



NAIDHEACHD COIMHEARSNACHD CILL MHÀLAIDH KILMALLIE COMMUNITY NEWS

inside

- KCC reports - p2
- broadband update - p3
- on the web - p4
- last christmas lights?- p4
- wrecked - p4
- councillors' corner** - p5
- community policing - p5
- coastguard - p5
- contractors on Blar - p6
- Community Centre - p7
- Lochaber High - p8
- Banavie Primary- p9
- Kilmallie Playgroup - p10
- canal news- p11
- Waterways Trust - p12
- FOCAL- p13
- rugby club - p13
- fireworks - p14
- Kilmallie shinty - p16
- Lochaber Art Club - p16
- country dancing - p17
- dog club - p17
- letters - p18 & 19
- Corpach woods - p19
- wild about Kilmallie - p20
- Mr Belford - p21
- Peatan - p22
- green fingers - p23
- natural history soc - p23
- Room 13 - p23
- focus on folk - p24
- Locheilside - p25
- focus on business - p25
- spotlight - p26
- feedback - p27
- puzzles - p27
- sponsors - p28



moon and stars, Banavie

when will we see your lights again?

Kilmallie Community Council have recently been told that this will be the last year that The Highland Council will be able to put up our Christmas trees and lights in Banavie and Corpach for free. We thought this was a good time to try and find out how much people enjoy and appreciate them, and how enthusiastic the community is about fundraising for decorations for next year.

Please let us know what you think and fill in the questionnaire included with this newsletter.

Read full story on page 4.



Kilmallie Community Council

From the Chair

Well hello there and welcome to issue 40 of the Kilmallie Community News and it is a right Christmas cracker!!

It is a pleasure to see more and more of the local clubs and organisations sending in articles for the newsletter to keep us all informed of what is happening and what is available to us in Kilmallie. Keeping fit with Scottish Country dance sounds like immense fun and a great way of meeting new friends - it certainly brings back memories of dances we used to have locally!

Talking of which I was delighted to hear from Andy Goodwin this month and to chat, via e-mail, about the events that used to be held in the then Kilmallie Hall. You will see some of the correspondence with Andy on pages 18 and 19. Did you go to the Corries concert or any of the concerts Andy organised? It would be great if you could come back to us with your reminiscences for the letters page. The postcards and beautiful watercolour of the Ben and the Pepperpot lighthouse look good in the newsletter but you can view them even better in colour in the galleries at www.kilmallie.org.uk if you have website access.

Andy in Sweden will have found us in Kilmallie on our wonderful website which is now a year old. If you have access to the web and have not yet visited the website please go and take a look around; there is so much more there than we can ever show you in the newsletter. As an example look at the Wildlife Notes page (www.kilmallie.org.uk/our-environment/nature-wildlife/wildlife-notes) - it is just fascinating to read of the sightings of otter, sand martins, roe deer, herons, wood anemones and Lady's Smock: just some of the wildlife, flora and fauna to be found in Kilmallie. We are very lucky!

You may remember last Newsletter that I mentioned that John Stafford of Scottish Canals would be giving a presentation of the workings of the canal at our October meeting. Just to let

you know that we had a very interesting and informative presentation from John and were joined by some Kilmallie residents who not only enjoyed John's presentation but a cup of tea and a biscuit to go with it! We cannot guarantee that all our meetings, held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (bar July and December) will be as interesting, but we will try! Please do come along if you can.

In this issue you will read of the predicament Kilmallie now has with the Christmas lights, and also of a resident calling for a New Year event to be held in the Community Centre. Kilmallie Community Council (KCC) is made up of 7 volunteers who also have one, or several, day jobs. We have made it our priority not only to deal with our statutory obligations of planning, licensing and consultations with Kilmallie residents, and also to lobby public bodies (like our current campaign to extend the Corpach 30 mph speed limit zone) but also to establish communications with all of you living and working in Kilmallie, through this newsletter and our website. I am sure you can appreciate that these activities take up so very much of our time and as such we cannot undertake community services and events as well. We need community minded people, such as yourself, to get together and take these ideas forward, whether facilities like Christmas lights, or events like a New Year do. Come and talk to us if you have any ideas that you'd like to take forward. KCC can help in all sorts of indirect ways even if we don't get directly involved!

Can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Maggie Mackenzie, Chairman

PS Would you like to plant a tree and watch it grow over the years? See page 12 to find out how!

Going Slow Road safety update

KCC has continued to pursue changing the 40mph speed limit zone through Corpach to 30mph. We wrote to all the list MSPs with responsibility for our area and also Dave Thompson our constituency MSP. The response was encouraging with strong support generally for improving road safety and specific support for Corpach from Dave Thompson. Since we started our efforts, Transport Scotland has released a report on trunk road speed limits in our area. Although this report suggests several positive changes including 50mph limits for the notorious Glenfinnan to Lochailort section of the A830 and the Onich to Fort William section of the A82, the recommendation was for no change in Corpach. This is disappointing but it is possible that the consultants didn't take full account of the increasing HGV traffic at Annat. One positive thing is that children will be allowed to stay on the school buses until they turn to head back towards town, meaning that they will no longer have to cross this section of road.

We have also been made aware of a lot of concern over traffic speeds across the canal bridge at Banavie. There is

currently a 60mph limit on this stretch between Corpach and the High School. The sight lines for pedestrians crossing the road either side of the canal are poor because of the bridge structure. Walkers and cyclists on the Great Glen Way and rail passengers for Banavie Station have to cross the road here. Many visitors also walk along Neptune's Staircase and then cross the road to see the steam train without thinking that traffic may be approaching at 60mph. Scottish Canals are so concerned about the safety of crossing the road here that local staff advise canoeists on the Great Glen Canoe Trail to start at Banavie rather than use the pontoons below the bridge that were put in specially for canoes. In view of all these concerns, KCC will be pushing for the speed limit between Corpach and the new roundabout on the Blar to be reduced to 40mph. This should also reduce the speed of traffic coming into Corpach and improve safety at other junctions into Banavie and Caol.

Russell Leaper, Secretary



kilmallie community news

We have once again been delighted to receive articles from some of our regular contributors and a few new ones – this is great! We appreciate the time our contributors have given up to write these articles, especially at this busy time of year! Take a look at the letters page and see if it stirs any memories for you!

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter and if you would like to suggest a topic for inclusion in the next newsletter – or if you would like to write an article – then please get in touch. We are waiting to hear from you! A new way of contacting the newsletter team is by email at newsletter@kilmallie.org.uk

Any contributions for the next issue – March 2013 – would have to be with the newsletter team by the 15th February – perhaps you have a favourite recipe to share, a favourite walk or a hobby. You know where we are! We would love to hear from the younger members of our community and we also want to hear what is important to you – we do hope the young people read our

newsletter!

We are going to try to hand deliver as many of the newsletters as we can – depending on the weather – we cannot expect our volunteers to deliver if conditions underfoot are dangerous, the rest will be posted. If you would like to help deliver future issues, please get in touch – we could do with your help. If you feel that you could deliver a few to your neighbours or on the street where you live – please get in touch – every little helps!

Once again we thank our sponsors without whom we couldn't fulfil our wish to communicate with you all.

Enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter and please have a peaceful Christmas and we will be back with you in March 2013!

Christine, Jan, Kshama and Mandy

Your newsletter team:

Christine Hutchison	772252
Jan MacLugash	772383
Kshama Wilmington	772499
Mandy Ketchin	



email us at newsletter@kilmallie.org.uk

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the newsletter team or of Kilmallie Community Council.

KILMALLIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Members of the public are most welcome at all our meetings. Meetings are held at 7:15pm in Kilmallie Hall on the 3rd Wed of every month excl July and Dec. Next ordinary meeting dates are 16 Jan, 20 Feb, 20 Mar. Next AGM is 19 June 2013.

Chairman Maggie Mackenzie,
42 Hillview Drive, Corpach, PH33 7LS chairman@kilmallie.org.uk

Secretary Russell Leaper
Canal House, Banavie, PH33 7LY secretary@kilmallie.org.uk

Treasurer Jan MacLugash
Salen, Banavie PH33 7LY treasurer@kilmallie.org.uk

Other members Jillian Clark
Christine Hutchison
Mandy Ketchin
Kshama Wilmington

Associate member Chris Pellow

coming up soon

more History of Locheilside

The Kilmallie Image Library

and maybe articles on fundraising in Vietnam, the steam train, the ramblers and more...

let us know what else you would like to see in future issues



listen out for news we hope of Kilmallie Community News becoming a 'talking newsletter' soon, courtesy of Talk Lochaber, for people with a visual or reading impairment, with thanks to Libby for suggesting such a great idea.

making progress with community broadband

A few of us have set up Locheilnet, a Community Interest Company with the aim of providing a wireless high speed broadband network, servicing the community around Loch Eil, from Achaphubuil to the end of Loch Eil on both sides.

In order to comply with funding regulations, our services are unfortunately limited to people who cannot/will not otherwise be supplied with next generation broadband via the existing infrastructure. Obviously, if in the future, it becomes clear that BT will not be offering high speed broadband service between Fort William and Corpach, a new project could be set up or the existing one amended.

You can read about the project on our website: www.locheilnet.co.uk. If you would like to be invited to the informative meeting or are interested in joining us, please send us an e-mail and we will add you to our list.

Many thanks
Chris Pellow

email: info@locheilnet.co.uk
website: www.locheilnet.co.uk





on the web www.kilmallie.org.uk

Our, YOUR, website is now one year old. Already it contains over 100 pages and is hopefully growing all the time in its value as a resource for everyone living and working in Kilmallie.

As it gets bigger, it gets harder to keep up with it all, so please get in touch if you spot anything on the website that is out of date, or a link that no longer works, or anything you think is missing or incorrect.

As promised, in the last three months we've added loads more about Corpach Woods on the Kilmallie Community Company pages. Thanks to Paul Biggin who has provided lots more information, news sheets and pictures. You can now read the results of their species survey of the

woodlands, read about their workparties, and even download a copy of their membership application form (hint hint!). There is an online 'contact form' too so you can get in touch with the Community Company direct. Follow the link to Corpach Woods on the left hand side of our home page.

Also new since last time is a 'remembrance gallery' in memory of local people who lost their lives in war. Please let us know the names of any people we have missed, or any memories of people you would like to include.

Please get in touch by emailing the website team (Mandy, Maggie and Russell) at website@kilmallie.org.uk

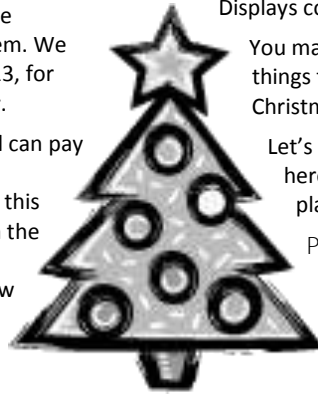
the last of the lights?

The run-up to Christmas starts at the end of November or early December with the switching on of the Christmas lights. This usually happens in cities and larger towns.

Here in Kilmallie we appreciate the Christmas lights that decorate some lamp standards in the centre of Corpach and at the entrance to Banavie from the A830. We have also had the pleasure of having Christmas trees in Corpach and Banavie. These Christmas displays have been provided by The Highland Council here and in other Lochaber Community Council areas.

Kilmallie Community Council have received a letter from the TEC Services Department of The Highland Council saying that this is the last year they will provide the Christmas displays unless they are paid for. Other Lochaber Community Councils have received similar letters, therefore in 2013 there will only be Christmas displays if the communities pay for them. We have been given a cost of £1113 plus VAT for 2013, for displays equivalent to the ones we have this year.

