

# The Lochgair Update

## August 2020

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### Editorial

Welcome to this special issue of Update, produced by The Lochgair Association (SCIO). The March 2020 issue came out at the start of lockdown. This one celebrates the lifting of many of the Covid 19 restrictions in Scotland, particularly for the number of locals who were asked to shield and others who chose to self isolate—as we keep being reminded by the press there is no vaccine yet. However here in Lochgair, as you'll read in this issue, we have responded constructively to the challenge, have delighted in what Lochgair can offer and, though difficult at times, we've begun to adapt to the new 'normal'.

**THANK YOU  
ON BEHALF OF THE LOCHGAIR ASSOCIATION (SCIO)**

"The Association would like to extend a big thank you to all the people in Lochgair who volunteered to help with shopping, prescriptions etc etc at the start of lock down. It was very reassuring to know that this help was available if needed. The fact that most of us managed to be fairly independent is because many of the local traders stepped in with home deliveries, so a big thank you to all of them for this service. Take care and stay safe."

Jean Smith, Chair

"It was great to see local shops and suppliers adapting to the changing conditions during Lockdown, with many providing free delivery. They all deserve our continuing support." Allan Redpath



### WELCOME TO LOCHGAIR

### LOCHGAIR FORUM

The Forum provided an important lifeline during the lockdown, particularly for members of our community living alone or who were shielding.

Discussion threads included: Updates on Council Services affected by Coronavirus; Corona Help Wanted / Corona Help Offered; Official advice from public agencies e.g. Stranger Danger; Co-op deliveries; Exchanging items (Market Place). Also 'From the Bench'; queries about Internet wifi strength; plumbing and heating advice/tools available to borrow; plus a number of fun discussion threads such as: cooking recipes (e.g. for soda bread); latest donations of books to Lochgair Hub (phone box), and information on forthcoming events.

### CHECK IT OUT

[www.lochgair.org/forum](http://www.lochgair.org/forum)

You may have noticed a reduction in emails from the Association as any guidance to do with Covid was posted on the Forum pages of the Lochgair website. Having piloted this for the last six months it would be good to get feedback on this approach. Are you happy to log onto the Forum and the Lochgair website? What alternative ways would you like to receive information from The Association? Please send your comments to: [rock.solid.res@gmail.com](mailto:rock.solid.res@gmail.com)



Third Sector Interface  
Argyll and Bute

## Lockdown Memories

Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface have invited us to collect memories of lockdown. The following Lockdown Memories pages demonstrate the creative writing and photographic skills of our members.

### Counting our Blessings by Margaret Gray

"While I realise that for so many people coronavirus has meant heartache and hardship, the overwhelming feeling for me and many others in Lochgair has been of counting our blessings. We all have gardens and it has been a joy to spend time in them in that lovely spring weather. We have had time to watch things grow and be aware that we share the land with so many other creatures (even all those wretched mice, voles and shrew which have munched through choice plants!) We have socialised in different ways, especially on walks to the castle where we have all had time to stop for a chat....how could it possibly take me 2 hours to walk from upper Lochgair to the bench and back? The silence and the wildlife have been appreciated too and sightings swapped with others. Of particular note have been several reports of a sea eagle flying along the Loch Fyne shore, and lots of beautiful white butterfly orchids which have popped up in the field between Point House and the castle. Last, but not least, we are so lucky to live in such a caring community where we all look out for each other and if help is required you only have to ask."

Exploring the beauty of the area.

Photos by Allan Redpath



"Along with some excellent weather, lockdown provided a great opportunity to explore the local area on foot, perhaps with a renewed perspective."

Loch Gair, and Loch Fyne from The Point; and a colourful find in Upper Lochgair.



