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Commemorating World War One in the Park

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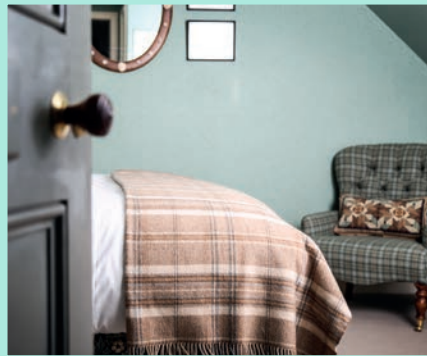


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THIS ISSUE:**

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Chairman's Introduction

WELCOME TO THIS AUTUMN EDITION OF VOICE which has a focus on the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and news on recent activities of the Friends and others working to make the Park a better place for people and nature.



As the only independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, we continue to try and make a difference through campaigning, fundraising and volunteering activities and by working closely with partners such as the Park Authority, local community and tourism groups.

In this edition we feature a special initiative being led by the Community Partnership to commemorate those involved in the Great War 100 years ago from communities in and around the National Park and the lasting legacy it has left. An interesting booklet has been produced that illustrates many of the communities' wartime experience and remembers some of the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Please take some time when you are out and about in the National Park this autumn to pause and reflect on the selfless contribution made by many thousands of individuals in both World Wars. There are memorials in most National Park communities, and at the Ben Lomond National Memorial Park at Rowardennan, to remember those brave men and women who lost their lives to protect the freedoms we enjoy today.

Recent priorities for the Friends have included raising funds to try and complete the £120,000 transformation

of the Tom Weir's Rest site at Balmaha which has very quickly become one of the top attractions on Loch Lomondside with over 60,000 visitors so far this year. With the Tom Weir Memorial Group and great support from the Fraser family at the Oak Tree Inn we ran a very successful Weirfest event on the site at the end of May and this is now likely to become a permanent feature on the calendar to showcase the cultural and natural heritage of the National Park.

We have worked with local groups and the National Park Authority to secure improvements to family friendly paths connecting local communities and recently financially supported a new map booklet for the Drymen area to promote the new and improved path network being developed by the Drymen Community Development Trust. We also made funding contributions to path improvements at the southern end of Loch Lomond and in the Callander area and are currently helping fund a much needed new paths booklet for Arrochar and Tarbet. Following an extensive consultation by the Park Authority on plans to tackle the problems of irresponsible camping on busier lochshores in the National Park, which we submitted detailed comments on, slightly revised proposals are now with Scottish Ministers for approval with the support

of local communities and a number of bodies, including the Friends. While the final proposals are not perfect, as they exclude the sensitive Loch Lomond islands, it will be interesting to see if the introduction of camping permits in new management zones, coupled with investment in urgently needed new camping facilities, has the desired impact. The issue of irresponsible behaviour, of course, is not restricted to some campers as the sheer pressure of day visitor numbers in some tourist hotspots contribute greatly to visitor management challenges and the overall quality of the visitor experience.

Please enjoy reading this edition of Voice and make the most of Scotland's first National Park during what will hopefully be a pleasant autumnal period following a disappointing summer. Thank you for continuing to support the work of the Friends and if you are not already a member please do consider joining by completing and returning the form on page 29. By becoming a member you will be able to enjoy a new package of discounts at venues throughout the National Park. All the very best.

JAMES FRASER

Chair - Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs



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The Voice is the magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the only independent conservation charity working to protect, promote and provide projects and services for this most precious part of Scotland – The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. To join us or to find out more about our work please visit www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk or use the form inside.

The Voice is published biannually in spring and autumn. Submissions on topics relating to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park are welcome. Please send submissions to the editor at the address below or email info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs The Old Station, Balloch Alexandria G83 8SS Telephone: **01389 298008** Email: info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

Cover photo – The special scenic qualities of the National Park come into their own in the autumn and no more so than here at Balmaha Bay with the backdrop of Inchcailloch National Nature Reserve and the Luss hills. *Photo courtesy of Paul Saunders*. Some beautiful photographs of the National Park are available to purchase as framed or canvas wrap pictures from our online shop at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org.uk

The Community Partnership has been co-ordinating a World War One Park-wide commemorative project with local communities to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War.

Here Carol Hemfrey, a local historian and Director of the Community Partnership, describes what communities have been doing to research their wartime legacies and to remember those involved.



COMMEMORATING WORLD WAR ONE IN THE PARK

In July 2014 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) backed the National Park Community Partnership's aspiration to act as catalyst, enabler and mentor to the National Park's heritage groups in creating a World War One Commemorative Showcase. This was supplemented with Community Partnership funding to trailer the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WW1 as part of the annual Gathering at the Three Villages Hall, Arrochar.

Initially it was envisaged that the 22 communities within the Park boundaries would be approached to collaborate through their local heritage/history groups in researching their local war memorials etc. However it was quickly realised that research was at different stages – if even commenced at all, and that the Park could not be viewed in isolation from its hinterland communities.



Out of over 25 known groups, an encouraging 16 took part in the project culminating in a showcase event in April in Gartmore Village Hall which was well attended. The keynote speaker was Dr Tony Pollard of Glasgow University, supported by Joyce Meader, Heritage Knitting expert, and Ann Galliard for Historic Kilmun. Delegates sampled Arrochar Primary School's competition winning WW1 menu. This popular event is being supplemented by a travelling exhibition and an interesting booklet. These legacies will hopefully inspire the remaining community groups to join the Community Partnership with the planned continuation of the networking research that is aimed to cover all aspects of wartime during its four years.

Highlights and Records

While the combined research has only "scraped the surface" some interesting highlights have been unearthed. This has helped to mitigate the impact of stark statistics, many of which have proved difficult to authenticate due to duplication/omission on memorials. It is guesstimated that 1,730 individuals in the wider project area died in World War 1 with around 380 from within the National Park boundaries.



Problems also manifest themselves in the Rolls of Honour for those that served and returned safely, if somewhat battered in body and mind – or lack of them. Many roles of service were discontinued when conscription took the "Volunteer" out of the equation in 1916.

Undertaking WW1 research can be a surprisingly daunting, time-consuming, often expensive, but ultimately rewarding task. Hence the Community Partnership is extremely appreciative of the commitment local groups are making to the continuation of the project, and is greatly encouraged by the evident high level of networking that eases the burden of research for the smaller groups.

For further information and to offer your own memorabilia for recording please contact:

info@communitypartnership.org.uk

COVER BOYS

Work on identification is still on-going for the group of lads on the cover of The Showcase booklet, but two nicknamed the "Painter Pals" because they shared that occupation and boss, have had their service archived by family – Ronald's so fully that he and his brother Robert really do have a "suitcase in a cupboard" devoted to them.

Top right of the boys "off to Aldershot" in August 1914, Ronald McLean, joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, but after being wounded in France, hospitalised and convalesced in England and sent back to the Front, eventually became a Sergeant in the Gordon Highlanders. He died of his wounds in November 1917.

Second from the right Duncan McLean Kirk (A.S.H.), also reached the rank of Sergeant, but received a "Blighty" wound in the leg severe enough to require its amputation. Rehabilitation was lengthy enough for him to get married while on leave from Bogside Hospital, Irvine, and he retrained as a watchmaker.

Researchers wish that all 'subjects' were as easy to follow up as these two, and while some societies, such as Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui, have been able to publish details of their Rolls of Honour, many have had to accept "unidentified", for now at least.



THE POST OFFICE AND THE PLOUGH – WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It happens occasionally that names annoyingly get muddled up in records. Two neighbouring buildings in Drymen elicited examples. The Postmaster of the time Alfred B. Simpson's son Alfred Junior, born in 1897 is regarded rightly as being the 'Alfred' named on the War Memorial who died serving in the Royal Scots. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) only has 'Arthur B'. Does one take the Arthur details as relevant – or keep hunting?

Likewise, the surname of the local lady announced in the Stirling Observer as having drowned in the sinking of the liner Lusitania was identical to another family who also had a daughter Catherine.... Eventually the right family, the tavern-keeping Menzies were identified, and 57 year old, 2nd Class passenger, Isabella's story of why she was on the Lusitania emerged. A trip to her eldest sister and family in Yashika, Washington DC was probably curtailed by the outbreak of war's subsequent threat to all Transatlantic traffic, neutral included, by the U-boats, one of which 'hunting' off the south coast of Ireland sunk her on 7th May 1915.

Intriguingly one other lost soul, crewman Maurice Bertrand, the 18 year old Larder or 'Extra Second Cook' – also known to sign on as Reginald LaForge, is the Grand-Uncle of Drymen's current community Librarian.



FAMILY TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY



Major George DeC. Emsall Findlay was one of the few Park-domiciled recipients of the Victoria Cross.

The family resided within its boundaries at Boturich Castle on Loch Lomond's southern shore. Serving in the Royal Engineers since 1910 he had already received a bar to his Military Cross before winning the VC in 1918 while substantially repairing then crossing the Sambre-Oise Canal Bridge under heavy fire. After WWII service as a Colonel he was, for many years, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire.

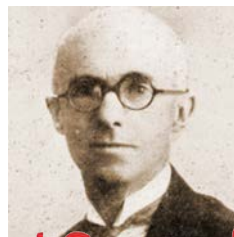
His younger brother, Captain Robert Scott Findlay (A&S.H.) had little chance to earn any plaudits, having his life (and that of Lt. Bonnar, Helensburgh's Provost's son) cruelly ended in the infamous Quintinshill Railway Disaster of March 1915, when their journey north from London on leave from the Western Front was abruptly ended in a 5-train pile-up that also killed over 200 Royal Scots bound for Gallipoli. Robert's grave in the private Boturich Castle cemetery is recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

THE PARK'S WAR POET

While Glenbranter's Harry Lauder (Sir after 1919) wrote and performed patriotic songs like "Keep Right On to the End of the Road" and penned a very poignant poem on his only son's death in 1916, it was a Strathendrick farmer's daughter that linked her, eventually, well-known poet and playwright son, William Dixon Cocker (1882-1970) to the Park through ownership of the cottage at Drumbeig Farm, which was their 'second home'.

