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runner-up
community
newspaper
of the year
2012

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please support our
**slower safer
smilier**
campaign!
see the colour supplement
in this issue, and please use the
enclosed flyer to let us
know your views

the first step!

welcome news from Transport Scotland

The speed limit across the Blar is at last to be reduced from 60mph. The present 30mph limit at Lochy Bridge is to be extended to beyond the new Blar roundabout, and from there to Badabrie the limit is to be reduced to 40mph. This is very welcome news for everyone who has campaigned, along with KCC, for lower speeds in Kilmallie over a number of years. In February, KCC heard from Transport Scotland that Ministers propose to make a Permanent Traffic Regulations Order to this effect. The present arrangements for '20mph when lights flash' at the High School and the Primary School will stay in place. We don't yet know when the change will come into effect, but watch out for new signs going up hopefully in the near future.



As well as reducing speeds, it will be a welcome improvement to the current confusion on the Blar - at present you can apparently whizz through the new roundabout at 60mph travelling east, but must stick to 30mph if travelling west! Maybe you could time-travel if you went round it the wrong way!

Meanwhile KCC are not resting on our laurels... in response to all the concerns raised by the community, we've suggested a draft overall plan for improved road safety and happier road users - see enclosed colour supplement. Please let us know what you think. It needs your support to help make it happen.

from the Chair

Hello there and welcome to another bumper issue of the Kilmallie Community News. You may remember that in the December newsletter we highlighted road safety issues in Kilmallie and you may be aware that since then two of the new bollards to the east and west of the Co-op have been badly damaged; we have been advised that one was the result of a driver swerving to avoid a deer and the other was the result of an unexplainable driver error - thankfully no-one was on the crossings at the time. In this issue you will find our "slower, safer, smilier" campaign supplement and response flyer. You

may agree with the suggestions KCC are putting forward, you may disagree. What is important is that you let us know what your thoughts are, through the completion and return of the flyer.

Please use the flyer too to let us know what you think about Scottish Canals' proposals for Banavie (pages 13-16).

Please complete and return it via the KCC suggestion boxes, or scan it and email it to newsletter@kilmallie.org.uk or direct to one of KCC members, by the end of March if possible. Thank you.

Maggie Mackenzie, Chairman

chairman@kilmallie.org.uk

musings on slower, safer, smilier

How do you want the physical environment in Kilmallie to look for you, your children or your children's children? Should it be a place where we can all drive around as quickly as possible in our own cars, or a place where we can not only walk safely, but enjoy the walk?

KCC is putting forward a vision for improving road safety along the most populated section of the A830 through speed-limit changes and pedestrian crossings.

The aim would be not just to reduce the risk of road accidents, but to make the whole environment more friendly for pedestrians and cyclists. The downside is the inconvenience to motorists of adding a few seconds to each car journey.

These kind of changes need to have the support of the community. So we will all need to think about whether these are the kind of road safety improvements we wish to see in our community, and then go about creating the political pressure to make it happen.

But how safe are our roads for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers?

The approach often used by regulators to identify dangerous parts of the road network and assess road safety is to use accidents as a sign that a road is unsafe. This may seem logical at first. However aside from the tragic consequences, waiting for accidents to happen as a way of identifying hazards makes no sense from a statistical perspective.

Suppose there are two similar stretches of road, but one has some hazard that makes an accident twice as likely. Using standard statistical tests we would expect to have to wait for something like 36 accidents to happen to be able to conclude that one section of road was significantly more dangerous than the other. So we clearly need to assess the risks and take action, rather than wait for accidents to happen before making decisions.

Transport Scotland recently announced that reduced speed limits across the Blar have now been approved. Road safety data show clearly that slowing traffic down results in fewer accidents, so this measure is a welcome contribution to the reduction of risk.

The new Blar roundabout has cut a once long, straight section in two, and 60mph is no longer a viable speed limit. So a rather unlikely benefit of the new Blar roundabout is



that it has led Transport Scotland to lower the speed limit on that section of road as a whole. We will now have a 40mph limit across the canal bridge, which should greatly improve road safety.

Furthermore, the new roundabout also serves as a major traffic calming measure in itself, slowing vehicles right down as they approach and go round it. However, it demonstrates clearly how well-thought-out road safety planning can deliver huge benefits for very little cost in terms of time and money, whilst inappropriate ones can have quite hefty consequences. For although the roundabout does slow people down, it is an inefficient means of traffic calming compared to lowering speed limits.

Changing speed limits facilitates gradual transitions between speeds, which is comparatively fuel-efficient. However, at a roundabout traffic slows then accelerates quite abruptly. So there is an economic cost to the roundabout in increased fuel use as traffic slows and then accelerates again. A typical car uses about 0.01 litres accelerating from 20 – 50mph over a short distance. For the average daily measured traffic flow of 9000 vehicles, the increased cost of fuel to the community caused by the roundabout is over £40,000 a year.

If the cost of the unnecessary time delay is taken into account, the true cost to the community is many times this figure.

As an aside, this further highlights the injustice of the Blar site developer's argument that they should not have to pay the developer contribution (designed to compensate the community for the economic loss) until the supermarket was opened because that was what would cause the economic damage. As, by the time the supermarket is opened the cost to the community simply due to the roundabout will probably have already exceeded the agreed developer contribution.

However, in road safety terms it also reminds us that all traffic-calming measures need to be carefully planned and considered, with full community involvement, so that we can all ensure that we are helping to build the sort of environment that we want to live in.

Russell Leaper

Kilmallie Community news

Thanks as always to all our contributors, our ever expanding delivery team and of course our sponsors - the newsletter couldn't happen without all your input and support. Thank you too to one anonymous benefactor for an unexpected but welcome generous donation towards newsletter costs. It's good to know that the community team effort is worthwhile.

If you'd like to help in any way, please get in touch - more help is always very very very welcome.

The deadline for the next newsletter is 15th May, for publication in early to middle of June.

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 currently held at 7:15pm normally in Kilmallie Community Centre (but see notice on right for different arrangements for March meeting) on the 3rd Weds of every month excl July and Dec, but please check the website or Facebook in case of changes. Next ordinary meeting dates are 19 March, 16 April and 21 May 2014. Next AGM is 18 June 2014.

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 Christine Hutchison
Mandy Ketchin
Kshama Wilmington

Associate member Chris Pellow

is everyone getting it?

with new houses getting built and new businesses starting up all the time, we may unwittingly be leaving a few addresses off our newsletter delivery list. If you know of anyone who isn't getting it, please let us know so we can add them in. Thanks.

hopefully not a night in the cells!



The 19th March meeting of KCC will be held in the new police station on the Blar, at 7:45pm, though will no longer include a tour of the whole building.

Community policing

I'm pleased to report that the long awaited and newly constructed Fort William Police Station on the Blar is now fully operational and has been since the second week of January 2014. There was a smooth transition from the old station located on the High Street, Fort William and there have been very few teething problems to report.

As liaison officer for the Kilmallie Community Council I intend to host the CC meeting for its March date at the new station.

Since the festive period we have experienced a relatively quieter period which will no doubt change as the tourist season kicks into full swing as we approach Easter and beyond. Hopefully we will also be able to begin enjoying some more pleasant weather come the spring; this winter has felt particularly long!

With the schools back after the half term break, school liaison officers will be looking to touch base with their respective schools again in the Lochaber area, especially in light of the newly launched Stay Safe online campaign which is a national campaign to raise awareness about online safety for children between the ages of 9 and 16.

Police Scotland is committed to building safer virtual communities as well as being committed to keeping people safe within the local communities. We want to help children enjoy the benefits of the Internet by being able to Stay Safe Online.

As per previous newsletter articles, I would welcome any feedback or comments on local Policing in the Kilmallie or Lochaber area.

PS197 Andrew Bilton

Liaison Officer for Kilmallie Community Council

Andrew.bilton@northern.pnn.police.uk

Police Service of Scotland
Fort William Police Station,
High Street, Fort William

Tel 101 for non-emergency

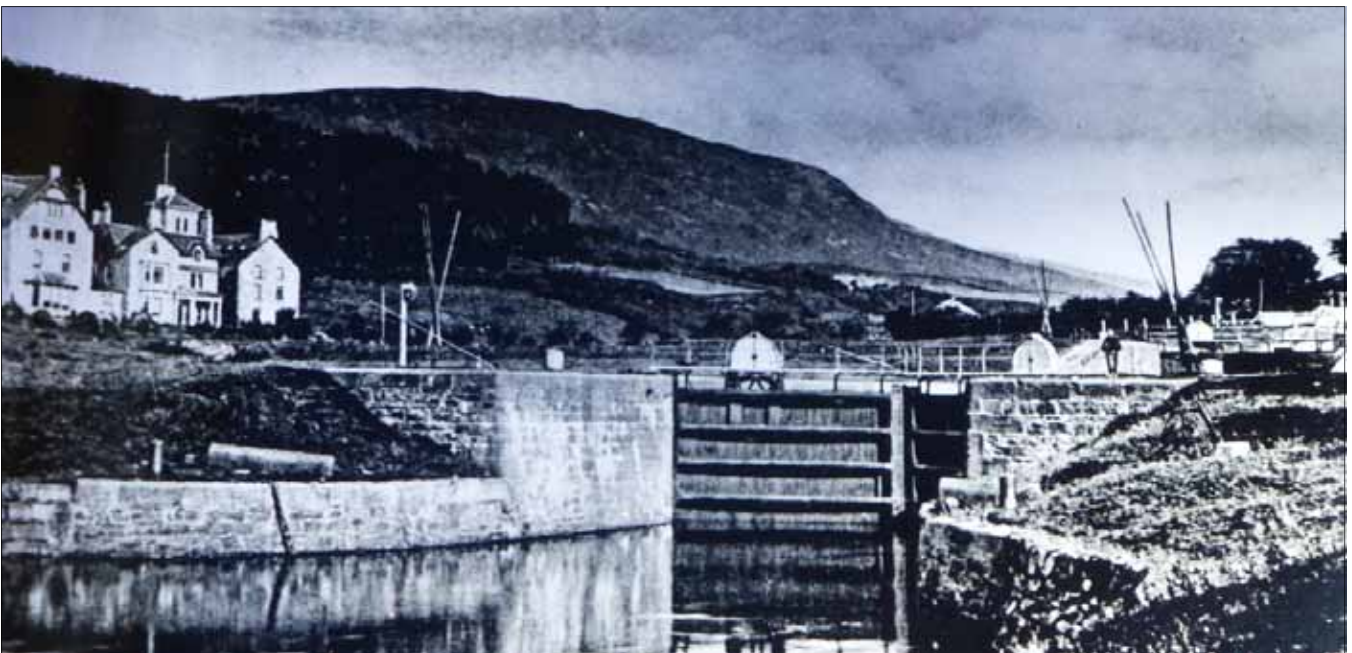
**POLICE
SCOTLAND**





bridging the past and future

You might walk up and down the canal barely noticing the odd structures about a third of the way up Neptune's Staircase. If you've stopped to look at them, perhaps you've been able to figure out what they are all about? Or perhaps one of our friendly informative lockkeepers has explained them? Or perhaps you're even old enough to remember them in use? They are the pintel bases and one of the abutments of the original bridge over the canal.



Postcard photo from sometime between 1880s and 1901, when there were no bridges at the foot of the Staircase. The original bridge is tantalisingly not quite discernible, three locks up. The Lochiel Arms Hotel is on the left. Poles akimbo for operating the capstans that opened the locks in the days before hydraulics. Photo courtesy of Scottish Canals.

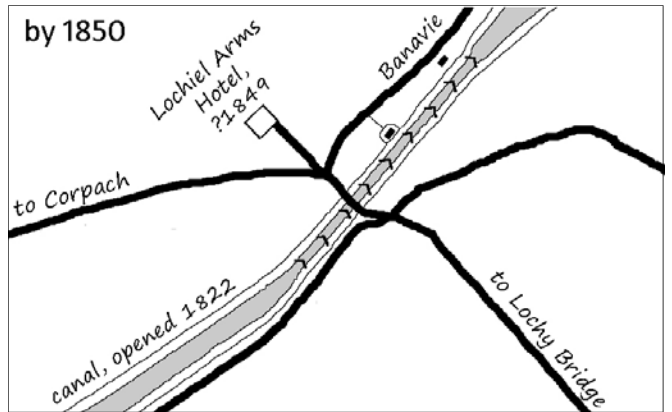
We get so accustomed to our modern day road layout that it is easy to forget that it is relatively recent. Travelling by car (at up to 60mph!) over the Blar nowadays, you are unlikely to spot the point where the line of the present road diverges from the original. But if you regularly walk or cycle from Banavie to the High School or towards the town, you will know the much older road – Old Blar Mhor Road - that tails off into what is now a very narrow overgrown whin-lined footpath – a shortcut today, but the main thoroughfare until the 1970s.



