

# Lairg Magazine

LAIRG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



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## **Spring has sprung!**

After what has felt like a very long winter, it's beginning to feel like spring might finally be on its way... The snowdrops and daffodils have popped up (later than they usually do) after the hard frost and snow kept them at bay for most of January and February.

The vaccine rollout in the community is underway and many people have had their first jab. All the primary school children are heading back to school on Monday 15th March, and some of the other Government restrictions are beginning to ease. Perhaps we can start to feel a bit more optimistic that life can slowly go back to normal as the year progresses and we can hope to see more of our friends. If you are struggling - with loneliness or financial insecurity after what's been a tough year—see page 8 for more info about the support that is available.

# Recipe of the week

## Rhubarb & custard muffins

### Ingredients:

300g rhubarb  
150g caster sugar  
110g butter, melted  
2 eggs  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
100g natural yogurt  
250g self-raising flour  
1½ tsp baking powder  
2 tbsp custard powder (optional)  
6 tbsp fresh chilled or tinned custard  
2 tbsp demerara sugar



### Method:

Preheat the oven to gas 6, 200°C, fan 180°C.  
Line a 12-hole muffin tin with muffin cases.

Slice the rhubarb in half lengthways, then chop into 1cm pieces and set aside.

In a large jug, whisk together the sugar, melted butter, eggs, vanilla and yogurt until smooth.

Sift the flour, baking powder and custard powder (if using) into a large bowl. Add the wet ingredients and stir until just combined. Add the rhubarb and stir until evenly incorporated – do not overmix as this will make the muffins tough.

Place 1 heaped tbsp of muffin batter into each muffin case. Add ½ tbsp custard to each, then top with the remaining muffin batter to fill each case. Sprinkle the top of each muffin with the demerara sugar.

Bake for 20 mins until risen and golden. Best eaten on the day they are made but can be stored in an airtight container for 2-3 days – try microwaving for 20 secs to soften before serving.

**(Answers on page 6)**

1. A 'nescient' person is someone who suffers from a lack of what?
2. Who had a 2013 hit with 'Applause'?
3. Who was the first BBC newsreader to appear on TV in 1955?
4. In which year did the Forth Road Bridge open?
5. In Blackadder Goes Forth, Baldrick's poem "The German Guns" consists of what word repeated fourteen times?
6. Mars, the Bringer of War is one of the 7 movements from The Planets, an orchestral suite written by whom?
7. Helen of Troy was 'the face that launched a thousand ships' but who did she run off with, causing the start of the Trojan wars?
8. Which Dutch spy married Rudolf McCloud in 1895?
9. On the 10th April 1998, the Belfast Agreement was reached between the British and Irish governments. What common name is used, because of the date?
10. What value was the Dove of Peace coin, issued by the Royal mint in 1995?
11. Whilst meditating, in what position would I be if I was cross-legged with my feet on my thighs?
12. Who or what holds the rights to the novel Peter Pan by JM Barrie?
13. In aeronautics, what does VTOL stand for?
14. Complete the title of the 2015 film sequel starring Judi Dench and Maggie Smith, The Second Best..... ?
15. The spice Turmeric is used to dye cloth what colour?
16. The Titanic sank 400 miles off the coast of which Canadian island?
17. The Good Samaritan is a parable found in which gospel?
18. Who led the Scottish forces at Bannockburn?
19. What is the name of the little boy who was brought up by wolves, in the novel 'The Jungle Book'?
20. Who, in 1907, was the first woman to receive the Order of Merit?



## SUN CLOCK

The most important part in making a Sun Clock is to remember:

**NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN, IT WILL DAMAGE YOUR EYES**

In 1880 Greenwich Mean Time was legally adopted throughout the United Kingdom. Before then everybody relied on mechanical clocks. Before mechanical clocks the Sun was the only way of finding the correct time, known as Local Mean Time.

The Sun always south at midday wherever you live. That is why Lairg Mean Time was 15 minutes after Greenwich Mean Time as reported in a previous issue.

The Sun rises in the East and sets in the West. When the Sun has finished rising it is at its highest daily point.

**Pictures:** 1 On a stone door post on an ancient abbey [early A.D.]. 2 On a church wall [about 1350 A.D.]. 3 An Analemmatic Sundial [2013 A.D.] in a Community Garden.

Dial 1 can be found on some Church Doorways and on some Farm Barn Doors, all are facing South. These were exclusive to that Church or Farm. A stick was placed in the hole and when its shadow fell on a line [as in picture 2] it was time for a church service or the farm hands to start their day.

1



2



3



[ Picture by Ann Moore]

Have a go at making number 1, the Mass Dial on the Abbey Doorway.

Try and find a plant saucer that goes underneath a pot plant that helps with watering. Fix the saucer on a South facing fence post, and make a hole in the centre and insert a stick. Draw a line in chalk when the shadow is at 10 a.m. Ask others to guess where 2 p.m. shadow will be. See who is the nearest.

