

Laggan Matters 5

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 5

This edition contains:

- Road updates
- Reports from Laggan organisations
- Results of the Summer in Laggan photo challenge
- Upcoming events
- Interesting walks
- Laggan history.....and so much more!

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

We are all hoping that with the easing of covid restrictions many aspects of community life can return with more events and opportunities to get together. If you or an organisation you know of, have events on that you wish to publicise, please let Jill or I know and we will make sure it's in the next edition of Laggan Matters.

'Summer' in Gaelic

=

Samhradh

'barn owl' in Gaelic

=

comhachag

'blaeberry' in Gaelic

=

dearc

As school returns for a new academic year we wish all pupils and staff a successful and "normal" Autumn term and look forward to hearing all the school news and activities.

Road issues dominate in this issue; look out for Graham Grant's fascinating article on Laggan roads and bridges to realise that our concerns about the A86 are not new and continue in 2021!

And finally we were all saddened by the loss of another Laggan resident and local character Jimmy Smith. Our thoughts and condolences are with Jimmy's family and friends.

Amanda Gallagher

amandagallagher17@yahoo.com

Jill Warner

jillvn@aol.com



Creag Meagaidh News

With the cracking weather the past couple of weeks we have seen many visitors enjoying Creag Meagaidh NNR. We are averaging 1000 people and 95 campervans per week and recent surveys show that 14% of visitors spend money locally. It is great to see people swimming and barbecuing by Loch Laggan, especially as the vast majority take great care in leaving the place tidy.

Ringed plover chicks have also been spotted at the lochside and ospreys are a regular sight. The wildflower meadows are full of butterflies like scotch argus and small pearl-bordered fritillaries and golden ringed dragonflies flit between pools.

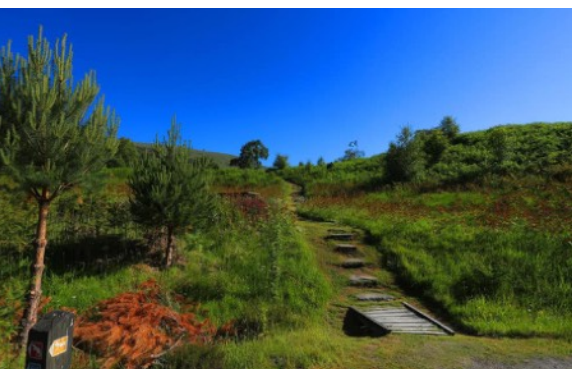
We recently had four new arrivals on the reserve. Douglas, Fergus, Islay and Raquelle have joined their mothers as part of our herd of Highland cattle which are used for conservation grazing. Their presence here maintains the grassland habitats for an abundance of native flora and enriches the soil.

Our ghillie, Geordie Fraser, moves on to his new job as a deer stalker at Braeroy Estate this month. Geordie leaves a lasting legacy on the reserve, his benches are already a hit with visitors.

The two new ghillies, Christopher Brannigan and Scott Wilson, have just started their 2-year placements. Both are looking to settle in this area and the skills, experiences and training they gain will help them develop their careers in rural jobs. **This is part of NatureScot's programme for youth employment to help meet our target of 5% of employees being under the age of 25 which means overall 37 new roles in NatureScot.**

Anna Cumming is an ecological and environmental sciences student and has been volunteering on the reserve, taking part in wildlife monitoring and learning practical skills relevant to her field of study. We are hoping to re-establish residential volunteering placements soon.

Rory Richardson



‘short walk, stroll’

ín Gaelic

=



sgriob



During the storm in the first week of August, the cairn of Old Cluny was struck by lightning and as you can see from the photo, the top of the cross was knocked to the ground. Luckily it fell on the grassy side and is intact apart from a few chips, which have landed nearby.



'journey, excursion' in Gaelic

=

cuairt

Ewen Macpherson of Cluny (1804-1855) succeeded to the Chiefship of the clan and to the Cluny estates on the death of his father - 'Duncan of the kiln' in 1827. He would have been only 13 years of age at the time. Nevertheless, he was destined to possess the Cluny estates for a period of nearly 68 years.

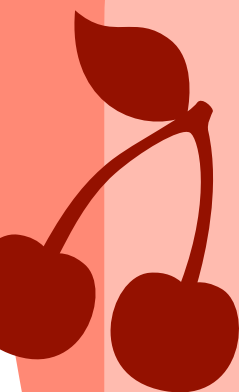
You can find more information about him in the newly refurbished Clan Macpherson Museum in Newtonmore.

Valerie Macpherson

The 'Honesty Spot' Honesty Box Berry Jam Recipe

- 2kg mixed summer berry (we use 1kg halved strawberries, 500g blackberries and 500g mixed currants)
- juice 2 lemons
- 2 x 1kg packs jam sugar with pectin

- Before you start, sterilise your jars and put a plate in the freezer to chill.
- Tip the mixed berries, lemon juice and sugar into a large pan. Gently heat, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until the sugar has melted and fruits are juicy.
- Bring up to the heat, then boil rapidly for 5 mins. Remove from the heat and drop a little of the mixture onto the chilled plate. Push your finger through it; it should wrinkle and have set like jam. If it doesn't, boil for 2 mins more, then test again and, if necessary, keep repeating until it's ready.



**The Honesty Spot is located on the A86 near the Pattack Falls.
You can find out more about the roadside stall over on instagram @thehonestyspot**



BADENOCH APP PRESENTATIONS AND HERITAGE FESTIVAL



'Badenoch The Storylands - meet the App' 7.30 - 9pm (no booking required)

Thursday 9th September - Newtonmore Village Hall

Friday 10th September - Laggan Village Hall



A wonderful new 'digital guidebook' has now been created for the Badenoch area - really useful for visitors and locals alike - 'Badenoch The Storylands App'.

It's a free smartphone app, and comes with highly recommended tours for driving, cycling and walking as well as a customisable map with accommodation, restaurants and great places to visit in the area.

It's also doubles as a Badenoch entertainment jukebox - featuring music by local performers and over 7 hours of local fascinating local heritage stories written and narrated by well-known local folk musician Hamish Napier.

