spin & Chatter Group meetings over Zoom, we decided to try using it for Wild Crafts meetings. So, on Saturday 30th January 2021 we successfully held our first Zoom meeting and have continue to meet fortnightly.

We have a list of workshop ideas, many that children can join in with, and wonder if and how we could hold one or two over Zoom. Parents will need to determine if crafts are suitable for their child and accompany/supervise them at crafting sessions. Why not check out the Wild Crafts - South Loch Ness on Facebook?

The format is very informal, everyone brings whatever Craft they are working on, mostly, knitting, crochet, embroidery, spinning, and naturally we blether away putting the world to rights as we work away.

The whole ethos of Wild Crafts is to share knowledge with anyone wanting to learn a craft and to share or lend equipment to our members on a try before you buy basis. (How many of us have bought crafting supplies only to realise that particular craft is not for us!)

Unfortunately, the pandemic doesn't allow us to do this right now, but lockdown is easing and, hopefully, we will soon be able to meet up in Wildside once again, safely distanced, possibly masked but together crafting and blethering away.

So, what have we been doing?

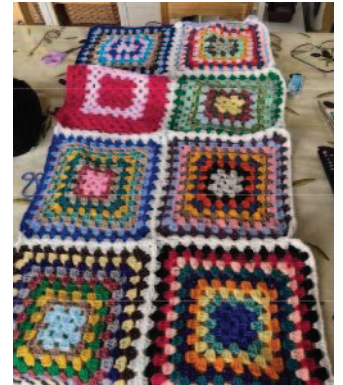
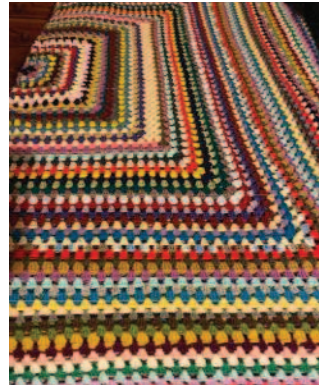
CROCHET



At one of our January meetings, a few crafters mentioned they would like to learn to crochet, so we decided to hold a Learn to Crochet Workshop on Zoom. A group of 8 ladies took up the challenge (and their crochet hooks) for the sessions lead by Morag MacDonald Pickthall. We were a mixed group from 'always wanted to try crochet' (several folk) to 'did it 40 years ago' (Mag Campbell), so we all went back to basics.

We held 2 x 2hr workshop sessions learning basic crochet stitches and how to make a granny square. We now have 8 new crocheters in Stratherrick. Here are a couple of early samples done by Heather MacDonald and Tracy Stronach.

Below on the left is the blanket Mag Campbell made 40 years ago and on the right is the one she is currently working on. Beautiful, well done Mag.



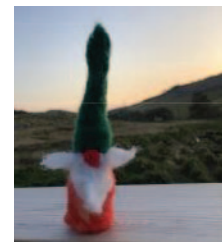
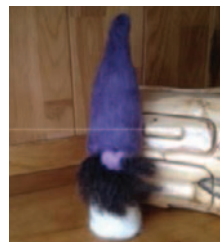
NEEDLE FELTING

Recently we held 2 Needle Felting workshops and had 8 attendees.

This is a good example of a craft that would benefit from meeting face to face and our ethos of being able to lend equipment allowing you try a craft before the expense of purchasing equipment. We were able to hold these workshops with people who had their own equipment.

Again, the workshops were good fun and we only hand one finger stabbed!

Here are some of the resulting works...



However, you do not need a workshop to learn Needle Felting. This is Toffee made by a local resident. It is a miniature replica of their Icelandic sheep of the same name, made from Toffee's fleece. Brilliant!



Here is another example of the wonderful variety of talent we have in the area. This beautiful cross-stitch embroidery was recently finished by Heather MacDonald. It was such a pleasure watching its progression at our fortnightly Wild Crafts sessions.

Well done Heather.

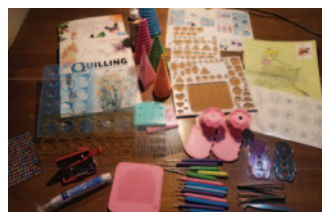
Wild Crafts have a long list of possible crafting workshops that we hope to bring to you soon. If you are a crafter and would like help others learn or improve a craft, why not host a Wild Crafts workshop. This could be done via Zoom or scheduled for when we can meet face to face.

We are really keen to promote recycling crafts and crafts for younger members of the community especially during school holidays. If you feel you could help, then please contact me at lynwoods@btinternet.com

Finally, I would like to say a very big Thank You to Jayne Brinkworth and Alex Coombs who have donated this crafting equipment to Wild Crafts.

Jayne has given us a large amount of Quilling equipment and Alex has given us a large box of wool for rug making. Both of these projects are on our list of possible workshops, so look out for these and other events on our Wild Crafts - South Loch Ness Facebook page.

Happy crafting! Lyn Woods



Green Team

PREPARING FOR NEW GROWTH

When Spring approaches, it's the time of year to think about preparing your garden for new growth. It's the best time to prune your plants in order to ensure they grow in accordance with the weather conditions in your area. If you leave pruning too late you will encourage lots of soft new growth that could get damaged by a cold snap.

Many people prune their plants in the autumn when actually there is nothing to gain from this as the plant will not start growing again until the spring. It is also worth noting that unless you have a specific reason, most evergreen plants do not need to be routinely pruned.

To give you a clear guideline of pruning, there are several reasons to prune plants: to encourage flowering and/or fruiting; to improve the shape and structure of the plant; to reduce the size of a plant and to remove dead, diseased and damaged branches.

If you would prefer to minimise the pruning required in your garden there are a good range of dwarf variety plants available. For example, instead of planting Pieris 'Forest Flame', which can grow up

to 5 feet, you could plant Pieris 'Little Heath', which only grows up to 30 inches.

When pruning your plants, you will also need to consider the time of year that they flower and/or fruit. You are unlikely to kill a plant by pruning at the wrong time of the year, however you may lose the flowers and/or fruit for that year.

For this reason, if your plant flowers up until or before May, then prune it immediately after flowering. Examples of plants flowering at this time of year include Forsythia, Kerria and Ribes (Flowering Currant.) If your plant flowers from June onwards then prune it in early spring (usually March is best). Examples of these plants include Philadelphus (Mock Orange), Potentilla (Shrubby Cinquefoil) and Weigela. Please note these are general rules, there will always be some exceptions, but these rules apply for most.

If you do not wish to prune early flowering plants such as Camellias, Magnolias and Rhododendrons after they have flowered, you can still prune them earlier in the year. To ensure you do not lose all the flowers you should prune a third of the shoots back one year, a third the next year and a third the year after that.

The best time to prune fruit trees and bushes is usually during the winter except for stone fruits (i.e., Cherries, Plums, Nectarines, Apricots and Peaches.) Prune these in March and this will help prevent a disease called silver leaf.

So, how much should you prune? As a general rule you should prune back the previous season's growth by approximately two thirds. Also make sure you completely prune out any dead, diseased and damaged branches including any damage caused by snow.

Always prune just above a bud, making a sloping cut away from the bud. All pruning wounds should be left to heal

naturally. Do not use any products to seal the wound as these can interfere with the plant's own healing and defence mechanisms. This will increase the time it takes for the plant to heal and will also increase the risk of disease entering the plant.

There are three major plant nutrients, and they all benefit the plant in different ways. Nitrogen is important for green, leafy growth. Phosphorous encourages root growth and Potassium or Potash, which is important for flowers and fruit.

All plants should be fed with a general granular fertiliser such as Growmore which contains equal parts of the above. There are a wide range of products and brands available including organic and peat free products which we support as whole. The aim of this article is to help provide information and not to dictate or promote any specific brands. Apply as a top dressing (by spreading around on the soil surface underneath the plants) at the rate specified on the product. You should water in the feed rather than raking in, as this can cause damage to the roots of the plant, especially shallow rooted plants such as conifers and Rhododendrons. Now is also the time to feed acid loving plants with sulphate of iron. Examples of these plants include Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias, Pieris and Skimmia. Again, apply at the rate specified on the product and water in afterwards.

To encourage healthy flowers and/or fruit, you can also apply potash. Apply just as the plant is beginning to flower, and again, water in.

It is also worth noting that whilst it is important to feed plants planted in the ground it is even more important to feed plants planted in containers. They will also benefit from a layer of fresh compost on the top each year.

Dale Lainton
Horticulturalist.

Soup to Go



SOUP TO GO

On Monday 16th March 2020 we held our last Broth and Blether at Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck.

We all know what happened soon after...Lockdown 1.

With the pandemic on going and several of us shielding etc., no matter how much we wanted to, we were unable to figure out a way to safely continue the service.

Move forward to February 2021, when the Brolly Group approached us to see if there was any way we could re-start a soup service. We digitally put our heads

together. We had had our 1st vaccinations and felt we could use the Wildside Centre to safely develop a Covid safe environment from which we could offer a takeaway soup service. Lists were written and re-written, Soup list (over 40 varieties), Equipment lists (cooking & takeaway), Costings etc.etc.

Working with the Brolly group, these lists went back and forth a few times and then we received the brilliant news that the Brolly Group had received funding from HIE and the Scottish Government and would be able to fund our service.

With all systems go, our soup making and baking volunteers as well as our volunteer delivery drivers were contacted and all 20 were happily on board.

On Monday 15th March 2021, exactly one year after the last Broth & Blether, Soup To Go open its doors to the community.

It was so lovely to be back and to see faces we had not seen for a whole year. Sometimes it was a little difficult recognising folk due to masks and long lockdown hair but the minute they spoke, there was no doubt who they were.

The Soup To Go service is free to all members of the community and ordering is essential in order for us to determine demand and calculate ingredients required.



Each week we offer a choice from 4 different soups, including gluten free and vegetarian, along with a bread roll & butter, a piece of homemade cake.

The service has gone from strength to strength, with a brilliant uptake and fabulous feedback, for which we thank you all. We recently received this comment from Siobhan Beith:

“Another absolute triumph from Soup to Go again this week. Honest to goodness our heartfelt thanks go to everyone whose diligent efforts make this roll out possible. It is simple Community selflessness demonstrated once again at its absolute best”.

Thank you, Siobhan, we can honestly say it is our pleasure. We so look forward to our weekly ‘duties’, the companionship, and of course... our putting the Strath and the world to rights!

Recently the Brolly Group joined us at the soup collection and gave out Activity Packs to those who had ordered soup.

For Easter we hung out the bunting, decorated the Easter Tree, put out the daffodils and ignored the falling snow!



Again, the Brolly Group joined us and handed out mini-Easter Eggs along with the soup orders.

You will find the Soup To Go Weekly Menu, on the Stratherrick & Foyers Community Facebook page, on the local Noticeboards, in the Food Larders, the Hub and in Foyers Post Office.

We look forward to seeing you all.

Lyn Woods, Pam Simpson & Fiona Bateman

VACCINATION LIFELINE FOR ANIMALS TOO

Lambing time is hectic and can be a delight or a disaster depending on what the weather throws at you. It is quite a big operation in the Straths considering there are around 15,000 breeding sheep between Fort Augustus and Daviot.

The preparation starts long before the due date, in early March the pregnant ewes are scanned to see whether they are empty or carrying a single, twins or sometimes triplets. Multiples beyond triplets are possible but rare in hill breeds of sheep like we have in this area. The sheep are marked with different colours or left without a mark, so the shepherd knows what to expect. Sometimes they may be separated and fed differently in the run up to lambing.

The next job is a vaccination booster. Vaccination is a buzz word these

days, but sheep are ahead of the game and have been on a vaccination programme for pasteurellosis and clostridial diseases for years. When the ewe gets her annual booster about a month before lambing, she can then pass essential antibodies to her lambs through her colostrum, the first milk they get when they are born. It's not just the ewes in lamb that are in the vaccination queue, the tups all get a booster as do the ewe hoggos (females born the year before and returning from their winter grazing in sunnier climes to join the breeding flock).

This early passive immunity from the mother does not last that long, so the lambs get their own vaccination course started at 'marking' at about a month old and the second 4-6 weeks later, this will see them through the summer and to market. Unlike our COVID 19 vaccine going into the muscle of your arm, these ones are put into a pinch of skin in the neck with an automatic injection gun attached to the bottle of vaccine. Perhaps farmers could speed up the line at the doctors? In this pre

lambing spa treatment they also get a drench for worms and liver fluke and a shot of liquid vitamins and minerals so they are as fit as they can be for the challenges ahead.

