

# Laggan Matters 3

1ST MARCH 2021

Neoní as leith an t-sluaigh, gun aonta an t-sluaigh

Nothing on behalf of the people without the agreement of the people

**A warm welcome to Laggan Matters 3 despite January and February's deep freeze.**

**At least we can start to look forward to longer daylight hours and more spring-like weather.**

**In this edition, look out especially for:**

- **An update on how to report accidents and road issues on the A86 from Newtonmore and onwards towards Fort William. This will help nudge the authorities into making road improvements**
- **News on the vaccination process from Laggan Practice**
- **The first Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve article**
- **Exciting developments from Laggan Community Housing**
- **Tributes to four well-respected Laggan gentlemen who passed away recently**

(The recent passing of Sir William Macpherson of Cluny and Blairgowrie will be covered in Laggan Matters 4)



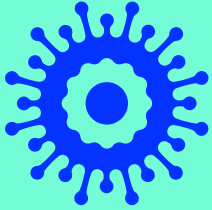
River Spey // Robyn Woolston

**The Useful Numbers List at the end of the last newsletter has been updated and is available on [laggan.com](http://laggan.com). Please email [info@laggan.com](mailto:info@laggan.com) if you have any further adjustments or suggestions to make about the contents of this list.**

**Thank you to everyone who helped to brighten up the dark winter evenings by making decorations and putting up the lights in the village and outside the church. The decorated stones were also much enjoyed. There is a small group already looking ahead to Christmas lighting 2021 and all ideas and offers of help would be most welcome.**

We hope that you will enjoy this edition. As ever, we are most grateful to all the individuals and the organisations for their contributions and to Robyn, for her design skills and general expertise.

Amanda and Liz.



### **COVID-19 Vaccinations Update, Laggan Practice.**

**As of 08.02.2021**

**Both Laggan and Kingussie Medical practices are currently working through our patient lists as per government guidelines. Clinics are being held weekly in the Badenoch Centre in Kingussie on a Wednesday. Our progress is dependent on vaccine supply and NHS Highland permission to move onto each group.**

**We now have the majority of people 70 years and over and those who are shielding vaccinated.**

**Those over 65 should have been offered an appointment or should have received a phone call during the week of 08.02.21 and we will shortly be moving onto patients 18-65 with specific chronic health conditions. (The chronic health condition guidelines have been provided by the government and we are unable to waver from these. If you are not included on that list you would have to wait until we are given the go ahead to vaccinate your age group.)**

**If you are over 65 before the end of March 2021 or shielding and have not yet been offered an appointment please call the surgery to arrange. If you have changed your phone numbers recently and have not updated the surgery please do so as soon as possible. We are arranging all appointments by phone call.**

'The first cheery signs of spring can often be found in our woodlands...  
Many herbaceous plants rush to flower before the canopy develops  
and casts them into deep shade'

Dr Fred Rumsey  
Senior Curator in Charge, Historical Collections  
Natural History Museum

As many of you may have noticed, I moved back home to Gergask in November. I have been incredibly lucky to join the team at Jahama Highland Estates, which includes Glenshero, as their Estates Surveyor. For the past year, after finishing my degree at SRUC, I was working in the Borders for a land agency firm. During this time I was involved in the management of an estate in Glen Lyon and I learned about arable farming, which, being from the Highlands, was completely new to me. I didn't see it as somewhere I wanted to stay long term, I longed to return home but didn't want to lose out on a good career to do so. During the summer I noticed Jahama were advertising. I was interviewed by Julia, our Chief Operating Officer, and to my delight I was offered the job.

Flash forwards a few months and here we are in lockdown again. I am working from home at the moment, while visiting the Estate when essential. People often ask me what I do for a living, any surveyor knows it is hard to put into words. The variety is endless from construction and tractors to sheep and deer.

I am aware that I do not fit the stereotype of somebody in my role. Certain people have joked about green wellies and names like Tarquin! In fact, only 15% of surveyors in the UK are female. I went to SRUC early at 17 and finished my last exam on my 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday.

On graduation day there were three of us representing Laggan, myself, Lauren Miller and Fachie Grant.

Looking to the future, Jahama have big plans, which I feel excited to be a part of. They are also putting me through training to complete my RICS exams to gain chartered surveyor status. The opportunities are infinite on the Estate, being a 'wee lass' from Laggan and working locally definitely has not limited me.

We hope that as restrictions ease you can enjoy the Estate and all that it has to offer. Until then, Happy New Year to you all!

**Anastasia Young**



### Did you know...

There's something in the air!

Your sense of smell can be more acute during Spring-time because there's usually more moisture in the air.



'Britain's commonest bird of prey, the buzzard is the species most often seen soaring. It wheels about in the air on broad wings, with its tail fanned out and wingtip feathers widely splayed. Eats birds, mammals and carrion. When male buzzards begin showing off their skydiving skills you know that they're thinking of settling down with a mate, so warmer weather must be on its way.' // [www.countryfile.com](http://www.countryfile.com)

### Laggan Community Housing Ltd - progress report on proposed housing.

As some of you will remember the Management Committee are being helped by Communities Housing Trust, who have 20 years experience of working with small rural communities assisting them to deliver affordable homes in their areas.

We are considering building 3 - 3 bedroom houses & 3 - 2 bedroom houses. Some of the houses could potentially be 'live / work units'. Due to Covid -19, many more people are working from home either for an employer or have set up a new home business and this change in the way we work may be here to stay. We hope live/work units will encourage younger economically active families into our village perhaps strengthening the school roll and certainly participating in local activities and events.

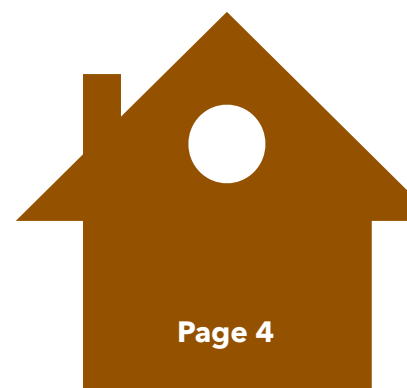
As LCH Ltd owns the Picnic Site, building them on land we own will reduce the cost of the houses. We are considering bringing the access through from Gergask Avenue along in front of the Albyn houses, giving those families the ability to have their cars at their garden gates. It will also give much needed access for ambulance and fire services. Funding of course is always an issue and we were gratefully relieved to see the Rural Housing Fund is continuing which may help with the necessary feasibility studies and we may also be able to get help from the Highland and Islands Enterprise.