The app also includes a pioneering new feature for travel apps of this kind - stunningly detailed 3D artist impressions of what the local castles and stone circles would have looked like back in their heyday. See Ruthven Barracks and two local hill forts as they might have looked centuries ago.

Whether a visitor to the area or local this is a chance to hear more about the App, its content and how it works, presented by Hamish Napier and hosted by The Badenoch Great Place Project.

'Badenoch The Storylands Heritage Festival' 18th to 25th September 2021

The festival will take place in September with a mixture of actual and virtual events, including walks, talks, music and storytelling events. The final day (Saturday 25th) will also serve as a Celebration day to mark the end of the Badenoch Great Place Project.

To view the programme and book a place on any of the events taking place across the 8 days, go to the Badenoch Heritage website www.badenochstorylands.com/festival for more information.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Graham Fraser & Caroline Sterritt



Creag Dhu Garden Opening

The garden opening with Scotland's Gardens raised £1036.20 - of which £310.86 was donated to Laggan Heritage and £310.86 to Laggan Church. The remainder goes to Scotland's Garden Charities.

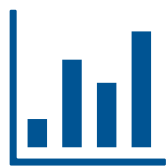
Thank you everyone who came along and also those who baked, helped on the plant stall, parking and tea tent, despite the weather and midges.

Valerie Macpherson



AN





Laggan Community Council - Colin Morgan Chair LCC

The Community Council intends to meet in person at its next meeting on Monday 20th September 2021 in Laggan Village Hall.

At its AGM on Monday 14th June, 5 community councillors agreed to continue in office for the coming year – Colin Morgan as Chair, Mignonne Khazaka as Vice Chair, Amanda Gallagher as Secretary, Gordon Stirling as Treasurer and Lauren Hendry. As we advised in the last edition, we unfortunately said farewell to Liz Macfarlan as she and her husband have relocated to the Taunton to be closer to family. The council remains open to co-opting any member of the community interested to support the wider Laggan Community in this activity. 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.

The summer months tend to be much quieter for specific Community Council activities however the Village Amenity group did receive bedding plants from Highland Council and planted them out in the village planters and continue to water them during the Summer months. Our thanks to that group for their efforts. Expansion of these planters to Strathmashie and Balgowan would be a welcome addition. Plans for the Winter lights will no doubt be on the horizon soon.

It has, however, been busy on the roads front. A separate note of intended road improvements and their timings is included elsewhere in this newsletter. The subject of urgent repairs required to the soft verges and the road surface on a section of the A86 between Laggan and Laggan (Gaskmore) Hotel has been raised with BEAR especially given the volume of timber lorries this year and the damage to the road edges. It is hoped that some remedial action will undertaken before the winter months.

With heather coming into bloom, here are some fascinating facts:

- Heather has been used for many purposes, such as fuel, fodder, building materials, thatch, packing and ropes.
- Plants grow tightly packed together and can live for up to 40 years or more.
- In 1884 Queen Victoria wrote that her servant Mr Brown “espied a piece of white heather, and jumped off to pick it. No Highlander would pass by it without picking it, for it was considered to bring good luck.”

SSE Stronelaig Community Benefit Fund

As a reminder to us all, 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 with applications to reach SSE **by September 3rd**.

In discussions with SSE, they are also open to reviewing future award criteria for the large grants if there is a more substantive project forthcoming that provides a sustainable legacy which benefits the community.

SSE fund managers will be visiting Laggan in the coming months to explain this, as well as a re-explanation of their present 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 a minimum of £61,662 each year in future years – from April 2022 onwards annually.

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

There is a vacancy on the local Laggan adjudication panel. Anyone interested please contact Marianne Townsley at SSE initially to express interest or discuss marianne.townsley@sse.com or to chairlcc@laggan.com. The present members of this local panel are Amanda Gallagher, Valerie Macpherson, Stuart Lilley and Colin Morgan.

The SSE Laggan Micro Grant panel (as above) continues to be available for micro grants of up to £500 or COVID recovery grants up to £1000. Application forms for these grants can be found at <https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/community-fund-locations/great-britain/stronelaig/> or on the home page of the <https://www.laggan.com> website.



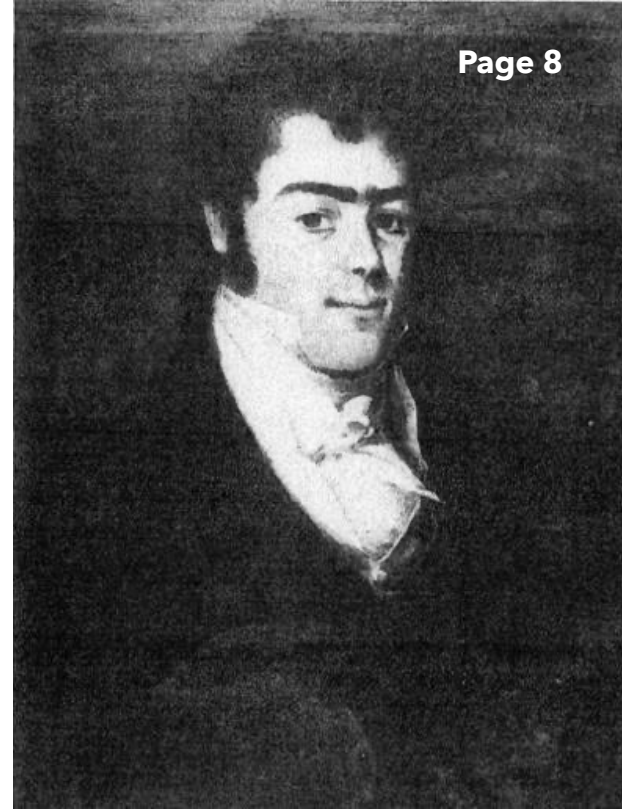
Did you know...

- Wind energy was first developed with windmills in 200 BC in Persia and China.
- The first modern turbine was built in Vermont in the 1940s.
- A wind turbine consists of about 8,000 parts.
- Wind exists because the sun unevenly heats the surface of the Earth.