### Reflections on Lockdown at Lochgair, February – July 2020, by Fiona Campbell Rice

Having driven north in February and spent some days at Lochgair, I went to Iona for a week's volunteering at Bishop's House, and then returned for a week or two at The Old Manse and it was lovely to see some Lochgair friends at Robert Wraite's fascinating talk on 7 March in the hall; then we were told there would be a 3 week lockdown. Three weeks, I thought, - I must make use of this enforced extra time at the house. Initially I felt a kind of release: all commitments were cancelled, there was a certain element of freedom to choose how to occupy the time. Looking around, many things presented themselves as needing attention and I embarked energetically on redecorating and trying to get the garden back under some sort of control - a task which, as it turned out, lasted me 4 months, and even then I left lots still to be done. As the weeks progressed into months I gave thanks that I was stuck in such a beautiful place among friends who I knew would help if an emergency arose. I reflected on my relationship with the location and all the people I had known there over the years since I first visited as a 6 year old in 1961. My grandmother, Irene Campbell, was a very keen artist, and loved painting the scenery of Argyll. Having spent time staying at Dunmore cottage on the Kilmory estate, she bought what is now Gair Cottage in 1926 for holidays with her 3 sons, and subsequently bought the whole village when the Vyvians were selling the Asknish estate in the 1930s. My grandparents sold the village in the 1950s to Dixon, but my grandmother kept The Old Manse so that her family could continue the link and enjoy this special place.

During Lockdown I read 7 books, resurrected the veg patch, spent much time gazing at the view, the dawns, the seals swimming in front of the house, the pink glow on the hills opposite at sunset, and taking regular walks to Loch Glashan and back by the Glen; watching the seasons change: initially the trees were bare, the temperature cold, but gradually the spring blossomed into early summer with a multitude of spring flowers and lime green leaf buds opening against the clear blue sky. Every little detail seemed much more noticeable, the unfurling of the ferns, the primroses and the hawthorn blossom took on a much greater significance than usual, I spent time really appreciating and taking photos of flowers, such as orchids and butterwort. The weather was fantastic, the roads so quiet, it brought back memories of raspberry picking on the roadside and going for runs with my father along the road as a youngster. The birds seemed to sing louder, every aspect of nature seemed enhanced in some way. But then loneliness began to set in - not seeing or speaking to many people felt alien; we depend so much on resourcing our own energy from that of others. Gradually internet contact was made with former groups online and like many of us, I learnt new skills using zoom etc. Daughter Bella and her family kept hoping to come up to join me, but every time intentions were dashed; I was seriously missing the family and began to be determined to drive south as soon as the 5 mile restrictions were lifted in Scotland. England had become more relaxed earlier, and I knew I could form a family 'bubble', so made a dash for it on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July and drove south again.

My father, Colin Campbell, with my stepmother, Joanna, spent 30 years of retirement at Lochgair, Peter and I only had 9 years permanently living at The Old Manse, but it will always be where I feel I belong; as I learnt as a child: "My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here..." My dear husband, Peter, died of cancer in November 2018, in some ways, these Lockdown months at Lochgair were a healing time for me, I visited his grave across the loch several times and have now just about come to terms with his passing (insofar as it is ever possible to accept the loss of a loved one). Unfortunately, I don't feel I want to be so far from the rest of the family and live on at The Old Manse on my own, so daughter, Bella, and Gabriel who also love the place, are taking it forward for the next generation. So we all look forward to being able to visit regularly and join in village activities when we can.

## LETTER TO CORONAVIRUS BY BEVERLY CUYTHBERT

Dear Coronavirus,

To say that you're having quite some impact on humanity would be taking understatement to the next level.

You're ageing and diminishing; your taste in prey chooses the path of least resistance - the elderly and vulnerable. The level of dependence upon other people that this creates; the lack of self determination and autonomy, saps self confidence and reduces me.

Conceptually, you're a tricky one - for me, you're out there beyond the grasp of my simple brain, along with infinity, eternity and protons avoiding each other if you're watching them.

You're intrusive, like background radiation - on good days and bad, there's always that white noise invading my mind.

Speaking of good days and bad, there are those bursts of determined Whirling Dervish energy, interspersed with periods when "meh" pretty much sums it up. Such days then prick you with guilt, in the knowledge of your own good fortune and bounty, when compared with pretty much everyone else.

I'm a technophobic technomoron, but how glad am I for all the technologies of the 21st century; despite you, Coronavirus, I can see and talk to my children, so that's one point to humanity on the scoreboard. If only we had the USS Enterprise and Mr. Scott to beam them up for a hug, I'd be winning at life.