We now plan to consult with SEPA about any risk of flooding and then ensure the services: water; electricity; sewage, are all available within a Feasibility Study along with our suggested access. Then we will have to consider the total cost and funding options.

Anyone with thoughts, questions, suggestions, considerations, can phone or email me: 01528 544722

[sheena.feithbuidhe@icloud.com](mailto:sheena.feithbuidhe@icloud.com)

Sheena Slimon, Secretary Laggan Community Housing Ltd. Reg No 2186 RS





'On the equinox, the length of day and night are only nearly equal. This is because the Sun appears as a disk in the sky, and the top half rises above the horizon before the centre. As well as this sunlight is refracted by the Earth's atmosphere. The Sun, therefore, appears to rise before its centre at the horizon, giving more daylight than you might expect (12 hours 10 minutes on the equinox). The *equilux* is when day and night are equal and occurs a few days before the spring equinox, and a few days after the autumn equinox.'

[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)



## **Laggan Community Council**

The CC's priorities remain focused on bringing to fruition the agreed community action plan (CAP) from 2019 and representing the interests of the community in its dealings with various public sector bodies – primarily Highland Council – in planning, provision of public services, and with the Roads department. Our activity has continued during the pandemic although the ability to have matters progressed has remained limited.

In the past year, the ability to take our daily exercise has re-emphasised the depth and breadth of the wonderful scenery on our doorsteps via the wider Laggan network of paths and trails. But feedback from many of you has identified a number of improvements needed to that network – some minor, some major – but all would benefit from some intervention. From the CAP, paths and trails were one of our priorities, whether it is the on-going Connecting Laggan Hamlets Project, requesting Forestry Land Scotland to re-open the Drum an Aird settlement circular core path, re-installing way-markers throughout the Strathmashie Forest estate, improving the visitor interpretation materials throughout the area e.g at Dun Da Lamh – the list is increasing. If there are trails and paths that are on your list that would merit improvement, please let us know via [info@laggan.com](mailto:info@laggan.com)



Roads and road safety in the area are also a source of continued comment and with a projected increase in visitor traffic in the summer, the community council is keen to coordinate some key road incident information (mainly along the A86) going to Transport Scotland and their partners BEAR. Please see the separate article on this about what you can do to help improve the safety of our roads through Laggan Community Council area. We are also canvassing Highland Council to place the 20mph signs at the entrance to the village rather than outside the hall.

We were also very disappointed to learn of a series of damaging break-ins and thefts in the Laggan area at Wolftrax and Creag Meagaidh in January and ask all in the community to keep a watch out for any suspicious activity and report this to the Police by telephone on 111.

The next newsletter will provide an update on the various wind farm developments both operational and at the planning stage and how existing and future Community Benefit funds could be best directed. SSE's Stronelairg WF is now operational as are the permanent connections via the Melgarve Substation. We still await the outcomes of the planning enquiry for the Glenshero WF proposal and the SSE Cloiche WF application – both of which are to be determined by the Scottish Government. (The [www.laggan.com](http://www.laggan.com) website – community council page – also has a reconciliation summary of the SSE CB funds awarded up to December 2020)



(Continues on the next page)

The Community Council continues to “meet” virtually - the next meeting will be Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 1900 and thereafter the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month up to our AGM presently scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup>. It would be good to hope that we may be able to meet in person by then but until then, the meetings will be via ZOOM. If you wish to join the ZOOM meeting, please send a message to [info@laggan.com](mailto:info@laggan.com) The minutes of recent meetings are routinely posted on the [www.laggan.com](http://www.laggan.com) website as well as on the Laggan Village notice board.

Finally we send our thoughts and condolences to the families of another 2 gentlemen of the community, who have sadly both passed away since the last Newsletter - Alister MacRae of Balgowan and Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington from the Ardverikie Estate.

**Colin Morgan Chair LCC**

### **Fiona's Fantastic Sausage Rolls**

Never before written down. A scoop for Laggan Matters!

For those of us in Laggan who have been lucky enough to sample these at various events, including the Helping Hands Lunches, and those who haven't been so fortunate - here is your chance to make them at home.

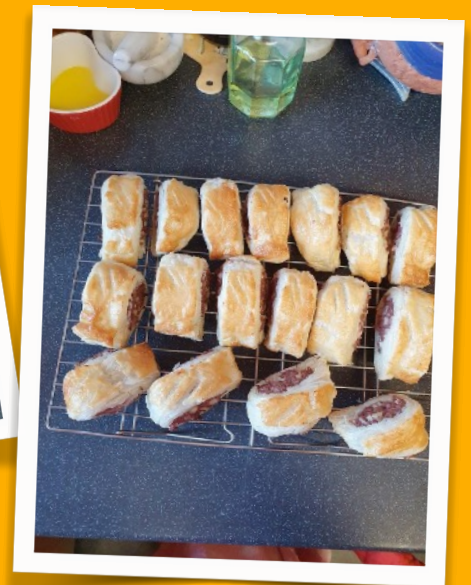
WARNING - they may never taste quite as good as when Fiona makes them with her own fair hand.

#### **Ingredients**

450g sausage-meat  
Chopped onions - lots  
Black pepper  
450g ready rolled puff pastry  
1 egg, beaten  
Plain flour for dusting

#### **Method**

1. Mix sausage-meat, onions and pepper in a mixer, or by hand
2. Roll out the pastry as thick or as thin as you like, into 2 long rectangles
3. Roll the sausage-meat into a sausage shape, then dip into a wee bit of flour
4. Place sausage-meat on pastry, doon the middle of each rectangle
5. Brush beaten egg (or water) doon one long side of pastry, then fold over the other side of the pastry onto the egg-washed (or water-washed) edge
6. Mac sure that you seal your sausage-meat in the pastry
7. Cut each pastry roll into slices, slash sideways along the top and brush with beaten egg
8. Cook on a baking sheet at 140C for 20 minutes, or so.



## News from the Church

It seems a long time ago already, but in this year of doing things differently, Laggan Church took its Christmas decorations outside. The tree, given by Ardverikie estate, stood at the door of the church, and we managed to have stars lighting the wall and the pillars on the gate. There were also supposed to be doves of peace actually flying, but the wet weather made that more difficult to achieve. Maybe next year!

