“Cherished” and virtually unaltered in the last 200 years

Croick church is “arguably the most authentic survivor” of all 32 Thomas Telford Parliamentary Kirks.

In the last issue we published a letter to the Editor highlighting how the trees around Croick church were overwhelming the building, and the potential damage faced by the church (fallen branches, roots, clogged gutters, etc). In this issue, Rev Mary Stobo has written an extensive article which brings invaluable insight into the history of the building, on what has been done in the past and what is being done now to preserve it in the best possible way for future generations. (Page 4)

Stories of the people of Glencalvie
An account of some not so well-known facts Page 16

The abolition of the runrig tenure system Page 18

Ardgay and District Community Plan is now available to the public

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust and Sutherland Community Partnership have published the findings of a consultation that invited residents to provide their view on what they thought could best improve the community. (Page 6)

Mac & Wild Falls of Shin will re-open 23rd March with exciting food and events Page 12

Time to join your local community gym! Page 21

2019 is the International Year of the Salmon Page 14

The Curlew needs all the help it can get Page 31

20 red squirrels, new residents of Ledmore & Migdale Page 20

36 pages featuring Lettes to the Editor, Opening times, Telephone guide, Bus & Train timetable, Sudokus & Crossword
The Community Food Stop

Sample Menu

Every Monday 11.30am-2pm
Bonar Bridge Community Hall
Everyone Welcome

Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato Soup
—00—

Chicken Mornay and Rice
—00—

Apple Pie with Ice Cream
—00—

Toasties - Cheese/Tuna mayo/Ham
—00—

Childrens’ Snack Boxes (sandwich, yoghurt, raisins and fresh fruit juice)
—00—

Cappuccino, Mocha, Latte or Hot Chocolate
Tea/Coffee

Fruit Juice, Bottled Water—Still or Sparkling
—00—

Takeaways must be ordered before 11.30am and collected by 1pm. Please phone 0798 5626340/01863 766554 to order.
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Editor’s Letter

Natural heritage

A big thank you to our new (and regular) contributors, and to our distributors. This issue is packed with articles on natural heritage, from the efforts to save a rare plant in Ledmore & Migdale, the International Year of the Salmon, the Gearrchoille wood, the plight of the pollinators, an Eco Action Day, and the endangered Curlew. On top of this, Ardgay & District CC Chairperson Betty Wright writes an op-ed about the global Climate and Biodiversity challenge faced by our generation, and we are reminded of the Earth Hour on 20th March 2019... a truly environmentally conscious edition!

Silvia Muras Editor
Built by James Smith, one of Thomas Telford’s surveyors, and completed in 1830, the church and manse cost £1,426 10s 11d.

Past, present and future of Croick Church

Rev Mary Stobo gives an insight into this iconic church and its compelling history, as well as addressing some of the concerns raised by readers in our last edition.

The church at Croick is one of very few “Parliamentary” Churches still in use and still showing its original design and internal fittings. At the end of the Napoleonic War the government voted for the building of 43 churches and manses in many remote parts of the Highlands in celebration of the victory. At common with the others, it was built to a design by Thomas Telford. Completed in 1827 at a cost of £1,426 it originally served a community of over 200 people. At the Disruption of 1843 most of the congregation followed the Minister, Rev Gustavus Aird, to the Free Church leaving only two families in the Church of Scotland.

It remained a separate parish until 1946 when it was joined with Kincardine as it is today. Later the parish of Edderton was added, therefore bringing the congregations of three churches together. More recently the parish known as Kincardine, Croick and Edderton was linked with Creich linked with Rosehall to become one charge and is served by one Minister whose home is the manse in Ardgay. We are currently looking for a new Minister.

Croick Church is well known for its association with the Clearances of Glencalvie and Gruinards in the mid-19th Century. Most of the scratches on one of the windows are said to belong to the people removed from their homes from Glencalvie who took shelter in the graveyard as they had nowhere to go.

In 1977 serious damage to the roof was discovered. Thanks to grants from several public bodies and generous donations from individuals work began in 1980 to restore the roof, repair other defects and install electricity. The whole project was completed in 1983 and cost just under £20,000.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEYS

Every ten years a professional survey has to be done on all church-owned buildings with a local inspection done by the Presbytery in the intervening fifth year. These reports detail work that needs to be done and checks are made that this has been completed. The cost of this is borne by the local congregation who are expected to cover on-going maintenance out of their own funds although help may be had from the national funds in the form of a loan or sometimes a grant for major work. A recent professional survey of the church (May 2018) states, “The surfaces of the sandstone slabs
Ardgay & District News

of the aisles, and of the pews and the long communion table, have been left in an immaculate state, [...] this also serves to reinforce the impression that Croick is one of those churches that has been cherished always by its dwindling congregation.” This indeed is the case, with regular maintenance carried out and the services on the second Sunday each summer month continuing despite few people attending.

OVERGROWN TREES
The problem with the proximity of trees to the building has meant on-going discussions with the Highland Council for several years and we continue to try to resolve the issue. Our concern is not just aesthetic but one of possible damage to the building or people should branches or the trees become unstable. The roof suffers from a common problem found in Parliamentary churches built to the T-plan monopitch form of display, perhaps in the church, which would enable those interested to find out more about the history of the area. Of course, there’s lots more history than just the Clearances and Telford in the area including the Broch beside the church. There is an open invitation to anyone interested to contact me with ideas or offers of help. Both the folk of the church and of the Heritage Society will welcome your interest. ■ Mary Stobo, Session Clerk to Kincardine, Croick and Edderton Church of Scotland and Chair of Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society

Not all 32 Thomas Telford’s Parliamentary Kirks are so well preserved

- Acharacle (interiors refurbished in the 1930s)
- Ardgour (refurbished in 1933)
- Berneray (derelict)
- Berriedale (altered and refurnished 19th century)
- Carnoch (interior completely recast in 1899)
- Croick (almost original condition, unaltered)
- Cross (demolished)
- Duro (interior subdivided and remodelled)
- Hallin (now in use as an artist’s studio)
- Iona (refurbished 1938)
- Keiss (partitioned, weathervane added)
- Kinlochbervie
- Kinlochluichart
- Kinlochspelve (converted to a holiday let)
- Knock (demolished)
- Lochgilphead (replaced)
- North Ballachulish (rebuilt)
- Risabus, Oa (derelict)
- Plockton (renovated in 1961)
- Poolwe (disused, listed as ‘Building at risk’)
- Portnahaven (re-decorated, clock added)
- Quarrf (unused, at risk)
- Shieldaig (rebuilt on the old wall bases)
- Stenscholl (repaired in 1856)
- Stoer (derelict, plans to convert into a house)
- Strathy (converted into a house)
- Strontian (vandalised by the insertion of modern windows)
- Tobermory (replaced)
- Tomintoul (extensive alterations, unrecognisable as a Telford church)
- Truimsgarry (derelict)
- Ullapool (restored, used as a museum since 1990)
- Ulva (dual use as community hall since 1950s)
Ardgay & District News

IT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD FROM THE KYLE OF SUTHERLAND DEVELOPMENT TRUST WEBSITE

Ardgay & District Community Plan publication

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust and Sutherland Community Partnership are happy to announce the publication of the Ardgay and District Community Plan. The Plan highlights the findings from a period of community engagement that took place in Ardgay and District in the Summer 2018.

People were encouraged to fill out a questionnaire and attend workshops in order to provide their view on what they thought could best improve the community. Among the most common themes from the community engagement were issues and proposed solutions around transport, employment, local economy, tourism, housing, internet speeds, and mobile phone signal. Young people from Ardgay also participated in a workshop at Tain Royal Academy which allowed them to provide input to the Community Plan.

Any individual or community group with an interest in improving and developing the area are free to use the document to identify project needs, evidence funding proposals or use for further community engagement. The Plan will also, along with plans from the rest of Sutherland, help to inform of the work of Sutherland Community Partnership.

Silvia Muras, Vice-Chair of Ardgay and District Community Council, said: “This is a great tool for community groups to help identify the areas which residents feel need improvement. We would like to thank the Community Engagement Team for their excellent work producing the Plan, that we hope will be of use to those working to improve the quality of life of Ardgay & District residents.”

The Ardgay and District Community Plan is available from: www.kyleofsutherlanddevelopmenttrust.org/community-engagement-project

For more information about the Sutherland Community Partnership go to: www.highlandcpp.org.uk/sutherland-community-partnership.

Martin Thomsen, Community Engagement Officer Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust

Successful bid for Culrain Hall

The Culrain & District Hall Committee have been awarded a grant of £10,000 from the SSE Achany Community Fund. This will fund the cost of a full structural survey of the existing hall and, further to the results, the cost of architectural fees and the various permissions needed to progress the renovation/rebuild of the hall.

Anne Henderson, Joint Secretary, Culrain & District Hall Committee

The hall committee has also organised fundraising events such as last year’s ceilidh.
Message from the Chairperson

by Betty Wright, Chairperson Ardgay & District CC

When we live in an area as unspoiled as this, the findings of reports which inform on the global situation can be difficult to relate to. The October 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on the state of climate and recent global review of insect studies in the journal Biological Conservation (which estimates that 40 percent of global insect species are threatened with extinction mainly due to habitat loss, intensifying agriculture and climate disruption) both indicate that we need to take urgent action.