ONGOING PROCESS

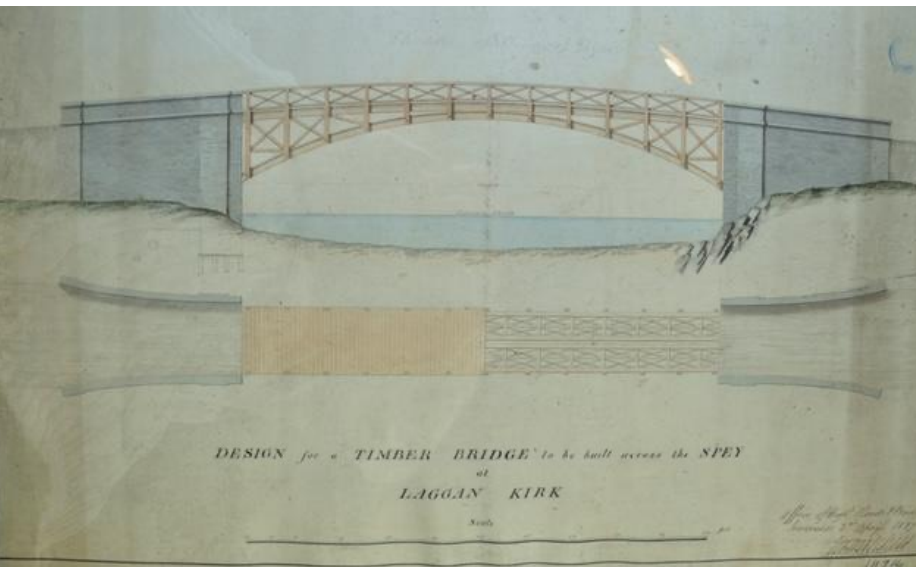
Regularly we experience repairs and sometimes closures of the A86 road as BEAR keep communications flowing east to west. This is nothing new since the 'Laggan Road' was built just over 200 years ago, by the famous Thomas Telford, to replace the high level route over the Corrieyairack.

Our eastern section, although finished in 1815 - 'one of the best lines in the Highlands' - by 1817 required straightening of the Spey above Laggan Bridge to protect from floods. Workmen lived in tents and temporary huts and eventually 16-18 in wheeled caravans. The replacement timber arch bridge required, throughout the century, re-decking and addition of steel trusses and the sockets still seen on the original abutments. 1913 saw the opening of a widened bowstring girder bridge which eventually carried a temporary Bailey bridge whose bent and damaged plates clattered and banged waking us through the night as traffic crossed. In 1985 the present bridge was constructed.

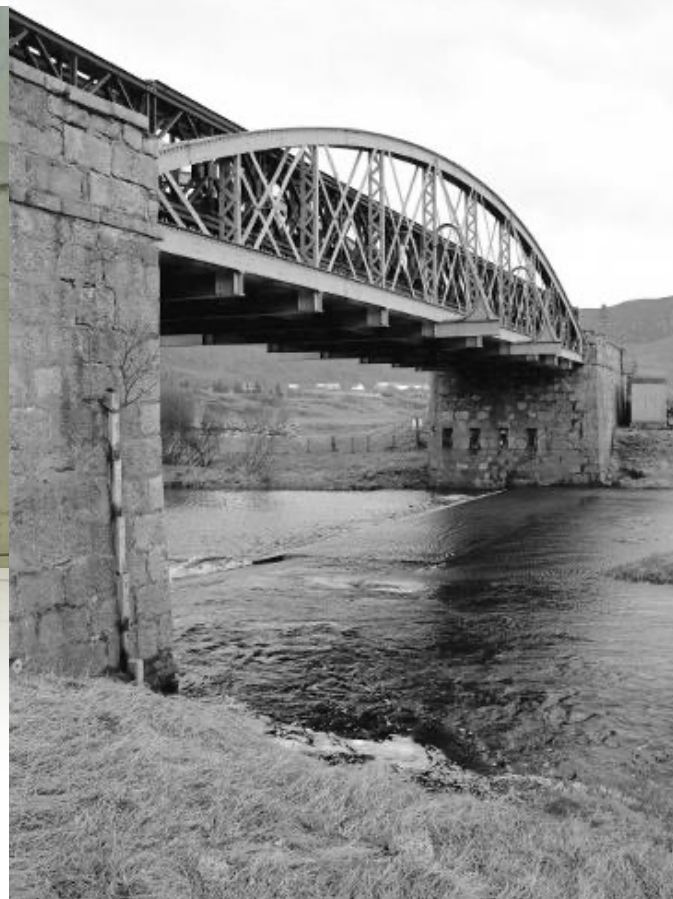


Thomas Telford, the great
Scottish civil engineer
1757 - 1834

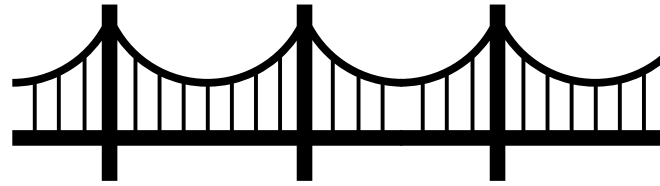
Laggan Bridge showing
old sockets
(below)



Laggan Timber Bridge Design (above)



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Lack of an inn along the road was a constant complaint during the early 1800's. The Duke of Gordon's plans for this at Strathmashie never materialised but by Queen Victoria's visit in 1847 to Ardverikie, Cluny had provided a hostelry at Loch Laggan End with John Campbell as innkeeper. In advance of the royal visit, road widening, passing places and stone parapets were built costing £558. Milestones had been set up in 1840 with painting of lettering in 1852.

Into the 20th century, the surface was often rough and muddy. In 1913 between Kinlochlaggan and Laggan bridge stone metalling was laid for a week 'none to be left unrolled overnight'. A tidy path was kept swept over the road between the now dilapidated gates below Cluny Castle over to the gardens, to protect the skirts of the strolling ladies.

Around 1929, JS MacPherson carried out widening and parapet work, prolonging the contract to give local employment at that difficult time. Under many bridges can be seen his concrete widening additions. During the 1930's the Aberarder Farm bridge collapsed twice. May Cameron and others biked to Secondary School in Kingussie, lodging for the week, over a sometimes rough and rutted surface. Tar Macadam was laid from 1936.

