

The Voice

The magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

Camping in the National Park



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Chairman's Introduction

WELCOME TO THIS SPRING EDITION OF VOICE,

with interesting articles about different aspects of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and news on recent activities of the Friends and others working to make the Park a better place for people and nature.

As the only independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, we continue to strive and make a difference through campaigning, fundraising and volunteering activities, working closely with partners such as the Park Authority, local communities and tourism groups.

As the marketing theme for Scotland this year is History, Heritage and Archaeology we have included special features on Harry Lauder's Cowal, linked to a special events programme, and the first in a series on the rich cultural heritage stories associated with the magical Loch Lomond islands that draw on the extensive archaeological study undertaken by the Friends a number of years ago.

We showcase Harry Lauder's connection with Cowal as we recently completed work on upgrading the path to the Lauder Memorial at Invernoaden in Argyll Forest Park with the help of the Mountains and the People project team of trainee path builders. The memorial was erected by him to commemorate his son, John, who tragically died 100 years ago in the 1st World War. This was shortly after Harry purchased the Glenbranter Estate as an engagement present for his son and which eventually went on to become part of Britain's first National Forest Park.

Recently we launched an exciting new eco-tourism initiative which is aimed at encouraging more tourism businesses throughout the National Park and the Clyde Sea Lochs area to make more of the rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage assets on their doorstep. So it is pleasing to see a number of new and exciting ecotourism projects beginning to emerge, including plans for a new eco camp and waterbus

service at Loch Katrine, in the heart of Britain's largest National Nature Reserve. It is also encouraging to see great progress being made with the Callander Landscape Partnership bid which will help to showcase the heritage assets of this important National Park town and the surrounding area.

The Friends of OUR Park visitor giving scheme is now well established and with the support of many local businesses and visitors we were able to support 18 projects throughout the National Park last year. Some of the projects supported included contributions to Loch Lomond Mountain Rescue Team for a new vehicle and Trossachs Search and Rescue for more public access defibrillators, which broke the 100 mark in 2016, and are making an invaluable contribution to making the National Park a safer place for residents and visitors.

This is a big year for the National Park Authority with the introduction of extensive camping management zones and camping byelaws covering the period March to September. A significant amount is being spent on this initiative with much needed additional camping facilities being created at a number of locations close to loch shores.

The Friends gave qualified support for the expanded camping management initiative, largely based on the success of the integrated package of byelaws and other visitor management measures on East

Loch Lomond which has transformed the visitor experience there over the last five years with many families returning to the area and some describing it as 'paradise re-discovered' but we do not underestimate the scale and complexity of the task now facing the Park Authority.

We earnestly hope the new Your Park camping initiative is successful in improving the camping and wider visitor experience on the busier loch shores and we are pleased the National Park Authority has stepped up the promotion of the wide range of camping opportunities available throughout the whole National Park with the production of a special camping map and leaflet.

I hope you will enjoy reading Voice and that some of the features will encourage you to get out and about to make the most of Scotland's first National Park over the coming months. Thank you for continuing to support the work of the Friends and if you are not already a member please do consider joining as the more members we have the more we are able to do to make a difference in this very special part of Scotland.

All the very best.

JAMES FRASER
Chair - Friends of Loch Lomond
and The Trossachs



Articles published in The Voice do not necessarily represent the views of The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. Charity No. SC015389

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The Voice is the magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the only independent conservation charity working to protect, promote and provide projects and services for this most precious part of Scotland – The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. To join us or to find out more about our work please visit www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk or use the form inside.

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Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs; Carrochan; Carrochan Road; Balloch G83 8EG
Telephone: **01389 727761** Email: info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk
www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

Cover photo - Camping at Salloch Bay, Loch Lomond.

Photo courtesy of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority.