At the February meeting of Ardgay & District Community Council I mentioned two grassroots organisations that have emerged in recent months to raise awareness of these issues: Extinction Rebellion and Youth Climate Strike. Supporters of these have been taking part in school strikes – locally each Friday in Ullapool and Fort William - and demonstrations in our cities. Demonstrations do not directly affect either climate disruption or the mass extinction events we are witnessing around our planet. Their sole purpose is to raise public awareness which can lead to changing political will. But who will vote for the tax increases that will surely be required to address these serious problems? All our politicians will have to work together and they will only do this if the public tell them to. In November 2018 Bristol and Manchester city councils passed motions declaring a ‘climate emergency’ and setting targets aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2038 respectively. They have since been joined by more than 20 other councils. Is it time we considered asking The Highland Council to declare a Climate and Biodiversity emergency? ■

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries
Protecting Salmon and Sea Trout stocks in the Kyle district since 1865

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT
KYLE OF SUTHERLAND FISHERIES TRUST
Thursday 4th April 2019
6.00 p.m. Trust ordinary meeting

KYLE OF SUTHERLAND DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD
Friday 5th April 2019
9.30 a.m. Board annual public meeting
10.00 a.m. Board ordinary meeting

Board meetings are open to the public
T: 01863 766702
E: admin@kylefisheries.org
W: www.kylefisheries.org

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Community Land Ownership guidance for engagement

The Scottish Land Commission have published guidance and a route map on community engagement in decisions relating to land with “practical advice on how landowners, land managers and communities can work together to make better – and fairer – decisions about land use.”

The guide can be accessed from their website: https://landcommission.gov.scot/lrrs/communityengagement/.

Ardgay / Bonar Glass recycling bins

Since the glass recycling bins were moved from their original site in front of the Hub in 2017, we have been trying to arrange for their re-siting in a suitable place within easy reach of all. (They are currently at recycle point at Inveran, which has restricted opening hours and is not so accessible)

After much discussion, the area in front of the Fire Station was agreed, on condition that the redundant overhead telephone wire was removed. This was arranged with Openreach and all seemed good to go. Until the question of the potholes in the entrance to the site was raised as a concern by the occupants of the Industrial estate. The Highland Council do not want to encourage more traffic to use the site until the potholes, which could potentially cause damage to vehicles, are repaired.

As we go to press, The Highland Council informed the CC that plans are in place to fix the holes, most likely in March. Once the work has been completed, the glass banks will be returned to the Industrial Estate.
The importance of Jubilee Hill

Jubilee hill (or Cnoc Na Griag) is the name of the summit of Ardgay hill, which in turn gave its name to the village of Ardgay, from the Gaelic ‘Àird Gaoith’ or ‘high wind’. It is said that a bonfire was lit there for Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee and the name stuck.

I have always thought there was something reassuring about the Jubilee Hill overlooking Ardgay, it has been a guardian of the village, a landmark and a way-point which is visible from all routes into Ardgay, and now, due to the proliferation of forestry, the last, and only, elevated area of open hill land in the vicinity.

IRON AGE FORT & VANTAGE POINT

Originally part of Daisybank Croft, it is now annexed to Poplars Farm and history tells us that the hill has seen various visitors over the years. Formerly the site of an Iron Age fort, it is also said that General Wade camped there before facing Montrose at the battle of Carbisdale, while those displaced by the Clearances took refuge there, and it was a vantage point to see anyone, especially the Militia approaching Ardgay. The hill also served as a Royal Observer Corps lookout post during the Second World War when it was manned continuously by local volunteers to warn of any threat to the security of the area, the underground bunker used by the Corps remains to this day.

WILDLIFE

Latterly in more peaceful times it has become an oasis for wildlife and has become home to several species on the UK Red Watch List. There is a very healthy and varied regeneration of trees in certain areas of the hill ground and these flourish in conjunction with the attention of a small population of deer and the seasonal use of the hill as grazing ground by a local crofter. Jubilee Hill was awarded core path status in 2011 but has always been a popular walking area and has been used by the members of the community and the wider public, who for generations, have enjoyed the tranquillity and uninterupted views that the hill commands, although I am not sure if the tranquillity and views were enjoyed by the pupils of Gledfield Primary School who used the hill for cross country running practice!

It remains the only elevated area surrounding Ardgay that has not been planted with trees and has been an integral part of the fabric of Ardgay and surrounding area and the affinity between Jubilee Hill and the local community has been reinforced by a resounding rejection by local residents to the proposal to plant trees on this iconic hill. "Rene Knott"
In commemoration of Able Seaman Donald Stewart

Donald was the son of Kenneth and Isobel Stewart. Kenneth was himself in the Royal Navy but when Donald was born on 9th July 1897, he was a 42 year old crofter and fisher on Islemartin, Lochbroom. Sometime after Donald was 13, the family moved to a croft in Durcha, Altass.

Donald enrolled into the Royal Naval Reserve on the 28th of August 1918 at H.M.S.Victory. His service record states that "his conduct was very good whilst serving at H.M.S. Victory". He was demobilised after 5 months, but died the following day of double pneumonia and pleurisy, aged 21. Most likely he had Spanish flu. He was awarded the 1914-20 British War Medal for his Service in the Royal Naval Reserve. Donald is remembered in the Rosehall Church Roll of Honour and the Rosehall War Memorial.

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One of Donald’s siblings, Angus, married Margaret (Maggie) Morrison and their daughter Dolina Agnes was named after the two brothers. She later married and was known as Agnes Aird. Agnes’s son Donald Aird and daughter Heather Watson, both from Altass, attended the service along with Heather’s son David Watson and Agnes’s granddaughter Lucy Clarke.

David Watson said “Thanks to the Royal British Legion Scotland my family were able to remember, and commemorate, my great, great uncle. It was an honour to take part in the service and it is something that we will all cherish. Donald is buried in Tutim Cemetery. The proper Gaelic name for Tutim is Tuiteam Tarbhach, meaning ‘plentiful slaughter’. This is as a result of a battle between the MacKays of Strathnaver and MacLeods of Assynt & Lewis in 1406. The description also seems most apt for World War 1.”

Last graveside service for a Kyle of Sutherland resident, who died as a result of WW1 and is buried in Tutim Cemetery, near Rosehall.
Remembrance service for Serjeant William Mason in Kincardine

The Creich and Kincardine Branch of Royal British Legion Scotland held a graveside service at Kincardine Cemetery on 25th February on the 100th anniversary of his death.

William John Mason was born around 1880, the son of John Mason a sugar dealer, and Isabella nee Thomson. Unfortunately, nothing else is known about his childhood but William joined the Army at a young age and served for at least 19 years, mostly in the Cameron Highlanders. Early on William served in the Second Boer War with the 1st Battalion Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders. He was awarded the Queen’s and King's South Africa Medals for his service. While with them he was awarded the 1914-20 British War Medal and Victory Medal.

William married Lizzie two months after the end of WW1 in Kincardine; he was a Corporal in the Royal West Surrey Regiment based in Inverness. He was aged 38 and Lizzie 32. William then returned to the Manchesters and was promoted to Serjeant Drummer. Very sadly, it was here that William died on 25th February 1919 of influenza and pneumonia, most likely Spanish flu. He had only been married 46 days.

Lizzie was born in Kincardine in 1886, the daughter of Hugh Ross, Meal Miller for the Gledfield Estate, and Isabella. She had nine siblings. She lived in the miller’s croft with her sisters Annie and Hughina until she died on 28th March 1965 aged 79. She is buried next to her husband, father, mother, sisters Annie and Hughina and brother David. The informant on her death certificate was neighbour, John Fraser, uncle of Jack and Kathleen who both live in Ardgay. They attended the service and remember Mrs Mason. Two of Lizzie’s great nieces also attended; sisters Margaret Hamilton and Monica Hutcheson plus Monica’s husband Donald.

Branch Secretary Fiona Porter welcomed everyone to the service and read the Exhortation and Kohima Epitaph. The family and Fiona Porter planted crosses. Chairman Tony Osborne played the Last Post and Reveille on the bugle. Treasurer David Hannah and Committee Member Rob Pope lowered the Queen’s Colour and Branch Standard for the silence.

Fiona Porter said “It has been an honour to hold these commemoration services to remember the WW1 fallen buried in cemeteries in Creich and Kincardine; this is the last one for these parishes. We are very grateful to the family for travelling so far to be with us to remember Serjeant William Mason. It’s desperately sad that with his new wife, William did not survive to enjoy his well earned future, after such a long and loyal service to his country. We will be holding two more services, one at Lairg Cemetery on 18th March and the other at Rogart Cemetery on 19th April to commemorate the 8 WW1 fallen buried there. We would like to invite the local community to join us at 11am on these days and would particularly invite relatives to make contact on 01863 766349 before the services.”