Jenny McCallum





ACTIVITY PACK FOR YOUNGSTERS

Loch Ness Rural Communities has been busy creating an interactive activity book for primary school children in our area. It was created to give children an insight into the landscape around us and how it works. If you would like a copy, please contact Jenny at jenny@mccallumagri.co.uk.

SCANNING ON YOUTUBE

A sneak peek into a typical day's sheep scanning on Corriegarth Estate.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=Gibm9q_zSgQ&feature=share

Kate Johnson





SOSA

FREEDOM AT LAST!

Following months of frustration and restrictions, we are at last emerging from lockdown - none more so than the growing membership of the Strathgorfoybridge Outdoor Sporting Association (2019), [SOSA2019]. We remain pleased to be the biggest (and still growing!) constituted group in our area and offer a warm welcome to all our new members!

Coming in the next months – or maybe, by the time you read this, already having occurred in the past weeks – are a host of activities as members begin socialising again and enjoying the fantastic outdoor opportunities offered by the fabulous area we live in. Where to begin?

There has been much talk of “sustainable transport” in our community of late and SOSA is at the forefront of finding solutions, with a trial of several e-bikes (commencing on 26th April), to see if they offer a popular solution – and to see if they will cope with our hills and glens! If you’re toiling up the hill and someone serenely glides past you – that’ll be one of them! Our friends at Home Energy Scotland have loaned us the bikes (many thanks to Bryony) for a five-week trial and members are really looking forward to getting out and about.

Preferably not linked to the above subject – at least we hope not – is a two day Outdoor First Aid Course to occur in June. This is a very professional course aimed at imparting the necessary knowledge to deal with situations “on the hill” – it’s a full two days and teaches participants how to deal with anything from broken bones to hypothermia. So makes friends with a SOSA member and they’ll be able to look after you!

On the subject of “the hill” we are also running two full day Navigation Courses, one for beginners and one at intermediate level. There has been great interest in these courses and what better place than Stratherrick and Foyers to learn this useful skill!

We also have a great fun day planned when members get the opportunity to unearth their latent skills with that most ancient and noble of weapons, the bow and arrow. Green tights are not obligatory (thank goodness!) and budding “hunter gatherers” will be taught the basics, hopefully managing to hit the bull (not Stewart’s!!) regularly in no time!

Also, local “Marathon Man” and running machine SOSA member Alex, is putting together some ideas for some communal running training, including coaching and physio. Watch this space if pounding the tracks and roads is your thing (I’m sticking to the e-bikes!).

As far as the wetter pursuits are concerned, we still have an invitation to try out offshore rowing, in St Ayles skiffs, with our friends at Cromarty Sailing Club and will be arranging this as soon as permitted. In addition, plans are proposed to try open Canadian Canoes on Loch Ness and members are really keen to get more experience in sea kayaks (some could do with it – you are meant to stay upright!).

We are also hoping to schedule some climbing tuition – both rocks and ice. Our local countryside offers so many opportunities to enjoy this sport, so why not learn to do it safely and properly!

Of course, our Boulodrome (Petanque Court) remains popular, and members will soon be assisting Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust in erecting the splendid new Marquee over the court, so providing some valuable and much needed “outdoor meeting space” for all to enjoy – provided you avoid flying boules! This will also be the venue for our long-awaited social gathering (again as and when permitted) and I think everyone is looking forward again to a good blether with friends old and new!

So, there you go – SOSA members can have a leisurely game of boules with friends, run to the e-bikes, ride to a boat, sail across the loch, walk up the hill, climb up the steep bits and then find their way home – and if they have an accident, know how to fix it! The full package!

Finally, a genuine word of sincere thanks to SFCT Directors and staff and our Community Councillors for all their support and encouragement. Their foresight and enthusiasm in supporting a group who get on and do things for the Community’s benefit does not go unrecognised.

If you’re interested in joining our merry band, we can be contacted at sosapiste19@gmail.com. All are welcome – but remember, we don’t take ourselves too seriously and the idea is to try something new, but make sure you have a good time whilst you’re doing it!

Best wishes and enjoy the summer!

Peter J Faye.
President, SOSA 2019.



South Loch Ness
Heritage Group

COVID-19 DOESN'T STOP HISTORY MAKING

In common with many other groups in the area, many of the activities of the South Loch Ness Heritage group have been on hold during the previous year due to the restrictions enforced in response to the global pandemic.

With an eye to the future and fingers firmly crossed, plans are afoot to resume activities as soon as regulations allow. Committee members have been in regular contact by email and zoom in relation to a programme of visits and talks for the coming Summer, Autumn and Winter. High on the committee's agenda is the holding of an AGM at the earliest opportunity. Please monitor the relevant Facebook sites and local notice boards for notification as to when these events will be held.

The lockdown has not however fully put a stop to projects by members of the committee. Alister Chisholm continues his research on area members who died during the First World War and are commemorated on the Stratherrick and Foyers war memorial. It is envisaged that at the culmination of his research a booklet on the subject will be published.

Bob Main is researching the history of the aluminium works at Foyers with the intent of producing an article.



Duncan Cameron is currently researching the lives of three of his ancestors from Stratherrick. Their lives spanned a seminal period in Scottish history and are illustrative of how in three generations Clan gentry, from being active Jacobite supporters grasped the opportunities that the Union offered them and became a driving force in the expansion of Empire in Canada and India.

Committee members are also working in partnership with the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust with the hope to establish a permanent Heritage exhibition at the recently purchased Errogie Kirk. Discussions are still at a very early stage and the progress of these will be reported in future articles.

Finally, may I take the opportunity to remind you that all future Heritage Group events will be advertised on the local notice boards, The South Loch Ness Heritage Group Facebook page and the dedicated Stratherrick and Foyers Facebook pages. We hope to see you all soon.

Robin Morley

LEAP ABOARD FOR A VISIT TO INVERGARRY RAILWAY STATION



Last year we had arranged a group visit to Invergarry Railway Station restoration project, but our area was put on to a higher lockdown status along with the rest of the country and we were unable to achieve this.

If the relaxation of outdoor meetings continues it will be possible for the postponed visit to take place. I do not have a date yet but would hope for late May or early June.

I do not know at this date what the maximum permitted number will be, but visitors will travel in their own "bubbles" and take their own food or snacks. Hot water for tea or coffee will be provided for a break during the approximate two-hour visit.

Could anyone wishing to come along please let me have their contact details so that they can be informed when date and time is settled. More details about the restoration are to be found on the Invergarry railway website - Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Museum

www.invergarrystation.org.uk
Bob Main
r.main456@btinternet.com

PREACHER'S TENT EMERGES FROM THE RUBBLE

Amongst the many items found in Errogie Kirk when it was purchased by the Trust was a large pile of timber panels. This has been identified as the components of a preacher's tent, few of which are still extant in Scotland. The tent is a substantial wooden

structure that could be erected and dismantled at will and was used to protect the Minister from the elements when holding services out of doors. Members of the Heritage group committee spent a morning erecting the tent to ensure it was complete and to take a photographic record for their archives. Thanks to John for the homemade pancakes and jam which kept energy levels up. An article on this will appear in a future issue.

Robin Morley



Spin and Chatter Group

A QUIETER AFFAIR

Members of the Stratherrick Spin and Chatter have continued to meet over the autumn and winter via fortnightly zoom meetings, and we have really appreciated the generosity of the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council for the micro grant which enabled the purchase of the zoom licence, which the Wildcrafts Loch Ness Group have also benefitted from. We have decided that even if we are able to meet in person next winter we will continue to make use of zoom during the depths of winter as it is a lot easier than transporting all our equipment to the hall on snowy or wet and windy evenings.

This year's Christmas Spin meeting on 17th December was definitely a quieter affair than the 2019 one (members will remember our very own Lyn Woods in her Elf costume) but most members dressed up in Christmas woollies and had a beverage to hand to make the spinning and chatter flow. Lyn Woods, Pam Simpson and I agreed that this year's Christmas Challenge would be a gift bag containing 200 g of prepared Corriedale fleece in two colours to spin and then knit, crochet or weave into something of the member's choosing although we included a couple of sample patterns including a hat inspired by the Downton Abbey series era. We managed to get nearly all of them delivered before Christmas lock down came, so members have been busy in the last three months spinning, skeining, washing and winding into balls ready to make their challenge item. As you will see from the photos we have some talented makers in the Group and Beth Rose's sheep tea cosy was a real surprise. Unfortunately, some of us still have WIPs (work in progress) either due to time constraints or in my case over ambition in thinking I could knit a pair of fair isle socks in a couple of weeks!

Five of us are also members of Highland Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers and we have been taking part in zoom workshops with guest speakers including ones that due to distance we would not be able to get here in the Highlands with demonstrations recently on silk spinning (Isle of Skye), preparing fleece and designing yarn (Cornwall) and flax spinning (Netherlands). Also the Guild set up new special interest groups for spinning and weaving to run on Zoom

as well. Hopefully when Spin and Chatter can once again meet in Stratherrick Hall, the Guild members will be able to pass on the learning from these workshops to the wider group and develop everyone's spinning and textile interests further.

From Thursday 22nd April the Group began the normal programme of weekly meetings from 7.30 pm onwards still via Zoom. Sadly, until we can meet in person, we cannot teach any new beginners as teaching spinning is best done on a one-to-one basis by demonstration. Although if anyone is keen to take up spinning in the meantime and motivated, we can help them get started by directing them to reputable online tutorials and help with equipment, as spinning is often best started on drop spindles which we have available.

We had planned a summer outing to visit Skye Wool and textile related businesses last year which we postponed and sadly in all probability will have to again this year.

We do, however, look forward to meeting up again in person once the Covid rules are relaxed, and the weather is better. Probably initially as an outdoor Spin and Chatter meeting in someone's beautiful garden in the sunshine, we are all so looking forward to getting together again.

Looking further ahead we hope to be able to return to an outdoor gathering for the Worldwide Spin in Public Day in September similar to the one we organised in 2019 as well as be available to provide a stand and demonstration at any appropriate community events.

We decided not to have a FB page as not all our members are on FB so use email to communicate. However, we do have a private FB Messenger group where most of us have a lively, friendly, and supportive chat daily as well as I use it to share relevant online links and learning and timely reminders about things such as wheel maintenance and equipment for sale etc.

"Please contact Stratherrick Spin and Chatter Group via our email address stratherrick.spin.chatter@gmail.com "

For more information on Corriedale sheep, check out this link [Corriedale Sheep | Corriedale Sheep Breed www.raisingssheep.net](http://www.raisingssheep.net)

Glenda Baily

Wildside Baby and Toddler Group

GUINEA PIGS RUN WILD

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to meet up much as a group over the last few months, however we have been very lucky that Kirsty has started her forest school training and we are the guinea pigs! We have managed a few outdoor get togethers outside at the old Classroom in Inverfarigaig when the sun has been shining. The kids have loved fishing for ducks in the burn, hiding in tepee tents, making mud pies, and scavenging for sticks and stones! We look forward to getting back to indoor meets as there are lots of young babies who really need to be inside.

When we finally can meet, we still have some of our COVID grant left for our welcome back event which we have been unable to hold so we look forward to organising that!

Our regular meeting days are Thursdays from 9:30-11:30 at The Wildside Centre. It's fun, free and great to chat! Please contact Kirsty or Jillian if you would like any more information or if you would like to come along. We are a friendly bunch!

Jillian Barclay



Friends of Inverness Royal Academy

VISUAL ARTISTS LIGHT UP LOCKDOWN

We are a community youth group for ALL P7 -S6 pupils who reside in the Stratherrick and Foyers Community area and attend any school or are home schooled. If you are not on our emailing list, please get in touch with Paula at firasec21@aol.com so that you can receive regular updates on activities and events your child might like to attend.