As your grip on all our lives continues, I guess we're all making 'risk assessments' and finding ways of taking back a few of our freedoms and some semblance of control over our lives.

What a balancing act that is! Choose to stay safe at home, cleansing all the essentials delivered to the door or choose to take baby steps out into Russian roulette world.

Well, I'm having a go at the latter - it still seems strange to me to be out on the roads; I feel as if I'm driving at warp speed, so unused am I to going anywhere.

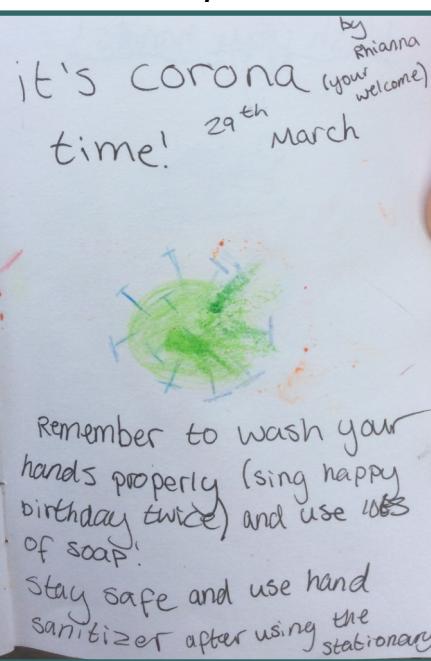
But - whether by myself, or with my husband, there's a joy to being out amongst other folk, albeit that cheerfulness is tempered by the sadness of looking at our 'new normal' society.

Through time, nature has culled the weakest and I guess that's where the battle lines are drawn between us and you. Time alone will announce the victor.

On the positive side of your score sheet, you gave Earth a short breather from all our excesses; maybe you've taught some of us what's important in life - but don't hold your breath - we seem to be trying to head straight back to where we were before you arrived.

Anyway, Coronavirus, see you around, Bev

## Covid by Rhianna



## Garden Group Informal Get Together by Jan Williams

Despite Association planned events put on hold such as the annual beach clean, and the picnic planned for later in the summer, Informal get togethers have been able to go ahead when household restrictions eased.



### Lochgair Garden Group - Meeting Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August

"On a baking hot Sunday in downtown Lochgair a few Garden Group ladies armed with sanitiser and sunhats met up for the first meeting since lockdown began. The proceedings kicked off in Jan's garden, chairs suitably social distanced, with a bottle of bubbly cracked open to welcome everyone. Jan produced homemade cake which was enough for all plus

some for hubbies left at home. There was a great deal of catching up to be done both socially and on the gardening front and a wooden "speaking" spoon would have proved very useful! Following the meeting, we had the opportunity to have a social distanced walkabout of Jan's, Deirdre's and Elspeth's gardens. All very different gardens, but the diversity made them all the more enjoyable.

Sadly, our two day garden trip to Arran at the end of August had to be cancelled as a result of Covid-19, but we hope to be able to enjoy the occasional day trip to local gardens such as Crarae and more meetings in members' gardens as long as the easing of lockdown continues, and, of course, the weather is kind!"

"Extraordinary Garden Group Meeting - how fabulous for the garden group to reconvene in Jan's beautiful garden on a sunny Sunday, after months of lockdown. It was just great to catch up with everyone and to enjoy a glass of fizz, cupcakes, snacks and the opportunity to visit Elspeth's and Deirdre's gorgeous gardens too. A wonderful time had by all... and hopefully more to come!" Bev Cuthbert

The hostess, Jan, with her delicious cup cakes



### LARGE BUILDING PROJECTS ; SMALLER SCALE— TEXTILE ART & MODEL MAKING

Despite the lockdown the number of residents in the village during the day swelled as a result of folk working from home, and boosted by our resident holiday home community. Some took the opportunity to take on building projects to improve studio/workshop facilities:



A remodelled pottery workshop at Knock Steading built by Mick.

**Before....After**  
“Moved it back, cut it in half... and build a new one on the front!” Bev Cuthbert



A new concrete deck for the studio at Redhouses - built from local stones by Douglas.

