

# The Lochgair Association Update

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## Editorial

Welcome to the June 2019 issue of Update produced quarterly by The Association.

We welcome regular contributions to Update. If you have any photos or feature articles, or dates for the diary, please pass them on to any committee member:

- Jean Smith (Chair),
- Rosemary Dargie,
- Elsie Freer.
- Margaret Gray,
- Maggie Murray,
- Kay Owen, and
- Marion Lacey (Sec)

## THE ASSOCIATION BECOMES A SCIO [SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION]

Sixteen years ago on 10th April 2003 The Lochgair Association was set up. As of 28th March this year the Association has been successful in being approved by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Officially we are now called The Lochgair Association (SCIO) though we will continue to use the term The Association.

We already have 55 signed up members and expect other folk will shortly renew their memberships.

## DO WE NEED A NEW HALL?



At the AGM on the 27th April members discussed the implications of the decision by the Kirk session that Lochgair Church is no longer 'Fit for Purpose'. Though it will continue to be used for church services as long as it meets health and safety standards, there will be no major investment in the fabric of either the church or hall.

The options discussed were: Buying the church land if it was ever to come onto the open market, or buying another piece of land in or adjacent to the village, and seeking funding for erecting a new hall; or purchasing the hotel. You may have some other ideas. We would welcome your input to the various consultations we will be initiating this year.

## THE NEXT ISSUE OF UPDATE WILL BE PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER.

We welcome your contributions and continued interest in supporting this newsletter. The deadline for articles for the SEPT ISSUE is *August 31st*.

FROM THE BENCH by Michael Reid  
March to May 2019

Winter gradually gives way to spring...

Bird sightings in March continued to follow the pattern established in January and February of being dominated by aquatic species, including Red-breasted Mergansers, Eiders, Goldeneyes, Curlews, Oystercatchers, Shags (or Cormorants?), Black Guillemots, Canada Geese and Grey Herons. Other birds noted included Chaffinches, Bullfinches, Common Thrush and Hooded Crow. No direct sightings of Otters were made, although their spraint (droppings) were noted on boulders along the path between the gate and bench. Seals were often seen, with up to six hauled out on Sgeir Dhuibh.

No signs of spring were noted during March, suggesting a bit of a slow start this year. The month was rounded off by a visit from some metal-detectorists though, who found a silver 1935 threepence and two brass buckles on the shore.

April started cold, windy and rainy and nothing much was reported for almost the first week. After this, a few signs of spring started to appear, including leaf buds starting to open on Horse chestnuts and Alders around the 6<sup>th</sup>, a Bumblebee on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Marsh Marigold flowers on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Celandines on the 17<sup>th</sup>, Pink Purslane on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Sea Pink, Louseworts and Bluebells on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Butterflies (Orange Tip & a white variety) started to appear on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first recorded sighting of swallows was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> behind the hotel, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> Grasshopper Warblers were heard for the first time - their song sounds like a fishing reel being wound. The first cuckoo was heard on the 27<sup>th</sup>, behind the village.

Other birds noted in April included Eiders (up to 16), a Red-throated Diver (calling as it flew over), Herons, Siskins, Common Gulls (which are much rarer than their name suggests!), Redshanks, Mergansers, Goldeneyes, Oystercatchers, Curlews, Shags, Herring Gulls, Blackbirds, Hooded Crows, Pied Wagtails, Reed Bunting, Great Tits, and Goldfinch. There was a notable shift from winter to spring / summer species over the course of the month. The Goldeneyes do not seem to have adopted the nest box, but hopefully will do in the future. It took 15 years for those the Scottish Goldeneye Project installed to be adopted, so we will be patient...



Common Gull (left) compared to Herring Gull (right).

Some small fish described as 'baby eels with spots along their backs' were found under rocks at low tide and a sketch helpfully included in the sketchbook. From the description and sketch, these were probably Butterfish, which are a favourite of otters! The Smiths reported seeing a large silver fish, probably a sea trout or salmon jumping from the water in front of Redhouses on the 20<sup>th</sup>. This was also beach clean day and other sightings that day included an otter, seals and a rubber duck. Otters and seals were generally seen quite often.