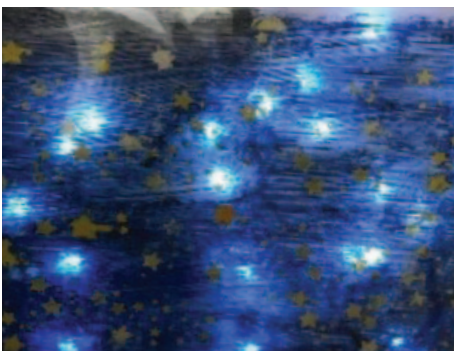
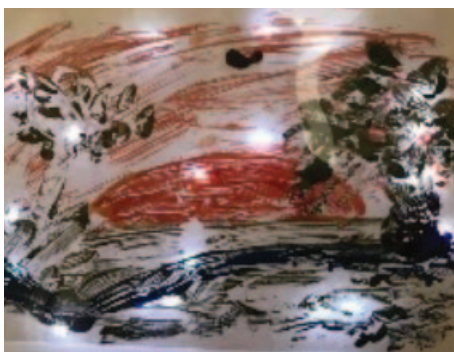
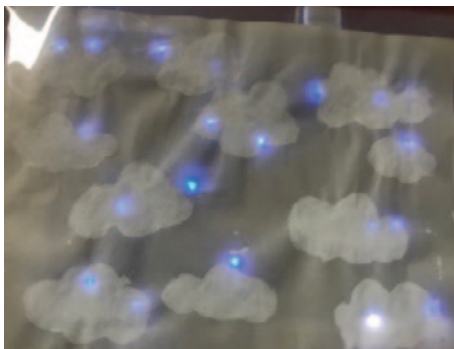
In March we were joined by Alison Durbin, a Highlands based Visual Artist from Wildwood Arts @WildwoodCreativeLearning.



Alison guided an art workshop to create a piece of 'lit up window art' for some of the FIRA members.



Creativity flowed in the 'zoom' art workshop over a couple of hours as those participating were able to experiment with simple printing and painting techniques, and combining the results with LED lights, to create their lit-up window art. Each child received an art kit in the post prior to the session to make this accessible to all who wanted to take part.



This workshop was made possible by a Stratherrick & Foyers Community Council, Stronelairg SSE Micro grant. Thank you.

These are just a few examples of what some of the youngsters achieved.

We also held our first 'virtual Quiz' which comprised 8 rounds. Each round had 5 questions or tasks to complete because we also had a Scavenger hunt which got every family member up and running against the clock to retrieve items!

We hope to run a 'Virtual' Bingo night soon so keep a look out at your 'Inbox'.

OTHER FIRA NEWS...

Behind the scenes during the lockdown as Members of Youth Scotland and Youth Highland we have had some volunteers go through the PVG check process getting ready for the restrictions to lift so that we can re-open Youth Club. One volunteer has also attended a Mental Health Champion Foundation course over 5 weeks run by Places2Be. FIRA has also successfully been awarded a grant from the Ward Discretionary Fund. Amongst other things this will fund a BBQ for all FIRA members when we can return fully to Youth Club and we are currently waiting to hear if an application to the Scottish Rural Fund has been successful to cover this year's Youth Scotland Membership and Insurance as well as to purchase a few other items.

In addition to this, and our thanks to Mrs Kay Jones, we have now finished the last block of English tutoring for the Seniors embarking on their Nat 5s and Highers. Unfortunately, the last session had to be postponed due to the Lockdown after Christmas. We are so grateful to the students and Mrs Jones for their patience so that we could finally deliver the last session on a 'virtual' platform. Subject to further funding we hope to offer one more block of Tutoring prior to the SQA Assessments.

The S2s and S3s have also finally met for their last catchup class via Google meets.

We are still hoping to offer the Literacy Catchup Club to Primary and S1 years and are working on the logistics of this. Our thanks to the SFCT Covid grant for funding this.

If anyone would like to Volunteer to help at the Youth Club or have a specific skill set to offer activities to our FIRA members or have any suggestions, please email Paula at fira21sec@aol.com

We would like to send you all our best wishes on a safe, full time return to school after the Easter holidays,

Keep safe, keep well.
Alan, Sharon & Paula

Inverfarigaig Residents' Group

ACTIVE RESIDENTS DIG LAZY BEDS

Well despite being in lockdown we have been a busy group. We have met by Zoom to organised ourselves.

Our community field is a great place to exercise in, for both humans and dogs. It remains a pivotal point for bringing our community together. Late October we were able to finish fencing the back fence in the big field. We had a big community effort and had one of the shelters from the park opposite Stratherrick Hall transported down to our field. This means that when restrictions are lifted, we will have an open air meeting place offering a little shelter, and we hope to hold a BBQ ASAP.

As a community we have started to dig for resilience! We have started to dig "lazybeds" to plant tatties for all of our group. We have also planted raspberry canes and some blackcurrant bushes and are waiting for our fruit trees to arrive so that we can get our community orchard started. On the opposite side in the small field individuals are able to have a small allotment.

It feels really good to see our vision for the field coming together, more importantly I love how the field brings our little community at Inverfarigaig together and gives people the opportunity to get to know each other.

Helen Grainger



Foyers Medical Centre

CALLING ALL OVER 50S FOR THEIR JAG

The Covid vaccination rollout is well under way. All those over 50 or in a "Clinical Risk" group should have received an invite for their first dose. (more details on the vaccination groups is available on the Practice website)

<https://www.foyersmedicalcentre.co.uk/index.aspx?p=H55747>
Please be aware that the supply of the vaccines will dictate the availability of the appointments.

If you are aged 50 years or over or are in one of the clinical risk groups-more details on website, and have not received your vaccine invite, then please call the practice to book your appointment. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020>

NEW DOCTOR AT FOYERS

The Medical Centre Team would like to welcome and introduce Dr Pei Ang. Dr Ang will replace Dr Anderson who we wish all the best in future endeavours. Dr Ang has been with the practice previously both as Trainee GP and has now taken on a salaried GP role at the practice.

NEW LINE FOR URGENT CALLS LINE

Telephoning Foyers Medical Centre
01456 486224

If you have a non-urgent enquiry or wish to book a routine appointment please call Foyers Medical Centre between the hours of 08:30 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 17:00.

The phone lines are restricted to urgent calls only between 8:00 and 8:30 and between 17:00 and 18:00, when routine enquiries will not be dealt with.

If you call is an emergency, please call 999. To contact NHS 24, call 111

Thank you for your understanding.

PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

The community has been very supportive in ordering their prescriptions on time. We ask that everyone continue to provide at least 3 "working days" for their requests and order no earlier than a week in advance. Any earlier the request will unfortunately be denied. Where possible the preferred method of ordering prescription is via the practice website -

<https://www.mysurgerywebsite.co.uk/secure/prescriptionsl.aspx?p=h55747>

The Medical Centre would like to thank everyone in the community for their patience and understanding throughout the pandemic. The kind words and support from members of the community has been of great comfort and support to the Practice team.

At the moment it can be hard to know what to do if you're unwell or have a concern about your health.

Please get medical help if you think you need it
You should keep any appointments or procedures you have booked – unless you're told not to go
Please go to hospital if you're advised to
NHS services have made changes to make sure it's safe for you to be seen during coronavirus.

Thank you for your support.
Foyers Medical Centre



Boleskine House Foundation

HISTORIC HOME RISES FROM THE WRECKAGE

In August 2019, The Boleskine House Foundation Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation was established to restore Boleskine House and transform the estate from an abandoned and derelict site into an accessible historical landmark. Set in 35 acres of natural beauty on the banks of Loch Ness, the restoration is as much about the grounds as it is about the house.

As well as restoring the house, we will also be reinstating the landscaped gardens, planting native trees and plants under the guidance of the Highland Council, and learning how we can increase and support biodiversity across the estate. We hope that visitors will be able to experience the sense of wonder and myriad health and well-being benefits that come when we 'switch off' from the hustle and bustle of daily life and cultivate a connection to nature.

As a conservation-led heritage project, we are also tasked with the momentous undertaking of communicating the history of the Boleskine House estate in its entirety. Heritage is complex, contested and by its very nature a communicative act that involves choices that have far-reaching ramifications. What to preserve, how to preserve it and how to present it to the public

represents every generation's vision of what is important and why material remains from the past should be preserved and passed on to future generations.

There are two aspects to heritage; so-called 'tangibles' and 'intangibles.' Tangibles are the physical, material remains that survive from the past. Applied to Boleskine House, this is the house itself, its structure, decorative sandstone and granite walls and everything they stand for and reveal about its history. How the building progressed, the two fires and their aftermath, and now the restoration project.

Intangibles include any customs, beliefs, knowledge systems and spiritual values associated with an historical site. It is often intangible heritage that arouses controversy and contestation, but it is crucial that meticulous, balanced and sensitive research should explore the significance of a site in its multifaceted, material, historical, political, spiritual and artistic contexts. This is no mean feat when you realise that the long history of Boleskine House encompasses all of these!

Boleskine House has many diverse stories to tell and we look forward to sharing them with you as the restoration progresses and our research deepens. A conversation is of course a two-way street; we welcome questions and hope to answer any concerns about the estate and the restoration project. In this short text, we'd like to share some information about the stone repair which is now underway after two years of preparation.

A small but dedicated team of expert masons and apprentices from Harper and Allan Masonry are working tirelessly to consolidate the structural integrity and breathe new life into the decorative stone features that characterise Boleskine House. As a conservation-led restoration, as much of the original stone as possible is being conserved and any stones that are too severely fire-damaged are being replaced by carefully selected and matched stone that is cut and dressed by hand using traditional masonry techniques to ensure historical sympathy.

Undaunted by the sheer scale of the stone repair to Boleskine House, Harper and Allan Masonry have over 30 years' experience working with traditional buildings and an impressive portfolio of historic building repair, including St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Aberdeen and the Elgin Museum. Recently, they conserved and restored Blackhills House, a private manor that had also suffered a devastating fire and shares many architectural features with Boleskine House.

To illustrate the magnitude of the restoration project; approximately 13 tonnes of new stone for Boleskine House arrived on site in mid-February, and that's just for the repair of about 8 windows! Andy Allan and his two assistant masons have already dressed over 110 pieces of decorative sandstone by hand and have spent the last few weeks painstakingly building them into place. A Herculean task in and of itself: a single granite lintel weighs in excess of 330kg, which the masons have to lift and carry! Moreover, to hand dress the 22 new stones needed for one of Boleskine's beautiful bay windows requires a single mason to hit a 2" wide chisel with a mallet 21,120 times! The complete restoration of Boleskine House is estimated to cost at least £1.2 million. In an effort to help raise funds, the Boleskine House Foundation has recently launched a sponsor-a-stone campaign. Approximately 150 hand-chiselled decorative sandstones are currently included in the campaign. Each sponsor receives a personalised certificate and their generous support will also be memorialised on a piece of original stone that cannot be repaired,

but will form a monument that will be displayed in the grounds of Boleskine House in the future. You can find out more by visiting www.boleskinehouse.org/sponsor-a-stone

The Boleskine House Foundation is a non-profit charity, run by a very small team of volunteers. We are at the very beginning of a long and arduous journey and we are very pleased to be working closely with an expert team of professionals. Alongside Harper and Allan Masonry, LDN Architects and Fairhurst Engineers - both of whom have longstanding relationships with the Highland Council and Historic Environment of Scotland - have also been contracted to restore Boleskine House.

To find out more about the project, please visit our website: www.boleskinehouse.org or email us at: info@boleskinehouse.org

The Boleskine House Foundation SCIO



JOB VACANCIES

CARE AT HOME WORKERS

(DAY, EVENING, WEEKEND, ONCALL COVER)

Boleskine Community Care in Partnership with Sunflower Home Care are looking for people to join our team of carers, who provide care at home to people in your community. We are looking for people who are professional, respectful, compassionate and fun. No care experience? No worries. We will provide the training you need.

We offer:

- All relevant training and qualification opportunities, including paid induction.
- Contributory pension scheme.
- Flexible working all year round.
- Starting pay £10.00 per hour.
- Contracts available.

UK Drivers licence essential.

Informal enquiries to:-
Heather MacDonald, Community Care Co-ordinator
01456 486247 Or heatherm@highlandhospice.org.uk

For a job application pack please contact
HR.team@highlandhospice.org.uk

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

FOYERS MEDICAL CENTRE:
01456 486224

NHS 24:
PHONE 111

POLICE - NON-EMERGENCY OR TO
REPORT A CRIME:
PHONE 101

MEDICAL, POLICE, FIRE, LOCH OR
ANOTHER EMERGENCY:
PHONE 999

SSE POWER CUT HELPLINE:
PHONE 105

FOYERS FIRE STATION
(NON-EMERGENCY):
01463 240999

For more info about the Power Networks 105
service click here.

