

# Lairg Magazine

LAIRG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



Photo by Jan Blackwell

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## The Big Freeze

Although we have been admiring the winter wonderland that we have on our doorsteps recently; with temperatures in our area dropping to as low as minus 16.7 on the 9th February—we are all feeling the chill...

This is why we would like to remind everyone about our **Helping Hands Fund**. The fund is there to support people from Lairg Community Council area, who are struggling financially to heat their homes. The fund does have criteria, (e.g. those who have savings of over £1500 are not eligible) - but even if you work—you may still be able to apply if you receive certain benefits (e.g child tax credits) ... If in doubt - please get in touch and we will refer you to our partners at the Citizen's Advice Bureau who will guide you through the application process. See advert on page 6 for contact details.

# Recipe of the week

## Savoury Bread & Cheese Pudding

### Ingredients

Serves: 2

- 4 slices white bread
- 2 slices strong Cheddar cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 30ml milk
- Salt and pepper
- 30g or 2 tablespoons grated cheese of your choice.

### Method

Prep:5min › Cook:20min › Ready in:25min

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees C / gas mark 4.
  2. Make 2 Cheddar cheese sandwiches and cut each sandwich into 4 triangles.
  3. Arrange sandwiches in a lightly greased oven-proof dish.
  4. Beat eggs and add the milk together. Season with some salt and pepper.
  5. Pour egg and milk mixture evenly over the sandwiches.
  6. Vary amounts if needed, but the sandwiches do not need to be totally covered in egg, but the egg should soak in and leave a little in the bottom of dish.
  7. Sprinkle grated cheese on top.
- Bake for 20/30 minutes, checking frequently to avoid burnt edges



### Would you like to support the Lairg Magazine?

As mentioned in our last issue we are currently trying to source funding to continue publishing the magazine throughout the year.

If anyone would like to make a donation of any size towards the costs of running the magazine, we would be very grateful.

Please send cheques made payable to: Lairg and District Community Initiatives to: The Chair, Lairg and District Community Initiatives, School House, Main Street, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EE.

Or if you would like to donate online here are our account details:

Sort Code 80-15-82

Account Number 00352268

Lairg & District Learning Centre

## ART CLASSES

6 weeks from Tuesday 23rd February  
1.30pm - 3.30pm via Zoom

Delivered by Connecting Communities



BOOKINGS: [lairganddistrictlearningcentre.eventbrite.com](http://lairganddistrictlearningcentre.eventbrite.com)

FURTHER INFO: [admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk](mailto:admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk)

1. Starring Sean Connery as 007, Never say Never again, was an unofficial remake of which earlier James Bond film?
2. A Liverpool bench sculpture has a dedication that reads to "all the lonely people". To which Beatles' song does this refer?
3. In 1972, UFO researcher J. Allen Hynek wrote a book giving a system of classification for three types of what?
4. What fruit is used to make Eve's pudding?
5. The famous Ipanema beach is in which country?
6. What was Agatha Christie's maiden name, was it Mellano, Mitchell or Miller?
7. What are the names of the goddesses of love in Roman and Greek mythology?
8. Which singer performed "Your song" for Prince William and Kate's first dance as newlyweds?
9. What word is assigned to the letter U in the phonetic alphabet?
10. What are the first names of the two Charlton brothers, famous for being football champions?
11. What are the names of Homer's three children in the TV show "The Simpsons"?
12. What Canadian province has the largest population?
13. John Jasper is the protagonist in the Dickens novel "The mystery of ....."?
14. In the song beginning "I'm getting married in the morning", what is the next line?
15. Who did Pippa Middleton marry in 2017?
16. In the Bible, who was Cain and Abel's father?
17. Who said "Veni, Vini, Vici" - I came, I saw, I conquered?
18. Ethelfleda was Queen of Mercia between 911 and 918, but who was her famous dad?
19. Who allegedly killed JFK in 1963?
20. In Scrabble, which three consecutive letters have the same value?

**(Answers on page 6)**



Where is Ipanema Beach?