Old Blar Mhor Road as it is today

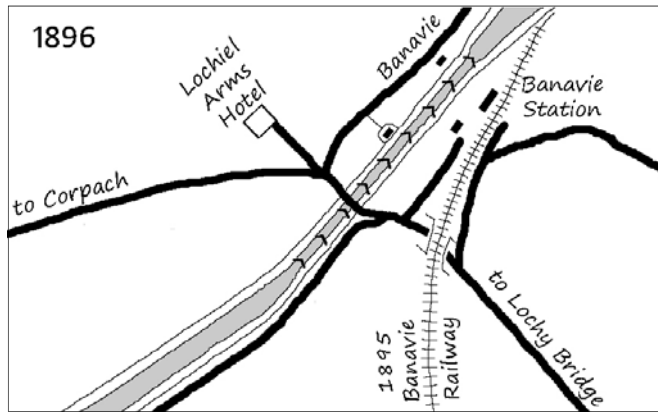


The line of the Old Blar Mhor Road now tails off into a narrow path





Later, in 1895, the Banavie Branch railway line was opened, So at that time, travelling west from Lochy Bridge, the old road would have taken you under the railway bridge, and then over the original canal bridge, before following on along what is now Old Banavie Road past the old police station towards Badabrie and Corpach.

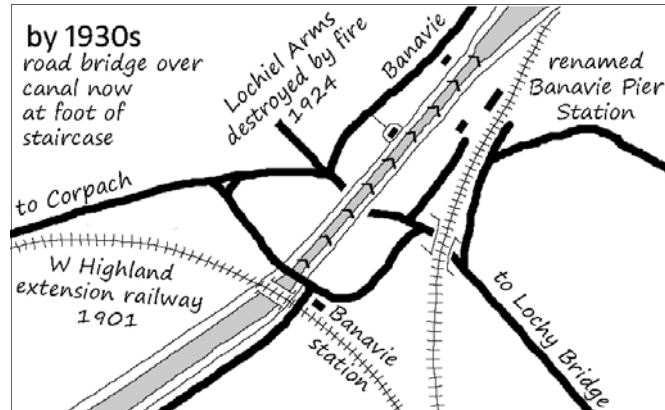


You can just make out the panels of the 1930s bridge to the left behind HMS Brierton as she comes up the Staircase. Photo courtesy of Scottish Canals.

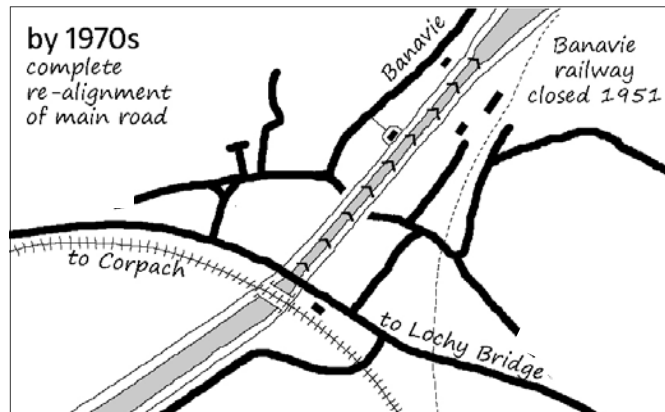
But after the pulp mill was built in 1964, the amount and size of traffic hugely increased, and this second bridge also needed to be replaced. So in the 1970s, the main road was completely realigned, and the present road bridge was built. But while its construction was taking place, the site of the original bridge was again put to use with a temporary Bailey Bridge. So all in all, four road bridges so far over the canal. Does anyone have any memories or photos of the earlier bridges?



The remains of one of the abutments of the old bridge that carried the Banavie Branch Railway over the original Blar road



Old Banavie Road



What did the original bridge look like? Judging from the abutments it seems it wasn't the same as Moy Bridge, and so far we haven't unearthed any old pictures so it is hard to say. Thomas Telford brought some of his team with him to the Highlands from other projects, including the ironmaster Mr Hazeldine (who had done all the ironwork for the remarkable canal aqueduct at Pontcysyllte in Wales). Hazeldine was to make all the ironwork for the lock gates and bridges at the west end of the canal, so it is likely that the Banavie bridge was at least partly his work. Like all the other original engineering structures on the canal, it would have been elegant and beautiful in its functional simplicity.

But by the 1930s, this bridge must have been unable to meet the needs of modern traffic: it became redundant when a new bridge was built at the foot of Neptune's Staircase. This wasn't the bridge you see now, but a smaller simpler one, similar to the present bridge at Gairloch. We've no info on when the original bridge was demolished – can anyone help here?



Gairloch bridge, similar to the 1930s one at Banavie (photo Nigel Brown)

The remains of the original canal bridge are part of the Scheduled Monument, rightly considered of great historic significance. The original approach routes to the bridge also deserve to be valued and protected, particularly if Scottish Canals are keen to capitalise on canal interpretation as a tourism asset. The stories of road, rail and canal at Banavie are intrinsically interlinked, and attract many visitors to the area, not just people wanting a stroll or a view of the Ben. On the west side of the original bridge, the approach has already been partly obscured. It would be great if any new development at this spot could take advantage of the opportunity to undo past harm and to enhance and 'present' the line of the old road. Perhaps it could make a pleasant south facing garden area for a tea room at the hotel? It even has a great view of the Ben!

In their Heritage Strategy, Scottish Canals say the waterways they look after are "one of Scotland's most significant national collections". If they and other businesses want to capitalise on the heritage asset of the canal, let's encourage them to take that heritage asset seriously. Ironically too often the real thing is destroyed to provide interpretation centres, shops, and cafes.

Heritage aside, if the present bridge over the main road ever needed to be closed for repairs or renewal, there is no more convenient and appropriate location for a further temporary bridge while work is in progress. Would we all rue the day if the old route has been built over?

Mandy Ketchin

the canal's past adds value to its future -

our Highland councillors' corner

The topic we gave our Highland Councillors this time was: "The Highland Council has stopped providing Christmas lights for communities - what other services are under threat and which ones would you fight to keep? We'd particularly like to hear your views on children's' play parks, dog wardens, rangers and libraries." Eddie had tendered his resignation by then, but here's what Allan and Bill said in reply. In the next issue we hope to bring news of a new councillor following the by-election due in May

There are no Highland Council services under immediate threat in Kilmallie. Budgets have been set based upon the monies available. When budgets are set, differences of opinion may arise over the setting of those budgets. Politics is the science of how who gets what, when and why. When two councillors agree on everything, one of them is not required. You cannot direct all the money available towards one area of expenditure. In the case of play parks, a report has been compiled by Mike Leary, Community Works Manager, and Emma Taylor, Assistant Wards Manager, confirming that the Council has an allocation of £40,000 this year in revenue money to maintain the 37 Council adopted play parks in the area. This is a reduction of £10,000 since January 2009. The allocation is spent on the maintenance of play parks based on the annual inspection reports for each park. An additional

£16,000 per annum is available for the replacement of play equipment, safety surfacing and fencing through a capital budget which has to be bid for year on year. In my view, this amount is grossly inadequate for 37 play areas. However, we can only work with the money which is available in the budget.

Libraries come under the jurisdiction of High Life Highland, not Highland Council. It is worth noting that libraries today offer more than books. All Highland libraries offer free connection to the internet and support for users to get online. Library membership gives instant access to e-book, e-audio and e-magazine download services. In addition, the library service is working with author Barry Hutchison and the Scottish Book Trust to promote reading and reading-based activities throughout Lochaber.

The duties of the Assistant Waste Management Officer working within the

Waste Management Team in Fort William include Dog Warden duties, Pest Control and Enforcement, ie dog fouling, litter, abandoned vehicles and fly tipping. Patrols are carried out on a regular basis for stray dogs and dog fouling throughout Lochaber. Anyone wishing to report incidents within the above remit should contact the Service Centre on Tel No 01349 886603. The Countryside Rangers raise awareness and encourage appreciation of the scenery, wildlife and heritage of the Highlands. They also have responsibility for promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and are involved in the management of a large number of countryside sites throughout the Highland Council Area. There are two teams of Countryside Rangers located in Lochaber.

Cllr Bill Clark



Disappointed as I was when Xmas trees were deemed no longer part of Highland Council's remit, it was heartening to see how communities responded this year. There is no doubt that a lot of good will was lost by the Council, although they are still willing to erect, but at a huge cost. Councillors can also still assist, through discretionary budgets, with replacement of old lights. As an opposition councillor (Independent), one of my tasks in committee is to challenge the administration (the labelled political members), when cuts are suggested. Obviously services such as playparks, dog wardens, rangers and libraries (the latter three being labour intensive) are under pressure as financial cuts and 'efficiency savings' keep coming.

Traditional playparks are vital parts of the local infrastructure, but are horrendously expensive to install and maintain. I prefer to promote the sustainable wood models which generate the same enjoyment through creative play, at a fraction of the maintenance cost of metal ones. Costs can also be mitigated through developer contributions when new housing schemes are built.

Despite kindles, our libraries are still vital as they provide many of the services that communities require. It is probably difficult to defend standalone libraries but they can be easily accommodated in community schools or shared services with Council service points. This then gives access to decent broadband.

Dog wardens and rangers, while different,

are in a way complementary and in future could possibly be a joint service. Rangers already have to deal with dog mess and stray animals. Education of our young who grow up to be the users and lovers of our countryside is vital to help support these services.

As a Councillor I do not want these services to go and certainly will not expect the 3rd sector (volunteers) to carry the can. We have to accept cuts will come, as long as community charges stay fixed, but wages rise (albeit at a paltry 1%), so it is wise to consult with the affected communities. Then, compromise solutions can be found.

Cllr Allan Henderson



all the best, Eddie



Most of our readers will be aware that Eddie Hunter has resigned as councillor for Ward 12 of The Highland Council (Caol and Mallaig), of which Kilmallie is part.

Eddie was brought up in Lochaber and attended Lochaber High School. He was Head-teacher at Banavie School between January 1986 and August 1999. He was interested in getting children involved in sport and many of you will have your own memories of his time as head-teacher. Many of you will also remember Eddie from his time at Tradewinds.

Eddie was elected councillor for Ward 12 in 2007. He was an active councillor and some of you will have knowledge of how he helped the community.

When Kilmallie Community Council was re-formed in 2011 Eddie attended our meetings and was constructive on many topics – giving us his advice and opinion which helped us find our way. We will miss him at our meetings and wish him and his family well as they start a new phase of their lives in Renfrewshire.

All the best, Eddie, and thanks for your support of the Kilmallie people and KCC.

Maggie Mackenzie, centre, chairs the first meeting of KCC in Glendessary Terrace in the mid 1950s, with Cllr Eddie Hunter, left, in attendance. Also present were Maggie's sister Ann, and Eddie's brother Roddy.

Note - Eddie has been spotted recently still wearing the same pair of shorts!



Banavie Primary News



Round the Rooms

2014 saw Banavie pupils getting right down to work and as usual, they have all been working extremely hard.

In Nursery, children have been learning all about their local area and Primary One has started off the year looking at the weather and the seasons. They have had a student in from Stirling University to whom they all enjoyed demonstrating how well they have been learning.



The local area - Nursery

Primary Two's topic has been money and they have set up a class shop which has really helped to support their learning.

Primary Three/Four have sailed the seven seas, studying pirates whilst Primary Four/Five have been using Kung Fu to help them develop their punctuation skills and sending boring words to jail.



Primary Five/Six have been learning all about the human body and the life cycle of plants and animals whilst Primary Six/Seven have been enjoying, yes enjoying, algebra and studying tourism and employment in Lochaber, visiting BSW Timber and Nevis Range.



Scotland's Bard

Across the school, the life of Robert Burns was celebrated in song, verse, word, painting and drawing with every class involved in a range of activities on the 24th of January.

We also had a Burns storyteller in, who enthralled the children with the story of the birth of Robert Burns and the tale of Tam o' Shanter.



Primary One Burns display

Chinese New Year

Children celebrated the start of the Chinese New Year in a range of ways and for those of you who did not know, 2014 is the Year of the Horse.



Primary Two Chinese New Year display

Drumfun

Early in February, Steve Sharpe returned to Banavie with Drumfun and once again, the children had a fantastic time, experimenting with beats and rhythms.



Flood talks

Always keen to keep children aware of what is happening in their world, we had a visit from Mairi MacNaughton of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency where she talked about the launch of new flood warnings in the Lochaber area and told pupils about its causes and what to do if their homes were ever threatened by water.

Wind is whistling through the night.
Inside is cosy and warm by the fire.
Night is coming, the snow is shining
in the moonlight.
The farmer uses a shovel to get the
snow out.
Early morning, snow is melting
Ready to play in the snow

by Emily Steer - Primary Three

How well do you know Burns?

by P 6/7

Which US President was an avid reader of the works of Robert Burns?

- a Abraham Lincoln
- b John F Kennedy
- c Theodore Roosevelt

Which country, in 1956, produced a stamp to mark the 160th anniversary of the death of Burns?

- a Cuba
- b Australia
- c Soviet Union

Which country uses the tune to "Coming through the Rye" to tell pedestrians when it's safe to cross the road?

- a Brazil
- b Norway
- c Japan

Robert Burns was the first ever person to appear on a commemorative bottle of which soft drink?

- a Irn Bru
- b Coca Cola
- c Vimto

Which fashion designer claims to be a direct descendant of Robert Burns?