Picture 3 shows Dr Robert Smith, uncovering the 12 noon stone from a radio signal by Sir Patrick Moore. Dr Smith was the Senior Lecturer in Astronomy at Sussex University. Sol and Ann Moore went to see Sir Patrick at his home because he was unable to travel. He was asked if he would Commission the sundial at 12 noon by a radio signal.

We will explain how to make the Sun Clock that is depicted in picture 3 in April issue as the clock needs to be made during Summer Time and 12 noon will be different from today.

**By SOL**

## Be Nice to Nettles!

We were walking through 'Humpty Dumpty' field, just outside Canterbury with my grandfather and his beloved spaniel Berry. The apple trees were heavy, the late autumn air was warm. Berry was scooting about, nose to ground, tail wagging. He startled a pheasant and chased him into a dark corner of the orchard. I followed closely behind but was jolted back to earth with a sudden unexpected sting, my five-year-old self betrayed by a wild plant with small heart shaped leaves, the nettle, prolific in its shady corner bed. I howled. Blistered skin, soothed by a dock leaf and promise of an ice-lolly from the corner shop on the way home.

With the spring equinox at the end of March and the arrival of warmer days, nettles will soon be everywhere but I no longer see them as the enemy or a troublesome weed. This is largely in part to my learning on our climate change project, Seasons of Change, where I've learnt how to grow my own vegetables, create a garden which encourages insects and wildlife and how to forage, from wild garlic and dandelions to the tall, elegant, hairy stemmed foe of my past.

I now love nettles. They are a fantastic superfood and they are free. The leaves make a wonderfully dark green nutritious soup, which can be made alone or with the addition of spinach. Nettle pesto is a firm favourite, whilst mixing nettle leaves with feta cheese, and making a filo pastry snack is also a top family hit. A word of caution though, once nettles have started to flower the leaves are no longer used, they are said to contain insoluble calcium carbonate crystals that are hard to flush out of the body and can build up in the kidneys.

Nettles are so much more than a free food. Our nettle bed is host to insects, moths and butterflies like the small tortoise shell and peacock. In late summer the nettle seeds produced are food for many birds, like chaffinches and bullfinches. They are joined by insect eating shrews, frogs and toads. This year we made what we call 'nettle pooh', which turned out to be a fantastic fertilizer for our vegetable plot, although it did stink to high heaven.



Despite its rash inducing tendency nettles can be used to make fabric, not quite spinning straw into gold, but not far off. As the world's resources dwindle, and more people become aware of the resource intensive process to produce cotton, polyester and nylon, perhaps there should be a revival in turning the tough fibres of the nettle stem into fabric.

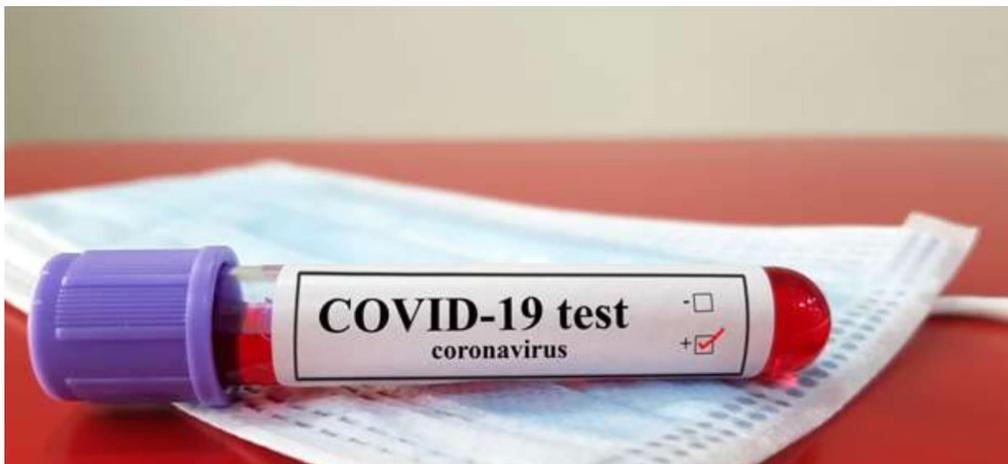
The beautiful nettle illustration is by LDLC's talented sewing and craft tutor, Jo Henderson. Jo is a student on our "Introduction to Art" classes which are part of our Winter Wellbeing Programme funded by the Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund. These are running weekly until March 30<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are available through Eventbrite via our website. See:

<https://www.lairglearningcentre.org.uk>

By Sarah Forrest

## Covid –19 testing kits are available in Lairg

Members of the public who have coronavirus symptoms can access test kits from Lairg Fire Station. Instructions will be provided with the test kits, which can be returned the same day using a priority post box nearby.



## Thank you!

Thank you so much to those of you who have made a donation towards the costs of publishing the Lairg Magazine—we really appreciate your generous support! We are delighted to say that thanks to your donations, combined with a grant we have received from Foundation Scotland, we will be able to continue publishing the magazine for another year.