Imagine a small seven year-old boy whisked from London to Sutherland to begin a new life in the Highlands. My father was a lawyer and a musician who decided to leave London and write music in the Highlands – after all you can write music anywhere! My mother went along with this idea, provided she was allowed central heating in the house – Bertie Sutherland of Golspie installed it – a first for him. James Cowie, then a young apprentice, still maintains it.

School was a very different experience compared to London. Ibstock Place School in London had four children to a table, small and noisy classes, and lots of freedom to chat. It was based on Froebel principles of letting children discover their talents for themselves.

Lairg School in the 1950s was a rather different place. The classes were some 45 strong, each split into two primaries with one teacher. There were then only primary classes as the senior school had recently (to the dismay of senior teachers) been consolidated in Dornoch. The headmaster, Tom Robertson, had recently arrived from Fochabers. Discipline was very tight and complete silence was required so that the teacher could teach one primary while the other got on with set work. One form teacher was Cassie Mackay, a young and quite inexperienced lady, who was I believe the daughter of a Minister. She was quite nervous and this made her a bit short tempered and unfriendly for a while. Discipline was enforced by serious punishments for misdemeanours – the strap hung on the blackboard for all to see.

We learnt the history of Scotland, some arithmetic and religious studies. We had reading classes where we had to read from various school primers. There was no instruction in foreign languages. We did have to write - what we ate for breakfast or did at weekends and so on. One of the first tasks was to learn parts of the Shorter Catechism according to the rites of the Church of Scotland. The text had the multiplication tables 1-12 on the back cover, and of course we had to learn those too. My mother, a Church of England adherent, disapproved of the Catechism, and I only remember the first question – “What is man’s chief end on earth?” – there was no part for women to play in those days! It was of course to glorify God which seemed to me a fairly remote objective for life. Personally I found more use for the multiplication tables which we recited in class as a group until we had them by heart, and Miss Mackay then picked out children at random to give instant answers – “What is 9 x 8?”. Woe betide those who were slow to answer.

I learnt the piano after school from Mr Fettes, who was a kindly man. Gender typecasting was prevalent. Boys learnt carpentry from Mr Strang, and Mrs RD Macdonald, whose husband ran the phone exchange, taught domestic science (basic cooking, and very useful too) to the girls. She was Iby Fraser’s sister, and Iby taught primary 1 at the school. Both were brought up at Shinness. Breaktimes were quite dangerous as the older boys played shinty and the pucks sprang off the tarmac in any direction.



Here is a rather fuzzy picture of me with my school bag walking off down to the bus in Spring 1959



Back Row - Jim and Nellie Matheson.  
Front Row - Me, Jamie Matheson and Isobel Matheson

In my class, the top pupil was always Pat Mackenzie, the pretty daughter of Sandy Rhian. Other top of the class types were David Pople and William Hay.

We travelled from Shinness to school in the school bus. There were then 30 or more children in Shinness, including those from Overscaig and Fiag who met the bus at West Shinness. It was driven by Angie Mackay from Achnairn, always known as Angie Brosie – that's what he was reputed to have for breakfast anyway. One unfortunate older child was chosen to be the bus leader and keep order – after a fashion. We awaited it at the West Shinness road end in a small hut also used to deposit newspapers and deliveries. There were the Mathesons, Jamie (who was the same age as me and my best friend) and Isobel, Michael Corbett and John Ross. At West Shinness were the Sutherlands, Frankie Skinner from Overscaig and the Watts from Fiag. All in all it took about 40 minutes to get everyone including those in Achnairn, Achfrish and Tirryside to the school by 9am.

On the way home the bus could stop at the shop for us to buy penny chews – toffees about 2X3/4 inches which lasted if careful all the way home. Teeth were a bit of a casualty.