- a Vivienne Westwood
- b Tommy Hilfiger
- c Jasper Conran

Date for your Diary

Saturday 5th April, 2014
Primary Seven Fund Raising
Car Wash and Coffee Morning
10.00am – 1.00pm
£5.00 per car

Burns Quiz answers
1-a, 2-c, 3-c, 4-b, 5-b

Fàilte! Fèisgòil coming to Banavie...



High Notes

Our winter term at Lochaber High has seen dramatic change to both our curriculum and assessment and to our physical surroundings. Throughout February, Fourth Years have been sitting prelim' examinations for the new 'National' courses which replace Standard Grade and Intermediate courses from this year. The new qualifications provide a more coherent progression which should, in time, make it easier for pupils, parents and employers to understand. At the moment they are causing schools an enormous amount of additional work as pupils and teachers are having to get to grips with new assessment methods, increased internal assessment demands and, of course, new course material. Senior pupils in S5 and S6 have also been sitting prelim' examinations and should now be on course for their final assessments in May.

Finding venues for prelim' examinations has been a challenge for Mr MacLean, Depute Head Teacher, who has had to manage the process without the use of our assembly hall which is currently being refurbished. However, it will all have been worth it when we move in to the smart new air-conditioned facility later this year. It is encouraging to see the new central block taking shape with the steelwork and roofing now complete. The block will include a new main entrance, reception, admin offices, pupil social area, restaurant, kitchen, toilets, staffroom, S6 common room and an impressive library/resource centre. This building, which we have waited so long for, will really transform the way the school functions... and we'll be in it this year!

The central courtyard area (or 'quad') is also unavailable to us and currently contains two large roof structures. Our skyline will be transformed when these structures are lifted into place atop the three storey buildings within the next few weeks... weather permitting. This should solve the water ingress problems that have plagued the flat-roofed buildings for so many years.

Pupils and staff have done well to keep 'business as usual' going on in the school with so much building work taking place. We're grateful to Robertson Construction for the way they have tackled such a big

project in a working school. It can't be easy to plan and execute a building project on a school campus with 1000 pupils and staff milling around every day!

School trips are, as always, a feature of life at Lochaber High. A senior snowsports trip to Les Menuires over New Year and a junior ski trip to Alpe D'Huez in January were both hugely successful with those participating enthused to take full advantage of local snow conditions on their return. As I write (end Feb) I'm preparing for our annual S6 trip to London where 76 of our final year pupils will have a chance to see the sights and sounds of the capital including a tour of Broadcasting House, the Tower of London, museums, galleries, the Emirates stadium and Madame Tussaud's. There will also be meals out at Carluccio's, Hard Rock Café and other venues and there are four West End shows on offer this year: 'Matilda', 'We Will Rock You', 'The Lion King' and 'The Commitments'. This is the eighth annual trip since we started in 2007 and this trip will see us reach an impressive total of 600 participants. Future trips currently being planned by the school include Mediterranean Watersports in June this year; a Second Year Outward Bound trip to the Lake District in August and, in 2015, Skiing, London, Paris, Auschwitz and Beijing.

Two of our Sixth Years – Sarah Johnstone and Clare Neil – visited Auschwitz last term as part of the Holocaust Education Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' project. Inspired by what they saw, the girls put

together an exhibition and delivered presentations to all S2 classes to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. A poignant article by Clare Neil was also featured in Lochaber Life.

Congratulations to Fifth Year pupil Paulina Szumko who, last year, won the Rotary Club of Lochaber's Young Chef of the Year competition. Paulina went on to win the West of Scotland championship in East Kilbride in January and will now compete in the Scottish final later this year. She has done very well, building on experience gained in the competition over three years and improving her skills with help from her mentors, Mr Brian Gunn and Mrs Fiona Harrower.

Jim Sutherland, Head Teacher

Photos top to bottom:

- 1 building work in progress,
- 2, 3 senior snowsports
- 4 junior snowsports



of the local woods for exploratory walks, collecting items to make into natural mobiles which proudly hang in our garden and adorn some of the playgroup walls. Interest developed around the fallen trees and the children worked collaboratively to form outdoor shelters which they huddled in to share stories. We have ventured further afield to Glen Nevis where we all enjoyed a wonderful morning jam-packed with activities based around the visitor centre area. We were all well kitted out with bright colourful waterproof clothing and excitedly waited to see what lay ahead. Our friends from Upper Achintore Playgroup joined us swelling the numbers considerably. On arrival we all met at a central point where resources and activities had been carefully organised by our staff and volunteer parents. The start of the day was to warm up our bodies by making mushrooms, flying saucers and clouds using an "enormous rainbow circle" namely a parachute. The children excitedly listened for instructions and joined in enthusiastically with a number of songs before moving off to make dens, create sculptures using "very messy, gooey" clay and make pictures using materials gathered from the surrounding area. The highlight of the day, for most, was winding in and out of ropes forming an adventure course round the woods: for some it was like a climbing expedition. "Look- Ben Nevis - my Dad works up there, it's his favourite mountain" and "my Dad uses ropes to help people off the hill" were a few of the comments passed. The day ended with a lovely get together for hot chocolate and shortbread in our self-made shelter.

With Christmas fast approaching excitement was building, our role play area had been transformed into Santa's grotto with lots of busy elves hard at work making cards, toys, decorations and lovely goodies. The children were planning a nativity play to perform to parents and all were learning the words and actions of many songs, some keener than others to adorn costumes. On the day of the nativity play the children were all so excited and dressed up to perform the Christmas story. The building was very busy with familiar faces and the children's voices could be clearly heard heartily singing their well-rehearsed songs.



A couple of ladies from Kilmallie Free Church visited to deliver the Christmas story: oh what excitement when they entered the building - it was two of our Mums. The children responded in a lovely warm manner and happily joined in with songs, games and listened intently to their story. Our Christmas party was great fun with children and adults alike joining in with games such as pass the parcel, musical chairs and musical statues. The party ended with a visit from Santa who came with "an enormous sack" of goodies.

After an unprecedented late start to the 2014 term due to flooding sustained throughout the holiday period everyone has now settled back into the daily routine.

The children have participated in numerous activities throughout the room. In the writing area they have been busily writing letters and making lists using a variety of mark-making materials. The majority of the group made shopping lists using old catalogues, developing the arts of cutting and gluing. Some were really interested in the price of their items and were keen to use numbers for costings. A small number went on an errand to the local co-op to purchase items for the group snack, here they selected the foods on the list, counted and problem-solved with money before returning back to the centre to prepare their snack. From the visit the role play shop progressed onto being a post office. The children were very interested in writing letters, working with envelopes, stamps and wrapping up parcels to post. All the children created lovely Valentine Cards for their loved ones all of which were independently written.

The children have been very excited about the snow on the hills with some making reference to sledging, skiing and looking at the moon and stars. This led on to a very interactive couple of weeks relating to space, comets, planets and flying to the moon. Clare our visiting music teacher added to the

atmosphere by providing space music and encouraging the children to make sounds linking to the planets.

The centre recently introduced mind mapping and large floor books to develop the children's individual interests. Our large book on castles is progressing well with many "authors". Lots of suggestions and ideas are incorporated into the day, none more evident than the "building" of our very own medieval castle. Some are already planning outings to visit Old Inverloch Castle while others playfully re-enact conflicts as knights through the use of swords, shields and galloping horses.

Enrolment for next session, August 2014-2015, is fast approaching and has been arranged for the week beginning 24th March - add this date to your diary! Places are available for morning Playgroup and afternoon Day Care. More details will be advertised on our facebook page and local community notice boards. Please contact the centre for further details.

Carole
01397 772016 or email
kilmallieplaygroup@hotmail.co.uk.



HM COASTGUARD AT CORPACH

It's official: 2013 was the busiest year for incidents for the team based at Corpach since records began.

In some ways it reflects our growing requirement for helicopters as a means of search and rescue and transportation of casualties whether they be from the mountains, hills and lochs or as a lifeline to our remote communities, especially island ones.

We also responded to each amber flood alert during December and January (6 in total) until high water had passed. It is reassuring that the relevant services are forewarned of possible flood situations. Electronic data from tide gauges from Oban, Kingairloch and Corpach is transmitted to SEPA who submit a report and warnings to Emergency Services and the public. The water rescue team here at Corpach is always ready to respond to such alerts 24/7.

This year to date there has been a mix of incidents including flare sightings, casualty transfers from both the Coastguard and Navy helicopters including their refueling. An extensive search was carried out following a report of a cabin cruiser aground near Onich. With the help of a local boat hire operator based at Ballachulish and the Corpach team, a boat fitting the description was located but was very badly damaged and believed to be a casualty of the most recent

storm. The aerial site at Achindaul had to be manned due a complete power failure at Stornoway Operations Room.

Just a short report this quarter I'm afraid. Pictured below is the Corpach Coastguard 4 x 4 at the refueling site at Torlundy with Rescue 100.

*Phil Wren
Sector Manager*



By-election coming up

Info from Highland Council:

The by-election to find a new councillor for the Caol and Mallaig Ward on The Highland Council will be held on

Thursday 1 May

The count will take place the following day.

The by-election is being called as the result of the resignation of Councillor Eddie Hunter (Independent).
(Councillor Hunter stood down on 27 February 2014).

Candidates seeking election will be able to obtain a nomination form from

Tuesday 11 March.

Nomination forms will be available from the home page of the Council's web site www.highland.gov.uk as well as at the Council's Service Points at Fort William and Mallaig.

The deadline for nominations is 4 pm on Tuesday 27 March.

Caol and Mallaig is a three-member ward. The two other current members are Bill Clark (SNP) and Allan Henderson (Independent).

The political representation of the Council is currently

Independent	34
SNP	21
Liberal Democrat	14
Labour	8
independent Nationalist	1
Non-aligned	2



Canal news

We are writing this quarter's Kilmallie Newsletter with heavy hearts, unfortunately as most of you know we sadly lost one our team Dave McCook in a car accident just after New Year. Davy started on the Canal in August 2009 and in the four years he was with us proved to be a very popular work colleague and friend to us all. He carried out so many good turns to everyone he came into contact with; if he could help you he would. Our thoughts at times like this should always go out to the nearest and dearest. Angie his wife, children Becky, Rachel & Jonathan and his grandsons Marc & Joshua; also his own mum Jean & dad Iain and Angie's mum Peggie. We also pass on our condolences to the Lauder family whose son Stephen was also sadly killed in the accident.

The last Newsletter quiz disappointingly had no entries; the prize of a tin of sweets was given to Joshua & Marc and like any three and five year old boys they certainly enjoyed them.

Moving on we have just carried out our seasonal recruitment and we will have three new starts this year and hopefully they will be as welcoming and accommodating as the existing workforce.

Season Time Table - 2014

Now up to Friday 21st March

9:00 am to 4pm

5 days Monday - Friday

Spring 2014, 24th March to 25th May

8:30am to 5:30pm

7 days Monday - Sunday

Summer 2014, 26th May to 31st August 2014

8:00am to 6:00pm

7 days Monday - Sunday

Autumn 2014, 1st Sept to 2nd Nov 2014

8:30am to 5:30pm

7 days Monday - Sunday

Winter 2014, 5th November to end of year

5 days Monday - Sunday.

Events for 2014

Great Glen Paddle – 22nd & 23rd March
Kayaking event Banavie to Inverness – 24 hour challenge.

Maggie's Cycle Hospice event
Starts Banavie 3rd May 2014.

Going Wild on the Canal

Neptune's Staircase & Banavie Basin. 17th May.
(Boat Trips, kayaking, dinghy sailing, water walkers, Raft Race, Birds of Prey, Climbing Wall, Face painting, stalls etc. Come & Try. (Public Event for Community and Visitors)

Heather's Walk
Corpach Basin to Banavie 25th May

Sail Caledonia (20 to 25 boats)
Corpach to Inverness, 24th – 31st May

Ben Nevis Charity Challenge Climb, Cycle, Canoe
Sat 7th June

Three Peaks Yacht Race
Starts Barmouth Sat. 7th June
Arrives Corpach 10th June.

Royal Bank of Scotland - Caley Challenge
walk Gairloch to Crianlarich
Sat. 14th June 2014

Great Glen Ultra Challenge (running)
Banavie to Inverness 5th July 2014.

Activity Hub - Banavie

We hope to have several new activities at Banavie Top this year – watch out for more news!

John Stafford



lochaber rural education trust

We're getting ready for another busy year. Here are some of our what's ons:

Mon 17th March Whist in An Clachan at 7.30pm (these are held fortnightly)

Sat 5th April Fundraising TableTop Sale, Caol Community Centre, 11am–2pm, table £5.00, please book a table

Tue 15th to Fri 18th April Children's Holiday Club at An Clachan, 10am–2pm, for Children aged 4-8, please book

Fri 25th April Prize Bingo in Caol Community Centre at 7.30pm

Schedules are now available for the Junior Gardening Show which is to be held on Friday 22nd August 2014 (please note change of day).

For more info on events and to book, please phone me on 01397 700800

For more details on Lochaber Rural Education Trust visit our web page www.lret.org or see us on facebook.

