

Lairg Magazine

LAIRG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



Contents:

**Page 2 - Lairg Lunch Club/
Lochview Rural Training**

**Page 3 - Quiz/Lairg Primary School
pt.1**

Page 4 - Lairg Primary School pt.2

Page 5 - Hot Cross Bun Recipe

**Page 6 - Lairg Community Centre/
Quiz Answers**

**Page 7/8 - Lairg & District Learning
Centre Classes**

Page 9/10 - Scottish Snippets

The new houses are finished and were handed over by Compass on Thursday 7th March to Albyn Housing who will be managing them.

As chair of the LDCI, I was invited to be there for the handover. It was quite an emotional morning for me, seeing all the hard work that has gone in to this project finally completed. All eight houses have been allocated and the new tenants will be moving in shortly.

I want to say a huge thank you to the community for supporting this project, and a personal thank you for all the kind messages I have received. There is no I in team and this has been a huge team effort, starting from Magda Macdonald (previous Development Officer) to several boards, to my own and to Susan Clark our Project Consultant to managed and guided us through each stage. I am sure many of you will know the residents and will be looking forward to a cuppa with them in their new homes.

Kaye Hurrion

LDCI Chair

The Lairg Lunch Club enjoyed their Christmas/ New Years Do at The Pier, late in February this year.

With the weather being so unpredictable it was felt it was better to wait until there was a break in the snow. The Pier put on a wonderful menu for us, and even though it was not December we had crackers and party hats.

The helpers and lunch club guests thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

If you would like to join the club, or if you could spare a Thursday to help with the serving of the dinners please contact projectofficer@lairginitiative.co.uk or call Kaye on 07500453301. We meet every Thursday through the school term and have two lovely trips out twice a year a summer outing and our Christmas Lunch.



To keep updated of our workshops please follow our Eventbrite page



A busy but great weekend. With our introduction to sheep course on Saturday and lambing on Sunday.

A big thanks to Emma our trustee and owner of Davochfin Farm, Dornoch for hosting the lambing course.

QUIZ

1. What was the name of the Apollo 11 moon landing module?
2. What are the names of Prince Harry and Meghan's children?
3. How many days are there in the last 3 months of the year?
4. Which TV policeman drove a Jaguar Mark II with the registration 248 RPA?
5. Who wrote, and reached No 1 in America, with the song "You're so vain"?
6. Ian Holm played the android 'Ash' in which Sci-Fi film starring Sigourney Weaver?
7. What letter of the Greek alphabet is applied to a version of software that is in the final development stages?
8. How many days constitute Lent?
9. On the original Monopoly board, the Electric Company sits between two properties of what colour?
10. Who won the title of 'Sports Personality of the Year' in 2023?

Lairg Primary School Part 1



On Friday 23rd February, all 8 East Sutherland Primary Schools took part in the Ceilidh Dancing Competition held at Brora Primary School. Each school entered dancers into the Virginia Reel, Gay Gordons, Strip the Willow, and a Waltz.

Lairg Primary School won first place in the Virginia reel, came second overall and won first for the small school's competition.

We would like to thank Lucy MacDonald and Jenny MacDonald who helped with our after-school dancing club.



The annual Badminton Tournament took place in Golspie on the 15th of March. All players played exceptionally well. We are delighted that Finn Sutherland won the trophy for the boy's tournament. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our coach Angel who has been taking lunchtime badminton club at our school.



We also welcomed Jorden, Golf Pro at Golspie Golf Club she delivered a block of curriculum time sessions to all the classes in the school.



P6/7 completed their topic on chocolate with a trip to Cocoa Skye in Brora. The children met at the train station and headed to Brora on the train. They were given lessons on chocolate and learned lots of interesting facts from the amazing staff. They then headed up to Brora Primary for an afternoon of games with the pupils there before heading back to Lairg at the end of the day.

Ingredients**Method****For the buns**

- 300ml full-fat milk, plus 2 tbsp more
- 50g butter
- 500g strong bread flour
- 1tsp salt
- 75g caster sugar
- 1tbsp sunflower oil
- 7g sachet fast-action or easy-blend yeast
- 1 egg, beaten
- 75g sultanas
- 50g mixed peel
- zest 1 orange
- 1 apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 1tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp mixed spice