“We have loved our long stay down here and it has now become home.” Maggie

While Maggie Murray worked on her textile art.....



A textile diary on the theme of Lockdown

Allan Redpath was busy building scaled down models



A model of the Titanic (nearly completed). It's a 1/200 scale model and is approximately five foot long,  
A 1/24th scale WW2 Grumman Hellcat fighter.



SKETCHES FROM THE BENCH



Could this be the same mystery artist?

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR****From Barabel McKay**

How has it been for you all? However much we enjoyed our scenery, the friendliness of our neighbours and the various services which swung into place, we are waking to a different world. The positive aspect is that if we wake at all, we still have the opportunity to influence future events.

Some of us have family. Some of us have lots of family. Our brood showed concern and eagerness to protect with a deluge of love and attention. It felt very enjoyable, but for the first time ever I felt my age, my ability to make my own decisions eroded. It was a syndrome identified from my working life, the difficult balance between safety and freedom, the often conflicting desires of client and family. It felt very uncomfortable to be regarded as in need of care, in spite of the pleasure of the care itself. It has a psychological effect, well recognised if not admitted—a sort of setting aside from mainstream life, the beginning of a locking down slide which one may come to feel as irreversible.

When my mother had a profound and damaging stroke, losing all ability to communicate with us, my sister caused astonishment by suggesting her bed be brought into the living room. The best chance of bringing her back was in the middle of active family life. The same research has family and friends continuing to communicate with people in a coma in hope that their attention can be caught. My mother lived long enough to move to Lochgilphead with us and live here in Lochgair for a further 5 years so I think the treatment proved its worth!

The importance of continuing to engage in life is the underlying motivation for much that goes on in our village. Living right in the middle with a window overlooking the road, many times a day we are amazed to see people who share this determination to keep on doing the things they enjoy, and sometimes things they do not enjoy but believe to be worthwhile. Thank you, those of you who keep us communicating and our villages looking good.

But we need more. Times of trouble do come, and however much we seek to disaster proof our lives, we need the right kind of professional services available at the point of need. Many facilities that existed in the past are no longer available here, cardiac rehabilitation classes for one. Rural provision is under huge pressure and, without public engagement in finding solutions, answers will not be found. Money is not the only challenge – attracting specialist staff, developing teams, thinking out of the box and convincing others take huge resources of energy and drive.

This has been a learning curve for many. I see that we have to have imagination about our personal and collective future. Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst is the best way to ensure our desires are achieved. The right kind of intervention can show us how to change things we once thought were inevitable with age, and innovative methods of support are being tried out to assist compliance. Just as Nicola (Sturgeon) is telling us every day, we have to keep on working together. The years we have are a gift, and we should resist being shut down before our time.

Best wishes to all. Barabel



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR****Photo of Rosemary and myself at Burns****Letter from Australia**

"We have enjoyed reading the Lochgair March Update Issue (sent by Lenny McNeill) as it brings back fond memories of the area and friends, as we used to stay in Minard having a house there for 23 years. The early part saw us living and working as a radio communication engineer in the Gulf. We used to come back every year in the summer as our children were at boarding school. When we did return to live full time I joined the Minard Fire and Rescue crew and when not being sent back overseas I carried out electrical work with Rosemary working for Argyll College Lochgilphead, and was a council member of WLFC. Now we are here in NSW following our two children out here. Although our daughter has since returned with her husband to Stirling, which means that we travel back to Scotland every year to see our daughter and family. This year unfortunately due to this virus we have had to cancel all our plans. Hopefully folk in Lochgair will remember us. Wonder if you still hold sailing regattas in Lochgair. I remember sailing with Jack Dunagan - great fun. Hope we can meet up when we are next over in Scotland. Stay safe with kind regards,  
David and Rosemary Fife-Jackson

**Scotland the rock and roll of my senses, by Mike Cuthbert**

**Look at the heather the moss and the burns,  
Stare at the hills the colours the ferns**

**Open your heart to the glacial starkness  
To the sky the stars the deepening darkness**

**We jag our hearts to this far away place  
That burns a smile on many a face**

**This seems beyond all our dreams  
We furnish our eyes with all that it means**

**Our souls are burning with the feeling the touch  
Of Scotland the Scots we need you so much**

**Scotland our place it's where we stay  
Secure in our home that's us our way**

**Our years are rolling like the hills and glens  
We'll love you Scotland to the very end**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR*****LOCHGAIR BBQ - September 1971 – by Craig Sanderson***