200,000th Visitor

Welcomed to Tom Weir's Statue



Emma Hamilton, immediately right of Tom Weir's Statue, receives her prizes for being the 200,000th visitor to the site



Just over two years after the unveiling of the Tom Weir statue at Balmaha Bay a staggering 200,000 people have now visited the site to pay homage to Scotland's most popular mountain man. Tom Weir is credited with introducing several generations to Scotland's great outdoors, and the wonders of Loch Lomond in particular, through his prolific writings and numerous TV and radio broadcasts over a 50-year period.

At a special ceremony to mark the occasion Cllr Graham Lambie presented the 200,000th visitor Emma Hamilton from Peebles with a DVD featuring the TV series *On Weir's Way*, fronted by David Hayman. Emma also received a gift voucher for dinner, bed and breakfast for two at the Oak Tree Inn overlooking the site from proprietor Sandy Fraser who also played an important role in transforming the site which now houses the statue and is known as Tom Weir's Rest.

The Tom Weir Memorial Fund and the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs worked jointly to raise almost £150,000 to transform the former run down picnic site

at Balmaha Bay which is now the popular home of Tom Weir's statue and the recently created Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden. Commenting on the success of the site Cllr Lambie said: "I am pleased Stirling Council was able to lease the site at Balmaha to the Friends and provide small grants from our community grant scheme for such a worthwhile project. I am impressed with what has been achieved here with the creation of a very popular and quality heritage visitor attraction which is a fitting tribute to Tom Weir in a stunning lochside location."

James Fraser, Chairman of the Friends said: "We are delighted with the success of the site which has far exceeded our expectations and we are grateful for the support we have received from Tom's widow Rhona, Stirling Council, the National Park Authority, Heritage Lottery Fund, Sandy Fraser and the many thousands of ordinary people who responded to the public appeal for funds to help deliver this project."

He added: "It is very encouraging following the installation of donation posts last year

that thousands of pounds in donations from visitors have been raised to assist with insuring the statue and the ongoing maintenance of the site by our local contractor, Alexander Fraser and Sons." Susan Taylor, Administrator for the Tom Weir Memorial Fund added: "We have come a long way since it was first mooted there should be a statue to honour Tom's contribution to enthusing people about Scotland's great outdoors and I am delighted the statue and the associated mountain garden and story boards at Balmaha are proving to be so popular with people from all walks of life. I am also delighted that the Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland initiative helped engage hundreds of schoolchildren around the loch in the production of an attractive booklet and supporting exhibition.

"This would not have been possible without a hard working group of volunteers and the considerable help of many others, including the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, who stepped in to handle grant funding bids and coordinate the delivery of the project."

Community Champions Recognised

A Community Partnership event on 16th February in Balmaha by Loch Lomond saw 33 volunteer walk leaders from the Countryside Trust's 'Walk in the Park' project gather to celebrate receiving the 'Champion Community of the Year' award, a prestigious title presented by the Community Partnership at the 'Community Champion Awards' last November. The walk event which has been jointly sponsored by the Community Partnership and the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs began in the Tom Weir Memorial Garden with a practical demonstration by health walk leaders before a small walk and a presentation and refreshments at The Oak Tree Inn. The Walk in the Park project, which delivers health walks across the National Park, aims to introduce

people recovering from illness or those who have experienced long periods of inactivity back into exercise. Activities include Nordic walking and are usually followed by a visit to a local hostelry for a bite and blether.

Adding to the list of other Community Champion Award winners were two young men from Callander, who jointly scooped first prize in the 'Young Artist of the Year' category. Callum Hall, currently Head Boy of McLaren High School, and Craig Fingland, a former pupil, received the joint award sponsored by the Friends in recognition of their commitment to supporting their community through art. Callum, who is a keen piper, started the school's pipe band over a year ago and as their manager and fundraiser

coordinates their regular appearances at events such as the Callander Summerfest. Craig is an aspiring engineer who started up his 'Potting Shed Crafts' business when he was in the sixth form making bespoke items in his dad's garage. He was recently commissioned by McQueens Gin to design a display plinth for their whole gin range. We raise a glass to Craig and Callum!