For the cross

- 75g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

For the glaze

- 3tbsp apricot jam

1. Bring 300ml full-fat milk to the boil, then remove from the heat and add 50g butter. Leave to cool until it reaches hand temperature. Put 500g strong bread flour, 1 tsp salt, 75g caster sugar and 7g sachet fast-action or easy-blend yeast into a bowl. Make a well in the centre. Pour in the warm milk and butter mixture, then add 1 beaten egg. Using a wooden spoon, mix well, then bring everything together with your hands until you have a sticky dough.
2. Tip on to a lightly floured surface and knead by holding the dough with one hand and stretching it with the heel of the other hand, then folding it back on itself. Repeat for 5 mins until smooth and elastic. Put the dough in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover with oiled cling film and leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hr or until doubled in size and a finger pressed into it leaves a dent.
3. With the dough still in the bowl, tip in 75g sultanas, 50g mixed peel, zest of 1 orange, 1 finely chopped apple, ground cinnamon and mixed spice. Knead into the dough, making sure everything is well distributed. Leave to rise for 1 hr more, or until doubled in size, again covered by some well-oiled cling film to stop the dough getting a crust.
4. Divide the dough into 15 even pieces (about 75g per piece). Roll each piece into a smooth ball on a lightly floured work surface. Arrange the buns on one or two baking trays lined with parchment, leaving enough space for the dough to expand. Cover (but don't wrap) with more oiled cling film, or a clean tea towel, then set aside to prove for 1 hr more.
5. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix 75g plain flour with about 5 tbsp water to make the paste for the cross – add the water 1 tbsp at a time, so you add just enough for a thick paste. Spoon into a piping bag with a small nozzle. Pipe a line along each row of buns, then repeat in the other direction to create crosses. Bake for 18-20 mins on the middle shelf of the oven, until golden brown. If you're using two trays the lower tray may need a minute or more than the top level tray.
6. Gently heat 3 tbsp apricot jam to melt, then sieve to get rid of any chunks. While the jam is still warm, brush over the top of the warm buns and leave to cool.



We held our first Community Market of 2024 on Monday 18th March. It was so lovely to see the Main Hall and Range packed with so many traders selling locally produced foodstuff, plants that are grown here on the outskirts of Lairg so they are very hardy, an abundance of unique and sometimes quirky, handmade items. Why not come along to our next market on Monday April 15th between 1.30pm and 4pm and see for yourself what is on offer. There are things such as goats cheese from Jumping Goats Dairy, two very good Charcuterie stalls (Clyth Charcuterie and Highland Charcuterie and Smoke House), Highland Quality Meats, The Highland Patisserie, Jams and Preserves sold to raise Money for Marie Curie, Knockdhu Plants, painted slates sold to raise money for Parkinsons, the Mouse Mum will be back this month too, just too many to mention individually! Ooh and new for this month Seafield Game!

In addition to the market we have many more functions booked throughout the month, some are regular fixtures including Pilates and Tai Chi, Lunch Club, Cookery Classes organised through the Learning Centre. Rooms are also available for meetings, public consultations, celebrations, Soup and Sweet events and so on. A weekly programme detailing everything that is going on is posted on all our noticeboards and also on Facebook and Instagram.

We have Ping Pong and Badminton equipment for use in the Hall should you want to make use of it.

As always we are looking for volunteers to keep the centre thriving as a hub for community activity. If you feel you could assist in any way, or would like more information please let me know by email lairgcommunitycentre@gmail.com, on 01549 402843 (the office is only manned part time) or by messenger. We are also on Facebook and the market has both Facebook and is on Instagram but I am still working Instagram so be patient with me on that one!

LDCI Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Eagle | 5. Carly Simon | 9. Pink |
| 2. Archie and Lilibet | 6. Alien | 10. Mary Earps |
| 3. 92 | 7. Beta | |
| 4. Inspector Morse | 8. 40 (not counting Sundays) | |



What's on LDLC?

Wednesday 3rd April : Scrappy Quilting Workshop 6pm – 8:30pm LDLC

Scrappy Quilting is what it sounds like, using your scraps to make a quilt.

If you have scraps, please take them along for you to use, or to share. Our tutor Jo has lots so no pressure.

This is a 3-week class where Jo will show you how to make a few blocks and you can go away and make as many as you like. On the second class, Jo will show you how they all go together. The third class will be how to finish and bind your quilt.

So, join us on Wed April 3rd for a fun and creative evening of quilting. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced quilter, this workshop is perfect for anyone looking to learn new techniques and create beautiful and unique quilts. Don't miss out on this opportunity to meet fellow quilters and unleash your creativity. See you there!

Saturday 6th April : Foraging Workshop: Rogart 10am – 12pm Rogart Primary School

Emma Armstrong will lead a guided foraging walk which will last up to two hours where you will learn to identify, pick and eat a number of edibles that present themselves along the way. April foragers will meet at Rogart School and we'll be passing a wild garlic patch. We'll have a little halftime activity of mixing chopped wild garlic into soft cheese and spreading on a cracker for a snack, then eating together in a picturesque location.

Saturday 6th April : Vegetable Fermentation/Kefir & Fermented Oats 10:30am – 3:00pm Masonic Hall, Golspie

Join us at the Masonic Hall on 6th April to learn how to ferment veggies, make kefir, and create delicious fermented oats!