**With the village Seniors' party having, of course, to be cancelled we were glad when Glenshero estate offered us some venison which we could distribute to many of those who would have been guests had the party been held. The Christmas services had to be online this year, but a lot of effort went into making them - from people across our linkage. Bits of both the Service of Lessons and Carols and of the Christmas service were filmed in all four church buildings, and it was good that so many people appreciated the services.**

However videoing the services and getting them up on the website was hard! So we have gone back to the audio recorded services which we have been doing every week for nearly a year now.

And you know that the pictures are better with radio!

**With the new lockdown we could not hold even the distanced spoken-word services we were having in the church building, so the church community is also meeting via Zoom (where would we be without Zoom?!) on Wednesday evenings, to read Scripture, reflect and pray together. On the third Sunday of the month this includes taking communion together - but apart. If anyone would like to have the details to get onto these services**

**please email [CBuchan@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:CBuchan@churchofscotland.org.uk)**

At the time of writing this we do not know how long the embargo on using the church building will last, nor what restrictions will be in place when we can return. I expect that at first we will still need to be distanced, restricting the numbers we can admit, and that singing will be one of the last things that will be allowed back, but that is just a guess. Plans for Easter may well have to be for a combination of Zoomed and online services. Since I can't give details of that just now, do keep an eye on the church website [www.stbrides-newtonmore.org.uk](http://www.stbrides-newtonmore.org.uk). We will also post details

on the local Facebook page / **Catherine Buchan**.



Over the next few pages we'll take a moment to pause, to remember, and to reflect on the lives of those we've lost...

### **Alister MacRae, 1925 - 2021**

Alister was Laggan through and through. Born 95 years ago and brought up in Kinlochlaggan, apart from his siblings, there were few children around so he spent much time quietly listening to adult conversations. This vast quantity of local stories and information, even from WW1 and earlier, was to become invaluable in future years in helping folk from near and far, research their family history.

Aged 15 years during his first job at the construction of the L Crunachdan - L Laggan tunnel, an explosion resulted in the death of Cpl James Hendry, Royal Canadian Engineers. Decades later when it was locally discovered that Cpl Hendry had received a George Cross medal for his self sacrifice in saving others, Alister though naturally a quiet man, patiently persuaded the Laggan community to recognise this exceptional bravery with a well attended event and the erection of the memorial at Loch Laggan side.



*An honest man here lies at rest,  
As e'er God with His image blest:  
The friend of man, the friend of truth;  
The friend of age, and guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.*

*Robert Burns*

During WW2 Royal Navy service in South Africa, Alister met Beryl Bremner - what lovely dancers. Married in 1946, they were inseparable through their happy 71 years together. Alister was so proud not only of their children - Roddie and Alison becoming doctors and Neil who passed away at an early age - but also their 5 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

Work in the Forestry at Strathmashie was followed by a spell in Cluny garden and then at Spey Dam running the associated water control systems. Here Alister bulldozed thousands of tons of silt from behind the dam, and once when walking back after reading the rain gauge at Lochan Spey with Benji Lobban, he even met the old fashioned ghost among the knolls near Shesgan.

Alister was very knacky. He could turn his hand to any job in home or garden. He could put many of us to shame with his self-taught skills on the computer.

A gentle gentleman, recently in St Vincent's a kind comforting person asked him for a hug and a kiss - Alister's reply, "Oh, but I'm married to Beryl".

We cherish his memory.

**Graham Grant**







**Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington,  
1930 - 2021**

Born at 6am on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1930  
and died on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Against his parents wishes he pursued a life on the land, among the hills he loved and the people who taught him so much that made him the farmer and fighter for our rural communities.

1955 he married Phyllida Pennington of Ardverikie; they had 4 daughters. Phyllida predeceased Patrick by 10 years.

Patrick was Hill Farming Convenor of the Scottish NFU, Convenor of the Scottish Landowners Federation and Chairman of the Deer Commission for Scotland.

But he hated sitting on committees, "Committees beget committees," and, "a committee of one is one too many."

He travelled the length and breadth of Scotland sitting round the kitchen table, be it with farmers, crofters, stalkers and hearing of their problems, experiences good or bad, and helping maintain their way of life in a fast changing world. Being a thorn in the flesh of many politicians who imposed rules and regulations with no understanding of the effects they would have on the people who worked the land.

"To Patrick, for annoying those who need it," on the plaque below the stag, presented on his retirement from the Deer Commission, made him very proud.

His poems were amusing, cheeky, reflective, latterly yearning for the ways that are lost, and he prayed that the "end may be soon".

***The greylag geese may take me home  
Within the phalanx of their beating wings,  
To find a place to be at peace,  
Somewhere beyond the Hebrides.***

**Sheena Slimon**

## **Adrian Henry Gill, 1938 - 2020**

Adrian will always be remembered for his creativity, ingenuity, wit and wisdom. He had an incredible talent for delivering stories and insightful descriptions on any number of topics – a testament to the many experiences, achievements and adventures of his life.

Adrian's career began with an apprenticeship in heavy engineering in Tyneside. Determined to further his qualifications, he significantly progressed in his career and gained membership of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. During the 70s, Adrian changed career to become a teacher. He secured a job at a comprehensive school in Newcastle, effectively delivering his vast knowledge of engineering.

Adrian's great passions were hill walking and skiing in his local Cheviot Hills. It was with the Northumbrian Ski Club that he met his beloved wife Doreen. They then spent many years travelling abroad and around the Highlands with their two sons and "The Crowd" – close friends who also shared their passion for the outdoors.

The pull of Scotland eventually led Adrian to design and build his house at Catlodge. It is here that he is also known for his paintings. He was a talented artist and the local landscapes inspired many beautiful sketches and water-colours.

Adrian accomplished so much throughout his life, but it was his calm nature and innate ability to make time for others that set him apart. Having known him for 58 years, shared his adventures, and having settled in Catlodge as his neighbour, I feel privileged to have been part of his life.