To find out how you can nominate your own 'Community Champion' please visit www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk or email info@thecommunitypartnership.org.uk.

To find out about a Walk in the Park programme or an event near you visit www.trustinthepark.org.



Walkers at the Tom Weir Statue at the Health Walk event

Lauder Memorial and Viewpoint in Focus

The path to a stunning viewpoint and statue in Argyll Forest Park at Invernoaden built to honour John Lauder, the son of famous Scottish entertainer Harry Lauder, was greatly improved in time for the 100th anniversary of his death in World War 1 on 28th December 1916, aged just 25.

This is the first phase of an initiative led by the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs to celebrate the Lauder connection with Cowal.

The path improvement project has been supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and the local landowner, John Montgomery. Work on replacing rotting timber steps with a stone path was carried out by trainees of the Mountains and the People project, set up last year by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust to work on landscapes throughout Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and The Cairngorms National Parks. Timber and safety railings have been donated by Forestry Commission Scotland and the stone for the path works was funded with a grant from the Friends of Our Park visitor giving scheme. A special feature on Harry Lauder's Cowal connection and a special programme of events as part of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology appear on pages 22 and 23. Harry Lauder and his family moved to Dunoon in 1908, buying Gerhallow House and changing its name to Laudervale four years later. John continued to be based predominantly in London, but would travel to Dunoon whenever he was able and regarded it as a peaceful refuge from city life.

James Fraser, Chairman of Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, said: "We are delighted to be co-ordinating this project to recognise the Lauder connection with Cowal, and especially to mark the



Lauder site access before and after path building work

recent milestone occasion at the end of 2016. We are pleased that we were able to raise the funds to support it through the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme, which continues to go from strength to strength with the support of local businesses. We are also extremely grateful to the Mountains and the People Project team and David Robertson, Recreation Manager at Forestry Commission Scotland for their great support with this initial phase of work."

Tom Wallace, Activity Programme Manager for the Mountains the People project, added: "This is something that our trainees enjoyed getting their teeth into and helping visitors to the local area recognise a man who fought for his country during a time of conflict. Our thanks go to everybody who has enabled us to get involved in this very worthwhile project."

Future plans for this year include site interpretation and improving advance signing as the site is easily missed by visitors. Proposals for a wider 'Harry Lauder's Cowal' initiative involving local community groups are also well advanced with the outcome of funding bids eagerly awaited.

New Ecotourism Recruit

We're delighted to welcome US-born Jared Bowers as our new Ecotourism Project Manager who will lead our initiative to capitalise on the ecotourism potential of the National Park and the surrounding area over the next two years. Below Jared provides an insight to his background which demonstrates why he is well placed to make a positive contribution to the Friend's work in sustainable tourism development.



I am very excited and grateful to join the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs team as their new Ecotourism Project Manager. I have been a regular visitor to this beautiful area for many years and I very much look forward to working with local businesses and others to develop ecotourism products that appeal to visitors while protecting and promoting the special qualities of the area.

The National Park and Clyde Sea Lochs have an incredible amount of ecotourism potential and this project aims to capitalise on these opportunities while also promoting sustainability within existing tourism businesses and experiences. Our approach to this will be grounded in a very practical and pro-active business to business strategy that will help support tourism stakeholders in the park and the surrounding area. We hope to generate an increased awareness within tourism businesses in two main areas: 1) how to develop more sustainable tourism businesses, capitalising on the area's natural and cultural resources; and 2) the importance and practical application of sustainability for tourism businesses.