Creag Dhu Bridge ~ concrete widening

'water' in Gaelic

=

uisge

'waterlily' in Gaelic

=

duilleag-bhàthte

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HIGHLAND BRIDGE DOWN.—Aberarder Bridge, Loch Laggan-side, on the Kingussie-Fort William road, which has collapsed owing to the subsidence of a centre column following a spate. All traffic was stopped at the week-end.



● Aftermath of floods in the Highlands in November, 1978. The historic Wade bridge which carried traffic on the A86 over the River Calder at Newtonmore was badly damaged when floodwater washed away part of one of the arches. *Telford*

Around 1970 the abandoned and replaced bridge at Strathmashie was tested to destruction, surprising the engineers at the strength of Telford's construction.

Through the 1970's the efforts of local councillor, Sandy Russell, eventually HC Convenor, resulted in realignment and reconstruction of long stretches to the west and then in 1990's big improvements along Loch Lagganside.

Now to the east end we have a patchwork surface with welcome overnight-created widened black, smooth sections. Sometimes tricky, but imagine if we'd to share the Corrieyairack with the timber wagons!

Graham Grant

Local Roads

There have been a number of road improvement works undertaken in the Laggan area in the past 3 months – notably resurfacing by Highland Council of a section of the Glentruim road off the A9 to the Centre of Scotland stone and the Balgowan Loop.

Trunk Roads (A86/A889)

BEAR (on behalf of Transport Scotland) have advised the undernoted programme of works from early September to mid October 2021, but have stressed that these are subject to change. All will involve a closure of the roads at some time and will mostly be scheduled for OVERNIGHT with diversions in place – the exception being the Strathmashie work when amnesty periods to allow through traffic will be in place.

Route	Scheme Name	Start	End	Duration
A86	A86 Cluny Farm	05-Sep-21	06-Sep-21	2 nights
A86	A86 West of Strathmashie Bridge	07-Sep-21	09-Sep-21	3 nights
A889	A889 Allt an t-Slugain	12-Sep-21	12-Sep-21	1 night
A889	A889 North of Dalwhinnie Rail Bridge	13-Sep-21	14-Sep-21	2 nights
A889	A889 Cathar Mor	15-Sep-21	23-Sep-21	7 nights
A86	A86 Creagdubh	26-Sep-21	07-Oct-21	10 nights

Final details of each scheme will be published on the laggan.com website, the Laggan Community Council Facebook page and to the residents e-mail list.

A889 widening programme – BEAR have also advised that they are planning a road widening programme for the entire length of the A889 between Dalwhinnie and Laggan at Drumgask Farm. They have already conducted geological studies, bridge investigation work and design activity. The plans presently unfunded in their budget and we expect formal community consultation sometime this year.

A9 Dualling Programme

The final road orders for the dualling of 2 sections of the A9 – Glengarry to Dalwhinnie and Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore (which involves a new junction to access the A889 to Laggan at Dalwhinnie) were signed off by Scottish Ministers in July this year. This means that any compulsory purchase orders for land and contract documents for construction can now be issued.

The section from Crubenmore to Kincaig, which impacts residents accessing the A9 from the Glentruim road, has still to reach this part of the “road order” process but is now expected shortly. An agreement between RSPB and the Dualling team appears to have been made with respect to various mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the scheme on Insh Marshes.

Details of the present programme can be seen at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/made-road-orders-and-compulsory-purchase-order-dalwhinnie-to-crubenmore-a9-dualling/>



CLIMATE RIDE

The 11th July 2021 saw us meeting Alistair's niece, Elsa Kent, and her horses Rosie and Summer on the road to Laggan with hot tea and a bag of carrots. We met her early evening after she had ridden her latest leg across the Corrieayrack Pass from Fort Augustus.



Elsa is on a mission to ride from John O' Groats to Lands End in the hope of raising awareness of and funds for Climate Change education and charities. Thoughtbox Education, the International Environmental Education Festival and the Kivukoni School Environmental Education Centre in Kenya will all benefit from funds raised by Elsa's journey. For more information please visit:

<https://gofund.me/d7e200f8>



A rest day or two was due for the three of them on arrival into the village and the horses enjoyed lazing in the sun and chomping on lush green grass whilst Elsa planned the next few days route and did some much needed clothes washing. Big thanks to Lucy and Ewan Grant for the use of the football field for the horses for the two nights she was with us, it meant Elsa was able to see the horses from her bedroom window and know they were safe. After new sets of shoes for both horses from a generous farrier, some leather mending by Al and a clear out of her saddle bags of things she didn't need, she was on her way again on the Monday morning, heading south and making for the border with England which she reached somewhere around the 27th July. Crossing the border and knowing she had succeeded in riding the length of Scotland was a great achievement and part of an adventure she will long remember. She experienced wonderful generosity and kindness, the very best of scenery and an appreciation for the Scottish hills her grandparents have always loved so much.

Her travels continue south with hopes of completing the journey and arriving in Lands End in September. However, Elsa won't have much time to celebrate as she is due to begin a Masters Degree in Ecological Design Thinking at Schumacher College in Dartington, Devon shortly after arriving home. It was great to see Elsa and be a part of her journey and we look forward to hearing about her adventure as she heads south.

Kate Fleming



Ticks – Do's & Don'ts

With the general increase in environmental temperatures across the UK and the increase in the number of dogs and cats travelling to and from Europe, we are seeing an increase in the number of species of ticks in the UK.

These ticks can carry diseases which can affect humans as well as dogs and cats. Fortunately, at present, we only need to worry about the *Ixodes ricinus* tick in the Highlands, but because of the large number of deer, we do have a lot of them!

They can carry a pathogen called *Borrelia* which can cause Lyme Disease, which affects humans as well as animals. They can also carry Tick-borne Encephalitis Virus which can cause disease in humans, although fortunately this is not thought to be a problem in Scotland at present.

It is unlikely, when walking, cycling etc. in the countryside, that we can avoid ticks so it is important to know how to avoid them causing the spread of the *Borrelia* pathogen.

There are 2 important things to note:

- 1) Ticks attach via two small mouthparts
- 2) If a tick is 'stressed' it will regurgitate and empty its salivary glands, which will potentially lead to increased disease transmission.