What is 105? | UK Power Networks

Foyers Community Fire Station

END OF AN ERA

Watch Commander Neil Kirkland, Manager of Foyers Community Fire Station retired from the Service at the end of April.

Neil has completed almost 23 years serving his local community and the wider area.

Neil joined Highland & Islands Fire Brigade in 1998, as a firefighter and in 1997 gained promotion as Sub Officer, then to watch manager, the service then changed its name to Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue service and latterly as we know it now The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, with Neil retiring as Watch Commander.

Neil says "Foyers Retained Unit has come a long way in the past 20 years, from just a small shed down in lower Foyers with no appliance and



a pump we used to carry in our cars as we were volunteers then, to our modern day station with good fire gear and with a major investment from SFRS. A brand new appliance with new firefighting technologies fitted to it was delivered to Foyers in October 2019 showing the Fire Service's commitment to our local community."

Foyers Fire Station wouldn't be what it is today without the dedication and commitment from local Crew who turn out at all times of the day and night 24/7 to those in distress, working tirelessly at incidents and training to keep our community safe.

Incidents that Neil has attended range from a dog stuck down a hole to fighting wildfires from a helicopter, and more locally, incidents including Garroge Lodge and Boleskine House which were both serious fires.

Neil was also pivotal in organizing the first defibrillator in our area.

Neil's wife Fiona has also recently left the Unit after 13 years of service, so the fire service has been a big part of the Kirkland's life combining over 36 years serving the community together. Although Neil has left the Fire Service, he is actively trying to organize a First Responder Unit for the Stratherrick & Foyers area similar to the one in Drumnadrochit, but one thing for sure he will not miss the pager going off in the middle of the night.

On his retirement Neil does ask if anyone who is interested or keen to help protect their local community to contact any of the Fire Crew, or pop into the Station on a Monday Night.

Stewart Macpherson
RVS Watch Commander

**DON'T JUST LIVE IN
YOUR COMMUNITY
PROTECT IT**

**WE ARE RECRUITING
RETAINED & VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTERS IN YOUR AREA**


firescotland.gov.uk
myjobscotland.gov.uk



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**
Working together for a safer Scotland



A YARN FROM THE BOG OF STRATHCROICH

Charles Dickens started with episodes of his atmospheric fiction appearing in the magazines of the day. This magazine is delighted to bring you the opening episode in the life of Murdo, in a gripping tale set, well, not too far away from here.



Episode 1

The Goat, the hat and the flappy tail

Murdo looked at the worm with some sympathy before burying it decently again away from the scrutiny of his attendant robin. Kicking the loose soil from his boots he withdrew indoors for a restorative cup of coffee before it was time to resume spring digging of the garden vegetable patch. The coffee pot went to the back of the Rayburn until his post man, Finlay "The Rocket", came by for his daily refreshment and exchange of local gossip.

The smoke from an early heather fire on the local hills indicated that the shooting fraternity had woken up and commenced their annual heather burning to provide a new growth bite for local wildlife. Everywhere in the Strath residents were venturing out into the spring sunshine after a prolonged winter.

Outside his decaying shooting lodge Captain Sir Ludovic Evelyn MacFarquhar of Farquar pondered on his financial situation as the sun imparted a pleasing warmth to his patched and scratchy plus fours drawn from the last bale of the

famous hunting Farquar pattern tweed once de rigeur for all estate employees. How was he to generate sufficient income from the family estate to provide for his off spring's public-school fees and even for himself and Lady Violet to cut a dash at the annual toff's ghillies ball?

There must be a way to generate cash from these darned acres of rolling heather and unrelenting bog which formed such a familiar horizon to the inhabitants of Strathcroic but were merely a backdrop to the lodge and its wooded policies. The family had been leaving its mark on the local landscape ever since his ancestor known as the Hanging Laird had tidied up the local cattle thieves and miscreants by promoting a local knoll as a place of summary execution thus providing the area's appellation of the Strath of the gallows!

The clan crest was distinctive, boasting the head of a belligerent billy goat with protruding front dentures, somehow married to the lower half of an altogether sleeker creature perhaps not unlike an otter except for the appendage of a rather broad flat tail and bizarrely the whole assemblage then sported a rather rakish top hat. This image was meant to record the family's famed ability to not only thrive on the poorest victuals and sustenance from meagre of hill grazing but also their very successful foray into north western Canada where they had greatly prospered from trapping beavers and shipping their pelts out to European hat manufacturers.

Ludo's son and heir, young Peregrine, did not have great confidence in his pater's traditionalist views on how to manage and maintain the family estates and was becoming increasingly enamoured with the latest conservationist and rewilding ethics. His homecomings from boarding school usually involved visits to Murdo's modest croft house to exchange ideas and to seek wisdom on his latest ideas. Murdo's family had survived the historic clearance of the

rest of the estate's crofters because one of his ancestors had rescued an earlier MacFarquhar laird from a rabid stag and then been rewarded with a tenancy for as long as a MacFarquhar owned the estate.

Plus, Murdo and his pipes were always on hand to provide musical accompaniment for weddings, funerals or any other occasion when the Laird wanted to impress contemporaries and visitors. Sometimes after a dram or two had been taken he had even been introduced as the estate manager and could always be relied upon to provide entertaining anecdotes and legend true or otherwise about past MacFarquhars and other local worthies! Murdo had taught the lad Peregrine how to fish and to poach to a high degree of proficiency and they enjoyed each other's company as equals.

At the end of the summer term when he dutifully went to collect Pergrine from the railway station in the aged estate landowner (another of his sometime duties) the boy had his usual cases but also a stout wooden box securely fastened but drilled with holes on one side and emanating a distinctive, and musty smell of pondweed. Murdo thought he detected a scraping noise from the interior as they heaved it into the back of their vehicle but said nothing as he knew his young passenger would get round to an explanation in good time. But before they could reach the lodge and its welcome Peregrine directed them towards the game larder and the disused kennel at its rear. Almost before they came to a halt, he had lifted the tailgate to examine the mysterious box for by now the scratching had assumed a fiercer and more urgent tone. Together they manhandled it into the old kennel, the lid was levered upwards and there within was a splendid example of Caster Fiber or an adult European beaver looking up at them with hungry eyes and gleaming front molars which had already been used to good effect to demolish half of its temporary home.



MEGS MINDFUL MOVEMENT

Having been brought up at Abersky Farm, I gravitated back to Torness where I now live in the new wooden house. I have spent my life working with people and currently still work with children in residential care.

I started my business, Megs Mindful Movement, after having trained in Mindfulness through the NHS and Highland Council. With the aid of a small grant from the Stratherrick and Foyers Trust, nearly 4 years ago, I set the class up at the Stratherrick Hall. The purpose was to share my knowledge and bring mindfulness to others, to encourage movement and relaxation but even more importantly to help stop isolate in these rural hills, after each class we would have a cuppa and a chat. Jessie, my wee dog would accompany me and would greet everyone as they entered and then curl up in a ball beside me until the end of the class when she went around catching up with everyone!

You might wonder what mindful movement is. It is slow, gentle movements, really noticing how your body is feeling, noticing if you are holding tension (we all do) and learning to release it. It is basically a lovely big gentle stretch. Then there's the meditation (my training is secular and not connected with any religion), my meditations are all about relaxing. All you have to do is lie or sit and listen to my voice. When you notice that your mind is thinking and wandering you just come back to the sound of my voice.

I am now half way through my yoga teacher training and alongside my current classes I will be delivering very gentle yoga classes. Yoga is excellent for strength and also balance which we both need to keep as long as possible as we age. Mindfulness helps to stop you worrying, it certainly did for me. Before I took my first step into mindfulness attending the 8-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

Course through my work as Residential Social Care Worker for people in high stress jobs, I was a complete worrier. (I now run these 8-week courses.) It helps you to live in the present moment and stops you dwelling in the past or worrying about the future. To step back and response rather than react at whatever is thrown in your direction. Some of my regulars have notice a drop in their high blood pressure and other noticing that they do not worry so much.

I have also had the pleasure of delivering mindfulness taster sessions to the local primary schools, which I absolutely adore doing, the enthusiasm in their faces, it's just amazing. I also volunteer for MacMillan Cancer delivering a gentle movement class in the Move More programme for anyone affected by cancer and recently delivered relaxation classes to the local community as a Covid pick me up.

As I write this, we are hopefully heading out of these very strange lockdown times but my Tuesday classes will remain online as I have gathered participants from far and wide. I will be working towards doing a blend of online and face-to-face classes in this new way forward.

Everyone needs a little chill time, if you want to try my classes please get in touch:

www.MegsMindfulMovement.co.uk
on Facebook and Instagram

Meg Somerville



“My God young Peregrine, wherever did that fearful brute come out of?” Peregrine, to give him credit blushed and said that he'd taken it as a favour for a school friend when his most unusual pet had grown too large and inquisitive to remain penned in an admittedly generous suburban garden. “I thought this might be a first step towards starting a small wildlife park and we could charge tourists to come and see the animals” was his rather faltering explanation. “Well,” said Murdo “I think it might be a good idea not to say anything to your father just yet until we see just how manageable this animal is going to be. It's not quite the same as the guinea pigs, rabbits and birds which you've kept here in the past.”

So, they put a bale of straw, some willow branches, cattle cake and a water trough into the kennel and went home for their respective suppers, Murdo to try and discover as much as he could about the diet and habits of beavers. He awoke early the next day and on looking out of his kitchen window at the familiar view was surprised to see one of the normally upright electricity poles hanging drunkenly from its wires seemingly having become disconnected from its base. On going to ring the hydro his phone line was as dead as the proverbial dodo and then a dreadful suspicion surfaced about the proclivities of beavers, particularly their diet of wood and need to be continually using those formidable molars on anything and everything in order to stop their continuous growth. Murdo hastened through the steading building to the old kennels and there as he had dreaded found the back wall of the timber kennel now sporting a yawning beaver sized hole and no trace of its late occupant. “Mo creach s'e thanig!” (Gaelic exclamation of horror literally the cattle raid is upon me). Murdo's startled cry filled the morning air...

To be continued.

Golach.

Alex Sutherland

ANIMAL MAGIC IN GLENLIA VALLEY

Bang, bash, wallop! "What was that" I said at 3am on a cold moonlit morning. A very noisy burglar...? Then "Smash"! That's it, not only a noisy burglar but a very clumsy one too! Up we got, expectant, and found the noises were coming from behind the larder door! "Switch on the light quick" and "got you"! The Pine Marten, who'd smashed my butter dish, looked up at us as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. I'm sooo sweet, her look said. "I was the baby pine marten who came into your kitchen with my mum a year or so ago and I'm back for a bit of food! Sorry about the butter dish," that now lay in smithereens on the larder floor.

So many animals live within the diverse re-wilding ecology of the Pass Road and Glenlia valley. Pine martens, hare, badgers, pygmy shrews, voles, moles, weasels, stoats, red squirrel, large slowworms {not worms at all but shy legless lizards with a smiley look}, many diverse lizard species like common toad and common frog. Not forgetting the sika and red deer!

The bird life has also a beautiful presence in this area. Identifying species is great fun. The finches are diverse, Chaffinches, Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Great Tits, Bull Finches. Occasionally a pair of Greenfinches and a pair of Gold Finches. Treecreepers work their way up the birch trunks seeking insect life. Siskins flash by with their yellow plumage and there's the odd sighting of a Crossbill. In

January the Woodpecker starts her drilling, even as the snow lies. The nesting swallows arrive a few weeks earlier than they did in the 1990s. Wood-pigeons flutter about. The Tawny Owl too woots in the night and the Little Owl emits its eery screech in the moonlight. I once saw the Little Owl in the car head- lights, crouching by the side of the Pass Road {Inverfarigaig to Errogie}- a tiny creature. And then there's the buzzard circling above on the thermals and the fork tailed Red Kite may take a dive down to make a catch. The Wren balances on the washing line under the veranda to shelter from the winter night. A honking sound denotes Autumn as the Geese {Greylags?} fly high overhead in forked formation. The Grey Dunnock makes a camouflaged appearance. The Pied Wagtail {butterfly in mouth} and Mistle Thrush {pulling at the worms} skirt the ground. And then there is the noisy parrot-like squawking of the very large gaggle of pink-plumaged European Jays that seem to have made Loch Ness a permanent home, and particularly my garden. Since they are parrot-like in sound, I took a double take when I first heard them. Having experienced the wild parrots of Australia in abundance, I was momentarily transported back to Mount Warning National Park, at the base of which I lived.