Sunday 7th April : Getting Growing Ready + Seed Swap 10am – 2pm Knockdhu Plants, Lairg

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting out, this event is perfect for everyone. Our experienced tutor Emma Armstrong will share her knowledge on preparing your garden for the upcoming season. From soil preparation to plant selection, you'll learn all the essentials to ensure a successful and bountiful garden. We'll be sharing clumps of perennials, tubers and bulbs and learning how to propagate from roots and how establish perennial flowers and kitchen garden plants like chives, rhubarb, jerusalem artichokes, snowdrops, daffodils.

Saturday 13th April : Turtle Mop Workshop 2pm – 4:30pm LDLC

This reusable floor mop can be washed in the washing machine, reducing your use of paper towels to wipe up the floor. It is also a great way to upcycle old fabrics and linens. No more water splashes on the floor. Place him on the kitchen floor to keep water drops away. Just place your foot on his back and move him around until the cleanup is done. Just leave him lying on the floor until it's time to throw him in the wash.

Saturday 13th April : Make Your Own Planter Box - Woodworking Class 10am – 2pm The Cabin, LDLC

Join our woodworking tutor, Graham Rennie, as he teaches you how to make a planter box. This will be using recycled and reclaimed wood and is perfect for a herb garden, flowers or smaller veg growing. You will use a variety of tools including a drill, sander, and jigsaw.

This class is for those with all levels of woodworking skills, from beginner to intermediate. All materials and equipment will be supplied. This class will be held in The Cabin at Lairg and District Learning Centre.

Saturday 13th April : Lairg Litter Pick 11am – 12:30pm Church Hill Wood Shelter

The nicer weather is here, so lets all get together and have a wee tidy up. Meet us at the Shelter on Saturday 13th April.

Tuesday 16th April : Historical Mapping Workshop 10am – 12:30pm Lairg Community Centre, Kinvonvie Suite

Do you love local history? Do you wonder how your local area has changed over time and what was there in the past? Do you want to learn new skills and meet like mind people? If so, Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) and the Lairg District & Learning Centre are delighted to be delivering a workshop on historic maps and how to use them to research your local area.

Tuesday 16th April : Cook Together! 4pm – 5.30pm Lairg Community Centre 8 Week course

Family Cooking sessions open to children of all ages and their Parent/Carers. These sessions are free and provide a change to learn new skills, try new recipes, have fun and enjoy your tasty new creations! Come to every session or drop in when you can. These sessions are free to attend and booking is essential. Contact us at 01549 402050 or admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk

Wednesdays 17th April : Bake & Blether 11am – 1pm Lairg Community Centre 8 week drop in

Bake & Blether is a new session for people to come together in a safe environment in the community to bake and chat. Our tutor Yvonne will guide you through some recipes for sweet and savoury baked goods that you can enjoy along with a cuppa in the session or take away to enjoy at home. You'll learn new skills and recipes as well as having the chance to share hints, tips and recipes. Whether you're already an accomplished baker or have no previous baking experience, this session is open to all to attend. You can attend all 8 sessions or drop in as you please.

Thursday 18th April : Pebble Art Workshop 1pm – 2pm LDLC

Come and unleash your artistic side as we guide you through the process of creating beautiful cards using pebbles. This hands-on workshop is perfect for all skill levels, whether you're a seasoned artist or just looking to try something new.

Thursday 18th April : 4 Week Coding for Kids 3pm – 4pm LDLC

In this 4-week course you will learn the fundamentals of video game design and will use basic coding to create your own micro game!

Come along and unleash your inner creativity while having fun along the way!

Tuesday 23rd April : 4 Week Introduction to Woodworking 2pm – 4pm or 6pm – 8pm The Cabin, LDLC

During this four-week programme in The Cabin at Lairg & District Learning Centre you will develop your woodworking skills and build items to take home. You will learn to use a variety of tools including a drill, sander, and jigsaw.

Using recycled and reclaimed wood, our tutor will walk you through the steps to crafting items such a plant box. You'll learn how to measure and cut wood accurately and safely; as well as sanding, planing, drilling and sawing. You'll have the opportunity to decide what you'd like to make within these sessions.

Wednesday 1st May : Emergency First Aid at Work 9am – 3pm LDLC

Join in on our Emergency First Aid in The Workplace Course with our trainer Barbara Jones, in the Conservatory at the Lairg Community Centre on Thursday 2nd of May 9am-3pm. Cost: £95 p.p.

This one-day course covers the basics of assessing casualties and dealing with emergencies so that you learn how to deal with a range of accidents. Please bring along your own lunch.

Saturday 11th May : (Lairg) Beginners Sewing - 6 Week Workshop 10am – 12pm LDLC

You don't need any sewing experience to take part in this 6-week beginners sewing programme. Each week you will learn new techniques and develop skills you'll be able to use on countless sewing projects.