Fiona Porter
Secretary
Mac & Wild Falls of Shin: What to expect for 2019

**Ardgay & District News**

Mac & Wild Falls of Shin will re-open on Saturday 23rd March with an all new dining and hospitality offering, and an exciting programme of experiences, workshops and events.

**FOOD & DRINK**

For this season, the food & drink offering at Falls will change slightly to reflect the changing clientele we welcome throughout the week. A relaxed café offering of home-made pies, sandwiches, hearty soups, wild bowls of goodness and a well stocked table of sweet Highland delicacies will be available through daytimes. At the weekends, as dusk settles in the forest, the space will transform into evening dining with the introduction of a more extensive a la carte menu complete with our award winning M&W Veni-Moo plus our signature Butcher Cut steaks. And finally, no M&W offering would be complete without our signature weekend Brunch & Roast parties. For the weary rambler in need of a pick-me-up, our full range of signature M&W Scottish Cocktails will be fully stocked from the start to the end of the visitor season.

**FROM US...**

We are Andy Waugh & Calum Mackinnon, from Ardgay & Aberdeen respectively. M&W has been our creative passion project since 2012 when we started street trading the Venison from Andy’s family Game Butchery, Ardgay Game. Seven years on, two much loved London restaurants, an array of accolades, an online modern Scottish Gift Shop and a range of M&W Scottish Cocktails soon available through major UK retailers, Falls of Shin is the perfect addition to our Scottish Lifestyle collection.

**Sample Experiences & Events**

As well as our free to use children’s adventure playground, mud kitchens and fire pits for toasting marshmallows or telling stories, below are some highlights of the M&W Falls of Shin experiences planned for the 2019 season:

- **Wild Cooking** by Andy Waugh (M&W co-founder)
- **Botanical Cocktail Masterclasses**
- **Haggis Making Classes**
- **Whisky in the Woods** (whisky tasting in the forest)
- **Monthly Supper Clubs** (hosted in unique and wild locations in and around Falls of Shin).
HOST presents films to promote tourism in the area

Over 30 members of the Heart of Sutherland Tourism (HOST) group attended a premiere of local tourism films at Bonar Bridge Hall. During the summer of 2018 HOST filmed a series of 12 films promoting the central Sutherland area for tourism, and featuring businesses located there.

Ashley Smith, HOST chairman said: “The aim of the films was not only to show the beautiful area that we live in, but to get under the skin of what it is like to live and work in Sutherland. We had a lot of fun making the films and we have had a lot of positive feedback from the evening”.

The premiere began with an aerial tourism film of the area, which had been released on social media during 2018 and has received over 18,000 views. The other films featured a range of subjects from local businesses such as activity providers, tea plantations, glamping sites, a look at the Lairg Crofters show, the historic Croick Church, how crofts have diversified and what it is like to be a child growing up on a croft. These films will be released via social media platforms, and it is hoped that they can also be used by the businesses to promote themselves and their products. All of the films can be viewed on the HOST website www.heartofsutherland.co.uk

Tracey Smith

INVERSHIN HALL SWISH
Sat 30th March, 7pm

SWISH AND LADIES NIGHT:
FILL A BAG FULL OF CLOTHES AND GET PAMPARED: NAILS, HAND/ARM MASSAGE, MAKE UP & LASHES!!
COCTAILS IN TEACUPS AND TRUFFLES (TEAS TOO)!
£5 ENTRY PLUS £ FOR PAMPERING AND A RAFFLE!!
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LAIRG LEARNING CENTRE

HAVING A WARDROBE CLEAROUT? ......PLEASE DONATE YOUR UNWANTED CLOTHES; LADIES, MENS, CHILDREN, JEWELLERY, HANDBAGS & FOOTWEAR.

CONTACT ELISSA ON 01549 421369 TO DONATE YOUR ITEMS OR SEE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE. #PASSITONWEEK (9-17/03/19)
Salmon are a species which is iconic in many parts of the world, not just in Scotland. As such, 2019 has been declared the International year of the Salmon, led by North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC).

As well as raising awareness of the plight of this fish, there is also a focus on the communities and economies that depend on salmon. Scotland, Norway, Canada and Alaska all have cultures dependant on different species of salmon, and a partnership approach will have the most impact to benefit both the fish and people. Various organisations in each country are holding events to raise awareness of the Salmon’s plight. Here at Kyle Fisheries, we hope to have an open day to invite people to see the annual PIT tagging of smolts on the River Shin.

**TRAP AND TRUCK OPEN DAY**
Smolts (juvenile salmon on their way to sea) from rivers on Loch Shin have difficulty getting past Lairg Dam. To compensate for this, Kyle Fisheries and SSE have an annual “trap and truck” operation where young salmon are captured before they reach Loch Shin and are then transported below the dams onto the mainstem of the River Shin, and then continue their seaward migration. Some of these fish are fitted with a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag. A tag reader is fitted in the fish pass at the Shin diversion dam, which reads the tags from adult fish tagged on the Ffag and Tirry rivers when they return in following years. The tag code allows us to trace it back in our records to the day we tagged it; we know its length, weight, the day it was caught and released. This allows us to calculate the percentage of fish returning from sea.

If you would be interested in attending an open day please let us know, either by coming into the office or give us a call. We are yet to organise the date, but we would be keen to know how many people we may need to accommodate. Additionally, you can check the Year of the Salmon website to see what other events are being held across Scotland and the world.

Sean Robertson, Science and Mitigation Officer Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries
MONDAY

Singing For Fun 7pm-8.15pm
ARDGAY VILLAGE HALL FREE

TUESDAY

Ballroom/Latin 2pm-4pm
ROSEHALL VILLAGE HALL £2

Latin Cardio Fit 7pm-8pm
BONAR BRIDGE PRIMARY £2

WEDNESDAY

Badminton 10am-12pm
ARDGAY VILLAGE HALL FREE

THURSDAY

Badminton 8pm-10pm
ARDGAY VILLAGE HALL FREE
**Commences 4th April**

FRIDAY

Yoga 10am-11am
ARDGAY VILLAGE HALL £2

BEINN THARSUINN COMMUNITY WINDFARM LTD.

www.facebook.com/keepactivetogther T:01863 766190 E: beverley@kyleofsutherland.co.uk

Keep Active Together (KAT) is funded by the Scottish Government. It is part of the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, which is a company limited by Guarantee Scottish Registration:SC401019 & Scottish Charity:SC043587. VAT registration number: 251 4030 5

Registered office: The Trust Office, The Barn, Drovers Square, Ardgay, Sutherland, IV24 3AL
Ardgay & District News

Stories of the people of Glencalvie

Glencalvie became (in)famous for the Clearances of 1845, but before those terrible events, and for as long as anyone could remember, the Glencalvie people had been model tenants, living in modest turf cabins where they grew barley and oats and herded cattle and sheep.

On February 1842 James Gillanders, factor to Glencalvie estate, advertised in the Inverness Chronicle that Greenyard and Glencalvie were to be let as sheep walks. The events that unfolded the following years culminated in one of the most notorious Highland Clearances. The Glencalvie evictions of 1845 were narrated by a Correspondent for The Times, whose articles were quoted during the debate on the Poor Law in the UK Parliament. Greenyards was cleared some years later, in 1854. Here are some stories of the people of Glencalvie.

Record of Longevity

Alexander Campbell of Glencalvie reached the age of 117 years old. Two newspaper extracts allow us to have a peek on his remarkably long life:

Inverness Journal, 24st Feb 1815

“There is a notice of a veteran named Alexander Campbell or...”

Dr Smith’s son with the gamekeeper Duncan Macrae standing to right, presenting a gift to Ann Campbell who lived at Garbh Allt. The house is now a ruin and can be found just after Amat Lodge on the road to Glencalvie near to the Carron river.
Ardgay & District News

Iverach, residing in Glencalvie, Ross-shire who was said to have reached the age of 116 years old. Six Ross-shire gentlemen in London contributed a guinea each to enable him to dress in tartan and refresh himself with a drop of liquor.

The Editor was requested by the minister of Kincardine to announce Iverach’s receipt of the bounty and to express his thanks.

The veteran is well, and prays for as many days to each of his benefactors as he has seen, and an equal portion of health.

He longs for the weather getting a little milder that he may take a walk to see his friends at Gledfield and the manse and to tell them of the tide of riches that has set upon him.

He danced two reels at the last Kincardine Cattle Fair, and a few days ago entered as a scholar in the Gaelic School at Glencalvie. It is supposed that he is the oldest Campbell alive.”

_Inverness Journal, 3rd May 1816_

“This is the notice of a veteran named Alexander Campbell residing at Glencalvie, parish of Kincardine, Ross-shire who has died lately at the advanced age of 117 years.

He was born in 1698, carried arms in 1716 under William, Lord Ross, and till his death showed the characteristic hardiness of a Highlander to an uncommon degree.

Till the storm of snow last winter fell he could walk down to Gledfield and the manse in a day; the distance being about 11 miles.”