I've probably missed out a species or too. We are luckily diverse here. The summer insect life is astonishing too! But that is another story.

Margie Elgar-Bond
Ault-na-Goire

COLD SKYE BATH FOR BABY

Its the 1950s and my mother regularly went to Skye. The bus only went to the beautiful Glenbrittle Bay once a week, so my mother went there with her easel and paints. The meandering journey on the narrow road took her past the magnificent Cuillins and the now busy Fairy Pools to a small white house that stood at the end of the road right by Glenbrittle Bay. There she stayed with the family. One very early morning, Mum was sitting on a rock with her easel, painting an oil of the little white house, the islands of Canna and Rum brooding in the background and clouds shooting by on this blustery day she was capturing in paint. She then saw the "Mrs" of the white house emerge with her naked little baby, and vigorously work the hand pump to draw up water from the well and then she washed the baby in the ice cold water that emerged!! I still have this oil painting on the wall of my own house and always think of this story Mum told me. The little white house still exists today by the reception of the Glenbrittle Camp site - the descendants of the same family in occupation.

Margie Elgar-Bond
Ault-na-Goire



"The Cottage, Glenbrittle Bay, Skye" 1951 by L. Marie Simm.

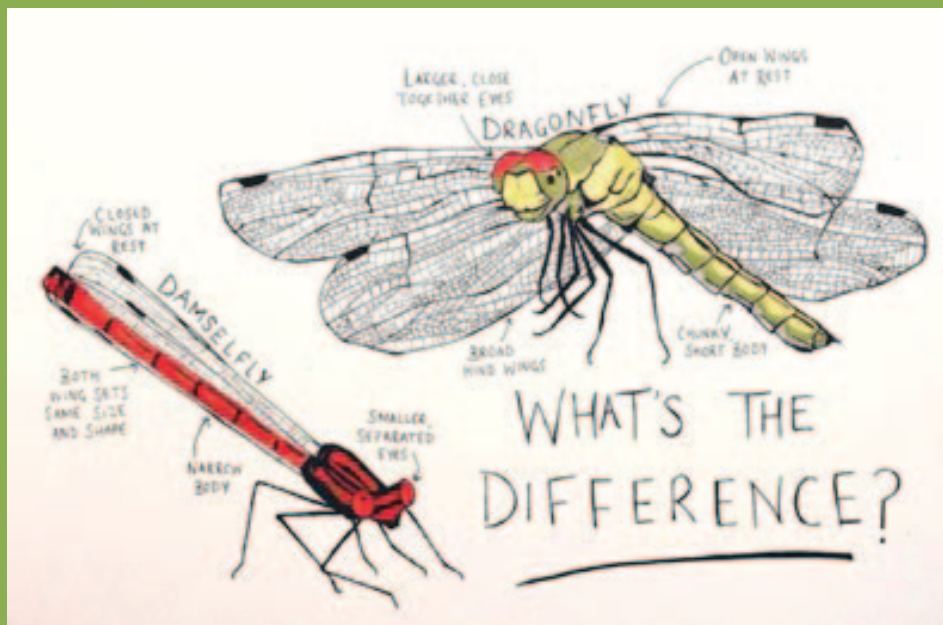
DAMSELS AND DRAGONFLIES

Which is your favourite loch in our area? Loch Knockie, Loch Killin or the little pond behind Foyers Primary School? Wherever you go there will be the chance of seeing damselflies and dragonflies – but which is which? Olivia Cooper, a Visitor Services assistant with the Scottish Wildlife Trust at the Loch of the Lowes near Dunkeld writes -

The fantastic weather is bringing out all kinds of wildlife, and this past week we have been inundated with damselflies and dragonflies around the loch. But how can you tell the difference between the two? We have a few handy tips to help you out.

Look at their wings when they are resting. Are they spread like an aeroplane, or closed together? Damselflies rest with their wings closed, and dragonflies the opposite, so this is a big give away!

How close together are their eyes? If you are fortunate enough to get an up-close view of dragons and damsels, then you will notice that dragonflies have very large eyes that are close together, whereas damselflies have,



though still large, smaller eyes with a gap in between.

Are they chunky or are they twig-like? Dragonflies have much chunkier and short bodies, and damsels are the opposite with an extremely long and narrow body.

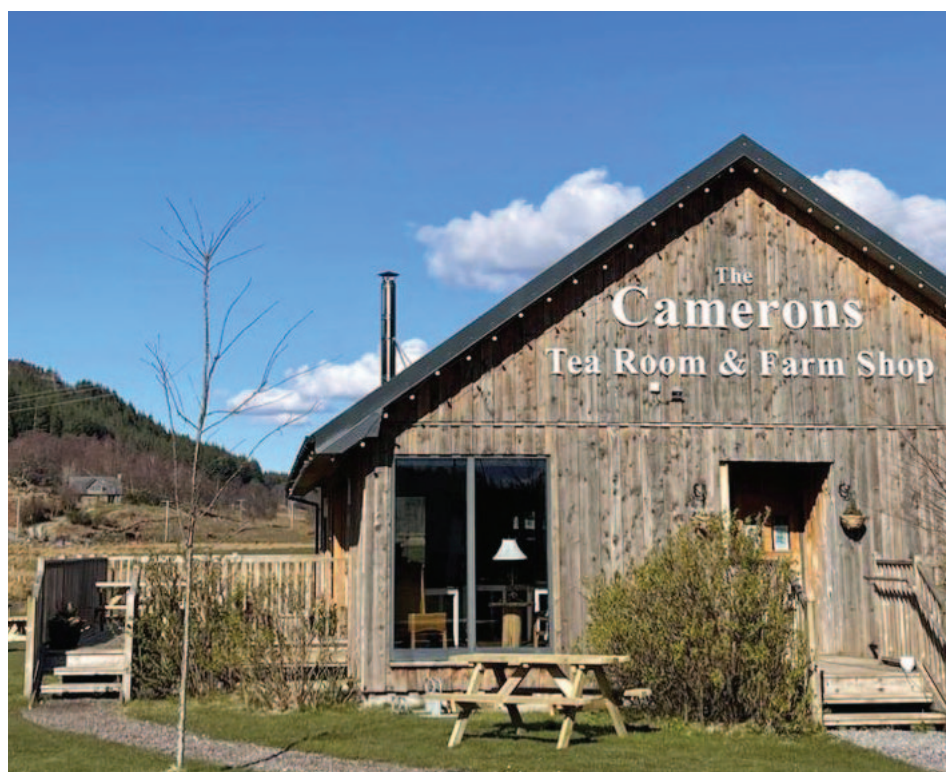
What shape are their wings? This is probably the most difficult feature to observe, as sometimes they have disappeared before you get a chance to look. Damselflies have wings that are both the same size and shape, which taper where they attach to the

body. Dragonflies, however, have different shaped fore and hind wings. Their hind wings are much broader and do not taper so much where they attach to the body, giving them more of a plane look.

You can watch the Scottish Wildlife Trust's live osprey webcam at the Loch of the Lowes on this link

<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/watch-wildlife-online/loch-of-the-lowes-webcam/>

Steven Waston



CAMERONS TEAROOM AND FARM SHOP

Camerons Tearoom re-opened fully on the 26th of April. We're open 7 days a week 10am to 3pm, sit in or take away.

We now stock fresh 'The Bakery Bread' and lovely local cheese, along with well stocked vegetables, frozen meats and quality items. We are also doing sandwiches, salads and cakes to grab and go from the farm shop.

Booking is recommended for inside seating, so please phone 01456 486572 to avoid disappointment.

We are very excited to welcome you all back to Camerons!

Thanks
Morag



Slow Cooker Leg of Lamb

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil
 1.3kg boneless leg of lamb, tied
 30g unsalted butter
 2 tbsp plain flour
 300ml lamb stock
 200ml red wine
 2 red onions, cut into wedges
 2 garlic cloves, sliced
 5 sprigs of thyme
 5 sprigs of rosemary
 mashed potatoes and steamed veg, to serve

METHOD

STEP 1

Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the lamb and brown on each side for 4-5 mins. Set the slow cooker to low. Melt the butter in a saucepan until foaming, then stir through the flour. Whisk in the stock gradually until incorporated, add the wine and bring to the boil. Set aside.

STEP 2

Put the onion, garlic, thyme and rosemary into your slow cooker and sit the lamb on top. Pour over the lamb gravy. Put the lid on and cook for 8 hrs or until soft and tender.

STEP 3

Remove the lamb and set, covered, on a plate. Strain the liquid into a pan and simmer until slightly thickened. Serve the lamb thickly sliced or shredded (it'll be quite soft) with mashed potatoes, green veg and the gravy.

Venison meatball & wild mushroom stroganoff

INGREDIENTS

1 onion, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 2 tbsp sunflower oil
 small bunch dill, roughly chopped plus 1 tbsp finely chopped
 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
 400g venison mince
 100g fresh white breadcrumbs
 1 medium egg, beaten
 25g butter
 400g wild mushrooms, larger ones sliced
 ½ tsp smoked paprika
 1 tbsp plain flour
 400g beef stock
 150ml brandy
 2 tsp Dijon mustard
 1 tbsp tomato purée
 300ml pot soured cream
 pinch of sugar (optional)
 buttered tagliatelle, rice or sautéed potatoes, to serve

METHOD

STEP 1

Gently cook the onion and garlic in 1 tbsp oil until really soft. Cool for 10 mins, then tip into a big bowl with the finely chopped dill, 1 tbsp of the wholegrain mustard, the venison, breadcrumbs and egg with 1 tsp salt and ½ tsp ground black pepper. Squelch together with your hands, squeezing the mince well to tenderise it as you mix.

STEP 2

Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan or sauté pan and fry the meatballs in small batches until well browned – add a splash more oil if needed towards the end. Set aside the meatballs in a dish.

STEP 3

Add the butter to the pan and fry the mushrooms over a very high heat until the juices have evaporated and the mushrooms are turning golden. Lower the heat and stir in the paprika and flour for 1 min.

STEP 4

Stir in the stock and brandy, and bring to a simmer, scraping up any bits stuck in the pan. Lift out the mushrooms with a slotted spoon to a dish. Boil the sauce for 3 mins, then stir in the remaining 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard, the Dijon mustard, tomato purée and soured cream. Simmer the sauce until it has reduced again and is a good consistency – anything up to 15 mins depending on your pan. Return the meatballs and any juice and simmer gently until they are cooked through. Stir in the mushrooms to warm through, and season to taste, plus a pinch of sugar if needed. Scatter with the remaining dill and eat with buttered tagliatelle, rice or sautéed potatoes.



Carrot and Coriander Soup

SERVES 4
PREP 15 MINUTES
COOK 25 MINUTES.

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon Vegetable Oil
1 Onion (chopped)
1 teaspoon Ground Coriander
1 Potato (diced)
450g Carrots (peeled & chopped)
1.2 litres Vegetable Stock or
Chicken Stock
Handful of fresh Coriander
Salt & Pepper

METHOD

Heat vegetable oil in a large saucepan.

Add the chopped onion and gently fry for 5 minutes until softened.

Stir in the ground coriander and the diced potato and cook for 1 minute.

Add the carrots and the vegetable or chicken stock.

Bring to the boil, then reduce heat to a simmer for 20 minutes until the carrots are tender.

Using a hand blender, blend the soup along with the fresh coriander until smooth. (can be pushed through a sieve if no blender).

Taste and add salt & pepper as required.

Return to simmer before serving.

Lyn Woods



Venison steaks with stroganoff sauce & shoestring fries

INGREDIENTS

For the sauce
2 tbsp butter
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, chopped
250g chestnut mushroom, sliced
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp tomato purée
1 tsp plain flour
2 tbsp brandy (optional)
200ml beef stock
4 tbsp soured cream
small handful parsley, chopped

METHOD

STEP 1

To make the sauce, heat 1 tbsp of the butter in a large frying pan, tip in the onion and cook over a low heat for about 10 mins until soft. Add the garlic and mushrooms, increase the heat and fry until all the liquid has evaporated.