Through my previous experiences I hope to bring a useful set of skills and knowledge to the role. For the past 13 years, I have worked in ecotourism and sustainable tourism, undertaking a variety of roles in management, consultancy, and academia around the world. I started out working as a guide, leading various ecotourism tours in my home country of the United States. Since then, I have moved on to some incredible opportunities, including my time as an ecotourism manager in Guyana, working on ecotourism consultancy projects in Africa and Azerbaijan and developing practical and academic training content on sustainable tourism for large international projects. Here in Scotland I have been working at Kelburn Castle and Estate in North Ayrshire for the past few years, guiding the development of their tourism activities including new glamping and mountain biking projects. I also have a PhD in sustainable tourism from Newcastle University and an MSc in ecotourism from Edinburgh Napier University.

This is a project which I believe has significant potential and I look forward to working with tourism stakeholders throughout the National Park and the Clyde Sea Lochs area to ensure its success.

Donation Drives Fund Forward

Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs has made a £1,000 donation to the Drymen-based Loch Lomond Rescue Team's funding appeal for a new rescue vehicle.

The Rescue Team is looking to replace its existing 4x4 vehicle with a new all-terrain vehicle to enable its members to continue to undertake their important rescue work in the heart of Scotland's first National Park which attracts over four million visitors a year.

The funding contribution from the Friends was made possible due to the success of the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme which involves a range of local tourism businesses collecting donations from visitors enjoying recreational opportunities in the National Park.

James Fraser, Chairman of Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, said: "The work undertaken by Lomond Mountain Rescue Team's many volunteers

is vital to ensuring the safety of visitors to Ben Lomond and surrounding hills all year round and we are pleased to make a donation to this very project."

Heather Sinclair, of Lomond Mountain Rescue Team, said: "If all required funding is secured, the new vehicle will allow the team better access, better communications and ability to respond to emergencies in wild places not accessible without it. The present vehicle, which requires replaced, is fully equipped with blue light driving equipment and appropriate communication equipment as well as a plethora of medical, technical and other equipment necessary for searches and rescues.

"We are extremely grateful to Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs for this most generous donation, and to all those who contributed to their Friends of OUR park programme to enable this to happen. Their fundraising is a tremendous asset to organisations like ours."



Heather Sinclair, of Loch Lomond Mountain Rescue Team, collects a cheque for £1,000 from Friends Chairman James Fraser and Vice-Chairman John Urquhart.

TRIBUTE

Nick Pennington
(1938-2016)

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death of one of the key advocates for National Parks in Scotland and a life-long member of the Friends. In 1989 a very wise decision was made to appoint Nick as the first Park Officer of The Loch Lomond Park Authority. In so doing the Authority gained the expertise of a graduate of Keble College Oxford and the planning school of Nottingham College of Art and Design together with the professional experience gained in the Peak District National Park, Ross and Cromarty County Council, Jamaica, Yorkshire County Council, Barbados and North York Moors National Park. Nick left his post as Depute Park Officer at North York Moors National Park to come to Loch Lomond. He came with the clear ambition to see Loch Lomond [and The Trossachs] given National Park status coupled with a desire to ensure that a primacy be given to the conservation of the area's natural and cultural heritage. Nick loved the scenic qualities of the area but was not so happy with what he found at his feet i.e. litter. One of the first initiatives he took was to appoint a litter team to get to parts of the Park not reached by local authorities. He was also charged with introducing measures to help curb inappropriate speeds and behaviour on the loch. He progressed this by appointing a Byelaw Officer with an intimate knowledge of the loch and its users rather than a legal or visitor management professional, an example of Nick's judgement qualities.

Committed

He was also committed to the implementation of the Loch Lomond [Subject Plan] in terms of planning policy and the provision of badly needed visitor facilities [e.g. public toilets] and the promotion of the understanding of the area. The Luss Visitor Centre was a major early achievement. Nick selected his staff with great care; staff who could be relied on to get on with allocated tasks. This allowed him to take a major personal role in focussing on future designation and management arrangements in conjunction with a multitude of politicians, public bodies, land managers and the all important local communities. Nick's experience and verbal communication skills were very persuasive. Above all Nick and his views won respect; his passion for the job at hand was clear for all to see and his integrity unquestionable. Nick was a Gentleman, always smiling even in challenging circumstances. On a personal note it was a major privilege to work with Nick albeit for a prematurely shortened period. I often wonder what Nick's influence would have been on a newly created National Park Authority. Our thoughts at this time must be with Nick's ever supportive wife Irene and family.

