

LAGGAN MATTERS

Neoni as leith an t-sluaigh, gun aorta an t-sluaigh

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Welcome to Laggan Matters

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

Welcome to our Winter edition of Laggan Matters...t's definitely becoming more like winter too!

Thanks to Phil at Ardverikie for continuing to print hard copies for those unable to download electronic ones.

As always, we welcome your contributions as there wouldn't be a newsletter without them! Therefore please keep sending them in along with any ideas for articles to jillvn@aol.com or amandagallagher17@yahoo.com



Charlie's Roses

For those of us who didn't know who planted the beautiful yellow rose opposite the Laggan Coffee Bothy, it was Charlie McLean. It came from Cluny gardens many years ago and is fondly known to some as 'Charlie's Roses'.



Where Is it?

Do you know where the photograph below was taken?



Answer in the next issue

Photographed by Jill Warner within the Laggan Parish

If you would like to send one of your photos for this regular feature, please email it to jillvn@aol.com

Answer to last issue's photo:-

Piper's Monument,
Cat Lodge

Jackie Ashworth



Kingussie, Laggan & Newtonmore Churches

Community B-B-Q & Picnic

The weather stayed dry for the annual community picnic on Adverikie Beach where we all gathered to enjoy a family day out with a delicious picnic and B-B-Q.

A cake stall provided 'pudding' while the more energetic amongst us played rounders, tug of war and generally enjoyed being on the beach.

It was wonderful opportunity to catch up with folk and spend time together.



Laggan Church

A date has not yet been fixed for the church building to close, but we have been told it is best to start thinking about future possibilities, including a community buy out.

As soon as we have all the relevant details from the Church of Scotland re closure we will arrange a meeting to which all interested members of the community are welcome. The date will be well publicised.



“Roaring Game” In Laggan

Graham Grant



Although forms of Curling were certainly played in Scotland since at least the 1500’s, it was 1838 before formalised rules were made and local clubs set up.

In Laggan, in Jan 1856, when the club played on Loch Crunachdan, North versus South, for the purpose of distributing meals to the poor, it was said “the roaring game” is likely to become a favourite in the Braes of Badenoch”

Loch Crunachdan



In Feb 1858 at Macpherson of Glentruim’s pond, Lady Cluny presented a “well chosen prize of 8 pairs of heather-coloured stockings, made by the Laggan Benevolent Knitting Society”.

In Feb 1865, again at Glentruim, the Macphersons and Macdonalds were beaten by The Rest, and the Married Men overcame the Batchelors. Following a piped march to the mansion house and a sumptuous repast containing beef and greens, the curling kettle was wheeled round and round amid cheers and songs.

Glentruim Pond at the Kennels



In 1873 several games were played at Gorsteon on the old river bed (now tree covered below the Community Forest car park), and in Feb 1874 the newly instituted Cluny Castle Club played their opening game in a new pond near the castle. “Cluny asked for a temporary pause and called upon all present to drink, in overwhelming bumpers, to success to the club.”

In Dec1878, Laggan the “parent club of the district met the young and flourishing Kingussie club on Loch Ovie. They met and parted as all true ‘Knights of the Broom’ always do, in best of humour”

Cluny Pond below the Castle



In Jan 1879, rinks from both Laggan clubs played on the river and in Feb 1882 Laggan played Kingussie at Drumgask - 2 rinks on the 'regular' pond and a 3rd on the old channel of the Spey (at Gorstean)

Drumgask Pond behind the Steading

In Jan 1885 the opponents Spean CC were beaten on Loch Laggan, when "Dr MacRae gave the memory to our (recently deceased) grand old Chief, Cluny, which was drunk in solemn silence". In March Wm Kennedy, Sherramore invited the club to play on 'his' pond -Loch Crunachdan. "None were killed or amissing and only Charley Oig acquired contusions to which aquavitae and Irish stew very speedily affected a cure". In the following weeks both clubs played for a meal for the poor, then a silver cup and medal, the prize presented by Sir JW and Lady Ramsden.

In 1887 Sir John's Cup was competed for on the Spey opposite Gergask Old Schoolhouse and a week later Cluny Castle played Kingussie "on a famous pond below Balgowan".

In Jan 1891 during a game in Kingussie, Laggan were entertained to a hot lunch and later to an "admirable dinner including a lengthy toast list. Then at a Curlers Court, 7 new members were initiated as Knights of the Broom, the stoup was roused and the toast list resumed"

In Feb 1894 a match was played on Loch Laggan, between rinks skipped by E Cameron, The Hotel and Mackenzie, gardener, and in 1895 North and South played for a silver cruet stand. Later, Newtonmore, 'only beginners made their first appearance on Laggan ice....by and by with practice...they are sure to be heard of soon'. In April a concert was held in the school "to raise funds for a new house and curling pond".

Perhaps these never materialised as thereafter references to curling in Laggan dry up, but for a match versus Newtonmore in 1913. Some ponds can still be seen.

Any further details, gladly received.



Grantown Skating Pond

Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve

The gradual turn of summer to autumn signals change in the world of Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve. As we begin the transition to a new season, we look back at a great end to the summer with many courses, visits and events to make the most of the tail end of the pleasant weather. Visitor numbers are continuing to rise which is also helping our venison sales direct from the farmhouse.