Do's

- Check for ticks on your pet and yourself at least every 24 hours. The bulk of infection is thought to be transmitted at least 24 hours after attachment.
- **Use effective tick preventable products. These will either aim to stop the tick attaching in the first place or kill them within 24 hours.**
 - **Some available products are toxic to cats so always get advice from a veterinary practice or a pet store with an SQP (Suitably Qualified Person)**
- Do use a special 'tick hook' or fine pointed tweezers to remove ticks. Tick hooks are ideal as they allow the tick to be twisted loose and this should ensure the mouthparts are not left in the skin – if this happens it can lead to a nasty skin reaction.
- **If you take your pet abroad, treat them with an effective product prior to leaving the UK and always check for ticks on your return.**

Don'ts

- Do not attempt to remove ticks with your fingers or a blunt instrument as this will stress the tick and may well result in the mouthparts remaining in the skin.
- **Do not apply petroleum jellies or try to burn the tick off as this will increase the risk of transmission as it will stress the tick.**

Follow these guidelines and you don't need to worry about enjoying our beautiful countryside. To put it into context, only about 3% of ticks found attached to dogs, were found to be carrying *Borrelia*. However the incidence of Lyme Disease in people is definitely on the increase.

There is no evidence that dog owners are at a greater risk of Lyme disease than people without dogs!

Trevor Warner MRCVS

Circular Walk from The Centre of Scotland to The Falls of Truim

Distance: Approx. 5 miles

Time: Allow at least 2 hours

Map: OL56

Dogs: Must be kept on a lead

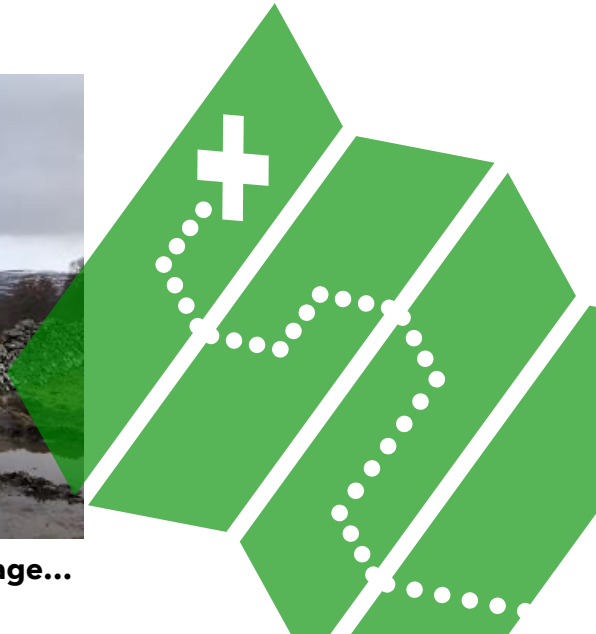
Terrain: Undulating paths and forest tracks - good walking boots as often muddy

Parking: Is limited at the Centre of Scotland Stone but there is a potential space just above the Shanvall Memorial - built in honour of Ewan Macpherson.



- This is a lovely walk at any time of year, but be aware that there are often free range sheep or cattle grazing along the way and in March, frogs galore!
- Take the path behind the Central Stone passing the sign to the viewpoint on your right. Continue down the hill where you will reach a gated fence. Go through this and continue along the track.

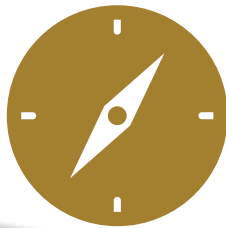
- The track then opens up with a stone wall on your left. Follow the wall until reaching the green right of way signpost (Perth Road) and walk into the open field following the marker to the right - taking the edge of the field.



- Keep walking heading down the field towards the house on your right, Crubenbeg Steading.
- Bear left as signed below until reaching another gate.



- This gate's sign directs you to turn right but once through the gate, if you go left, you will see a memorial to Charlotte and Jane Macpherson who tragically died in a fire in Crubenbeg House in 1866. The old farmhouse house has been replaced by a modern one of the same name.



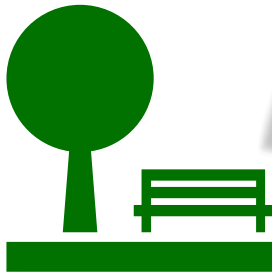
- Keeping the memorial on your right, go back in the direction of the footpath towards another two gates both of which you go through.



○ Turn left after the second gate heading away from the direction of Laggan and to the road bridge over the River Truim.



○ Having arrived at The Falls, you can either retrace your steps or go through the wooden gate at the bridge and follow the crags above the falls. This is a beautiful rocky gorge where at certain times of the year, salmon can be seen leaping.



○ If you take this route, you will pass a wooden bench on your left and you then follow the path through the wood. This leads to a gate which takes you back on the path between the two gates you went through earlier. Turn right and head back below Crubenbeg House turning left up the hill before the Macpherson memorial and this will take you back the way you came.