You may think OK then – the Community Council can pay for them – well that is not what can happen as Community Councils do not have any funding for this activity. If we want to have Christmas Displays in the KCC area the money would have to be raised and either spent to pay The Highland Council or a new community group to assemble and manage the displays.



How do you feel about this? Would you miss the Christmas Displays?

Will you volunteer to join a community group to organise this?

If a community group asked for a donation towards the Christmas Displays, would you donate?

Remember this is not just for 2013, it is for the foreseeable future. Now is the time for us, as a community, to pull together if we feel that this is important. Your community needs you and we need each other. We can all help in some way.

We have all seen how community groups - Corpach in Colour and Banavie Floral Improvements – have been successful: well now is the time for a group or groups to be formed so that the Christmas Displays continue.

You may think "Bah Humbug" but this is probably a sign of things to come – hanging baskets and flower tubs, Christmas Displays – what after that?

Let's be positive and hope we will have Christmas Displays here in Kilmallie in 2013 and following years – we can all play our part.

Please let us know your views on this topic by completing our simple questionnaire – either the paper copy included with this newsletter, or you can do it online at www.kilmallie.org.uk – easy!

wrecked?

Were you curious about the new blue flashing light that appeared offshore at Corpach a few weeks ago? We asked John Stafford and Phil Wren if they knew what it was all about...

John explained:

It is blue and yellow – put in place by the Northern Lighthouse Board. Charts mark this area as 5.2m depth but a build up has caused a shoal where the buoy is now, resulting in a reduced depth of 2.7m, hence the reason the new buoy is in place.

and Phil added:

It is an emergency wreck marker - but no there is not a wreck. It is hopefully a temporary marker which is indicating a shoal area. Basically it marks an area of seabed which has become shallower due to a build up of sand/gravel and may be a danger but only to the larger vessels going to the Clyde Boyd pier. The next question is - who is going to remove the build up when no one is responsible for it? Watch this space.



PS Paul Biggin tells us he has paddled round the new buoy in a kayak



our Highland councillors' corner

Our three Ward 12 councillors continue to take turns to write a piece for our newsletter. This time we're round to Allan Henderson again.

A very Merry Xmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year to all our readers.

The recent official opening of the Kilmallie Shinty Club community changing room facilities, at the magnificent setting of canal parks, on the shore of Loch Linnhe and looking on to Ben Nevis is the manifestation of a really good partnership: a model to be copied by all other sports clubs who do not want to be at the mercy of scarce Council ground-keeping funds. Ever since Kilmallie Shinty Club concluded a long lease of their own shinty pitch they have gone about securing funds and procuring a 21st century facility for community use. Along with Highland Council, Leader, Sports Scotland and other funds raised locally they have funded a facility which is being well used by the football welfare league as well as Kilmallie Shinty Club. This is taking your destiny in your own hands!

The official opening ceremony continued with the community

theme with the youngest and oldest playing members being involved in an afternoon exhibition match. The master stroke was enlisting the Camanachd cup winning side of 1964 to do the honours at the opening. They regaled many with their shinty tales at the magnificent spread in the Caol Community Centre which is another great community venture to complement the revitalised Kilmallie Community Centre in Corpach. The bringing together of the '64 cup winning side brought back many memories. Memories of playing shinty as a kid at Kinlocheil school (along with the other 8 schoolchildren----boys and girls) on a field that has now disappeared under the A830.

To be a part of the official opening was a great honour for me as this community spirit is what makes our jobs as your local councillors much easier and more rewarding. It also has the benefit of 21st century facilities for our community.

While on the subject of community spirit, as I write this piece I have just come back from the Rugby Club's community bonfire and firework display at Banavie. Each year Lochaber Rugby Club go to great lengths to put on this superb display which is very much appreciated by the huge crowd that turns up from all over Lochaber. As a councillor I would like to express my personal thanks to the whole club and their willing helpers, who go out of their way to entertain and thrill in such a safe environment, even although the first team members were giving their all for the club in the afternoon.

Allan Henderson

community policing

In the Community Council's last newsletter I posted news of the Northern Safety Camera Partnership's (NSCP) intention to position their safety camera van along the A830 at varying positions following the complaints of speeding in the area, most especially in and around Banavie Primary School. In that article I gave an overview of the statistics for persons speeding along this stretch and can report that the NSCP have detected a similar amount of speeding offences in this most recent period. They also report that they are looking to identify a further site for positioning the camera van along this stretch of road and so the message to the local community to be aware of their speed remains the same.

Indeed, with the winter months ahead of us, it will be no surprise to the local public to learn that road safety will be high on the priority list for Northern Constabulary during this period. Road safety checks will be carried out as part of routine policing to ensure vehicles are roadworthy for this time of year. Drivers should take special care in bad weather conditions and only make journeys that are essential when the roads are badly affected by

snow or ice. Always carry a shovel and blanket in your car and make sure windscreen wash fluid is topped up and all lights are fully functional. Drivers should avoid sharp braking especially at bends and only drive at speeds that are safe for the conditions.

The local community will now be well used to the continued work on the Blar and there have been no major issues with traffic reported to Police. The new Police station on the Blar is on target with the service site being handed over to Northern Constabulary in January 2013 and work anticipated to commence soon thereafter, with a scheduled completion date of October 2013.

Lastly I am pleased to intimate that PC Joan Barron has recently been appointed as liaison officer for Banavie Primary School and has already carried out a few visits, including one where she distributed high visibility wrist bands to the children amongst other goodies.

Andrew Bilton

Police Sergeant

Liaison Officer for Kilmallie Community Council

Andrew.bilton@northern.pnn.police.uk
Fort William Police Station,
Tel 01397 702361



HM COASTGUARD AT CORPACH

At first, Phil wrote a short apology... then two weeks later he sent us more - what a star you are Phil!

Hi all

For the first and hopefully last time it has to be no article from me for this newsletter. As the closure of Clyde Coastguard is imminent I am busy preparing for the switch over to Stornoway plus attending courses and teaching at Stornoway, Aberdeen and Southampton. Really sorry but normal service should be resumed next issue
Best regards
Phil

Hi again all

Although I am away for most of this month, mainly involved in the handover of maritime operations from Greenock to Stornoway, I will be attending a week's course in technical rescue in Dorset followed by three days of Officer in Charge training at South Queensferry.

It did however feel strange not writing for your wonderful publication so here's a few words to keep the flow going. Is flow the right word !!!

From a local view point the handover of operations for Argyll and Lochaber to Stornoway should not have any effect. The teams, lifeboats and helicopters remain as they are. What will be lost is a large amount of local knowledge but that is where we

come in. The time I have spent in Stornoway recently was to present to them the type of incidents we have here and how we are able to bring them to a successful conclusion. In the coming months we should see some enhancement here in Corpach and around Lochaber. The team here have a vast wealth of local knowledge which can be tapped into by Stornoway. Much of our rescue equipment will be upgraded and new equipment purchased. There will be an additional full time Officer thus enabling one to be on call whilst the other can be off duty or attend courses etc. New equipment will include a spinal board, flood suits and dry suits and new first aid equipment.

Best regards

Phil

contractors on the Blar

KCC has received the following update from Colin Graham, Development Manager of Miller Developments

We continue to make good progress with the site preparation works at Blar Mor, boosted by the fact that it has been the driest year in Fort William in living memory. When shifting around 200,000 cubic tonnes of boggy peat, the absence of (much) rainfall has been a real boon to our contractors, I&H Brown. Pupils from Caol Primary School got the chance to see I&H Brown in action when we took them round the site in early September.

Much of the muck-shifting is now complete and we are focusing on the delivery of the associated utilities, bring power, water and drainage to the site. As everyone will be aware, we are also now in the midst of constructing the new 5-arm roundabout on the A830 that will be the main access to the site. This has, of necessity, involved disruption to the normal traffic flows on the Fort William to Mallaig road but hopefully our traffic management measures have kept the nuisance factor to the absolute minimum (and the disruption is temporary).

Since my last update, we have also completed a sale of the first site within Blar Mor to Northern Constabulary for the construction of the new Fort William Police Station. We are twin-tracking their enabling works with those for Tesco and expect to hand over a serviced site to the Police very early next year for them to start work almost immediately on the station itself.

In terms of the main site, we should see all the Tesco enabling works complete by around Xmas time and again, our intention is to hand over the serviced site very early in 2013 and it is then down to Tesco (who have already bought the site) to decide when to construct their store. They already have a full detailed consent for the store so it should just be a question of when they can fit it into their busy store development programme.

Colin Graham
Miller Developments
0870 336 5283



Kilmallie Community Centre



By the time this is printed, it is hoped that the new disabled toilet will be open, with access from the car park using a universal Radar Key. Attached is the Chairman's report for the year: I would like to add that a major vote of thanks is due to our Chairman who without his work in dealing with all the contractors, none of the improvements could have been completed.

As a committee we would ask if anyone is interested in assisting with the Badminton section on a Wednesday at 7.30pm please come along.

The Centre is also willing to assist with any other section who would like to use the hall such as Indoor Bowling, Whist or you name it.

Merry Christmas to all.
Jimmy Smith

Kilmallie Community Centre,
Station Road, Corpach,
Fort William, PH33 7JH
Scottish Charity SC000604
CHAIRMAN Mr John Macdonald,
Merchiston, Badabrie, Banavie,
Fort William. Tel 01397 772443
SECRETARY Mrs Norma MacLellan,
12 Hillview Drive, Corpach,
Fort William. Tel. 01397 772597
TREASURER Mr James Smith,
13 Lady Margaret Drive, Corpach,
Fort William. Tel. 01397 772561

Here we publish an extract from John Macdonald's Chairman's Report to the Kilmallie Community Centre's AGM on 24/10/12. John's report also described some of the problems and frustrations they encountered during the building contract: they have submitted a claim for compensation from the contractor.

Another rather eventful year in our now named Kilmallie Community Centre.

The present committee can be justifiably proud with the end result of securing the future of this centre with the completion of new roof, new heating system and an ongoing programme of upgrading the hall facilities, the latest to be starting shortly is an additional disabled toilet with access from outside using a radar key.

To help us achieve these goals we have to thank Mr. Roddy Macphee who guided our treasurer throughout the process of controlling the financial implications relating to the Leader grant and its control and also Mr. Martin Cuthbertson our local Leader controller and contact.

.....

We must also thank Mr Roddy Mainland who offered to cover overseeing the work whilst myself and Jimmy Smith were on two weeks holiday. Roddy intimated that he did not envy us our job. Things took a turn for the better with the arrival of a Mr. Ian Beesley, this man showed proper experience and control to manage the job and take it forward. The remedial work he carried out had an immediate effect, and the snagging list he was presented with was dealt with very speedily. Unfortunately a new leak is evident in the main hall at one of the three tall windows, this has been passed on to them. A.J.Engineering still acknowledge their liability for the leak proof roof.

The Highland Wood Energy bio-mass boiler, after a shaky start, has proved to be a very good piece of kit and has been running without human intervention for the past few months, a formal hand-over and further briefing to the hall committee is to be arranged.

The wood chip supplier has unfortunately broken a large number of paving slabs which service the pathways and disabled car park this has to be looked at for a no cost remedy, also control of spillage of the wood chips when charging the hopper, as the chips will degrade and choke the soak-a-way.

