

1st June 2021

Laggan Matters 4

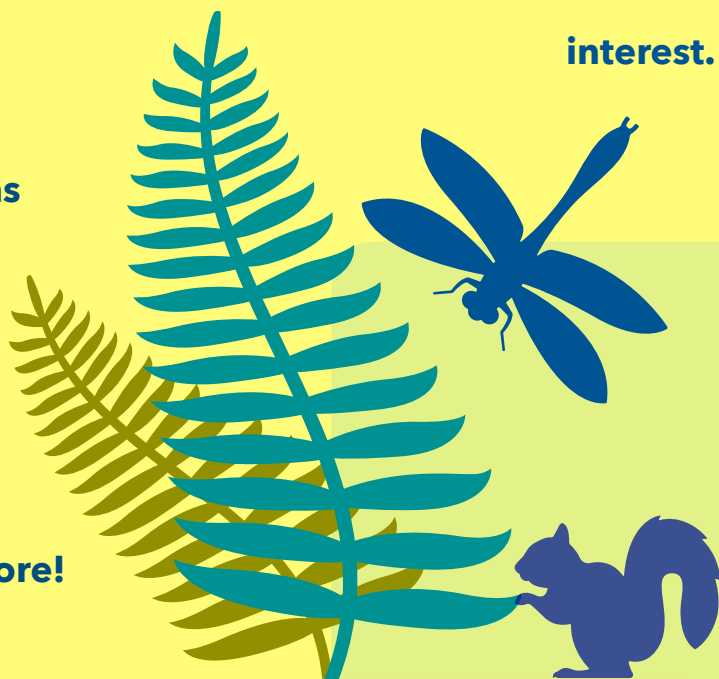
Neoní as leith an t-sluaigh, gun aonta an t-sluaigh

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

Welcome to Laggan Matters 4, packed with useful information, news and articles of local interest.

This edition contains:

- reports from Laggan organisations
- interviews
- upcoming events
- school activities
- wild swimming hints
- Laggan history ... and so much more!



Our thanks as ever, to all our contributors and to Phil at Ardverikie for printing hard copies for those unable to download an electronic version.

Laggan Matters 5 will have a new editorial team due to James and Liz leaving Laggan, to spend more time with their family in the south of England.

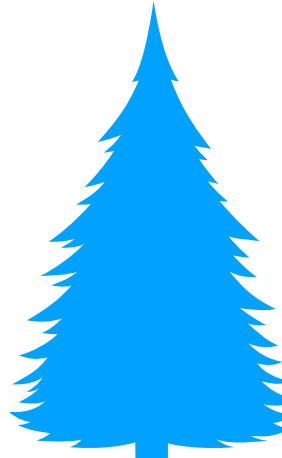
Thanks to Jill Warner for stepping in.

If anyone has a bit of spare time and some tech know-how, and would like to join the team, Amanda would be delighted to hear from you at amandagallagher17@yahoo.com

It is wonderful to have the school back in session and sending us photos and articles.

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- SPEEDWELL
- DEER
- GROUSE
- TORMENTIL
- BUTTERWORT
- NEWT
- FOXGLOVE
- STAG
- MIDGE
- THISTLES
- VOLE
- CRANEFLY
- BIRCHWOOD
- SQUIRREL
- PEREGRINE



← Highland
 'Flora and Fauna'
 Word-search



[Gergask Primary School](#)

Creag Meagaidh Nature Reserve donated money, which allowed us to buy snow gear and boots for each pupil - keeping us warm outside through the winter!

We were also delighted to buy some outdoor games with the money obtained through the Covid Recovery Grant. Pupils love getting out to play with these. We have bought Jenga, Connect 4, Giant Noughts and Crosses, Swingball and Dominoes.

Lisa Ross

Lockdown Learning Mark 2! By Abbey Findlay

We did not come back to school for six weeks after the Christmas holidays because of Covid19.

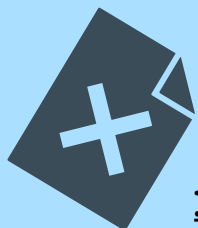
Good Points

I got to sleep in more because we didn't need to wait for a school car or we didn't have to get ready. I got to mess about with my pets and do more fun stuff. I got to spend more time with my family. I still got to spend more time on google to see all of my friends and teachers. I got to drink more coffee and tea. I got to play outside with my brother and sister. I got to go on walks more often with my family. I got to play with my family more and have lots of fun. I got to go on youtube more and play more video games and play with my cuddly toys more as well.



Bad points

I did not get to see my friends in person or my teachers. I did not get to see my granny or grandad or my gran and pop. I did not get to see or hug my Family and I felt miserable, upset and kind of mad because I had to put up with my brother and sister. It was annoying.



I missed hugs! I got really scared because I did not know if my granny, grandad, gran and pop would get covid19.

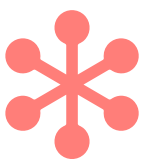
Conclusion I really hated Lockdown 2.

If you are feeling lonely, remember you are not in this alone.



A lovely piece of work from Abbey to share. I thought Abbey's writing encompassed all the children's ideas - Lisa Ross

I felt lonely as well.



News from Laggan and Newtonmore Church

When I arrived as your minister, nearly 12 years ago, I had been in the area for about a week when Jean Burnard said to me, "I hope you have discovered that Laggan is a very special place!" After just one bewildering week, I hadn't quite discovered it yet, but I soon did, and now that I am moving on again, I can say that being the minister of Laggan Church has been a highlight in my life. However the time to move on comes, and you know yourself when it arrives. So, June 13th will be my last Sunday in post.

