

Lairg Magazine

LAIRG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



Jayzed Kay

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The Flow Country

UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Flow Country is the first peatland worldwide, to be made into a World Heritage Site – it was inscribed with this status in July 2024. It is being recognised as a place of global significance in the fight against climate change. According to UNESCO, “This peatland ecosystem, which has been accumulating for the past 9,000 years, provides a diversity of habitats home to a distinct combination of bird species and displays a remarkable diversity of features not found anywhere else on Earth.” See page 6 for more information.

Pop over to the Ferrycroft Visitor Centre to see their new and wonderful display on this amazing project.

QUIZ

1. Which Russian Ruler put a tax on beards, of 100 Roubles annually?
2. Who was the first woman singer inducted into the Hall of Fame?
3. Who wrote the book 'The Female Eunuch'?
4. Kathmandu is the capital of which country?
5. Whom has become the Democratic Party nominee for the 2024 USA President election?
6. Kathryn Bigelow was the first woman to win a Best Director Oscar, but for which film?
7. What was the total number of medals won by Team GB at the Paris Olympics 2024 (not including Paralympics)?
8. What domesticated animals are affected by a condition called "Broken Wind"?
9. 'Umberto' was the first name of the last King of which European country?
10. Which island has been named Scotland's first International Dark Sky Sanctuary?

Save the Date!

Keep Saturday 7th December free for Winterfest.



The poster features a snowy, crystalline background. At the top left is a red Christmas ornament with a white snowflake. In the top right, Santa Claus in a red suit is shown in a sleigh pulled by a team of reindeer. In the center, the text 'LAIRG WINTERFEST!' is written in large, bold, green letters. Below this, on the left, is a photograph of a reindeer. In the center, a red starburst contains the text 'Save the Date! Sat 7th Dec 2024'. To the right, a green rounded rectangle contains the text 'REINDEER PARADE CHRISTMAS MARKET ENTERTAINMENT SANTA'S GROTTO & MORE!'. At the bottom left, it says 'FOR MORE INFO SEE: WWW.LAIRGINITIATIVE.CO.UK/WINTERFEST'. At the bottom right is the logo for 'LAIRG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY INITIATIVE' with 'LDCI' in large blue letters.

**LAIRG
WINTERFEST!**

**Save the Date!
Sat
7th Dec
2024**

REINDEER PARADE
CHRISTMAS MARKET
ENTERTAINMENT
SANTA'S GROTTO & MORE!

FOR MORE INFO SEE: WWW.LAIRGINITIATIVE.CO.UK/WINTERFEST

LDCI
LAIRG & DISTRICT
COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

We know it is still the summer and we don't want you to have to start thinking about Christmas at this time of the year - but here is a date for your diary!



Dancing Competition

Beginners 7 years & under

Ava Mackay

Beginners 9 years & under

Ava Roas

Beginners 10 years & over

Lois Manson

Novice 8 years & under

Orlaith Deas

Novice 9 years & over

Aryhel Santiago

Intermediate 11 years &

under

Cara Sinclair

Intermediate 12 years &

over

Jess Kenny

Premier 11 years & under

Gracie Schofield

Premier 14 years & under

Anna Thain

Premier 15 years & over

Iona Browne

Overall Beginners

Anne Kidd

Overall Novice

Orlaith Deas

Overall Premier

Anna Thain



Paddy the Clydesdale



*Lairg Crofters Show
Queen and her
Attendants*



*Sutherland Schools &
Caledonian Pipe band*



Piping Competition

Overall Under 15s

Champion - Will Fryer

Overall Under 18s

Champion - Andrew

Sinclair

Overall Open Champion -

Brian Mearns

Best Under 15s Piper in

Sutherland - Arran

MacDonald

Most Promising Piper -

Andrew Sinclair

Congratulations to them

all, it was a great morning

of piping!

Special Thanks to Mr

George Robertson Stewart

for stepping in as our

Judge for the morning, it

was great to see George

down at the show this year

and hope to see him again

next year.

We'd like to send our get

well wishes to James

Mather and thanks to him

for organising George to

come along in his place.



We have been busy again this month, Throughout the summer holidays we had various activities organised by Gala Week, LDLC, Highlife Highland and Lairg Library. There was a three day holiday club hosted by Lairg Christian Fellowship and Waganini ran a weekly Music/Chess Summer School.

Now that the summer holidays are over we will return to a more regular schedule again and as ever we have a wide range of bookings in the centre, these include some regular ones such as The Haven, (a weekly coffee morning), Tai Chi, Pilates, Lairg Art Group, Schoolhouse Crafters, Toddlers, Lunch Club, Whist, and there are various classes organised by the nearby Learning Centre and the monthly Quiz night.