The hall is being well used with rave notices from the courses which required tea, coffee and light lunches of soup and rolls, supplied and made by Jim and Ellen Smith for which we give them a very big vote of thanks, as they have raised a large amount of money for hall funds. The toilets and halls are still being kept to a very high standard for which we thank Bobby and Jessie Henderson.

We are on the final part of our re-generation plan which is for an additional disabled toilet. This work has been programmed to start shortly and will only take a few days to complete. Three additional disabled car park bays have been marked out with relevant sign-age, these are around the side of the hall, sheltered from the wind and rain from the loch. Access to the main hall is with a slabbed pathway to either the front door or the double door at the bottom of the hall.

A request to purchase a piece of land has been received. This was duly considered by the committee and has been refused. The position of the trustees was debated and the implications considered. From this debate the committee would like to retain the position and status as the controlling body for the hall assets. The committee being the managers of the running and maintenance of the hall. The trustees insuring the hall and its assets, remain within the control and the interests of the community, initially it looks like the Trustees will have to satisfy OSCR by sending in an annual return. The local plan category being C.U. (community use).

Hall users we have a significant list of these i.e. British Waterways, Highland Council, Trans Serve, Old Tyme Dancing, Scottish Country Dancing, Mustard Seed Fellowship, Mothers and Toddlers, Community Council, Music for All, Woodland Trust and a new booking for Parkinsons Support Group and interest shown for badminton and whist drives, annual events being the Buttons and Bows concert, Heathers Walk, R.A.F.Weekend, The Macmillan Nurses, The community carol service, Xmas Fayre and Xmas tree festival, as you can see, a well used asset to the community.

As it has been a very busy year the committee were beginning to feel the strain, our treasurer Mr. Jim Smith has stated that he wishes to stand down once all the paper work has been finalised, but to remain on the committee, we are in the process of finding a replacement. Mrs. Margaret Macdonald has taken on the mantle for hall bookings.

We look forward to a secure future for the hall with the involvement of more of the community members in the day to day running of the hall as this is a superb facility which is borne out by a survey carried out to ascertain the suitability of the hall to fulfil the functions as an emergency centre, the person doing the survey said that this is the only hall that they found which ticked all the boxes.

Once again a hearty vote of thanks to all my committee members, councillors Mr. E. Hunter, Mr. W. Clark, Provost Henderson and especially my long suffering wife who has been home alone on too many occasions.

All the very best for the future

John Macdonald
Chairman



High Notes

Remembrance

Remembrance is a special time of year at Lochaber High. Our strong and enduring link with the Commando Veterans Association makes the whole event more relevant for our young people and it is always good to see old friends who visit Lochaber for the poignant weekend.

Our Sixth Years sold poppies around the school and, on 8th and 9th Nov we had Remembrance assemblies for all year groups. This year the theme was the 'Act of Remembrance', focusing on what the elements of a Remembrance service actually mean. Sarah Johnston played the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' on trumpet and Ewen MacQueen played 'Flowers of the Forest' on bagpipes. There was also an opportunity to reflect on recent casualties in Afghanistan.

We staged our annual concert for the Commando Veterans Association during the afternoon of Friday 9th November. Our Wind Band, Swing Band and Pipe Band played a variety of tunes culminating in a moving joint version of 'Highland Cathedral'; always popular with the veterans. The Vic Ralph Memorial Shield for Musician of the Year was presented to Rebecca Shearer from the Pipe Band and Amy Cameron from the Wind Band. Then there was tea and cakes with the veterans and their families – always a good opportunity to rekindle old friendships, hear stories and strengthen this important link for the school.

On Remembrance Sunday, the Lochaber Schools Pipe Band led the parade for both the Sunday morning service in town and the afternoon service at the Commando Memorial, Spean Bridge. Isla MacKay and Ruairaidh Wells (both Sixth Year Prefects) laid a wreath on behalf of the school at the town's War Memorial and our Wind Band played for the service at Spean Bridge. Pupils who have been involved with Remembrance events over the years often comment that it was one of the most memorable parts of their school career, especially having the privilege of getting to know some of the exceptional people who come to Lochaber to remember lost friends and colleagues. This year that experience

was enhanced when eight of our S4 and S6 pupils had the opportunity to interview veterans on a one-to-one basis. This was organised by the West Highland Museum and their conversations, which were recorded, will be edited and will form part of a Commando exhibition due to be opened in the museum next year.

Concern has been expressed in the national press that schools are no longer taking Remembrance seriously. That is not the case in Lochaber High School; we are very proud of our link with the Commando Veterans and the role that we play in Remembrance events. We will remember them.



Top: The Vic Ralph Memorial Shield for Musician of the Year is presented by Geoff Murray, Secretary CVA & Stan 'Scotty' Scott Chairman CVA. The winners were Rebecca Shearer (Pipe Band) & Amy Cameron (Wind Band).

Middle: on the New York subway

Below: at the Statue of Liberty

Overpage: against the New York skyline

New York, New York

Three members of staff from Lochaber High – myself, Donald Maclean (Depute Head Teacher) and Ann-Marie Masson (Librarian) – took our spouses to New York City in the October holidays and – to add to the experience – we took along 30 pupils from the school. A great group of young people from Second Year to Sixth Year had the 'trip of a lifetime' as we dashed around the city, trying to see and do as much as possible in a week.

We flew out from Glasgow, via Heathrow, to JFK and despite delays, extra security checks and an escorted run through Heathrow airport to board our transatlantic flight just as the doors were closing, we made it to New York on time ... albeit without 15 of our bags which arrived the following day.

We stayed in the Chelsea International Hostel in Lower Manhattan. It was, to say the least, basic, but it was perfectly situated between 7th and 8th Avenues and right on the main north/south Subway lines to Times Square and other popular destinations. We made good use of the Subway every day and the tickets - \$29 (around £20) for a week of unlimited travel – were a real bargain.

We started our week with a visit to NBC Studios for a guided tour and then went to the 'Top of the Rock' – The Rockefeller Building, where we enjoyed spectacular views of Manhattan to the south and Central park to the North. We had a day cruise to see the famous immigration reception centre at Ellis Island as well as landing on Liberty Island where we were able to pose for photographs in front of the iconic Statue. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately) the inside was closed so we weren't able to climb the 350+ steps to the top! Other visits included an open-top bus tour; Central Park; Chinatown; Grand Central Terminal; The American Museum of Natural History; a walk over Brooklyn Bridge and a thought-provoking visit to the 9/11 memorial.

A 'high point' of the trip was the view from the top of the Empire State Building at night – the clear sky gave us a spectacular view of the brightly lit city in all directions and that particular evening was topped off with a limo ride back to the hostel.

*contd
overpage*



We ate out at different venues each evening, the most popular being Bubba Gump's and Hard Rock Café (both in Times



Square) and Tick Tock, a traditional all-American diner. Evening activities included a visit to the cinema (where some tired travellers caught up on lost sleep) and a visit to the Gershwin Theatre on Broadway to

see the world-famous musical, 'Wicked'. You can't go to New York and not shop (or so they tell me) – we took the Subway out the Queens Center Mall where our young (and not so young) shoppers replenished their wardrobes, bought presents for family and friends and – I'm sure – contributed to reducing the USA's national debt!

There has been much discussion about what was the 'best bit'. I think the conclusion has to be that it was simply 'being there' – sampling a fascinating city; enjoying the sights, the sounds and the general buzz. The pupils were impeccably behaved throughout and were often complimented for their good manners. They were great company; they had a great trip and so did I.

Jim Sutherland,
Head Teacher, Lochaber High School



Banavie Primary News

At Banavie, the last four weeks have been very busy! We have been doing things like the Halloween disco, fitness testing, dance platform, a panto called Robin Hood and Children in Need.

M and M productions came to put on a pantomime and it was Robin Hood. It was really good and very funny! I liked the costumes too.

Primary Seven have been to their first fitness testing at the High School. I thought the hardest part was the bleep test, that's when you have to run to each side before it bleeps and it starts to get faster each time. It was very tiring! There were also different activities too.

This year for Dance Platform, we have been working very hard to learn the dance that we have been taught. There are going to be three songs in the dance and there are two different costumes. It is Primary Five to Seven girls that are dancing.

By Isla MacEachan



CHARITY Shoebboxes

Banavie Primary has been taking part in the Blythswood Shoebox appeal. Most families in the school have put together a wrapped shoebox and they have filled the shoebox with various items. The school managed to collect over 100 shoeboxes to send out to countries around the world. On 8th of November, Blythswood came along to our assembly and they took the shoeboxes away to get checked and posted.

Archie Foundation and SSPCA

On Friday the 26th of October, a lady called Carole from the SSPCA came along to our assembly to receive a cheque from the school. We raised the money from our 2011 Christmas Concert. The amount of the cheque was an amazing £100!

On Friday the 16th of November, 2 girls called Alana and Katie came from Inverness to receive a cheque from the school. We raised the money from our 2011 Christmas Concert. The cheque was also for £100 and the money will go towards a new Children's Ward at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness.

Children In Need

On Friday the 16th of November was Children In Need day. We did loads of activities to raise money. Primary 3/4 sold wristbands for £1 and Pudsey Key rings for £2 around the school. They also drew giant pictures of Pudsey for every class and if people had loose change at home, they would bring them in and stick them all over Pudsey. Overall, we raised an amazing amount of £353!!!!

By Morgan MacDonald





Our boys and girls have settled in smoothly to a year of fun and learning outside their home life amongst new friends.

A great start to the year was enjoyed outdoors in the garden with energetic play on the slide, seesaw, in the sand pit, and Wendy house. Much creativity took place too, painting and drawing 'en plein air' at our outdoor easels and even some pavement art was draughted in chalks on our steps in the garden. Many boys and girls tended to plants and vegetables by weeding and watering via our eco water butt. However, watering operations had to be delayed thrice as the butt actually dried up and ran out - quite uncommon in Lochaber!

Despite dryer than usual soil, our plot yielded a good harvest, plump potatoes were dug up and impressive carrots, parsnips and onions were enthusiastically pulled out by keen groups of girls and boys. Many of these little gardeners were amazed at the different sizes and funny shapes of their home produce.

Everyone loved making vegetable soup for snack and several little sous chefs cut up the carrots into sticks for dipping into yummy houmous and cream cheese. At the craft table, our home produce was used to make bold press prints with sliced carved potatoes, and other vegetables and fruit were explored by printing too.

Further cooking activities were baking cheese scones and making our own garlic bread, the latter of which was well timed



just before Halloween so that any vampires steered well away! The effort everyone made to dress up at our Halloween party was astounding. New games were quickly grasped and gleefully played by good sports; musical chairs, dooking for apples, pass the witches cat, and stick the teeth on the skeleton. Games and activities were learnt further afield outside in the "Fir Wood", Tom Giubhais, a short walk uphill from playgroup - den building, map making and insect spotting. Many boys and girls collected natural objects and created clay sculptures on site. These wonderful woods provide a super environment and much stimuli for spontaneous imaginative play; so far such play appears to have centred around adventurers, explorers, pirates and roaming dinosaurs. Lots of running jumping and balancing on rocks and tree trunks have given everyone more confidence and an appetite for getting out into the healthy outdoors. Kilmallie playgroup think these beautiful and ancient woods are a most valuable resource and hope to participate in a future event with Corpach Community Company to help maintain them during the course of the year.