The church will then be in "vacancy" mode, which means that they carry on regardless! An "Interim Moderator" is appointed to make sure that the church runs smoothly, both in the search for the next minister and in the everyday organising of services of worship and services to the community. The Interim Moderator for this vacancy will be Mrs Mary Stewart, an elder from Aviemore, who has a good, gentle grasp on what is required.

Meanwhile the delight for everyone has been being able to come together again on a Sunday. No, it is not the same - sitting distanced and masked and not being allowed to sing - though we have started a pattern of having a hymn to hum at some point in the largely spoken service. It is not the same, but it is still good. As the nation gradually regains various freedoms, none of the government guidelines shows a change in the need for 2 metre spacing, masking and not singing - even at level 0. And so the capacity of Laggan church remains at about 20-25 (depending on the size of household groups), even when the official guidance says "up to 50" or "up to 100". When the spacing becomes less of an issue this will change.

However we can make some tentative plans for a normal life. We have booked the Laggan Hall for the sale at the end of September - Saturday 25th - and while we can't yet say exactly what format such a sale will take we are hopeful that we will be able to do something at least. We might even manage some form of Church and Community picnic, probably later rather than earlier in the summer, depending on how restrictions are lifted following level 0.

Catherine Buchan

Farewell

Rev. Catherine Buchan, who has been our Minister for the last 12 years, will be taking her last service on the 13th of June, before she and Alan move on to Cullen. She will be greatly missed for the enthusiastically active roll she played in our community. We thank her for her faithful service and also extend our thanks to Alan for his support and excellent musical input.

There will be a presentation to her at 2pm on the 13 June in the garden at St Brides in Newtonmore. If you wish to contribute either by cash or cheque payable to "Laggan & Newtonmore Church of Scotland", this can be given to me or any church elder, or electronically as close to the end of May as possible, please. Use the account name "Laggan & Newtonmore Church of Scotland". Sort Code 80-22-60 A/c No.18658560. Please use the reference "Farewell" so the money will be allocated correctly.

Campbell Slimon





DO YOU FANCY GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY?

Laggan Community Council: Become a Co-opted member with full voting rights:

With Liz MacFarlan's recent resignation from the Community Council, there is an opportunity for up to 4 more co-opted, but full voting places to be filled.

Our main role is to represent the folk of Laggan, which comprises Balgowan, Strathmashie, Kinlochlaggan, Glenshero as well as Laggan Village itself. We engage with the Public bodies that provide us with our public services and we try to involve the community at large to improve the amenities for us all. We also monitor the progress being made to carry out Laggan's Community Action plan, developed in 2019.

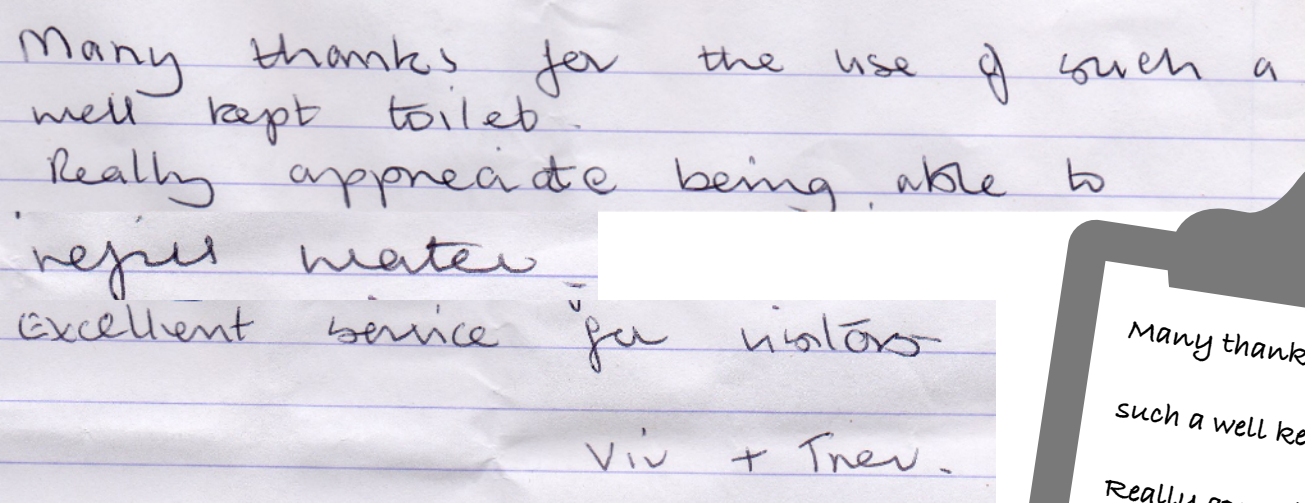
The next scheduled election is not until November 2023, but until then, we are able to receive nominations and appoint co-opted members from within our community. All residents who are over the age of 16 and on the voters' roll are eligible and we would certainly like to co-opt people from the *whole* Laggan area.

If you are enthusiastic about Laggan and want to make a difference, please contact secretarylcc@laggan.com or chairlcc@laggan.com to find out more and to register your interest.

'The Honesty Spot' Honesty Box Blueberry Cupcakes

- 110g (4oz) Self-raising flour
- 110g (4oz) cup of caster (superfine) sugar
- 110g (4oz) of butter, softened
- 1 tsp Vanilla extract
- 2 Large eggs
- 110g (4oz) fresh blueberries.

- * Preheat your oven to 180c // gas mark 5
- * Mix the flour, sugar, butter, vanilla extract & eggs into a bowl
- * Beat the mixture until you have a smooth, light and fluffy batter
- * Fold in your blueberries then teaspoon the mixture into paper cakes in a cupcake tray (you need about 12)
- * Bake for 15 mins.