STEP 2

Meanwhile, heat enough oil to come 4-5in up the sides of a large saucepan. When hot, add the chips and cook, in batches, for 3-5 mins until golden. Remove and drain on kitchen paper, but keep the oil hot.

STEP 3

Add the paprika, tomato purée and flour to the mushrooms, cook for 1 min then add the brandy, if using, and leave to bubble away for a further 1-2 mins. Be careful as the brandy may set alight. Pour in the beef stock and set over a high heat to reduce by half. Stir in the soured cream and parsley, then season. Keep the sauce warm while you cook the venison.

STEP 4

Heat the remaining butter in a frying pan over a medium-high heat. Season the venison and cook for 3 mins on each side for medium-rare, depending on the thickness of the meat. Remove from the pan and leave to rest, loosely covered with foil.

STEP 5

Tip the fries back into the hot oil and cook for a further 2-3 mins to crisp up. Drain and season with salt. Serve the steaks with the sauce poured over and a pile of fries on the side.



Broad Bean and Bacon Soup

INGREDIENTS

100g Bacon (chopped)
2 tablespoons Olive Oil or Vegetable Oil
1 Onion (peeled & chopped)
3 cloves Garlic (peeled & chopped)
700g Broad Beans (skins removed)
1 large Potato (peeled & diced)
1 Chicken Stock Cube dissolved in 1 litre Water
Salt & Pepper to taste
Grated Parmesan Cheese

METHOD

In a large saucepan sauté the bacon in hot oil until lightly browned.

Add onion and garlic and sauté until soft.

Add the broad bean and diced potatoes and sauté for 3 minutes.

Add the chicken stock dissolved in water.

Taste and season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then turn down to a simmer for about 20 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.

Using a hand blender, blend soup until smooth. (can be pushed through a sieve if no blender).

Simmer for a minute or two then serve sprinkled with Parmesan cheese.

GORTHLECK HOUSE GARDEN PLANS FOUR-DAY OPENING IN MAY

All being well, Steve and Katie Smith are set to open their garden at Gorthleck House again in May. Speaking to the NEWS, Steve said 'We were not able to open last year due to COVID, so we decided that we would open for four days this year to enable as many people as possible to have the opportunity to visit at what is normally a very colourful time in the garden.'

There are hundreds of different varieties of azaleas and rhododendrons as well as camellias, pieris, a collection of stunning bamboos and lots of different trees. Many people have seen the shelter belts from the main road or the

Stratherrick War Memorial but have no idea what it is like to wander through this hilltop garden. With nearly 20 acres, visitors should allow plenty of time to explore and enjoy a very different experience from any other rocky ridge around Gorthleck.

Visitors can park on the grassy verge at the top of the drive. There is more information on the Scotland's Gardens' Scheme website at Gorthleck House Garden (www.scotlandsgardens.org)

Admission is £5 for adults, children are free. There will be an 'honesty box' at the top of the drive close to where visitors will be able to park. All monies raised will go to Maggie's Centres and other charities.

The garden will be open from 10am to 6pm on Friday 28 May 2021, Saturday 29 May 2021, Sunday 30 May 2021, and Monday 31 May 2021

Boleskine Brolly Group

COVID-19 SUPPORT

Members of the Brolly Group got together again in January and started with a survey to help them decide the needs of the Community. Following on from this, there have been numerous plans put into place to help combat issues with low income, loneliness and poor mental health which had come through strongly on the survey.

The Brolly Group along with being supported by the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust and a Covid recovery grant from Highland Council, also had funds from HIE from Lockdown 1 that they allowed us to continue to use. This fund comes to an end on 31st May and the group, along with SFCT, have now set a closing date of Friday 16th May for the following schemes –

Loss of earnings - The financial assistance that ran this time last year was re-opened. This provides regular payments to households who have seen their income severely reduced. It is available to people who fall into the following categories: Currently awaiting payment of Universal Credit, receiving Universal Credit, furloughed and earning £10 an hour or less and have lost 20% of your income, self-

employed but not eligible for Self-Employment Income Support or in receipt of SEIS but receiving the equivalent of £10 an hour or less, pensioners who have lost part time earnings: If you fall into anyone of these categories then please contact the administration team at the Trust using this email address: admin@sfctrust.org.uk

Household expenses – This fund supports households that are struggling to meet their household expenses. It is managed by the Knockie Trust and will continue to the end May. This runs alongside the Trust's Hardship Fund which continues to support families year round.

Fuel costs – There is a limited amount of funding from HIE for a one-off delivery of logs or coal to households that are struggling with high fuel bills. To request an application form please email the Community Council's administrator: email: sfcc@aol.com or call 07375 605743. Applications are only open to those who have a reduced income due to the pandemic and are not eligible for any other fuel help scheme from the Government or Highland Council.

Community larders and food boxes – The community larders that are situated in the phone boxes at



Gorthleck, Errogie and Lower Foyers along with the bus stops at Whitebridge and Upper Foyers will continue to run until 31st May. We can also offer a food box delivered for households who are struggling to make ends meet. If you would like to receive a box, please email email.sfcc@aol.com or call 07375 605743. All requests dealt with in the strictest confidence.

As we emerge from Lockdown 2, we hope that we as a community can turn a corner into a more positive period and look forward to groups being able to start running different activities that will see people starting to be able to meet up again. Finally, a huge thank you to everyone in the Community that ran the Brolly Group this lockdown 😊

Sharon Feguson

THE NEIL MACKENZIE TRUST

As we look forward, hopefully, to a slightly more normal spring and summer The Neil Mackenzie Trust has been planning some exciting new things!

New Health and Wellbeing Award
It is well documented that being outdoors, pushing boundaries and learning new skills are all beneficial to physical and mental health. As a result of the current coronavirus pandemic we are delighted to offer a temporary small award to encourage outdoor activities for anyone to take part in, in order to encourage better health and wellbeing. The award, available to applicants who have experienced health problems during the pandemic, will allow them to participate in a new outdoor activity. This may be to join a group, club or organisation, or, depending on the individual circumstances, may be available for one to one activity or instruction. For more information and an application form go to www.theneilmackenzietrust.com/

To celebrate the new award, we are holding a "Get Outdoors Day" at Daviot Wood on 22nd May (all being well). Val Rose has kindly agreed to lead morning and afternoon walks. Places will be limited and must be booked in advance. More details available nearer the time – look out for posters and watch local Facebook pages.

Our online shop is now open!

NEW PRODUCTS! - We have pure cotton tea towels, with designs created for us by local artist, Jessie Adam.

We have two new sets of greetings cards using local and Highland scenes taken by us. We also have some of our original greetings cards, as well as some branded polo shirts and thermal tops and other miscellaneous items.

Visit us at www.theneilmackenzietrust.com/
We are hoping that this year will see many more of our skills training and expedition grants being able to go ahead – there are some exciting projects in the pipeline. Remember that if you, or



someone you know has an idea, get in touch and we will let you know if we think we might be able to help.
www.theneilmackenzietrust@dr.com

Caroline Tucker

An interview with FOYERS BAY RADIO KING

The NEWS interviewed Gary Fentiman from Foyers about the internet radio station he runs from Elmbank.

So Gary, You have lived in Foyers for decades and many folk will know you from plastering, rendering and bricklaying, but tell us why you set up Foyers Bay Radio?

I have always been a 'Radio Nut'. As a boy I listened to the Pirate Radio Stations like Radio Caroline and Radio Luxembourg. I even broadcast on pirate radio myself for a few years. I just love the radio!

But you feel that other radio stations today have lost their way a little?

Oh yes, nowadays radio stations don't play the range of music they could. So many great tracks just aren't heard. There are so many adverts on local radio stations and a very restricted number of tracks that they play – and non-stop talking too.

So how does internet radio work?

It is a truly international set up. I use a company called 'Radio King' based in France. I pay a monthly subscription to use their system. The tracks I select are hosted in America, so I don't actually need to 'spin any discs' here in Foyers. I have listeners all around the globe. This includes USA, New Zealand, Australia and even Fort Augustus.

Radio King is used by a very wide range of radio stations all over the world. Anyone with an internet connection at home or on a mobile phone can listen. You can even hear Foyers Bay Radio in the car, just use Bluetooth to link your phone to your car's speakers and you can sing along as you drive! The tracks played on Foyers Bay Radio are crystal clear too.

What is your favourite type of music then Gary – and what can Foyers Bay Radio listeners expect when they tune in?

My own taste is rock music. I like Led Zeppelin, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, the Eagles and other 70's rock bands. My message is love and peace. I play lots of

different tracks, older rock and pop recordings that you would have heard broadcast on Radio Caroline back in the day.

How do we get connected to Foyers Bay Radio?

It takes only two clicks to start listening on your laptop or phone. Google 'Foyers Bay Radio', or click on this link. Listen to la Radio foyers bay : [null www.radioking.com](http://nullwww.radioking.com)

Thanks for all this info Gary – what about the future?

I will start to do more live quizzes soon, but I am a bit busy with building work at the moment. One thing I'd to add is that the holiday makers who get to know about Foyers Bay Radio like to listen when they go home after their visit to Foyers. If you run a self-catering, please let your guests know about Foyers Bay Radio.

Radio Caroline broadcast their programmes of popular music from a ship in international waters to get round the BBC's monopoly of radio in the 1960s.

COMING TO A STORE NEAR YOU

Lots of exciting new things happening at Foyers Store and Waterfall Cafe. We have not been resting on our laurels during the last few months; like many other businesses we have reassessed how we do things to keep ourselves and our customers safe during this strange new world we have found ourselves in.

Unfortunately, along with many other business owners in the current precarious environment, our tenant was unable to continue leasing the Café, so we wish Vanessa all the best in her future endeavours. We decided that the Café needed reconfiguring and perhaps a lick of paint (Simon had much grander ideas!). As the area now has many high-quality food outlets in the area, we have decided to concentrate on coffee, cakes and snacks. The café has been fully open for takeaway from the end of April; Takeaway coffee and snacks are currently available, daily, from the shop. The 'Ice Cream @ Foyers' outlet will be re-opened early May stocking the delicious Capaldi's of Brora selection of homemade ice creams. Good to know that Capaldi's have survived the last year, so remember you need to eat lots of delicious ice-cream and do your bit to support them!

Best of all we will now utilise half of the café space as the new 'Foyers Gift Shop'. We have sourced lots of lovely new products from companies and artists based in Scotland. I, personally, have had great fun researching and sourcing the new stock. We are also happy to be stocking some of the lovely local arts and crafts, supporting our very gifted local community. The Gift Shop will open as part of the Café from the end of April.

A big Thank You to Caren for her continued hard work and we all look forward to welcoming some new members of staff.

Last but not least, Thanks to Ian and Luke of Etherington's Estate Ltd for another great job revamping the café kitchen (and replacing the decking last year AND decorating the stairwell to our flat).

Keep it local if you can! All the best from Jan and Simon at the shop.

Visit Loch Ness

TOURISM CHIEF EXECUTIVE SAYS ALL STILL TO PLAY FOR

A year after the outbreak of the pandemic businesses again need to adjust focus and prepare to fully reopen. The good news is that there is a large amount of visitor interest in returning to the area, with up to 70% of Scots expecting to holiday nationally this year. However currently only about 5% of these people have booked so there is still work to do with effective and responsible marketing.

We are supporting the messaging from VisitScotland for responsible tourism to "leave only footprints". We are also actively seeking to complete the necessary funds for a Loch Ness Ranger post and if successful we will work with communities for effective delivery of this post. There has been a great deal of activity in the last year, including reaching 9.3 million through social media alone. We have also created a new website with the agency used by VisitScotland and worked with partners to deliver engaging campaigns. Through webinars we have provided access to senior leaders such as Marc Crothall, Chief Executive of the Scottish Tourism Alliance and Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance - the local MSP for Stratherrick and Foyers. Our membership service has remained consistent and we have been responsive to the evolving needs of businesses and



communities. We are in this together and committed to supporting a practical and direct route to restoring our sustainable tourism industry.

Tourism directly employs 26% of all people in Ward 12 and generates £330m of economic impact across the destination. It is therefore key to recovery, not just directly of businesses but of our wider communities, to ensure it remains an outstanding place to live and work. We look forward to working together for the good of area and recovery of the place we call home.

Visit Inverness Loch Ness is committed to inclusivity in every aspect, this begins at board level with active efforts being made to ensure diverse representation from across sectors and areas of the destination. We are delighted that Anna Low of Foyers Lodge was appointed as a Director in December 2020 and represents South Loch Ness on the board.