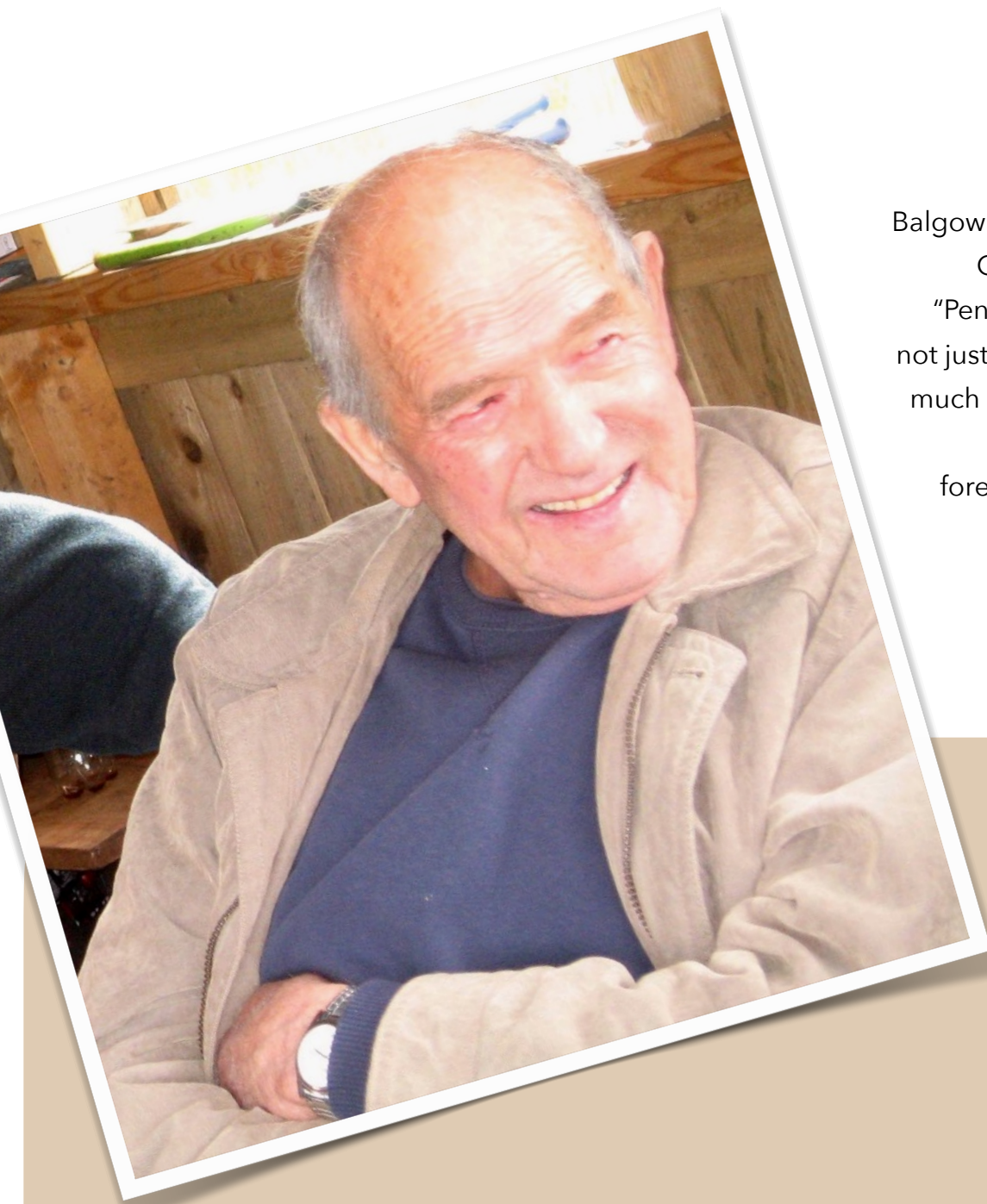
**John Walker**





## PENDY, 1941 - 2020

Donald Macdonald was a Balgowan crofter with his beloved Cheviots. Widely known as "Pendy", he was well respected not just in Laggan but throughout much of the Highlands where he worked in forestry and road construction right up to the start of the Covid pandemic.



He died peacefully after a short illness in St Vincent's aged 79 on November 12, 2020. Born, the second youngest of 10, on the family croft of Fuaranbhan in 1941, Pendy was the third generation. Donald 'pumped' the organ in Church for his mother

His first job was cycling round Laggan with telegrams. He worked on farms round Laggan, mostly on Gaskbeg and culminating in managing Drumgask for his good friend Mark Robson of Kelso for eight years. At this time he was happily married to Jo, with Claire coming along to complete the family. However, back at Gaskbeg, Jo died very suddenly in 1988 and Donald was left to bring up teenager, Claire. But Claire was soon to return with husband Michael Falconer and family, James and Katie, building their house on the croft. Pendy took a full part in community life from Dr Mackay' piping school, to sheep-dog trials, whist drives, badminton and pool. He always looked forward to the Harvest Home and every other dance and ceilidh.

**Campbell Slimon**

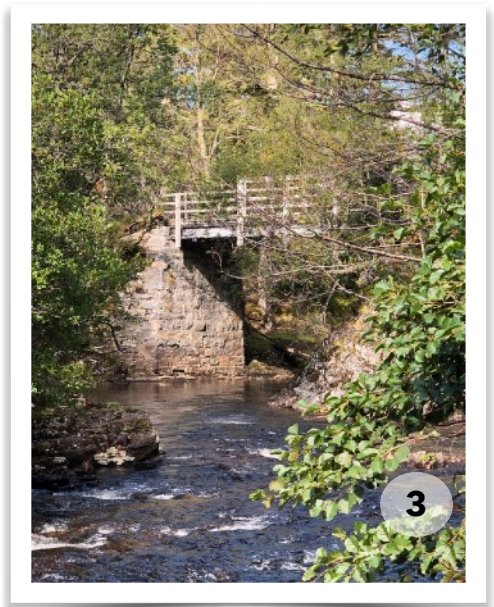




**Spot where these Laggan Bridges are to  
be found**

(Answers on page 21)