Contributed by Friends Trustee and former National Park CEO, Bill Dalrymple who was Nick's Depute at the Loch Lomond Park Authority, the organisation that pre-dated the formation of Scotland's first National Park covering Loch Lomond and The Trossachs.



New Trossachs Pier Eco camp

From summer 2017 the Steamship Sir Walter Scott Trust plans to open a new eco camp in a stunning lochside location overlooking Loch Katrine near Trossachs Pier. The £190,000 development includes a range of high quality camping pods, camping pitches and campervan stances with electric and water hook ups and is being supported by a grant from the Forth Valley Leader European Programme. The eco camp is being developed in response to the growing demand for glamping facilities in the National Park and partly in response the Park Authority's call for more camping facilities to coincide with the Your Park camping initiative which recently led to the introduction of camping management zones covering most of the lochsides in the Trossachs. Any surpluses from the venture will be used to support the continued operation of the historic Steamship Sir Walter Scott.

LIVE Park Plan Approved



An award-winning plan setting out a range of policies to develop and protect the National Park has been given the go ahead. Named 'LIVE Park', the Plan outlines an ambitious vision for making Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park an attractive and viable place for young people and families to live and work, for businesses to start and grow and improving the experience for visitors whilst also protecting the unique environment of the area over the next ten years. Following extensive engagement and consultation during the process to prepare the Plan, it has now been formally adopted by the National Park Authority as its Local Development Plan, the legal document to determine all planning decisions in the National Park. The Plan will be updated every five years.

It identifies potential opportunities that could shape the future development of the National Park including:

- An annual target to deliver 75 new homes across the area to sustain communities and meet demand for smaller, more modest sized and affordable homes for young people, families and older people,
- Sites for tourism and leisure development that will help grow and enhance the quality of the Park as a visitor destination,
- Supporting new businesses in and around towns and villages that create local jobs and diversification of the rural economy,
- A new bridge, housing, hotel and riverside park in Callander, the largest town in the National Park,
- Creating a central village hub in Arrochar alongside housing and tourism development at Arrochar, Succoth and Tarbet,
- Improvements to Balloch village centre and new development that will link with Loch Lomond Shores.

Arrochar, Balloch and Callander are expected to see the biggest change over the next 20 years while the plan also identifies development opportunities in the Park's smaller villages.



National Status for John Muir Way

The 134-mile John Muir Way has officially been recognised as one of Scotland's Great Trails by Scottish Natural Heritage. The John Muir Way is the 28th long distance route to be awarded Great Trail status by Scottish Natural Heritage and joins four others that weave their way through the National Park – the popular West Highland Way, the Great Trossachs Path, the Cowal Way and the Three Lochs Way. Since its launch in April 2014 to mark the centenary year of the Scots-born conservationist's death, the coast to coast long distance route has quickly become popular with walkers and cyclists from the UK and overseas.



Great Trossachs Forest Milestone Year

Since 2008 a great deal has been achieved as part of the Great Trossachs Forest project and 2017 marks the final year of the Heritage Lottery funded Gateways project. The Great Trossachs Forest initiative is one of the most significant woodland regeneration projects to take place in the UK for a generation. It covers 16,500 hectares, an area the size of Glasgow, between Loch Lomond and Callander in the heart of the National Park. It is a partnership project between BP, Forestry Commission Scotland, RSPB Scotland and the Woodland Trust Scotland. Some of the project's main achievements so far include creating over 300 hectares of new woodland with the planting of 1.5 million trees; creating an extensive network of paths and loops for all abilities including the Great Trossachs Path long-distance path linking Inversnaid on Loch