Michael Golding
CEO
Visit Inverness Loch Ness



Whitebridge Hotel

THE HORSE MIGHT NOT DRINK WATER – BUT HE CAN DRINK BEER!

We were delighted to re-open to the public on 26th April 2021, having been shut since Boxing Day 2020!

We have been busy bees buzzing around in the background though. We have so much news, but we will pick our top three developments to share with you! First of all, we have a brand spanking new website which we are able to keep up to date with all our menus and events so it will become our go-to place for you to get information for everything that's going on at the Whitebridge Hotel.

www.whitebridgehotel.co.uk.

Next up, we have extended our alcohol license to the paddock area adjacent to the car park. You may see benches and tables in the field the next time you pass – we will be serving tea/coffee/lunch and drinks where you will be able to enjoy the fabulous views whilst you catch up with friends and family outdoors.

Finally, we have been doing some decoration work in two areas of the hotel. First up – the gents bar toilets which were very much in need of a bit of love! We have worked with Michael Margetson who lives locally to give them a modern and quirky new look. We have re-purposed some old beer kegs for urinals and sinks and Michael has produced some lovely ironmongery and burnt wood finishes. Secondly, the restaurant has had a re-vamp. We have launched a new Table d'hôte restaurant menu in there which will be continuously changing. This new restaurant menu will run alongside our pub menu offering you another dining option with a great view.

Lockdown has been a real challenge for us; however, we have remained enthusiastic and motivated for the up-and-coming season. We are very much looking forward to hosting our local customers again soon.

Bella & Lesley



LOCH NESS SHORES FOR SALE

Newspapers and media across the country have been quick to pick up that Loch Ness Shores was for sale at offers over £2million.

Estate Agents Colliers were marketing the caravan and camping site at Foyers for the current owners Donald and Lyn Forbes, who are retiring from the business. Since developing the site, the Forbes have always focussed on providing a high-quality experience. The site is rated 5 Star and consistently wins awards for clean toilets and a high level of service.

The site has 18 acres of land, 128 pitches, a bistro, reception and owners' flat. The salmon fishing licences are included in the sale.

There has been a lot of interest from prospective buyers.

Steven Watson

BUSINESS IS BLOOMIN' MARVELLOUS

I am blown away by the support that the community of Stratherrick and Foyers continues to show my new business 'Flowers By The Loch'. The feedback I get is that folk are delighted to have someone who will deliver locally. Below are some photos of arrangements that I have done for the community. A funeral tribute in the colours of Boleskine Shinty club, a bridal bouquet for a local lad's bride and thank you bouquets for a local business.

Helen Grainger



LITTER PICKERS PICK STAGGERING AMOUNT!

Keira, Ellie, Holly and Tahlia spent the evening of Friday 26th and Saturday 27th March collecting rubbish and litter around Lower Foyers. Around twenty bin bags were collected between the girls over the two days which was a staggering amount!

Thank you to everyone that was involved in the litter pick!

April Emmott

*Pictured from left to right:
Keira Stewart 13yrs, Ellie Emmott 14yrs, Holly Emmott 15yrs
and Tahlia Stewart 15yrs.*

SAD TWINNING OF TWO STINSONS

I recently read about the sad downing of a Stinson aeroplane by the side of Loch Ness, by Inverfarigaig, in 1944. It is a strange coincidence that I live near Inverfarigaig because when I lived in Uki, on the New South Wales / Queensland border Australia, I could see the high top of a caldera in Lamington National Park where the infamous crash and search for a Stinson occurred in 1937. Bernard O' Reilly became hailed as the man who, after all hope was lost, took it upon himself to trek into dense forest to find two survivors and lead them to safety.

The two Stinsons shared a similar fate in the days of primitive navigation systems - they both had to navigate using geographical features on the ground. Both of the aeroplanes hit appalling weather conditions, resulting in both planes dropping to too low an altitude with both meeting the same fate. In Australia, I once experienced the same cyclonic conditions as the Stinson faced - there were roaring winds that demolished a house on a hilltop and stroboscopic

lightning that lasted all night. The weather by Loch Ness was equally inhospitable for the 1944 Stinson flying from Orkney via Loch Ness.

Margie Elgar-Bond

A Stinson aeroplane



LOCH NESS MONSTER SIGHTINGS REGISTER

Next month sees the 25th anniversary of the formalisation of the recording of sightings of the Loch Ness Monster. Gary Campbell, now Keeper of the Register of Sightings at Loch Ness, set the register up with his wife Kathy in 1996 after seeing what he described as and 'unknown but animate creature' in the loch in March of that year. After seeing the creature rise twice in quick succession from the loch, he went to report the sighting but discovered that no-one was keeping a list and in fact, there had been no register kept since 1972.



He and Kathy set about correcting this and over the past quarter century, it has evolved into The Official Loch Ness Monster Sightings Register where every sighting of something unexplained at Loch Ness since 565AD is listed. So if you or any visitors to the area see anything, please tell them to visit www.lochnesssightings.com and report what has been spotted.

Gary Campbell

CALLING ALL RUNNERS AND RIDERS

Runners and riders are set to reappear once it is safe to do so with the Etape pushed back to August.

We contacted Etape Loch Ness and Loch Ness Marathon organiser Malcolm Sutherland from Caledonian Concepts in early March about the plans for 2021.

Malcolm said 'It's been a difficult start to the year for everyone although news of the vaccination roll-out has been very welcome. We continue to follow advice and guidance from the Scottish Government, governing bodies and local authorities with regards to events and would like to reassure you all that we will only stage our events if it is safe to do so and in accordance with all government guidelines.

Malcolm stated 'The health, safety and welfare of our participants, volunteers, staff, stakeholders and the

local community is at the heart of everything we do and will always remain our priority. The team is working very hard behind the scenes to ensure we deliver a safe and amazing event experience for everyone involved and look forward to sharing our plans for the Etape Loch Ness on 22 August and Loch Ness Marathon on 3 October over the coming months.

Malcolm concluded "We are as always extremely grateful for the support we receive locally for the events from both volunteers and the community."

For updates on the Etape and Marathon click through to the websites

Stop Press – This year's Etape in August is sold out! You can register your interest for the 2022 event planned for next April on line now.

Loch Ness Marathon - Marathon and Running Festival in Scotland Etape Loch Ness, Cycle Sportive



Shinty News

CAMANS AT THE READY!

The Camanachd Association has announced a total of nine leagues of mostly six teams for the recommencement of shinty after lockdown. The revised set up has three senior leagues – one covering the top North West clubs, one for clubs close to the A9 and the third of the South West and Argyll.

There are a further three leagues, roughly covering the following – North A league will have the second teams from the North West clubs, North B see the colts for the clubs close to the A9 and North C will include single team clubs such as Boleskine, Lewis and Strathspey.

In the South, a further two leagues will include Argyll area colt teams (South A) with South B including teams such as Kyles Athletic and Tayforth. Finally, the humorously named South Central league will have just five teams including Ardnamurchan, Kilmallie and Dalmally-based Glenorchy!

The Sutherland Cup draw has been announced. Strathpeffer team Caberfeidh will play Boleskine in the first match, scheduled for 3 July at Castle Leod. Check in case details change.

Catriona Fraser

CONFUSED BY THE MANY CHURCH BUILDINGS AROUND FOYERS AND STRATHERRICK?

Church buildings around Foyers and Stratherrick can cause confusion and new residents may well wonder about the names of churches and the congregations that have endured or changed over the centuries.

The Scottish Reformation is a good place to start. 1560 is important, because this is when the reformed congregations first split from the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church has remained largely intact since then, although the failure of the last two Jacobite Risings in the 1700's meant it never recovered its former strength.

The next date to focus on is the 1646 and The Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Confession is a long and detailed guide to Calvinist theology and forcefully details the difference between Calvinism and Catholicism. Most protestant churches today refer to the document, sometimes with later changes or clarifications.

1689 is also a 'big date' when bishops were discontinued for the majority of the protestant churches, except for the Scottish Episcopal Church. Today, only Catholics and Episcopalians still retain a hierarchy of bishops.

The idea that bishops or monarchs, or the State itself should never get in the way of an individual's relationship with God is strongly held in Scotland. For example, The Queen is 'supreme governor' of the Church of England, but the Church of Scotland does not recognise her in this capacity. She is welcome to attend the Kirk's General Assembly but has no special role in the Church at all.

In the 1700's some groups left the Church of Scotland to form their own denominations. In the Highlands however 'The Disruption' of 1843 had a big effect. After this date, the Church of Scotland continued, but those who left,

including 450 ministers, set up the new Free Church of Scotland and rejected the patronage of wealthy landowners and any influence by the State or individuals in church matters. Free Church buildings were constructed for the congregations who had quit the Church of Scotland. Further divisions in 1893 and 1900 led to the formation of the United Free Church. By 1929, some of the differences between those involved were resolved and some of them joined forces again with the Church of Scotland.

By around 1960, the dust had settled! The Church of Scotland retained its dominance, the Free Church of Scotland had been reduced in terms of congregations by the return of many United Free congregations to the Church of Scotland. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, successors to the old Covenanters, remained exceedingly small indeed. Roman Catholicism continued largely unchanged, and the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland soldiered on with a

minority of churches, many in the north. Whilst already small in numbers, some members of the Free Church of Scotland left to form the APC, the Association of Presbyterian Churches, in 1989. This occurred because of a dispute around a member and elder of the church attending at a Catholic funeral mass held for a member of the judiciary. Less than ten APC congregations now meet.

Finally, in the year 2000, a disagreement within the Free Church of Scotland caused the formation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). The members of the 'new' church were unhappy about the Free Church of Scotland and its dealings with alleged improprieties. The Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) has over 30 congregations and adheres most strictly to the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646.



Rev J Christie, Retired Church of Scotland Minister at Boleskine Church, Drumtemple.



Memorial to Father Thain at the Burial Ground at Bridge of Loin



Where they are today? Worship in 2021

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND holds services at Drumtemple. No services are now held at Dores Church and the new congregation, Inverness St. Columba New Charge, meets at Drummond School, Inverness. The 'Great Glen Churches' congregations also meet at Invergarry, Fort Augustus and Tomdoun.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ABERDEEN operates the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Stratherrick. Services are held here and at Fort Augustus, and St. Mary's on the riverside in Inverness. The current Archbishop is Rt Rev. Hugh Gilbert, OSB of Pluscarden.

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH is part of the Anglican Union and still has bishops. Services are held by Canon Collins at Croachy and at Inverness Cathedral. The current bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness is the Most Revd. Mark Strange, who is also Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES (The APC) – holds services at the Kingsview Christian Centre, Inverness.

THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND holds services at Chapel Street, Inverness, Beaulie and Dingwall, with the small church building near the Stratherrick War Memorial.

THE UNITED FREE CHURCH has congregations at Balintore and Lossiemouth, with more churches in the Central Belt of Scotland.

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING) has a church complex at Westhill, Inverness on the Culloden Road.

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HAS MANY LOCAL CONGREGATIONS. Services are held at four church buildings in Inverness - Greyfriars, Free North, Merkinch Free and Smithton and at Fort Augustus and Drumnadrochit (Milton).

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (The Cameronians) has active congregations in Stornoway, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Airdrie.

David Fraser Councillor for Aird and Loch Ness

NEW HIGHLAND COUNCILLOR SAYS HELLO!

Hello, I am David Fraser, and I am the newest of the four councillors for Aird and Loch Ness. I'd like to thank everyone that voted – not just for me – but for all six of us who stood, all wanting to represent you, the people of Aird and Loch Ness on Highland Council.

I am an independent councillor, part of the independent group led by Councillor Margaret Davidson, Abriachan. The Ward's four councillors are Margaret, Cllr. Helen Carmichael, Beaulie also an Independent, Cllr Emma Knox from Kirkhill of the SNP and myself.

I hope you saw my election leaflet, but if you did not then I think I owe you all some information on who I am. I was born in Drumnadrochit. I am a Civil Engineer by profession and worked across Scotland for a number of years before returning home in 1992 with my wife to raise our family. When not working, I have supported my local community in a number of roles including Chairman of the Community Council and Convenor of the Patient Participation Group. I have also served as a director on the Glenurquhart Care Centre board for over ten years and then again as Convenor 2016/17.