**Photos by Jill Warner**







### Creag Meagaidh NNR

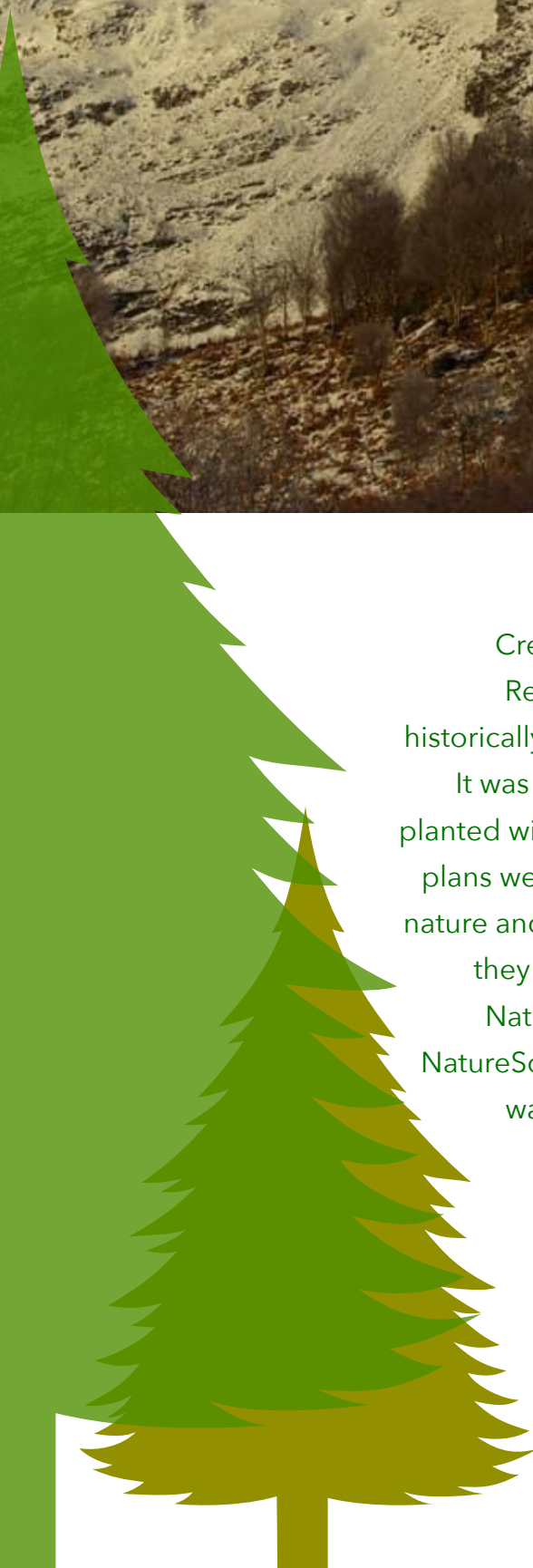
Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve is around 30yrs old, and historically was part of Ardverikie Estate.

It was sold to Fountain forestry to be planted with spruce trees, although their plans were restricted (by the protected nature and recreational interests) and so they decided to sell the land to the Nature Conservancy Council (now NatureScot) in 1985. In 1986 the estate was officially declared the Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve.



The NNR is 3940hectares of uninterrupted landscape from lochside to mountain top. It is in Badenoch and it marches with Lochaber.

(Continues on the next page)





The NNR employs three staff, two permanent locals and one student placement. The student placements are with us for one year at a time, learning about countryside management by getting practical experience as well as also studying at college. There are opportunities for local people to get these placements each year.

**In a normal year we also take local and national volunteers for placements up to 6 months. These volunteers stay in the farmhouse at Aberarder and help us with some of the jobs around the NNR, which is a huge help to us, and gives them a chance to get experience of practical work, get some training and live in some of the bonniest landscapes of the country. Of course this year has been different, and we have missed having our volunteers around.**

At this time of year we are making sure our small pedigree herd of Highland cattle, are well fed and healthy. We breed a small number of calves which are sent on the ferry to Rum NNR. At Creag Meagaidh they are also a tool for breaking up the ground to allow the woodland to regenerate.

**Managing the wild deer on Creag Meagaidh is also a focus for this time of year, so most days when the weather is fine, we are out on the hill. It is important for us to manage the deer to sustainable levels to allow the habitats to thrive, the woodlands to expand and the peatlands to be in good condition.**

Of course the venison is also a very sustainable, ethical meat that has very low 'food miles'. You can find out more about venison and deer management on this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyCQqK76jWI>

Anyone who is interested in purchasing a whole deer carcass can contact me on mobile no. 07725 171287 or email [Rory.Richardson@Nature.Scot](mailto:Rory.Richardson@Nature.Scot).

**Rory Richardson**





# The Badenoch Great Place Project



This was set up with the vision that by the end of the project, Badenoch would be renowned as a place within the Cairngorms National Park with a strong character and identity based on its distinctive cultural heritage. It is hoped to encourage people to come to the area, stay a while and learn more about this less well known part of the Cairngorms National Park. The project is now entering its final stages and you will no doubt have seen or been involved in the range of events and activities that have been organised to promote and celebrate the heritage of the area. Alongside this, much work has been ongoing behind the scenes to develop a tourism offering that draws on the tangible and intangible heritage of the area and presents it in modern and innovative ways.

Initially work focused on the audit and possible interpretation of Badenoch's cultural heritage sites. The emerging key themes were used to develop and test a Tourist Route which has since evolved into a number of walking, cycling and driving itineraries for visitors to follow based on Badenoch's rich heritage offering. Within the Laggan area a cycling route has been mapped out that starts at Wolftrax and takes in the sites of Dun da Lamh and Loch Spey before ascending to Garva Bridge. A walking route that explores the history of Black Wood and Dun da Lamh has also been identified. These will be brought to life through GPS linked storytelling and augmented reality 3D models at particular points of interest or viewpoints. On the ground QR code plates at specific locations will encourage visitors to link to the Badenoch Storylands App to immerse themselves in the stories of that place.



**The “Beta” (or trial version) of Badenoch Storylands App was launched at the end of January with the full version due to go live in the Spring of 21. It will be an “Area Destination” App, showcasing the heritage of the area and bringing it alive for visitors in modern innovative ways. As well as an interactive map, the App will have the aforementioned routes as well as storytelling, augmented reality models and more general visitor information**



The project is keen for as many local businesses to be listed on the App as possible. This can be done by contacting [badenochheritage@gmail.com](mailto:badenochheritage@gmail.com) and giving the business name, an email address and postcode of the premises. The App developers will then send a link to complete your business listing.

Much of 2020 was spent developing the content that will populate the App and a project website [www.badenochstorylands.com](http://www.badenochstorylands.com) which launched in the summer.



