

THE LOCHGAIR UPDATE

JUNE 2022

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LOCHGAIR BIDS FAREWELL TO IAN SMITH, THE ASSOCIATION'S FOUNDING CHAIRPERSON by Jean Smith



Bench presented by The Lochgair Association to Ian (Chairperson 2003-2013) and Jean Smith in recognition of their service.

Ian Smith died peacefully at home in the early hours of Monday 14th March.

After a working life in Glasgow, Ian wanted to spend his retirement in Argyll, and after viewing 6 Gallanach, he knew that he had found his ideal home.

Shortly after arriving in Lochgair the village learned of a grant scheme which helped small coastal communities with maritime projects. A meeting in the hall identified a slipway would be an asset and a group were asked to take this forward. However it soon became clear that to apply for grant funding a proper organisation was needed, with a constitution, a committee and some evidence that they could raise funding.

The Lochgair Association was born. Ian was elected chairperson and he set about writing the constitution. Meanwhile others began a programme of fundraising, which was when the beach clean and BBQ was started. We had Burns nights in the hall, musical evenings in the Hotel and a host of other events.

The slipway was designed and planning obtained and Ian, on behalf of the village, was trying to buy the piece of foreshore required when Scottish Water appeared on the horizon wanting to site the new village septic tank on the same bit of foreshore in front of Gallanach Cottage. As a Civil Engineer Ian could see that this would be a visual blight to the village, especially given the height it would have to be built to prevent the tank being inundated with sea water, which would lead to the tank smelling.

Ian led the village campaign against Scottish Water, which went on for nearly 3 years culminating in a full public enquiry which the village won. He continued as chairperson for another few years, leading a renewed calendar of social events and fundraising, as the funds had been depleted by the Scottish Water fight.

Ian, now no longer on the committee, continued to be a strong supporter of the Association, attending all its events and meetings. Lochgair is a more vibrant village because of the Lochgair Association and The Lochgair Association is a robust organisation because of Ian Smith.

Editorial

Welcome to the June issue of Lochgair Update.

This is a community initiative of The Lochgair Association, and without your contributions – photos and articles – it would not have continued to be published four and a half years after its first issue in September 2017.

The next, and possibly final issue of Update, will come out in September and will be a very special one as it will be the quinquennial issue that will look back at key events in the village and noteworthy articles and photos from the previous 20 copies of Update.

LOCHGAIR VILLAGERS OBJECT TO PLANNING APPLICATION BY MACLEOD

Reference No. 22/00680/PP



There were 45 objections by members of Lochgair community by the deadline of 30th May to the phase one application for 8 dwelling houses (a medium scale development) with phased development of up to 24 houses.

Objectors highlighted the inconsistencies in the application in terms of both local and national planning policies e.g. in relation to “Areas of Panoramic Quality”, “Villages and Minor Settlements” “ Sustainable Development”.

The so called ‘Master Plan’ lacked necessary detail, and there had been no consultation on the contents with the community council. Plus technical reports were not made available to the public prior to the deadline for comments.

Objectors highlighted the negative impact of such a development on Lochgair, for example in relation to: Road safety; The adequacy of infrastructure (sewerage, water, flood control, Wifi); Ecological protection and Biodiversity; Safeguarding the character of the rest of the village (housing density, layout, and design proposed).

A number of objectors questioned the assumption that such a development would address the Council’s policies in terms of meeting housing shortages and population decline. The sense was that the focus was on providing housing for commuters (which goes against Government policy on climate change mitigation) or worse still the houses would be bought up for holiday lets or second homes.

In short the planning application was felt to run counter to sustainable development principles, with no evident positive impact on the economic, social and environmental needs of Lochgair.

However one objector commented that a benefit of allowing a small scale development might be that the developer would consider provision of a financial contribution towards the repair and upkeep of the hall—in a small way thereby giving back to the local community.

Message from Jean Smith, the Chair of The Lochgair Association (SCIO)

Since the last issue of 'Update' life for me has changed beyond all recognition, but I would like to thank all the people in the village who have offered support and comfort during these past few months. However life in the village goes on.



The Easter week-end beach clean and BBQ went ahead as in pre-covid days. It was a success as usual. However looking towards next year, we would be interested to get some ideas on how to make it different, better or should it be scrapped?

The Jubilee week-end street picnic was a new idea in our social calendar, which proved popular with all who attended, aided by super weather.



Planning

The Association does not have a remit regarding planning. However we can, at the request of a member, facilitate a meeting of interested parties to exchange ideas and information. Thereafter it is up to individuals to submit their own comments.