LAGGAN'S LAVATORY; AN APPRECIATION...

It is lovely in this year of controversy over public toilets being closed and camper vans being a nuisance that Laggan's public toilet, which has been open all winter, gets appreciated by thoughtful campervanners.

Many thanks to Tiggy & Agnes for their all year round commitment. And are we not lucky that the Rev. Catherine Buchan stepped in and suggested Laggan Church would take on Highland Council's Comfort Scheme for the Public Toilet when other community groups were unable to do so. We will miss Catherine's community support when she leaves us in June // **Sheena Slimon**



DID YOU KNOW?

...WHEN THE VERY FIRST KNITTING UNION WAS ESTABLISHED IN PARIS, IN 1527, NO WOMEN WERE ALLOWED!

Do you enjoy crocheting or knitting and fancy a blether with like-minded locals?

Then please come and join us at one of our weekly online VABS Knit & Natter meetings. Our meetings are held **every Monday at 3pm** and are run on Zoom by our chat facilitator Emma Folan from Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS).

We aim to provide you with a friendly informal place to meet new friends, swap ideas and tips and share your work in progress projects! We usually gather for about an hour, depending on the conversation flow.

If this sounds like something that you would enjoy, then we would love for you to join us. To book, please email Emma at cafe@vabs.org.uk for a link to the meeting or message me on the VABS Facebook page.

I look forward to welcoming you to one of our meetings soon.

Best Wishes, Emma



Do you
knit
or
crochet?

Then come and join us for a chat to swap ideas and tips at:

VABS Knit & Natter

ONLINE EVERY MONDAY AT 3PM



The Community Council's next meeting will be Monday 14th June at 1900 in Laggan Village Hall. Appropriate Covid 19 guidelines will be followed. This meeting will also incorporate the Statutory AGM of the Community Council, as required by Highland Council, when the Chair and Treasurer will share their annual reports and accounts for the Community Council. The minutes of recent meetings are routinely posted on the www.laggan.com website as well as on the Laggan Village notice board.



Twinning Proposal - Labatmale, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Aquitaine, SW France. In February this year, we were approached by a similar sized community in France to consider a Twinning Proposal. Grantown is the only local town in our area that has any similar formal arrangements having had one for around 20 years. The CC briefly discussed the proposal at its last meeting and concluded that this really needed a wider discussion in person amongst the community, to gauge both interest and commitment. We will arrange this and/or a survey as soon as possible.

We were saddened to accept the resignation of one of our community councillors, Liz MacFarlan, who is moving to England in the summer to be closer to family. Liz was our first Treasurer, then became our minute secretary, has been a stalwart of the Village Amenity group and, of course, is one of the joint editors of Laggan Matters. We thank Liz sincerely for all her work on behalf of the Community Council and community and wish James and her all the best as they relocate south.

We would, of course, welcome any member of the community who wishes to become a co-opted member of the community council. Any appointment as a co-optee would last until new elections in November 2023. Please contact chairlcc@laggan.com or any other community councillor, if you would be interested.

Did you know?

Town Twinning, as an official relationship-builder, started in Europe after the second world war. The idea was simple: repair damaged relationships between France, Germany and the UK. Find towns that suffered during the wars and pair them. Then encourage people from these areas to meet, mix and get along.



WILD SWIMMING

"Wild swimming" has become very popular in the last couple of years. Some people, especially those who grew up locally and swam in the Dulnain, Spey and other beautiful swimming spots before there were any swimming pools built, will likely just think it's a new fangled version of swimming! However there seems to be a difference between those who happily flung themselves into river and loch on a glorious hot summer day and those who almost religiously swim all through the year, in every season and weather. So, what does it take to swim even when the water is near freezing? And, why do they do it?

Mairi Boyle has recently taken up the challenge and was happy to share her insights and advice to those also prepared to take their outside swimming to a new level.

What made you start?

A couple of years ago I realised that the time could come when, for whatever reason, I may not be able to continue with my other forms of exercise. I decided it would be good to have an alternative in place (the thought of not being able to do anything at all was depressing). So although never a strong swimmer, I decided to try and improve and to swim more often. However, I never particularly enjoyed the pool and a couple of friends who were swimming outdoors suggested I give it a try, which I did a couple of times and found it to be much less painful than I anticipated. Then Covid struck!



When the 2nd lockdown hit, I teamed up with a friend (separate cars - keeping apart etc.) We decided our mental health needed some assistance to get through the winter, so we started on our weekly swims. We are both convinced that this is what allowed us to hold on to a semblance of sanity over the past few months.

Where are your favourite places to swim?

Being unable to travel much and having always to travel separately we have been limited with "spots" but we are so lucky locally - we started in the Spey Dam, then moved to the Pattack when the dam froze up on New Year's day. Over the winter we moved around, determined to find moving water and tried a few different spots on the Spey. When the ice finally lost its grip we tried Loch Insh and finally Loch Laggan (at Creag Meagaidh). It's really difficult to choose a favourite. Each one is special for different reasons and I have a long list of places I want to try once we can travel further in shared transport.

What is the best thing about wild swimming?

Difficult question; it's really hard to explain how it feels without sounding corny. Being in the water rather than on or beside it gives a completely different perspective, which I love. I find it very tranquil and relaxing. I also love the "buzz" I get when I come out especially when it's been particularly cold.

How often do you go swimming?

As often as possible allowing for work and other commitments. Minimum once a week.