The final 9 months will see the many strands brought together through a variety of engagement and skills building activities and groundwork planning for the future. The Project will culminate in September with the Badenoch Heritage Festival 2021 and Conference which will showcase the interest, passion and excitement that has been generated over the past three years and should raise the profile of Badenoch in the years to come.

**Liz Henderson - Community Support Manager CNPA**

#### **CNPA Ranger Service - 2021 Summer Months recruitment and deployment.**

**Following last year's temporary CNPA ranger service provision in the summer months to patrol the whole of the Park Authority area (including Laggan) to clear up "hot spots" for fly-tipping, lay-by littering, dirty camping and wild fires, we are very pleased that the CNPA is again committing to providing this very welcome service. Should any member of the community spot any "issues" as you go around the area, please send a message to [info@laggan.com](mailto:info@laggan.com) and we will forward to the Ranger team. We expect them to visit our area weekly in the (hopefully) busy summer months.**



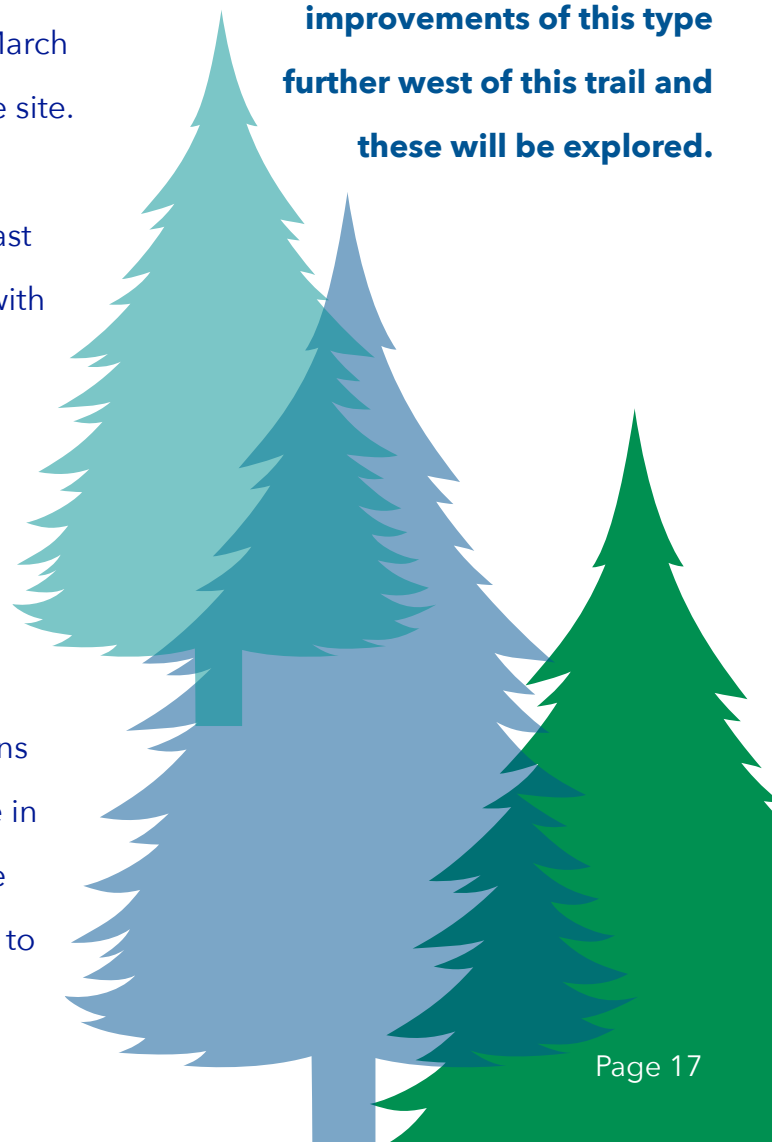


**The Trust's activities have remained significantly curtailed since Christmas - a combination of COVID restrictions but also the cold weather. One project that did come to fruition was a new path/trail connecting the Blackwood forest track to the Feagour forest track - a collaboration between LFT, the Community Woodland Association and Forestry Land Scotland (FLS) - the aim being to make this section more accessible to all users. There is still scope for further improvements of this type further west of this trail and these will be explored.**

At the Wolfrax Centre itself, a planning application was submitted to create a new covered area outside, which will allow us to highlight interpretative panels of significant visitor and local interest e.g. Dun Da Lamh and Druim an Aird. We hope this will create a much improved experience and understanding of the area for the community and visitors alike. The construction work should start in March and visitor access will be managed safely around the site. We also remain keen to manage visitor traffic at the Wolfrax car park in the summer months to resolve last year's parking issues and discussions are on-going with FLS.

Very disappointingly, the Centre was the subject of a significant break-in in January with the theft of a number of mountain bikes from the Wee Bike Hub and significant damage to the external doors of the centre. Repairs are in progress but the centre remains closed. The Wee Bike Hub is to relocate to Kingussie in April and LFT will be exploring options for use of the vacated retail area. However we are looking forward to opening up again in the summer months.

**Colin Morgan, Chair LFT**



Much as I love winter and the stunning snow covered hills, I am so looking forward to longer days and better weather to get back on the bike. One tour I am particularly looking forward to doing again is a cycle from the western end of Loch Laggan to Corrou Station, 1339ft high on the West Highland Line and so remote there is no public road to it.

This cycle is a 30 miles round trip and takes you through wild hills and around scenic Loch Ossian on good forestry tracks and estate roads. The added bonus is the potential of well deserved cake and drink at the Station House restaurant, open from March to October (depending on Covid rules), or a nice picnic on the shore of Loch Ossian.