Purchase of the hall and church buildings

Lawyers seem to have no sense of urgency! I expect things would have moved faster had we been prepared to pay nearer the site valuation. However I understand the title deeds information is with the Association Lawyer for her to make the necessary checks. So maybe soon!

Activities for the Lochgair Association tend to tail off during the summer - most people are too busy doing their garden or going on holiday, but we will be looking at what our members would like for next winter.

We will be planning the Association AGM in the Autumn and will be inviting nominations for new committee members.

It is your Association so please participate.

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON IN LOCHGAIR?

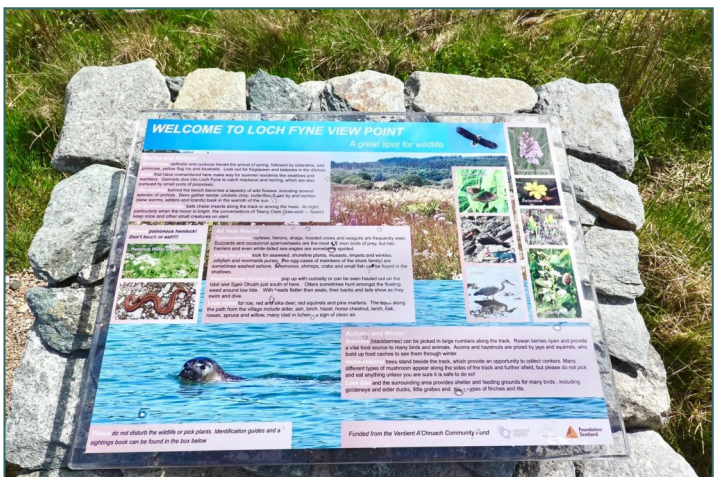
Beach Clean and BBQ on Saturday 16th April, By Jean Smith



"I would like to thank everyone who made Saturday such a success. To the 40 adults and assorted children who took part in the beach clean and to Fred Bruce who organised the teams and gave them their allotted areas thank you and well done. To all the people who helped with the BBQ and provided goodies very many thanks, and most importantly everyone who came to the BBQ thank you for making it such a rewarding afternoon.

As usual we were sponsored by the GRAB Trust and we had the local representative for 'surfers against sewage' present this year. It is recognised that while our pile of rubbish has lessened with the years - we can still make a difference."

Natural History Display erected on Loch Fyne foreshore at the beginning of May



This project was funded through a grant by Ventient Energy A'Chruach Community Fund - administered by Foundation Scotland. We are grateful to Graham Ramsay, whose company Midton Acrylics, produced the display; to Kenny Reive who built the plinth, and Euan Seator the galvanised metal mountings.

This was a great community effort thanks to the following Association members who contributed photos from which the final selection for the Natural History board was made by Michael Reid, who also created the explanatory text: [Photos by Anna Watkiss, Allan Redpath, Bev Cuthbert, Jennifer Swanson, Karen Connor, and Michael Reid.]

If you still wish to provide your feedback to Foundation Scotland the deadline for responses is the 22nd of June, and the Survey Monkey link is: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/F72PLHR>

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON IN LOCHGAIR? continued



Lochgair Street Party, June 4th

Over 50 folk from Lochgair plus friends and family turned out in force for the street party held in Upper Lochgair (held outside the gates of Knock Steading and Knock Farmhouse) and a good time was had by all. A big thank you to everyone involved in the organisation: In particular Bev and Mick Cuthbert and Alan Redpath - the DJ for the afternoon (with his Classic JBL 4312 Studio monitor speakers and Separao Valve Amplifier, and an eclectic mix of music from spotify loaded on his Ipad); plus Members of the Committee, and Marion, Greg, Dave, Fred, Barbara etc. etc. etc. who all helped to make the afternoon a great success,



Also thanks to the entertainers— Heather McGee who kicked off the picnic in style with a highly proficient performance on bagpipes; followed by Sandy Richardson who with the support of Jan, Lorraine, Bev, Tom and Marion, provided a demonstration of Chi Kung, and the Tai Chi Short Form, followed by a mimed performance of 'The Pond'. Congratulations also to the brave folk who attempted to dance The Gay Gordons and Strip the Willow.



Lorraine Darbyshire, who recently moved into the village with her husband summed up the event in a Facebook message : " I've had an absolutely lovely afternoon at the picnic, thank you to everyone who made it happen and have made us so welcome."