Mairi was happy to pass on the various tips about gear and safety that she has picked up on her own personal journey in outdoor swimming. Clothing may be optional for a private swim, but there are many types of swimwear on the market that provide more coverage for cold water swimming e.g. rash vests. It's also helpful when swimming in cold water to wear neoprene gloves and socks. In really cold weather a hat is needed as well as something warm to wrap up in once out of the water while you drink something hot from a flask. Also useful is an insulated mat to sit or stand on when changing. Mairi found that you need to build up slowly by only submerging/ swimming for a couple of minutes and to keep breathing through the first shock of cold water. It is highly advisable not to swim alone, especially as a novice.

Another thing to remember if you are swimming in different rivers or lochs, is to make sure that all gear is rinsed thoroughly between swims to avoid contaminating other waters.

Many have claimed that cold-water swimming not only benefits the body but also the mind and argue convincingly that it helps with anxiety and depression. Along with a couple of friends I think I might also take up the wild swimming challenge, but only if I can build up my tolerance by starting while the weather is warmer ... whether I am still swimming when I have to break up the ice first remains to be seen!
Happy paddling!

Mairi Boyle was questioned by Amanda Gallagher.



And what could be better after a swim than a piece of Fiona's shortbread?

Fiona's Shortbread

(We have sampled this delight - it's up there with the sausage rolls!!)

16oz/450g plain flour

8oz/225g caster sugar

8oz/225g cornflour

16oz/450g butter

* Cream butter and sugar until white

* Add cornflour and flour

* Blend 'til bowl cleans

* Press into a tray

* Mark and prick with a fork

* Cook at Gas 2 ½/Electric 155C/

Fan 130C 1hr to 1hr15

* Sprinkle with caster sugar

* Leave in tin for 30mins

* Lift on to cooling tray

Fiona Grant



DID YOU KNOW?

SCOTLAND'S GARDENS SCHEME WAS
FOUNDED IN 1931 TO RAISE MONEY
FOR THE QUEEN'S NURSING INSTITUTE
SCOTLAND, TO HELP SUPPORT THE
QUEEN'S NURSES, BEFORE THE
CREATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH
SERVICE.



GARDEN OPEN FOR CHARITY

Before setting out please check the garden on our website:
scotlandsgardens.org for any last-minute changes

Craig Dhu House
Laggan PH20 1BS

Sunday 20 June
2pm - 5pm

£4.00, children free
for Laggan and Newtonmore Church of Scotland; Laggan
Heritage & Scotland's Gardens Scheme's Beneficiaries

Homemade Teas, Plants for sale

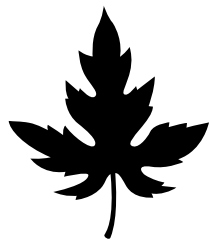


Full information at
SCOTLANDSGARDENS.ORG

Scotland's Gardens Scheme SIO SC049866



SCOTLAND'S GARDENS SCHEME
SUPPORTS OVER 250 DIFFERENT
CHARITIES EACH YEAR! TO SUPPORT
THE CHARITY LOCALLY DON'T FORGET
TO POP ALONG TO CRAIG DHU HOUSE
ON 20TH JUNE.
FURTHER INFO HERE:
[HTTPS://SCOTLANDSGARDENS.ORG](https://scotlandsgardens.org)



The Laggan Forest Trust

The Trust's recent activities have been primarily focused on the Wolfrax centre's outdoor extension and the Connecting Laggan project, the latter, as part of the Community Action Plan. The construction work at the centre started in April and has encountered a few challenges, not least the cool weather, which affects when you can do any foundation work. The centre will remain closed until its completion - currently expected to be end of June.

The Connecting Laggan project, helping the community and visitors alike to move through our area more safely off the main roads, has progressed to start a more detailed construction design, based on one of the initial feasible route options - that between Wolfrax, Gorsteane and Laggan Bridge. A route option from Laggan to Balgowan is presently not feasible nor is a route from Laggan to Strathmashie via the Spey Dam route, which Sustrans, the principal funder of the project, has deemed unsuitable. Another possible feasible section of route from Catlodge to Drumgask was also not progressed by the project as Transport Scotland (BEAR) is separately looking to widen this stretch of the A889.

There is presently a significant amount of felling activity in both the Strathmashie and Blackwood parts of the forest - expected to finish in late July. Discussions with FLS on their long-term forest development plan for our area (2021-2031) are overdue and we also wish to progress other plans with FLS for more effective visitor and recreational management in our area.

Finally, the Trust's AGM will be held in late June and trust members will receive details of this shortly.

Colin Morgan Chair LFT



Laggan Community Housing Ltd. - Sheena Slimon

Laggan Community Housing Ltd. is needing a Treasurer to keep an account of the money coming in and going out of Laggan Community Housing Ltd. bank accounts.

LCH banks with Triodos. There are 2 accounts - The Social Venture, where much of the money is lodged, and the Business and Charity Account. We never handle cash.

Our main income comes from Highland Council, with money coming in April & September.

Our main regular expenditure is HighWater 2-3 times a year and SEPA, once a year.

With Covid-19, all invoices are now paid by bank transfer.

The Accounts do not require to be audited but do have to be examined yearly by a qualified accountant.

If you think you can help, contact Angus Macpherson on 544200 or Sheena on 07398305278.



Once again, Laggan has bade farewell to two of its well known characters. In this section, we respectfully remember the lives of Sir William Macpherson and Bill Knox.

Obituary: Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, clan chief and judge

Died: February 14 2021 in Blairgowrie, Perthshire, aged 94.

As clan chief, soldier, lawyer, judge and passionate rugby player, his trademarks proved to be personal courage and independent judgement.