The hardworking students of Kingussie High School have continued their weekly visits as part of our rural skills program. They have recently been involved in many exciting and hands-on activities including herding our Highland cows between pastures, constructing bird boxes for the alder wood and learning about the deer larding process.

In late September, we hosted another deer management best practice day. This special occasion brought together 60 people from local wildlife and conservation organisations for a day of field-based exercises, workshops and talks to demonstrate expert skills in deer population monitoring, herbivore impact assessments, culling, shooting, extraction and larding. The day ended with a talk and discussion with the chair of the Association of Deer Management Groups. Attendees were treated to a delicious venison mince chili prepared by a small local catering company with deer culled on the reserve.

Researchers from the University of Stirling and University of Cambridge have embarked on voyages all over the reserve in all kinds of weather and midge conditions to collect field data on soil matter and birch-wood expansion as part of studies monitoring the effects of the regeneration of trees. Their data will help scientists understand how upland ecosystems are responding to our land management work.

Did you know that Creag Meagaidh is host not only to young trees, but also to ancient trees festooned with lichens, bryophytes, fungi and ferns in our alder wood? The Woodland Trust visited in mid-October with an army of volunteers to record the ancient tree habitat features, including deadwood and holes in trunks, for their Ancient Wood Inventory. It is brilliant to see local organisations and communities engaging with and learning about the nature on the reserve.



We said a fond farewell to the swallows and ospreys that are summer residents of Creag Meagaidh; they have left on their annual voyage to their winter nesting sites in Africa. Our over-winter residence remains here however, and much work on the hill still lies ahead for our reserve staff and volunteers.

Rory Richardson

Earba Public Consultation Events



Earba Ltd is proposing to construct a 1,800 Megawatt, 40 Gigawatt-hour large-scale long-duration electricity storage pumped storage hydroelectric scheme within Ardverikie Estate.

We invite you to come and find out about our proposals for this development and for you to share your views about them.

Pre-application Public Consultation Events

We are holding public consultation events at:

- Laggan Community Hall between 13:00 and 19:30 on Tuesday 21 November 2023
- Spean Bridge Community Centre between 13:00 and 19:30 on Wednesday 22 November 2023

During these drop-in events, members of the community will be able to view key project information about our proposals and there will be the opportunity to ask questions to the project team and share feedback ahead of the submission of a planning application, which is expected to be in early 2024.

We look forward to seeing you at one of these events. Information on the scheme is available on our website: www.earbastorage.co.uk

If you wish to make comments on the Proposed Development, you may do so in writing at the public consultation events, or alternatively at any time by email to info@gilkesenergy.com.

Comments made to Gilkes Energy Ltd are not representations to the Council. When Gilkes Energy Ltd submits a planning application on behalf of Earba Ltd there will be an opportunity to make representations on the application to the Council.

If you have any questions, please contact us at: info@gilkesenergy.com

Vet Talk ... Where's Wally Now? Trevor Warner MRCVS

We were driving between Newtonmore and Laggan one evening when we came across an injured tawny owl lying in the road. Fortunately, there were no other cars, so we were able to pick him up and bring him back to our house. We have large outdoor kennels so, having checked him over we were able to put him in the kennel area overnight.

He was clearly young. Examination the next morning revealed no obvious wing or leg fractures, and he was much more alert, so we elected to try and release him that evening near the point we found him. However, it was very quickly evident that he was unable to take off, so we picked him back up and took him back home.



The next day I took him to the practice I work at and X-rays revealed that he had fractured the right coracoid bone. Along with the clavicle and scapula this bone forms the pectoral girdle. Damage to the coracoid bone is most likely to occur with frontal collisions when the wings are fanned. Affected birds are unable to gain lift.

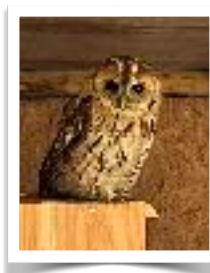
Surgical repair has been described but, in most cases, conservative treatment can be at least as effective. However, it is important to allow some movement so that the muscles can still develop. We therefore decided to keep him in the kennel area for 6 weeks with pain relief and then release him if he was doing well. Obviously, he now needed a name and Jill decided on Wally.

In the first few days it was important that he was eating so Caroline Hunt kindly let us have a few frozen chicks. Initially we were worried as he didn't eat them but fortunately, he suddenly rallied and was eating 2 day-old chicks a day. This meant we needed a source of frozen day-old chicks urgently and guess who provided next day delivery? Yes, you probably guessed, Amazon!!

He continued to do well but even though he had perches etc he was not sleeping well in the day, so we decided to get him a Tawny owl box and placed this in the kennel area. Even though he never went in it he loved the perch attached to it. He continued to grow and get much stronger and was soon flying down to get the chicks.

As the release day neared Jill contacted The Barn owl Society who were extremely helpful and advised us to confirm he was able to take off strongly and then release him. They also warned us that unlike Barn owls Tawnies rarely returned to the site of rescue.

We set up our trail camera which confirmed he was indeed now a strong flier and that evening we open the kennel door and waited. He did not fly out straight away as we had thought but obviously took his time as the next morning he had gone.