Linda Campbell



Look out for the
**KILMALLIE CHRISTMAS
LIGHTS FUND'S**

collecting box

on the counter in the Co-op.

The loose change accumulated throughout the seasons will help the group plan in good time for another great event this year.





Kilmallie Community Centre

As those of you who attended our last AGM were informed, John Macdonald has resigned as Chairman of Kilmallie Community Centre but has agreed to stay on the committee. We would like to thank John for his immense contribution to the upgrading and improvements for the centre over the past 8 years. His dedication and commitment to the Centre is second to none and his nickname of "John the Hall" was well deserved!

Unfortunately this situation is vacant so if anyone would like to join the committee and carry out this role then please do contact me on 07768 805040 or email petracat@hotmail.co.uk.

We have recently employed Jimmy Milne as new caretaker. We hope that you will all welcome Jimmy in his new role and help him settle in. Jimmy's contact details for bookings are as follows: 01397 712663/07787866813 or email jimmymilne@fsmail.net

Edith Peagle has also joined us as our cleaner and we welcome her to our team too.

There have been some discrepancies in the pricing for renting the halls and we have therefore streamlined our structure. It is generally £12 per hour for local associations/charities and £24 per hour for businesses. Please see the notice board in the entrance hallway for further information.

We are pleased to advise that the loop system is now installed. This was partly funded by Lochaber Housing Association Ltd as part of their support of local charities and organisations and we extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their generosity. We trust that this system will help those who are hard of hearing in the community.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight to the community the excellent facilities that we have here at the Community Centre. Many of you may not know of the two dressing rooms that we have behind the stage and photographs have been uploaded onto our page on the Kilmallie Community

Council Website. We hope that this will encourage further interest from travelling theatre companies to carry out events at our Centre.

Customers who have used the Centre over the past few weeks are:

- Bowmans – training
 - NHS - training
 - Kilmallie Christmas Lights Fund - we are storing the Christmas Tree and street lights and thank them for their donation
 - Kilmallie Community Company (the Wood Group) - they had a good turnout
 - Music for All - reported to be the best event ever
- Our thanks go to our regular customers for supporting the Centre:
- Parents and Toddlers
 - Kick Boxing
 - Scottish Country Dancing
 - Contemporary Dancing
 - Old Time Dancing
 - The Mustard Seed Fellowship
 - Kilmallie Community Council
 - Parkinson's Support Group

We are sorry to see the Kilmallie Shinty Team stop using the Centre and wish them every success for their future games.

Sarah Kennedy

Kilmallie Community Centre
Station Road, Corpach, Fort William PH33 7JH
Scottish Charity SC000604

CHAIRMAN post vacant at present

SECRETARY Mrs Norma MacLellan,

12 Hillview Drive, Corpach, Fort William 01397 772597

TREASURER Mrs Sarah Kennedy 0776 880 5040

Locheilnet

It seems like an eternity since we last posted an update in the newsletter but it has only just been 5 months since the installation of our leased line.

We founded Locheilnet in October 2012, installed the pilot project in February 2013, ordered the leased line in May 2013 after our first big funding came in, got most of the infrastructure up by the end of August 2013, the leased line up and running at beginning of Sept and from then on we have not stopped. We have installed 125 customers, and with plenty more to do, we are working our heads off to get everyone on our order list connected as soon as we can.

The winter months have been very trying and tiring, and our dedicated team of volunteers has worked relentlessly, throughout the Christmas period, on Christmas Day, even on New Year's

Day... They were out in horrible weather conditions, repairing storm damage, dealing with power cuts, in order to restore the service to our customers. Who says the



community spirit no longer exists? Please spare a thought for every single one of them!

You may have read in the papers that we received another substantial amount of funding to take our project closer to completion. We are a bit of a victim of our own success in having more orders than we can possibly install in a short time frame with our small team. This funding has allowed us to call in the troops, and have some professional hands helping us.

We still need to do a fair few installations but we are making progress! If you think you could give us a hand, please get in touch via our website.

This is very much a community effort and we thank everyone who has given us the strength and support to get us this far.

You can follow our progress on the website:

www.locheilnet.co.uk/news

and our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Locheilnet>

Chris Pellow



Brass

Diversions

Sunday 23rd March, 3:00pm
Kilmallie Community Centre
Tickets available at the door.

Brass Diversions is a cutting edge ensemble, recently formed to promote a wide range of unexplored repertoire, and is already involved in a number of collaborations and commissions. The trio's three members met as students at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and each is pursuing diverse careers with their respective instruments of piano, trombone and trumpet.



Scottish Canals' proposals for Banavie

KCC are grateful to Keith Mackie from Scottish Canals' (SC) for sending us information on their latest proposals for Neptune's Staircase for inclusion in this newsletter.

Over the next three pages you can see

- their landscape architect's plan
- Keith's explanation of the proposals
- the architects' impression of the design for the area between the car park and the canal.
- and news of the proposed Scenic Routes viewpoint

KCC discussed the proposals at their February meeting, and have had ad hoc discussions with a number of residents so far. KCC welcome any changes that bring genuine benefit to the canal and to the area, but many people have said that these current proposals would be a step in the wrong direction.

If you think you could be affected by the proposals, directly or indirectly, for better or worse, or if you simply care about the canal and have views on what happens there, please let us know what you think, either by letter, email, suggestion box, or through FOCAL (see below). **Or please use the enclosed flyer.**

KCC will write to SC to relay the discussions and comments received. Here are some of the reactions that have been expressed so far:

Things that people have welcomed so far:

- improved disabled access
- removing the perimeter fence alongside the pavement (providing the play park is safe)
- more economic opportunities for local businesses
- any new tree planting in principle
- bike racks



Things that people are concerned about:

- the direct impact of parking charges: This won't affect very local people (who are likely to walk to the canal) but will be:
 - a penalty on many existing users, mostly the large number of people from the whole wider Fort William area who visit the canal frequently***
 - a deterrent to visit the canal for Lochaber folk and tourists alike
 - a deterrent to visit the play park(These concerns were expressed before Keith wrote that SC will be creating "a system that doesn't penalise locals". How local is local? Any system more inconvenient or costly than parking for free will penalise many people compared to at present***).
- the indirect impact of parking charges:
 - cars clogging up nearby streets and roads on both sides of the canal (neither do people want to see double yellow lines all over the area)
- having a ticket barrier - it will make the area look very urban and unwelcoming
- while there seems to be intention to keep space for a play park, it is in a new position, so the present one will be lost, and it looks like the obligation to create a new one will fall on the community (see also page 20 for news of new play park group)
- the impact on the setting of Telford House (an important historic building)
- the proposed building on line of the old road (see page 4)
- chopping down some existing trees
- the 'sculpted landform' of the ground to the north of the canal. Much nicer to leave the area clear, and let people walk



and run about where they like, not regimented by steep slopes and paths. The banked slopes on the canal verges and towpaths themselves are an original feature and should be respected, not mimicked as pointless pastiche in the landscape.



Things people have noticed:

- the pods have been re-born at a new less controversial location (though Keith tells us there are no immediate plans to develop them)
- the pods look small - where do guests go for sanitary facilities? is there a separate toilet block or are they ensuite (in which case wouldn't they be bigger than shown?)
- disappointing that some of the trees planted by community for The Waterways Trust seem to be getting dug up - very counterproductive for encouraging more community involvement
- looks sadly like KCC's noticeboard gets dug up too.



And other comments so far:

- SC seem to be ignoring the value of the canal as a working waterway. Instead of more landscaping it would be better to encourage more boats which would bring more revenue, not only from the boats themselves but from enhancing the essential canalness of the visitor experience.
- would be nicer to see more of the parking spaces in reinforced grass
- please no gravel anywhere - really bad for disabled access. Prefer blinded hardcore to match the best bits of the towpath.
- will overnight parking be encouraged, ignored, or banned?
- the picnic area would be much better nearer the canal, alongside the towpath so people can sit and watch boats go up and down, and see the canal working,
- the area where the picnic tables are shown would be much better left clear for eg big marquees for the big events that happen here
- areas of wildflowers and grasses are very welcome, but would be prettier and more use to wildlife if they edged the wilder area at the SW corner of the site
- some of the paths are pointless as they don't follow natural lines of travel
- birch isn't the most appropriate tree in this setting. Scots pine, oak, ash, plus holly, cherry, rowan preferred.
- the view point is not in the best place to get the best view!
- disappointed that community ideas for a Telford Museum (from the consultation back in 2012) have been ignored whilst SC have nabbed the idea and are promoting it for Inverness.

What do **you** think? Please take a look at the plans and pictures on the next three pages and let KCC or FOCAL know.

*** Parking charges are a good thing in cities as a mechanism to reduce congestion, pollution and carbon footprints. Parking charges in rural areas are punitive, even more so for access to land already in public ownership.

How else can Scottish Canals raise £40,000 a year if they don't charge for parking? Please send us your ideas.

FOCAL

(Friends of Caledonian Canal Lochaber)

Thank you KCC for making space to inform people about these developments on the canal.

Please get in touch if you'd like to hear more, or to share your views.

FOCAL is a subgroup of the Kilmallie Community Company (entirely independent from Kilmallie Community Council) For more info, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact Jan MacLugash, 01397 772383, email: janet.maclugash@gmail.com



Here are Scottish Canals' proposals (plus more info on next page).

See comments, concerns and reactions so far from KCC and community on the previous page.

Please let KCC know what you think about the proposals.



Received from Keith Mackie, Scottish Canals:

Scottish Canals have been busy working on plans to improve the tourist offering at Neptune's Staircase. This followed a community meeting on 11th December last year when we presented our ambitions to make Neptune's Staircase a major tourist attraction with all the necessary facilities that go with this. There are three parts to this project:

1 Activity Hub

Rockhopper Sea Kayaking, based at Annat are going to take a unit next to Caledonian Bears on the Staircase for a new bike, kayak and canoe hire centre and this will be

operational in April. Another new activity will be provided by Free Spirit Electric Boat hire at the top of the flight where customers can hire small boats and cruise up the canal for an hour or two.

2 Improvements to the bottom car park area

Rankin Fraser Landscape Architects have created some proposals for creating a better entry point to Neptune's Staircase with better landscaping and an improved pedestrian flow onto the lock flight. There will be an area that can be used for marquee events. Members of the community are getting together to try and get funding to improve the play park. Scottish Canals need to generate a revenue out of the car park and will be working with

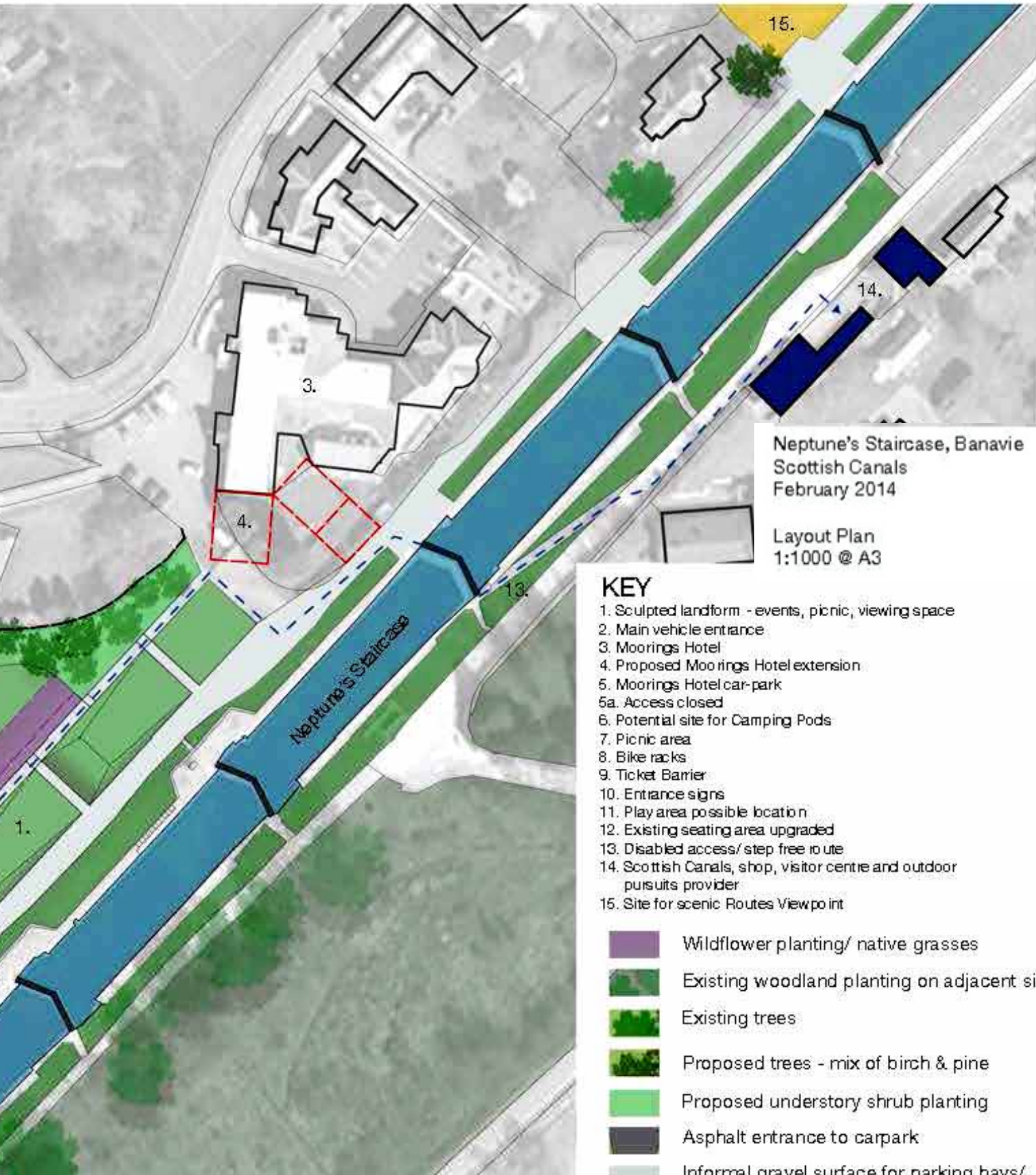
community groups to create a system that doesn't penalise locals.