He needed both when in 1997 the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, asked him to lead the inquiry into the racially motivated death of Stephen Lawrence. The investigation took evidence for a year, yet Sir William produced his report inside an astonishing six weeks. His findings that "institutional racism" existed within the Metropolitan Police saw him subjected to death threats. However Jack Straw, Home Secretary, promised action on all 70 recommendations.

That commitment to justice was echoed by Michael Nevin, chairman of the 1745 Association (Sir William was one of four patrons): "His conclusion that the police investigation had been 'marred by a combination of professional incompetence, institutional racism and failure of leadership' led to attacks on his findings from those who found their implications uncomfortable, yet led to reforms that have helped remedy the problems he identified, and ultimately resulted, many years later, in a measure of posthumous justice for Stephen Lawrence".

Educated at Wellington College and Trinity College, Oxford. He was commissioned in the Scots Guards in 1944, and trained with 21 SAS - of whom he was made honorary colonel in 1983.

As hooker, he captained London Scottish in 1954. In a select game, he was one of only three non-internationalists of the XV. He entered the showers after a game to be greeted by a voice through the steam: "Ah, you must be the other Macpherson!" This was the redoubtable Tommy Macpherson; both would later be knighted.

As only son to Brigadier Alan Macpherson - made DSO for exploits in the Great War - Sir William succeeded as 27th chief of Macpherson in 1969. "Cluny" to his clansfolk, he led the annual march of his clan at the Newtonmore Games, entering the field to the strains of Macpherson's Rant.

Surviving the infamous After-Ceilidh Ceilidh required front-line courage, with Cluny leading the singing, his party pieces being "Blaydon Races", then a somewhat risqué song about an RAF parachutist who didn't quite make it.

Continues on to the next page

Obituary: Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, clan chief and judge (contd)

As fastidious in genealogy and heraldry as he was in law, Sir William kept clan papers filed at home in acid-free boxes in a purpose-built study and gallery, the walls of which are covered in heraldry – his own and that of his clansfolk. In a corner, his bonnet with three chiefly feathers, when not in action on the chief's head, rested on a stuffed wildcat in rampant pose, the Macpherson crest. His Blairgowrie castle has been home to Macphersons since it was purchased in 1787 by James "Ossian" Macpherson as agent for Cluny's ancestor.

Sir William was predeceased by Sheila McDonald née Brodie, his wife of over 40 years, and his elder son Alan. He is survived by his daughter Annie, son Jamie, and five grandchildren. After the death of Lady Macpherson, he met Hilary, Lady Burnham with whom he formed a close and loving partnership.



Sir William is succeeded by his son Jamie as 28th chief to the clan Macpherson.

Gordon Casely's obituary in the Scotsman was edited by Valerie Macpherson

Tribute to Bill Knox, by Sheena Slimon

Bill Knox late of Glentruim Mains, born September 1932 died aged 88 years, March 2021.

William Stuart Knox better know to us all as Bill was born and farmed in Ayrshire, where he bred Herefords. Bill and Pat married in 1956 and moved from Ayrshire to Glentruim Mains in 1988, bringing with them a few Highland Cattle. Bill's love of breeding and showing cattle, he was a regular at Smithfield, continued and with the help of Rich Thomson their Highland Cattle grew in numbers and became an award winning fold.

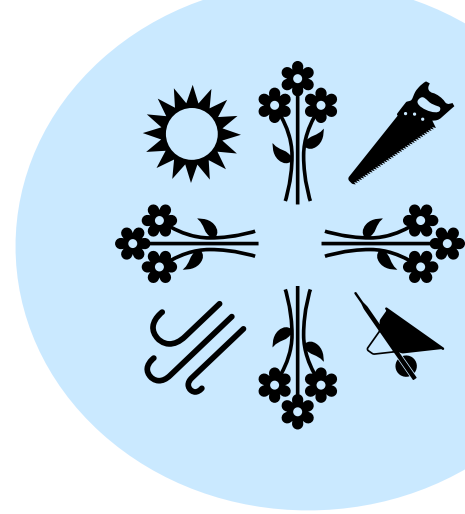
While building their new home they lived in "the Kennels." The first winter was very cold, wind blew through the cottage, snow piled up high outside. The climes of Ayrshire suddenly seemed comparatively tropical. Their new home beside the farm steading was warm and welcoming. Bill soon settled into life in Laggan, including chairing Laggan Forest Trust and negotiating the setting up of the Forestry Company. He was involved in the Laggan farmers' petition to include Laggan in the National Park.

In latter years he was afflicted with Dementia, at first managing to remain at home but eventually moving into The Mains. Pat would visit Bill almost daily, often with her knitting. Pat would like it recorded how grateful she is to the staff for the care and kindness shown to Bill and the support they gave to her throughout Bill's remaining years.



Village Amenities Update

It's always a joy to see the village looking bright, colourful and at its best during the summer months. Fresh bedding plants from Highland Council are due mid June. We hope to gather a planting party, with refreshments on June 19. All volunteers most welcome; details to be confirmed on laggan.com and Facebook. Helpers are also needed for watering duties; the equipment for this is kept at The Coffee Bothy



A problem with the village litter bin has been highlighted, recently.



A polite reminder that this bin is *only* to be used for litter. It is not suitable for household or commercial waste; householders should not be using it as an overflow for their bins. Leaving black bin bags beside the bin is an eyesore and a health hazard. The Community Council is trying to solve this problem and welcomes any suggestions.

Please email info@laggan.com

Still on the subject of litter, the Community Council has been awarded a grant of £500 from the Cairngorms Trust for litter pickers, hi-vis jackets, gloves, bags etc. which will be stored at The Coffee Bothy and Wolfrax, to be available to volunteers, when organised. CNPA Wardens are active in our area and if you come across littering, please report any issues to LCC at info@laggan.com

Thanks to Gordon and Stuart at The Laggan Coffee Bothy for organising the squirrel signs in the village; Cyril the Squirrel is especially grateful.