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON IN LOCHGAIR? continued

More Photos from Lochgair Street Party



It was a hot day and hats on display provided much needed protection from the sun.

Heather McGee, a member of MidArgyll Pipe Band took up the pipes three years ago. So good was her performance of well known Scottish pieces that Jean Smith and Tom Clarke couldn't resist a quick twirl to the sound of the pipes.



Chi Kung session led by Sandy Richardson

KAYAKING LOCHGAIR BY HEATHER ROGAN

Spring was finally starting, with daffodils in flower everywhere, and, for the first time in years, we were actually living somewhere that we could finally get out and do something we enjoy – sea kayaking.

It must be three years since we got out, so I can't say I'm up to much, but it was just so nice to get back out on the water. I had been worried that I'd struggle to get the kayak down but, with the help of a trolley, it was no problem despite the fact that the tide was inevitably out!

We are only fair-weather paddlers so had waited for light winds and flat seas. It was absolutely beautiful, mirror calm and quiet, the only sounds paddle in water and the wildlife. There is nothing quite like it.



The good thing is that, even if Loch Fyne is choppy, Lochgair itself is generally very sheltered, so it should be safe to build up those faded muscles over time. We have had a few good days though and have paddled down to Kames Bay and up past Ardcastle, we couldn't resist. The reflections on the loch and the clarity of the water is amazing. There is nothing quite like gliding along looking over the side and watching the seabed slip by.

What can you hope to see out there? I have no idea, not having been here long enough. But, so far, we have spotted Guillemots and their small cousins, Black Guillemots, Eider ducks, Curlew, Oystercatchers, sandpipers, Mergansers, Graylag, Heron, Shag, Gannets and Harbour Seals. We are certain there are Otters about but, as yet we haven't spotted them, we have also heard tell of dolphins, we live in hope.....



One day, perhaps, I'll be able to make it to Otter Ferry or Old Castle Lachlan, but for now I'll settle for a few hours out on peaceful calm waters. See some of you out there sometime perhaps?

SCRATCH MAGIC VIOLIN MAKING by Robert Lacey

Violin number 1 was complete. But it had no sparkle. I had wanted to make a violin with an inspiring sound. I also wanted to understand what would make the difference.

“But achieving this by using templates of famous instruments such as Stradivari’s ‘Messiah’ or Guaneri’s ‘Kreisler’ didn’t appeal. But what was the alternative? I then came across the Youtubes of Peter Westerlund making his 400th violin - instruments that sell for \$40,000 plus.

Westerlund trained in a traditional way. Yet as he worked he saw inconsistencies between the accepted methods and the knowledge gained from CT scanning. This led him to an epiphany, which he calls ‘the bomb’; that exact copying of a golden age instrument does not guarantee quality. Instead he found by using the subtle sounds made by the wood he could control the shaping and thickening of every element of the instrument.

I was sceptical. How could this method produce what Westerlund claimed? It seemed too abracadabra. But to create the instrument’s shape using the sound of the wood, to me, if it could be done, was alluring.

So this is how Westerlund does it. Once the profile of the instrument is decided on, it is used to create the form around which the sides - the ribs- are built. The outline of the ribs plus 3mm is then used to mark and cut the profile of the front and back plates.

There is nothing unusual about Westerlund’s initial stages - the removing of wood that is clearly surplus, and the making of a flat platform, about 9mm wide and 3.5mm thick, around the perimeter of each plate. Then the magic begins. Westerlund ‘tunes’ the edge to its acoustically correct shape.

He does this using what he calls ‘scratch tones’. I ended up calling this ‘wheeching’.

It is a bit like using your finger tip as if it was a violin bow, repeatedly stroking the edge of the wood. He first tests the scratch tone on the edge of the plate at the tail. This determines the starter pitch. Then wood is removed from around the edge of the plate wherever the pitch is higher than the starter pitch. Unbelievably this produces a very smooth curve and, provided the thickness of the edge platform is consistent, it works. This produces a tuned boundary to the plates which allows the next even more unbelievable process to begin.

The exact middle of the outer face of the plate blank is found and the thickness is reduced to 15mm along a narrow platform about 75mm in length on the centre line. This area is flattened with a plane until it is all the same pitch. Initially the mid-point will sound high. Once the middle falls to the same pitch as the rest of this platform, carving of the arching begins. And extraordinarily, working outwards to left and right across the narrow waist of the plate, the curve of the cross arch emerges as wood giving a higher tone is removed. Then it’s time to create the long arch using the same process. The pitch of the wood from the centre outward is repeatedly checked and refined as smaller and smaller amounts are removed. Slowly the downward slope to the edge boundary emerges. And astonishingly, there it is; the familiar elegant curvature of the violin plate.