Three decades later, the 1846 book written by John Robertson _The Rosses of Glencalvie_, mentions Alexander Campbell, who “saw the three hundreds” (17th, 18th and 19th centuries): “This old man never had a pair of pantaloons, but wore all his days, or centuries, the kilt or phi labeg.” The extraordinary lifespan of Iverach comes to show how long these families had been attached to the land -it might very well be for as long as 500 years-. An attachment that the author cannot understand: “Wonderful is the power of the affections which link human love to dark, dirty, turf huts, with earthen floors and heather roofs, half kraals and half cowsheds!”

_LITERACY_

After their eviction, the people of Glencalvie took shelter in Croick churchyard. As a testament to their misery, they etched messages in the East window of the church. Some people question why the messages are in English if the Glencalvie people knew only Gaelic, as claimed by the reporter to _The Times_. However, the New Statistical Account shows that most of the pupils of Croick parish school could read and write both in English and Gaelic. Robertson affirms that “the people of Amat and Glencalvie supported a teacher for the education of their children.”

_BORN IN THE CHURCHYARD_

According to David Craig’s book _On The Crofters’ Trail_, a child named Sandy, son of John Ross, was born in the churchyard, “in a make-do shelter built of birch branches and turfs.” It goes on to mention “one of the slab stones at the north-west corner” as the actual place of delivery. Sandy lived to become the ferryman at Ardgay.

_SOLIDARITY_

Some landowners were reluctant to give shelter to the people of Glencalvie after the Clearances, as the new Poor Law made them responsible for the destitute in their land.

Robertson recounts that, in 1844, three of the 19 cottages in Glencalvie were occupied by old lone women who paid no rent, and “have a grace from the others for the grazing of a few goat and sheep, by which they live.” All this was done without the laird’s intervention.

That same community spirit might have survived at least until the 20th century. Willie Mac Donald, late of Amat na Tua, remembered that his father would take firewood to Anne Campbell of Garbh Allt, and Peggy Mackay, pictured along these lines. ■ _Silvia Muras. With information provided by Donald Brown & Gregor Laing_
The abolition of runrigs

The changes were conceived initially as a rearrangement of the land to create larger and more productive farms and to substitute the dispersed strips of the old runrig system, but they soon became a drastic social experiment. As a consequence of these changes, a whole social class of “tacksmen” disappeared, wealthy peasants were suddenly impoverished, clan customs lost, Gaelic speakers replaced by English-speaking tenants who came from the Lowlands to run the farms, glens de-populated to make way for sheep, and a sizeable part of the workforce encouraged to emigrate or to take on industrial jobs.

Runrigs or “lazy beds”

Due to extensive glaciation during the Ice Age, the soil in the North Highlands is very thin and difficult to cultivate. To be able to yield subsistence crops such as oats and potatoes, the nutrient-poor peat soil was piled into ridges or rigs with deep furrows or runs in between to aid drainage. Seaweed or manure was also added as fertilizer to provide nitrogen and increased the height of the rigs, to around 18 inches (45cm). The drainage made the soil warmer, so the rigs were less prone to frost.

A communal ‘military’ system

According to Angus “Ease” MacLeod, the runrig system of land tenure was organised on military lines: at the top of the structure was the clan chief (supreme commander), at the next level was the tacksmen (officers), and then there were the small holders or ordinary soldiers. MacLeod explains: “Tae is the old Gaelic word for farm. Tacksmen leased large areas of land from the clan chief on a long-term basis, usually as a reward for military service or because of blood relationships. He, in turn, sub-let most of his land to small holders on an annual lease without security or tenure. The small holders’ annual rent was therefore payable to the tacksmen and it was usually paid in kind, either by labour or agricultural produce or both.” Every year one third of the rigs were reallocated by drawing lots, ensuring that no-one could permanently keep the best land or get stuck with the worst. This system of land tenure was called roinn-ratthe in Gaelic, which means ‘the common run’.

Drawbacks

Runrig was an inefficient system. Much of the land was taken up by the drains rather than being used for growing crops. Each family would be allocated a fair share of the land, but time was wasted moving between the rigs -sometimes far apart-, which were also too small for horse-drawn implements to be used. It is estimated that runrig made effective use of only about 40% of a township’s land. And because people knew that three years was the longest they were likely to keep any particular piece of ground, there was no incentive to spend time and money improving the land.

Remnants

Physical traces of runrig have been erased in our area (the closest ones might be in West Helmsdale and Marrel near Helmsdale), but the communal aspect of the runrig system continued into the crofting system. For example, the land around a township was held collectively by all the small holders in the same way as today’s common grazing. The grazing clerk is a figure similar to the village constable who represented the small holders, and the designation “lots”, sometimes applied to the croft, comes from the ‘cast lots’ or portions of land that changed hands each year.

Silvia Muras
Fundraising effort at Ardgay Public Hall

Due to a reduction in this year’s support grant and increased running costs, hall rental fees will suffer a small increase. It is hoped that this measure, alongside holding events such as this year’s auction, will help bring in enough funds to keep the hall up and running for all.

It has long been a hall committee aim to keep hall rents as low as possible, for as long as possible. It’s to this end that the committee run the fundraising biennial auction, which this year, please note, will be held on Friday, 14th June. And the annual Christmas fair, on the last Saturday of November each year.

Unfortunately, although both events are always well supported, the resulting profits do not go as far as they used to. For example, last November the Christmas Fair raised a fantastic £872. But, just the month before the annual support grant from Highland Council had been halved. This meant that £500 of the fair profit had to be reserved to make up the deficit. In years gone by this £1,000 would have covered the annual insurance premium. But, this is no longer the case. So, additional funds had to be found, that swallowed up the remaining £372 fair balance and left nothing at all to help with other bills.

The insurance is but one unavoidable running cost. Statutory licences, regular fire and electrical equipment servicing all have to be paid for too. Not to mention the increased cost of electricity we are all so familiar with at home.

So, there’s no avoiding the writing – or rather the maths – on the wall. Hall rentals will have to be increased for everyone from the 1st of April 2019. The committee are conscious of the fact that many user groups are financially fragile themselves, so are endeavouring to keep the increase as small as statistics will allow. It’s hoped that the whole community understands that a bankrupt hall would serve no one.

However, the committee are determined to continue working hard to ensure a secure future for the hall and by the time this newsletter goes to press it is hoped that funding applications submitted to enable some of the ongoing maintenance and upgrading projects to be completed.

Rhonwen Copley, Secretary

How can you help?

Here are some of the many ways you can help support your hall too; you can

- Volunteer at the hall’s events (selling raffle tickets, serving teas, etc) - it only costs you your time.
- Select “Ardgay Hall” when you buy through Amazon Smile - There are no extra costs to you or your purchase.
- Participate in the running / maintenance of the hall, just come along to a hall meeting; the dates are always displayed in the notice boards and the committee promise not to press-gang you into anything you do not want to do! - Again, it only costs you your time.
- Make a donation (via any committee member or the post box by the pigeonholes)
- Donate a raffle prize at our fundraising events (the auction is next on the 14th June)
- And finally... Just use the hall!
Ardgay & District News

A busy year ahead at Ledmore & Migdale

In 2019 we will be progressing with the North Highland Twinflower Project, the translocation of red squirrels, and keeping at bay the invasive plant Cotoneaster.

What a fantastic open winter it has been so far. The dry weather and lack of snow was a huge help to us finishing off the sensitive thinning of selected areas of Scot’s pine in improve conditions for blaeberry, and to remove some Norway spruce seeding into the designated Migdale Rock Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), all expertly carried out by Ardgay’s Duncan Wemyss and his team.

During the poorer days, it has forced me indoors to pour over a series of drone images taken of Migdale Rock to track down an invasive plant Cotoneaster, which is threatening a very rare plant species on the rock. Through these images, we can identify hot-spots and prioritise efforts for a rope access team to remove Cotoneaster and protect the vulnerable native plants that survive there. This drone also took some stunning footage of the woods, which was compiled into a short video of the site that can be viewed on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsjY46WA3xA.

Twinflower translocated in January.

TWINFLOWER

Last month saw the first of two translocation projects this year coming to fruition. Twinflower, a rare pinewood plant, has just 15 patches through the North Highlands. As these are clones distant from each other, it is impossible for them to produce seed. The North Highland Twinflower Project has collected plant material from five of these clones and planted them together in five separate locations through the pine woodland, with the aim of establishing new patches and, with time, to see these produce seed with patches appearing elsewhere in years to come. It is an exciting project to be part of, and part of the wider restoration of this beautiful woodland.

Following the success of the red squirrel translocations in parts of the Highlands, including nearby Ardgay, Trees for Life have looked at the wider area of South East Sutherland to promote the spread of this stunning creature, and increase the small genetic pool from the existing translocation. In November this year, we will become home to 20 squirrels, with additional squirrels coming in 2020 to Loch Fleet and nearby ground.

NEW FACEBOOK PAGE

Recently, a Facebook page for Ledmore and Migdale was set up. When anything interesting is seen or happening, I will post on here. If you would be interested in keeping up to date with the goings on in the wood, please search for ‘Ledmore and Migdale’ in Facebook. If there is anything in particular you would like to see on this, please do let me know.