**Butterfish**

May began with the 'chust sublime' sight of the VIC32 puffer steaming past. There was also a large amount of tree pollen (probably birch) covering the shore, cars, windows and most other things!

Birds in May included Whitethroats, Goldfinches, Swallows, and the 'usual suspects' (Hoodies, Herons, Oyster-catchers, Gulls etc). A pair of Mergansers seem to have stayed in the loch, but so far there hasn't been any signs of young ones, but fingers crossed. Common Sandpipers seem to be nesting somewhere around the footbridge, possibly on the red catamaran pulled up on the shore. They can be pretty noisy.

A big hairy caterpillar seen on the track was later identified as a drinker moth (see photo).

**Drinker Moth Caterpillar**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, a dozen seals were seen on the rocks, and later that evening, six were seen jumping like dolphins. Midges were also noted for the first time that day!

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, a large and very impressive 3-masted sailing ship was anchored in Kames Bay, flying a Cayman Isles flag. It had two launches which went off exploring Loch Gair and the Ardcastle shoreline and was seen around Loch Fyne for a few days.

The first of the Flag Iris flowers was seen on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

June has brought a large number of plants and wild flowers, more about that in the next issue.

FROM THE BENCH by Michael Reid (continued)

The artists have been very busy since the last time. We have decided to feature one adult and one junior sketch this time, although it's worth a trip out to the bench just to see the variety and quality of the artwork. Congratulations and Thanks to Eilidh Tate (12) and Bruce from Devon.



## DUCKS, GOATS AND A COCKATOO by Fraser Bell

Many households in small communities around the country keep cats and dogs but here in Lochgair we can boast that over the years this village has truly had a great variety of animals and birds. For many years my Mother kept ducks on the front green and on the mound where Kay's house is now. At night they were locked into a small wooden hut and each morning they would be fed and then they would waddle down to the shore and into the water. They then paddled in a line out into Loch Fyne, only returning when it was almost dark. It was my job to stand on the shore and make sure they all returned. Each year to get new ducks my Mother would put thirteen fertile duck eggs below a



clocking (broody) hen to incubate them. Three weeks later when the chicks hatched out, the first thing they wanted to do was get into the loch causing the mother hen to panic on the shore line as she couldn't follow them. Duck and hen eggs in these days were sought after by the many visitors who wandered down the village from the numerous bus parties who stopped at the hotel for afternoon teas. I also had a pet duck called Weatie who followed me around like a dog however when I went to the Merchant Navy she was given to a neighbour.

My Aunt Mary had two goats which were kept in the shed which is now part of the old Post Office. Each morning they were led over to Manitoba, tethered and allowed to graze all day. One of the goats was bought in Lochgilphead and my aunt and uncle had to walk it back to the village. Unfortunately, it ate so much grass and clover on the way it collapsed two miles from the village, unable to walk any further. My uncle had to walk to the village to get a wheelbarrow to carry it home. Cats were common in the village, many of them were Manx cats having only stumps for tails. They died out when I was in my early teens. Old Pop was our family cat. He only had 3 legs having chewed off a leg caught in a gin trap. He was 23 when he died.



In the early 1920's a lady called Billy Livingston, who lived in the house now Jean and Ian Smith's, came from America and brought with her a male cockatoo. He was of course called Cocky and it was alleged that he was over 100 years old. Cocky was given to my Aunt Margaret who was at that time about 10 years of age and he lived in our house in a very large cage. Cocky and Aunt Margaret were inseparable and she carried him around on her arm constantly, even when she was playing football. The boys in the village were scared of

him as he could give a nasty bite. Unfortunately, Cocky died and his body was sent to a taxidermist in Glasgow to be stuffed. When he was returned to the village he looked beautiful but sadly his prominent comb had been put on sideways and he was never displayed again. He ended up in the small loft space above Ian and Jean's sitting room. Some years later my Aunt May Bell lived in the house and I was able to search the attic for Cocky's remains, but there was only a bundle of cotton wool and some large feathers.

**INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF  
LOCHGAIR NATURE WATCHERS?**

by Robert Lacey

Have you had a fleeting glimpse of a rare bird or noticed some mysterious animal activity in your garden but have not been sure what it was? Well now is your chance to find out.