Corpach in Colour Flower and Produce Show 2012 - Congratulations to :

- Cameron Sandison 1st Prize
 - Skye Strachan 2nd Prize
 - Archie MacLean 3rd Prize
- for craft decorating a wooden spoon, and Skye Strachan also gained 1st prize in drawing too.



canal news

End of season statistics

West District locations to end of October 2012.

This shows that we have been quieter with Boat movements this year.

Corpach Sea-lock

2011 – 1502 boats
2012 – 1372 boats
down - 8.5%

Corpach Double

2011 - 1361 boats
2012 – 1234 boats
down - 9 %

Banavie

2011 - 1311 boats
2012 - 1237 boats
down - 6%

Moy Bridge

2011 – 2960 boats
2012 – 2895 boats
down - 2.5 %

Gairloch

2011 – 3021 boats
2012 - 2916 boats
down - 2 %

Differences in figures -

- Moy & Gairloch have internal boat movements. Could be an increase in hire boat movements. The other locations in the West are private boat owners only.
- Reduction at Corpach with the number of commercial vessels using it as a berth in the summer months. Vessels stayed at Oban to reduce fuel costs.

Recent talks

I gave a Water Safety talk to Primary 3 at Caol Primary School.
Alec Francis gave a talk to the Lochaber Friendship group – Passing Along the Canal.

I gave a talk to Kilmallie Community Council – I described the Operations of West District and we discussed the Banavie Bridge swings.
(Russell Leaper of Kilmallie CC has kindly agreed to put together graphs showing statistics of the logged swings of the bridge - thanks Russell). *** see KCC note below

Canal Closure

This winter the canal will be closed between 7th January 2013 till mid-March 2013 to allow Transport Scotland to carry out work on the Bridges at Banavie, Laggan & Aberchalder.

Planned maintenance for the Winter

Operations team -

- refurbishment of 3 pontoons at Banavie
- repairs to lighthouse at Corpach Sea-lock
- Toe Ditch work, Loy Sluices to Loy Jetty
- masonry repairs at Corpach Sea-lock.

Maintenance team –

- Lighting repairs Gairloch
- Structure repairs Shengain Aqueduct
- plus repairs at Tomnahurich Bridge, Laggan Locks & Laggan Bridge.
- upgrading of electricity supply at Banavie Ocean Mist Jetty.

Our chance to catch up on jobs when boat movements are vastly reduced.

Wishing everyone a Merry Xmas
and a Happy 2013

From all on the Canal Bank.

John Stafford

Scottish Canals

*** We have posted up the results on the KCC website. It is really useful info for people wanting to plan their journeys to avoid canal swing bridge closures.



Before & after photos of pontoons: bearers had completely rotted.



We also had a visit recently from the TV Series Countryfile



Removal of old lighting towers at Corpach Basin



are you a sound-engineering whizz?



help
needed
please!

I am involved (as a volunteer) in a Waterways Trust community project to try and record the oral history of our stretch of the canal through the stories, reminiscences and experiences of our great local team of lockkeepers. I've recently recorded this year's seasonal team (starring Mairearad, Davey, big John, Andy, Alan, Andrew, Miguel, and young John) and I will be talking to John, Alec, Tommy, Toni, Raymond, Michael and others through the winter. I'm a complete novice as far as audio stuff goes, but I'm beginning to get to grips with the sound recording equipment that the Waterways Trust have lent me. I'm also learning how to use sound-editing software so I can turn the raw voice recordings into finished stories (which mostly involves editing out my own voice, and the surprisingly loud sounds that drinking coffee makes!). Does anyone have experience of sound-editing software who would be willing to give me just a couple of hours help with stuff that I've got stuck on please? (I'm using Audacity, and also have access to Cubase). I would personally be really grateful, but it would also be a great contribution to this community project. If you are able to help, or would like more info, please email me at website@kilmallie.org.uk. Many thanks.

Mandy Ketchin, Banavie

Great Glen - Great Trees

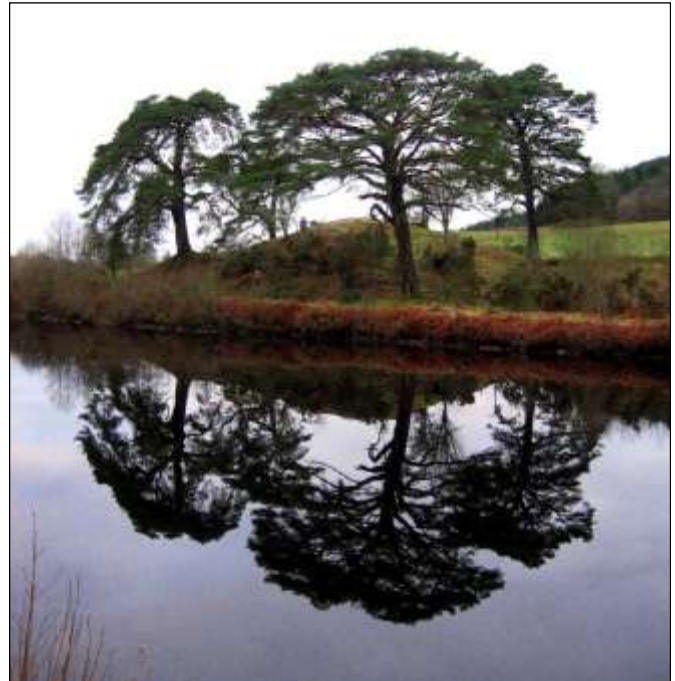
The wealth of wildlife through the Great Glen is renowned – the iconic highland species such as red deer, salmon, otter and eagle are here but the less well known, such as the bee beetle and freshwater sponges, add interest for the keen naturalist. Trees may seem common and are perhaps taken for granted but they form vital shelter and food for a myriad of species.

How would you like to plant a few trees in your local patch and see them grow over the years? Get involved in the opportunity to invest in a green future that will help to nurture nature on your doorstep. We have 3000 native trees ready to be planted after Christmas – we need to find interested volunteers, identify good areas along the canal, prepare the areas and plant the trees. Community groups, schools and individuals all welcome!

Stephen Wiseman was appointed by the national waterways charity The Waterways Trust *Scotland* as Heritage Officer to help people and communities enjoy the Caledonian Canal's fantastic treasures – wildlife, history and landscapes. Stephen's aim is to encourage more local residents to explore, enjoy and care for the waterway, which stretches from Inverness to Fort William.

The locks, bridges and aqueducts are magnificent works of engineering but what do these structures have to do with engaging people with biodiversity? They offer a unique opportunity to get people to do something practical and positive at the same time. Crucially they are important connections: green and blue corridors along which wildlife can move and spread. Two centuries ago the canals lay at the heart of the industrial revolution, because communications were fundamental to development. They were critical components in the infrastructure of development. Perhaps now they can lie at the heart of the green revolution, serving as part of the "green infrastructure" – a network linking greenspace and patches of semi-natural habitat across Scotland – something which is essential if plants and animals are to survive in a dynamic and changing world. But canals also serve another hugely important function. They represent a major leisure and health resource – for walking, jogging, cycling, canoeing, boating – and breathing.

We can engage people with biodiversity on the Caledonian Canal in various ways: by encouraging conservation volunteering; survey work and habitat management and by raising awareness, appreciation and knowledge of canal wildlife amongst those who use the canals for leisure. The tree planting project will start in late January and each area will need probably three days to complete. Tasks will include some scrub and invasive species clearance, a little light digging to facilitate tree planting and knocking in some tree stakes. There will be nothing too taxing and output will be just at the level and for the amount of time that you can allow. If you would like to get involved please register your interest now to let us plan it well.



on the canal near Strone (picture KCC)



young volunteer treeplanters working with Stephen further north on the canal (picture Waterways Trust)

Please contact:

Stephen Wiseman
Caledonian Canal Heritage Officer
Seaport Marina, Muirtown Wharf,
Inverness, IV3 5LE

Direct dial: 01463 725561

Stephen@scottishwaterwaystrust.org.uk



WHAT FOCAL NEWS?

We don't have any updates on the DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN for the canal, but one of the most popular comments made at the community consultation was that people wanted to see more tree planting along the canal. So we're really delighted to see the Waterways Trust community tree planting initiative (please read Stephen Wiseman's piece on p 12).

FOCAL and KCC are teaming up to try and get lots of people involved and lots of trees planted along our stretch of the canal.

If you'd like to suggest where new trees should be planted, or you'd like to join a fun treeplanting workparty for a few hours (all ages and abilities welcome),

or you'd just like to come along for a picnic and give moral support, please get in touch and we'll keep you posted with details and dates.



FOCAL (Friends of Caledonian Canal Lochaber) is a subgroup of the Kilmallie Community Company.

For more info please contact Jan MacLugash, 01397 772383, email: janet.maclugash@gmail.com



LOCHABER RUGBY CLUB



Lochaber RFC held an U16's Ten-a-Side Tournament at Banavie back in the autumn. In brilliant October sunshine teams from Nairn, Plockton, and Inverness took part in the tournament. It was deemed a great success by all and it's hoped that the other clubs will hopefully return the compliment during the season. The next fixture for our U16's is against Nairn Academy on Sunday 16th December in Nairn.

We are always looking for new players, especially in this age group. If you fancy giving rugby a try, training is every Tuesday and Thursday 7pm – 8.30pm (S1 upwards) and Saturday 10am – 11.30am (P3-S2).

For further information check out our website www.lochaberrfc.co.uk or search for us on Facebook.



RECESSION HITS BANAVIE!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents of Fort William and surrounding areas for supporting our Bonfire & Fireworks Display at Banavie. A huge amount of time and effort is put into the event every year by club members who give up their spare time to help everything run smoothly & safely.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the men who made it all go off with a bang.... and who put in 10 plus hours of preparation work i.e. our firework gurus, namely Charlie, Davy, Colin, Gus, Martin & Richie to ensure the public got a great display – which they did. Additional thanks go to all the club members (too many to mention) who volunteered to marshal the road, collect donations, and serve behind the bar, in the kitchen and Tuck Shop.

External support was provided by three local contractors, AA Young Ltd, Industrial Electrical Services (UK) Ltd, Derek Fraser Ltd, Fort William Police and TEC Services.

Last, but not least, thanks to the Local Councillors who approved our application for funding out of their discretionary budget. We received £850 this year to put towards the cost of the fireworks which cost over £3,200. To date the costs of the fireworks have been met by donations made by the public, but unfortunately this year the donations were not forthcoming (for whatever reason) and we have made a loss of £500 – which is very disappointing as we always felt that the efforts we made were appreciated by everyone.

This loss leaves us with a huge hole in our bank balance and is not sustainable to a club that works very hard to try and make ends meet. As a result of this a meeting will be held to discuss the future of this event.

Thanks again for your all your support over the years

Pauline Donaldson
Lochaber RFC



facts and figures: over 82% of Kilmallie's population are registered to vote



a huge thank you to the rug for a fantastic display again this

Unfortunately the donations from spectators didn't cover the Rugby C
If you enjoyed the display but weren't in reach of one of the c
The display has become a much-appreciated tradition but there's no guarantee t



Thank you to the Lochaber Camera Club (and Russell!)
for these brilliant pictures -
you can see them in full size colour on the KCC website.

Clockwise from top left:

1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 Anthony Angus

5 Russell Leaper

6 Gavin MacMillan

9 Catherine Stewart



rugby club and the volunteers year and for all their hard work



Club's costs this year by quite a long way (see article on previous page).
collection buckets, please think about sending them a donation.
that we'll have community fireworks to enjoy next year if the event makes a loss.