After the success of our Taste of the Wild event last year, we plan to hold another in July, including a camp out overnight in the wood. This family event will be held in July, with dates and promotion in local shops and the Facebook page. If you wish to find out any more on these topics, or anything else about the wood, please get in touch using the contact details below. ■ Ross Watson

Ross Watson
Nort Scotland Site Manager

0343 770 5483
07585 995 300
rosswatson@woodlandtrust.org.uk
Ardgay & District News

The Kyle of Sutherland Hub Gym has some of the world’s best commercial fitness gear.

Check out your community gym

There are many reasons to join a gym: get out of the house and socialise, improve your health, loose some weight, get fit... whatever your reason, just go for it!

So Spring is in the air and we are all looking forward to those long active Summer days. Sometimes though the thought of Summer can send us into a blind panic, the thought of less clothing to hide behind and outdoor activities highlighting our fitness or lack of. Yet Spring breaks us in gently and inspires our renewed motivation and intentions. Whether you wish to supplement your existing fitness routine or embark on that new start for your health and wellbeing, now is the time to check out your local community gym. If you haven’t already been impressed by our snazzy Fitness Suite, fully equipped with the world’s best commercial fitness gear then please drop in for a wee peek and meet our friendly team.

At the Kyle of Sutherland Hub Gym we are blessed with a variety of Technogym cardiovascular, strength and general fitness equipment. There is something for everyone regardless of your physical capabilities or previous gym experience. Many of our members had never set foot in the gym environment before venturing to The Hub. We understand that it can be a daunting experience! If you are a little hesitant at embarking on your gym journey, why not pop along and have a peek. With our bright airy surroundings and tremendous views up the Kyle towards Carbisdale you won’t be disappointed. Everyone is treated to a gym induction free of charge (and of course a chance for a good yarn, particularly if you book with Emma!) and given the opportunity to consider membership.

There is a wonderful social aspect to our facility which many weren’t expecting when joining a gym. There have been a few friendships formed and a general sense of camaraderie between our regular members. Our staff enjoy seeing the commitment and progress in our members wellbeing as they continue with their health goals and of course we enjoy the banter too!

As the gym begins to establish itself we look forward to further developments and services available to you, watch this space. With Emma having various fitness qualifications under her belt she personally enjoys helping members with their goals and if you are now pondering on checking out the gym... Ponder no more and pop by, we look forward to meeting potential gym newbies and doing our part in upholding our community’s wellbeing. Jan Burdett

Jan Burdett, Co-manager
Kyle of Sutherland Hub
② 01883 769 170
www.kyleofsutherland.com  Facebook Kyle of Sutherland Hub
School children, teachers, parents and local volunteers made the most of the lovely weather and rolled their sleeves up to help clear-up and prepare the school garden for the growing season.

Throughout the day the pupils threw themselves into gardening tasks which included weeding, constructing compost bays and seed planting; as well as litter picking and ‘reduce-reuse-recycle’ activities. The children took part in a circuit of outdoor learning activities such as pond dipping, soil testing, worm investigations, and a ‘Bio Blitz’ quadrant study to inspect the natural habitat of the creatures that reside in the school garden. They experienced weaving with willow, and also helped to make a giant pot of delicious homemade soup using organically grown vegetables from the newly launched Dingwall Academy Market to feed the local volunteers.

Tony Sergeant, Depute Head Teacher of Dornoch Firth Campus commented, “It was so pleasing to join pupils, parents, staff and members of our wider community coming together in the spirit of sustainability.”

Arabella Kennard from Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust added: “We’d really like to thank all the volunteers and staff who joined us on the day – including Ian Paterson for his willow weaving skills, and Amanda Morrison for running the outdoor soup kitchen. We must thank our partners Lairg Learning Centre and their tutors, Emma Armstrong, Hugh Moore and Graham Lonsdale for lending their expertise on the day and donating pallets for the compost bays. We are also very grateful to all the people who donated seeds, compost and manure to get us started…. If anyone would like to donate food or garden waste directly to the school garden’s compost bins please do so. The school has 15 raised beds in total. They are offering the opportunity to ‘Adopt a raised bed’ to any community member or group who want to take on a raised bed and start growing. Anyone who might be interested is invited to chat to the school about setting this up.”

Bonar Bridge Primary School’s Eco Action Day

On Friday 22nd February, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust’s Energy Advice Service teamed up with Bonar Bridge Primary School to coordinate an Eco Action Day.

“...It was great to have time learning outside. I enjoyed learning about what lives in our school grounds.” (P7)

“...It was great to get everybody involved, everyone helped each other.” (P4)

“...I found out about a plant in our pond. We called it a Lego plant because it came apart in sections like Lego.” (P1)

“...I enjoyed planting potatoes in the garden.” (P1)
Mr Bumble and his ‘Pollination for the Nation’ road trip

Mr Bumble - aka Jim Webster is taking time out from pest management to travel the length of the UK to build awareness of the vital role pollinators play in everyone’s lives - particularly the humble bumblebee. He’ll be doing it all in his tiny Bumble-mobile. Mr Bumble and his team will leave Land’s End on 13 April to begin a countrywide tour. They’ll be stopping off at a selection of garden centres, schools and parks to educate the general public about pollinators. He’ll be distributing information cards and talking to children about how important it is to look after bumblebees. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust has arranged for Mr Bumble to visit Bonar Bridge Primary School on the 23rd of April. Mr Bumble is part of Beewise, the BPCA’s special interest group on bees. The campaign will be supported by BPCA, Beewise and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust
The Barn, Drovers Square, Ardgay
01863 766 190
www.kyleofsutherlanddevelopmenttrust.org
@KOSutherland
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust
How to apply for Community Awards

**SMALL PROJECTS UNDER £250**

The Beinn nan Oighrean Windfarm Awards
- Go to Ardgay & District CC website: www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk where you can find full details and download the application form.
- Send your completed application form to secretary@ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk
- Next deadlines: 8 April 2019 & 10 June 2019

**PROJECTS UNDER £2,000**

The Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund
- Go to http://ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk to download the guidelines and application form.
- Send your completed application form to phil.tomalin@highland.gov.uk and to secretary@ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk
- Next deadlines: 8 April 2019 & 10 June 2019

**BETWEEN £2,000 AND £10,000+**

SSE Achany Community Fund
- Visit the fund’s page http://sse.com/communities/fundlocations/achany/ for more info and to download the application form. Please note that there are two different forms: £2,000-£10,000 and £10,000+.
- Complete and return to fiona.morrison@sse.com or by Royal Mail to: Fiona Morrison, Corporate Affairs, SSE, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN
- Next deadline: 30 April 2019

**BETWEEN £2,000 AND £25,000+**

E.ON Rosehall Community Fund
- Foundation Scotland administers E.ON Rosehall Community Fund. Visit https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/eon-rosehall.aspx for details. You can apply online or download the application forms (£2,000-£25,000 and £25,000+).
- Alternatively, you can contact Eilidh Gunn by email Eilidh@foundationscotland.org.uk or call 07801 530 218 if you require any further information or advice.
- Next deadline: 30 April 2019

**LATEST BEINN THARSUINN FUND AWARDS (ARDGAY)**

- Gearrchoille Community Wood- £900 towards running costs. 11/02/2019
- Friends of Bradbury Centre- £500 towards ongoing provision of music and alternative therapy sessions. 10/12/2018
- Royal British Legion Scotland Creich & Kincardine Branch - £850 towards costs of staging events to commemorate the end of WW1. 08/10/2018
- Ardgay Public Hall- £861 towards continuing the provision of broadband in the hall. 08/10/2018
- Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust- £1,125 towards Post Office improvements. 13/08/2018
- Ardgay & District Community Council- £2,000 to complete its three year programme. 13/08/2018

Festive lights

Culrain Christmas tree with its new lights bought with a grant from the Beinn nan Oighrean Small Grant Fund Award awarded by Ardgay and District Community Council. We are very grateful to the CC for making this award and the new lights were much enjoyed by residents and visitors over the festive season.
Letters to the editor

Do you have a strong feeling about something you read? Do you want to share your opinion or point of view? Send your letters to ardgaynewsletter@gmail.com.

Sutherland Care Forum’s Footcare Service receives award with thanks

Sutherland Care Forum are seeing further growth in the requests for their Footcare service and were particularly pleased to have recently received a generous grant for £7,098 from the E.On Rosehall Community Fund which enables this valued service to continue. — Isobel Murray

Bank closures and lack of ATMs

I am sure that you will be aware that over the last two years banks have been closing their branches in Sutherland and in other parts of Scotland, particularly Bank of Scotland, Clydesdale Bank, and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Mobile Bank vans have been travelling the rural areas for the Bank of Scotland and the Royal Bank of Scotland. These mobile Banks only come on once or sometimes twice a week to the rural settlement and stay from two to four hours. With all the banking experience I have had with the Bank of Scotland and its mobile, the Chair of the Scottish Executive of the Lloyds Banking Group is going to meet with me on Tuesday 26th April 2019 to discuss about my concerns of the Bank and Mobile. If you too are concerned about these closures and how they are affecting rural communities to place them at a disadvantage, please get in touch. — Michael Baird, Bonar Bridge

Local mini digger hire

Most ground work catered for, ditching, trenching, foundations material handling, rock breaker for stubborn boulders, concrete etc, 3 tonne rubber track machine ideal for sites with restricted access.