We put out food for a few days but as expected he did not return. The owl box is now in one of our trees so you never know, he may return one day. We do hear tawnies often at night so maybe he is one of them but if not, he is hopefully having a happy life somewhere in Laggan.

Remembering Jean Burnard 9/3/34-21/6/23

Jean was born on the 9th March, 1934 in Leeds to Albert and Violet Widdall. Her father was in the police and during the war and had a role in protection for official visitors to the city. The family moved to Bridlington and it was from there that Jean attended Ilkley teacher training College, becoming a special needs teacher at Hilderthorpe Primary School.

Photos of Jean as a girl and young woman show her sporty side, playing cricket and hockey.

She met and married Percy Burnard, who was Deputy Head at Hilderthorpe Junior School, in the late sixties. They both continued to work at the school until Percy's retirement in about 1980.



On marrying into the Burnard family, she gained 3 grown-up step-children, and an increasing number of grandchildren and eventually, great-grandchildren.

Jean and Percy loved to travel - in Europe but also came to Laggan, initially camping in the Blargie campsite. Finally, they bought a plot of land to build their home, Am Bothan, and settled into retirement there.

Jean and Percy were involved in many clubs, organisations and societies in the Laggan area, as well as participating in many community and church events. They also continued to travel in the UK and Europe. They met everyone and knew everyone, or their families, and loved speaking to and spending time with friends, neighbours and members of the community. Jean and Percy were warm and welcoming hosts to many friends and family members, who enjoyed discovering the Laggan area.

I first met Jean and Percy when I came to Laggan with my future husband, Percy and Jean's grandson, Pete in about 1990. This was as part of a group from Manchester University looking for snow to ski. We slept in the Village Hall and were invited over to Am Bothan one evening for soup and sandwiches. We were packed into their living room, but I remember a lively evening of friendly conversation. After Percy passed away, Jean remained active, continuing to participate in groups and clubs, and was also still on several committees.

However, in the last 5 years, she became increasingly physically frail, which restricted her outings more and more. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at the beginning of the pandemic during the first lockdown.

With the help of carers, and the Laggan community, she was able to stay in her home until just before Christmas 2022. A bout of poor health meant that she had to leave Am Bothan, her home for over 40 years, and move to Mains House nursing home. She finally passed away on 21st June 2023 as a result of her Alzheimer's.

The Burnard family were touched to see so many members of the community at Jean's funeral, and by many kind thoughts and words. We would like to thank everyone who contributed in many ways to make it a fitting send-off for Jean.

Elsbeth Rae Burnard

Cycle Ride

Amanda Gallagher

This is a lovely 12 mile circular cycle which goes through varied and stunning scenery using good estate trails and roads.

Park at the Gallovie entrance to Ardverikie (layby on A86 opposite) and cycle up the track and over bridge turning right where after a few hundred yards you will come to a barrier. Go past the barrier until you come to a fork in the road. Take the left up a fairly steep hill signposted Gallovie farm. This track climbs steadily upwards for a mile going through Gallovie farm and forestry until you get to the sign for the upper Pattack falls. There is an opportunity to get off the bike here and take a short walk to see these beautiful falls. Continue on the track until you get to the first cycle friendly gate.



This next pretty section runs along the river

Pattack for another mile. After crossing 2 wooden bridges and passing another small waterfall at Mrs Browns pool the track levels off onto open ground still with the river on your left and with stunning views to the mountains.



Continue to cycle for another mile (ignore the first track on the right) until you come to the end of a section of woodland on your left and take the track to the right. This is a section across open moorland with great views. The track loops round and after a mile and a half goes through a section of birch until going across another section of moorland for another mile until you reach a metal gate. Use the cycle friendly gate and continue until you come to the end of the track and meet a wide logging road. You have now done 6 miles and if you turn right here it will take you down to Ardverikie wood yard.

However turn left and continue on this great track for a mile and carry straight on when you come to a crossroads (the track to the left takes you to Loch an h'Earba and the track right is a very steep descent to Ardverikie castle)



The wide logging road winds down and round for a couple of miles until you come to a sharp bend to the left. Instead of taking this which continues on to Loch Laggan take the smaller track in front of you across a wooden bridge and through woods eventually emerging at the hidden gem that is Loch an Righ. Continue round the loch on the track which winds down ignoring paths to the left and after less than a mile you will emerge on a wider track, turn left and you will see Ardverikie castle in front of you. Turn right and cycle on to the tarmac estate road with Loch Laggan on your left. This is a beautiful 2 mile section of road with great views of the loch and the magnificent woodland. When you reach the end of the loch you can turn left to access the beach but to continue

the cycle leave the tarmac road and take the track to the right which leads to the sawmill and wood yard. Please take care here and respect the estate workers. Take this track through the wood yard and continue another mile until you reach the road up to Gallovie farm turning left towards the barrier and your starting point.

Alternatively this cycle can be done from Laggan by taking the road up to

Sherramore and the track through the deer park which comes out at the end of Loch Laggan. You would enter Ardverikie estate at the gate house and take the turn for the wood yard and then continue until the Gallovie farm turning. This would add another 8 miles to the loop, returning to Laggan up the steep track back to Sherramore.