At home of course we always had homework to do – it took quite a long time especially if we had to learn stuff by heart – never my strong suit. I had a lot of fun with Jamie Matheson – we made bows and arrows from the willow trees. Jamie got into a heap of trouble when he shot the cockerel, not realising what a powerful weapon he had created. Later on my father bought an old 1950s Hillman Minx for a fiver from Lesley Mackay at Sutherland Transport & Trading (which also ran the buses). We learnt to drive and maintain it. We called it cottontail and painted the bonnet and boot white. It survived remarkably, and easily went up the hill to the old track between West Shinness and Achnairn even without the benefit of four wheel drive. We also helped with the hay harvest, and this was gathered by dragging a hay rake behind an old blue landrover – it was quite a challenge to drive I remember, but I learnt to reverse a trailer as a result.

When I was about 12, I went to a different school which taught Latin – a requirement for going to Cambridge University. I did eventually pass the Latin exam with a rather poor grade, but failed to get to Cambridge!



KYLE OF SUTHERLAND DEVELOPMENT TRUST

## COMMUNITY LARDER



KoSDT have a stock of tinned, packaged and frozen foods in our Community Larder. The food in our Larder is available to everyone in our community and also to residents of Lairg. The food is free of charge.

Due to social distancing regulations, we are operating an appointment only system at the Larder. Our opening times are Tuesdays and Fridays, 10am until 2pm. Unfortunately, food collection will not be available outwith the stated days/times. Collection is from the Barn, Drovers Square, Ardgay.

To book an appointment, please phone: 01863 766190  
We will supply carrier bags for your food.

*The Community Food Stop Community Larder - reducing food waste and food inequalities while maintaining the main principles of Dignity.*

Lairg & District  
Community Initiatives



## Lairg Helping Hand Fund

Sutherland has one of the highest rates of fuel poverty in Scotland.

A person is classed as living in fuel poverty if, to heat their home to a satisfactory standard, they need to spend more than 10% of their household income on fuel.

**Do you worry about how to pay for your energy bills?**

**If so - we may be able to help.**

Grants of up to £250 are available to assist eligible households in Lairg & District Community Council area. (One grant per household.) This is a confidential service provided in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau.

Call Kirstin on: 079611372427 or email: [projectofficer@lairginitiative.co.uk](mailto:projectofficer@lairginitiative.co.uk)



Our Helping Hands Fund will soon be able to provide grants of up to £250 towards the costs of replacing faulty white goods such as fridges/ washing machines with new energy efficient versions. Contact us for more info.

## LDCI Quiz Answers

- |   |   |                       |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Thunderball  | 8. Ellie Goulding                       | 15. James Matthews    |
| 2. Eleanor Rigby  | 9. Uniform                              | 16. Adam              |
| 3. Close Encounters of the first, second and third kind | 10. Bobby and Jack                      | 17. Julius Caesar     |
| 4. Apples   | 11. Bart, Lisa and Maggie               | 18. Alfred the Great  |
| 5. Brazil   | 12. Ontario                             | 19. Lee Harvey Oswald |
| 6. Miller   | 13. Edwin Drood                         | 20. R S T             |
| 7. Venus and Aphrodite                                  | 14. Ding Dong the bells are gonna chime |                       |

How did you do?

1-5/20

Poor

5-10/20

Okay

10-15/20

Good

15-20/20

Excellent

## **Lockdown Hobbies - By Sarah Forrest**

This year has been a difficult one for so many of us. It has been tough on businesses; and on individuals. Since the lockdown began, it has caused worry and stress and the restrictions have meant that many have had to stop attending clubs and classes as normal. However, many have found the chance to try out a new hobby at home. Plenty of things can be tried out for the first time at home and many are therapeutic and good for helping to relieve stress.

I received a small wood whittling kit for my birthday and have thoroughly enjoyed creating my first few items. I have found this to be a fun and absorbing pastime, one that has helped me to relax and centre my thoughts. There is something about the creative process of taking a blank piece of wood and slowly whittling away until a spoon, a knife or a cup begins to emerge, that allows you to clear your mind and concentrate fully on the task in hand.

I have found that many hobbies act as a form of release and escapism, whether that is cooking, reading, writing, gardening or something else entirely. There is joy to be found in creating and learning new skills. Hobbies usually involve some form of learning curve, which can help increase your confidence and self-esteem. As you spend more time at your hobby and your knowledge and skill increase so too will your enjoyment and self-assurance.