Although not as famous as Wilfred Owen etc "W.D." still merited praise for his verses in Scots and English, many written during his sojourn (as a captured Royal Scot Private) in the POW Camp at Enger in Westphalia from mid-1917. These were published (along with later ones reflecting on the war's effect on returning soldiers) within several collections, and occasionally in the Daily Record or Evening Times – the "day-job" he returned to on repatriation and held till retirement in the 1960s.

In 1991 several of his poems were included in historian Trevor Royle's "In Flanders Fields: Scottish Poetry and Prose in The First World War".



ON THE MEND

One of the means of service on the Home Front, mentioned briefly in the showcase booklet was in the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) of the British Red Cross Society Scotland and their Auxiliary Hospitals. Many were just convalescent homes requisitioned from small country houses, such as Craigmaddie outside Milngavie, Inverlery House in Callander (a 'Military Extension' of Falkirk Infirmary) and Lettres Lodge at Strachur.

Larger houses like Hermitage House in Helensburgh (connected with Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow) often had their extensive grounds utilised by ancillary buildings and patient recreations areas. The largest complex nearest the National Park was the hatted, 700 bed Scottish National Hospital across the Clyde at Bellahouston – a train full of wounded arriving at Glasgow Central for transfer within minutes of its official opening by the Duke and Duchess of Montrose.



Hannah's Legacy



Following the death late last year of Dr Hannah Stirling MBE, the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs founder and President, has very generously left over £2 million to charitable causes close to her heart.

Over £1 million has been allocated to the Hannah Stirling Loch Lomond Charitable Trust to support the conservation of the loch and to help young people. £130,000 has been gifted to Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities to assist students in difficult circumstances. Hannah also very generously gifted £50,000 to the Friends to further the work of the independent conservation and heritage charity she was instrumental in founding in 1978 to protect and promote the special qualities of Loch Lomond. The Friends have already allocated some of these funds to support improvements at Tom Weir's Rest site at Balmaha and the planting of the Queen's Tree in Luss. At a very pleasant private ceremony in June organised by Hannah's nephews, Hugh and Barclay, Hannah's ashes were scattered on the loch opposite her home of many years at Auchendarroch, Tarbet. Very appropriately the ceremony took place on board Cruise Loch Lomond's passenger boat, Lomond Hannah which was named after Hannah last autumn to mark her 100th birthday and to recognise her enormous contribution to the protection and promotion of Loch Lomond.

Another Record Year



One of the many popular John Muir events

At a well-attended Friends AGM in May, very kindly hosted by Luss Estates at the Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, in an upbeat report Friends Chairman, James Fraser reported it was another record breaking year with just under £140,000 raised and hundreds of volunteers helping to make a difference by supporting a range of community, conservation and heritage projects throughout the National Park. Highlights included completion of the three year Loch Lomond Tree Tunnel project with support from the Park Authority that has led to extensive stretches of trees being removed alongside the busy A82 to open up views of Loch Lomond and Ben Lomond; an investment of £28,000 in 15 diverse projects across the National Park as a result of 22,000 visitor donations through the successful Friends of OUR Park visitor giving scheme operated in partnership 100 businesses and our volunteers Kiltwalk fundraising efforts; organising several events to celebrate the opening of the John Muir Way; and working jointly with the Tom Weir Memorial Group to raise £70,000 to erect a statue of Scotland's most popular mountain man and Friends former Hon Vice-President, Tom Weir, at Balmaha.

At the meeting an excellent talk on the challenges of managing Luss Estates on the west side of Loch Lomond was provided by Simon Miller, Chief Executive of Luss Estates. See pages 18-19 for more on the Luss Estates Story.

New Trustee Tom

We're delighted to welcome Tom Wallace as a new Trustee of the Friends Board. Below Tom provides an insight to his background which demonstrates why he is well placed to make a positive contribution to the work of the Friends.

I am very excited to have this opportunity to join the team of enthusiastic Trustees and committed staff who support and drive the great work of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, and I hope that I am able to bring skills and experience which will complement and enhance the achievements made to date. I am very familiar with the work of the Friends as I am an active resident of the Park living in Drymen, with my wife and two young children and for the past 18 months have played a lead role in the Community Partnership helping to deliver community development related activities around the Park. I take on the role of Programme manager for the HLF Mountains and People project in October and will manage the delivery of the five year project in both of Scotland's National Parks. It is through this role and my voluntary role as chair of my local Community Development Trust, that I have come to

appreciate the important place that the Friends plays in protecting and enhancing the unique qualities of the Park, whilst also generating enthusiasm, interest and passion in this place we are fortunate enough to call home. I have however not always lived in the Park, being born in Ayrshire then studying Countryside Management at Scottish Agricultural College before moving around Scotland, Wales and latterly England working for a range of private and third sector organisations linked to conservation, recreation and community development. After 10 years south of the border Scotland was calling and I returned to work as a Project Manager for Forestry Commission Scotland within Glasgow before taking on my current role with the Community Partnership. I hope my skills and experience in project management, fund raising, volunteering and conservation can add to the exciting work of the Friends to date.





Tom Weir's Rest Success

Countryside legend Tom Weir's statue and the associated bay viewpoint and picnic area at Balmaha is proving to be a runaway success with over 60,000 visitors since the statue unveiling last December.

This news has coincided with the completion of the latest £20,000 phase of site improvement works which has included the construction of an attractive bay viewpoint incorporating a stone wall, raised and widened pathways, memorial benches, upgraded picnic tables and attractive new Tom Weir's Rest signing. This latest package of site improvements was funded by the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs with some of the legacy funding from their former President and founder, the late Dr Hannah Stirling MBE and funds raised at the first Weirfest event, held on the site at the end of May, and by the Oak Tree Inn through the Friends of OUR Park voluntary visitor giving scheme.

James Fraser, Chairman of the Friends of Lomond and The Trossachs, said: "The level of interest in the statue has exceeded all expectations and the stunning setting of the statue against the backdrop of Balmaha Bay is proving to be popular with visitors and West Highland Way walkers."

He added: "In partnership with the Tom Weir Memorial Group we are currently progressing the installation of story boards featuring the rich natural and cultural history of Balmaha Bay and the Tom Weir Story and, with funding support from Love Loch Lomond, Stirling Council and the Park Authority, we hope to complete the final phase of site works shortly." The public appeal for the Tom Weir Statue site improvement and ongoing maintenance remains open and donations can be sent to the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, The Old Station, Balloch Road, Balloch G83 8SS or online at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/visiting/tom-weir-statue-campaign.

Top National Park Accolades for Making a Difference

Two individuals and a Friends Business Supporter have been recognised for their outstanding contribution to enriching the lives of National Park visitors with awards presented by the Friends.

At the charity's annual general meeting, held in May, awards were given to George Bruce, voluntary chief executive of Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre in Lochgoilhead; Fred Moore of Loch Lomond boat trip operator of Cruise Loch Lomond; Tarbet and Tom Weir Statue Campaign leader Susan Taylor, all three having made an enormous difference to the visitor experience in the National Park in recent years.



Pictured (left to right) are Friends Vice-President George Boyd, Fred Moore of Cruise Loch Lomond, Friends Chairman James Fraser, George Bruce, Friends Trustee Joyce Deans and Susan Taylor

New Hannah Stirling Award

George Bruce has been presented with the inaugural Hannah Stirling National Park Award in memory of the former Friends President who died at 100 years of age late last year. George was recognised for his outstanding efforts re-opening Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre and successfully hosting almost 10,000 youngsters on activity breaks and life changing experiences in the National Park since 2011. Four years ago he set up a social enterprise to run the Centre and very quickly turned it around from a previous annual operating loss of £290,000. His role as chief executive at Ardroy is undertaken on an entirely voluntary basis with no salary and involves a daily 60-mile round trip from his home in Dunoon in order to oversee operations at the centre, which caters for around 2,500 young people each year.

George said: "To be recognised in this way by Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs is extremely humbling and it was a great surprise to receive this honour. Keeping Ardroy going is a real team effort."

Business Supporter of the Year

The National Park Business Supporters of the Year award went to family owned and Tarbet-based cruise operator **Cruise Loch Lomond**, who run a fleet of passenger boats on Loch Lomond introducing over 100,000 visitors a year to the scenic splendours of the loch. They are founder business supporters of the Friends charity and last September launched their latest passenger vessel MV Lomond Hannah in honour of Hannah Stirling to recognise her 100th birthday and great contribution to protecting the special qualities of the loch for current and future generations.

Managing director Fred Moore, who collected the award on behalf of Cruise Loch Lomond, said: "We believe that the National Park is a place everyone should be able to enjoy and at Cruise Loch Lomond, we strive to ensure this can be done with the provision of a range of cruise experiences to suit a range of interests."

Volunteer of the Year

Last, but by no means least, the Friends have honoured the work of **Susan Taylor**, whose tireless efforts led to the proposed Tom Weir Statue at idyllic Balmaha Bay becoming a reality in December last year. Susan was named as the National Park Volunteer of the Year after an enormous personal commitment which saw the statue successfully unveiled on December 29th 2014 which would have been Tom's 100th birthday. The statue was the result of several years of hard work by Susan and her small team of volunteers who undertook numerous fundraising activities to ensure a permanent memorial to Scotland's most popular mountain man was in place on the lochside in time for Tom's milestone anniversary.