Editor's note: "The estate is often a location for various filming and commercial events, so very occasionally estate or security staff might ask you to wait or take an alternative route. If you see filming activity taking place you can always check access arrangements with the Estate Office in advance on 01528 544300"

What's on ... November 2023 to March 2024

Laggan War Memorial Remembrance Sunday 12th November

- Sunday 12th November 9.00 am (prompt start) at Laggan War Memorial
- 9.30 am church service in Laggan Church

Helping Hands Lunch Wednesday 15th November

- Wednesday 15th November 12noon - 1.30pm
- Soup and a roll
- Laggan Community Hall



Movie Evening Friday 17th November

- Friday 17th November 7.00pm - 10.00pm
- Cool Runnings
- Laggan Church

Earba Public Consultation Event Tuesday 21st November

- Tuesday 21st November
- From 1pm to 7.30pm
- Laggan Community Hall

Movie Afternoon Wednesday 6th December

- Wednesday 6th December 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Miracle on 34th Street
- Laggan Church

Carols For Everyone Sunday 10th December

- Sunday 10th December
- 7pm in Laggan Church
- Refreshments provided



Movie Evening Friday 15th December

- Friday 15th December 7.00pm - 10.00pm
- Arthur Christmas in Laggan Church

Senior Citizens' Party Sunday 17th December

- Sunday 17th December
- Laggan Community Hall
- Time to be confirmed



Christmas Eve Service Sunday 24th December

- Sunday 24th December
- Watchnight Service at 11pm
- Laggan Church



Helping Hands Jumble Sale Saturday 10th February

- Saturday 10th February
- 10.00 to 12 noon
- Laggan Community Hall

Helping Hands Soup Lunch Wednesday 21st February

- Wednesday 21st February
- 12 noon to 1.30pm
- Laggan Community Hall



Quiz Night March ...

- Date and Time to be confirmed
- Laggan Community Hall



Helping Hands Easter Tea Wednesday 20th March

- Wednesday 20th March
- 2.30pm to 4.00pm
- Laggan Community Hall



Laggin Behind - the TGO Challenge!

Willie Todd

Each year in mid-May, along with the new lambs you may have noticed a steady trickle of walkers heading eastwards along Strathspey. Often camping by Garva Bridge or refuelling at the Coffee Bothy. Most of the hikers will be taking part in the The Great Outdoors Challenge, an annual event where up to four hundred people set off from fourteen locations on the west coast and walk across to the east coast.

The format is simple - you have up to fifteen days to complete your journey to the east coast and can finish anywhere between Fraserburgh and Arbroath but you must then sign out at the Park Hotel in Montrose, which is the hub of the event and party central. Entrants plan individual routes across the hills and through the glens giving an infinity of route choices. If you have high ground in your route, then you also need to include 'foul weather' or 'feeling weary' alternatives.

Although you can walk in small groups many people choose to walk solo. Long distance walking by yourself can be a lonely affair but on the Challenge you often suddenly meet another challenger in the remotest of places and it feels natural to walk and talk with them for a while before your routes diverge, perhaps meeting them again days later. Some people meet on day one and stay together for the whole walk and at least one couple met and later married.

The average age of people taking part is in the mid-fifties and the oldest person that I know of who completed the crossing was ninety-one and rumoured to live on a diet of oats and water, so age is never an excuse for not doing it!

The weather has a huge effect of course as wind and rain can drastically change the experience and landscape, with even small streams in spate becoming impossible to cross safely and camping difficult. Surprisingly it is hot weather that seems to cause more people to drop out due to blisters and exhaustion. Control in Montrose keeps an eye on everyone and you have to phone in every few days to let them know that you are safe.

I've made five crossings now. Twice passing through Laggan and twice through Dalwhinnie. I was drawn to do my first one when I was sixty and living in France still and homesick for the Scottish hills. I started at Shiel Bridge and a couple of days took me over the hills and through Glen Affric then on to Fort Augustus for a good night in the pub. Then a big day to our old house in Newtonmore and on over the Cairngorms to Braemar and the coast at Montrose. I was blown away by the beauty of our hills but also by the friendliness of the people that I met along the way.

The event is run by Ali Ogden and Sue Oxley from Newtonmore and there may be a few places left for 2024 if you are interested in having a go - you won't regret it!

tgochallenge@gmail.com



Looking back at Sgurr na Ciche



Towards Laggan from Geal Charn



Beinn Alligin



Rhum and Eigg from Luinne Bheinn

Ladies Golf Champion



Congratulations to Jean Campbell from Strathmashie who became the Ladies Club Champion of Newtonmore Golf Club in July. Jean took up golf 20 years ago and joined the golf club shortly after.



Cross Country U23

James Simon



I had a great season last year racing across Scandinavia. It was my first year in senior and u23 level so it was a big step up. My first races were in Norway and Sweden where I qualified for the u23 world championships in Whistler, Canada. The races went well with a massive PB in the Sprint.

This year I am heading back out to Norway where I hope to qualify for this year's U23 world champs in Slovenia and improve on my points. I will also be racing across Scandinavia again.