3 Interpretation

There will be a new interpretation building next to the Caledonian Bears. This will tell the story of why and how the Staircase was built. The hope is that there will be a walkway up the flight where visitors can actually see the boats being put up and down and understand how it actually works.

4 Scenic Routes Initiative

The brief for young Scottish based designers was issued at the end of March seeking designs



Neptune's Staircase, Banavie
 Scottish Canals
 February 2014
 Layout Plan
 1:1000 @ A3

KEY

- 1. Sculpted landform - events, picnic, viewing space
 - 2. Main vehicle entrance
 - 3. Moorings Hotel
 - 4. Proposed Moorings Hotel extension
 - 5. Moorings Hotel car-park
 - 5a. Access closed
 - 6. Potential site for Camping Pods
 - 7. Picnic area
 - 8. Bike racks
 - 9. Ticket Barrier
 - 10. Entrance signs
 - 11. Play area possible location
 - 12. Existing seating area upgraded
 - 13. Disabled access/ step free route
 - 14. Scottish Canals, shop, visitor centre and outdoor pursuits provider
 - 15. Site for scenic Routes Viewpoint
-
-  Wildflower planting/ native grasses
 -  Existing woodland planting on adjacent site
 -  Existing trees
 -  Proposed trees - mix of birch & pine
 -  Proposed understory shrub planting
 -  Asphalt entrance to carpark
 -  Informal gravel surface for parking bays/ roadway
 -  Space for Scottish Canals Camping Pods
 -  Bus parking - reinforced grass
 -  Disabled access/ step free route
 -  Site for Scenic Routes Viewpoint

tem that doesn't

centre in the old Saw
 n Bears building and this
 the canal was made and
 working model of the lock
 operate model lock gates
 derstand more clearly

viewing platform that celebrates the amazing view of Ben Nevis. This initiative has been piloted at Loch Lomond National Park with an exhibition of the winning and short listed entries currently taking place in Glasgow and the quality of entries was phenomenal. Importantly, Transport Scotland are part of the project and so better signage from the road will be produced.

The various strands all contribute to an exciting project that will put Neptune's Staircase on the map and create a gateway for activities on the canal. As ever, Scottish Canals are keen to hear the views of local residents and these can be channelled through the Community Council.

architects will go out at
 for an installation or

rankinfraser
landscape architecture

Neptune's Staircase, Banavie
Scottish Canals
February 2014

Landform Visual



Coming soon to Neptune's Staircase...?

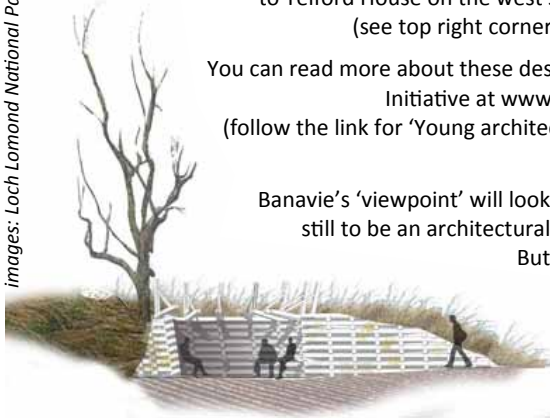
Here are the winning designs in the competition for the Scenic Routes Initiative at Loch Lomond that Keith Mackie tells us about (see previous page). The proposed site for Banavie's equivalent 'viewpoint' development is in the gardens next to Telford House on the west side of Neptune's Staircase (see top right corner of plan on previous page).

You can read more about these designs and the Scenic Routes Initiative at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org (follow the link for 'Young architects to breathe new life into scenic views').

Banavie's 'viewpoint' will look different to these: there is still to be an architectural competition for its design.

But you can maybe get a good flavour of Scottish Canals' aspirations for Banavie from these Loch Lomond designs.

images: Loch Lomond National Park



Annat at the end of the war

In an unguarded moment during a party for well-wishers and supporters of the West Highland Museum, I mentioned to a member of the Community Council that I had started my school career at Annat where a school had been established early in the war, mainly for the children of workers at the 'Admiralty,' who lived in the 'prefab' village on the site of what is now Sutton's caravan site.

My father had been invalided out of the army in 1942 and came to work for the British Aluminium Co. in June 1944. Three months later, he was joined by my mother, my elder brother aged 3 and me, aged 3 months. Camus na h-Atha was our home at a time when the Mallaig road was a single track highway, and the railway line carried nothing other than steam trains.

The nearest primary school was part of the prefab village and my brother must have started his education there in autumn 1946 and I followed in 1949. For understandable reasons, my memories are few and far between but I do remember that the person who first taught me was Miss Morag Morrison. It may well be that it was a single teacher school as numbers were small, but some of you readers may well be able to add more authoritative comment. We moved to Fort William in 1951, so my time at Annat would have lasted for 2 years. During that time, many of our

schoolfriends were regular visitors, and some of the games we played didn't always meet with my parents' approval. I distinctly remember an unmarried and rather prim great-aunt calling my mother to warn her that there was a child in the garden who was chasing others with an axe! I could even tell you who it was! A family called Mackenzie lived in the railway cottages, now owned by Highland Council as part of its dog warden service, and further to the west was MacHardy's croft, where there are now four or five houses, and Achdaluie Hotel, now the Outward Bound Centre.

Before the Mackintosh family gave the land for a new catholic church on the site of what is now Treasures of the Earth, we used to go to mass in a Nissen hut beside the Allt Dogha on a site which vanished when the A830 was re-aligned and I can distinctly remember complaining to my father, with little effect, that I was kneeling in 2" of water! We had no mains electricity, so life involved Tilley lamps and none of the modern conveniences such as fridges and washing machines. The wireless was powered by wet cell batteries which my father took in to Fort William once a week to be charged and rationing was still in place, so treats for children were few and far between.

Several boom defence vessels which had been used for laying moorings and moving anti-submarine nets were still moored in Loch Eil and I can still hear the slightly eerie sound of their sirens: a reminder that the war was not long over and that many who lived in Annat had known the air raids and devastation of Clydebank, Portsmouth and other coastal towns.

Richard Sidgwick

Corpach in Colour



With the passing of a very wet winter, there are a few jobs to be done - replacing tubs; putting new bands on others; repairs to the Maggie; bits and pieces to be painted; the garden at Farrow Drive needs attention not to mention planting summer bedding in June. The railway station tubs look good and this year we hope to extend the rockery area.

We are disappointed to see that some of the grass verges have been churned up by vehicles and unfortunately they are seldom reinstated.

As usual, we are grateful for all your donations, for putting small change in our tins and to our local councillors in Highland Council who have always supported us. Thank you one and all.

Margaret MacIntyre

Flower and Garden Show



Good News! Good News!

Due to popular demand, the Kilmallie Gardens Competition is resuming this summer after a break of 8 years.

It will be run by a group of 5 ladies - 2 Joannes and Sheena of Banavie Floral Improvements plus the 2 Margarets from Corpach in Colour.

There are trophies in the following categories:

- Large all year
- Small All year
- Summer Bedding
- Fruit and Vegetable
- Low Maintenance
- Containers/Hanging Baskets
- Water Feature
- Business
- Sunflowers (for school children);
- Drumfada Cup
- and finally Best Overall.

As the competition will be run by a new independent group which has no funds at the moment, a donation box will be placed at the Post Office counter in the Corpach Co-op.

More about this in the next newsletter but in the meantime... Keep Gardening!

Margaret MacIntyre

GARDENERS HYMN



thanks to Sheena Macintyre of Banavie Floral Improvements for sending us this poem

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

But what we never mention,
Though gardeners know it's true,
Is when he made the goodies,
He made the baddies too.

All things spray and swatatable,
Disasters great and small;
All things paraquatable,
The Lord God made them too.

The greenfly on the roses,
The maggots on the peas,
Manure that fills our noses,
He also made all these.

The fungus on the goosegogs,
The clubroot on the greens,
The slugs that eat the lettuce
And chew the aubergine.

The midges and mosquitoes
The nettles and the weeds,
The pigeons on the green stuff.
The sparrows on the seeds,

The fly that gets the carrots,
The wasp that eats the plums,
How black the gardener's outlook,
Though green may be his thumbs.

But still we gardeners labour
Midst vegetables and flowers
And pray what hits our neighbours
Will somehow bypass ours.

heather's walk

Come and join us
Heather's Walk
25th May

We are leaving Kilmallie Hall
at 1 o'clock.

Please come early to
register.

We hope to have a few new
stalls this year and are in the
throes of organising some
different things.

Unfortunately we don't have
everything finalised for this
edition's newsletter. Look
out for the posters in the Co-
op and the notice boards.

Hopefully we will get
wonderful weather like last
year and also the same
brilliant turn out.

Margaret and Sarah





focus on folk

Time to redress the gender balance after three issues where we've had men in our focus on folk! We love hearing from people of all ages, so we were delighted when Jan said she'd been to talk to Kaiya.

A huge special thank you to Kaiya and friends for helping with our newsletter deliveries.

In this edition, our focus is on Kaiya Clarke, who is our youngest newsletter team member. She's 9 years old, and she's been delivering the newsletter in her street practically since it was re-launched! It's so nice to hear of youngsters who are keen to help in the community. Kaiya always has a young friend or two with her helping to deliver the newsletters (and her mum keeps a watchful eye over things in the background.)

I was further delighted to hear that Kaiya has done 'Heather's Walk' most years and last year she helped to raise money on the day taking round a collection bucket at the 'Strip the Willow'. Also she helped her Grandad, who does the auction to raise money at 'Heather's Walk'.

I really enjoyed meeting up with Kaiya to help her write this article. She told me her unusual name is the Japanese word meaning 'forgiveness'.

Kaiya told me she likes doing arts and crafts and one of her crafts is unusual too – Harumika – which is dressing model dolls with outfits she designs herself. Kaiya also builds Lego models. She is currently building a cruise ship and her favourite Lego build so far is a model school.

Kaiya is a pupil at Banavie school and likes doing maths and spelling. Also she has recently started getting cornet lessons at school and she hopes to join the Junior Wind Band when she is old enough.

Kaiya's favourite music group is One Direction and she is looking forward to going to their World Tour concert in Edinburgh later this year – lucky girl!

When she was two years old, Kaiya started ballet dancing and only stopped recently. The highlight of her dancing days with Ballet West was going to Euro Disney, where her group won the Junior Competition and had a photo shoot with the Disney characters!

Last year Kaiya took up climbing at the Ice Factor near Kinlochleven. She can climb to the top of the highest wall which is higher than a two-storey house.

It was very interesting to hear about these different interests and activities which Kaiya has tried in her nine years of age! Thanks for sharing them with us!





nearly 1/5 of households in our Ward have a total income under £10,000pa (census 2011)

Congratulations Jessie Henderson, BEM!

Jessie was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year's honours list "for voluntary service and charity".
 Jessie has been a longstanding committee member of Kilmallie Hall / Kilmallie Community Centre.
 She and husband Bob cleaned the Hall for many years and she has raised lots of money for various charities.
 Very well deserved. Kilmallie thanks and warmest congratulations to Jessie.

Kilmallie Community Woods



We need your support.
 The pine wood above Guisach Terrace and the oak wood between Druim Fada estate and the saw mill are owned and maintained by the community. Just recently the weather has caused a lot of damage, particularly the gale just before Christmas.

The gale broke lots of large branches mainly in the oak wood. Some of these blocked paths. With the help of some willing volunteers these were cleared from the paths and made safe. But there is more to do!

In the pine wood a group of large trees was blown down in the SW corner blocking one of the main paths into the wood. The dangerous trees have now been cleared by a volunteer contractor and the path has been reopened.

How can you help?

On Saturday 29th March (from 9:30 to 12.00 am) we plan to have a work party in the pine wood. And on Saturday 26th April we plan one in the Oak wood. There is plenty to do; tidying away branches

from paths, pulling down hanging, broken branches, clearing up rubbish pulling out invading holly seedlings, rebuilding fences.