The village now has access to 2 NATURE CAPTURE CAMERAS, courtesy of the Community Council A'Chruach Fund. The truth will out as these elusive creatures are caught on camera, in motion pictures, stills, and after dark. Contact details will be circulated to request camera placement, though there is already a list of gardens with potential sightings of otters, bats, owls and the presumed pine martin.

Combined with pics taken in the native woodland project area, thanks to MacArthur Green, and any pics you've taken yourselves, we could soon be able to pop up an exhibition of a YEAR OF NATURE IN LOCHGAIR.

**HOW GOOD IS LOCHGAIR?**



This is your opportunity to feed into the development of what might become an action plan by Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership for Lochgair. The consultation will run until 30th September.

By clicking onto the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/abcplacestandard> you can complete what is called 'A Place Standard tool'. This will rate what you think of — the access, shared spaces and facilities available in the Lochgair area and comment on what is working well and what is not. The final action plan will be split into administrative areas with priorities on which community planning partner agencies can work together with the community to reduce inequalities.

West Loch Fyne Community Council will receive the full results for our area so that this may assist in any community-led action plans that are developed.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO INCREASE THE  
DIFFERENT USE THAT CAN BE MADE OF THE  
HALL. HAVE YOU ANY IDEAS?**

**Do you have ideas for events or other activities operating in or out of the hall or elsewhere in the village?**

To improve our chances of attracting external funding for either major improvements to the current hall or better still a brand new hall, we need to show that the hall has been used over the years and continues to be used, and not just by the older members of the village!

1. Have you ideas for events that would attract folk not only from the village but also from a wider catchment area? As you'll remember the Long Memories Exhibition did just that last Autumn - we doubled our attendance by folk from outwith the village!
2. As part of The Long Memories Project we want to collect photos of how the hall has been used over the 47 years it's been in existence? Has any one got a photo of it being built in 1972? Any newspaper articles? This type of memorabilia would be great to make the case for both a replacement hall and investment in the village.
3. Why don't you influence what the community planning partners think our village needs by completing the on-line survey :

<https://tinyurl.com/abcplacestandard>

THE LOCHGAIR AMBLERS VISIT ARGYLL BEAVER CENTRE

On the 30th May members of The Lochgair Amblers attended an evening briefing at the visitors centre at Barrandaimh by Pete and Oly of The Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation.



Beverly Cuthbert summed up the experience:

“What excitement! Hoping to see the elusive beavers at work and maybe play - the prospect of rain, wind and midges couldn't dampen the enthusiasm...none of the above materialised to any great degree, but neither did the beavers!!

Nonetheless, what an utterly enchanted evening, gently strolling amongst such scenery and learning a great deal, not only regarding the natural history of the beavers, but about so many varied forms of plant and animal wildlife. Brilliant.”

If you are interested in visiting the Wildlife Visitor Centre or joining a Beaver Walk around Loch Barnluasgan you can speak to Michael Reid, a volunteer guide with the centre; or go onto the website: [www.argyllbeavercentre.co.uk](http://www.argyllbeavercentre.co.uk)



**The Beach Clean**



Photo by Lucas Smith

The ever popular beach clean and BBQ in April was blessed with beautiful Easter weekend weather. The turn-out was great by both young and old. Thanks to Fred Bruce and his support team for a very efficiently organised clean up of the bay and surrounding beaches; to The Grab Trust for loaning of equipment and grant funding.

Thanks also to Ian and Jean Smith for hosting the BBQ, Easter egg hunt, and relaxing drinks afterwards in the courtyard looking over Loch Gair; and to West Loch Fyne Community Council for subsidising the BBQ.

**Resuscitation Update Course**

By popular request Andy Craven, our local first aid expert, ran a highly informative update course on resuscitation on 3rd June. Thanks you Andy. We learnt how to distinguish between heart attacks and cardiac arrest, the ABC - how to Assess, check Breathing, and if necessary use of CPR in conjunction with the defibrillator which is stored in Lochgair Hub (The phone box on the road down to the lower village). Andy circulated afterwards an electronic copy of his First Aid Course Notes. This covers anything you will ever want to know about dealing with accidents and health incidents.