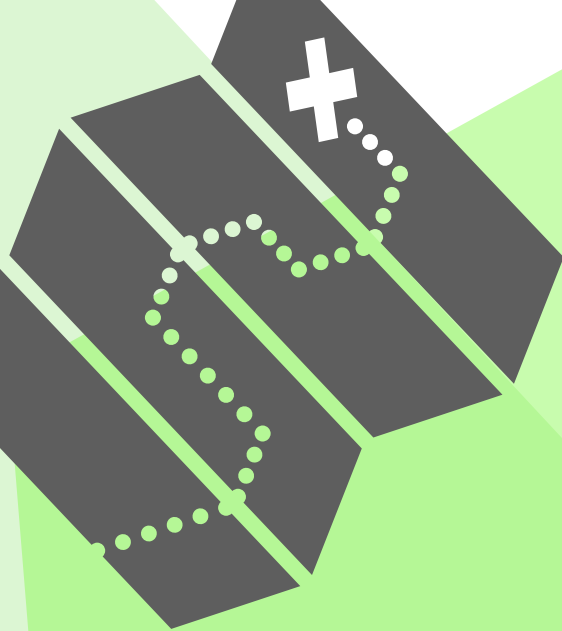
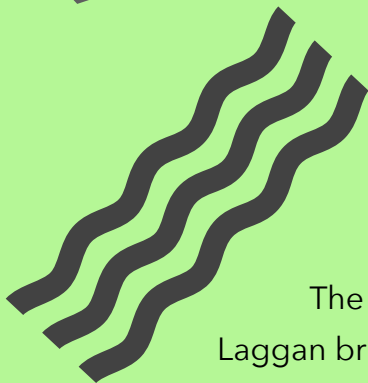
The starting point is just west of Moy on the A86, 15 miles from Laggan bridge, right at the western end of Loch Laggan, where there are two available parking areas. Take the bridge across the River Spean and proceed along the forestry track straight ahead that takes you uphill past Torgulbin (OS map OL50). You now have about 7 miles of climb through forest. Ignore the track on the right signposted to Fersit and carry on winding your way to get to the gate marking the entrance to Corrou estate and signposted for Corrou Station. Go through the gate (cycle friendly) and soon you will come out on an exposed expanse of moorland and hills looking down on to Loch Ghuilbinn.

The views here are wonderful, but it's worth doing this cycle when weather is reasonable because it is so exposed on this stretch. Carry on along the good, wide estate road until you drop down into Strath Ossian, eventually reaching the head of pretty Loch Ossian itself.

Here you have a choice to turn left and take the rougher track clockwise around the southern edge of the Loch, which has some waterlogged patches, or to continue along the northern shore until you reach the end of the Loch. Here you can climb up on to the moorland and see Corrou Station in the distance for a well-deserved break.

For the return cycle you can either retrace your steps, or take the alternative track to do a complete circuit of the Loch, before re-joining the estate road near Corrou Shooting Lodge. You may be very grateful of the long stretches of downhill back to the starting point!

**(Continues on the next page)**



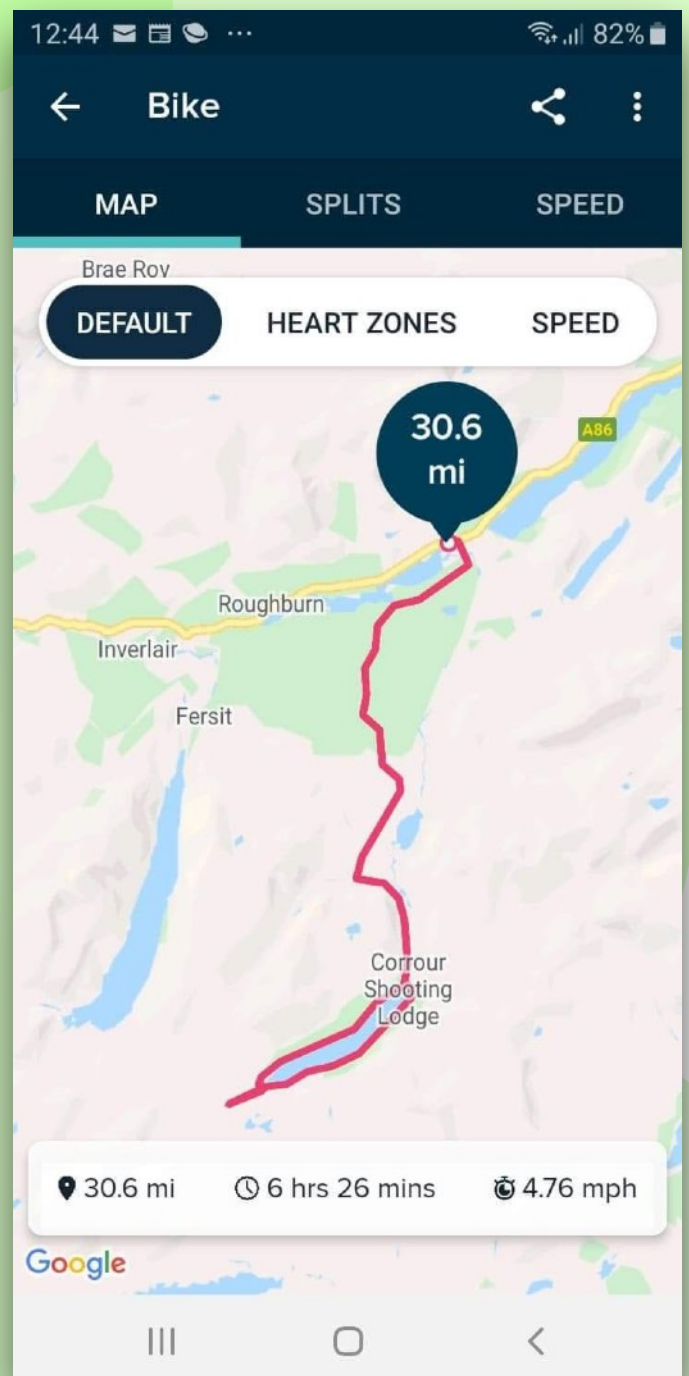
I did this cycle 3 times last year on a mountain ebike, which made the initial, long climb do-able and would recommend that you use a mountain or gravel bike, with or without e assistance. I would also recommend that if using an ebike, you have a full charge in your battery, as there are some long climbs. Otherwise this is a good cycle for anyone new to off road, with reasonable fitness.

(It would also be possible to make this a longer cycle from Laggan by going through Ardverikie estate and along the shore of Loch Laggan, but this would be a challenge on the battery range of an ebike, so maybe an opportunity for a night's stay in the hostel for a chance to recharge battery and tired legs.....)

**Looking towards loch Ossian from Corrou**  
(below)



**Views from above Loch Ghuilbinn or views after the climb**  
(below)



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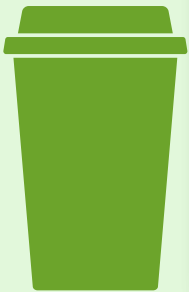


Corrour Station (above)

Loch Ossian (below)



Rough track South side Loch Ossian (above)



Cake!