If you can't make it to the work parties then just joining the company is a way of giving support and taking an interest. You can see details including an application form on the community council's web site at www.kilmallie.org.uk. Joining does not cost anything but we do welcome donations. Every little helps, just to keep the company going we need to cover expenses for insurance, meetings in the hall, materials for fences, and so on. You can get more details from Paul Biggin at 772459 or email pjbiggin@gmail.com

Frequently asked questions:

Quite a few people have said that the woods look untidy. Well so they do which is one reason for the work parties - but we don't want a clean sweep: leaving dead branches is good for wildlife, so away from the main paths it is better to leave them.

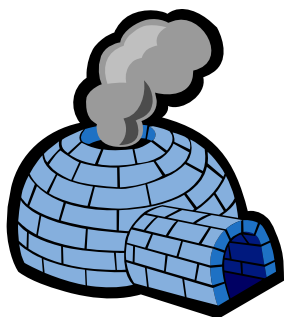
Before you ask! We are not insured for anyone to use chainsaws in the wood.

Meanwhile, take a walk in the woods, feel the Spring, as the woods come into leaf.

Paul Biggin



Corpach Woods



keep
warm

**Funding for
external insulation**

The energy company E-on, with backing from the Highland Council, are looking to install external wall insulation onto solid wall houses within the Highlands. This is part of the national Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS) funding sources.

The insulation will be offered **FREE OF CHARGE** to qualifying houses and at a subsidised rate for others.

This offer is worth in the region of £10,000 per household!

External wall insulation involves fixing a layer of insulation material to the outside of the house and then covering it with a render (plasterwork). This can dramatically decrease the amount of heat being lost through your walls (*the heat loss through an uninsulated solid wall is typically over 50% greater than through an uninsulated cavity wall*) which will save you around £490 per

year on energy bills and lower your carbon footprint. The general process is that people contact E-on to register interest: they will then do an assessment of your home and then depending on the assessment results the work is carried out. Timescales are for the houses to be identified by the end of March and work to be completed by September. E-on will pay for all the installation costs but householders may have to pay for work to things such as pipes - but it should all get decided up front.

To qualify for FREE insulation houses must:

- be of a solid wall construction (ie no cavity between brick and blockwork etc)
- and have electric or coal-fired heating (eg a back boiler)
- and be owner occupied or privately rented.

There is no obligation to follow through once you have made an initial enquiry so there really is no reason not to call.

For more information contact E-on on 0800 141 2283 or the Lochaber Environmental Group office 01397 700 090.

Information about external insulation and how to discover if you have solid walls can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland).

*Kendra Turnbull
Lochaber Environmental Group*



banavie quarry liaison group

KCC has been contacted recently by residents with concerns about operations at Banavie Quarry. Banavie Quarry is operated by Breedon Aggregates. Planning permission for continued operations at Banavie Quarry was granted in April 2004 subject to the establishment of a liaison group to address issues associated with the impact

of quarry operations on the local community. The group meets 2-3 times a year to discuss any issues or complaints. Russell Leaper is the representative for KCC. If you do have any concerns about the operation of the quarry then please contact both the quarry and the liaison group straight away. It is much easier to investigate and address problems at the time, particularly if these involve noise, dust, smells or lorries travelling too fast.

Read more about the Liaison Group and see minutes of their meetings on KCC's website.
www.kilmallie.org.uk/community/banavie-quarry



banavie play park regeneration group

A new group is being formed by members of the community to improve the recreation facilities at Banavie Play Park. It is hoped that by combining support from local users and residents, Scottish Canals and the Highland Council, there will be a lot of scope for improving the existing facilities. This would tie in well given that the area is planned for significant regeneration and will serve as a major draw to the area for both locals and tourists.

All ideas are welcomed for the project and the group is open to all for membership. This is the start of a community consultation. A public open day regarding the play park will be scheduled shortly. Watch this space for details.

Please send any comments or enquiries to Vicky Dodman
vickydodman@outlook.com
01397 772501 / 07855 755793



Calling all kids,
mums, dads,
grannies
&
grandads

art lochaber

Art Lochaber has had a great start to 2014 with two workshops with local tutors. One free flow with Gay Anderson and one structured with Alistair Smyth – we learned a lot at both and enjoyed the process.

On 1st and 2nd March we also had a very successful workshop 'Balancing Colour' led by painter and tutor Bella Green from Lockerbie. Bella, a frequent guest tutor at Art Lochaber, is an expert on colour theory and her colourful work may be viewed on www.bellagreen.co.uk. On 5th

and 6th April artist Lys Hansen from Stirling will be helping us express our emotions through 'Wild and Wonderful Paint'. Lys is a very experienced teacher and her workshop is sure to be both exciting and fruitful for participants. If you would like to know more about Art Lochaber or to attend one of the above workshops please contact Catherine Putman on 01855 841231. Our AGM will be held on 10th April at 7pm in The Underwater Centre and our Annual Exhibition runs from 24th May till 4th June at Ben Nevis Distillery. ALL WELCOME!
Lorna Finlayson

art lochaber ANNUAL ART EXHIBITION 2014

Ben Nevis Distillery
Fort William
Sat 24TH May – Wed 4TH June
ALL WELCOME





Saturday Youth Rugby Returns



Our boys and girls started back training on Saturday 8th February following their Winter Break. They are now getting ready for the forthcoming tournaments planned and would love you to come and join them. We are currently training at the King George V Park (next to the swimming pool) starting at 10am. We welcome boys and girls of all abilities from P3-S2 at our Saturday sessions.

Do you fancy giving rugby a try? – it's a great, fun game where you can learn how to win and lose gracefully, respect other players and officials and you are allowed to get muddy – if you want!

U17'S & Girls' Rugby

Training is every Wednesday (7pm – 8pm) at Lochaber HS Astroturf – they will be training there until the end of March when they move back to The Black Parks, when the daylight improves. **Come and join us – all abilities welcome.**

Pitch improvement work

We recently met with contractors (Soutars) to discuss the improvement works progressing on our pitch at Banavie. They were very encouraged by how dry the surface was considering the winter we have had and confirmed that they only need two dry weeks to finish the work... we are currently on our knees & have our fingers crossed! We are not sure when we will return to play at Banavie, but we hope for a nice warm spring & summer to encourage the grass seed to grow.



1ST XV Rugby

It's fair to say that playing away from Banavie has had an impact on our team: with no floodlights at The Black Parks our team have had to partially train on the Astroturf at Lochaber High School, which limits the type of contact rugby training they can do.

Bearing this in mind, we are currently sitting 5th in the RBS Caledonia League out of 11 teams, which is a very acceptable position to be in.

We are also grateful to our supporters for continuing to support the team at The Black Parks on 'home' days.



Our Sevens Tournament

is on Saturday 3rd May at The Black Parks, kick off 12 noon. Everyone welcome.

Pauline Donaldson
www.lochaberrfc.co.uk



Kilmallie shinty club



Pre-season training started in January for Kilmallie Shinty Club. The senior team train from 7-9pm in Caol Community Centre on a Monday night and are meeting on Canal Parks on a Saturday morning: the Under 17's are also encouraged to come

along. The Under 14's are training at Banavie School on a Saturday morning.

The coaches for this year are

- 1st team – Duncan Kelly
- 2nd team – Dugald MacPhee
- Under 17's – Nicola Maclsaac
- Under 14's - Lachie Innes.

The shinty fixtures started on the 1st March so here are some of our games. The fixtures are subject to change so please listen in to Nevis Radio on a Saturday morning for updates.

- 15th March Kilmallie vs Caberfeidh – 1st team
Inverness vs Kilmallie – 2nd team
 - 22nd March Glenorchy vs Kilmallie – 1st team
 - 29th March MacTavish Cup 1st Round –
Kilmallie vs Inverness – 1st team
Lochbroom vs Kilmallie – 2nd team
 - 5th April Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup – 1st Round
Oban Celtic vs Kilmallie 2nd team
Oban Camanachd vs Kilmallie – 1st team
 - 12th April Kilmallie vs Glasgow Mid Argyll – 1st team
Strathspey vs Kilmallie – 2nd team
 - 19th April Kilmallie vs Lewis – 2nd team
 - 26th April Artemis Macaulay Cup 1st Round –
Kilmallie vs Newtonmore – 1st team
Kilmallie vs Inverness – 2nd team
 - 3rd May Scottish Hydro Camanachd Cup 1st Round –
Strachur vs Kilmallie – 1st team
Caberfeidh vs Kilmallie – 2nd team
 - 10th May Fort William vs Kilmallie – 1st team
 - 17th May Kilmallie vs Lochbroom – 2nd team
 - 24th May Kilmallie vs Bute – 1st team
Kilmallie vs Strathspey – 2nd team
 - 31st May Strathdearn Cup 1st Round – Kilmallie vs Beaully
- Please come along and support your team – it would be good to see you at Canal Parks on a Saturday!

Linda Campbell

update from sub-saharan africa!

Happy New Year to all Kilmallians from Malawi! Approaching the 3rd month of 2014 already and just short of the halfway mark of our time here. Reflecting back on the last quarter it seems at times quite surreal. For a Christmas neither of us was particularly looking forward to in terms of missing being with the family, it turned out a very lovely affair. The thoughtfulness of our children ensured they were amongst us on Christmas Day having arranged a full Christmas dinner for us (with champagne) all of which was managed despite the fact we were staying in the middle of a National Game Park in Zambia! What a boon this internet connection is as we even managed to talk to several of them after we had partaken of the feast! Added to this, prior to our break we had a very jolly staff party by the lakeshore with great food and even better African music and dancing in the sunshine of the afternoon! It seemed very bizarre somehow. The clinic closed for most of Christmas week, which allowed us to take the break and we enjoyed that trip very much.

It is the rainy season here, again a new experience for me. Rains can be torrential, often preceded by great crashings of thunder and sheets of bright lightning. By mid November the ground was very dry and the heat almost unbearable as the pressure grew. All around the fields were ploughed in neat rows as far as the eye could see... all by hand and mainly by women, often working 6am till 6pm with the baby tied onto their backs as they dug and cleared the dusty hard soil in readiness. Everyone waited for the rain and when the first storm broke there was great celebration, even by us! Imagine a Fort William pair dancing with delight at rain pouring from the heavens! Two days into the rains, the fields were alive with people all out planting the maize, the staple crop, again all by hand, and then as the plants began to grow, out again with a bowl and teaspoon applying fertiliser to each individual plant! Such labour intensive work but hardly a square inch of land remained unplanted. Now two months on, the maize plants tower over us and dwarf the huts in the villages and along the roadside as the combination of rain and sunshine see a steady growth of almost a foot a week. While they wait for the crops to grow for the first harvest, the effects of hunger become more evident by the day. Last year's harvested crops are running out, and what is still available is getting more expensive and less affordable for many. The falling rate of the Kwacha pushes all costs up, not helped by the cutbacks from the corrupt government who have lined their own pockets and managed to reduce aid into the country, ensuring the poorest struggle even more. Children in the villages have little extended bellies and the most malnourished have hair and skin colour changes – little pale brown children with ginger hair and pot bellies, a syndrome/condition I believe is called Kwashiorkor. Ndi Moyo supplies maize and protein enriched soya to the most needy of our families and this may well account for some of the huge attendances at clinics recently. It can be a



harrowing sight at times but the benefits of a good diet are so evident, especially in those also coping with awful disease. Infinite need and finite budgets – the same everywhere, just more immediately stark here I think.

Work remains very busy within our respective roles but the great news is that the much-sweated-over many-drafted Strategic Plan, 2014 budget, Business Plan and audited accounts have at last been accepted and passed by the Board of Trustees which has made Peter an altogether happier volunteer and life partner! Fundraising has now become his top priority as the pressure mounts to bridge the funding gap between what is now needed and what has been raised to date for the new clinic build. This is an area that Peter feels less comfortable with but will I am sure rise to embrace. He is working currently with Rotary in Lilongwe to help link with the Rotary International and his local club in Fort William with some success. He presented briefly at the last meeting here and we have been invited back early March to elaborate further on needs and potential projects. Everything crossed. Meanwhile the new build has to wait in the wings and life goes on in the rather crushed quarters we currently use. I find I have gotten used to the lack of space/privacy and think nothing of squeezing between clinician and patient to reach for a new set of notes or to pass medication to a waiting patient. Everyone just gets on with it and on most occasions the lack of privacy only seems to bother the staff as patients all seem to know each other or if they don't before they come to clinic, they do pretty quickly and then there is huge exchange of information, advice and rivalry over medication given, support in the form of food or blankets etc, as no one wants to be outdone in what might be available! I had a patient recently who demanded morphine as I handed over his Paracetamol, Brufen and other meds. Thinking I had missed the prescription I rushed back to pharmacy to check his notes. No morphine had been requested or indeed had been given previously, and on return to tell him this (in my pigeon Chechewan) he pointed out that his neighbour had a bottle of something so he wanted one too!

Those who have been following these quarterly updates will perhaps remember that a lot of my time was focussing on developing the outreach clinics by expanding teaching/mentoring sessions to the health professionals in the outlying clinics and General Hospital. These have been challenging in the extreme. Despite an initial wave of enthusiasm, it has been hard maintaining momentum and forever frustrating. However with lack of management support, poor premises and poor access to even the simpler drugs I can understand how difficult it is for them to change or show any commitment. We have had some success in some areas and there is nothing for it but to keep focussed and move slowly forward. Nothing changes quickly here or indeed moves at any speed, which for those who know me, is something I struggle with! Drip, drip... onwards and (hopefully) upwards.