The British team is based in Lillehammer for most of the season so that is where I'll be staying. The training facilities are great there and the Norwegians are very talented so are very good to train with.

The Camanachd Cup

Clare Falconer



Kingussie is synonymous with shinty and as a family we are very lucky to be associated with it. The Falconer name goes back 5 generations playing for Kingussie shinty club with James and his sister Katie being 5th generation.

James was a wee bit late in picking up the sport, it wasn't really until p5 but he quickly developed into the enthusiastic and skilful player he is today. James and Katie would practice in the stackyard at home, with homemade goals and take on their father at any opportunity. Throughout primary the team we know today was developing, the highlight of which was James captaining the winning p7 team and bringing home the Mackay cup, which hadn't been in Kingussie for several years. After leaving primary school he played at all levels, gaining experience and coming on as a sub in the 2014 Camanachd Cup final which Kingussie went on to win, a real highlight as he was only 16.

However in the last couple of seasons James has been blighted by some nasty injuries, some would say more stitches than goals! The highlight of last year was winning the grand slam along with fellow Laggan players Savio from Blaragie and Calum from Gaskbeg.

James scored in the final minutes of the Camanachd Cup and made sure the trophy was in Kingussie for another year, a very proud moment indeed for our family.

This season James was chosen to captain the club, again a very proud family. So far he's lifted two trophies, the Mactavish and the Camanachd, the league title yet to be decided. He also represented Scotland in the shinty hurling international against Ireland this October.

Although not playing any more due to work commitments his sister Katie has played for the Badenoch ladies after being persuaded to try it by a teacher. She also has a Valerie Fraser Camanachd Cup medal.



Laggan Helping Hands

The Helping Hands Team

- All 4 defibrillators are now in place at: Drs Surgery, Laggan Hotel, Pottery Coffee shop, Wolftrax

Each one is checked by local volunteers every fortnight and the information passed to OneKingussie who monitor the database for all the defibs in the area. This highlights when pads, batteries etc are due to run out so that they can be ordered in advance. All money raised through Helping Hands specifically for defibrillators is kept in a separate account managed by the Emergency Medical Fund, and will be used to cover those costs when needed.

Along with the Kingussie and Newtonmore ones, our defibrillators are all registered on The Circuit - the national defibrillator network. This means that when someone has a life-threatening cardiac arrest, the ambulance service can tell the person calling 999 where to find the nearest life-saving defibrillator.

Each defibrillator has audio instructions to follow when one is in use, but we will arrange a training session early next year for anyone interested in practising with one.

Thanks to everyone for their support

- The next Helping Hands get together will be a soup lunch on Wednesday 15th November at Laggan Community Hall from 12 noon to 1.30 pm

We look forward to seeing you all there



- The food share shed continues to be well supported and Caberfeigh left some 'winter bags' again this year for folk to take.

The Laggan Forest Trust

Autumn 2023

In the Blackwood Forest, timber harvesting activities by FLS are expected to finish by the end of 2023. The Trust will press FLS to ensure that the core paths through this area extending to Feagour and Pattack are appropriately clear. A meeting is scheduled between FLS and LFT in mid November with FLS' new Regional Manager Alex Macleod, when a variety of issues on the future management of the Forest will be discussed. These will include:

- how the Trust could revert to having any role in the future management of the Forest,
- how the community would be able to secure better use of any redundant assets,
- an update on the next 10-year Forest Management Plan - which is now 2 years late.
- opportunities for improving visitor management at the Car Park & Bike Trails.

Other on-going projects are:

1) The building of a new BLUE mountain bike trail at the Laggan Wolfrax Centre to "complete the set". With the co-operation of FLS, the contractor (CRC) is expected to complete these new Trails as well as some significant improvements to the Red and Green trails by the end of November. A section of the new trails was opened formally by Kate Forbes, our local MSP, with partner organisations attending to "see for themselves". The Trust is very grateful for the collaboration from Sportscotland, FLS, CNPA, HIE, Badenoch & Strathspey Trail Association - all of whom have provided funding for these improvements to the trail centre. This project is one of the sportscotland legacy projects aimed at increasing participation in cycling in Scotland following the UCI championships held in Scotland in August. Pupils from Kingussie High School were first to test the trails out during Kate's visit.



A much-needed boost to the local economy is envisaged with more visitors to the Laggan area and of course our various local cafes and self-catering facilities. We cannot thank Cristian enough for his coordination and project management skills to bring this project to completion. Very well done.

2) The "Connecting Laggan" project - not much of an update in this newsletter. There have been prolonged discussions with Transport Scotland seeking road safety measures around the Laggan Village junction and the Spey Road Bridge. Further work is needed to confirm what is possible but Transport Scotland is unwilling to support design proposals for new road safety and does not have resources to complete the re-alignment studies at this time. This will delay development of this important connecting path between Laggan Village and Strathmashie, but the work done to date can be brought forward as soon as the opportunity arises.

3) The Wolfrax Café - The main tourist season has finished and with it a difficult decision, at present, to close the café over the forthcoming winter months. A combination of many factors from the previous 2 winters, weather and Covid related, resulted in a trading loss for the café, and it had been hoped that the summer of 2023 would have provided sufficient headroom to allow the café to operate as normal. The well known cost of living issues, the substantial increases in food and energy costs and a reduction in spend from those people visiting the café have all contributed to this difficult decision, despite the great efforts of the café team, whom we thank for their support during the year. Since the new trails opened, there has been many more trail (and café) users so we will be monitoring this closely.