Research has shown that people with hobbies are less likely to suffer from stress and they can help to improve your mental resilience and well-being. Your interests may be creative, athletic, academic learning, or something quite personal to you. What matters is that you find an activity that you find meaningful and enjoyable. Lairg and District learning Centre run a range of classes which allow you try out and begin to learn many new skills, keep an eye on our Facebook page to find out about what classes are being run!

## **I.T Digital Support Clinics - By Ryan Connelly**

Like most of us, one of the things I have missed the most this year is the face to face interaction of friendly, familiar faces, sitting down with a cuppa and having a blether with those that mean the most to us. It's something I certainly took for granted - just how much and how quickly things can change. Now almost suddenly, many people have felt they need to "get connected" to speak and see their loved ones, to have a digital blether with their neighbour, learn a new skill or language, or to do online shopping! Some people have had to use tech for the first time, with no prior knowledge of using Smartphones, laptops or tablets at all (and some, with no prior interest for that matter!)

"How do I send a text message from my phone?" a recent client asked me. "How can I connect my printer to my tablet? How do I set up an email address?" Questions I'd normally refer for a one-to-one time slot at one of our weekly I.T Clinics at the Learning Centre, but with this not being feasible for the foreseeable future I thought we'd hit a potential roadblock. Working and helping those in need with tech at our clinics has always been one of my highlights of the week since we began running them.

How can we still offer the help needed for these clients? We knew the need and demand was there, but how could we get around this? We pondered, and thought, "Well, we still have an active internet connection and our office mobile phone, why not use technology itself to our advantage!"

Back in June we set up online sessions for individuals in Sutherland looking for digital support. These one to one sessions can be done over the phone, emailing, or using Zoom live video calling, whichever is the best solution for each I.T issue!

If you would like to book an appointment for a digital support session, please email: [admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk](mailto:admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk).

Well, I hope this finds everyone staying cosy and safe and looking forward to a midge free summer, after this “proper” winter.

One of the significant benefits of Covid has been the very exciting increase in on-line events and the ability to get to meet folks far and wide without having to fly, drive or sail and travel through bad weather to get to conferences and meetings, such as the following.



The Highland Good Food Conversation Conference – this amazing initiative has brought about 100 people together, listening to experts, discussing topics with each other and creating start up plans for exciting projects that will not only help with climate change, but also with business recovery and building more community ventures. The delegates split into ten groups to evaluate opportunities such as: improving access to local food; innovative community composting solutions; and even creating a Highland “glasshouse” sector. The conference closed on Monday 9th after five weeks of intense discussion and the report will be issued in the next few weeks. You can sign up directly at [www.highlandgoodfood.scot](http://www.highlandgoodfood.scot) to hear more.

Peas Please – We have 40 Veg Advocates in Scotland seeking solutions to help us all eat more veg. Surely it can’t be hard to get our country average up from 2.5 portions of veg a day? Again various sub groups are looking at viable projects regarding Food Systems and Community Growing etc. You can hear about events, take part or hear more here – [www.foodfoundation.org.uk/peasplease/](http://www.foodfoundation.org.uk/peasplease/)

And bringing it all home? We were delighted to run a Starting Community Growing event with Thurso Grows on the 9th Feb and that will feed into plans for our community orchards and community growing projects in and around Lairg. Thanks to those who have been in touch so far. It’s truly difficult, as you can imagine to develop on the ground projects when we’re all prevented from meeting up, but hopefully we’ll get going on these soon. Please do get in touch if you’d like to know more or work with us.

Zoom Carbon Café’s - And finally... are you ready for online Carbon Cafés? These are informal get togethers where we can answer each others questions about climate change and share hints, tips and ideas. Please let us know and we’ll get this going.

To join in with any of the above or to find out more, please get in touch with Anna at [oneplanetsutherland@gmail.com](mailto:oneplanetsutherland@gmail.com) or look at [www.planetsutherland.com](http://www.planetsutherland.com).



Photo by Norman McLeod



Photo by Jan Blackwell



Can you tell us anything about these pictures?

Do you recognise anyone? Maybe yourself?!