Having a recent spate of young UK doctor volunteers has been a good uplifting experience. In January we had Amy, a GP in Glasgow (and Fort William GP Jim Douglas's daughter-in-law) who volunteered with us for 4 weeks while her husband was with another project in south Malawi. The day after she left, we were

continued overpage



contd from previous page

joined by a final year medical student on elective placement from Oxford Uni and as she finishes her 7 week stint, another follows. As well as being a great help in the clinic setting it's good to have some young blood around and keeps my brain active in ensuring I know enough to make them think I know what I am doing! I seem to have managed this so far.

The patients we see remain in such desperate need. It is hard to describe sometimes the awful things one sees on a daily basis when there is little on offer but even so, a little helps such a lot. I recount some of the stories in my fairly regularly updated Facebook group page (details at the end of the news) for those who want a more graphic picture and alongside these are some happy camera snaps of fun times with patients too, so it's not all awful! We continue to enjoy the benefits of living in this lovely part of the world and although our travels have been a little contained with the rains and having to tighten our belts in everyway, we still love our evening lakeside strolls, watching the lovely cloud formations and the fantastic lightning storms

within them, seeing the ever changing colours of the sunset when no two days are the same, and just being lulled by the lapping waves on the sandy shore. The level of the water is at last rising again with the rains but the lake is not swimmable at present as the flooding rivers bring such a torrent of mud down from the hills. We miss our daily evening swims but another few weeks should see that settling again. Work can be tough but the fact that this can be offset by enjoying our sundowner most evenings still sitting outdoors makes it all worth it.

Further updates will be made as we continue this work. If anyone would like to follow the process more closely, there is a group setting on facebook, which I try to add to on a fortnightly basis. Type Ndi Moyo into the FB search bar and you should get a 'closed group' option. Otherwise my email address is Kathryn.hamling@hotmail.com and I do so enjoy hearing tales from Corpach and surrounds! Our fundraising webpage remains open for anyone who would like to contribute: www.everyclick.com/peterandkathryn, with all donations going straight to NdiMoyo Palliative Care.

Kathryn Hamling

Lochaber Showstoppers -21 years young

Lochaber Showstoppers are hard at work this month rehearsing for their production of the family favourite Annie the Musical to celebrate their 21st Anniversary.

Putting the show together this year is Susan Munro who is returning not only as Musical Director but as Director as well, a formula which was fabulously successful at the helm of the Showstoppers' performance of Oliver in 2012.

Annie is the heart warming 'rags to riches' story of plucky young Annie's journey from hard knock New York orphanage to the luxurious home of billionaire Oliver Warbucks. With some of the best known

songs in musical theatre (Tomorrow, Hard Knock Life, Easy Street). Annie also boasts a hilarious script and the adorable dog Sandy.

Showstoppers was formed in 1993 by Douglas Yule, Jackie Wright and Jo Cowan. At the time, there was no other dramatic or musical society in the Lochaber area and when they asked the locals if they were interested in forming a club they received a fantastic response. More than 40 people turned up to the first Showstoppers gathering and over the past 21 years the group has gone from strength to strength, performing many favourites and also introducing audiences to new, less familiar shows to an average of 2000 people a year.

Showstoppers members have hailed from all over Lochaber with some people from as far afield as Mallaig, Duror and Kinlochleven. They come from different backgrounds: Scottish, English, Welsh, Polish and Australian to name but a few, and

professions: teachers, midwives and public servants, and bring with them countless skills and talents. Showstoppers has given many people the opportunity to not only perform on stage but also to involve themselves with set design, lighting and sound production, costume and direction.

A huge thank you goes out from Lochaber Showstoppers to everyone who has supported us over the past 21 years and we look forward to entertaining new generations for many years to come. Annie will be on stage on 27th, 28th and 29th March 2013 at the Nevis Centre at 7:30pm each evening and a special matinee performance on Saturday 29th March. Tickets are £9 for adults and £7 concession. Choose seats well in advance in person at the Nevis Centre or by calling 01397 700707.

Clare Brewer



lochaber natural history society

Lectures are held in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, 7:30pm, all welcome
24th Mar - Plant trips abroad, and more - lecture by Peter Baxter, Benmore, RBGE Botanic



Loch Shiel Viking Challenge 2014

WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

21k in the wake of Somerled
This challenging charity sea kayak event will take place on the weekend of 29th March for touring & performance sea kayaks from Monument Beach at Glenfinnan.

The aim is to raise funds direct to Macmillan Cancer Support with an entry fee of only £30 for competitors raising £100 or more.

For the less intrepid, donations are most welcome.

See us on www.lochshielvikings.org.uk

To enter or make a donation contact : | Alistair on vikingchallenge2014@gmail.com.



wild about Kilmallie

Coille Phuiteachain SSSI

About half way up Glen Loy, just before the end of the public road, a very special wood can be found. Coille Phuiteachain was first established as a Caledonian Pinewood reserve by the Forestry Commission in 1931, the first of its kind. Remarkably there are only 38 recognised ancient pinewoods in the whole of Scotland, so this is a rare and internationally recognised habitat. The pinewoods of Scotland have adapted to the mild (!), wet and windy Atlantic climate and have a character distinct from other pinewoods found throughout the northern hemisphere. The western pinewoods to be found in Lochaber are particularly interesting in that they are a component of the so-called "Atlantic Rainforest", and are covered in mosses, lichens and ferns that thrive in areas of high rainfall (over 1800mm per year) and relatively high humidity. The local pinewoods tend to be small and fragmented in character and often difficult to access. The largest areas surviving are possibly to be found along the south banks of Loch Arkaig, although until they were badly damaged by fire during commando training, these used to be much more extensive. Although Scots Pine is the dominant, or at least most obvious tree, these woodlands are really mixed. Coille Phuiteachain shows a fine transition from wet Alder woodland by the River Loy, up through Oak and Hazel woodland with Rowan and Holly, into the main body of Pine to Birch on the upper edges of the wood. The Pines are mainly to be found on drier hillocks covered in Ling and Blaeberry in and amongst a damper woodland floor. There is even the odd Juniper above the main wood. It represents a relatively sizeable block (around 40ha) of surviving woodland that is ancient in character, and as such has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Scottish Natural Heritage. This is the only SSSI to be found in Kilmallie.

Perversely, one of the reasons why the woodland at Puiteachain may have survived is that it is small and probably did not contain many good trees. The woodland historian, Peter Quelch, has produced a fascinating report on Coille Puiteachain that suggests it may even have been primarily wood pasture used as a woodland croft. Indeed the woodland only first appears on maps in 1774, where it is clearly marked as a wood with 'birch with some firs' in a survey of the forfeited Lochiel estates. Some of the surviving pine trees probably date back to this time. Some of the older trees bear axe marks suggesting that they were used to provide fir candles, which utilised the pine resin as lamp fuel. There are the remains of a single cottage in the wood (some distance from the modern farmhouse) together with what has been suggested was a saw pit. There are reports from this time of local carpenters collecting sawn planks from Glen Loy. Other evidence for woodland workings at Puiteachain includes other ancient pollarded trees (Oak, Birch, Ash and Rowan) and also a charcoal platform. As the wood fell into disuse as a worked croft, probably in the late 19th century the remaining pines acted as a seed source for the more extensive pine woodland that can be seen today.

The immediate impression of Coille Phuiteachain today is of a fairytale woodland, where everything is covered with a rich carpet of moss, lichens and ferns droop from the trees and there are no obvious paths. Indeed, it is hard to walk through and is full of dead wood, tangled scrub and deep boggy pools. It is however, a paradise for both lichenologists and bryologists. Most of the species of mosses, liverworts and lichens characteristic of Atlantic Oakwoods and Caledonian Pinewoods can be found here, many in profusion. The aptly named Splendid Feather-moss, along with hair mosses and leafy liverworts cover the rocks and tree trunks. The lungworts (Lobarion) lichens are particularly obvious, their leafy forms present on most trees. These are indicative of good air quality, and several rare species are present such as the Norwegian Specklebelly. The hair and beard lichens that hang from branches give the wood a shaggy appearance, particularly in winter when the



top: witch's beard



below: lungwort

trees are leafless. Pixie cup lichens rise delicately from fallen branches, and along with a profusion of fungi add to the otherworldly atmosphere.

One of the possible translations of the name Puiteachain is 'home of the young moorfowl', which refers to the black grouse of the glen. These can still be seen perching in the pines and feeding on the blaeberry, and are known to lek on the woodland edge. Other resident birds include Crossbill, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Woodcock, and in the summer, Wood Warbler and occasional Redstart. Woodland mammals include Pine Marten and Red Squirrel, which are rarely seen, but leave tell tale traces in the form of split hazelnuts. Both Red and Roe Deer are present, despite deer fences, and probably still limit the spread of trees. Insect life is profuse (including midges, sadly!). Chequered Skipper butterflies flit around the open areas of the lower oakwood, along with Green Hairstreak and many species of moth. The woods are particularly noted though for their beetles, especially those that feed on deadwood, and these are a noted feature in the SSSI citation.

In recent years FCS has fenced the adjacent area of moorland to the west, linking the existing wood to a stately row of riverine pines along the Allt Coire Dubh to encourage the spread of the pinewood. Highland cattle have been introduced to try and suppress the growth of rank vegetation and allow the pines to flourish. Sadly, saplings are still being suppressed, but, conversely, growth in the clear-fell area to the east has been good. To obtain a good overall appreciation of the woods the view from the forest track just before the gates at Achnanellan is recommended. Access into the site is via a track over a stile in the deer fence almost immediately after the wooden bridge over the Loy, which leads up to the current house at Puiteachain. There is always plenty to see in Coille Phuiteachain, and lots more to find, so if you do see anything interesting please let us or FCS know.

Jon Mercer, Glenloy Wildlife

left: Coille Phuiteachain and Beinn Bhan



history snippets - Corpach

Again we remember Hugh Muir in this, the first of his four articles about Corpach which he sent us before he died last year. With thanks as ever to Hugh's family for permission to publish it.

What does the name mean?
The place of the corpses. This is because, at one time, Corpach became a recognised stopping place for funeral parties taking the bodies of eminent persons to such places as Iona, etc. One reason for it being here was that the bodies could be kept overnight on an island where they would be safe from wolves. It is also believed the islands were used, from Corpach, for local burials especially of epidemic victims.

Where was the early Corpach?
It was a shoreline settlement. It was round the bay called Breuncamus - the stinking bay - which we still see today. Yes, the bay in front of Canal Parks! It appears to have stretched from roughly the burn at Farrow Drive to the River Lochy. The whole area was known as Corpach Moss or today as the Blar Mor. There appears to have been an early 'road' along the shore with a ferry across to Inverloch Castle. The road we now use - building only started in 1804 - formerly crossed the river by a ferry just South of the bridge until the first bridge was built here in 1849. This ferry was often referred to as the Corpach Ferry.

Also on Corpach Moss was Loch Aber - said to have been roughly behind Lochside School. This small loch gave its name to Lochaber.

Soon after Lochiel's forfeited estate was returned in 1784, Lochiel XXII lived here for a short time at Corpach House - believed a

fairly large house which has also been called Gray's House.

From a map of about 1750 is shown 'CORPACH CASTLE (never finished)'. The site was approximately what is now the Canal Basin. Who was building it? Camerons?

Where is the present Corpach?
From the Oakwoods to the road sign on the Main Road.

What other interesting events / structures do we have in this modern Corpach starting from the West of the community?

One notable event was the coming of the Camerons (the De Cambrons) to the west island in the 14th C, and who lived here 1335 -1550. As we know the Camerons spread their 'influence' in our area after not many years. This island has had many names including Plumb, Lochiel and Tree. The island was inhabited until 1670.

The Oakwoods could have had significance in the area. Long before roads and railway, this hillock would have a place as a lookout or defensive position, or maybe as a religious base because of its closeness to Annat. The top of this place has been levelled and may even have been a Nunnery! The official name for this small hill is Cnoc Nam Faobh - the hill of the spoils. It

has also been known as Bungalow Hill. This is because, in 1893, an oriental-style bungalow was built by a Mr Wilkes who had worked in the Far East. For years it was occupied by a McAlpine who built the Mallaig Line. This Oakwood is now community owned under the Kilmallie Community Company

The first houses on the Drumfada estate were built in 1952 on a croft which was last run by a McMaster whose croft buildings were situated between Annat View and Clerk Drive. The rest of the houses on this estate were started building in 1964 for Pulp Mill employees.

The old Kilmallie Manse (now Kilmalyn) was built in 1818. The previous glebe and manse were at Torcastle. In 1804 Lochiel had given this Corpach glebe - 400 x 1350 yards - "sufficient for 6 cows and one horse". The house had two large wings and outbuildings. The wings were demolished in 1960. One of the outbuildings is Walter Cameron Way warden's house. Across the road and railway are three cottages - one of them was owned for a time by the Church and was called Glebe or Manse Cottage.