4) Water Supply - Strathmashie Forestry Cottages. Few in the wider community will be aware that Laggan Community Housing Ltd maintain a water supply on behalf of all the properties there. In April 2022, the supply was deemed unfit for use without additional treatment and LCH initiated a significant project to resolve the problem. The Trust was initially notified in December 2022 that LCH may need to submit a planning application before the issue could be resolved. On investigation it was found that the borehole and header tanks supplying the water were on LFT land and that no clear legal rights to the water existed for the LCH properties or the privately owned properties, nor were the lines of responsibility for maintaining the supply at all clear. This is especially important as LCH notified their shareholders in September 2022 of their intention to sell the tenanted properties, and so potentially relinquishing their responsibility for maintaining the water supply. In the meantime, LFT and LCH are working together to resolve this for the long term benefit of all residents.

5) Trust Directors: Finally, the Trust was sorry that Mignonne Khazaka had to stand down from the Trust board, but we were pleased that 2 new Directors joined the Trust Board recently, Donald Cowan, as a member director and Megan Griffiths as a Co-opted Director. We thank Mignonne for all her support to the Trust whilst a Trustee Director and it is very pleasing that members of the Community continue to take an active interest in the future of the Trust. Angus Armstrong, David Narro and Michael Sharp are the other member directors. Megan Griffiths and Colin Morgan, as co-opted directors are appointed until the next AGM.

Colin Morgan, On behalf of The Laggan Forest Trust

Laggan Community Council

Amanda Gallagher

All Community Councils were up for election in October and Laggan was in the fortunate position of having 6 (out of a possible 8) people putting themselves forward to stand as councillors and therefore able to form a new Community Council for 4 years.

Your Community Councillors are: Mignonne Khazaka , Amanda Gallagher, Karen Thew, Clare Falconer, Cath Hamill & Kevin Fletcher

Office bearers will be announced soon.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the outgoing councillors for the time, commitment and support that they gave. In particular I would like to thank Colin Morgan for all his hard work and wish him all the best for the future in his new home. He will be a very hard act to follow.

Christian Engineering In Development (CED)

The word Christian is some how a bad word for many people these days. Maybe it conjures up images of judgemental, self righteous, tweed clad joy killers, I don't know.

But some of it is adventurous, exciting and transformational. In amongst some of this has been my involvement, since 2006, with Christian Engineers in Development, CED for short. It is what it says it is, we're a bunch of Engineers, who are Christians, getting involved in development work.

We're about 70 volunteer Engineers of different types, Civil, Structural, Mechanical, Water, Electrical, Agricultural etc, but all Engineers. We also have others who are members who are not Engineers, who help make things happen in the background.

We have a strap line "sharing skills, changing lives". And this is what we try to do in several countries in the Developing World.

We are working on a variety of things just now.

- A tiny hydroelectric installation in the DRC to run a freezer at Lwamba hospital to preserve inoculations.
- We are upgrading an aging hydro project in Uganda to provide light and power to a charity hospital at Kuluva.
- A programme of training and building ferrocement rainwater harvesting "jars" from 1,000L for widows up to 10,000L for community buildings. These provide water through the dry season.
- In Siere Leone we have sunk a bore hole in Manowa, built a reinforced concrete tower, topped it with a water tank and laid out miles of pipes and tap stands to provide for some 6,000 people.
- One of our members, Nigel Heeler, has developed a really cool water filtration system, called Clariwash. It requires no power to run and using clever hydraulics backwashes itself when the filtration material starts to clog up. This has been installed in a number of locations and one is being assembled just now at Kagango in Uganda.

I have a small involvement with the rainwater harvesting work. I was lucky to visit Rwanda last September and to meet a community of returning refugees from the genocide era. Here CED had installed rainwater harvesting tanks to collect rain from folks corrugated iron roofs. We also improved the mud brick houses the people had been provided by the government and encouraged kitchen gardening. All water projects also have a training side with an emphasis on hygiene.

Words can be a bit dull and I'm always happy to talk about this stuff if anyone is interested to hear more from Rwanda or Zanzibar or just about CED itself.

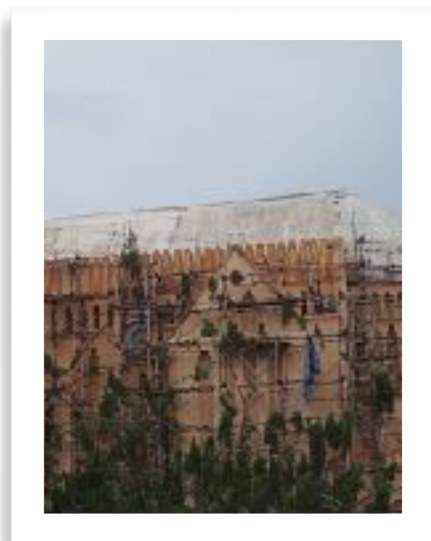
Angus Armstrong



Church like we do not do it at home. This was a celebration service in Rwanda on completion of their project. Great fun and a lot of noise!



