

Lairg Magazine

LAIRG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



Lorraine Boshoff

Contents:

- Page 2** - Quiz/Join LDCI
- Page 3** - Northern Lights 1/2
- Page 4** - Northern Lights 2/2 -
Ferrycroft Playpark
- Page 5** - Lairg & District Learning
Centre
- Page 6** - Lairg Notice Board/Quiz
Answers
- Page 7** - Lairg Primary School
- Page 8** - Save Our Screen Machine
- Page 9** - Lairg Community
Centre/Lochview Rural Training
- Page 10** - Lairg Community Council &
Representatives

The Northern Lights

Have you been lucky enough to see the Northern Lights – or to give the phenomenon its scientific name – the Aurora Borealis? Chances are that if you live in Lairg then you might have! Thank you to Lorraine Boshoff for allowing us to use her beautiful photograph (above) taken recently.

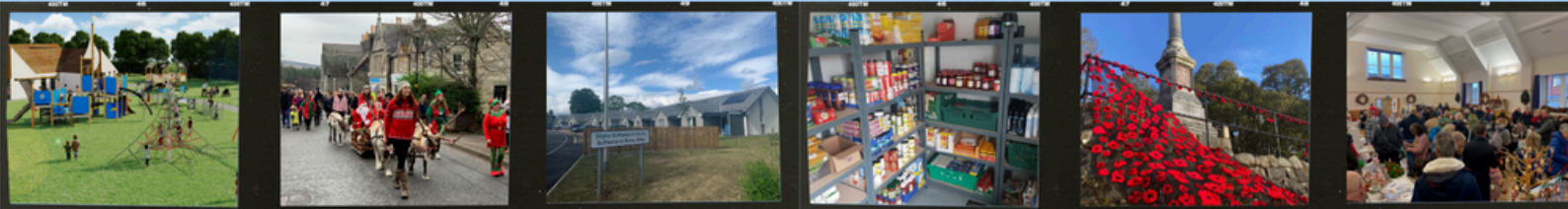
There's more on the science behind what causes the northern lights on page 3 of the magazine. Also inside the magazine this week... we have plenty of news from Lairg's different community organisations and from the Primary School. If you would like to share details about your community group's activities - please get in touch! Our contact details are on page 10.

QUIZ

1. Dunfermline recently granted 'Freedom of the City' to which birds?
2. What do the letters of the Government department DVLA stand for?
3. Where will Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams be spending Christmas this year?
4. Who had a hit with "The Closest Thing to Crazy" in 2003?
5. What part of the human body has the Lacrimal gland?
6. Which American city will host the 2028 Olympics?
7. Which year was the first Apple phone released?
8. What edible plant root is also known as Japanese Horseradish?
9. How many moons does the planet Venus have?
10. Who is the evil-genius leader of the Minions in the Despicable Me film series?



Join LDCI!



Become a Member of Lairg & District Community Initiatives (LDCI)

LDCI is the development trust for the Lairg Community Council area.

Development trusts rely on residents' local knowledge to shape and contribute to our delivery by becoming members.

Members can contribute in various ways (if they wish to) – for example, by being a board member, volunteering to deliver local projects, or simply by showing support for local developments. Members also have voting rights at the annual AGM.