Kilmallie Shinty Club

Kilmallie Shinty Club opened their new community changing facility on Saturday 6th October in glorious Lochaber sunshine. Over 300 past and present players and committee along with parents, supporters and sponsors congregated in the Caol Community Centre before marching along behind two pipers to the Canal Parks. Hugh MacIntyre, Chairman welcomed everyone, Linda Campbell, Secretary made a vote of thanks to all those who had contributed to the new project especially SportsScotland, Highland Council and Leader. Sarah Robertson from SportsScotland said a few words on the project. Provost Alan Henderson spoke and Archie Robertson, President of the Camanachd Association, made a toast to the Club. The 1964 winning team consisting of Hugh MacIntyre, Derek Fraser, Johnny Murphy, John MacIsaac, Frank Sweeney, Dougie MacLachlan and Alasdair MacIntyre were asked to cut the ribbon. Unfortunately Ian MacKintosh, Corpach Hotel couldn't be with us as he was on holiday. After the opening 4 Kilmallie Teams played a round robin shinty competition and everyone headed back to Caol Community Centre for refreshments and a beautiful buffet provided by the volunteers of Lochaber Rural Education Trust.

Linda Campbell

pictures by The Write Image



art in store for new year

Lochaber Art Club has lots of fun in store for the New Year with workshops to suit all levels.

Tutors, some local and others travelling from farther afield, are all very experienced in working with mixed ability groups and we are really lucky to be able to enjoy the benefit of their skills and talent here in Lochaber.

On 26th January, Corpach artist Felicity Nightingale will lead another of her most enjoyable **Assemblage** workshops, here in Kilmallie Hall. Participants work with their own source material – perhaps a favourite object with special associations, or with found objects from a beach walk. Last January some of the group walked on the shore at Caol to add to our collection of bits, creating some interesting results. You may have seen some of them at our Annual Exhibition last June.

On 16th and 17th February, retired Head of Art at Lochaber High School Alistair Smyth will lead a **painting workshop** entitled 'Subject and Content', to be held at An Clachan, the Rural Complex at Torlundy. Although acrylic is the preferred medium, Alistair is happy for you to use any materials you wish; also bring along any drawing materials eg pencils, pastels, charcoal. Alistair is a keen member of the Club and we are all delighted that he recently won

the Royal Society of General Practitioners Painting Competition, with his winning entry now hanging in the London office. This was followed by a commission from the Scottish branch of the society in Edinburgh.

We also have a more experimental and relaxed type of workshop this year, where participants paint in an informal way - the main object is to **have fun** and try things out with less emphasis on the finished result, which can sometimes make us too self-conscious. One of our own members Gay Anderson will lead this event in the Braxy Hall at Inverlochy, on 3rd February.

Members come from all parts of Lochaber, so we often vary the venue. Sharing lifts makes a lot of sense wherever the event is held, so please ask when booking if you require transport.

We are keen to share these opportunities with more locals, so come along and have a go.

To book a place ring Catherine Putnam on 01855 841231

Or just to find out more ring Lorna on 01397 772806

ALL WELCOME – no need to formally join the club!

New website will soon be up and running -

www.artlochaber.org.uk



Kilmallie Scottish Country Dance Club



Kilmallie Country Dancers with some Indian visitors

We all look forward to Tuesday nights because we always have fun! From the opening of Kilmallie Hall in the '60's to whenever you pick up this newsletter, Kilmallie Scottish Country Dancing Club has met each week in the hall.

Our patient teacher, Norma MacLellan, explains the dances and we walk through them before we dance them. Everyone is always welcome and in the summer we often have visitors who are on holiday, sometimes from abroad, and we keep the programme simple for them.

Each year in May and October we hold dances with live bands, to which dancers from other clubs are invited, and some of our dancers travel regularly to dances elsewhere; a few even go on dancing holidays!

Country dancing is a sociable and inexpensive pastime - it only costs £2 per night, including a cup of tea and a biscuit, and we keep fit as we dance.

We would love to have some new members of all ages, both men and women. So do come and join us on Tuesday nights, 8-10 pm in Kilmallie Community Centre.

Joy Biggin

If you would like more information, please telephone Norma 772597 or Joy 772459.



dog club

Lochaber & District Canine Society exists to promote responsible dog ownership and to help owners enjoy the company of a well behaved dog and to go on, if they wish, to develop their dog's abilities in various ways.

The Club is made up of people who enjoy training their dogs and taking part in the many activities available. Our dogs are family members, so we understand how important it is to have dogs which are comfortable to live with and take around with us and we will work with you to help you achieve this.

The Dog Club, as it is known, has been in existence for over 30 years and became registered as a Kennel Club Society in the early 1990s. We run our classes & events under Kennel Club rules & regulations, and all members are obliged to abide by KC rules. Our main classes run on Tuesday evenings in the Nevis Centre. Our popular puppy foundation courses and Kennel Club Good Citizen classes are based on the Kennel Club's own training system. The puppy courses must be booked in advance and provide a good foundation for training & socialising puppies - and their owners! The Good Citizen Classes are aimed at just that - helping you & your dog to be good citizens in today's society. There are three levels to achieve - bronze, silver and gold. There are also intermediate and advanced obedience classes for more formal exercises or if you are interested in competition obedience.

We also have ringcraft classes for those who participate in Breed showing.

Outwith Tuesdays, and generally in the lighter evenings of summer the Club runs Agility & Flyball training as well as fun lure coursing for the faster canines! Agility and Flyball are fun, fast & furious, so be prepared for hard work from you as well as your dog. The agility team give demonstrations & "have a go"

sessions at various events & agricultural shows across the Highlands.

The Club holds open Obedience & Breed Shows which attract entrants from all over Scotland, as well as smaller events to raise money for local charities.

In short, if you are interested in doing things with your dog, then Lochaber & District Canine Society will have something for you.

Lorna Ungoad Thomas

Contacts:-

Puppy class	Morag Mackell 01397 772369
Good Citizen classes	Vicky-Ann Tompkins 01397 701704
Lure coursing	Vicky-Ann Tompkins 01397 701704
Obedience	Christine Cameron 01855 821381
Agility and Flyball	Jackie MacDonald 07795 294959
	Lesley Stewart 01855 821519
Ringcraft	Nan MacLeod 01397 700173

www.lochaberanddistrictcaninesociety.com



Niko trains his human to check out the KCC noticeboard regularly!



other old postcard views to share? does anyone have

Hello KCC,

I used to live in Banavie and during the '70's was very active on the Kilmallie Hall committee looking after the entertainment and also the badminton club. I now live in Sweden.

One of the acts who came to the hall were the Corries and I have sent you the original advert from the very first issue of the Fort William Free Press from Friday the 14th March 1975. This tour has also been featured on a dvd and there is a wee clip from the concert at Kilmallie, also showing the then caretaker, Mrs Mac, bringing in a pot of tea and some sandwiches to the band.

I would also like to show you a water painting which I bought on the internet showing Corpach Pier and the Ben. I think that the artist has captured the Lochaber climate very well.

I have a good collection of old pictures and postcards from all over Lochaber and I am including some for you to use if you want. The one from Banavie has the old hotel in view and is postmarked 1921.

Regarding Kilmallie Hall, when I was there it was Dr Allison (Mrs) who was chairwoman and took me in to the committee. Many famous artists have been there, including Midge Ure, (from Ultravox and live-aid) Judas Priest, Christian (also known as the Chris McClure Section) Dead End Kids, to name a few.

I have continued working in the music branch and for the past 25 years have worked with artist security here in Gothenburg. I have looked after artists from the Stones, Madonna, Springsteen to Cliff and Leonard Cohen.

If it is possible I can try to copy the dvd from the Corries and send it to you.

Please, if you can, scan a copy of the newsletter for me.

Cheers

Andy Goodwin, Gothenburg, Sweden

PS I usually get the weather from my sister Patti Macdonald who still lives in Lochyside.

Maggie wrote back to Andy, reminiscing about the concerts in Kilmallie Hall in the late 60s/early 70s, and got a further reply, see next page. Rock on!



letters




SCOTLAND'S PREMIER ENTERTAINERS

the CORRIES

wish the

FORT WILLIAM FREE PRESS

every success



SEE THEM "LIVE" IN CONCERT AT
Kilmallie Hall, Corpach
Monday 31st March at 8 pm

Tickets £1 (all seats) from Marshall & Dawson, 15 High St., Fort William, Tel. 368

PAN-AUDIO

Latest Album "LIVE FROM SCOTLAND - Vol. 1"
The Audio - PA 802



Corpach Hill & Fort William



THE CALEDONIAN CANAL AT CORPACH

© 1990



Banavie and Loch Linnhe

more letters

Dear KCC,

Since I wrote the wild boar article in the last issue, I have seen widespread digging in an abandoned field behind Errachd in Glen Loy and on the north side of the River Arkaig. It looked as if this was the work of some pretty big pigs.

A while back I had a visit from a couple of engineers from the hydro who noticed that the pole which carries our transformer has about 5 big holes in it. They immediately blamed woodpeckers and I had to confess to feeding them in winter. It looks as if the greater spotted woodpecker is a major pest to the Hydro. It is no longer safe for a linesman to climb our pole. Any work on it will have to be done from a cherry picker.

I don't think we had any woodpeckers in Banavie when I was a child but there weren't nearly so many trees then. I think that changes in climate and vegetation have brought several new species into the area and some of them will bring problems. I wonder if anybody else has heard of woodpeckers drilling into poles? Apparently the hole goes right into the centre. It looks big when viewed with binoculars.

Remarkable that the greater spotted woodpecker will probably do more damage than the wild boar.

Ronald Cameron, Banavie

Hi there.

Are there any plans to have anything on to get locals together in Kilmallie Community Centre for New Year? Everyone local I have spoken to would love something to go ahead. Would be GREAT to have some thing in CORPACH to get some community spirit. There are a lot of young families that would attend even if there was a dance and bring your own bottle with donations and tickets towards the Community Centre.

Elaine Wink (via Facebook)

Some really great letters this issue - thank you! Hope Andy's letters don't make Elaine too wistful for the great times some of us oldies had in the past! Hope it's possible to get something arranged for this New Year but if not, perhaps a group could get together with Elaine to organise something for next year?

Dear KCC,

Just a quick update on the wild boar situation. Paul Rigby actually saw one at the beginning of November returning home along Glen Loy, and we subsequently managed to capture some video footage with a camera trap. See the GlenLoyWildlife post of 8 Nov on the Wild Lochaber Facebook pages for a link to the video.



Regards

Jon Mercer, Glen Loy

Hi again KCC

Yes, Midge Ure played at the Kilmalie Hall in about 1972 in a band called Salvation. He played guitar and the music was heavy rock. Judas Priest also played at the hall around the same year, just before they released their first LP, Rocka Rolla. They were paid £150. Another person who went on to greater things and played there is Brian Robertson who played in a band called Heidi. He went on to play guitar in Thin Lizzy. Jim Diamond, a singer who had a big hit in the 80s called "I should have known Better" also played at the hall in a band called Jade. Tear Gas who became The Alex Harvey Band also played there.

Here are a few other bands who were fairly big in the 70s that also appeared in Corpach: Beggars Opera; Iron Virgin; Trash; Sleaze band; Frenzy; Agatha's Moment; My Dear Watson (from Buckie) and Spiggy Topes (from Elgin).

How do I remember all this you ask! I still have a lot of papers and old diaries stored from all my music days from Corpach to Gothenburg. I was also involved in putting bands on at the old Milton Hotel and also at the Caledonian Hotel in Inverness. My very first concert involvement was Tyrannosaurus Rex (Marc Bolan) at the old Empire theatre in Inverness in 1970.