" On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1971 three nineteen- year-old lads from Rothesay, who'd been in the same class all through school and were now together at Edinburgh University, set off on a week-long cruise in a 24-foot, four berth powered yacht to Inveraray and back. A handwritten 'log' on a few scraps of paper has recently come to light and the following consists of those bits which remain readable. YT is the writer and cabin-boy, the keeper of the kitty (Purser), and the boat's owner and skipper (Pugwash). The three of us remain close and remember fondly this trip and the hospitality at Lochgair in particular. Perhaps we should revisit Lochgair next autumn and celebrate the two 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries simultaneously."

**Extract from Log Book—Sept. 1971*****Mon. 20<sup>th</sup>.***

Left Tarbert 9.50am , arrive Ardrishaig 12.15pm and left 3.00pm

Passed Minard Castle, Furnace and hundreds of cormorants. Noted in particular The Lochgair Hotel. Arrived Inveraray 8.45pm in total darkness – ran aground.

***Tues 21<sup>st</sup>***

Left 12.30pm. Sailed beating to windward, criss-crossing the loch. Wind force 5 initially, then dropped during the afternoon/evening to 0. Pugwash and Purser took 2 hours to fix engine (water in crank casing). Queen Mary passed (both ways). In gathering gloom and having lost almost two hours' drinking time we dropped anchor at that hotel we'd seen on the way up. 7.45 pm. Waded ashore to beer, darts, very friendly natives (once they'd got over our ragged appearance) and comely wenches behind the bar. We can re-provision food stocks when the van arrives 1pm next day. More importantly, there's a BBQ tomorrow evening !! So we're staying at least for another 36 hours.....

***Wed. 22<sup>nd</sup>***

Went ashore at 11am to Hotel (via stream to wash....) From 12.30 am looked out for butcher's van – which never came (and turns out it wasn't meant to 'til tomorrow!). So, we walked to Minard. Back to Hotel for darts, drink and food. Clambered up a hill and tried to get closer look at Castle, but a man drove us away. Ashore at 6.15 pm for more beer and food. Thrashed at darts by two locals. Went to BBQ at 10pm. Warmed by the fire and fed on chicken, sausages and sausage rolls. Cheuter dancing. Failed in the pea in the jar competition. Campfire singing led by long haired blonde bloke with guitar. Ended 1.30pm. We helped the girls clear up, carrying table/chairs/lighting back to Hotel in the hope that we could continue the party in their rooms. But, despite their being keen (and complaining about the lack of blokes locally) it didn't happen 'cos they feared the sack. YT was consequently selected to wade out to the dinghy which had been inadvertently tied to a post below the high water mark.