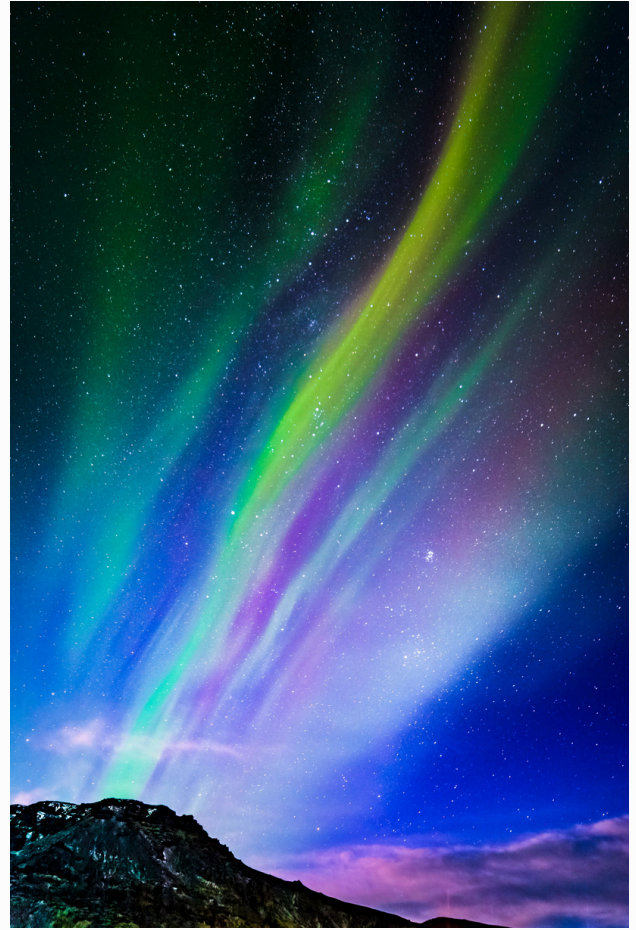
The more members that LDCI has the better - as it will mean that we will be able to fully understand the issues that are facing those who live and work in our local community. It also helps us when we apply for funding as it shows funders that we have strong community support.

If you are interested in shaping the future of the Lairg community - please sign up as a member. It costs nothing! Simply scan this easy-to-use QR code which will take you to our simple online application form. The only requirement is that you are a resident of Lairg Community Council area and that you are over 18.

A junior membership is also available. Please ask for details.



Named after the Roman Goddess of dawn, 'Aurora' and the Greek god of the north wind, 'Boreas' - the Northern Lights are usually more visible in the countries in the polar regions (Scandinavia, Greenland, Russia and North America) but in the north of Scotland we are quite often treated to spectacular displays too. The lack of light pollution helps... The Southern Lights, or 'Aurora Australis', occur simultaneously in the Southern Hemisphere but the inverse seasons mean they generally aren't visible at the same time.

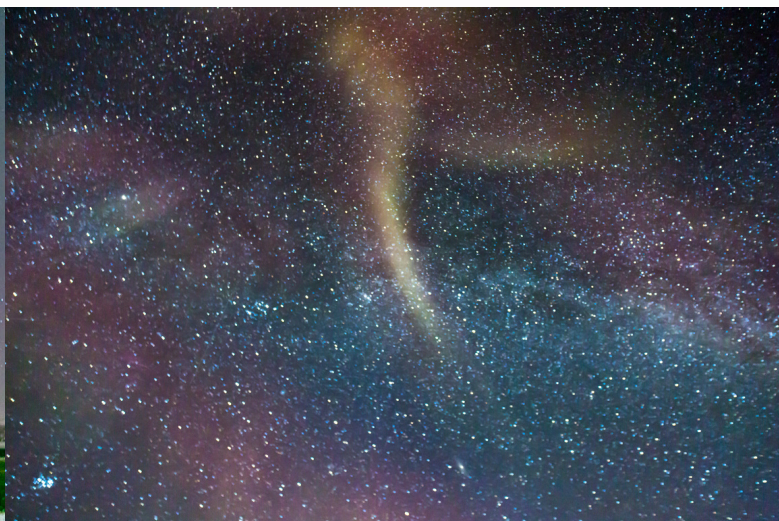


So what causes the Northern Lights?

The lights we see in the night sky are actually caused by activity on the surface of the Sun. Solar storms on the Sun's surface give out huge clouds of electrically charged particles. These particles can travel millions of miles, and some may eventually collide with the earth's magnetic field and accelerate down the magnetic lines towards the poles.

The most striking auroras occur when the Sun emits really large clouds of particles called "coronal mass ejections".

"Picture this as a big sneeze by the Sun," says Dr Affelia Wibisono, from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. "It can contain up to a million tonnes of charged particles."