Jahama Estates at Glenshero is also taking littering seriously. If you spot any instances of littering, dirty camping or fires along the Glenshero road, please report these directly to highland@jahamaestates.com

Occasionally, access to Track 19 (the SSE access track to the north of the Spey) is closed. This is because of timber extraction or industrial movement and the need for health and safety precautions. Again, please email any concerns about this to highland@jahamaestates.com

At a recent meeting with SSE, we were advised that the Laggan part of this fund available to award grants to community group projects now sits at £114,037. This is available for any grants agreed up to April 2022. The next meeting of the SSE large grant panel will be in late October 2021. Present award restrictions on large grants of £10,000 may be revised should a substantive project be forthcoming that provides a sustainable legacy, which benefits the community.

It is entirely probable that SSE fund managers will visit us again when face-to-face meetings are permitted to explain this, as well as a re-explanation of their allowable criteria and potential future funding arrangements for possible projects for the next 22 years of their fund. At a minimum, the Laggan Community will be granted £61,662 each year in future years.

All properly constituted Community Groups, which have community benefit at the core of their constituted aims and objectives, could be eligible for grants. SSE are particularly keen that any project proposed will create a sustainable legacy to benefit the community and will also be happy to explore multiple year projects for consideration.

Any group that wishes to discuss a project idea may contact Marianne Townsley at SSE by e-mail initially marianne.townsley@sse.com

The SSE Laggan Micro Grant panel continues to be available for micro grants of up to £500. Application forms for these grants can be found on the home page of the www.laggan.com website.

Colin Morgan

Stuart Lilley, co-owner of Laggan Coffee Bothy & Gallery.

Interview by Jill Warner.



Background

Stuart has been a semi-professional photographer for many years, having featured in the press, magazines and on the BBC and BBC weather. Therefore when he came to look at the Coffee Shop, Stuart realised this was the perfect opportunity to expand on what he had already achieved by having a gallery with local photos. Stuart, Gordon and Kara opened their Laggan Coffee Bothy and Gallery on 3rd May 2018.



1. When / why did you first become interested in photography? **20 years ago while in Canada for the first time and I photographed the Horseshoe Falls (Niagara Falls).**

2. What was your first camera? **Fuji HS30 bridge camera.**

3. What camera do you use now & why? **Nikon full frame D750, which allows more to be in the frame and because of the quality of the pixels.**

4. How has your style of photography changed over the years and has moving to The Highlands had an impact on your style of photography? **I have always been into landscape photography and prefer to take photos with no people in as well as wildlife photographs.**



5. What type of photographs do you enjoy taking most? **Landscapes and wildlife. Anything from swans to whatever appears on the bird table.**

6. Do you have a favourite photo and why is it your favourite? **I have 3! Autumn Walk (Padly Gorge in Derbyshire). This was the first of my photos to go international. Warren Peace (Laggan). This did well on the BBC, Daily Mail and Times. Black & White Stag (Glenshero). I like the pose and the way the stag looks at you and the hidden stag in the background.**



© Stuart Lilley Photography



Stuart Lilley Photography

7. What advice would you give to someone starting out in photography?

When buying your first decent camera, go for the biggest size of mega pixels you can afford. Join a friendly local photography club.

Don't be afraid to 'shoot' what you like and if anyone says they don't like one of your photos ask them why and vice versa if they do like it ask why, as their feedback helps you grow.



© Stuart Lilley Photography

- 8. You currently offer to undertake family and/or child portraits, food photography and small photography courses for beginners. Do you have any plans to introduce anything new in the near future? **I aim to carry on entering competitions to become more widely known.**
- 9. If you had the chance to photograph anyone in the world, who would it be? **I'm a big Madonna fan but it would also be an amazing experience to photograph the Queen.**



QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS...

Flat walking or Munro?

Both

Lady Gaga or Madonna?

Madonna

Horror or romcom?

Horror

Gin or Whisky?

It used to be gin but it's whisky now

Sunrise or sunset?

Depends on the time of year as it is time dependent

Indian or Chinese?

Chinese but prefer Thai as it's a mix of them both!

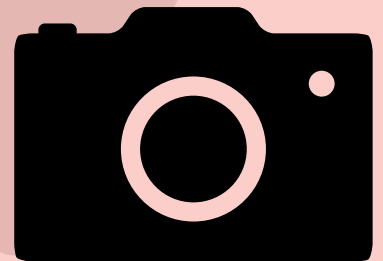
www.facebook.com/stuartlilleyphotography

www.instagram.com/stuartlilleyphotography

Inspired by Stuart, we'd love to see your photos of Laggan in the summer of 2021. Stuart has agreed to select the best ones to be included in the September edition of Laggan Matters.

Please email them to Amanda at:

amandagallagher17@yahoo.com



DID YOU KNOW?

THE MOST EXPENSIVE CAMERA EVER SOLD WAS AT AN AUCTION IN VIENNA IN 2007. SETTING ALL-TIME OVERALL RECORD, THE "DAGUERROTYPE SUSES FRERES" WAS SOLD FOR NEARLY EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND U.S. DOLLARS. THE STARTING PRICE WAS 100,000 EUROS.

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.BACKLIGHT.MU/20-FUN-FACTS-ABOUT-PHOTOGRAPHY/](https://www.backlight.mu/20-fun-facts-about-photography/)



Major Luttman Mitchell
d1835, 23 years, Gordonhall

Margaret Luttman Mitchell,
William's & Andrew's stones

A Kindly Act

This year is the 275th anniversary of the Battle of Culloden, when the Jacobites, commanded by Bonnie Prince Charlie, were soundly defeated by the government forces of the Hanoverian line, led by George II's son, the Duke of Cumberland.