Phone Dave
07860675194
What’s on in the area

**UNTIL 26 MARCH**

**#Digital Kyle**

To mark Safer Internet Day on the 5 Feb 2019, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust launched #DigitalKyle. This involved teaming up with several organisations (including Highlands & Island Enterprise, Business Gateway, SCVO, UHI Stem Hub, Police Scotland, Google, Mhor Collective and Lairg Learning Centre) to curate a series of FREE digital themed events to take place in February and March at the Kyle of Sutherland Hub in Bonar Bridge. The events are targeted at different groups, with the aim of raising awareness about cyber security risks for both families and businesses – but also to help people make the most of being online and to encourage people of all ages to enhance their digital skills have fun! For further information see: www.kyleofsutherlanddevelopmenttrust.org/cyber-month

**U N T I L 18 MAY**

**Classic Car Tour**

Organised by Rotary Club of East Sutherland. Assemble outside Dornoch Castle Hotel, register in the Carnegie Courthouse and have a cuppa. Inspect other cars and prepare to leave, the start signalled by the firing of a cannon. Drive to Dingwall and Muir of Ord, then alongside Loch Glascarnoch. Eat lunch at Ullapool. The route home will take you through the UNESCO Geopark. Have afternoon tea at Oykel Bridge and make your way back to Dornoch. To enquire about entries: secretary@east-sutherlandrotary.org or Paddy Murray 07785 261 110.

**FROM 28 MARCH**

**Scottish Ballet: Spring!**

To kickstart our 50th anniversary year, Scottish Ballet presents a fresh double bill fizzing with energy and guaranteed to send you home smiling. Resident choreographer Sophie Laplane will premiere her latest work, Dextera, set to the music of Mozart, performed live by the Scottish Ballet Orchestra. Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Elite Syncopations is an irresistible carnival of colourful characters. This much-loved whirl of 1920s dancehall glitz is set to a series of Scott Joplin’s tunes, performed live by an onstage ragtime band. Thurs 28th, Fri 29th & Sat 30th March. 7:30 pm £11-£23

More info: https://eden-court.co.uk/event/spring-dextera-elite-syncopations

**UNTIL 22 APRIL**

**Art Exhibition**

Organised by the Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society, the art exhibition will be running from Thursday 18th to Monday 22nd April. Artists are invited to submit a maximum of four pictures. If interested artists would care to contact me by e-mail (gardnerhilary@hotmail.com), I will ensure that the full details and entry forms are sent to them in due course.

**UNTIL 4 MAY**

**Beyond Likeness**

Delivered in collaboration with the National Galleries of Scotland, ‘Victoria Crowe: Beyond Likeness’ brings together some of the finest works by one of the UK’s most distinguished figurative artists, for a captivating and career-spanning exhibition. Image: Victoria Crowe, Large Tree Group, 1975, Oil on board 2015 © Victoria Crowe
What’s on in the area

ARDGAY PUBLIC HALL - 6 PM

**Auction & Grand Raffle**

Ardgay Public Hall biennial fundraising event. Come along to view the variety of donated items at 6 pm, with the auction starting at 7 pm. Donations welcome. The Hall will be open for donations on Saturday 8th (3-5 pm), Monday 10th (6-8 pm), Tuesday 11th (2-4 pm), and Wednesday 12th June (6-8 pm). More info: 01863 766 174 or 01863 766 602

ARDOROSS HALL, 8 PM

**‘Tantalus’ and ‘A Pair of Genes’ by Plan B**

Tantalus’ explores the emotional journey for a man pulled in conflicting directions. ‘A Pair of Genes’ is a witty and thought-provoking dance theatre duet. One of the performers exhibits an additional chromosome; and with technology ever increasing, the show considers the imperceptible de-population of people with Down’s Syndrome. Tickets on: 01349 880591 or online on: https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/ardrosscommunityhall. £10 and £8 conc.

INVERSIN HALL 7 PM

**Ladies Night and Clothes Swish**

Fill a bag full of clothes and get pampered: nails, hand/arm massage, make up & lashes! Cocktails in teacups and trifles ( teas too) £5 entry plus £ for pampering and a raffle. In partnership with Lairg Learning Centre. Having a wardrobe clearout? Please donate your unwanted clothes. Contact Elissa on 01549 421 369

SPRING CONCERTS

**SUTHERLAND SESSIONS:**

DOLL HALL, BRORA - 7.30PM

**Calum Alex Macmillan**

Calum Alex Macmillan was born and brought up in the Isle of Lewis, surrounded by traditional music and Gaelic song from a young age. He has gone to become one of Scotland’s leading Gaelic singers. He is one of the youngest ever winners of the Mod Gold Medal, adding the traditional Gold medal and the traditional prize from the Pan Celtic festival to this. Calum Alex is descended from a long line of distinguished bards and singers. £10/£8 online at www.sutherlandsessions.com or on the door.

EDDERTON HALL - 7.30PM

**Andrew Finn Magill with Seán Gray**

International fiddle extraordinaire Andrew Finn Magill plays in concert with returning guitarist and flautist, Seán Gray. Raised in an Irish musical household in Asheville, North Carolina Andrew “Finn the Fiddler” Magill grew up studying with many of the world’s best traditional American and Irish fiddlers at The Swannanoa Gathering music workshops. £10/£8 - online at www.sutherlandsessions.com or on the door
What’s on in the area

**ARDROSS HALL, 7:30 PM**

**Heroes - All or Nothing**

Heroes is a new show from All or Nothing and Room 2 Manoeuvre. Light hearted with something for all the family, Heroes mixes aerial skills with dance theatre and contemporary circus. Asking profound universal questions with humour, straight talking and lots of moving, we follow the journey of the 2 performers as they navigate their way through the world of idolising and being idolised. Advised age 7+ Tickets on: 01349 880591 or https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/ardrosscommunityhall. £10 and £8 conc.

**VARIOUS VENUES, 8:30 PM**

**Earth Hour**

Every year millions of people, businesses and landmarks set aside an hour to host events, switch off their lights and make noise for the Earth Hour movement. This year, Earth Hour takes place on the 20th March at 8:30pm. The Energy Advice Service will be celebrating Earth Hour - so keep an eye on their social media to get updates.

**ARDGAY PUBLIC HALL, 4-6 PM**

**Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust AGM**

The Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust AGM will be held on Wednesday 3rd April from 4-6pm at Ardgay Hall. All welcome.

**STRATHPEFFER PAVILION, 1 PM & 3:30 PM**

**Space Race by Funbox**

**MARCH**

The countdown is on to blast off into the unknown in Funbox’s brand new show for 2019, The Space Race. Packed with classics like ‘Apples and Bananas’ and ‘Aiken Drum’, Funbox favourites and brand new songs, The Space Race is out of this world singalong fun for all the family. Come dressed for adventure – come as an alien, a space princess or an astronaut – and remember in space everyone can hear you sing! Adult £12 - Child £7 - babies in arms £2. Tickets on http://www.wegottickets.com/event/460912 or by phone: 01997 420 124

**BONAR BRIDGE COMMUNITY HALL 4-6 PM**

**Mac & Cheese & Family Bingo Night**

**MARCH**

Come along to play bingo and have a delicious dinner of Macaroni cheese and garlic bread, followed by a raffle. £ 6 adults / £ 3 children / £ 12 families. This is a fundraising event in aid of Bonar Bridge Gaelic Playgroup.

**INVERSHIN HALL, 4-6 PM**

**Roller Disco**

**APRIL**

Any wheels allowed: Roller boots, in-line skates, heelies, skateboards and scooters!! All ages welcome Suggested donation £3. Includes hot dog, a drink and a fruit.
My initial thoughts for writing about the Gearrchoille wood in February were about how exciting it is to look for the first wee shoots which bring hope that spring will soon be here. But then the wind changed and suddenly spring was everywhere – bees flying collecting pollen from snowdrops and winter aconite and toads all over the road in the evening. 16°C in mid-February! While it’s always a good to feel the sun on your back, seeing the seasons being disrupted is not good. Ecosystems are complicated and interdependent and have evolved over hundreds of years. Dramatic sudden change can mean that different species can grow out of harmony with each other – These asynchronies can include mismatches in the timing of migration, breeding, pest avoidance, and food availability. Growth and survival are reduced when migrants arrive at a location before or after food sources are present.

Work on the boardwalk continues – the weather on our workdays has not been very favourable and we have continued with birch thinning. A grant from the Beinn nan Oighrean fund has allowed us to print our two leaflets giving info about trees and moths in the Gearrchoille. Copies are available in the shelter in the wood.

The tallest trees in the Gearrchoille are aspen. Aspen is a fairly rare native tree which provides an important habitat for a variety of lichens, mosses and invertebrates. Aspen reproduces mainly by new shoots, called ramets or suckers, growing from the root systems of mature trees which can extend up to 50 metres from their source trunk, which means that all the trees in a group are all one organism. Aspen trees are either male or female and flower erratically – both producing catkins in March or April as the leaves are emerging. The Trees for Life project keep records of when this happens – so do let us know if you see any aspens flowering locally. (You might need your binoculars!)