Saturday 11th May : Loom Making & Using 10am – 3:30pm LDLC

Come along and make your own Peg Loom with our fantastic woodwork tutor Graham, then in the afternoon, Jo will show you how to set it up and use it and to use up recycled materials. Please take along your own lunch, but hot and cold drinks will be available all day.

Wednesday 22nd May : First Aid for Mental Health Awareness 9am – 1pm Lairg Community Centre

Join in on our First Aid for Mental Health Awareness with our trainer Barbara Jones, in the Kinvonvie Suite at the Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 22nd of May 9am-1pm.

Our programme of classes is updated on a regular basis via Eventbrite which you can find by searching **Lairg & District Learning Centre** or contact us on 01549 402050 or admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk.

FOLLOWING THE MATHESON CONNECTION

By Jonathan Brett Young – West Shinness



When my wife Dorothy and I bought West Shinness Lodge in the Northern Highlands of Scotland in 1984 it was our intention to run it as a guesthouse. We were confident that the lodge would provide an ideal retreat, dating as it did from the 18th century, and with its remote location and stunning outlook over Loch Shin. We had also been made aware that our new property had a significant connection with an ancient Highland clan, the Mathesons. We believed such an interesting link would be an added selling point. Our research revealed that indeed West Shinness Lodge had been the seat of a branch of the Clan Matheson, although the clan's main seat since the 15th century was Fort Matheson on the coast in Wester Ross in western Scotland.

Further research took us on a voyage of discovery to India, China, Hong Kong, Australia and finally the island of Lewis. The link was one James Matheson who was born on 17 November 1796 in Shinness Farm, now our own West Shinness Lodge. The son of Captain Donald Matheson, James was educated at Edinburgh Royal High School and the University of Edinburgh. After spending two years in London, he went to Calcutta to work in his uncle's trading company, Mackintosh and Co. While in India, in 1820, he met fellow Scot, William Jardine who was later to play a significant part in his life. Matheson then moved to Canton in China, and in 1827 founded the Canton Register, the first English language news sheet in China. Five years later he and Jardine founded Jardine Matheson and Co and he became known as a tai-pan, the name given to foreign-born senior business executives operating in China.

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In 1830 the British parliament had ended the monopoly of the British East India Company and Jardine Matheson filled the gap, exporting tea to England.

They also dealt in silver, porcelain, silk, rice and lacquer ware. But most lucrative of all was their questionable trade in opium from India into China. Obviously different morals and values applied in those times, and today we would rightly condemn many elements of Britain's colonial and trading past. The new opium trade was certainly at odds with the China's stance, and its vigorous opposition led to the notorious Opium Wars.

The first of these ended in 1842 with the Treaty of Nanking which forced the Chinese to concede substantial trading rights to Britain. As a result, Jardine Matheson was able to expand its business interests further from Canton to Hong Kong and to the mainland.

During this period James Matheson amassed a large personal fortune. When he finally returned home in 1842 the merchants of Bombay presented him with a service of silver valued at £1500.

The accompanying address acknowledged his efforts in promoting British commerce during the First Opium War.

In 1843 James Matheson married Mary Jane Perceval, granddaughter of British Prime Minister Spencer Percival who had been assassinated in 1812 in the lobby of the House of Commons in London. The same year, his partner William Jardine died. James decided to retire soon after, and handed over the company to Jardine's nephew.

At about this time, Jardine Matheson was established in Sydney and Hobart, developing the lucrative wool trade. James sent his nephew, Alexander Mackay, to supervise the shipment of wool to England. James then became involved with several sheep runs or stations and he appointed his young nephew to be responsible for keeping the records of wages, stocks and stores. James passed one of his sheep runs,

Wallendenbeen in southern New South Wales, to Mackay. The enterprising Mackay soon established himself as a landowner accumulating considerable acreage in sheep runs and stock.

In addition to Wallendenbeen, his holdings included Lewis, formerly Memmagong, another property near Geelong in Victoria, and two others called Honeysuckle Creek and Wyuna. In 1845, on his nephew's advice, Matheson was sending to Australia Southdown and Merino rams to improve the stock.

Alexander McKay's second son was Major General Kenneth Mackay CB OBE VD, a prominent Australian soldier and politician at the beginning of the 20th century.

Next time. Sir James Matheson buys Achany House, Lewis, Ullapool, becomes an MP and Lord-Lieutenant and Chairs the P and O Steamship Navigation Co.

Thank you for reading issue 66 of the Lairg Magazine! If you would like to submit something to the magazine, please send it to: zoe@lairglearningcentre.org.uk

Phone: 01549 402050 or write to us at: Schoolhouse, Main Street, Lairg, IV27 4DD