Jill Warner



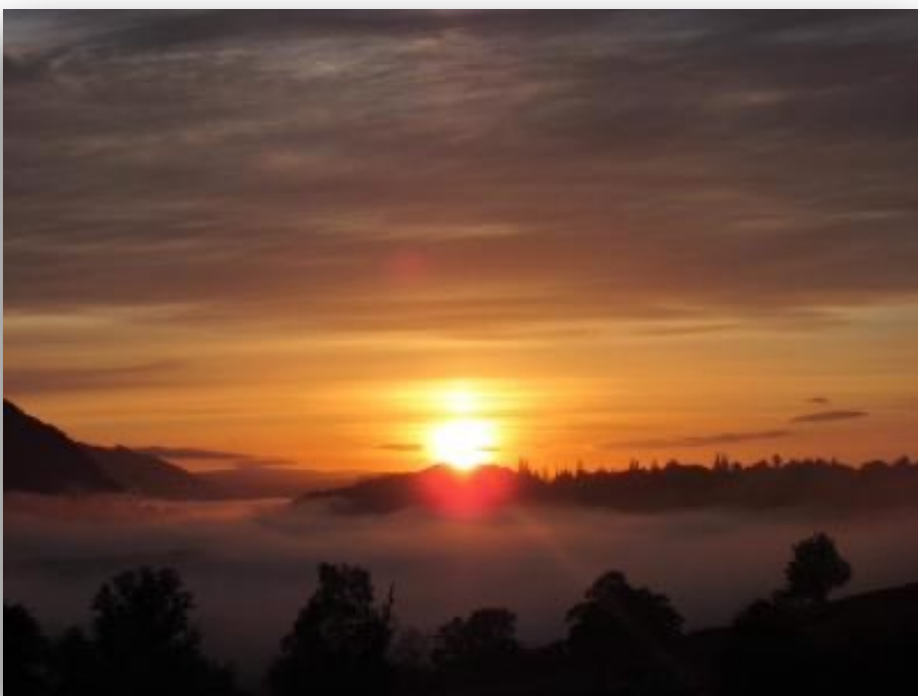


The Laggan Forest Trust – Colin Morgan Chair LFT

The Trust's recent activity continues to be focussed on the Wolfrax centre's outdoor extension project. Construction work has unfortunately been slow for a variety of reasons however the café did open in early July to at least provide some sustenance to visiting cyclists and walkers. Completion is now scheduled for mid to late September 2021.

The Connecting Laggan project - helping the community and visitors alike to move through our area more safely off the main roads, continues to a more detailed construction design, based on one of the initial feasible route options - that between Wolfrax, Gorsteane and Laggan Bridge.

Felling activity has recently been completed in the Strathmashie forest and started in the Blackwood. This is expected to be completed by December. Discussions with FLS on their long-term forest development plan for our area (2021-2031) remain overdue and we also wish to progress other plans with FLS for more effective visitor and recreational management in our area.



Laggan in the Summer 2021 Photo Challenge!

**Congratulations to Jackie Ashworth
who took this Stunning photo.**

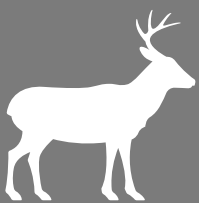
Stuart Lilley kindly 'judged' the entries and selected this beautiful sunrise as his favourite. He particularly likes the sun rising above the cloud inversion and the silhouette of the valley below.