For those not able to attend this session there will be another opportunity in August. Look out for posters and emails about this.

**Lochgair Arts and Crafts Group Members try out Eco-printing  
With expert input by Maggie Murray**



Five members of the Arts and Crafts Group spent a fascinating afternoon in 'The Studio' at Redhouses learning about eco-printing. With a selection of various leaves and flowers from the garden, Maggie Murray showed them how to use mordants (rusty iron or copper coins mixed with vinegar and water). After steaming for two hours the results were amazing. So also was



printing using leaves stuck onto polystyrene blocks. A big thank you to Maggie for such a fun afternoon. It's planned to run a further eco-print session exploring other

methods when the group restarts in September. Anyone interested being added to the mailing list of the Arts & Crafts Group should drop an email to [rock.solid.res@gmail.com](mailto:rock.solid.res@gmail.com).

**LOCHGAIR GARDEN GROUP BY CAROL BRAIDWOOD**

The income from The Plant Sale and Coffee Morning was £602—a major achievement for such a small village—and thanks to inclusion in 'Lochgilphead and Around Noticeboard' on Facebook attracted folk from a wide radius.

“A great big thank you to all our volunteers Deirdre, Jan, Jean, Margaret, Dee, Sandy, Marion, Fred, Beverly, Mike, Maggie, Elspeth, May, Rosemary and Douglas. I would like to thank everyone who donated plants, baking and raffle prizes. This has been one of our best plant sales.” Carol Braidwood (Chair).



Some of the money has been allocated to replacing worn out planters, the purchase of new plants for the planters along the front in the lower village, and the community garden on the A83 maintained by Douglas and Carol Braidwood .

The next garden group meeting will be on Saturday 27th July at 10.30am.—tea/coffee and cake at Jan Williams home, Marden, followed by a look round some of the members' gardens. All are welcome.



Rambling Rector Rose planted in the memory of Peter Rice.

Thanks to the Gardening Group and to Tom & Barabel McKay for permission

to plant this special rose beside the fence overlooking the Scottish Water Garden.

Fiona Rice was delighted. “Someone gave Peter one when he was ordained in Salisbury and we planted it at the bottom of the garden to grow through some trees. The white flowers were prolific and we were sad not to be able to take it with us when we sold the house. Peter would be delighted, flattered and honoured!! ”

Donation of Gardening Gear/Plants & Arts and Craft Materials by Helen, Nick and Adrien - the family of Hazel Jackson

The family of a founding member of the Garden Group (Hazel Jackson), whose home is being prepared for sale, offered the contents of her greenhouse to the members of the Garden Group; and also lengths of material and a tailoring/embroidery electric sewing machine to the Arts and Crafts Group.

Over £225 was raised from this generous gift and will be donated to the Dorchas Centre.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ARDCASTLE FOREST/LOCH FYNE

\* SATURDAY 3RD AUGUST

PICNIC LUNCH at the BARGE RAMP, ARDCASTLE

Make your way to the barge ramp in Ardcastle forest by any way you choose – car, bicycle, by foot, tender, kayak , horse back.....and bring a picnic lunch... This will be weather dependent! [see posters for details]

N LOCHGAIR HALL

\* FRIDAY EVENING 27TH SEPTEMBER

BOTHY NIGHT.

This will be a fun evening with local entertainers— songs (Gaelic & English), music (Jazz & Scottish), dances (Hungarian & Ceilidh) - and other entertainment for all the family; plus snacks and refreshing alcoholic & non-alcoholic drinks!

\* FRIDAY EVENING 25TH OCTOBER

*KIDNAPPED* / APPIN MURDER- AN ILLUSTRATED TALK BY ANGUS STEWART

You may like to refresh your memory of R L Stevenson’s novels - *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*

**UPDATE BY WEST LOCH FYNE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

In 2018/19 West Loch Fyne Community Council approved the following A’Chruach Windfarm micro-grants.

**LOCHGAIR**

Lochgair Garden Group £175.00

Lochgair Association £605

Lochgair Lunch Club £300

Lochgair Craft Group £120

**LOCHGAIR TOTAL £1,200**

**MINARD**

Argyll Fyne Art £420

Minard Community Trust £1,110

**MINARD TOTAL £1,530**