Susan said: "It has been a struggle at times, but with the help of a small group of volunteers and the Friends, who provided great hands on project management, and support from the National Park Authority, Stirling Council, Rhona Weir and various sponsors, we got there in the end and to see so many people enjoying visits to the statue is very gratifying."

Friends Chairman James Fraser said: "These three award winners are fully deserving of recognition after their great work, and support for the delivery of projects and services which have made a real difference in improving the overall appeal and diversity of the National Park offering for many thousands of visitors."

Balloch's Tourism Potential



The future tourism potential of Balloch was recently under the microscope at a well-attended meeting organised by Balloch and Haldane Community Council with Friends Chairman James Fraser, Park Authority Chief Executive Gordon Watson and Maid of the Loch Director John Beveridge as guest speakers.

In his presentation the Friends Chairman, James Fraser, gave an overview of the history of tourism in Balloch and outlined a six-point action plan to make more of tourism in the village.

James said: "There are potentially exciting times ahead for Balloch but there needs to be a co-ordinated approach to tourism development and this is best achieved by producing an action plan that can drive forward the tourism effort."

He added: "There is potential to generate significantly more employment in Balloch Old Village and West Riverside if they are developed in sensitive ways that build further on the recent investment in the new Queen of the Loch Hotel and Restaurant that has created 80 new jobs."

Gordon Watson in his presentation highlighted the Park Authority's recent investment in cruise and waterbus infrastructure at Loch Lomond Shores and the opening of the new high ropes activity business beside the National Park Gateway Centre. This building has been promoted in recent months as a development opportunity as has the extensive area of land on West Riverside which provides an important link between the old village of Balloch and Loch Lomond Shores.

John Beveridge provided an upbeat report on the great progress being made with restoration of the Maid of the Loch as a static visitor attraction. He also referred to the more ambitious plans to fully restore the historic vessel so she can sail again which have been the subject of recent bids to secure heritage lottery funding.



Mountain Paths Secure Lottery Cash

More than 20 mountains in the National Park are set to benefit from a £6.1 million funding package with the award of £3.28 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and match funding from a range of sources including £525,000 from the National Park Authority.

As part of a five year 'Scotland's National Parks – The Mountains and the People' project most of the funding secured will be invested in upgrading paths in both the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Parks and this will be linked with creating training opportunities in path building for young people and an educational initiative to engage people in caring for upland landscapes.

Park Chief Executive, Gordon Watson said: "With 50 per cent of Scotland's population within an hour's drive of the National Park, our hills and mountains are already popular with outdoor enthusiasts and this significant investment will provide further opportunities for people to get out and get active."

Lochside Paths on the Move

In the last edition of Voice we reported that work was nearing completion on the first phase of a £400,000 scheme to create new and upgraded paths for walkers and cyclists between Drymen and Balmaha which is being led by Drymen Community Development Trust with support from the Park Authority and others. The network of paths between Drymen and Milton of Buchanan has now been completed and the project received another welcome cash boost recently with Sustrans approving a further £140,000 to complete the route between Milton of Buchanan and Balmaha and to create a new and upgraded safe route between Drymen and Croftamie.

To coincide with the completion of recent upgrading works a new Drymen Paths booklet and map has been published with funding from the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and the Winnock Hotel and design support from the National Park Authority. Meanwhile in the Balloch area at the southern end of the loch the Whinney Hill path linking Balloch Castle Country Park and the Water Board Road at Boturich has been upgraded as part of a £30,000 project led by the Woodland Trust with funding contributions from Love Loch Lomond and Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. West Dunbartonshire Council and the Park Authority have also joined forces to produce a new Balloch walks booklet and map.

Soaring Eagle and Fairies' Homes

A soaring eagle and a fairies' village are part of an imaginative new wooden sculpture initiative being led by Stirling Council to tell the rich and varied stories of places throughout the eastern part of the National Park and elsewhere in Stirling District.

The sculptures have been created using chainsaws by award-winning carver Iain Chalmers of Chainsaw Creations. The beautiful wooden sculpture of an eagle has been carved from oak heartwood and has been placed at Strathyre to highlight the village's reputation as a centre to see all sorts of birds of prey and other wildlife. The sculptures of fairies' homes have been placed at a fairy village beside Doon Hill in Aberfoyle as part of the village's wider initiative to promote itself as the 'Fairy Capital of Scotland'.



Callander Landscape Funding Bid

A partnership of eight community groups and four agencies has submitted a £97,400 funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop an ambitious project to reconnect Callander with its surrounding landscapes and improve management of and access to its rich heritage.

'Callander Pass – Mind the Gap' is centred on the Pass of Leny, which was carved out by glaciers and became a key route linking Highlands and Lowlands across the Highland Boundary Fault by river, road and rail. A wide range of projects includes archaeology, skills development, river restoration, oral history, interpretation and new paths. The Victorian walkway at the Pass of Leny will be restored to reveal the iconic view of Leny Falls and a bridge will link to the national cycle route across the river.

If successful, the initial funding will help develop the £2m project for delivery in 2017-20 and another HLF application will be made for 70% of the delivery costs.

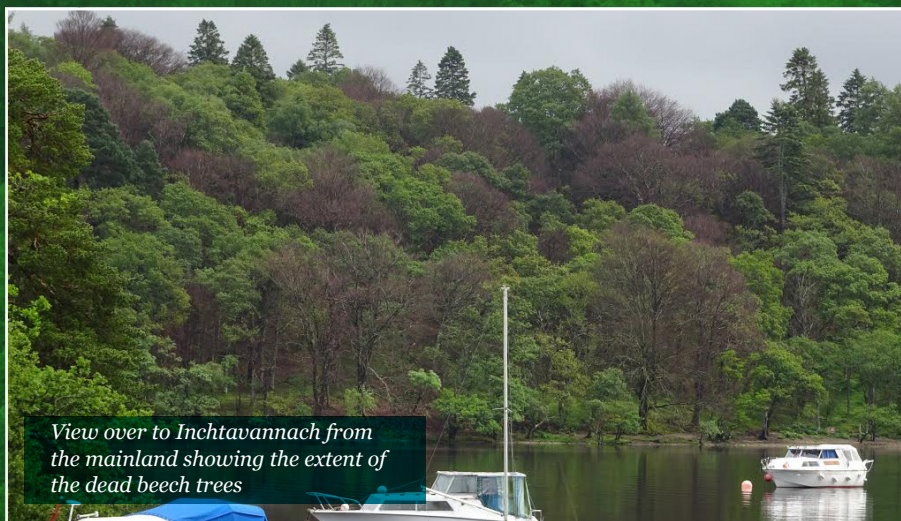
300 Year Old Trees on Loch Lomond Island Poisoned

Around 350 of native beech trees, many over 300 years old, have been poisoned on Inchtavannach Island, Loch Lomond by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and this has led to widespread criticism and condemnation by Luss Estates, the local community and the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs.

Luss Estates' owner and Friends Honorary President, Sir Malcolm Colquhoun, said: "I am outraged and shocked at this act of wanton vandalism, and the resulting blight on the landscape of Inchtavannach Island. It will take years and indeed generations for the canopy to recover and this beautiful view to be restored. I simply cannot understand why the supposed guardian of our natural heritage has killed off these wonderful trees for no apparent reason."

In 2013 SNH entered into an agreement with the tenant of Inchtavannach to remove rhododendron from the island. The agreement also provided for the mature beech trees to be felled gradually over a five year period.

However, SNH apparently decided as a cost saving measure to ring-bark and poison hundreds of mature beech trees, and in the process created an unsightly 'dead' canopy. It is now also feared that the dead trees will shed branches which will be a danger to the many visitors who come to Inchtavannach each year. Chairman of the Luss and Arden Community Council, Ian MacEachern, said that local residents are appalled.



View over to Inchtavannach from the mainland showing the extent of the dead beech trees

"To say we are annoyed is an understatement," said Mr MacEachern. "The mature beech trees on Inchtavannach added greatly to the visual impact of Loch Lomond, for residents and visitors, particularly in the autumn. This act of vandalism is a travesty and tragically cannot be restored in our lifetime."

Simon Miller, Chief Executive of Luss Estates, said: "We have asked SNH to explain why it did not comply with the management agreement to fell the mature beech trees and what measures SNH proposes to undertake to replace the tree cover on the island, having killed such a large number of mature native beech trees." Commenting on the incident the

Chairman of the Friends, James Fraser, said: "This thoughtless act by SNH has brought sharply into focus the urgent need for a summit to review the future management of the fragile and sensitive Loch Lomond islands which are supposed to enjoy special attention from statutory conservation and visitor management bodies."

He added: "Beefed up management measures to protect the special qualities of the islands are urgently needed and it very disappointing that, following hard on the heels of the Park Authority's recent decision to exclude the islands from the 'Your Park' special management zones, SNH has acted in an such an irresponsible way to destroy the scenic qualities of Inchtavannach Island."

Arrochar Paths Investment

The popular tourist village of Arrochar at the head of Loch Long has received two welcome boosts recently with the opening of a new link path between Arrochar and the Three Lochs Way and a pledge of financial and 'in kind' support from the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and the National Park for a much needed new walks booklet and map to showcase the range of walks available in the area.