To carry this out Westerlund uses small thumb and palm planes, some less than an inch long. The majority of makers when doing the rough arching use gouge chisels. It is a matter of preference which tool is used. But to follow Westerlund’s method, the more controllable removal of wood helps as it leaves a surface that already has become smooth. Refinement follows leading to a polished surface using scrapers and kitchen roll.

SCRATCH MAGIC VIOLIN MAKING continued

The next step is an even bigger 'bomb'. 'Thickening doesn't matter', is what Westerlund says. What he means is: don't use a thickening map from a famous instrument. Instead use the same scratch tone technique to tune the inside surface of the plate to match the pitch of the outer surface at every point. At this stage Westerlund introduces 'tap tones'. This helps considerably by giving a cross check to confirm the pitch that is heard from the scratch tone. Confusingly the 'tap tones' tell the pitch on the opposite face from the tap, while the 'scratch tones' give the pitch for the same face. The wood removed during this stage reduces the thickness non-symmetrically, in a range from 4mm down to 2mm. The same process also controls the shape of the bass bar, the bridge, the 'f-hole' nicks that position the bridge, and the tail piece.

A few weeks ago I completed instrument number 5 having practiced Westerlund's method on instruments 2, 3 and 4. This instrument is made from Sycamore from Minard [the neck and back plate], Lime from Dunoon [the front plate], cherry from Bishopton [the chin rest], and the fingerboard, pegs and other fitments, using Purple Heart from the tropics. To my ear number 5 sparkles. It is now my 'go to' instrument to play. Will I stop there? Who knows?

Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 1. Fence post, decking, pine, and mahogany; tail piece, finger board, chin rest from auction instruments.

Fig 2. Siberian Larch (back), Western Red Cedar (front); Boxwood (tailpiece); Siberian Larch (purfling)

Fig 3. Violin No. 4: Lime and Sycamore from Minard; Siberian Larch (chin rest); Sycamore (tailpiece). Violin No. 5: Lime front from Dunoon (Lover's Lane); Sycamore from Minard for back, sides, and tailpiece; chin rest—Cherry from Bishopton; fingerboard, pegs and button — Purpleheart from the tropics.

Pretty Hardy Alpine Flowers by Anna Wells

When we think of flowers, we might see them soft and pretty
And hold a misconception that they're not so tough and gritty
We think of them as delicate, as fragile as a rose,
Pretty flowers, dainty petals, so the story goes.

But now I'd like to show you how these flowers prove us wrong,
For in the Alpine Mountains they are sturdy, tough and strong.
They've developed and adapted to endure the toughest tests
When it comes to pure survival then these flowers are the best.

They live up high at altitude, where air is very thin,
Low CO₂ and oxygen, with plenty snow and wind,
Freezing temps and high UV, low nutrients in the soil,
But through the summer droughts and frosts, these brave wee
flowers toil.

Let's start with Alpenrose, which can live above 3K
They choose long-lying snowpatches to keep strong winds away
The snow provides them nutrients, and moisture in one place,
And it's many degrees warmer, in the Subnivean Space.

And when the snow has melted and the winter sees an end,
Its time to photosynthesize, the sunshine is your friend,
And since the seasons short they must work at quite a pace
But their leaves are ever-green so there's not a moment's
waste.

And when that summer sunshine is a little much to bare,
and we're all getting frazzled by the UV in the air,
Their leaves have anthocyanin, to absorb the excess rays,
The pigmentation blocks it out, and keeps the harm away,

Glacier Crowfoot holds the record for the highest flowering
plant,
Its been found at 4274 so never say you can't!
It flowers within days, and the seeds will ripen fast,
It needs to reproduce, before the summer's past.

Freezing point depression is a trick within its leaves,
Increased sugar solutes, will ensure the plants don't freeze,
Just like in the winter when we cover roads in salt,
The water stays as liquid so activities don't halt.

Some plants are "Supercoolers", which also stops the freeze,
They segregate their water into empty cells with ease,
Ice crystals cannot form, without a particle or seed,
So the empty cell stay liquid and they photosynthesize with
speed.

Now for Alpine Rock Jasmine, another Alpine wizard,
It can live above four-thousand and survive the harshest
blizzard,
It keeps down very low, growing not 2 inches tall,
And for an alpine flower, it is great to be that small,

It means less fear of winds, and the risk of taking flight,
And longer in the snow patch where it's snuggled warm and
tight,
And closer to the soil is where the greatest warmth is
found,
Its dense abundant foliage creating cushions on the ground.