What year was the photo taken?

Please send us your photos of people and past times in Lairg... We'd love to publish them.



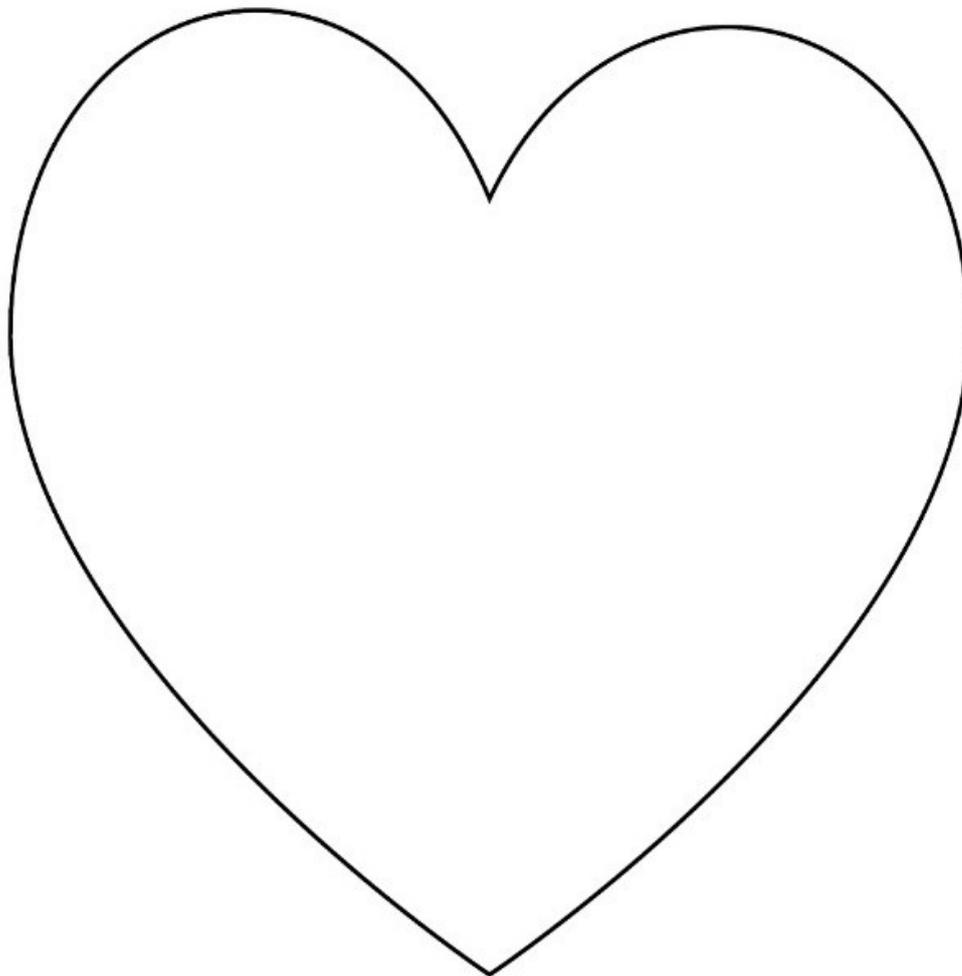
## Valentine's Day is coming up soon. Why not decorate this heart shape then give it to someone special?!

First, cut your paper into a heart.

Use a paintbrush or spoon to add drops of paint to one side of the heart paper.

Carefully fold the second half of the heart paper over the paint and press. Squish the paint sandwich all over with your hands.

Open up the heart to reveal your interesting and unique symmetrical heart art!



Or try making a mosaic!



This magazine is funded by:



Thank you for reading issue 32 of the Lairg Magazine! If you would like to put something in the magazine, please send it to the contact details below. We are very much open to ideas and suggestions, so please get in touch by emailing: [projectofficer@lairginitiative.co.uk](mailto:projectofficer@lairginitiative.co.uk). Phone for Chair Kaye: 07500453301, Vice Chair Norman: 07742025719 or write to us at Schoolhouse, Main Street, Lairg, IV27 4DD