We also have indoor bowls and a Rifle Club that meet up during the winter months. We have a variety of rooms that are available for one off meetings, consultations, exhibitions and celebrations etc. A full schedule is posted weekly, usually on a Friday, to our Facebook page and also on the noticeboards around the building so you can see the events that are happening in the centre each week. If you want to make a booking or need any more information, please just let me know.

Don't forget that we have Ping Pong and Badminton equipment for use in the Hall should you want to make use of it. We also have a wonderful stage that could be put to use for Amateur Dramatics, Pantomimes and Music Performances!

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 on anything please let me know by emailing lairgcommunitycentre@gmail.com, or call 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.

Lairg and District Learning Centre, along with eight other centres throughout Scotland, are delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Scottish Government's £272k Climate Engagement Fund (CEF).

The fund has been set up to increase Climate Change awareness and action in local communities through various activities such as community workshops, podcasts and green festivals, which will be supported from the latest round of Scottish Government funding.



We will use the funding from CEF to launch a new project which will raise awareness about the impact of climate change on the migratory patterns and behaviours of birds.

These will be held at the Lairg & District Learning Centre, as well as other local hubs arounds Sutherland. Participants will be able to explore the various ways in which changing environmental conditions, such as temperature shifts and habitat loss, are affecting the ability of birds to navigate their traditional migration routes.

Through a combination of creative writing workshops, lectures, immersive walks and various mediums of art, we hope that attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of how climate change is altering the behaviour and distribution of bird species worldwide. We also intend to run a few local side projects to encourage families and youngsters to take an interest in the feathered friends that surround us.

Please stay tuned to our Eventbrite and Facebook channels for further class information.

You can book our workshops via phone: 01549 402050, email:

admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk, or our ticketing site, Eventbrite – go to

www.eventbrite.co.uk and search under the location of Lairg, UK; alternatively, please use the QR code above:

We are having an open day, mainly based around our new project, so people can come in and take a look around/talk to us – it'll be hosted at the Learning Centre on Saturday 14th September, from 10.30am-4pm; a little bit of lunch will be provided and we will have some activities throughout the day, some can booked on in advance through Eventbrite.





For thousands of years, human activity left the peat bogs of the Flow Country largely untouched. During the twentieth century, improvements in technology meant that land previously seen as barren and useless could be drained for agriculture and forestry.

Government funding after both the First and Second World Wars funded hill drainage across large areas of peatland. Then, in the 1970s and 80s, tax incentives led to an increase in forest planting. Large areas of the bog that had been treeless for thousands of years were drained, furrowed and planted with non-native conifers.

The Flow Country became notorious as a battleground between investors and conservationists, who were concerned at the destruction of such a rare, undisturbed habitat. In the end, the tax incentives were stopped, and it's now become clear that forests planted on deep peat will never produce a valuable crop of timber.

The Peatlands Partnership was formed in 2006 and has a new approach to managing the Flows. Its vision is for a landscape underpinned by a healthy environment, at the heart of which is the great expanse of wild peatlands habitat. Forestry and agriculture are part of a mosaic of productive land use in the straths (fertile valleys in between the hill and bog) and along the coasts. (Text & image provided by The Flow Country: <https://theflowcountry.org.uk/>)

Ferrycroft Playpark

Lairg & District Community Initiatives (LDCI) is delighted to say that the installation of the Ferrycroft Playpark started on the 26th August, and all going well the project is expected to take between 4 and 6 weeks - with an estimated finish date of the 4th October 2024. The removal of the old equipment has already begun as you can see in the photo.



We can't give you an official opening date yet because after the work has been completed, the playpark will have to be inspected by an independent inspector as well as by the Highland Council, so it can't open to the public until after that has been done – but we will keep you updated!

Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. Peter the Great | 5. Kamala Harris | 9. Italy |
| 2. Aretha Franklin | 6. The Hurt Locker | 10. Rum |
| 3. Germaine Greer | 7. 65 | |
| 4. Nepal | 8. Horses | |

We are all glad to be back after a long 7 week holiday. Below are pictures of our new classes.



P1/2



P3-5



P6/7



Lairg Primary were approached by Theo Jenkins who has links to the Lairg/Rosehall area. As part of his Duke of Edinburgh scheme, he thought he could brighten up the doors on our old shelter. Theo first got involved with Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme through his school, Millburn Academy in Inverness. It is a scheme for 14-24 year olds which was established to develop essential life skills. Theo is currently working towards his Bronze award and this involves helping in the community and environment and developing new and existing skills. The award focusses on setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. He was first inspired to start spray painting when he went to a street art event in Glasgow called Yardworks. And then he started experimenting with clips off the internet and different tutorials from well-known spray paint artists. He enjoys it because he can be creative and finds it really relaxing. The pupils were delighted with the results and can't thank Theo enough.