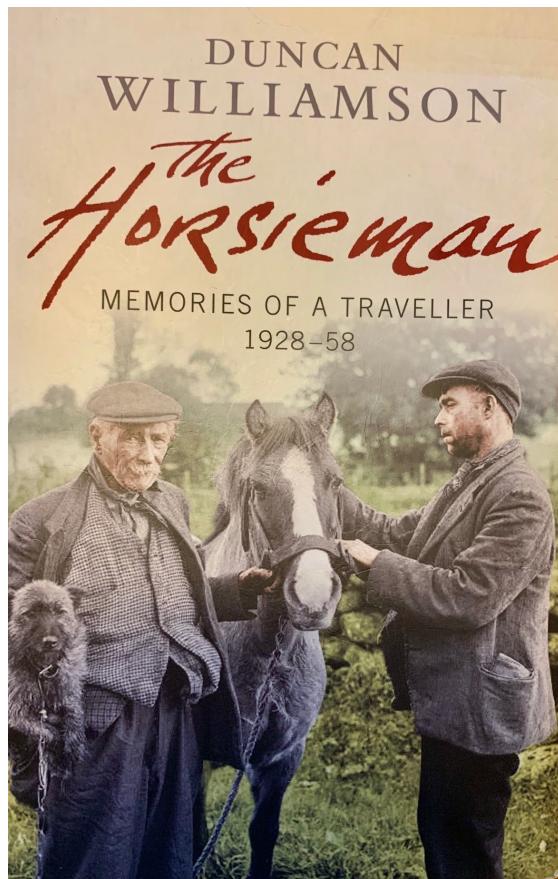
### THE QUIET PROJECT BY Michael Reid

"Lochgair is a monitoring location for The Quiet Project, a nationwide survey of noise levels during the coronavirus lockdown. Many people have noticed how much quieter it has been due to reduced road and air traffic and how natural sounds like birdsong are more noticeable as a result. This is an unexpected positive effect of the lockdown as environmental noise has been shown to have an adverse effect on human health and increased engagement with nature a beneficial one.

Sound levels were measured for approximately ten days during May, and which will be repeated after 6, 12 and 18 months. Along with those from many other locations around the UK, the measurements will be analysed to see what the changes are over time as life returns to normal.

If you go onto the Lochgair website (<https://www.lochgair.org/blank-page-1>) you can see the results of the measurements in Lochgair. It demonstrates how the sound levels drop dramatically at night, with a sharp increase at dawn - this is due to the dawn chorus. Peaks during the day are likely to be due to activities such as grass-cutting. Higher levels found on the 10th, 17th and 18th of May were due to increased wind speeds and / or rainfall on these days. I will update this page on the website with further results once the other measurements have been made."

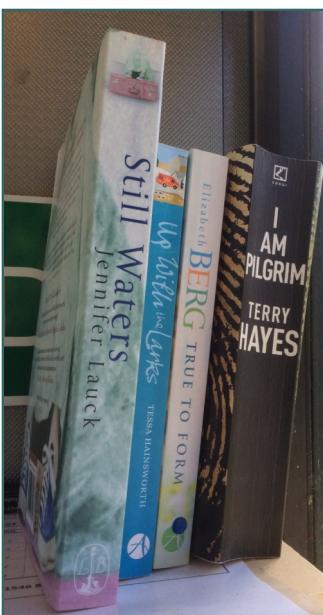
The quiet of Lockdown was a great chance to become reacquainted with some favourite films and to immerse oneself in a good book.



"A rather excellent book detailing the life of an Argyll travelling family." Allan Redpath

### EXCHANGE OF BOOKS DURING LOCKDOWN

Take a look next time you're passing LOCHGAIIR HUB



## NOTICEBOARD

**SCAM SHARE  
BY TRADING STANDARDS SCOTLAND**

Are you concerned about being scammed? Keep yourself up to date and register with SCAM SHARE to receive regular advice directly by email on the latest scams.

<https://www.tsscot.co.uk/news/latest-scams/>

**LOCHGAIR HALL**

We are not sure when we will be able to meet in the hall again because of current restrictions. However Sandy Richardson hopes to restart Tai Chi sessions soon but with modified numbers to enable social distancing.

Events cancelled this Spring included the Association's Annual General Meeting. The Board of Lochgair Association (SCIO) is seeking guidance from OSCR on how to hold an AGM while still maintaining social distancing.

The visit from Church of Scotland Trustees in April also had to be cancelled but the Association will be writing to ask for this to be rescheduled.

**A FOND FAREWELL**

We're sorry to be losing a stalwart of the community

Jean McCartan, ex-chair of Lochgair Association, an active member of Lochgair Garden Group, the Arts and Crafts Group, the Tai Chi Group, and long term volunteer worker with Lochgair Lunch Club etc. etc. Thank you for all the hard work and support you've given to Lochgair and its groups. We will all miss you but our best wishes go with you as you settle into your new home in Lochgilphead.

We're also bidding a fond farewell to Noemi and Alex Fenyes, who were asked to vacate Loran House by the beginning of August so that it could be put on the market. They are delighted however with their new home in Lochgilphead as it's closer to NOEMI'S (the Patisserie in Lochnell Street from which she sells delicious pastries, bread and jams) and is also more convenient for their children who attend Lochgilphead Primary School.

Welcome back any time!