Different gases give off different colours when they are heated. The same process is also taking place in the aurora. The two primary gases in the Earth's atmosphere are nitrogen and oxygen, and these elements give off different colours during an aurora display. The green we see in the aurora is oxygen, while hints of purple, blue or pink are caused by nitrogen.

This year, there has been more activity than in previous years due to powerful solar storms, and this has made the aurora visible more frequently and also to people further south in the UK.

This could be because we are heading towards the 'Solar maximum' which is the peak of the solar cycle – when the average number of sunspots is larger than at any other time during the cycle. It happens roughly every 11 years. The last solar maximum was in 2014 and this current solar maximum seems to be happening a little earlier than average, in 2024.

How to know when to spot the northern lights? Lancaster University's Department of Physics runs a website called [AuroraWatch UK](https://aurorawatch.lancs.ac.uk/), which estimates the likelihood of an aurora being visible based on geomagnetic activity. You can sign up for alerts on their social media accounts. See <https://aurorawatch.lancs.ac.uk/>

Sources:

[BBC website – What are the Northern Lights](#)

[Space.com - Solar maximum: What is it and when will it occur?](#)

[Royal Museums Greenwich – What causes the Northern Lights](#)

LDCI Ferrycroft Playpark Update

The installation of the playpark equipment is going well, despite there being a couple of minor hold-ups along the way! The aim is for the playpark to open in time for the October holidays. The Lairg primary school children have been invited as special guests to a 'preview opening' to try out the play equipment that they helped to choose.

To celebrate the opening of the new playpark - please keep an eye out for an extra issue of the Lairg Magazine in October focusing on the more recent history of the Ferrycroft area.





Writing Class: Quill the Climate Crisis

About Ospreys
2 pm - 4 pm
OCTOBER 12TH
@THE HUB
£10

Writer, Jackie Pavlenko, will help you to explore the beauty and inspiration of birds and use them as a springboard to ignite creativity in writing.



BOOK HERE
eventbrite

If you live in Sutherland and would like to attend but are financially unable to, please email us at:
heather@lairglearningcentre.org.uk

Writing Sessions: Held across Sutherland

- 14th September - Lairg Learning Centre, IV27 4DD
- 12th October - The Hub, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3AQ
- 7th December - Lairg Learning Centre, IV27 4DD
- 8th February - Brora Learning Zone, KW9 6PF
- 8th March - Brora Learning Zone, KW9 6PF

-No prior writing experience necessary



#FLIGHTPATHDLCL

Through a combination of creative writing workshops, lectures, immersive walks and various mediums of art, we hope to raise awareness and a comprehensive understanding of how climate change is altering the behaviour and distribution of bird species worldwide. Lairg and District Learning Centre, along with 8 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.

Introducing GEORGE the Cuckoo

As part of our Flight Path project, we have decided to sponsor one of the cuckoos ringed by **BTO British Trust for Ornithology**, so keep an eye on this page for monthly updates as to his whereabouts...

George was tagged in Ross & Cromarty, so it seemed appropriate to keep an eye on him in particular! According to his GPS updates, he's now back on track toward Africa.

For more information about George and the other Cuckoos, please scan here to go to the BTO's website:



Status:
Active

Tagged:
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 - 04:50

Tagging Location:
Dundonnell Estate, Ross and Cromarty, Scotland

Sex:
Male

Age when found:
Adult

SCAN HERE

New Delivery Service Coming Soon!

We are tentatively aiming by the end of October to have a delivery service up and running. It will be free and available for all patients, covering the areas;

- Lairg village and surrounding areas

- Rogart
- Rosehall
- Invershin
- Altnaharra

Some of these areas will be weather permitting at some points of the year. Since it is a large area to cover we have not got exact routes and days decided yet but once we know how it will look we will update you.

If you are interested in signing up for this there is a form to fill out in the pharmacy or if you are unable to come in please phone on 01549402374.

Please share to spread the word.

Keep Saturday 7th December free for Winterfest!

Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Peacocks (of Pittencrieff Park) | 3. The International Space Station | 7. 2007 |
| 2. Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency | 4. Katie Melua | 8. Wasabi |
| | 5. Eye | 9. None |
| | 6. Los Angeles | 10. Gru |



P3-5 and Rosehall Primary joined P6-7 for a Paralympics day. We cheered on local hero Hope Gordon in her races and then took part in a team STEM challenge designing and building kayaks out of Lego and knex. We held a kayak race with our own heats, semi finals and finals. The groups designed their own mascots and decided which values fitted with their team best. Everyone was fantastic, we had a great day. Despite the technology hiccups!



Primary 6 and 7 were delighted with a school trip early in the term. They headed down to the Dingwall Newton Room. The Dingwall Newton Room is a full-time facility, based at Dingwall Town Hall. They enjoyed learning about the anatomy of the human body and the functions. The pupils took on the roles of different healthcare workers and through hands on practical experimentation, research and medical testing methods.

In pairs pupils found and removed lymph nodes from a dummy patient, ready to be sent to the laboratory for testing.

Lung Dissection – In groups the pupils investigated the different structures that make up the lungs by dissecting a lung.

Throughout this module the pupils were encouraged to discuss and consider how the factors within the workshop are relevant to real life situations. They related to their own lifestyles and choices and how this raises awareness around different choices and conditions that can affect their overall health.



We are fundraising for a new Screen Machine that will secure the service into the 2040s, and we need your help.

In January 2023, we had to retire our beloved Screen Machine (SM2) after 18 years of service because it was no longer fit for purpose. Then, in September 2023, we announced that in its 25th year of operation, the Screen Machine service was at risk of closure unless we raise the funding required to build a new mobile cinema.

We asked our supporters to write to the First Minister and their local MSPs to urge the Scottish Government to pay for 50% of the approximate £1.7million cost, so that we can commission the build.

The letters of support written to MSPs were a huge help, we are grateful for every letter and email sent. They influenced multiple discussions in parliament about the value of the Screen Machine, they helped us to get meetings with relevant MSP's and with the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson. Even Dame Judi Dench was inspired by letters to her from school children on Barra to write to then First Minister Humza Yusaf. Nevertheless, no commitment of funding has yet been made by the Scottish Government.

Good news came in March this year when Screen Scotland granted us funding to extend until April 2026, the lease of the Cinemobile that we are currently using to deliver the service. It was such a relief to know that we can maintain touring and bring films to communities with otherwise no access to cinema. However, Cinemobile was not designed and built to be opened and closed every few days, as we require, and it cannot navigate ferries and slipways as ably as our custom-built Screen Machine. It also cannot get to all our communities, with the Isles of Jura and Rousay still without service since January 2023. Cinemobile is therefore only temporary. A new machine will take between 12-18 months to build. We need approximately £800,000 to commission the build. It is vital that we raise the initial funds to get the project started this year.

We now cannot afford to wait for a Government response. We have launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise at least £100,000 to get the project rolling and we need your help.



DONATE



<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/save-our-screen-machine>

We were busy in September with various activities taking place throughout the month. 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 get in touch. Throughout September there was a display in the Conservatory that highlighted the importance of reusing/recycling and minimizing landfill. It was brought to us by Lairg and District Learning Centre and was very informative. It will move to it's new location, somewhere in the Highlands, in October.



Lochview Rural Training

Another busy week, between our schools, the new 8 week land based course, acres of knowledge, young crofters and our equine course.

Recently, our young crofters spent the afternoon at Alladale Wilderness Reserve speaking to the local staff that are employed, and gaining an understanding of how the reserve supports a variety of careers whilst maintaining and improving the estate and biodiversity within the reserve.

A big thanks to Ryan and Ronnie for escorting us. It was a great visit.



LAIRG COMMUNITY COUNCIL



The Community Council represents the residents of Lairg.

The general purpose of the Community Council is to act as a voice for the local area. This will involve them articulating the views and concerns of local people in their area on a wide range of issues of public concern and making representations to The Highland Council, other public sector bodies and private agencies on matters within their sphere of interest. Please see www.lairgcommunitycouncil.co.uk for more information.

YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

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Thank you for reading issue 73 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