I have a wide range of interests and hobbies when time allows, we also have a dog and two Exmoor ponies that keep me busy. My current project is restoring a 1970 Triumph Bonneville that my son inherited but when he returns to work in Edinburgh, I hope to get on with some other things such as my woodturning. A major project which is drawing to a close is the restoration of an old burial ground – Cnocan Burraidh. It has a fascinating history and prior to Covid we managed to really engage pupils from all the local schools in learning about their past. Two years ago, I took early retirement from Scottish Water and that created a bit of time to allow me to consider the role of a local Councillor. I care deeply about our area and its people, and I



also believe in ensuring rural communities are listened to. At a high level it is easy to list some of the big issues – recovery from Covid including tourism, employment and housing for young people, schools and nursery provision, climate change and the environment, infrastructure including roads and broadband, care for the elderly within our communities and so on. A key driver for me is to ensure that when policies are being drawn up that they consider rural areas and not just city centre or central Scotland solutions. I see you are currently developing a community action plan and I fully support that as a method of identifying priorities and influencing how the area develops. I will do all I can to support the work of Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust in making the plans a reality.

I will be visiting Stratherrick and Foyers as COVID permits and look forward to meeting people face to face. I feel that my experience of life around the Loch and my family background will help me understand the specific needs of South Loch Ness. Whether you voted for me or not, I am available to help if you need it. Perhaps you have a problem with Highland Council which you think I can help resolve, or maybe you need some advice on how the Council operates, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

The best way to contact me at the moment is by my new Council e-mail. David.fraser.cllr@highland.gov.uk, mobile 0779139792 or via [facebook.com/davidforlochnessandaird](https://www.facebook.com/davidforlochnessandaird)

David Fraser

Drew Hendry

MP SEEKS RULE CHANGES TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT

As your MP, I am privileged to raise an incredible range of issues on your behalf at Westminster; my team and I work hard for successful outcomes for constituents. Of course, in politics, a much tougher assignment is trying to change UK Government policy and its effects on our communities.

Stratherrick, along with Inverness, was picked as a testing ground for Universal Credit nearly nine years ago. Immediately, we could see the punishing effects of this flawed social security change on vulnerable families, the disabled and even the self-employed. Those most impacted even included the terminally ill.

Working with the local MacMillan CAB team, I soon discovered that local

people living with terminal illnesses were being forced to attend work coach meetings. Shamefully, even having to prove that they would die within six months to access fast track claims. I immediately set up a cross-party group working with Marie Curie to urge the UK Government to scrap this policy.

All these years later, despite promises from various UK Ministers to review the situation, terminally ill people still face these appalling challenges. The Scottish Government has already stated it intends to scrap the 6-month rule when it takes over Personal Independence Payments. People living with a terminal illness in receipt of PIP will not have to prove they only have 6-months to live to get fast track support.

We desperately need to see this rule changed for Universal Credit which remains reserved to Westminster. As your MP and the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Terminal Illness, I will continue to do all I can to work towards putting fairness and

dignity in this policy for families living with a terminal illness.

For details of how to get in touch or follow my work on your behalf, visit www.drewhendrymp.scot



Stratherrick & Foyers NEWS... bringing you info you won't find anywhere else.

BUTTON CELLS

Button cells, or coin shaped batteries can be confusing things. We seem to need these for kitchen scales, some watches and lots of handy things that flash and bleep.

The most commonly used coin style batteries are CR2032, CR2025 and CR2016. What do all those numbers and figures mean, and who makes them up?

It goes all the way back to 1906 when the International Electrotechnical Commission was formed. The IEC is now a very big organisation with its main office in Geneva, and other offices in Nairobi, Sao Paulo, Sydney, Singapore and near Boston in the USA.

The IEC does a great deal more than give numbers to batteries. The first president of the IEC was the great Lord Kelvin from Largs. Today, just as in the infancy of electricity, standardisation helps everyone. Manufacturers, users, consumers and repairers all need electrical standards to function in a global market. A recent growth area has been setting standards for fibre optic cables.

Button Cells –

- The code for a battery covers:
- The number of cells,
- The chemistry (what the innards of the battery is made from)
- Cell shape
- The dimensions and any special characteristics

So – A CR2032 means:

- C = Lithium
- R = Round
- 20 = 20mm in diameter
- 32 = 3.2mm in thickness.

Find out more fascinating things about the IEC at their website <https://www.the-iec.com>

Sin agad e!



Kodak Button Cells blister pack



Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council

ALL CHANGE AT THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Even during Lockdown, the volunteer Community Councillors of the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council have been meeting every month to deal with all things statutory in the area. We have listed below some updates for the Community –

Hellos and goodbyes – we have warmly welcomed Craig Lightbody and Jim Cameron who have been co-opted onto the Community Council. Craig also volunteered to be the CC member of the Brolly group and Jim kindly volunteered to be the treasurer of the CC. Before Christmas, Paula Page and Caroline Mortimore unfortunately stepped down from their roles as Chair and vice-chair, respectively and then this year, both Lorraine Lewis and Alannah Graydon both stepped down. We are so grateful for anyone giving any free time to volunteer in a community role but appreciate that sometimes life is just too busy so we thank them all for their time but must especially mention the time and dedication that Paula Page input as the Chair of the CC. She will be greatly missed and has left big boots to fill! These boots were stepped into by Patrick Haston, which all other members were very relieved about! Patrick is a very busy man but is doing a great job and without a chairperson, the CC would cease to exist. The other role that must be filled to allow the CC to function is the vice-chair. Simon Hargreaves has very kindly taken up this role. Again, a very busy man so

we are very grateful for Simon taking this on. There are spaces on the Community Council if anybody out there would like to volunteer to be a Community Councillor. The CC can only function due to the generosity of members of the Community volunteering their time, but it is very important for the Community to have a Community Council, to allow the area to have a strong voice when it comes to local issues. If anybody would like to find out more, please email our admin at – email.sfcc@aol.com

Roads – We have recently compiled a list of road defects that need either surface work and/or drainage work (thanks to Craig Lightbody for this) and this has been submitted to Highland Council along with information from the recent Community Action Plan where roads and transport was the most mentioned issue. Some of the works are already in the capital programme list that the roads department will be seeking approval for funding from HC on 27th May. We will work with those at the road department and our local Councillors to try to achieve wider road improvements, but this will take time. We still encourage everyone to please report potholes as and when you see them as they do fix them quite quickly. This can be done at –

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/96/roadside_problems

Public Toilets at Foyers – So far we have successfully secured funding from the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust and the SSE Stronelairg Panel but as we continue to wait for news of funding for a new toilet building from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (this will be after the Scottish elections we have been told), we have secured money from Highland Council and the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust to put in place 4 portaloos at the car park for the summer season. They will be emptied twice a week and checked daily.

Micro grants – The Community Council currently receive £5k per annum to give out in micro grants from the SSE Stronelairg Panel. Applications accepted for up to £500 for anything that is deemed to have Community benefit. More information at - <http://stratherrick.net/micro-grants/>

Minutes & Website – The minutes of the Community Council can be viewed at - <http://stratherrick.net/> Here you will also find details of forthcoming meetings etc, but we are currently working on a new website that we hope to share with you soon. Copies of minutes can also be emailed if requested.

Sharon Ferguson
Secretary
Stratherrick and Foyers
Community Council

ELECTION NEWS

The poll for the Scottish Parliament's Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch Constituency, and for the Highlands and Islands List MSPs made interesting reading following the declaration of the election results on Friday and Saturday 7th and 8th May 2021.

Our constituency MSP has been re-elected with a very healthy majority of over 15,000 votes. Kate Forbes, seen by many as a rising star in the Scottish Nationalist Party polled more than the other three candidates combined. Kate has Inverarnie and Garbole connections and has recently become engaged to be married to a man from Dingwall. Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Labour party candidates all scrambled to get less

than 45% of the votes cast for our constituency.

Kate Forbes, Dingwall, SNP – 24,192
Jamie Halcro Johnson, Orphir, Conservative – 8,331
Denis Rixon, Mallaig, Liberal Democrat – 6,778
John Erskine, Labour – 3,855

The Highlands and Islands List result was a complex affair. The d'Honte or Additional Member System is used to elect additional MSPs based on party preferences on a regional basis. This system has given the opportunity for Green MSPs to be elected for the Highlands and Islands Region and elsewhere.

Some political hopefuls who do not get elected on a constituency vote still become Regional List MSPs. The characteristics of the d'Honte system have been highlighted by politicians

such as Alex Salmond and George Galloway who planned but failed to 'get in' on the regional list elsewhere in Scotland.

There are two new MSPs elected this time on the Highlands and Islands List. Our seven Highlands and Islands 'listies' are as follows.

Conservatives
Sir Edward Mountain
Donald Cameron, Younger of Locheil
Douglas Ross
Jamie Halcro Johnson

Green
Ariane Burgess *New

Labour
Rhoda Grant

SNP
Emma Roddick *New

THE SHOWS THAT CAN'T GO ON

Whilst the Black Isle Show is cancelled again this year, the Black Isle Farmers' Society is confident that the event will return with a bang in 2022. This will come as relief for many people in the agricultural business for which the Show is the biggest day of the year. What else is the first Thursday in August for? Meanwhile, the Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh has cancelled for this year and replaced the event with the Royal Highland Showcase. Their Facebook page gives a flavour of what's on offer. Royal Highland Show - Home | Facebook

The Nairn Show is cancelled for 2021 and hopes to be back in late July 2022 at their new venue within walking distance of the town. The Strathnairn Vintage Rally at Daviot is now also cancelled.

The Highland Field Sports Fair at Moy is now cancelled. More information is available on their website. Home | Mysite www.moyfieldsportsfair.co.uk

2021 SHOW CANCELLED



We hope to be back on 4 August 2022





Getting your garden ready for growing?

Making compost?

We can help - with donkey manure

Call 01456 289035 to collect

HAS THE MOT ON YOUR CAR RUN OUT?

COVID lockdown has put many things out of sequence. It is easy to forget about when your MOT is due, whether you take it to Fort Augustus or to Inverness. The DVLA has a great and simple way of checking when your MOT is due. Just click on their website and enter the registration number of your car. It really is that simple. Here's that useful link Check the MOT status of a vehicle - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



VAT REVERSE CHARGE FOR SUBBIES – DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT

We can't always bring you good news, but this article about the VAT Reverse Charge is probably something that many people should know about. Smaller building firms around Foyers and Stratherrick will be affected by VAT Reverse Charge rules which will impact on cash flow and lead to a big change in VAT returns.

From 1 March 2021 new rules apply to VAT and firms which build or subcontract building work and similar services such as painting or landscaping. This is covered in the Excise's Construction Industry Scheme (CIS).

In the past, a VAT registered building and construction services firm would usually charge all customers VAT, but now there are different rules which depend on whether your customer is an 'end-user' or an 'intermediary supply business'.

Whilst the changes do not directly affect self-builders they do have major implications for sub-contractors or building firms who get work from other building firms.

As with all questions to do with VAT, the VAT helpline 0300 200 3700 is a good shout, and info is also provided on line in detail at VAT reverse charge technical guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) There are even on line webinars available on the topic.

Steven Watson
Community Liaison Officer, SFCT

FLASH, BANG, WALLOP, WHAT A PICTURE!

The community is blessed with some fantastic photographers. Please enjoy a sample of their recent work. If you are a keen photographer and would like to see your pictures in the magazine, drop a note to Jillian at jillian-dir@sfctrust.org.uk



Loch Ness by Hugh Elgar-Bond



Stone Byre at Newlands by Hugh Elgar-Bond



Winter sun on Loch Kemp by Ros Nicol



Snowy Rosehip by Ros Nicol



Winters' grip, Loch Pataig by Ros Nicol



Early Morning Frost by Ros Nicol

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMER MARKET & MINI GALA

24th July 2021

12 Noon - 5pm



Stalls ~ Food ~ BBQ ~ tug o' war
~ Dog Show ~ Music/ kids disco
Raffle ~ Games ~ Tombola

contact -

stratherrickandfoyersmarkets@outlook.com



Cameron's Tea Rooms, Foyers

The publication of the Stratherrick & Foyers News and many of the activities we report on are made possible by the community funds we receive from the following organisations:

Scottish and Southern Energy



Greencoat Capital



Green Highland



Easter Aberchalder Partnership