Close to the Old Cemetery was a giant Ash tree of 58 feet diameter - possibly the largest ash in Scotland at the time. In 1746 it was burned down by government troops because of Lochiel's support of the 45.

Hugh Muir



The Kilmallie glebe barn, now converted to residential use, but still a lovely example of the uniquely characteristic Lochaber barns - they were often built into a hillside, known then as a 'bank barn'.

10 years ago

Here's an extract from KCC's newsletter No 18, May 2004 newsletter.



CAOL BMX TRACK

KCC and Caol CC are working together in a joint project to build a BMX track for local youths. Caol CC have access to a suitable site and the Highland Council will consider taking over the track and maintaining it once it was built. This track will also be the first part of a larger swing park project (The Caol Players). The BMX track idea and swing park has been on the go for a while and a lot of work has been put in by Caol Players already to bring this exciting project along this far. We have a small willing group of local residents who will help out with heavy machinery and also supply the machinery (diggers, whackers etc) to construct the track. There are people who can design and handle the construction of the track, however the project is looking for funding or assistance with materials for the site. **If you can help, please get in touch.** One idea was to use rubber bales made from car tyres (they are a bit like lego building blocks). These would be used to form the basic shape of the track with the various jumps and berms, then fill over them with suitable rock. This would use a lot less rock material and is a good way of recycling a waste product. We cannot dig down into the site for materials as that would upset the drainage system.

The track would be a great asset to the Fort William area as a recreation facility for local youths and visitors. It would also support the area in it's bid to become the Outdoor Capital of the UK and with the future World Cup Cycling events.



The Dulverton Trust purchased Achdhalieu to run an outdoor centre 50 years ago



green fingers the garden in spring

Everything is beginning to grow so lots to do.

Roses can be pruned soon, no need to be scientific about it; our roses were wonderful one year after a roe deer got in and took them down to the ground. Give them a feed of rose fertiliser after pruning. Many people have the common Buddleia or butterfly bush; this should be pruned to about 10cms of last year's growth. This keeps it under control and gives good flowering. Clematis also needs pruning, how much depends on the variety; if in doubt take it down to a couple of feet and give it a feed of Sulphate of Potash. We have two rows of Autumn fruiting raspberries; they will bear fruit right up until the frosts and the birds are not so keen on them. The stems now need to be cut down to ground level. Gooseberries should be well pruned in March. Blackcurrants need very little attention but keep them fairly open and under control.

Seed sowing can be started soon; sweet peas are best done early. I have found after lots of trial and error, that putting them in

a 6 inch pot, keeping them somewhat frost free, thinning them out carefully when they have two pairs of leaves into individual pots or half a dozen to a 4 inch pot will do fine. Lobelia is best sown early too as it takes a while to germinate. A lot of supermarkets have seeds in already; it is far too early to think about putting them outside. They need to be kept in the greenhouse or in the house until about the beginning of June till all risk of a frost is passed. Make sure all seed trays and pots are clean, and the compost you buy is suitable for seeds, slightly stronger compost is needed when they are ready for pricking out. Always hold the seedlings by the leaf tip when repotting as the stems bruise easily. If you have managed to overwinter dahlia and begonia tubers, they can be started off. Check them first in case you have had a visit from the dear little Vine Weevil, easily identified as a fat little wormy thing. We check our tubers with a cocktail stick. Fuchsia cuttings, kept overwinter can be started off in small pots on the windowsill or in the greenhouse.

I daresay I will not be the only person who has dropped a tray of seedlings so it is worthwhile checking the greenhouse before you start.
Happy Gardening.

Morag Mackell



are you displaying a Baby Friendly welcome sticker yet?

calling all Kilmallie **BUSINESS**

feedback

Loving the newsletter by the way - especially enjoyed Hugh Muir's history piece in issue 44 on Muirshearlich as we are moving down that way next year :) Keep up the good work. (AV)

The last newsletter was really great, and my wife was really taken with it too. I loved all the pictures of the Christmas lights ceremony. DM

Thank YOU for continuously providing us with that super interesting newsletter! I KNOW how much work this requires and appreciate it all the more. May you have plenty more exciting stories to tell this year. (CP)

Another excellent Community Newsletter (DD)

I always read the newsletters cover to cover and they are a credit to the whole of the editorial team. (DD)

It is a fantastic job you all do with the newsletter although it is much more than a newsletter and most people seem to look forward to the next issue. It is always a pity to bin it once it is read from cover to cover. (AG)

Well done to you guys for all your hard work!! (AF)



we love to get your feedback - please keep it coming - together with ideas for future issues



focus on business

This time we spoke to
Tina Cuthbertson
of the Snowgoose Mountain Centre -
they have recently become a very
welcome new sponsor of the newsletter.

What is your company name?

Snowgoose Mountain Centre is an independent family-run outdoor adventure business which is owned and run by John & Tina Cuthbertson. John is in overall charge of the outdoor adventure courses and guiding side of the business as well as looking after maintenance, while Tina takes care of bookings, reception and general office matters.

Where are you located?

We are located at the extreme SW end of the Caledonian Canal - just alongside the rail station at Corpach, with our main accommodation building alongside Station Road and the activity part of the business located further within the site of the former goods yard.

What does your company do?

We are now pretty diverse! On the adventure activity side of things we focus on skills training in mountain activities in summer and winter, kayaking and open canoeing on rivers, sea & loch, along with some dinghy sailing and mountain biking.

Our main aim is that folks acquire outdoor skills and can go away and independently develop their mountain or water based skills safely. We are equally happy for folks to stay with us and do their own thing, take part in our courses or guiding, or stay elsewhere. Over the years we have developed a range of wilderness expeditions on the local lochs and mountains as well as Duke of Edinburgh Award Open Expeditions at Silver and Gold level with young folk aged 16- 25 years participating both from Scotland wide and well south of the border. For many years there has been a steadily increasing and developing demand for kayak and open canoe hire for independent expeditions. We have been well placed to service this demand by offering a complete hire package to our clients based on our longstanding local knowledge.

Snowgoose Mountain Centre has developed from the original three self-catering apartments and two bunkhouse units which sleep a total of 42 folks overall with an additional activity building added later.

How long have you been operating in Kilmallie?

We arrived in Lochaber 1997 when John worked at the emerging Outward Bound Loch Eil after transferring from Outward Bound Moray Sea School after completing 15 years of active RAF Mountain Rescue. After operating a yacht charter, boat repair and chandlers for several year from 1977 on the site of the former goods yard at Corpach, the original butt 'n' ben in Station Road was redeveloped in 1990-91 into what

is now Snowgoose Apartments and The Smiddy Bunkhouse. The Bunkhouse is on the site of a former blacksmith's actual smiddy and forge - reputedly one of the oldest in Corpach. The additional activity building was added later on 1997-8 : it houses an activity store, workshop, meeting room and office.

How many people do you employ locally?

Along with John & Tina who operate the business there are two part-time employees who work on site all year round. We have a pool of 6-8 well qualified local freelance instructors who are called in to cover additional outdoor activity instruction when needed.

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

We have to drive to work because of the time it takes to walk - meeting folks along the way and discussing the world's woes! The best views of Ben Nevis, the surrounding mountains and over the islands in Loch Linnhe can be had from our accommodation and lecture room. It is brilliant to look out over the canal area when it is snowing... and blowing... which it does on occasion. There is always something going on locally and someone to chat to! Seriously though, we were lucky enough to be able to arrive in an ideal location which suited our long term plans and dreams with good transport links on the doorstep. Over the years we have been able to develop our business independently to meet changing business needs, varied markets and differing customer expectations.



PUZZLES FROM THE PITHEAN

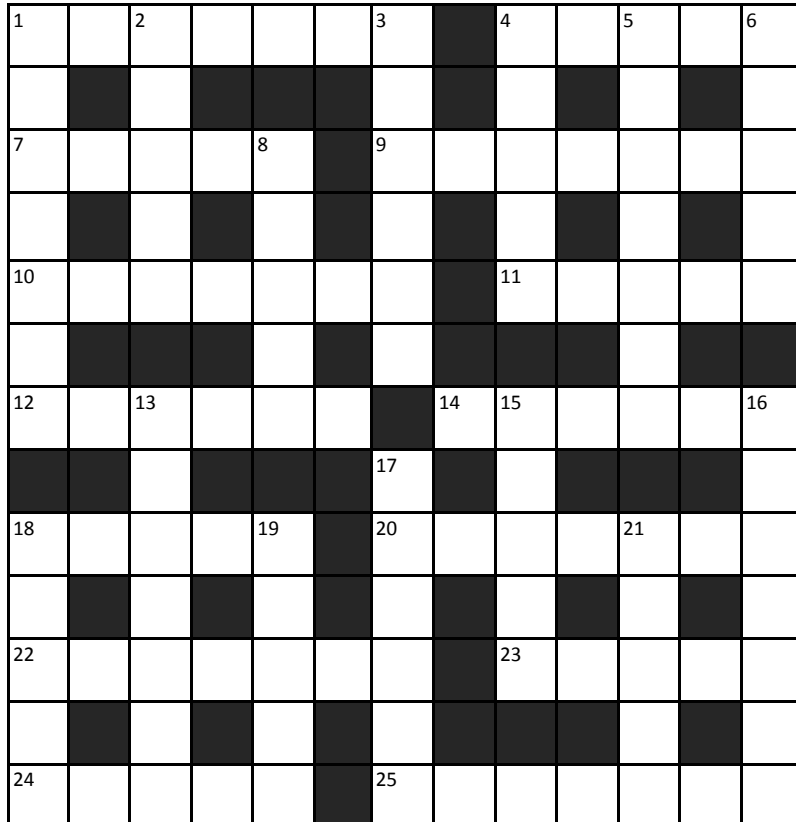


picture quiz no 2
 KCC's logo gets everywhere!
 Can you guess where this image of
 Corpach lighthouse was spotted?
 and can you figure out who took
 the picture?

???????

Answers to these puzzles 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

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



Across

- 1 Go south in the arid region for a pudding (7)
- 4 Meg and May hold her (5)
- 7 Sounds like a young one who digs (5)
- 9 Painkiller confused in pairs (7)
- 10 Greek letter (7)
- 11 Abrasive board (5)
- 12 Wife or husband (6)
- 14 Relative made of money that takes us in (6)
- 18 This saint waits at the gate (5)
- 20 Goes with between (7)
- 22 Arbiter gets mixed up for Welsh food (7)
- 23 Big striped cat (5)
- 24 Strong beer! (5)
- 25 This watch is found at the dig. It always is (7)

Down

- 1 These ladies are sometimes in distress (7)
- 2 Nasal passage (5)
- 3 Practices on the tracks (6)
- 4 Canada's tree (5)
- 5 Garbled dangers where the flowers grow (7)
- 6 Grandma goat (5)
- 8 Royce's pal (5)
- 13 Canadian province (7)
- 15 There's 8 in this (5)
- 16 Not artificial (7)
- 17 Subsided (6)
- 18 Mixed pairs found in France (5)
- 19 Metal man? (5)
- 21 Bar of gold found in swinging Ottawa (5)

Thank you to Tony Whitelocke for another great crossword.

Answers to last issue's puzzle:

Across: 1 BISCUIT, 4 MOUNT, 7 GABLE, 9 FIGMENT, 10 ICE CUBE, 11 NORSE, 12 ESCAPE, 14 ANCHOR,
 18 PAPER, 20 HONESTY, 22 TEAR GAS, 23 SHISH, 24 RENAL, 25 EIGHTHS

Down: 1 BAGPIPE, 2 SABRE, 3 TUFFET, 4 MEGAN, 5 UNEARTH, 6 TITLE, 8 EQUIP, 13 CAPTAINS, 15 NINES, 16 RHYTHMS,
 17 CHASTE, 18 PETER, 19 REGAL, 21 SWIFT

a huge thank you to our sponsors

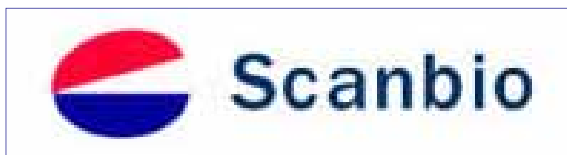
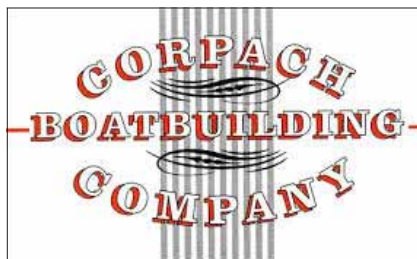
A huge thank you to the businesses below who have sponsored the newsletter this year.

The cost of copying this newsletter has again been very generously donated by

Lorna and Finlay Finlayson of Crannog Restaurant, Fort William.

The paper for this issue has again been generously donated by BSW Timber, Kilmallie

Our other newsletter costs have been met by donations from the other businesses below, from KCC's limited funds, and in kind from all our volunteers.



would you like to become a sponsor too?

We rely on the contributions from our business community for the cost of distributing this free newsletter to every address in our area.

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.



remember the KCC suggestion boxes - there for your comments and ideas