Underground storage tanks in the Thar Desert, Pakistan.



Zanzibar Cathedral undergoing renovation - hopefully it will not fall down now.



A typical water tap stand. It is transformational to peoples lives.



A typical rain water harvesting ferrocement tank at Kavumu in Rwanda (5,000L)



The bulk storage tank tank at Kavumu in Rwanda (40,000L)

St Kenneth's

Campbell Simon

Ardverikie Estate have recently undertaken, at no little cost, to remove the ivy that has covered St Kenneth's for a very long time. They have cut it back as far as is possible, without damaging the structure.

The effect of this is that the interior is much more open, with the font in the door-way being visible rather than at arm's length through ivy. This font was cut out of solid granite and when the new chapel of St Michael was built, the Bishop decided to leave it to show that St Kenneth's was a Catholic Chapel.



At the same time Ardverikie have removed two very large trees that were growing adjacent to the walls, so giving a much clearer view of the outline of the church but with the one gable. It has been standing thus for over 100 years. The Estate are seeking funding to further improve the site.

St Kenneth was born in Ireland of poor parents and was a shepherd before becoming a monk. He accompanied St Columbus to Inverness to visit King Brude. He then set up a 'cell' in Laggan and lived for two years converting the Picts to Christianity. He moved round Scotland from the Uists to Fife. There are many churches dedicated to him. He died in Ireland in the year 600, aged 84.

It is said that St Kenneth's was built by Allan Nan Creach ie Allan of the Spoils in the 15th Century. Allan Cameron was of the Locheil family and was noted for cattle stealing amongst other crimes. Eventually he agreed to build seven churches as a penance. St Kenneth's was one.

It is also said that the churchyard surrounding St Kenneth's was much bigger. The burials predate the construction of roads, so the coffins made of wicker were carried for many miles with designated stopping places where bearers would change and a stone placed on a cairn. There are a few graves inside the church itself.

Old Cluny Monument

Laggan Heritage has secured funding from SSE for the repair of the Cross on the Old Cluny Monument. It was hoped that the work would have been completed this year, but the Stonemason assured it will now be done in the Spring.

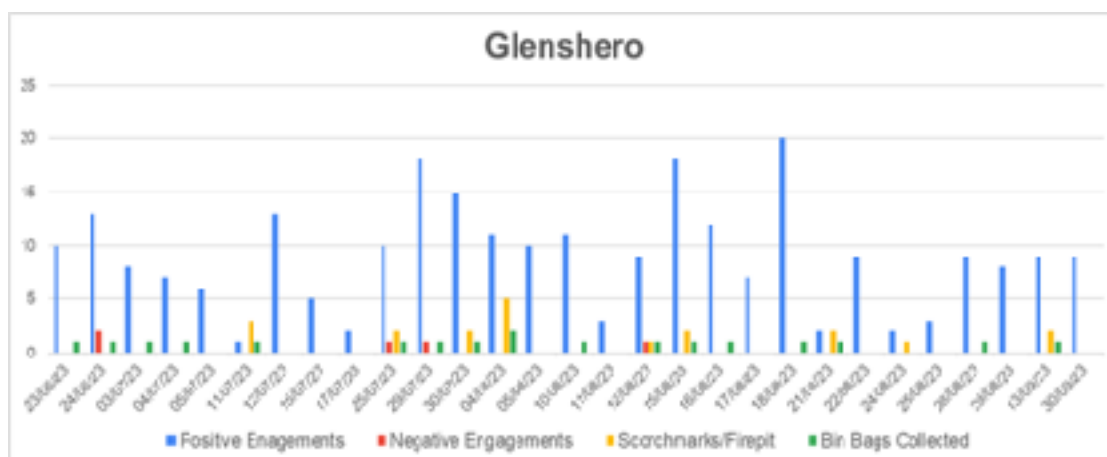
Jahama Highland Estates News

Another super busy summer across the whole of the Glenshero estate. Highlights this year have included: Local resident Angus Todd returned to Glenshero this summer, working as a ranger. It was a super busy summer for Angus and his contribution to Glenshero has once again been a highlight of the year for us. This year he was heavily involved in the 2023 RSPB wading bird counts, a variety of other ecology visits, hosted several of our Smelter development days and engaged with the full range of visitors and tourists to the landholding. Once again, a huge amount of litter and waste was recovered by both Angus and our Glenshero staff from across the property including bothies, car parks and most sections of woodland. However, probably the most significant contribution Angus made was making visitors aware of the issues linked to campfires and the risks of a major wildfire getting underway at Glenshero. Angus, as well as the full time Stalking team, requested politely that visitors did not have campfires (in line with the CNPA guidance) yet this was often ignored once our staff had left the locus. Campfires were also very prevalent this year in the woods at



the side of the public road in Glenshero. Many fires were put out, dug out or doused with water. Thankfully, due to the diligence of our whole staff team we did not experience any of these smaller fires becoming large scale wildfires at Glenshero. Our Glenshero staff did, however, respond along with Corrou Estate staff and the SFRS, to a major wildfire at Fersit. This was successfully managed before spreading out across multiple Estates.