Helensburgh and District Access Trust Convener and Friends member, Anne Urquhart chats with the machineman as the path nears completion

The new link path was formally opened by National Park Chief Executive, Gordon Watson, at a special event in August. Gordon praised the work of Helensburgh and District Access Trust for making the path possible and also for their tremendous achievement in developing the 34-mile (55km) Three Lochs Way Great Trail over the past decade which is becoming increasingly popular with visitors from the UK and overseas. This latest stretch of path was supported with a £20,000 grant from the Park topped up with some funding by the Access Trust. The path was constructed using locally available materials as well as road planings donated by Argyll and Bute Council.

Anne Urquhart, Convenor of the local Access Trust, said: "Delivering this latest stretch of path was a true partnership effort and it is a huge improvement on what was there before which makes it much easier for both local path users and long distance walkers and mountain bikers



Tighness path under construction

who want to access the popular Three Lochs Way."

The Access Trust will also be helping the Arrochar and Tarbet Development Trust with the content of the new walks booklet and map that is being funded by the Friends with design and mapping support being provided by the National Park as part of ensuring there is a comprehensive range of local walks information available in leaflet and online formats.

To celebrate Scotland's Year of Food and Drink in the National Park here we feature some of the many businesses that excel in showcasing local food and drink and pride themselves in providing memorable authentic experiences. Also see *Venachar Lochside* feature on page 20.

Balmaha Business Leads the Way



The enterprising Fraser family, who run the popular Oak Tree Inn, St Mocha Coffee Shop and Village Shop in Balmaha on Loch Lomondside, are set to capitalise more in Scotland's Year of Food and Drink Year with the investment of a further £175,000 in new and expanded production facilities to increase their brewing capacity for local beers and ciders and to expand their Loch Lomond fish smokehouse operation. This is being coupled with the launch of a new Balmaha's Braw Weekend Festival on 3rd and 4th October to showcase local food and drink.

For many years now the Fraser family have led the way on the lochside with the introduction of locally sourced food and drink at their award winning Oak Tree Inn beside Balmaha Bay.

In addition to introducing a series of popular dishes on the menu which use produce from local suppliers such as butchers, dairies and

bakers, as well as their own well stocked kitchen garden and smokehouse, they have developed their own microbrewery and ice cream factory and also recently launched a luxury 15 year old Balmaha malt whisky.

These initiatives have led to the number of staff employed growing to over 60 making the Fraser family business one of the largest employers on the lochside.

Stuart Fraser of the Oak Tree Inn said: "We owe our success to our strong focus on producing authentic locally produced fayre which is popular with local residents and visitors from the UK and overseas and our latest investment is geared to capitalising on this further.

"There is growing demand for authentic local food and drink experiences and we have tried to cater for this more in recent years with the introduction of our own microbrewery, producing a range of Balmaha beers and

ciders, and our unique Loch Lomond ice cream factory, that makes use of high quality products from Muirhead's Dairies in nearby Alexandria at the southern end of the loch."

James Fraser, Chairman of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, said: "The Fraser family have built up a very successful business over the years through sheer hard work and an ability to spot emerging trends for good quality locally sourced produce as part of the growth internationally for genuine authentic local visitor experiences.

"They are well placed to act as local National Park ambassadors for Scotland's Year of Food and Drink and epitomise what we collectively should striving to achieve on a pan-National Park basis to provide distinctive and high quality local experiences that reinforce the special qualities of the National Park."



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Top Hotel & Restaurant Flourishes

Over the past 11 years John and Susan Martin have gained a well-deserved reputation for developing one of the best quality small hotels and restaurants in Callander and the National Park. This is reflected in a steady stream of awards including a recent 'Green Tourism Silver Award', the 'Best New Discovery Hotel' accolade from the Good Hotel Guide and a 'Taste Our Best Award' for consistently delivering quality Scottish fayre in their character restaurant.

In their busy restaurant they offer excellent Scottish contemporary and classical cuisine that is freshly cooked. Popular meals include their superb value "Early Evening Option" and special Sunday roasts using quality locally sourced meat. There is also a pleasant outside eating area.

Camerons Bar in the hotel has a locally crafted oak gantry and counter with one of the largest collections of whisky in the area, including some special bottlings and some rare vintages. Whiskies stocked also include some from nearby Deanston Distillery that takes its water from the River Teith that flows past the hotel.

Voted as one of the top 100 bars in the country, special "whisky flights" are available along with John's daily recommendations that feature a variety of styles of whiskies from different areas and distilleries. The bar has featured in many whisky magazines and attracts whisky enthusiasts from home and abroad.

Poppies really is the ideal place in Callander to enjoy food and drink at its best. There are also nine comfortable en suite bedrooms, including some family rooms.



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Historic Coaching Inn is a Winner

In 2010, partners Amanda Clark and Bob Stevenson bought the Bridge of Lochay Hotel, a former historic coaching inn, on the edge of the highland village of Killin. They have worked tirelessly with their staff over the past 5 years to build the hotel's reputation for warm Scottish hospitality and great Scottish food and their efforts were recognised earlier this year when they won the Regional 2015 Scottish Hotel Awards Inn of The Year for Central and Fife. Amanda's background as Chief Executive of the former Taste of Scotland organisation and publication means that she is passionate about the best of Scottish produce. Amanda said: "Seasonality is key as it means we are using the best produce, at the best price when they are available and they are at their best taste wise too. The cooking style here is accomplished and good presentation is important but more important than the 'look' is where the food has come from and the recipes are Scottish. "As a traditional Scottish Inn it is important to us that we offer a genuine product that reflects our history. Our Chef and his team

have a very real commitment to quality, fresh local produce which is skilfully prepared and presented. We have a main a la carte menu which changes with the seasons and in addition our specials board changes daily allowing the team to reflect seasonally available produce. "Scottish hospitality at its best is welcoming, friendly and unassuming and that is what we aim to offer. Giving our guests somewhere to escape to where they can relax, enjoy peace and quiet, some good local ales and beers and a good selection of wines and of course good food. A highly significant proportion of our guests are repeat visitors, sometimes several times in a year, and we enjoy around 95% ratio of residents dining in the hotel most if not all nights of their stay." This year the Bridge of Lochay Hotel is 250 years old, the oldest part of the building dates back to 1765 and this is being commemorated in various ways. The hotel was originally part of the Earl of Breadalbane Estate and only moved to private ownership in 1938. It has always been a traditional inn

but now it has all the 'mod cons' that guests expect while still retaining the charm of the period.

"Seasonality is key as it means we are using the best produce..."



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The Mountains and The People

Iconic Ben Lomond and The Cobbler are just two of the 23 mountains in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park that will benefit from a £6.1 million restoration project.

LOCH
LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
NATIONAL PARK



The Mountains and The People is a five-year initiative led by Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) which aims to engage people in looking after many of Scotland's most cherished mountains and create training opportunities for young people.

The project is made up of six different elements:

- **The Upland Path Programme** will upgrade, enhance and repair a range of prioritised routes
- **The Training Programme** will run vocational training courses to provide young people with accredited skills to take up employment opportunities created by the maintenance of Scotland's mountains in the longer term and elsewhere
- **The Conservation Volunteer Programme** will recruit, train, guide and support volunteers from major urban centres to carry out practical weekend work supporting the Upland Path Programme
- **The Adopt a Path Programme** will recruit, train, guide and support volunteers in monitoring the condition of paths in order to avoid problems going undetected
- **The Education Programme** will coordinate the creation of opportunities for schools, colleges and universities to become involved in the monitoring, care and management of upland paths in both National Parks
- **The Visitor Information Programme** will liaise and coordinate with visitor management services to ensure visitors are made aware of the importance of managing upland paths and the part they can play.

COAT led the successful application for Heritage Lottery Funding and will commit £612,177 to the project, which will be matched by contributions from; Cairngorms National Park Authority (£275,000); Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (£525,000); Scottish Natural Heritage (£200,000) and Forestry Commission Scotland (£525,000) with the remainder coming from corporate sponsorship and charitable trusts, to give an overall total of £6.1m.

The ambitious project will deliver against all four National Park aims.

To find out more about The Mountains and The People please visit:
www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk

Funding Success

The National Park has been successful in securing £142,500 of funding from Sustrans to create two dedicated traffic-free routes between Drymen and Croftamie, and Milton of Buchanan and Balmaha.

The funding will allow the National Park, in conjunction with a range of local partners including Sustrans; Drymen Community Development Trust; Buchanan Community; Croftamie Community; Sportscotland; Stirling Council and Love Loch Lomond to deliver on ambitious plans to make cycling, walking and horse riding an integral part of the National Park experience.

This supports Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority's five-year (2013-2017) £8.7m Outdoor Recreation Plan which aims to enhance recreation opportunities throughout the area.



Bus - Bike - Boat

Exploring the National Park is now even easier with the addition of new boat and bus services which allow you to take your bike, making many routes within the National Park more accessible.

The popular Loch Lomond waterbus has extended its routes and now offers a new service between Ardlui and Ardluish providing access points to the West Highland Way. There's also an increased frequency of the service between Luss and Balmaha which gives access to other popular walking routes such as Conic Hill and the Millennium Trail.

In addition to this a new bike bus is running between Balloch, Loch Lomond Shores, Luss, Arrochar and Ardgarten.

The B1 Balloch shuttle service can carry up to 16 passengers and 12 bikes meaning visitors can now take their bikes and enjoy some of the most spectacular cycle routes, walks and locations on west Loch Lomondside.



To help visitors make the most of their visit, downloadable cycling route maps have been produced by the National Park, promoting the different cycle paths and networks available. With a choice of flat tarmac routes or wide forest tracks for families, to challenging trails and terrain for mountain bikers, there is something for everyone.