Betty Wright

gearrchoillecommunitywoodardgay.org.uk
gearrchoille@gmail.com
01863755316

A very early Spring in your community wood

(left) Our volunteers working on the boardwalk. (Top centre & right) A frog and the first frog spawn of the season. (Bottom centre) Fungus growing on a tree. (Bottom right) Hazel catkins.
Pilates
Bonar Bridge Hall, Mondays 10-11 am. Contact: Moira Chisholm ① 01862 810 786

Kyle of Sutherland Joggers
Facebook page: Kyle of Sutherland Joggers
Contact: Elissa ① 07743 228 661
Naomi ① 07818 482 341
Catriona ① 07929 886 105

Sutherland Walkers Club
We meet the 4th Sunday of the month, all year round.
24TH MARCH: Ben Bhraggie; Big Burn and Dunrobin. 8 miles, circular, tracks and paths, woodland and open ground, views to and from hills, the sea and Dunrobin Castle. Leader: Caroline Dallman. Enquiries: Fiona Macdonald: 01862 810275. Optional shorter walk omitting Ben Bhraggie. Leader: Annette Parrott: 01549 402095. Contact the Walk Leader the day before the walk to confirm that it is taking place.
Contact: David Hannah ① 01863 766 061
Facebook: Sutherland Walkers Group

Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society
With Bonar Bridge History Group. Tuesdays 7:30 pm at the Heritage Centre, Ardgay. Contact: Valerie Mackenzie-Harris ① 01863 766 700

Kyle of Sutherland Growing Group
Meetings last Monday of the month at Invershin Hall from 7-9 pm. all aspects of growing fruit, vegetables and flowers, including gardening for wildlife.
25TH MARCH: Propagation from seed and cuttings. Looking at different methods.
29TH APRIL: Dahlias, Chrysanthemums and Gladioli for your garden and containers.
27TH MAY: Alpines & Hypertufa containers.
Contact: Jean ① 01863 760 190

Edderton & District Gardening Club
First Monday of each month. Edderton Community Centre, 7:30 pm. We took a break from serious gardening in January, opting instead for a very enjoyable lunch. The February meeting took the form of a gardening quiz, won this year by Chris Wood and Phil Gurr. Our April and May meetings may take the form of visits, details still to be confirmed. Contact: Patricia ① 01863 766 061

Kyle of Sutherland Cinema Club
Bonar Bridge Hall, 7:30 pm. Film nights every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month. Free admission / £2 Refreshments. Contact: Silvia
Facebook: Kyle of Sutherland Cinema Club ① 01863 766 690

Kyle of Sutherland Whist Club
Bonar Bridge Hall. Wednesdays at 7.30 pm, Admission £2 including tea. Drives:
20 MARCH Culrain Hall
17 MARCH KoS Gala Week
3 APRIL KoS Cinema Club
10 APRIL Bonar Bridge Indoor Bowling Club
17 APRIL CDL Syndrome Foundation
24 APRIL HOST. 1 MAY KoS Joggers
8 MAY Kyle of Sutherland Whist Club

Tai Chi
Ardgay Public Hall. Monday 2:30 pm £2
Contact: Angela ① 01549 421 336

Ardgay Scottish Country Dancing Club
Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in Ardgay Public Hall. £2 per session. The season ends on Tuesday 30th April and Next Season starts on Tuesday 1st October.
Contact: David Hannah ① 01863 766 061
dhannah559@hotmail.co.uk
Wildlife

Curlew
NUMENIUS ARQUATA

There is no call more evocative than that of the Curlew in our remote Sutherland straths. The Eurasian Curlew is the LARGEST of Europe's wading birds, instantly recognisable by its long, downturned bill, brown upperparts, long legs and in flight its white rump. From March to July you might see them on HEATHERY MOORLAND and grassy croft land, defending their territories and feeding on earthworms, leather jackets and beetles. From July onwards they can be found in our ESTUARIES where numbers are boosted enormously by wintering birds from Scandinavia, Iceland, Finland and Russia. Here food mainly comprises shellfish, shrimp and lug-worm. Once common throughout the UK this species is almost extinct elsewhere, with it now being classed as THE HIGHEST CONSERVATION PRIORITY BIRD SPECIES in the UK. We have the last stronghold up here in the Scottish Highlands. The main reasons for the sharp decline in the rest of the UK is thought to be: -FORESTRY. Due to loss of breeding sites under forestry plantations, its drainage and the “edge effect” which is crows and foxes using forestry to predate surviving wader eggs and chicks. -LOW-LAND AGRICULTURAL CHANGES.

There are EIGHT SPECIES in the Curlew family and two of them (Eskimo Curlew and Slender-billed Curlew) are suspected to have become extinct from healthy numbers in a matter of 20 years or so. Three of the species present in the UK, the Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit and Black-tailed Godwit, are globally Near Threatened.

Improvements such as drainage, cutting silage early and topping (cutting) of all rushes. Curlew need damp soil for chicks to probe edges of shallow pools and cover such as grass and rushes to nest and hide in from predators. -LOSS OF UPLAND GRAZING LIVESTOCK. Upland nesting Curlew need a mix of moor mat-grass, rush, deer-grass, heather and sedge. If the vegetation becomes too dense then it is not suitable to breed. Studies show that under-grazing poses more harm than over-grazing.

Fortunately the SHOOTING of Curlew has been banned in the UK since the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, but shooting still continues in France. Should this concern you then contacting RSPB, SNH or a Member of Parliament should help.

With the government target of 10,000 hectares of new forest per year, the fear is that more UPLAND WADER-RICH LAND is lost. Environmental schemes do exist for farmers, crofters and estates, but offer less support than forestry, so with the lack of market value for livestock and uncertain times ahead with Brexit, it is understandable that more are looking to forestry to safeguard their future. So next time you hear or see a Curlew, stand still and just soak it up. We might be the last generation to enjoy them.

Thanks to reports of those witnessing the decline and through research of bird population we can piece together why and hopefully come up with a plan to PREVENT THE EXTINCTION or slow its progress at least. Further info: https://wadertales.wordpress.com https://www.rspb.org.uk

George Ross
Churches

The important things that don’t change

On Thursday 21st February a record set 122 years ago was broken. The temperature in Aboyne hit 18.3°C - breaking the record for the highest February temperature recorded in Scotland (17.9°C in Aberdeen in 1897). Even Sutherland (Kinbrace) hit 17.3°C, and the Dornoch Firth was not too far behind, reaching 16.1°C at Tain Range.

What a difference a year makes. Last winter was cold and we got plenty of snow. This winter, by comparison, has been remarkably mild. Of course, the winter isn’t over yet, and the really snowy weather last year was at the beginning of March. But it feels like spring is arriving.

And that is something I look forward to. I prefer it when the weather is warm, and the days are long, and the roads aren’t icy. I don’t know what the weather this year will be like, but I am confident that the days will get longer, and the weather will get warmer over the next few months. Every year is different - some very different. But some things don’t change. Spring comes after winter, and then gives way to summer.

Life in churches is a bit like weather. In Bonar Bridge and Lairg Free Church, we’ve seen a few changes in recent months. Our minister left in early November and thus managed to miss winter this year, since he moved to a new charge in Australia, getting there just as summer was arriving. (Good timing!)

And so, like a few other churches in the area, we are looking for a new minister. We have a variety of preachers at our services. And instead of having services in both Bonar and Lairg every Sunday morning, we alternate between them and have a united service in one in the morning, and then an evening service in the other - except for the last Sunday of the month, when we go to Rosehall in the evening. (Full details at bonarandlairg.org) That means a bit more travelling, but it also means the Bonar folk see more of the Lairg folk, and vice versa. And when the morning service is in Lairg, there is a lunch in the church hall afterwards - so it all adds up to getting to know one another better.

We continue to have our weekly meetings for prayer on Wednesday evening, but instead of having an address (sermon) at the meeting, we gather around a big table and discuss a passage from the Bible together.