Other species take advantage of this cosy little nest,
Protected from the elements a perfect place to rest,
More radiative heat, and reduced throughflow of air,
These factors work together to maintain a cosy layer.

Buttercups are clever and stay warm when sun is lacking,
They've developed nifty tricks which are known as "Solar
Tracking",
They turn around their flowerheads, to follow sunshine
trends,
Their saucer shape will heat them up, a parabolic lens.

They also turn their leaves, perpendicular to rays,
To maximise exposure to the sunshine through the day,
They even store some heat, and are warmer than
surroundings,
By up to eight degrees, which is really quite astounding,

The insects like this warmth and will surely come and call-
in,
And this will raise the odds of them distributing pollen,
The warmth will boost development of ripening their seeds,
All this helps them reproduce, which is all they really need.

And when the sun is hot, and the heat is too intense,
Then they do things in reverse, and turn away for some
defence,
They turn away their leaves and heads, away from sunny
skies
To prevent evaporation of their precious drink supplies,

Now for mossy saxifrage, with properties we've seen,
Only one inch tall, and another ever-green,
Also forming cushions with dense foliage on the ground,
But underneath the surface there's more magic to be
found,

Pretty Hardy Alpine Flowers continued

Their roots, they are their anchors, and they creep through every crack,
 Helping them find nutrients in areas that lack,
 They'll grow in rocky fissures and they'll live upon the scree,
 Their roots will find them water, even when there's none to see,

Saxifrage means "rock breaker", the roots look that intrusive,
 Although it may refer to kidney stones, the answer is illusive,
 Their leaves have crusty calcium, the excess from the lime,
 So perhaps they hoped it broke it down, in medicine back in time,

Edleweiss the alpine star, it's well known that's for sure,
 It's iconic and it's noble, patriotic loved and pure,
 But it's clever and it's hardy, not just a pretty face,
 Among the toughest flowers it is worthy of its place,

Its flowers and its leaves are amass with soft white hair,
 It's tomentose and wooly, it's the perfect boundary layer
 This reduces contact, with the air that's moving past,
 So there's less convective cooling and it won't get cold so fast,

And when stomata open, to let in CO2,
 The boundary layer helps, to stop the water rushing through,
 It lessens transpiration by decreasing potential gradient,
 Meaning that our Edleweiss, can go on looking radiant.

And here we have arrived at the ending of the story,
 So I hope you'll see these flowers in their state of well earned
 glory,
 Remember every little feature, was created for a reason,
 They're well adapted alpinists, they're fit for every season.

[Written as part of Anna's International Mountain Leader
 Qualification about the incredible survival mechanisms of Alpine
 flowers



ALPENROSE



GLACIER CROW-
FOOT



ALPINE ROCK
JASMINE



RANUNCULUS
GLACIALIS
KILPISJARVI



ALPINE BUTTERCUP



MOSSY ALPINE SAXIFRAGE



EDLEWEISS

A FOND FAREWELL TO SHEILA CAMPBELL OF MINARD
who died on 3RD May aged 85

Sheila Campbell



15th March 1937 - 3rd May 2022

Sheila Campbell was a loyal member of Lochgair Arts and Crafts Group. Born in March 1937 and living in Minard up to her death in May this year, she was a quiet and resourceful lady, widowed early but then a dutiful carer to her ageing parents. Despite health issues and latterly problems with communication she never let her handicap stop her, and threw herself into her City and Guild projects and subsequent creative ventures.

She was surrounded by close friends and encouraged some of them to join us in our various Arts and Crafts workshops when our group started up. She instructed us in the finer arts of embroidery of which this is an example of the standard she achieved. Some of us are still working on the creations she inspired us to tackle!

Although covid stopped us meeting up and keeping in contact with Sheila, we are very proud to acknowledge her as one of our founder members and she will be sorely missed.



NOTICEBOARD & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Foundation Scotland
Scotland's Community Foundation

2022 deadline for applications to A'Chruach Wind Farm Community Fund: 9th Sept

**For more information contact Chris Lee: email
clee@foundationscotland.org.uk**

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Karen Connor

THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOCHGAIR ASSOCIATION ARE:

Jean Smith, Chair (Tel. 886328), Beverly Cuthbert, Michael Cuthbert, Elsie Freer, Maggie Murray, and Alison Wilkinson.

There is a vacancy for another Trustee to join the committee.