If there is anything else you need, please ask and I will try and help.

Cheers

Andy Goodwin, Gothenburg, Sweden



corpach woods

Corpach Fir Wood

Since the Kilmallie Community took over the Wood, the age of the Wood has intrigued me. Legend has it that it was one of seven woods planted as a penance by a medieval Lochiel but it is clearly not as old as that, for records of the post '45 Estate show no wood at that time.

John Dye, of Acharacle, kindly helped the search by boring a fallen tree and a couple of standing trees. Theoretically the bore takes a core of wood, from the surface to the centre of the tree, which reveals the 'rings' marking each year's growth. Hitting the centre exactly is difficult and the rings are so close: good eyes are required for the counting. From these bores it would seem that the trees are aged about 150 - 180 years old.

To date, the research of records indicates this is not unreasonable. The early Ordnance Survey of Lochaber (1868-1872) clearly shows an established Wood, bounded by a wall. It would seem that the wood was planted in the first half of the 19th C.

Allan Colquhoun

*top: John Dye lines up the corer
bottom: core collected on cardboard to dry
(photos Roddy Mainland)*



The Fir Wood (Tom Giubhais) and the oakwood (Cnoc nam Faobh) are owned and managed on behalf of the community by the Kilmallie Community Company



maybe Ron's woodpecker is collecting core samples to find out the age of his electricity pole!



wild about kilmallie

Welcome Visitors

Winter has started early here in Kilmallie, and as I write at the end of October, a good cap of snow lies on top of Aonach Mor, whilst the Ben is wreathed in ominous cloud. The recent frosts have accelerated leaf fall so that the garden is looking quite bare, and the last of the fungi have all turned to mush. Blackbirds turn the leaf litter incessantly, on the constant look-out for juicy tit-bits. Their supply of stale porridge has dried up with the last of the season's visitors. Numbers of thrushes have been greatly swelled this year by the arrival of thousands of redwing and fieldfare from Scandinavia, as well as by migrant blackbirds. Our local mistle thrushes have had it all their own way until the last couple of weeks, but now the Viking hordes have descended. The redwing is a small thrush with a white eye stripe, and a notable red patch under its wing. Its quiet 'seep-seep' call may be heard far above as the birds move around the area looking for food. The fieldfare is a much larger, colourful bird, with a bluey-grey head and rump, a yellowish speckled breast, and chestnut wings. It is altogether much noisier than the redwing, and its 'fruity chuckles' are an easy give-away to finding them. This year there is a fabulous rowan crop, and these winter thrushes will have much to keep them in the area. It will be interesting to see how long they linger, before the flocks move further south in search of new food sources. Undoubtedly many rowan trees will be missed, leaving the mistle thrushes and blackbirds plenty to eat. The pine martens are also rather partial to rowan berries, although they are not able to digest them properly. Martens have feasted on these recently, and small piles of semi-processed berries can be found along paths and forest rides throughout the region. Holly berries are also much prized by birds, and often a mistle thrush will take possession of a single tree as its own private larder, chasing off intruders if it is able. Hopefully the weather will not be so harsh that these are stripped before we can collect some for Christmas decoration!

There are also rumours of a shortage of beech mast further north, and so we can expect an influx of brambling into the area. These can often be found mixed in with flocks of chaffinch, although they will also form single-species groups. The brambling is rather more orange than the chaffinch, and the cocks have quite a bit of black around the head, a remnant of their striking breeding plumage. Look out for them in late spring, when they are starting to colour up again. With possible food shortages elsewhere we may even get an irruption of waxwings again this year. Search for them on ornamental berry trees in towns and villages. The waxwings are about the size of a starling and move around in equally voluble flocks. Their punky crests, bandit masks and paint-dipped extremities make them impossible to miss. An even rarer visitor was recently reported in Corpach – a cattle egret. These large, white members of the heron family are just starting to colonise the south of England, and the odd bird that finds its way up here is undoubtedly lost. Their smaller cousins, the little egrets, are moving incessantly north, having become firmly established as a British breeding species. Little egrets can now be found around the Solway Firth, with reports of individuals as far north as Oban. It will be interesting to see whether it remains just too cold for them to successfully move into our area. Other vagrant species have also

been reported locally, with little auk off the coast around Mallaig. It is always worth looking out for the unusual, particularly on the back of abnormal weather systems such as the recent hurricane to hit eastern America. If you do see something please report it so that we can keep abreast of what's happening. The Skye Birds website www.skye-birds.com also includes Lochaber records, while nationally, BirdTrack (www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack) is often used to record sightings. If you prefer the local touch then please feel free to contact me at Glenloy Wildlife (info@glenloylodge.co.uk).

At present we are putting together a programme of events for next year's Wild Lochaber Festival www.wildlochaber.com, to be held on 17-25th May. If anyone has any ideas or would like to become involved in the festival please let me know. We also plan to have an open meeting of the Lochaber Biodiversity Group during the festival week. The LBG represents a plethora of groups and organisations operating locally who have an interest in the environment, including public bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Highland Council and Forestry Commission Scotland to local volunteer groups such as Wild Lochaber and the Lochaber Natural History Society. If you would like to find out more about what is happening in relation to local wildlife then please note this week in next year's diary.

*Jon Mercer
Glenloy Wildlife*

PS – The wild boar have been very active along Glen Loy in the last few weeks. It would be great if we could get some photos of boar, and if anyone manages to obtain a decent shot please let me know.



white cattle egret on Maisie's croft at Corpach (photo Roddy Mainland)

some exciting developments
on the wild boar front
since Jon wrote the PS to this article -
see the letters on next page



The Life and Crimes of Mr Belford

As a wee boy I had my tonsils removed in the old Belford Hospital; the legendary Donald Duff did the business. I was persuaded to co-operate by the promise of ice cream afterwards although somehow they failed to tell me that I wouldn't be able to swallow anything else for quite some time. My father died and my younger daughter was born in the new Belford. It's an institution that has served us well as a community and its staff has earned the deep affection in which it is held. The dedication stone from the old hospital stands outside the new and invites us to be grateful to the original benefactors, Mr and Mrs Belford of Glenfintaig, even though few in Lochaber will have much idea who they were. Indeed we seem to be uncertain of his first name, some writers calling him Andrew while others favour Thomas.

Anyone standing on the shores of Loch Lochy at Achnacarry can see the huge pile that is Glenfintaig House, built by Belford, on the other side of the loch. Not bad for one who arrived in the Highlands as a penniless youth. So, how did he come by the money to build his house and the hospital and earn our eternal gratitude? Land, sheep and ruthlessness supply most of the answer. In the early 19th century there were large scale population movements within and from Lochaber. People were forced out by higher rents or were simply evicted. It is a complicated tale in which it is hard to pin down exactly who made the key decisions, as many of the key players have tried to place the blame on somebody else. Belford has been used as a bit of a whipping boy, getting blamed for more than his share of the dirty deeds but nobody should imagine that he was in any way an innocent.

Somerled MacMillan says that he began his working life as a poor clerk in the Edinburgh law offices of Sir Duncan Cameron of Fassiefern. He was clearly a smart boy as Sir Duncan placed him in an office in Inverness to manage the estates of various highland grandees such as Lochiel and Cluny MacPherson. Here he married Miss D. Wilson, a dressmaker who brought a good house and a fortune of £2000 to the marriage; a smart move, Mr B. There were those who looked down their noses at Miss Wilson for her lack of education but the Rev Archibald Clerk of Kilmallie thought her religious and very charitable. Belford, by contrast, was notoriously mean, writing receipts etc on the backs of old letters and all the time saving money. He appears to have managed the Lochiel Estate from 1833 until 1859 and to have been associated with a string of clearances and sheep farm amalgamations. He bought the lands of Dochenassie, or Glenfintaig, for £9000 from the Duke of Gordon and cleared out the 9 tenant families. Alexander MacKenzie described the Dochenassie Camerons as "the beau ideal of magnificent highlanders"; big, strong, handsome and brave. Not all of them left Lochaber as A A Cameron of Mucomir (d 1951), "champion heavyweight athlete of the world" appears to be of Dochanassie stock (see his photo and champions belt in the West Highland Museum).

We will never know whether the endowment of the Belford hospital was due to a guilty conscience or to his wife's generosity but we can be sure that he would have approved of the saving achieved by using stone from the old fort for part of the building. We can call it re-cycling.

While we still commemorate Belford today not all our local heroes have been so lucky. In 1965 a large, unstable and not particularly attractive monument was demolished in Cameron Square to provide more car parking. It commemorated Dr William Kennedy of Leanachan, a contemporary of Belford. He attended the poverty and typhus stricken family of Ewan MacPhee, the notorious Loch Cuaich (Quoich) outlaw. He nursed them, cleaned their hovel in Fort William and eventually died of the disease he contracted from them. Revered locally, Kennedy's funeral in 1851 was attended by 1400 people.

In a town called after a mass murderer* it may not seem so odd that we should continue to honour a greedy, grasping man; one of the villains of the clearances, while forgetting one who died because of his dedication to the poorest of his patients. Plans have been mooted to build a new hospital on the Blàr Mòr. In the current economic climate this seems unlikely to happen immediately but if it ever does might it be a good idea to call it *The Kennedy Memorial Hospital* rather than *The Belford mk 3*?

*Latest thinking is that William of Orange/ King Billy (1689-1702) did order the Massacre of Glencoe and wasn't merely complicit. He was fortunate to live at a time when it was cool4kings to wipe out glen-fulls of people. Now he would be indicted for crimes against humanity.

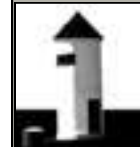
Ronald Cameron



Glenfintaig House from Loch Lochy
© Copyright John Allan and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence.



This sandstone block was salvaged from the old Belford Hospital when the new hospital was opened in 1963
© Copyright Kenneth Allen and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence.



peatan

We were absolutely delighted to receive this Gaelic article from Sine, who is in 1st year at Lochaber High - we love her goats too!

Tha tòrr peatan anns an teaghlach againn. Tha sinn taingeil gu beil Alex Campbuill an nàbaidh againn, leigeil leinn an achadh aige a chleachdadh airson nam beathaichean. Tha tòrr cearcan agus tunnagan againn agus gobhar air a bheil an t-ainm "Flopsy".

Tha sinn a' faighinn uighean a chumas a' dol sinn fad na bliadhna agus tha iad cho math! Cha toil le na cearcan an uisge mar sin tha iad gu tric ann am bothag nan cearc ùr a chumail tioram. Ach tha an t-uisge a còrdadh ri na tunnagan agus bidh iad gan glanadh fhein leis. Cha toil le duine againn bothag nan cearc a' ghlanadh!

Tha cù agus cat againn cuideachd. Tha sinn air ar cumail trang a' coimhead as an deigh.

Se an rud as fhear leam a bhi a' choimhead às dèigh an cù agam, Messi. Tha mi gabhail tlachd ann a bhith a' dol a mach a' choisachd leis agus ag ionnsachadh cleasan ùr dha.

Tha an cat, Louie, againn math air luchagan a' glacadh agus gu tric bidh i gan fagail aig an doras às dèidh bi muigh fad na h-oidhche.

Sine NicRath



Our family have lots of animals. We are thankful to Alex Campbell who lets us use his field. We have lots of hens, ducks and a goat called Flopsy.