There is a tale that Andrew Mitchell, a young Jacobite lad from Ayrshire, was still lying hurt on the field when 'Butcher' Cumberland gave the order to kill all the wounded. It is said that a Hessian mercenary soldier took mercy on the lad and rather than finishing him off, covered him over and tended him for several days, until he was able to get himself off the field. Before parting, the lad asked the soldier his name and in remembrance of his kindness, later would include the surname, Luttman, in each of his children's names.

Andrew Mitchell in the 1770's eventually became one of the first southern flockmasters to bring the improved sheep, and their modern ways of husbandry, to Badenoch - to Aberarder on Loch Laggan side (now known as Creag Meagaidh NNR). Andrew died in 1790 and is buried under a broken stone (no 181) in the Laggan churchyard.

In records, the additional name of Luttman is not found in his children's names, but his granddaughter, the daughter of his son William, is commemorated on a nearby stone (no 184) - Margaret Luttman Mitchell. She died 1835, aged 23 years.

This tale was brought to light c1980 by a locum doctor who worked occasionally for Dr Donald Fraser in Laggan. She was Esme Helen Mitchell Lewin, a direct descendant of Margaret Luttman Mitchell's uncle Andrew.

Graham Grant



Margaret's Memories: A snapshot of a conversation between Margaret Sharp and Liz MacFarlan, in the garden at Cluny Castle.

Born in Carrbridge in June 1930, Margaret Fleming was the eldest of 3 children. Her father was called up at the start of the war. In 1941, while stationed in the north of England, he was killed in a blitz. Margaret's mother had to go out to work, leaving Margaret in charge of her 2 younger sisters. Margaret has memories of this time, quite a lot of them about food.



"Food was scarce, then. We had a lot of rabbits for food, which the Gamekeeper would give to us. Rabbit stew was lovely."

"I remember going to the shop. We had a mile to go to the shop. I had to go down for sugar and the siren went. The shopkeeper said 'Hurry home,' Well, I ran home, but I forgot to take the sugar!"

"For school we had a piece with us, of course. My mother made dumpling - it was beautiful. There was a lot of 'I'll give you my sandwich if you give me the dumpling.' I think some of us lost out loads of times."

"The schoolchildren, if we had a ha'penny, there was white pudding and black pudding and fruit pudding, with raisins. You had to cook them. You would get it in slices. We used to buy fruit pudding in the morning and just eat it raw. It was good. There were no sweeties to buy because of rationing."

Margaret's Memories (Continued):

In 1957, Margaret, husband Donnie and 2 young sons Danny and Roger, came to Laggan to live on the Cluny Estate, where she has been ever since. Donnie was the new Stalker. The Sharp family moved into The Kennels, a small cottage 'up the hill' with no electricity. Lighting was by Tilley lamps, heat was an open fire downstairs and upstairs was unheated. "I seemed to be on my own a lot. I didn't see a lot of people," Margaret said. After the family was flooded out, they went to West Lodge and stayed there for the next twenty years. It had the luxury of electricity, "It was great. At the flick of a switch!"



During their second winter at West Lodge there was a hard freeze. None of the inside taps on the estate had running water for 13 weeks. Every 2 days a tanker drove up to the Castle, from where the men would collect water and distribute it to the various houses. Margaret remembers when the water finally came back on. ***"The kids had a bath, then when Donnie had his bath, the water started to come back up the pipes because the trap outside hadn't thawed. The plumber was too busy to come. We had to take the drain cover off and Donnie had to climb down a ladder and fill pails with sewage and I had to empty the pails one at a time into a pit!"*** It was a rude return to normality.



3 sons later - Michael, Callum and Ian - Margaret and the boys were housed in The Square. Once all 5 lads were at school, she had to go to work, cleaning at the Doctor's house and 'another big house'.



Margaret has fond memories of a busy social life in Laggan, with the WRI, Whist Drives, and Dances and Ceilidhs at the old hall. There was the hotel at Gaskmore and the pub at Kinlochlaggan. A beautiful voice, Margaret sang with choirs in Newtonmore, Kingussie and the Badenoch Choir. Although she never learned to drive a car, Margaret had a motor scooter for a while. ***"I enjoyed it until I realised the road was getting very busy."***



Margaret is still at Cluny, at the cottage by the castle. She keeps a watchful eye on the house and makes sure things are spick and span. 'Margaret's Ceilidh', held annually at the Hall, is a highlight of Laggan's calendar. Margaret is a joy to talk to, full of life and wonderful company; one of Laggan's many interesting folk.





We are seeing lots more visitors arriving at Creag Meagaidh NNR. We had 131 cars visiting the Reserve on Saturday 17th Apr, around 50% staying to the lower paths and facilities. There is still plenty snow on the high tops.



The fishing season is now underway and great to see so many friendly faces returning. And even better the vast majority are taking their rubbish away.



We had our first Black Grouse count of the season on the 12th April at 5am, 73 Males and 11 females were counted. This is the highest April count since 2015. The osprey and ring ouzels are amongst the many birds that have returned for the summer.



The Rural Skills program with Kingussie High School finished their term in April and they enjoyed learning about processing venison in the larder, livestock management and tree planting amongst many other activities.



Three Highland calves have been born so far, Douglas, Donald Angus and Fergus. They will be heading to the Isle of Rum at around a year old to live a long and happy life and help with grazing the grassland habitats.



After what has been a different year, we hope we will soon be able to take residential volunteers alongside local volunteers who help us with our management and can learn some new skills.