He was also impressed by these two photos

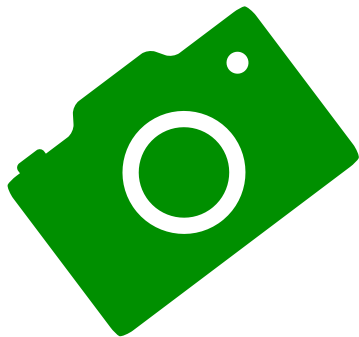


‘stag (deer)’ in Gaelic = damh

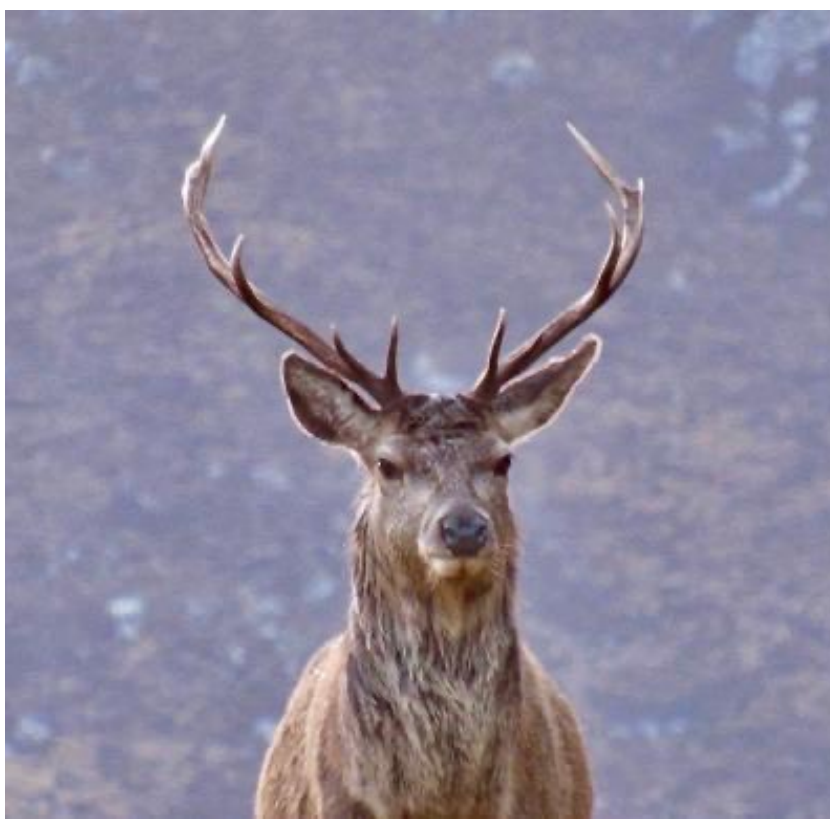


‘rowan’ in Gaelic = caorann

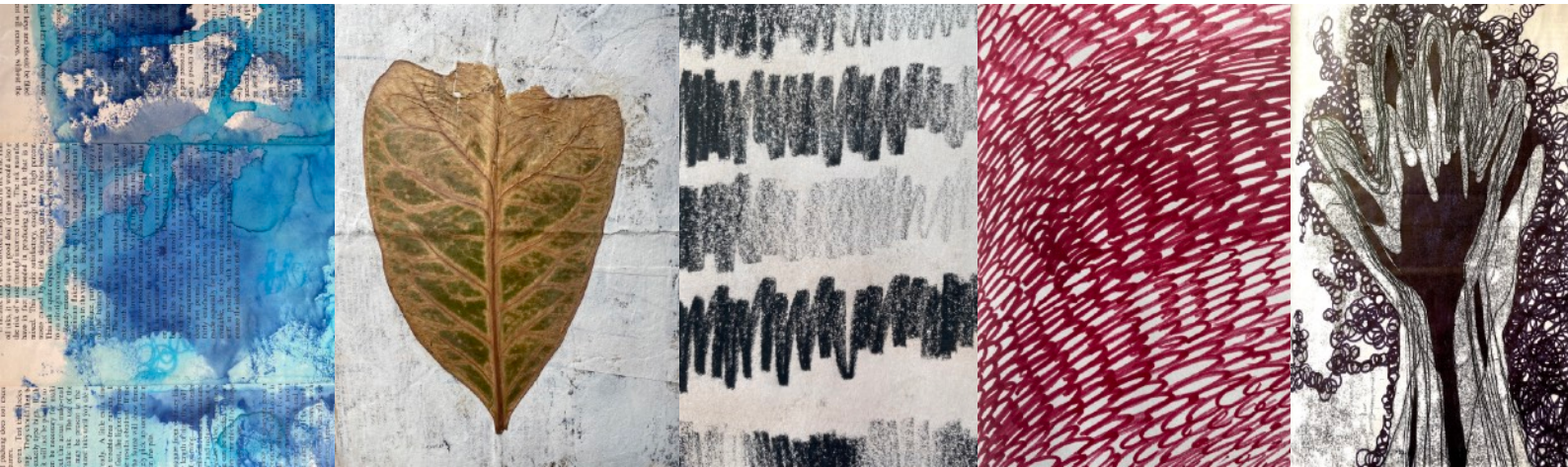
‘red deer’ in Gaelic = fiadh ruadh



And these wildlife shots also caught Stuart's eye too.
As he pointed out, they are not easy to take!



Upcoming 'Arts for Wellbeing' Workshops...



Artist, Robyn Woolston, has been commissioned by the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) 2021/22 to run a series of monthly arts workshops across the glen from Laggan to Aviemore. The programme is called ART SAFARI HIGHLAND.

'Launched in 2007, SMHAF has grown into one of the largest festivals of its kind in the world, with over 300 events and 25,000 attendees across Scotland each year. Its innovative approach, combining high quality artistic events with community led programming, has been replicated internationally.'

<https://www.mhfestival.com>

SMHAF's Community Commissions are supported by the Baring Foundation:

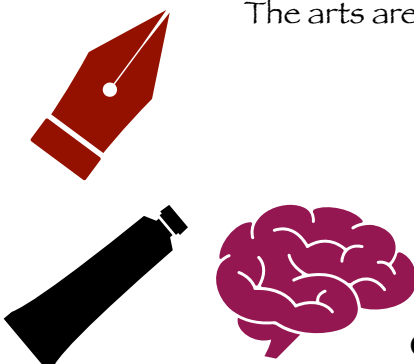
'There are many good reasons for funding in this area. Everyone has a right to be creative and to take part in what the arts and culture have to offer.

Society is experiencing a shift towards a greater understanding and awareness of mental health problems and the arts have a role in this too.

The arts are also a route to recovery, building self-confidence and new skills and they can also simply be pleasurable, relaxing and fun!'

— The Baring Foundation

<https://baringfoundation.org.uk>



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Further info:

- Sessions are FREE and open to adults.
- You can come along to one to see if you fancy it or join all 10 ;-)
- Everyone is welcome.
- Whether you just feel like getting out of the house and trying something creative, meeting new people, exploring new activities in a supportive environment or want to expand your knowledge of arts/crafts techniques then ART SAFARI HIGHLAND is for you.



Where will the sessions be held?

- We'll be working across a wide range of indoor and outdoor settings (because we're going on an Arts Safari after all) including The Monarch Hotel and Church Ruin, Ardverikie Estate and castle exterior/ gardens, the Highland Folk Museum and the Highland Wildlife Park to name just a few.
- We'll need to be flexible though in terms of 'wet-weather' alternatives as our workshops run from September 2021 to June 2022- but i'll keep you updated via email and on the programme website.

What will we be doing?

- We'll be exploring mark-making, paint and print alongside collage, poetry and sculpture.
- We'll be drawing upon our lived experience of mental health.
- We'll be COVID-SAFE.

Previous feedback:

'I am really enjoying Art Safari, I think this is due to Robyn's enthusiasm which is so up-lifting. I am finding that it is making me look at all sorts of things differently, both practically and emotionally. I like the freedom to express myself without boundaries. Robyn does this by giving everyone a good background about the subject matter and then lets us get creative. She also creates a very friendly atmosphere, and I have noticed that people are more willing to open up because of this.'

Janet (Art Safari Hull participant)

Where can I find out more?

- Check out the website for full, up-to-date, info: **www.artsafari.org**
- Instagram: **@art_safari_insta**

- Details of upcoming sessions will be put up on the noticeboards in Laggan, Newtonmore, Kingussie and Aviemore
- Email Robyn at **robyn24_7@hotmail.com** with the subject header 'Art Safari Highland' to register your interest



It's now August and I've been swimming regularly outdoors in lochs, rivers and sea since the beginning of May....and I'm hooked! It helps that I go with friends who are similarly obsessed and that we have been blessed with some lovely weather. However we were surprised to find that actually we now like the water to be proper cold to get the most "buzz".

News headlines of the tragic loss of lives caused by drowning over a single weekend at the end of July prompted many to ask me how safe we are and how hazardous it really is. I'm no expert but these seem to be the most common risks and hazards:

DEEP WATER: many of our lochs and rivers are very deep and the depth of water changes suddenly. This is possibly what happened in Loch Lomond with people paddling and then finding themselves suddenly out of their depth. Open water swimmers often use a buoy for visibility and as an emergency aid. It's also advisable to swim along the shore rather than across the water so that you are more likely to swim safely within your depth.

HIDDEN HAZARDS: always check for submerged rocks and other hazards and make sure that there is a place to get out safely and easily. Don't be tempted to dive into a river rock pool from a great height especially in a place you have never swum before...the other people doing it may be local and know exactly when and where to jump and the depth may vary considerably.

SWIMMING AFTER HEAVY RAIN: the water levels in rivers can change rapidly especially if there has been a thunderstorm upstream in the mountains. To see a flash flood in a Highland river is a terrifying sight so keep an eye on weather forecasts and be aware. If there is any doubt and if you feel the river is flowing too full and fast leave it for another day. Lochs and beaches can also be affected by pollution after heavy rain.