E bikes rule! (left)





## 'THE HONESTY SPOT' HONESTY BOX HONEY & BLUEBERRY CAKE RECIPE by Robyn Woolston

- 150g butter, melted
- 175g caster sugar
- 50g honey
- 150g Greek yogurt
- zest of 1 lemon
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 225g self-raising flour
- 2 eggs
- 125g blueberries, plus extra to serve

### METHOD

- Pre-heat the oven // 150c fan, gas mark 3.
- Whisk together the butter, sugar, honey, eggs and yogurt with the lemon and vanilla.
- Fold in blueberries and flour.
- Spoon into a 25x12cm loaf tin, with the sides and base lined with baking parchment, level the surface and bake for 1 hour 10 minutes until cooked through. Serve with a dusting of icing sugar and extra blueberries.

The Honesty Spot is located on the A86 near the Pattack Falls. It offers homemade/handmade artisan cakes, jam, chutney and gift boxes. Follow @thehonestyspot on Insta to find out more.

### Answers to Laggan Bridges Quiz

1. Melgarve East
2. Near the Linn of Pattack
3. Strathmashie
4. Glenshero - The Bridge to Nowhere
5. Lower Pattack
6. Falls of Truim
7. Gallowie
8. Moy
9. Truim road - the Ghostie Bridge
10. Glentruim
11. Greag Meagiadh
12. Glenshero - Substation road

**A86 Road Safety Request //** Many residents in Laggan have complained to the Community Council, and previously to Laggan Community Association, about the number of road accidents/near misses/speeding/car damage (broken wing mirrors/damaged wheels/punctures) on the A86 between Laggan and Newtonmore with seemingly little response from BEAR or Transport Scotland to respond with any improvements. A similar charge could also be made about the “fast bends” on the road from Feagour to Creag Meagaidh. Both road sections constitute a considerable road safety hazard to the unaware.

The community council is seeking to have Transport Scotland/BEAR introduce additional safety features on these 2 sections of road as well as surface and road edge improvements throughout. Speed tends to be the major cause of the incidents, but adequate safety warning signs, additional speed restrictions and overgrowth of vegetation onto the road may also be contributing to such incidents. To make any progress, we need to gather evidence of all vehicle “incidents” that would perhaps not be reported to the police. (A major incident (road casualty & fatality) would always be reported to the police and BEAR.)

Following discussions with BEAR on this, and if the police are not involved in any incident or accident management, BEAR simply has no knowledge of any such incidents, BUT they did strongly suggest that if ANY member of the community does have such an incident/accident/car-wheel damage caused by on-coming traffic, going off road edges etc, then BEAR has a website into which ANYONE can log such an incident.

Everyone in the community would be able to submit their “incident” and by highlighting the specific location - either with a photo, a clear description of the area or a grid reference, this would allow BEAR a better understanding of the volume of such incidents to justify remedial work. So please help out and log on to this website to report your incident - even historical ones - and help us all have some significant road safety improvements on “our section” of the A86.

<https://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/>

**Colin Morgan**



**Stop Press!! Arrêter la Presse!!**



**Stop Press!! Arrêter la Presse!!**



**Stop Press!! Arrêter la Presse!!**

We have received a “twinning proposal” approach from a like sized village in SW France - Labatmale - a village with a number of similarities to Laggan. The Community Council intends to discuss this opportunity at our next meeting and welcomes any comments from the community.





## THE NORTHERN MARCH

The north boundary of Laggan Parish runs over 30 miles thro' some very remote country. It starts just east of Lochan Uvie. Here, Prince Charlie's gold may still lie hidden, and here the Duke of Gordon's rent for a dwelling was one Peregrine Falcon Chick taken from the nest on the cliffs above. The march strikes north over the shoulder of Creag Dubh and then west crossing the track leading to the Cluny/Carnegie's/Dalnashalg bothy. It is surprising to note that this bothy and the majority of Cluny Estate is not in Laggan parish but in that of Kingussie (using the old Civil parish boundary line). The boundary then climbs steeply up and along the skyline behind Balgowan, passing the Five Cairns on Gaskbeg to the Blaragie Rock. Here it turns abruptly to its most northerly point far up round the top of Glen Markie and its tributary, the Red Burn. Having crossed the Coffin Road to Stratherrick, the march reaches Geal Charn, the popular Munro above Spey Dam.

The summit of Corrieyairack pass, above the hairpins defines the end of the northern march.



**Gergask School held 2 sponsored walks over Corrieyairack 1980's**

Until fairly recently this back-lying hill ground was covered by shepherds up to 4 times yearly, gathering the sheep from all the farms and estates from Newtonmore to Glenshero. On a misty day it was not difficult, tho' perhaps slightly embarrassing, to become disorientated and arrive down the tributaries of the River Findhorn to Coignafearn, Tomatin. Sheep too can wander far, so each November, Donnie Wilson of Blaragie would take his lorry round to the Coignafearn and Stratherrick farms, exchanging their stragglers for those from Badenoch.





cc-by-sa/2.0 - Lochan a' Choire of Geal Charn by Karl and Ali - geograph.org.uk/p/3143220



From Geal Charn the boundary continues west. Over the march is the big Stronelairg wind-farm whose modern day 'harvest of the hills' is brought down to the (badly named) Melgarve substation and onward to the Beaully/Denny power line. Nearby within the parish, the proposed Jamaha Estates Sherramore windfarm is soon to go to Public Inquiry.

Much of the march is delineated by metal fence posts, set with lead into large stones. These remains are examples of the hundreds of miles of fencing erected by Sir John Ramsden of Ardverikie throughout his many estates. Even into the 1930's they were maintained by a squad of men, assisted by a mule to carry tools and repair materials.

The summit of Corrieyairack pass, above the hairpins defines the end of the northern march. Just over the top is Lagan a' Bhainne - the Milky Dell. Here for a year due to a witches spell, the cows' milk dried up causing great deprivation. This was only ended by Alastair Ban with his dirk, who 'severed the long slender hawthorn stick' of a mysterious goblin, who was toiling up the hill.



**Graham Grant**

**(Above)** Cluny bothy - 3 of Margaret's boys dancing/accordion with passing walkers during Hamish Marshall ceilidh c2015. (Hamish many years ponyman who died, and each summer wee celebration of him at bothy.)