For further information on activities in the National Park including walks, cycle routes and waterbus services please visit www.lochlomond-trossachs.org

www.lochlomond-trossachs.org

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Nature of the Park

Keith Graham writes about how the rich variety of wildlife in the National Park and how different species are preparing for the months ahead after a wet summer..



SUMMER IN THE PARK was disappointing to say the least. Perhaps we should approach autumn in the fervent hope of an Indian summer? However nature copes. She has to! Nature's whole essence is about renewal. That is why when species dip dangerously close to extinction because of human activity, for instance the mass felling of precious rain forests, there is little that nature can do to reverse the situation.

However, when the right circumstances prevail, restorations can succeed. The return of ospreys to Scotland and subsequently to England and Wales as breeding birds, after an absence of almost fifty years, illustrates well the resilience nature can and often does demonstrate. Initially returning to what might then have been regarded as 'osprey heartland', Speyside, our ospreys have since gone forth and multiplied. Indeed, the first pair to breed away from that heartland, nearly fifty years ago set up home here in the Trossachs, their whereabouts then a closely guarded secret. Now, during the summer months, ospreys are a familiar sight throughout the Park. However as the days shorten, they leave us to take on a marathon three thousand mile migratory journey to Africa, where they winter. However, if the ospreys have flown, there remain red kites, also restored after coming dangerously close to extinction in Britain. Now, these lovely birds have spread their wings across the country and are a familiar sight especially in the eastern quarter of the Park. Don't hold your breath but that other spectacular bird also restored, the sea eagle, also from time to time puts in appearances too and autumn is the most likely time for them to turn up here with young birds searching for territories to occupy.

Autumn Gold

Birds, by the very nature of things, are relatively easy to spot and as autumn gold begin to colour the landscape, there is much movement to witness. Many of our summer migrants bid us farewell, retreating to the tropical warmth of Africa for their winter. Some linger longer than others and it is not unusual to find house martins, rearing late broods and thus not departing until surprisingly late in October.

However, as they leave, so too do our skies fill with winter migrants. In the lowland eastern parts of the Park, the skies are suddenly filled with skeins of geese, loudly signalling their arrival from the Arctic north. The vanguard of these new arrivals, most of them pink-footed geese, can be seen and very much heard as early as mid-September although the bulk of them arrive in October, transforming the landscape and animating it in their own unique and garrulous way. The southern reaches of Loch Lomond take on this new dimension with the arrival of considerable numbers of Greenland white-fronted geese, grey geese with a distinctive white flash above the beak.

And, as November approaches, sailing like great white galleons in the sky, come whooper swans from Iceland. Slightly lighter and smaller than the more sedentary mute swans, whoopers are consequently more athletic, when on water, generally holding their necks erect as opposed to the curved necks displayed by mutes. Whoopers are also more vocal and illuminate the winter landscape with their delightful, gentle fluting.

The golden glow and brilliant red of autumn enriches this shapely landscape. Blackpool's illuminations are staged in the autumn but they cannot match the wonderful display of rich colour that characterises our 'Fall', as our American friends call it. Eventually of course, the leaves descend, the trees now unadorned and by comparison, skeletal, a condition which curiously enough, exposes wildlife to our gaze more readily.

Harvests of Nuts

Red squirrels for instance, become more evident as they scurry about gathering their harvests of nuts to tide them over the winter. This, our native squirrel of course, is enjoying something of a renaissance thanks to the increasing population of another mammal which not so long ago, had been on the verge of extinction altogether. Once upon a time, the pine marten was severely persecuted but now it is instead afforded protection and accordingly its range is expanding across Scotland. It is doing especially well in the Park.

So why is the presence of an animal which counts red squirrels among its dietary choices, benefiting squirrel nutkin? Well, the fact is of course, that many parts of the Park, most notably its southern reaches, have during the past hundred years or so, been invaded by the alien grey squirrel which was introduced in this part of the world from North America just over a hundred years ago. The UK in general has proved to be a perfect environment for these invaders and because they are bigger and more aggressive than the native squirrels, they have driven the more timid red squirrel out of its former haunts. However, the arrival of pine marten has changed the entire complexion of the squirrel picture.

Previous generations of pine marten in the Park would not have known grey squirrels. However, grey squirrels have, for the new generation of martens, proved a highly valuable and catchable source of food. Being bigger and less agile than the red, the grey squirrel is easy meat for the martens and so easier to catch. What's more, when caught they make a much better square meal! In recent times therefore, the advance of the pine marten has seen a considerable diminution of grey squirrel numbers. Accordingly, where numbers of grey squirrels have declined, they have been replaced by reds, a very healthy state of affairs.

By the more covert nature of their lifestyles, mammals are generally not as easy to observe compared with birds. However as autumn and winter advance and the vegetation dies back, their movements are easier to keep track of. The Park has a really healthy mammal population. The pine marten's arrival in recent years has merely added another, more arboreal dimension to an already vibrant picture.



Badger Country

Badgers for instance, are very well distributed throughout the Park. Here in Scotland we are, thankfully, free of the debilitating disease bovine TB with which badgers have been associated in the south, resulting in what many believe is a misguided policy of culling. No such fears are present here and our badgers are therefore left very much to their own devices. Brocks are by nature extremely nocturnal and so to watch badgers you have first to know where they are and then set yourself up carefully to watch them.

Slightly less nocturnal perhaps are the Park's otters, also very well distributed throughout the Park as you might expect with so many rivers and lochs. So often all we see of these elusive animals is a swirl in the water but again once their whereabouts are discovered, patience can be rewarded. Otters are enchanting creatures, with a great propensity to play, even in their dotage. Sinuous and of course, wonderful swimmers, these are perhaps the mammals most people want to see.

Foxes, as might be expected, are found universally, not always to the delight of sheep farmers or game rearers but they are endemic in both Highland and Lowland areas of the Park, albeit that they are not as easy to observe as they are in some towns and cities! On east Loch Lomondside, walkers may be surprised to encounter herds of wild goats.

However, Scotland is rightly famous for its deer. Lowland woodlands are where you will find the small woodland deer, roe. Although extremely red during the summer months, their pelage takes on a browner, more brindly look in the winter. These are arguably among our most graceful animals and are often to be seen emerging from their woodland habitat to graze surrounding fields as the afternoons approach dusk. Round Loch Lomond you may also catch glimpses of fallow deer, imported here a century or two ago, their palmate antlers distinguishing them from our larger red deer.

Monarchs of the Glen

But for most folk, it is those Monarchs of the glen, our magnificently antlered red deer, which are the main attraction to animal spotters. During the summer months red deer are generally to be found on high ground and may often be seen breaking the skyline on some Highland ridge. During the winter months however, more hostile weather conditions and a lack of good feeding, brings them down to lower levels, increasingly these days, into Lowland areas. It is worth noting that red deer were originally forest and woodland based deer but had to seek new, more upland habitat when so many of our forests were felled as the Industrial Revolution got under full steam!

And of course, October sees the high point of the year for these magnificent animals as the stags are brought to a peak of activity by the rut, the annual gathering of stags and hinds when the stags challenge each other for dominance and the right to mate with the hinds. As this annual event takes shape, so the temper of the stags seems to heighten. They face each other and clash their mighty heads. They roar as only red deer stags can, their voices echoing across the glens with amazing resonance.

No matter when you visit the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, there is always plenty of wildlife to see. As the seasons change, so it is that different aspects of natural life catch the eye. The visitor can never be in any doubt at all that this is a vibrantly living landscape of intrinsic beauty.

“During the summer months red deer are generally to be found on high ground and may often be seen breaking the skyline



FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR MAID OF THE LOCH



The charity's volunteers celebrating the good news on board the Maid flanked by MSP's Stuart McMillan and Jackie Baillie

The last ever paddle steamer built in the UK has recently secured a conditional promise of almost £4million to help return it to its former glories on Loch Lomond from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Phil Preston, Chairman of the Loch Lomond Steamship Company, the charity that owns the Maid of the Loch said: "This has been a 20 year cause, during which we have raised and reinvested over £1.9 million and committed over 80,000 hours to restoring the ship. With this promise of around £3.8 million from HLF, we now need to do the hard work of raising the other £1.7 million".

This is an HLF Round 1 Pass, meaning that the charity can prepare all the necessary technical surveys, drawings, and specifications for the

ship's rebuild. Included in this will be a big effort to get people involved, and to record and publicise the various stages of the rebuild. The Round 1 Pass is a vital first stage of the overall project and is worth £230,400.

Local MSP, Jackie Baillie said: "This is tremendous news and the grant will help the Maid of the Loch sail once again on Loch Lomond. The board and volunteers have painstakingly restored the Maid and their vision has driven the project forward. We are all grateful to them for their efforts.

We are blessed with stunning scenery at Loch Lomond, Scotland's first National Park, and what better way to see it than from the water, aboard the Maid of the Loch."

John Beveridge, Director and Founder of the charity, was understandably over the moon. "All

our volunteers, sponsors, and supporters have been wonderful over the years. Now having the support of the HLF, we will transform the Maid from a static venue to an historic icon for West Dunbarton and Scotland. We can provide training, jobs, and investment. Maid of the Loch will make the Bonnie Banks come alive and give visitors an experience of Loch Lomond – and Scotland - they will never forget".

The engagement of consultants and marine experts will begin immediately with all necessary surveys, reports, and costs being ready for the spring of 2016. The ship will meet the latest marine safety standards, and be fitted with a lift to enable access for all. All being well, it is anticipated that Maid of the Loch will sail again in 2018.

New Trossachs National Nature Reserve

The designation of the UK's newest and largest National Nature Reserve (NNR) – The Great Trossachs Forest – has recently been approved by Scottish Natural Heritage.