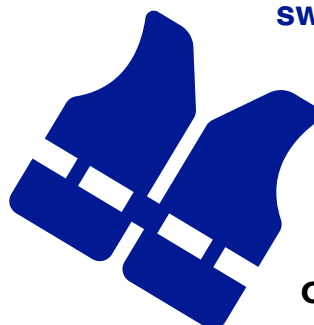
COLD WATER SHOCK: Scottish lochs and rivers are cold, even on hot summer days. The body's response to suddenly coming into contact with the cold can cause immediate involuntary gasping and hyperventilation which results in water inhalation and drowning. This happens in the first 3 to 5 minutes of contact with the water. To avoid this enter the water slowly and allow your body to acclimatise first. Also breathe slowly and steadily. It is not advisable to jump in. Your body temperature continues to cool down after swimming so don't stay in the water too long and watch your swimming companions for signs that they are getting dangerously cold.

DON'T SWIM ALONE: this is the advice given by many safety bodies and it's obvious why.

Check out

www2.sepa.org.uk

for useful information on water quality for swimming and watersports.



Continues on the next page...

*** Remember if in trouble in the water "float to live"**

* Fight your instinct to thrash around

*** Lean back, extend your arms and legs**

* If you need to, gently move them around to help you float

*** Float until you can control your breathing**

* Only then, call for help or swim to safety



With many more people taking to the water it isn't surprising that there are more tragic accidents, but with education and a few sensible precautions we can all enjoy the wonderful swimming spots on our doorstep.

For more information and advice on 'float to live' and other lifesaving advice see <https://www.rnli.org/>

Amanda Gallagher



Amanda's Fruity Flapjack Fingers

Great for after a swim or to take on a walk or cycle!

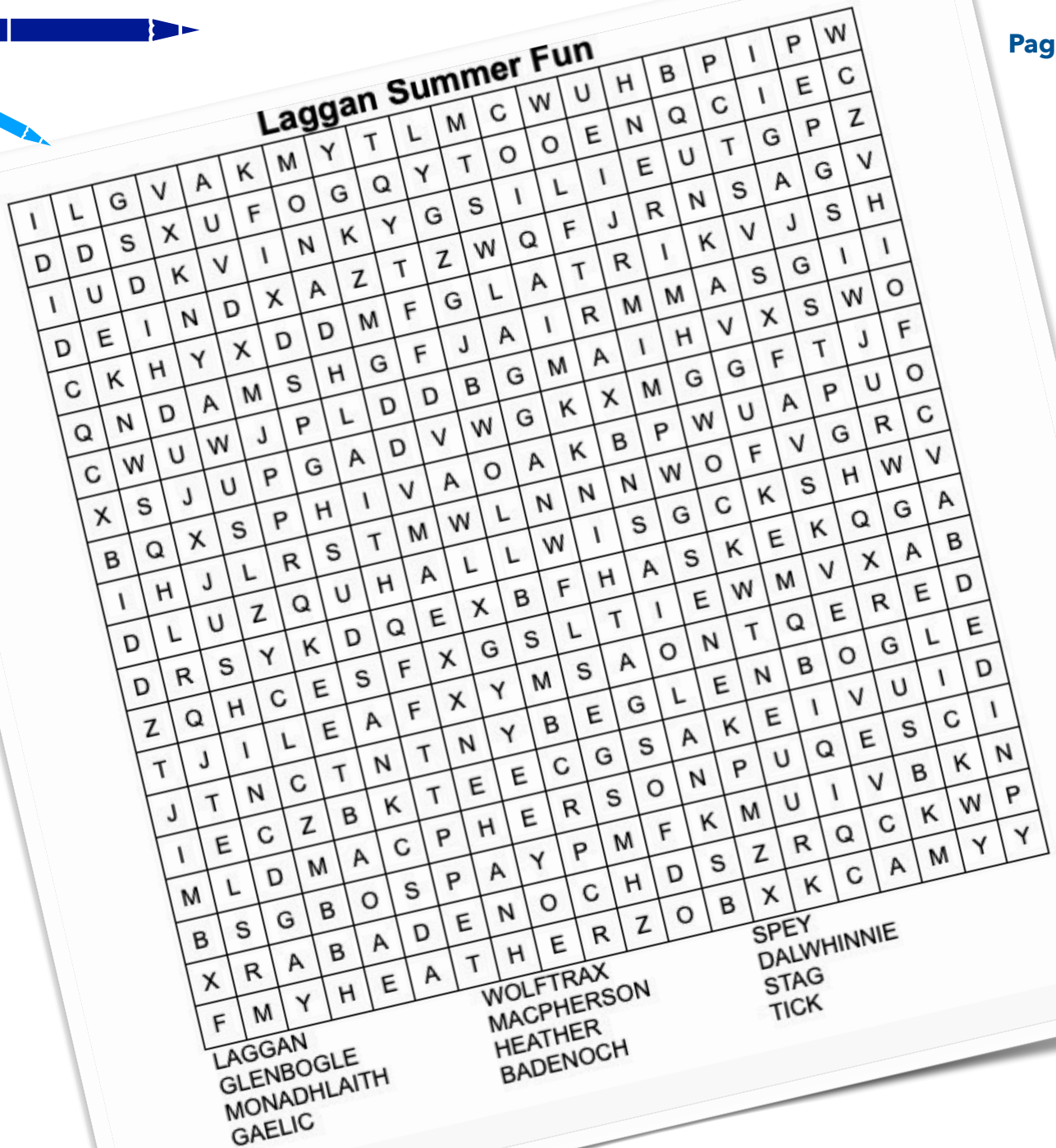
113g butter
113g demerara sugar
2tbs golden syrup
227g porridge oats
100g sultanas or glace cherries (optional)

Melt the butter sugar and golden syrup in a pan. Add the oats (and dried fruit if desired). Mix well and spread evenly into a greased square baking tray. Cook at 180° for approximately 15 to 20 minutes until golden (the longer you leave it in oven the crisper the flapjack so if you prefer gooey flapjack take it out earlier!)

Cut into fingers while warm but leave in tray until cooled.

We'd love you to share some of your 'family recipes' with us, so please do send them in. Our next edition is leading up to Christmas so your family favourites are very welcome!

Laggan Summer Fun



If you looking at a digital version of our
newsletter then why not print off the last page and
TEST YOUR THINKING
with our Summer Word Search?

Laggan Matters is designed by **Robyn Woolston**

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...when not designing the newsletter, or delivering Arts Safari, Robyn recommends walking your dog (or yourself) on Ardverikie beach at sunset.