Over the next few weeks we will be giving the 8000 metres of paths their spring maintenance and making sure all facilities are ready for the visitor season. A new screen has been set up in the visitor centre where short films can be watched about the NNR.



We are also currently recruiting for 2 jobs which will be 2 year posts; one Modern Apprentice and one student placement, which will give the skills, experiences and training they need to develop their careers in rural jobs.



**'Lekking' A mating ritual used by male grouse
Jahama Highland Estate**



**Tern TV filming at Garva Bridge
Jahama Highland Estate**

An update from Jahama Highland Estates (JHE)


We have had a range of meetings with local heritage and cultural organisations including the CNPA, Badenoch Great place Project and of course our local group Laggan Heritage Society. These meetings covered a wide range of subjects but are in essence all about identifying key sites of interest on the JHE. In June, we will be underway with an internal branding project and this will include our own internal update on how we will take forward visitor interpretation, new product branding, Estate related signage and the wider management opportunities related to the many and varied visitors that recreate, visit and enjoy the JHE.

Our Golden Eagle population across the JHE are doing well. Recent visits from the Scottish Raptor Study Group have identified pairing activity at a number of key sites. Our work with the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project and the translocation of Golden Eagles from Glen Shero to Southern Scotland is also going from strength to strength. We have been in contact with local Badenoch schools and are planning a range of educational programmes for local schoolchildren.

Early signs are that this year has been also very positive for our wading bird population based in and around the Spey Reservoir and the upper headwaters of the Spey. Of particular note are sightings of Curlew which appear to have improved. Working with the RSPB, wading bird counts are underway.



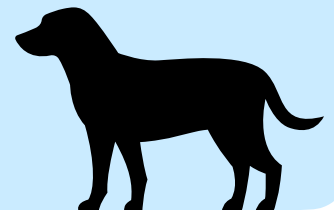
Black Grouse Leks on Glen Shero have also been busy this year. Our Estate staff team have submitted this year's count return to the RSPB. Images and video of Grouse can be viewed at our Instagram page: **JahamaHighlandEstates**



Channel 5's, 'Scenic rivers of the world' ran a great piece at the start of their new series. They filmed the Spey Fisheries Board and our Chief Operating Officer, Julia Stoddart, undertaking some successful electrofishing for salmon parr, high above the dam at Garve Bridge. Tern TV have also been out at Glen Shero filming a programme that follows the Spey from source to sea.

JHE staff sit on the regional visitor management group, set up in response to the expected increase in visitors to the region. Managing waste and litter, alerting visitors to the dangers of triggering major wildfires due to campsite fires getting out of control, keeping dogs under control and challenges related to overcrowding at popular destination sites are all under discussion and review. Of course, this is all against a background of providing a warm welcome for those that recreate and visit the JHE and who do so responsibly and in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Jonathan Hart, Liaison Manager.



...magical midge facts!

MALE MIDGES EMERGE IN EARLY MAY ... A WEEK LATER THEIR MATES, THE LADIES, ARRIVE AND THE MALES DIE OFF ... AFTER SEVEN DAYS THE EGGS MATURE ... TO BEGIN WITH THEY LIVE OFF FAT RESERVES BUT THEIR SUBSEQUENT 'FEEDS' DERIVE FROM BLOOD MEALS ... EGGS HATCH INTO SOIL-DWELLING LARVAE WHICH TRANSITION THROUGH THREE EVER-INCREASING STAGES UNTIL THEY PUPATE TO FORM INTO THE ADULT MIDGES WE KNOW ... THERE ARE OVER 35 DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCOTTISH MIDGE ... A MIDGES WINGSPAN IS ONLY 2-3MMM ... THE HIGHLAND MIDGE PREFERS TO LAY ITS EGGS IN SLIGHTLY ACIDIC HABITATS, TYPICALLY PEATY SOILS CONTAINING FAVOURITE PLANTS LIKE RUSHES.

Samaritans

<https://www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland>
Call 116 123
24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Scottish Recovery Network
<https://www.scottishrecovery.net>

C.A.L.M.

(Campaign Against Living
Miserably
<https://www.thecalmzone.net>

Call 0800 58 58 58
5pm-midnight, 365 days a
year

Citizens Advice Scotland

[https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
scotland/](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/)

Call 0800 028 1456
Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm

A moment of reflection ...

As we begin to exit from the lock-down restrictions of the pandemic new-found freedoms can still feel a little overwhelming. Pressures can still exist in our personal and work lives, from reduced incomes to long-term health inequalities. If you need some time-and-space to reflect-and-relax we've a few hints, tips and contacts that may help...

- * Listen to a favourite song or watch your favourite film
- * Smell some flowers or sniff some citrus. The smell of citrus can help us relax by increasing levels of the stress-related hormone norepinephrine

- * Take a long soak in a warm bath
- * Journal - Take a few moments each day to write your feelings down. Try listing three things you are grateful for in a Gratitude List
- * Drink a warm drink that doesn't contain alcohol or caffeine. Why not try herbal tea or a warm milk
- * Get a massage or perhaps a hand or foot rub
- * Take a walk or cycle outside
- * Cuddle a pet
- * Try taking a 'social media detox'. Try NOT logging into Facebook/Insta etc for 30 minutes, a day or even a week
- * Make some silly faces
- * Talk to a friend
- * Volunteer some time to help others
- * Try a small square of chocolate. Dark chocolate in particular can regulate levels of the stress hormone cortisol and stabilise the metabolism
- * Take a nap
- * Fill a page with doodles
- * Share a meal with a friend
- * Plant some seeds

Laggan Matters is designed by Artist
and filmmaker Robyn Woolston

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