### LDCI Quiz Answers

- |                          |                                   |                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Knowledge(no science) | 8. Mata Hare                      | 14. Exotic Marigold Hotel |
| 2. Lady Gaga             | 9. Good Friday Agreement          | 15. Yellow                |
| 3. Kenneth Kendall       | 10. £2                            | 16. Newfoundland          |
| 4. 1964                  | 11. Lotus                         | 17. Luke                  |
| 5. Boom                  | 12. Great Ormand Street Hospital  | 18. Robert the Bruce      |
| 6. Gustav Holst          | 13. Vertical Take Off and Landing | 19. Mowgli                |
| 7. Paris                 |                                   | 20. Florence Nightingale  |

### How did you do?

1-5/20

Poor

5-10/20

Okay

10-15/20

Good

15-20/20

Excellent

Apparently there's been a surge in sales of puppies, teddy bears and – polytunnels! Great news!! Are you one of the many who have purchased a new polytunnel or greenhouse for the garden? It's very exciting to think about the lengthened growing season, and I'm sure many will have seeds planted already.

### Community Growing:

We all know that food is of core importance to our health and wellbeing and the more we can grow at home, the better. Not only do we end up with fresher, healthier food, but we also help to reduce food miles and plastic wrapping, and all that greenery helps protect our environment in so many ways – all helping to create a cleaner and healthier place to live.

It would be great to be doing all this together – right now - but the prospect continues to prove difficult with the Covid restrictions. However, community gardening can be broader than just a specific space for collective growing. Here are some ideas for gardening in the community:

Phone or email a neighbour or local friend to discuss swapping seeds or seedlings

On a larger scale, you could decide to join a crop rotation scheme with neighbours, where in each year, one person grows tatties, another beans, and another onions etc.

Perhaps you have an older neighbour with a now unused greenhouse or veg patch that you could offer to plant?

Chatting on line can be a great way to learn and share skills too. So, why not join the Kyle of Sutherland Growing Group on Facebook. It's a very welcoming group with members from the whole area.

There are also many other Highland and Scotland wide growing and food groups with a broad range of topics on growing, cooking, reducing waste and composting etc. A list of all these groups is on our web site under the "food" section.

### Carbon Conversations

There are of course many other changes we can all make towards a greener living. And to help with that there's a great event being run by the Lairg & District Learning Centre called Carbon Conversations. It's a four week course to help us all figure out practical and useful changes and offers great potential for building more local community projects. Details are on the LDLC web site.

### Climate Action

Further, if you are interested in building community projects, there are some great courses being run by the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN) including Widening Participation, Storytelling, Communicating Climate Change and Creating Local Plans. Details are here: <https://www.scottishcommunitiescan.org.uk/category/event/>.

Planet Sutherland is of course keen to encourage many local projects covering everything from recycling to waste and growing to energy efficiency and more. Please do get in touch to join us and turn 2021 into a fun and active, carbon friendly year.

By Anna Patfield,

[www.planetsutherland.com](http://www.planetsutherland.com) / [oneplanetsutherland@gmail.com](mailto:oneplanetsutherland@gmail.com)



# SUTHERLAND HELPING HAND SUPPORT

Do you need a helping hand to pay for home energy or food due to the impact of COVID-19 on your household?



Sutherland Helping Hand Support provides one-off financial assistance to households within Sutherland.



Support of up to £250 will be awarded to households who require support with home energy or food costs.



The service is private and confidential.  
For more information email or call:  
[shhs@kyleofsutherland.co.uk](mailto:shhs@kyleofsutherland.co.uk)  
01863 720050

Administered by:



Sutherland Helping Hand Support is administered by Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (Company Limited by Guarantee).  
Registered Office: The Barn, Drovers Square, Ardgay, Sutherland, IV24 3AL  
Scottish Registration: SC421918 | Scottish Charity: SC043587 | VAT  
Registration Number: 251 4030 53

Funded by:



SUTHERLAND  
WELLBEING

## Sutherland Wellbeing

A brand new website has just been launched that connects Sutherland's residents with services, resources and activities aimed at promoting good mental health and strengthening people's emotional and physical wellbeing.

The website is a one-stop shop with listings and contact details for both local and national support organisations.

For further information please visit:

[www.sutherlandwellbeing.com](http://www.sutherlandwellbeing.com)

## Light Up Lairg



*Lots of Prizes to be won*

*Upload all your creations onto our Facebook page*

*Winners will be announced on Easter Sunday*

Signs of Spring...

Photos by Jan Blackwell





This week we have two photos starring people from 'Lairg Laundry' but from different eras...

Can you tell us anything about these pictures - do you recognise anyone?

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

It's not too long until the Easter Holidays - so let's get in the mood with some Easter colouring-in!



Do you like decorating your own Easter eggs to roll on Easter Sunday? Check out [www.kidsactivitiesblog.com](http://www.kidsactivitiesblog.com) for some great ideas!

This magazine is funded by:



Thank you for reading issue 33 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