So, while the way we do things does change a bit, the important things don’t change. We still get encouraged and challenged by what God has to say to us in the Bible, and we still get encouraged (and challenged) by our conversations with each other as we meet together. ■

John Mann, Elder of Bonar Bridge & Lairg Free Church
Guide to local services

**Village Halls & Venues for hire**

- **Ardgay Public Hall**
  Fiona Venter / 01863 766 602
  fcmm11@hotmail.com
- **The Hub**
  Jan Burdett / 01863 769 170
  info@kyleofsutherland.com
- **Kincardine Heritage Centre**
  Valerie Mackenzie-Harris / 01863 766 700
- **Ardgay Church Hall**
  Mary Stobo / 01863 766 868
- **Croick Church**
  enquiries@croickchurch.com
- **Bonar Bridge Community Hall**
  Sally Thompson / 01863 766 883
- **Bradbury Centre**
  Lorraine Askew / 01863 766 772
- **Invershin Hall**
  Elissa Steven / 01549 421 369
- **Rosehall Hall**
  Ann Malone / 01549 441 345

**Mobile Library**

- **GLEDFIELD, CULRAIN CARBISDALE**
  Thursday: 4 April 2019
  25 April 2019 / 16 May 2019
  6 June 2019
  Glefield School 9:30 10:40
  Grumards 10:55 11:10
  The Criags 11:30 11:50
  Corvist 11:55 12:10
  Braeangwell 13:15 13:30
  Cornhill 13:40 13:55
  Culrain 14:10 14:45
  Mr & Mrs Charge 14:55 15:10
  Wester Badarach 15:20 15:40
  Housebound service 16:00 16:30

**EDDERTON - ARDGAY**

- Wednesday: 3 April 2019
  24 April 2019 / 15 May 2019
  5 June 2019
  Ardvannie 13:00 13:25
  Oakwood 13:40 14:00
  Ardgay Hall 14:10 15:10
  Housebound 15:15 15:35
  Arabella 16:30 16:50

**Train times**

From 09/12/2018 to 18/05/2019

**INVERNESS ➔ ARDGAY**

- **Monday to Saturday:**
  07:00 (08:33) Catering serv. available
  10:41 (12:05) Catering serv. available
  14:00 (15:29) Catering serv. available
  17:12 (18:39)
  18:31 (20:01) Catering serv. available
- **Sunday:**
  17:56 (19:23) Catering serv. available

**Bonar Bridge Recycling Centre**

- **MONDAY:** 1 pm - 4:30 pm
- **TUESDAY:** 1 pm - 4:30 pm
- **WEDNESDAY:** Closed
- **THURSDAY:** 8 am - 12 pm
- **FRIDAY:** 8 am - 12 pm
- **SATURDAY:** 9 am - 1 pm
- **SUNDAY:** Closed

**Post Office Ardgay**

- **Ardgay Public Hall**
  TUESDAY: 14:30 - 17:00
  THURSDAY: 13:00 - 16:00

**Post Office Bonar Bridge**

- **MONDAY:** Closed
  TUES: 8:30-13:30 / 14:00-17:30
  WED: 8:30-13:30 / 14:00-17:30
  THUR: 8:30-13:30 / 14:00-17:30
  FRI: 8:30-13:30 / 14:00-17:30
  SAT: 8:30-13:30 / 14:00-17:30

**Ladybird Club**

**ARDGAY PUBLIC HALL**

Every term Tuesday
12:15 to 2:15 pm

**Playgroup**

0-5 years

Snack, toys, tea & coffee, friendship & fun!

Birth to 6 months £1 * 6 months+ £2 * Second child £1.50

LADYBIRD CLUB - Scottish Charity No: SC022751

**Photocopying Prices**

May 2017

**Black and White**

- A4 single sided 15p
- A3 single sided 20p

**Colour Copies**

- A4 single sided 25p
- A3 single sided 35p

**Laminating**

- A4 60p
- A3 £1

Price on request for bulk copying.

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Ladybird Club

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Snack, toys, tea & coffee, friendship & fun!

Birth to 6 months £1 * 6 months+ £2 * Second child £1.50

LADYBIRD CLUB - Scottish Charity No: SC022751
Guide to local services

B
Bradbury Centre
01863 766 772

BUSES
Bradbury Centre Bus
01863 766 772
Stagecoach Highlands
01463 233 371

C
CAB Golspie
01408 633 000

CHURCHES
Church of Scotland
01863 766 868
Scottish Episcopal Church
01862 881 737

D
DVLA Inverness
0300 790 6801

E
ELECTRICITY
Power Cuts
105

SSE Customer Help
0345 026 2658

F
Fire Brigade Dornoch
01862 810 297
Ferries Trust (KoS)
01863 766 702
Forestry Commission
01309 674 004

G
Bonar Bridge-Ardgay Golf Club
01863 766 199

H
HIGHLAND COUNCIL
Customer service
01349 886606

Drummie Golspie
01408 635 370

Service Point Dornoch
01862 810 594
Tain Registration Office
01349 886 644

HIGH SCHOOLS
Tain Royal Academy
01862 892 121
Dornoch Academy
01862 810 246

The Hub
01863 769 170

K
KoS Development Trust
01863 766 190

L
LIBRARIES
Bonar Bridge Libray
01863 760 083

Mobile Libraries
01349 852 698

N
NHS
Doctors Creich Surgery
01863 766 379
Nurses Creich Surgery
01863 766 237
Migdale Hospital
01863 766 211

P
PHARMACY
Mitchells Chemist Bonar
01863 760 011

POLICE
Non Emergency: 101
Emergency: 999

POST OFFICE
Post Office Bonar Bridge
01863 766 219

PRIMARY SCHOOLS
Gledfield
01863 766 580
Bonar Bridge
01863 766 221
Rosehall
01549 441 348
Edderton
01862 821260

R
Recycling Centre Bonar
01349 888 439

S
Scottish Water 24Hr Emergency
0845 800 8855

Customer Help
0845 601 8855

T
Ronnie’s Taxis Ardgay
01863 766 422

TRAINs
National Rail Enquiries
0845 748 4950

V
VETS
Rogart Vets
01408 641 352
Easter Ross Vets Tain
01862 893 142
Johnston & Farrell Tain
01862 894 223

Stagecoach

67 - MON TO SAT
TAIN ➔ LAIRG

Tain Lamington St
06:45 ➔ 07:00
08:00 ➔ 10:11
13:11 ➔ 15:45
16:30 ➔ 18:45
17:27 ➔ 17:42

Edderton ➔ Edderton ➔
08:22 ➔ 11:26
09:05 ➔ 14:20*
17:05 ➔ 17:20
17:35 ➔ 19:50

Ardgay ➔ Ardgay ➔
07:07 ➔ 07:22
08:10 ➔ 11:26
09:05 ➔ 14:20*
16:55 ➔ 19:50

Bonar Bridge ➔ Bonar Bridge
07:10 ➔ 07:25
08:25 ➔ 10:36
13:36 ➔ 16:10
16:55 ➔ 19:50

Invershin ➔ Invershin ➔
07:15 ➔ 07:30
08:30 ➔ 10:41
13:41 ➔ 16:15
17:00 ➔ 19:15

Laing ➔ Laing ➔
07:27 ➔ 07:42
08:42 ➔ 10:55
13:57 ➔ 16:29
17:12 ➔ 19:29

Stagecoach

167 - MON TO FRI
LAIRG ➔ DORNOCHE

Laing Football Ground
07:31

Invershin opp Hotel
07:39

Bonar Bridge Post Office
07:46

Argay opp Ardgay Hall
07:49

Argay opp Ardgay Hall
07:59

Bonar Bridge on Police Station
08:02

Spinningdale opp Post Office
08:10

Clashmore Telephone Kiosk
08:19

Dornoch Cathedral Square
08:27

Stagecoach

920 - TUESDAY
Bonar Bridge to Dornoch via Spinningdale

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove
09:40
13:30

Spinningdale Lady at Post Box
09:48
13:38

Clashmore Carnegie Hall
09:54
14:44

Dornoch Sq
10:00
14:00

920 - WEDNESDAY
Bonar Bridge circular to Dornoch via Spinningdale, Tain & Edderton

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove
09:30
13:30

Spinningdale Lady at Post Box
08:38
13:31

Clashmore Carnegie Hall
09:54
14:19

Tain Bus stop at Co-Op
10:02

Tain Lamington Street
10:04

Edderton
14:06

Clashmore
16:17

Ardgay
16:33

Ardgay
10:39

Ardgay
10:42

Brady Bridge
13:30

Operates every Tuesday and Wednesday apart from Christmas and New Year weeks.

Mobile Banking

Mobile Banking
Royal Bank of Scotland
TUESDAY
Bonar Bridge War Memorial
Arrive 12:05 Depart 12:20

Bank of Scotland
TUESDAY
Bonar Bridge War Memorial
Arrive 10:00 Depart 12:00
Puzzles

Sudoku

Easy

Medium

Hard

A number may not appear twice in the same row or in the same column or in any of the nine 3x3 subregions.

Crossword

Across

5. The art of knotting string in patterns to make decorative articles.
6. To obtain (money) illicitly.
10. A claw, especially one belonging to a bird of prey.

Down

1. Walk with effort through water or another liquid or viscous substance.
2. The movement of something from one place to another.
3. The point on the celestial sphere directly below an observer.
4. A rank of non-commissioned officer in the army or air force, above corporal.
7. (In Scotland) An official who keeps order in a law court.
8. A narrow raised band on a surface.

Solutions can be found at: www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk
**ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL:**
Betty Wright (Chairperson), Silvia Muras (Vice Chair), Marion Turner (Treasurer / Secretary), Rob Pope, Andy Wright, Dr Buster Crabb, Leslie Pope.

COUNCILLORS: Linda Munro, Hugh Morrison, Kirsteen Currie (More details on page 8)

**NEXT EDITION: 15TH JUNE**
**COPY DATE: THIRD WEEK OF MAY**

www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk

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