This year we have tried to quantify our ranger activity and I attach the initial statistics for Glenshero. It is very difficult to put a fiscal value on the role of our rangers and we are still working out the best way of detailing the value add that they bring to the wider company and our desire for communities to have improved visitor experiences when on JAHAMA landholdings.



What's really encouraging from this data is the low number of negative engagements that our staff have experienced this year and is testament to both Angus's approach and the work that all our Estate staff put into welcoming responsible access onto the Glenshero Estate.

However sadly, this year we experienced several vandalism incidents with break ins at several properties at Glenshero. All were dealt with swiftly and promptly by Head Stalker Bruce Hendry and the wider estate team.



This year we introduced our Fort William smelter staff to all the great catchment improvement and environmental restoration works underway at Glenshero. We hosted 5 shifts (averaging 15 people per day visit) from the smelter, for full day tours of Glenshero.



We highlighted our work with the Spey Fishery Board, RSPB, our peatland restoration and discussed our plans for future woodland restoration and other biodiversity projects. Linking our staff from across our different businesses to the importance of the wider Estate landholdings is an important objective for the company, as we continue our drive to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The stag season has now finished for the year, and we are now into our hind season. Head Stalker Bruce Hendry and his team of Edward, Ryan and Duncan all report a very successful year with a good number of healthy stags to date. Our bookings at Sherramore Lodge and Sherrabeg cottage remain very positive. Our Estate accommodation and maintenance staff Ish Hendry, Shona, Angus, and Eric are all well and remain busy on a wide range of activities.

Out on the farm, Chloe has selected her best stock ewe lambs, which will remain in the Estate flock, wintering at Glenshero. Here they will be well looked after, ensuring that they grow into good quality ewes. These ewe lambs will go to the tup this time next year, lambing in 2025. Those lambs not selected went to the sales. Recent lamb sales have gone very well with the top selling price being £78 per lamb. Last year's top price was £69 per head. A great improvement. All 12 tups have all had an 'MOT' - dosed, vaccinated, mobility checked, feet trimmed and checked. Chloe is working with Bruce and Jamie to move sheep between Inverlair and Glenshero, with the tups going out with the ewes from the 15th November.

Lastly, we are pleased to report that our activities at Glenshero were a significant contributor to the company winning the 2023 Stromar Award for Excellence in Natural Capital, Climate Change and Sustainable Communities.



Jonathan Hart

Laggan Community Housing Ltd - Catch-up

As ever we seem to be playing catch-up with the Strathmashie water supply.

For reasons beyond my ken, the present LFT Directors only became aware that the Strathmashie water supply came from a borehole in their land when LCH's planning application required their acknowledgement as owners of the land.

LFT's responsibility to their trustees requires a Deed of Servitude to be drawn up. It might be thought that in a very small community that 2 small committees might make do with a jointly agreed letter, (many in this community are both trustees of LFT and shareholders of LCH) but such is life these days, it seems we must pay our respective solicitors to draw up a legal agreement.

So the Strathmashie residents did not have an improved water supply by the end of October and to add to their angst when the rain was at its worst the water in the bog being at a far higher level than ever before flooded the pump house and the water supply became a weak tea colour. HighWater came to our rescue and sorted out the pump house, checked the tanks on the hill side and the water has returned to normal. We now have sandbags at the Pump House door.

The use of the un-tarred forest track for all vehicles delivering to the proposed Distillery has caused some worries with those residents of Strathmashie living closest to the track. Since the building of the sub-station with lorries of all sizes traveling too fast, then wood lorries plus great number of speeding vans and cars. One cannot blame the residents for saying "not again!" and "why us!"

LCH has asked for both Highland Council and the CNP to be mindful of the worries of the residents. Speed, dust, mud, and small problem of the waste water pipe that goes under the road.

Proposed picnic site houses -

The Communities Housing Trust has lodged a pre-planning application with Highland Council on our behalf, what happens next depends on the Highland Council's views.

Sheena Slimon

Secretary Laggan Community Housing Ltd. 2186 RS
sheena.feithbuidhe@icloud.com - 07398305278 /544722



Stronelaig Community Fund

The Stronelaig Community Fund for the Laggan area is now open to receive applications. There are two grant programmes currently available the main fund £1,001 - £10,000 and the large fund £10,001 - £25,000.

Three deadlines for applications have been set:

30th November 2023

31st March 2024

31st July 2024

Applications for the Main and Large fund will be reviewed by a panel made up of local representatives. Decisions on applications will be made within 8-10 weeks of the grant deadline.

To be eligible to apply the applicant must be a fully constituted group and the activity/project must benefit residents of the Laggan area. The eligibility criteria, application forms and guidance can be found on the SSE website <https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/community-fund-locations/great-britain/stronelaig/>

In addition to the Main and Large fund the Micro Grants (up to £1,000) will continue to be available and will be administered by the Laggan Community Council. The Micro grants are open to unconstituted groups and individuals. Please note that Micro grants will not support individuals for their personal gain (other than skills development). The application can be found on the SSE website but please contact the community council for deadlines secretarylcc@laggan.com.

Please get in touch if you wish to discuss a project proposal or have any queries about the application process.

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