An Encounter with an Albatross – by Jonathan Brett Young*Ivan Fox*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in his epic poem, the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, tells the story of the seaman whose ship is blown into the dangerous and icy waters of the Antarctic. An albatross appears and leads the ship away from danger. But the mariner associates the albatross with the lack of wind, and kills it ... “With my cross-bow, I shot the Albatross.”

According to Coleridge this brings very bad luck to the ship, and so the crew blame the mariner by hanging the dead bird around his neck. So today sailors regard killing an albatross as very bad luck indeed. More generally an albatross is regarded as a constant burden or handicap.

It's estimated that there are 21 species of this large seabird which has a wingspan of up to 12 feet (3.6m) and is noted for its powerful gliding flight. They are found mainly in the Great Southern Ocean. The albatross has a long lifespan with some living for 60 years or more. They're very faithful, and pairs mate for life. Today, however, they are under considerable threat from long-line fishing and plastic waste in the seas.

I've always had a fond regard for the albatross as a result of an experience I had with one many years ago. While serving with the Royal Australian Navy I had the misfortune to lose my ship in the Great Southern Ocean. We were dumping spent ammunition when a fire broke out. Several major explosions followed, and the ship was destroyed. Sadly, two sailors died but the 25 of us who survived spent some time in the water, joined together by a heaving line. Somebody was heard to remark “Lash yourselves together lads so we'll all arrive in New Zealand together!”... an example of the dark humour of the sailor when danger threatens.

continued on the next page...

Fortunately, in spite of the radio shack being ablaze, the wireless operator had been able to transmit an SOS alert so we knew help would be on its way. For his bravery the seaman rightly received an appropriate decoration.

As we waited to be rescued, I was conscious that we may have been tempting targets for the hungry great white sharks which are common in these waters. But the visitor we had, actually came from above. A circling albatross came down to look us over and landed in the water close by with a great splash. To this day I have a vivid memory of being eyeballed by the albatross from about 20 feet. The picture of its lovely yellow beak and piercing slit eyes remain with me still. He soon realised that we were not on his menu, and with great splashing, flapping of wings and a lot of effort, he took flight and disappeared heavenwards.

We were rescued an hour or so later and taken safely back into Sydney Harbour. After the inevitable board of inquiry and the court-martial of the Captain and the First Lieutenant, I was posted to another ship and was able to get on with my life.

Today however I have visions of an old albatross soaring and sweeping the Great Southern Ocean looking for food ... and possibly, just possibly, keeping a weather-eye open for shipwrecked sailors.



JJ Harrison

8 WEEK INTRO TO LAND-BASED COURSE FOR 16-25 YEARS



WEEK 1

17/18th September : Introduction and visit to a local working estate

WEEK 2

24/25th September : Animal care covering different animals on the croft

WEEK 3

1/2nd October : Soils, conservation and biodiversity and NatureScot managed land site visit.

WEEK 4

8/9th October : Dry stone walling course

WEEK 5

15th/16th October : Fencing course

WEEK 6

22/23rd October : Record keeping, business skills and visit from Business Gateway rep

WEEK 7

29th/30th October : Machinery maintenance and ATV course

WEEK 8

5/6th November: First Aid ; last day course completion celebration

For more information on this FREE course please email lochviewruraltraining@gmail.com

As we almost come to the end of August just a reminder of new courses coming up - booking is essential.

First we have our Equine Care - this is a 12 week programme running every Saturday from 2-4pm.

We can take people aged from 13 + years.

We also have our introduction to land based course this is for 16+ (with priority to 16-25 yrs). This 8 week course will be starting mid September. Please email us for more information.

Lochview Rural Training

LOCHVIEW RURAL TRAINING

INTRODUCTION TO EQUINE CARE

STARTS 24TH AUGUST 2-4PM

A 12 WEEK PROGRAMME COVERING
HANDLING A HORSE & IDENTIFICATION
TACK AND TACKING UP
EQUINE BEHAVIOUR
STABLE MANAGEMENT

Croft experience sessions running all summer so get in touch to book a session.

Email: lochviewruraltraining@gmail.com

Free

Sutherland Green Health

NETWORK LUNCH

<https://lochviewruraltraining.co.uk/>

Groups running nature-based activities in Sutherland, are invited to attend a network lunch. There will be a tour of Lochview followed by a workshop on tackling health inequalities through nature connection.

Food and refreshments will be provided.

SEPT 10 Lairg, Sutherland
11 am to 2pm

Booking Essential:
info@thinkhealththinknature.scot
07816 219 125

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS CLIMATE HUB

Thank you for reading issue 72 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