We get a regular supply of eggs and they taste so good. The hens hate rain so are often inside their new hen house keeping dry. The ducks however love the rain and washing themselves in puddles. No one likes it when they have to clean the hen house!

We also have a dog and a cat. We are kept busy looking after them.

I love looking after my dog Messi. I love taking him walks and teaching him new tricks.

Our cat, Louie is great at catching mice and often brings us a present back after being outside for the night.

green fingers winter tasks



compost in a cold but frost free place; I keep mine in the cellar. It is well worth doing this as they usually yield bigger and better plants the following year. Next February it is time to

bring them out, give them a water and put in a warm bright place and hopefully they will reward you with another year's display. Dahlias are even easier as they just need dried off and then stored in a frost free place.

Another important job is to cut back bush/floribunda roses by half, as this prevents wind rock which can loosen the roots. They will still need pruned properly in the spring.

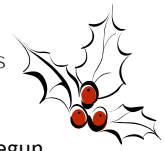


Sheena MacIntyre

"Sheena MacIntyre of Banavie
Floral Improvements has written this Very Useful Advice for us. I found it very helpful, I am sure **that other gardeners will too"**
Kshama

Now that the nights are getting frosty you should have lifted all your dahlias and begonia corms. Dry off the begonia corms, clean off any soil and check for the dreaded vine weevil (a small white grub with a yellow brown head which burrows into the flesh of the corm). Discard any affected corms and then store in dry

Ruth Miller sent us her personal view of Christmas



Christmas is coming,
the rush has now begun
For presents and for parties
and all other kinds of fun,
The Christmas pudding's to be made,
a turkey to be bought,
Mistletoe and holly too

But will you spare a thought
For the central core of Christmas,
a baby in a stall,
The son of God come down to earth
to live, and love us all.

Earlier and earlier
the Christmas lights shine out,
The Christmas trees are decorated,
cards are all about,
But mid the Christmas greetings
just be sure you offer one
To Jesus in his manger bed,
God's beloved son.

Ruth Miller



LOCHABER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY 2012-13 TALKS PROGRAMME



ALL MEETINGS will be held in the NEVIS SUITE at the ALEXANDRA HOTEL FORT WILLIAM on Mondays at 7:30 pm MEMBERSHIP: £15 VISITORS: £4.00 per meeting Children FREE! Tea/coffee & biscuits included All welcome!	Monday 21 Jan 2013	'Breeding Common Scoters in Scotland' Mark Hancock, RSPB	COMMITTEE Ian Strachan (Chairman) Tel 01397-712566 Jon Mercer Tel 01397-712700 Marion Moir Tel 01855-811028 Sue Hood Tel 01397-722400
	Monday 18 Feb 2013	'Conserving Wildlife in Lochaber's Forests' Henry Dobson, Forestry Commission	
	Monday 18 Mar 2013	'Greenland: rocks and wildlife' Prof Ian Parsons	

Room 13 Open Studio

What age can you start being an artist?

Why don't you come along to the New Open Studio at Caol Youth Centre and find out?

Everyone is welcome!

Come and explore ideas, Experiment, and get creative with our Artist in residence

Every Wednesday: 3-5pm
Caol Youth Centre



Room 13

is participating in a global photography project called

"The Inside Out Project"

www.insideoutproject.net

This project is based around portrait photography which makes a positive statement about who people are, where they are from and their community. The aim is to portray the vibrancy of local life and in doing so promote solidarity, equality and community spirit through the portraits.

The project is being run by Room 13 in different locations. With the permission of each individual, Room 13 community studio has been taking portraits of people in the local area, and will be uploading them to the Inside Out website, from where they will be printed out on billboard size images at the Inside Out HQ in America and posted back to the Community Studio on Caol. We will, with volunteers, be pasting up the images in designated areas, on the inside and outside of buildings, in and around Fort William, as a large community exhibition for everyone to see and enjoy.

For more info contact Sarah at Room 13:
info@room13international.org

Active Hands Active Minds

Why not come along to a weekly art session with Room 13

where you have the freedom to experiment with different types of art, get advice from artists if you want, or have the space to be left to think and create,

and most importantly, have a chat and a coffee amongst friends!

Every Wednesday: 1-3pm
Caol Youth Centre

sorry to be missing showstoppers this christmas!



focus on folk

Many thanks to John Hutchison, who lives at Badabrie, for sparing an afternoon to talk to Mandy - inspirational!

Making wooden toys for his 4 grandchildren, horseback riding, travelling abroad, singing (37 years with Kilmallie Singers), training for - and qualifying - as a Mountain Leader... such is the stuff of a very busy fulfilling retirement. But for John, who retired 5 years ago, he still has to fit these things into an impossibly hectic 'work'load. At a stage in life when most people are reducing their commitments, John seems to be taking on more and more!

Many people will know John as Highland Council's Lochaber Area Manager, a post he held for 12 years until 2007. An Abranch by repute but not by birth, he was brought up in Edinburgh and Leith, where he and Christine met at school. John reminisces that as a lad, he and Sean Connery both started their working lives doing a milk round, but after that their careers diverged! He started as a civil engineering apprentice with Redpath Brown, and after graduating at Heriot Watt University he moved away down to Bedford, where he and Christine got married. There he worked on erection schemes for steel road bridges in the UK and as far afield as Australia. (He was involved in the rebuilding of the Yarra bridge after its disastrous collapse in 1970). It was partly his reluctance to be posted to the Far East that resulted in him applying for a job in Skye, and handing in his notice ("Where's that?" said his boss!).

Living in Bedford, John had missed the sea and the hills, so he was delighted to return to his homeland, first to Portree as Resident Engineer and then to Lochaber, 37 years ago in 1975, where he soon became Divisional Engineer. "In those days we had to look after the trunk roads as well as the local roads, piers and jetties, so it was quite comprehensive - there was no demarcation with different snowploughs on side roads and main roads like there is now. And if you had a tailback at Inverloch, one of the local men who knew about traffic lights would just go along and tweak the timing - although not perfect, it all worked hand-in-glove, not like it does now with private companies looking after the trunk roads."

In 95/96 he moved from Carrs Corner to Lochaber House to take on a much wider remit as Lochaber Area Manager. This was when the Regional Council and District Councils were re-organised to create a single authority with 8 devolved areas. "I was responsible for the operation of the Council in Lochaber, serving the Area Committee of 8 elected councillors - I had to take decisions on the operations of the council, to help Councillors examine the efficiency of what was going on, budgets, performance criteria - they had a scrutineering role on behalf of the public. The principle of the Area Committee was absolutely sound to my mind - local people could sit in the public gallery and hear what was going on, and we used to have big Q&A sessions. It was really interesting to get involved in social work, education, planning and all manner of things I hadn't really known anything about before - it was really good experience, a tremendous opportunity."

Part of John's job was to encourage community development, and that's how he got involved in village halls, and the Kinlochleven Land Development Trust, and the community buy-outs of Knoydart and Eigg (he's currently chair of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust). John is passionate about the value and potential of community - he realises now that it has been one of the most important things in his life. "I did the roads job for years, to keep people moving throughout the year and to deal with big landslides and things - but the whole idea of doing something that links to the community has always been really important to me". John had seen "The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil" back in '73 - ("it's on YouTube now" he points out delightedly) - and that was a real life-forming experience for him - as it was for many of us at the time. "It's been a great privilege to have been involved in the Eigg and Knoydart communities and also the Loch Sheil Jetties Trust and the Clanranald Castle Tioram Trust."

One of the biggest community projects John was involved in was the Belford Hospital - "that was an exceedingly important bit of community action - we reckon we had 2800 folk turning out - after that public meeting, the NHS and the government realised a

solution had to be found: the West Highland Hospital Solutions Group was set up and it established the model for a rural general hospital that got enshrined into NHS Scotland thinking". But one of his big disappointments is that the Fort William waterfront development didn't go ahead. "It could have provided an opportunity for a local Common Good Fund, and I still believe the town centre is the right place for supermarkets. It's interesting that the government set up a task force a few months ago to look at the vibrancy of town centres and its first statements were 'we've made a big mistake building these out of town supermarkets'. We're still doing it!"

It was through Knoydart that John got involved with the John Muir Trust, the UK's leading wild land conservation charity. He became a Trustee when he retired in 2007, and then Chair in 2009. It's voluntary but it's probably his biggest job now, UK-wide, involving him in advocating for the care of wild land all over Scotland, including Ben Nevis. Involvements like this take John right back to his boyhood when his playground was the amazing landscape of the Kings Park (now Holyrood Park) in Edinburgh.

John's appreciation of the link between landscape and community is threaded through his life. For 14 years as a young man, he was involved with the Schools Hebridean Society. "We ran 6 expeditions a year, and we'd take 20 or 30 boys, with 6 so-called officers and a leader - but we were all really young; students, teachers and the like. We'd go for 2 weeks to places like Mingulay, the west coast of Lewis, or slightly tamer places like Gometra and Colonsay. We'd take marquees and section tents, and we'd make furniture out of driftwood, go fishing, climbing, sailing, birdwatching. I remember one time there was an underprivileged lad from the East End of London sleeping next to a fieldmarshall's son... I like to think it was a great leveller!"

Even after 5 years in 'retirement', John isn't slowing down. He's getting much more involved in renewable energy, and as a founding director of Community Land Scotland, he's actively encouraging more communities to buy their own land. Through that, he's also currently involved in helping set up the Scottish International Land Trust with Brian Wilson (former Labour MP, founder of the West Highland Free Press): its purpose will be to raise funds from the Scottish diaspora for community land ownership. John's also actively engaged in moves to establish a Rural Parliament for Scotland, like they've had very successfully in Sweden for 20 years.

And as if all that wasn't awesome enough, John is a JP (and has been for over 25 years) and an honorary sheriff in the Fort William court. And Chair of the West Highland Museum. And a very active Rotarian (he mentored four young professionals on a month-long study tour to Japan earlier this year - noticing as he did that the Japanese locate their wind turbines in industrial areas, leaving the rural landscape unscathed).

"I've got a lot of community things to do still - I don't feel that I'm ready to stop working away at it yet" says John, but first of all he has to finish making the wooden toys for this year's Christmas presents. He's made all sorts of things in the immaculately-organised workshop shoehorned into his loft - Noah's arks, little trailers, cars, a helicopter, a trebuchet, a cooker! Lucky grandchildren - the toys he makes for them are beautiful!



"John in the Mountains"
the Alpine Lakes Wilderness in Washington USA)

Locheilside

Here's the first part of Hugh Muir's notes about the history of Locheilside. Lots more from Hugh in future issues.

This area covers the north side of Loch Eil. Over the years Loch Eil has been known as Iall, Zell, Zeld, Yeal and Eale. Historically this area has been known for its farming, crofting and a couple of estates.

From a map of 1495 the only places marked were -

Drumnasall
Owenhane
Corebeg
Fassefarne.

Moving forward to a map of 1750 -

Kenlocheale
Corrybeg
Town of Fassifern
Town of Drumferloch
Achdaleu.

To give an indication of population, the Census of 1841 shows -

Drumsallie	35
Corriebeg	85
Fassifern	40
Achdaliu	24

Drumsallie (ridge of the willow tree):

A fairly large area at the end of the loch with ground on both sides of the river Callop. In the 1850s a surgeon, Dr Ewan Cameron, lived here. There was a meal mill - part of its channel can still be seen. Drumsallie was also known as the salting bridge where fish were salted.

Reaching northwards is Glean Dubh Lighe, the glen of dark water. A couple of miles up was the great bothy, sadly badly damaged by fire in 2011.