Covering 16,500 hectares it will be Scotland's largest reserve, with a variety of wildlife, habitats, and landforms, including some of national or international importance such as ancient woodland, wet woodland and upland wood pasture.

Scotland's newest reserve covers a swathe of land from Inversnaid on the east bank of Loch Lomond, through Loch Katrine and Glen Finglas and almost as far as Callander.

The Great Trossachs Forest is owned and managed by RSPB Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and the Woodland Trust Scotland. With support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the partners are restoring the ground to a more natural mosaic of open hill ground and woodland.

For more information visit www.thegreattrossachsforest.co.uk



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Friends member Alistair McIntyre takes us on his fourth outing following the Three Lochs Way. Here he walks the 3 miles (5 kilometres) from Glen Douglas to Arrochar. The Three Lochs Way was created by Helensburgh and District Access Trust with funding from a range of sources including The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. It is one of Scotland's nationally approved "Great Trails".

A Walk on the Three Lochs Way

From Glen Douglas railway bridge, the route takes us above the railway line, where before pressing on, it's worth savouring the view over Loch Long to Coileasan Glen directly opposite, as well as making the most of our fleeting encounter with Glen Douglas, unusual in having no headwell, but boasting instead a hanging valley at either end. This lonely place might just have played a key role in British history. Some argue that King Arthur fought no less than four of his twelve epic battles here! It all hinges on a list compiled by the Dark Age cleric Nennius, where we learn that the first of these took place at a river called "Glein", with the next three being contested at another river called "Dubglas", in the district of Linnuis - ergo, Glen Douglas, in the district of Lennox! But was Arthur real? One antiquity which is indeed real is a territorial boundary which drops down hereabouts to Loch Long. Mentioned in documents as far back as the 13th century, it effectively coincides with our re-entry to the National Park. We now enter one of the classic stretches of the Three Lochs Way, with the precipitous drop to Loch Long as dramatic as the high and rugged terrain of the Arrochar Alps. Some rail passengers simply cannot bear to look down over this stretch. To my mind, the landscapes rival any in Scotland. King of the mountains is

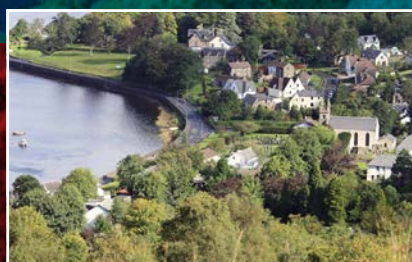
the Cobbler, which, although by no means the highest, is by far the best known on account of its distinctive and jagged outlines. There are classic rock climbs to be had, yet the humble hill-walker can easily reach the summit. There's romance too, the alternative name of Ben Arthur giving encouragement to those arguing for a northern King Arthur.

As if wishing not to be upstaged, the hills on our side of the loch steadily take on a steeper and more rocky character. After a couple of miles of ups and downs, you may spot a pile of stones and finger post by the wayside. Here, it's possible to drop down by way of a railway underpass to emerge near a ruinous set of buildings. This is Murlaggan, an old settlement abandoned around the time of the First World War, and the site of a recent archaeological dig, where around 12,000 artefacts were found, mostly relatively modern pottery fragments - reports are available on-line at <http://canmore.org.uk/site/301028/high-morlaggan>.

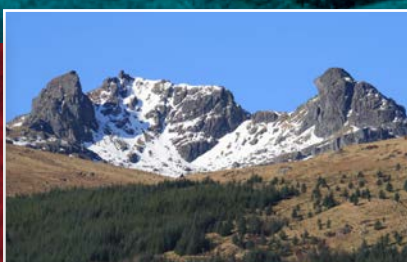
Continuing on our way, notice the large pipes visible at the crossing of Tighness burn. These date from the 1960s, when water was brought by this means from Loch Sloy to a thirsty submarine base at Faslane - our track was built as a service road for the project. The sight of Arrochar sitting snugly below



our feet signifies the end of this stage of the walk. If we take the link path (signposted Arrochar) we come out by Arrochar Church, having followed the first leg of an ancient hill track called the String Road, linking Arrochar and Luss. Before Arrochar had a church, folk used to worship at Luss by this means. You may prefer to continue a further 1.5 miles or 2.5 kilometres to come out at Tarbet and catch a boat to join the West Highland Way or, alternatively, you can head south-west through Argyll Forest Park following the Cowal Way, as it meanders down the Cowal Peninsula to the Kyles of Bute.



Arrochar from the Three Lochs Way



Early snow on the Cobbler



Start of Glen Douglas to Arrochar section



On the Three Lochs Way just south of Arrochar



The 57 pages of the beautifully illustrated Three Lochs Way guidebook are packed with fascinating information about the route. It can be ordered online at www.threelochsway.com

THE Luss STORY

In this special feature we interview Sir Malcolm Colquhoun of Luss Estates and Honorary President of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. Sir Malcolm provides an interesting insight to the challenges of managing a special area on the west side of Loch Lomond stretching from Arden in the south to Tarbet and Arrochar in the north and embracing a cluster of islands and the popular historic village of Luss. He also shares his vision for the future to ensure this magnificent area can continue to be enjoyed by current and future generations.



SIR MALCOLM COLQUHOUN is well placed to be the Honorary President of Friends of Loch Lomond, born, he says, on the kitchen table at the family home of Camstraddan House, Luss in 1947, he spent his childhood in and around Luss, and since his father died in 2008 has been the Chief of the Clan Colquhoun.

Sir Malcolm then became the Chairman of Luss Estates Company, a large, diversified rural business. As such he is responsible for over 100 employees and a business with very diverse operations in hospitality (in the form of the award-winning Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, the Inverbeg Holiday Park and luxury self-catering holiday cottages), retail, property management and development, green energy production from 'run of the river hydro schemes' as well as the more traditional rural activities of stalking, shooting, fishing, forestry and farming.

Royal Charter

Sir Malcolm and his family have deep roots on the west bank of Loch Lomond. The first documented evidence dates back to the year 1150 with Maldovan 1st of Luss and in 1190 Umfridus de Kilpatrick & de Colquhoun. The Colquhoun family were later granted a royal charter by King Robert the Bruce in 1320. Sir Malcolm Colquhoun is the latest Chief in a chain going back

800 years and is formally the 31st Chief of Colquhoun and the 33rd of Luss. Sir Malcolm and his wife, Katharine, live locally to Luss, from where they manage their two businesses, the Estate and their schools business. He has three children, Georgina (22), Fergus (24), and Patrick (34), who in turn has two sons Arthur and Rory. Both of their grandchildren show all the early signs of loving the Loch Lomond countryside and its associated mud and rain!

Sir Malcolm takes his responsibilities as Chairman of Luss Estates Company very seriously. He said, "My two main objectives are to grow local economic prosperity, employment and the population whilst transforming the Estate into a thriving, diversified business able to stand on its own feet financially. A successful Estate can have a catalytic and positive role to play in helping form a viable and prosperous future for the local community, and for future generations of that community. Whilst doing this the Estate has an obligation to protect the natural environment and enhance the local area, making it a more pleasant place to live and a more enjoyable experience for visitors to the area.

One issue of great importance to the Estate is that in order for rural communities to survive and prosper they must evolve, and change is sometimes uncomfortable. Achieving the right balance between the status quo and a changed future is a tricky task, one that needs a constant watchful eye - the Estate has a crucial role to play, not only as a business in its own right, but as a facilitator, allowing the space for other businesses to establish themselves and grow.

He cites to outstanding examples of the latter: The Carrick Golf Course and the world famous Loch Lomond

Golf Course that for many years hosted the Scottish Open. Both of these are on Luss Estates land, both employ scores of people and attract countless visitors and their spending power to the area, and both are real assets to the community and the National Park. There are numerous smaller examples of this and the Estate is committed to carrying on with this approach.

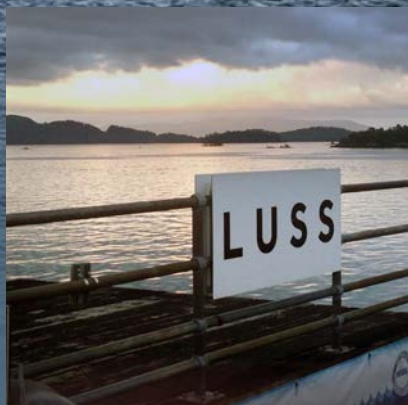
Community Support

The Estate is also assisting local communities create their own fund-raising ventures; there are two green energy projects currently being worked on which could raise significant funds for reinvestment into local projects, and in addition the recently-launched Luss visitors signage and Guidebook – both financially assisted by Luss Estates, should raise funds for the Luss & Arden Community Development Trust to re-invest in the community.

Also now coming to fruition is the Luss Strategic Development Framework: a planning initiative funded by Luss Estates and involving all the local community groups. The development framework paints a picture of the community in 20 years time and details numerous housing, business and village amenity opportunities together, and the changes in planning policy required to deliver each project. The National Park Authority recently published the "Draft West Loch Lomond Rural Development Framework Area" document as part of the most recent park-wide Local Development Plan, which includes many of the original recommendations. The aim is

to create a number of new businesses, over 30 new family homes, as well as a significant improvement to the look and feel of the village of Luss itself. A key aspiration is to create a new village green and to remove visitor traffic completely from the congested heart of Luss.





It has been asked, “who polices the policemen?” and Sir Malcolm views the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs in just this light. “We live in an outstandingly beautiful National Park, on the doorstep of the central belt, and we are happy to welcome the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come every year to visit. We have a duty to pass this on to future generations in a better state than when it was passed to us, and the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs has a pivotal role to play in ensuring this happens. I am honoured to be the Honorary President of the Friends.”