Kinlocheil and Corriebeg (Corriebeg = little corrie):

Numerous foundations of crofting properties can still be seen. It is said that, in the 1600s, Ewan Cameron, Lochiel XV111, killed the last wolf (in Lochaber?) at Corriebeg.

In the 1840s there was an innkeeper and a blacksmith.

Mary McKellar (1836-1890) a celtic/gaelic scholar and Bardess to Clan Cameron, although born in Fort William, was brought up at Corriebeg.

A school was noted, on the south side of the road, in 1855. A new school, the present Outdoor Centre, was built in 1876 at a cost of £590. School closed in 1960s.

During the building of the railway it was diverted slightly to avoid a well, claimed to have been used by Prince Charlie in 1745.

In the 1940s a wooden hall was built at Corriebeg to give recreational facilities for the many sailors on anchored supply boats on the loch. It closed in 1962.

There was a wooden RC Chapel until the late 1960s.

About 1950 there was a Locheilside Scout Troop called the 29th Inverness-shire.

In an 1891 "Gaelic census" of this area, it showed that there were 42 persons over 3 years of age, of which 95% spoke Gaelic and 22% spoke Gaelic and English.

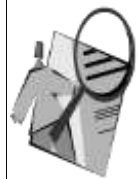
There was a Mission Church by the roadside, now a letting cottage, last used by the Rev Jack Andrews, C of S, in 1982.

Because of the upheaval of the coming of the railway, one crofter was given £4 for disturbance and 16/1d for loss of arable land.

So, in its time, this area had a chapel, a church, a hall and a school.

From here going up Gleann Fionn Lighe - white water - we come to Uachan - the place of caves - with a nearby kiln. Going on takes us to 961 metre Gulvan - KCC boundary is just off the top of this peak.

Hugh Muir



focus on business

This issue we have interviewed Jamie Ball, founder and partner at All Round Signs.

What is your company name?

The business is known as All-round Signs to reflect the wide, 360 degree range of sign & display products we supply.

Where are you located?

Located at Unit 12a, Annat Point Estate, the business originally began trading at the Blar Mhor Industrial Estate in 1999.

To find us, pass the sawmill then take the second left. Once on the industrial estate turn right and you'll see our workshop on your left.

What does your company do?

We provide sign design, manufacture and installation to meet a variety of requirements. This includes pavement signs, fascia signs, exhibition and point of sale displays, safety signs, banners, B&B signs and freestanding timber frames to name just a few. We

also supply interpretation panels for nature trails or places of interest, and we work with artists to supply and install public art projects. We can provide any kind of vehicle livery to include 100% coverage, full colour, digital printed graphic wrap.

Recently we have added garment printing, work wear and engraving services from the new workshop based within the Granite House on the High Street.

How long have you been operating in Kilmallie?

We moved to larger premises on Annat Industrial Estate in 2003.

How many people do you employ locally?

We employ 6 full time and 2 part time employees. Manager, Gavin MacMillan joined the business in 2000 and apart from a year travelling abroad has been here ever since.

What do you and your business like about being in Kilmallie?

We regularly meet our customers in town but our site is easily accessible for a lot of work that takes place to our north and west. Born in Fort William, I always wanted to live and work in the area and the views of Ben Nevis from our car park can be spectacular. During good weather there can't be many better places than the canal to grab a sandwich on lunch break. Gavin and Woody (the dog) often walk there at lunch break or up the hill from Annat.





spotlight

Scott Bellwood, of Highland Council's Waste Management team, takes the stage with information about recycling over the festive season.

RECYCLING OVER THE FESTIVITIES

The 2012 Festivities are almost upon us and with it, a surge in the amount of waste we all produce. How can we manage it? Can we prevent it? With a little bit of planning and thought we can do both and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Xmas Recycling / Refuse collection changes –

If your normal collection day is:

Tue 25th Dec: it will be collected on Sat 22nd Dec;

Tue 1st Jan: it will be collected on Sat 29th Dec;

Wed 2nd Jan: it will be collected on Sat 5th Jan.

Garden waste collections (brown bin) will stop between the 22nd Dec – 6th Jan.

Remember you can use your blue bin for all your paper, cardboard, food tins and drinks cans and plastic bottles.

Recycling Points –

With over 200 Recycling Points across the region it's never been easier to recycle your festive glass bottles and jars, any extra cans or paper. Make sure you're ready for any extra recycling this year by finding the Recycling Point nearest to you.

Recycling Centres –

Our Recycling Centres only close on 25 Dec and 1 & 2 Jan so don't get snowed under with waste this festive season!

Pop in with all your extra glass bottles and jars, cardboard boxes, electrical items and batteries, check our website to find out opening times for your nearest Recycling Centre. You can also take your real Christmas trees to be composted.

Food Waste – there's a lot more food waste produced over the festive season. Whether you are having family or friends round for a meal or just fancy an extra mince pie or two, it's easy to plan ahead to reduce your waste and in the process, save money!

Know your dates –

Best Before dates - These dates refer to quality rather than food safety. Foods with a 'best before' date should be safe to eat after the 'best before' date, but they may no longer be at their best.

Get Planning –

Write a shopping list and only buy what you need.

Use your Freezer –

Freezing meals can save you time and money.

Love your Leftovers –

Visit lovefoodhatewaste.com for some inspiration.

For collection calendars and further information visit www.highland.gov.uk/recycle or call 01349 886603

recycle for Highland
The Highland Council
Commitment to a Greener Future

Don't get snowed under with waste this festive season!

Use all our recycling facilities for your extra recycling!

Look out for changes to your collection days

Use your Blue Bin for:

- Wrapping Paper
- Christmas Cards
- Cardboard Packaging

Most Recycling Centres are open Boxing Day! Check our website to find out if yours will be!

Use Recycling Points for:

- Glass Jars
- Glass Bottles
- Textiles & Shoes

Use Recycling Centres for:

- Real Christmas Trees
- Electrical Items
- Large Cardboard Boxes
- Juice Cartons
- Glass Bottles & Jars
- Used Batteries
- Extra Plastic Bottles
- Extra Tins & Cans
- closed on 25th Dec, 1st & 2nd Jan

01349 886603 • www.highland.gov.uk/recycle
recycle@highland.gov.uk

The Highland Council
Commitment to a Greener Future

Important!

ZERO WASTE
BY 2015

The following changes to your recycling/refuse collections will take place over the Christmas and New Year period.

Normal collection day:	Will be collected on:
Tuesday 25th December 2012	Saturday 22nd December 2012
Tuesday 1st January 2013	Saturday 29th December 2012
Wednesday 2nd January 2013	Saturday 5th January 2013

There will be no garden waste collections between 22/12/12 and 06/01/13

Use your local Recycling Centre over the festive period:

- To recycle all those glass bottles and jars.
- For extra recycling e.g. wrapping paper and cardboard.
- To recycle REAL Christmas trees.

Recycling Centres will be closed on 25th December and 1st & 2nd January

For collection calendars and further information visit:
www.highland.gov.uk/recycle or call 01349 886603

feedback

Everyone thinks it's fantastic . (GH)

Your website is wonderful. (MM)

Interesting to see the wide range of things in the newsletter. And refreshing that it's different from what you see in the papers – no sensationalism! (PB)

KCC is doing a really good job and getting the newsletter going is a tremendous achievement – I expect you won't get much feedback but I think it's a really good thing to do, to let people know what's happening in the area. And it's admirable to see the conscientious way that no house is forgotten. I'm all in favour of your speed limit campaign - now has to be the time to go for a 40mph limit from Corpach to Lochybridge roundabout - it's really quite dangerous at the swing bridge. (JH)

The newsletter was a very good informative and interesting read. Compliments to the team! (PC)

Another great newsletter! Not only the quantity but the quality of the articles is excellent, really interesting, especially those letters about the Blar Mor. (FR)

I am delighted that KCC intends to pursue the issue of extending the 30mph limit towards Annat Point. Russell's excellent article has said it all - as one of the residents who lives along the 40mph stretch, I am constantly horrified by the excessive speed of some vehicles - from both directions! Bring on the Smiley Face Road Signs! (MM)

My sister lives in Weardale, and when she was up recently she saw our copy of KCC news and thought it was really great - where she lives she says they only get a single piece of paper double-sided every few months, so she was really impressed. (AL)

The newsletter's great - there's so much in it and it's all interesting reading. My Dad comes over from Inverlochly just to get a read of it! (FS)



We're delighted to hear all your feedback, and please let us know what you'd like to see in future newsletters.



PUZZLES FROM THE PITHEAN



"some straight clues, some cryptic clues, some easy, some not so easy"

1		2				3		4		5		6
7				8		9						
10								11				
12		13					14	15				16
						17						
18				19		20				21		
22								23				
24						25						

Across

- 1 O of OCUK (7)
- 4 Foxy actress (5)
- 7 The golden one has landed (5)
- 9 East Anglian county (7)
- 10 Shorten text by going across one (7)
- 11 It's not liked inside what Ed has in store (5)
- 12 You won't shine if you lack this (6)
- 14 Shiny magazine(6)
- 18 Put right in the con. Beat it! (5)
- 20 Beasts (7)
- 22 Roman number (7)
- 23 Prepare him for the bride (5)
- 24 Chasm (5)
- 25 Where the Danes come from (7)

Down

- 1 Work clothing (7)
- 2 Lily or wild cat (5)
- 3 This warden is in the Range Rover! (6)
- 4 You must be in step in this month (5)
- 5 Santas live here (7)
- 6 Nude (5)
- 8 Duck and down (5)
- 13 Cider (7)
- 15 Fibbing (5)
- 16 Eastern veil (7)
- 17 All in bad song (6)
- 18 Mr Claus (5)
- 19 Spencer's pal (5)
- 21 Hawaiian greeting (5)

Thank you to Tony Whitelocke for another great crossword.

Answers to this puzzle are on the website www.kilmallie.org.uk (follow the link on the RHS of the homepage)

and will also be published in the next issue of the newsletter for people without access to the internet

Answers to last issue's puzzle:

Across: 1 TOWARDS, 4 TODAY, 7 LILAC, 9 COMICAL, 10 ONSHORE, 11 SEMIS, 12 DALEKS, 14 DOLLAR, 18 RINGO, 20 HAIRPIN, 22 APOSTLE, 23 NORTH, 24 MINOR, 25 SPONSOR

Down: 1 TELFORD, 2 WALES, 3 SACKED, 4 TIMES, 5 DECIMAL, 6 YOLKS, 8 CHOCK, 13 LINCOLN, 15 ORION, 16 RANCHER, 17 CHEERS, 18 REALM, 19 OTTER, 21 PARIS





a huge thank you to our sponsors

A huge thank you to the businesses who have sponsored us for 2012/2013.
The cost of copying this newsletter has again been very generously donated by
Lorna and Finlay Finlayson of The Crannog Restaurant, Fort William.
The paper for this issue has been generously donated by BSW Timber, Kilmallie



Scottish Canals



would you like to become a sponsor too?

We rely on the contributions from our business community for the cost of printing and distributing this free newsletter to every address in our area. Without further sponsorship this year, we may not be able to meet all our costs.

We welcome sponsorship from all businesses located in Kilmallie, or with principal key personnel resident in Kilmallie. If you would you like to see your name or logo in print supporting your community newsletter, please join with our current sponsors. All donations, big or small, are hugely appreciated.

Please contact us at treasurer@kilmallie.org.uk for details.

another bumper 28 page issue!