Sir Malcolm believes Luss Estates is going through a period of enormous change as it turns itself into a viable and thriving business. He said: “Over the the past four years more than £7m has been invested in projects such as transforming the Loch Lomond Arms Hotel and the Village Store and making use of the water tumbling down the glens with low environmental impact ‘run of the river ’ hydro schemes. The vast majority of the associated work has been undertaken by local businesses and contractors.

Looking forward the company is actively working on the creation of new camping and caravanning sites to assist the National Park Authority in dealing more effectively with camping pressures in the West Loch Lomondside area. New leisure activities in and around Luss are also planned to encourage visitors to stay longer and to create new jobs.”

A Special Place

The west bank of Loch Lomond is indeed a special place and under Sir Malcolm’s leadership, the Estate is working hard to protect and preserve the environment. Of the highest importance is the preservation of the delicate habitats of the Loch Lomond islands – these are some of Scotland’s most protected landscapes and supposedly home to endangered flora and fauna. Every month through the tourist season the Estate team litter

picks some of the most notorious spots and last year collected over 350 bags of rubbish plus numerous larger items. Sir Malcolm said: “Whilst I completely support the right to roam and we are working on two large new walking routes through the Estate, I believe that the level of irresponsible wild camping next to the road and the loch is unsustainable and the Estate is very supportive of the National Park’s new byelaw proposals.”

Perhaps dearest to Sir Malcolm’s heart is the beauty of Loch Lomond and the countryside around it. It is for this reason, and for the production of delicious local food, that he is a strong supporter of farming. The Estate has 12 tenanted farms in addition to its own in-hand farm of 3,000 sheep and 150 pedigree Luig and Simmental/ Luig crosses. In many respects it is the farming of the countryside that makes it look as good as it does and this is why the Estate continues to be an active investor in farming.

As if all of this was not enough, Sir Malcom has just opened the Clan Colquhoun Museum in Luss, under the watchful eye of James Pearson, the Clan Historian, and in addition will be opening the new Luss Smokery this autumn. Never one for a quiet life, all of this is in addition to Sir Malcolm and Lady Colquhoun’s other business in London running three successful private schools and, more recently, building and opening a charitable school in Ethiopia.



Sir Malcolm Colquhoun in front of Rosdhu House, which is now the home of Loch Lomond Golf Club.

PHOTO BY ANGUS BLACKBURN - SCOTTISH FIELD

Friends of OUR Park is a very successful voluntary visitor giving and volunteering initiative led by the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs with support from 100 local businesses, Scottish Enterprise and the National Park Authority. Over the next three pages we feature different aspects of OUR Park, which is going from strength to strength and making a real difference in the National Park.



Thanks to Kiltwalk Volunteers

A huge thank you to the Friends team of kiltwalkers who participated in this year's Hampden to Glasgow Kiltwalk in April, as well as the young people from the Vale of Leven and Brucehill Youth Group who took part in the Wee Walk on the same day. We are also grateful to the many businesses who provided prizes for the Kiltwalk raffle and our team of volunteer raffle sellers.

All the money raised this year is going to help young people from disadvantaged areas to participate in the John Muir Award, the popular scheme designed to recognise youngsters who take part in environmental activities. With match funding from Argyll & Bute Council we are working with 80 young people from the Helensburgh and Dunoon area to provide them the opportunity to take part in

activity days out and environmental tasks in the National Park. Feedback from previous groups has been overwhelmingly positive, with the young people reporting good outcomes, including enjoying learning new outdoor skills, overcoming fears, trying new things, and improving and building their confidence.

Focus on

Over recent years we have been developing a volunteer programme to enable people to help with our work to keep the National Park beautiful and accessible. Last year over 200 volunteers contributed towards this work in a variety of ways, including removing litter to maintain the scenic qualities of the area, creating a nature play area for children, improving the biodiversity of the area by tackling invasive species and fundraising for projects. All in all, last year volunteers contributed over 1,760 hours of their time – equivalent to an incredible 220 days full days!

Irene MacKenzie is just one of many who regularly give up their time to volunteer with the Friends. She first volunteered with the Friends in 2010 at the Spring Clean event at Lochgoilhead, and over the years has contributed over 70 hours including marshalling at the Kiltwalk and Caledonian Challenge and participating in numerous litter clean-ups as well as Make a Difference Days.

Originally from Scotland, but having lived 28 years in Australia, primarily in Alice Springs managing the A&E unit there, Irene returned home in 2006. Born in Sutherland, but also living in Dumfriesshire and Glasgow as a child, she spent her formative years hitch-hiking and walking all over Scotland with friends. She loved the area that was to become Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, and on returning to Scotland settled nearby in Rosneath.

A year later she started volunteering with the National Park Authority and it was through one of their events she found out about the Friends. Irene says: "I really enjoy volunteering on the various event with the Friends – volunteering has been a wonderful way to get to know people and make friends after having lived away for so long, and it is great to have the chance to clean-up areas I enjoy spending time in, such as Luss. I also really enjoy helping with events such as the Kiltwalk, as it is about helping kids. As my mum would say, I look like something the cat dragged in after a day's volunteering - it is hard work, but thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable!"



A Kilt-walk in the park

Valerie Nagy tells us about her experience of walking the Kiltwalk for the first time.

I live in Renton and each year I saw people walking past participating in the Kiltwalk. When I joined the Friends last year and found out they put a team in I jumped at the chance to participate! It was also a good personal challenge to set myself – I had never walked anywhere near 26 miles! I had also never fundraised before, so building up the courage to ask people to sponsor me was also a new challenge for me. The atmosphere along the walking route is incredible. It was really pouring with rain when we set off at Hampden, but there were crowds cheering us on all along the route in Glasgow, as well as people shouting and waving to us from their flats. The lowest point was around Milton when we were about 10 miles from the finish. Everyone was getting so tired, no one had the energy to talk anymore and cheer each other on. However, I somehow managed to make it on to Dumbarton and from there I had a renewed boost of energy – yes I can do this! I think the fact that with every step I was getting closer to home helped. The high point was at a cattle field just outside Dalreoch. There was a big burly chap opening and closing the cattle gate for all the walkers and he was high fiving everyone. He gave me a big bear bug, which was just what I needed, and said I was doing brilliantly. I then knew I could keep going for the final few miles to the finish! I am so proud to have completed the walk, and to know all the money raised is going to help young people makes it all the more worthwhile.

Left: Valerie at the half way point [Kiltwalk]



Rhodies Gone Wild!

This autumn we are focusing our **Make a Difference Day** volunteer efforts on tackling invading rhododendrons along West Loch Lomondside. Rhododendron ponticum were first introduced to Britain in 1763, and were later planted extensively by Victorians in gardens and estates, particularly in western coastal areas under woodland canopy and heathland to provide shelter for game birds. While the plants do produce an attractive purple flower, they grow quickly and densely, blocking out natural light and outcompeting native species. In many areas, they have escaped from managed gardens and grounds, and are now preventing native woodland from regenerating, significantly reducing the biodiversity of the National Park.

Join us for a special **Make a Difference Day** on 29th October to help with the effort to get to grips with this invasive species! We are working in partnership with the National Park Authority and the Countryside Trust to bring as many people together to make a big difference to helping to maintain the beauty and biodiversity of our native woodland along West Loch Lomondside. Join us for a fun and worthwhile day 'bashing rhodies'! For more information or to book a place please contact Andrew on 01389 298008 or info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

Below: Rhododendron clearance on a previous Make a Difference Day



Recent Friends Grant Awards

As a result of our ongoing fundraising activities through the Friends of OUR Park voluntary visitor giving scheme and the Kiltwalk it has been possible to award a number of grants to local groups to improve facilities and support initiatives that help increase people's enjoyment of the National Park.

Projects that have received financial support in recent months have included:

- Drymen Paths** - a new leaflet and map (above) to promote the recently upgraded network of paths for walkers and cyclists (£800);
- Mhor Festival** - a two day celebration of food and culture in remote Balquhider Glen (£300);
- Callander Summerfest and Railway Festival** – two weeks of music, arts, crafts, heritage displays and films in July and a September weekend celebration of Callander's railway and Victorian heritage (£500);
- Arrochar & Tarbet Paths** - a new leaflet and map to promote the extensive network of local paths (£800);
- Whinney Hill Path** – upgrading an existing path link from Balloch Castle Country Park to Water Board road led by the Woodland Trust (£3,000)
- Loch Tay Storyboard** – installation of an information board near the shores of Loch Tay in Killin by the Breadalbane Tourism Group (£500);
- Tom Weir's Rest** – The creation of a new Balmaha Bay viewpoint and all abilities path beside the recently installed Tom Weir statue (£5,000);
- The Queen's Tree** - planting of a new oak tree and commemorative stone circle in Luss to celebrate the Queen becoming Britain's longest reigning monarch (£500);
- Loch Tarsan** – Improving access at the loch shore for fishermen and other water users (£800);
- Powan in the Classroom** – Providing opportunities for children from local primary schools to learn about the lifecycle of the rare powan and the ecology of Loch Lomond (£500).

focus on local businesses

Andy and Carolyn Barrowcliffe who are part of the young and energetic team at the award winning Venachar Lochside restaurant on the banks of Loch Venachar in the Trossachs talk about their business and their involvement with the Friends of OUR park scheme.



Tell us a little about how you came to the business...

We previously had a successful restaurant in Renfrewshire, where Carolyn is from originally. We were looking for a restaurant with potential and happened to come across the opportunity at Loch Venachar. We had never heard of Loch Venachar, never mind actually visited, but were both blown away by the scenery and instantly said yes to the opportunity. We took over in September 2011 and haven't left since!

Meghan and Martyn joined Andy and Carolyn early in 2013 to help develop the business further.

Why did you decide to get involved with the Friends of OUR park scheme?

We first heard about the scheme from

Alice when we were relatively new to the restaurant. We jumped at the opportunity to contribute towards the wonderful scenery and recreational product of the area. We felt it most appropriate to incorporate a donation on to one of our dishes, and thought our most locally sourced dish, the baked Venachar trout dish, would be most appropriate. Since incorporating the donation in 2013, we have raised £865, which we are really pleased with. However, we would like to do even more! Our cakes are very popular (quite rightly so with the restaurant winning Scotland's Best Restaurant – Scottish Baking Award last year) and we are looking at transferring the donation on to a selection of cakes instead as we think we will be able to contribute even more this way.

Right: Andrew and Carolyn, and the staff at Venachar Lochside

What is particularly special for you about Loch Venachar area?

We are absolutely hooked on the scenery – it is so beautiful. People say it is like a mini-Trossachs, with the mountains and the loch. Our outdoor dining tables on the decking go all the way the loch shore, so you really feel part of the landscape. It is such a privilege being able to serve people delicious locally sourced food, prepared with love and care, in the heart of such a stunning landscape.



 **Venachar Lochside**
...unique, beautiful, serene

We're passionate about seasonal, local and freshly prepared food.
Award winning homebaking, Brodie's tea and coffee 10.00-17.00
Soups, sharers, specials and delicious main courses 12.00-16.00.
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Keep up to date with our #yearoffoodanddrink plans by visiting our facebook page.

Gift shop featuring local artists, jewellers, photographers and crafty people!

'Scotland's Best Restaurant 2014' - Scottish Baking Awards
Taste our Best 2014/2015 - Visit Scotland



Loch Venachar, Callander, FK17 8HP

01877 330011

www.venachar-lochside.co.uk



Red Toorie Hat Invasion at First Weirfest

A bumper crowd sporting red toorie hats enjoyed the first ever Loch Lomond Weirfest and Scotland's Red Toorie Hat Festival in Balmaha on Saturday, May 30 in great weather conditions with support from the team at the Oak Tree Inn and funding from Love Loch Lomond. The festival was organised by the Tom Weir Memorial Group and the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs on the site of the Tom Weir statue set against the scenic backdrop of Balmaha Bay with all the funds raised being used for further

improvements at this popular site. The festival was a celebration of Tom's life and Scotland's great outdoors which featured so strongly in his storytelling in the Scots magazine for 50 years and his popular Weir's Way television series and led to him being acclaimed as "Scotland's most popular mountain man". There was an impressive line-up of musicians performing at Weirfest including popular Scottish minstrel Alastair McDonald, the Loch Lomond Ukulele Orchestra, The Mighty

Sparrowhawk and folk and ballad artists Linsey and Ken Campbell. Scottish food ambassador Christopher Trotter also showcased some of Tom Weir's favourite foods with a series of cooking demonstrations while Donald Nelson and Sion Barrington entertained visitors with some Scottish storytelling. Other activities included woodcraft demonstrations, workshops, birds of prey displays, themed guided walks and showings of Tom's popular Weir's Way TV series in the National Park Visitor Centre.

Christmas at Ross Priory

Mince Pies, Mulled Wine,
Music and Mini Craft Fair

On Sunday 29th November 2015
2.00pm to 4.30pm

Tickets £9 each.

The musical entertainment this year will be provided by the *Loch Lomond Ukelele Orchestra* and Singers.

Some local craft workers will have stalls to sell a range of good value original craft gifts (cash sales only)

To avoid disappointment book early as this event is normally a sell out.
Tickets available now.
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info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

CALLANDER Summerfest
@ ST KESSOG'S

Summer Success

Thank you to everyone who helped to make Callander Summerfest's second year such as success – and such fun! Over two weeks in July the doors of St Kessog's were open every afternoon and on eight evenings for films and music. Nearly 3,500 visitors came to enjoy the varied exhibitions, films, music, craft workshops and craft fair.

A highlight of the opening weekend was the appearance by Stirling based nature writer Jim Crumley talking about his recent books on the relationship between golden and sea eagles. Jim is also a stalwart of the Callander Jazz & Blues festival and gave a brilliant solo jazz guitar performance.

The programme was organised by Creative in Callander and Callander Community Development Trust with the support of 25 local volunteers and funding from Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and Stirling Council's Community Pride Fund.

A Trossachs Treasure - The Steamship Sir Walter Scott

Loch Katrine in the heart of the Trossachs has been the home of the Steamship Sir Walter Scott for 115 years and down through the years the steamship has been in the care of different public bodies including Glasgow Corporation, Strathclyde Regional Council, West of Scotland Water and Scottish Water before she transferred, along with the shore based facilities at Trossachs and Stronachlachar Piers, to the Steamship Sir Walter Scott Trust 10 years ago. Here we mark the 10th anniversary of the Trust and their great work in undertaking a major refurbishment of the steamship and strengthening the visitor offer at Loch Katrine to ensure this iconic National Park heritage attraction has a bright future.



Managing Director, Gordon Allan has worked at Loch Katrine since 1984 and has witnessed many changes over the past 31 years in his different roles initially as an engineer before becoming Operations Director and Managing Director and he is ably supported by David Wyles, the Company Secretary, who has a strong background in visitor attraction management from his days at the former Area Tourist Board. The Trust and Operating Company Boards are also fortunate in having a wealth of experience to oversee the operation and includes Sir William McAlpine, two former Council Provosts-Billy Petrie and

Alex Mossman and Les Micklethwaite of Lake Windemere Cruises.

Gordon takes up the story: "The transfer of the steamship and shore based facilities to a charitable trust 10 years has enabled a significant amount of investment to take place and we have also been able to diversify and strengthen the visitor offer with a range of cycling, catering and photography partners. "A high priority for us in the early days of the Trust was to secure the £1.4 million necessary to restore and modify the Steamship Sir Walter Scott. This included installing new and more efficient bio-fuel boilers and providing more indoor cover for visitors on the ship so that there was scope to move to a year round operation if there was sufficient demand. With the help of Scottish Enterprise we also invested heavily in improving our shore based facilities and we also purchased additional boats-the Lady of the Lake (85 capacity) and MacGregor of Glengyle (24 capacity) and this enables us to provide a more flexible range of boat trip offers to complement the SS Sir Walter Scott (245 capacity).

"We have gone from strength to strength and now employ 34 staff during the busier months which drops down to a core staff of 16 in the winter. This is supplemented by 18 staff employed by our catering and bike hire partners. Importantly, the growth in turnover

has also enabled us to set aside funds each year in a capital reinvestment fund which is so essential to secure the long term future of the Steamship Sir Walter Scott which I hope will continue to be a popular attraction for another 115 years at least.

"Both working and living around Loch Katrine has been an absolute pleasure, a wonderful 'office window' over the last three decades." Steamship Sir Walter Scott and the shore based facilities now attract over 200,000 visitors annually and is a 'must visit Trossachs Treasure' on the well signposted Trossachs Trail that winds its way on a circular route from Callander and Aberfoyle. The steamship is also becoming a more popular wedding venue and such has been Gordon Allan's love of the ship he even had his own wedding reception on board last year!



Sailings depart daily from Trossachs Pier. Please check www.lochkatrine.com for sailing times and prices and remember to take along the advert opposite to ensure you benefit from the Voice readers special 20% discount on fares.

The Ladies of the Lake

For this year's cruising season the Steamship Sir Walter Scott Ltd, appointed their first female only crew on the motor vessel Lady of the Lake.

Debbie Whyte from Aberfoyle is skipper, and is a fully trained boat-master with certification for both the Lady of the Lake and The Steamship Sir Walter Scott and Tamsin Webster, a university graduate from Gartmore, is the other member of the crew.

Debbie and Tasmin are one of the crew teams providing a daily cruise programme on Loch Katrine in conjunction with the Steamship Sir Walter Scott until November, followed by a winter cruise programme until 3rd January 2016.

The Lady of the Lake offers an interesting "Legends of the Loch" cruise that features stories about Rob Roy Macgregor, Queen Victoria, the Wordsworths and Sir Walter Scott who in 1810 was inspired by the scenery of Loch Katrine and the Trossachs to write "The Lady of the Lake".



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Home of the Steamship Sir Walter Scott

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Classic Steamship Cruises on Sir Walter Scott

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* 20% Discount offer is not valid in conjunction with any other offer. Valid until 03-01-16.

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The Mouldsdale Foundation & Optical Express are proud to support the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. For 35 years, the friends have been working to protect the area's environmental heritage, promote it as a most special part of Scotland, and provide for its future through a range of projects for people and for wildlife.

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• LOVE LOCH LOMOND

email: info@lovelochlomond.com

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Love Loch Lomond is a recently formed industry led Destination

Organisation that operates in the Loch Lomond, Strathendrick, West Dunbartonshire and Clyde Sea Lochs areas. It is dedicated to working on a collaborative basis to capitalise on the area's strong tourism potential.

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• LUSS ESTATES

Luss Estates Company, Arnburn Arden

Argyll, G83 8RH

email: estateoffice@lussestates.co.uk

www.lussestates.co.uk

One of Scotland's greatest Estates, spanning 40,000+ acres and eight centuries of continuous ownership by the family of Colquhoun of Luss. Today we combine farming, forestry, tourism, property and power generation - protecting, preserving and developing the estate to enrich and ensure the future of the land, resources, villages, communities and people which are at our heart.

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