Lomondside with Callander; opening new visitor gateway centres at Glen Finglas and Inversnaid Nature Reserve; removal of areas of non-native trees and invasive species; introduction of successful volunteering and educational programmes; and production of a range of promotional print and online materials to help people enjoy 'Nature's Great Adventure' in what is Britain's newest and largest National Nature Reserve. In the final year of the Gateways project plans include completing a further two seasonal photographic panoramas as part an interactive virtual tour of the Trossachs; continuing the programme of non-native and invasive species removal and managing grazing levels to create a natural mosaic of natural habitats; organising an events programme; and providing new volunteering opportunities. For more information visit www.thegreattrossachsforest.co.uk.

New National Park Convener

The Managing Director of Entrepreneurial Scotland and former Chief Executive of the Royal Yachting Association, James Stuart, was recently elected to become the new Convener of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and took up his new position at the beginning of March.

Linda McKay, outgoing National Park Convener is pictured with the newly appointed Convener, James Stuart.

Mr Stuart served as an Officer in the Scottish Infantry for eight years and was first appointed to the National Park Board in February 2015.

He said: "I am delighted to have been elected as the new Convener of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The National Park has come a long way in recent years with numerous successes and gaining national recognition. We are also about to deliver some key projects that will secure long-term, environmental, community and economic benefits.

"These projects will characterise much of our work over the next few years and are crucial to the continued progress and impact of the Park. However, they are not the only activity of the Park Authority.

"As Convener I aim to lead the organisation in a way that is mindful of these big projects whilst also looking to the future. To help realise the brightest of our possible futures we will seek to draw on the sum of all our talents and to make the most of our links to communities and partner organisations. In doing so we will work together to shape the long-term future of the National Park."

The current Convener, Linda McKay, stepped down in February 2017 after serving six years in the post.

Luss Regeneration Plans Gather Momentum

Following an investment of over £8 million in tourism and civic pride projects over the past five years by Luss Estates, plans for the next phase of regenerating the lochside village of Luss are being progressed by Sir Malcolm Colquhoun and his senior management team. An attractive £150,000 scheme to create a new village green has been approved by the Park Authority and plans have been lodged for a new village car park nearby and 30 houses on eight different sites in the village and nearby hamlets. It is expected that five of these houses would be affordable self-build plots. These 30 houses are in addition to the five already under construction by Link Housing Association with land and funding contributions from Luss Estates. Simon Miller, Chief Executive of Luss Estates, said: "This initiative stems from the Luss Strategic Development Framework, published in October 2013. The framework seeks to address the actions needed to make Luss a thriving and viable community by bringing in much needed new jobs and family housing."



£4m Cameron House Renovation Progress

Due to be completed in May 2017, the latest work, costing £1m, will include an extensive terrace overlooking Loch Lomond, alongside redesigned bedrooms. The new terrace, designed by architecture firm 3DReid, will feature frameless glass balustrading and a covered timber deck to provide a bar and events space for 60 seated or 120 standing. The latest work is in addition to the £3m invested last year on revamping the Cameron Grill and creating a new cocktail

bar, together with updating the other public spaces including the leisure centre. Andy Roger, Resort Director said: "We are continuing to invest in Cameron House and are committed to making it the ultimate luxury destination in Scotland. We are truly privileged to have a unique setting that boasts such an abundance of natural beauty." Cameron House was acquired by American private equity firm KSL Capital Partners for £70m in November 2015

MAID PLANS SAIL THROUGH MAJOR REVIEW



Above: Loch Lomond Steamship Company board - from left to right - Ronnie McKay, Jill Farrell, Bob Dobie, Ian Fernie, Robin Naysmith (Chairman), Anne Urquhart, John Beveridge, Iain Robertson

The ambitious Maid of the Loch restoration plans that could see the last paddle steamer built in Britain sailing again took a major step forward recently with the project passing the critical mid-term review by the Heritage Lottery Fund assessors.

Most consultant's reports, including the business plan and naval architects plans, are now signed off, and this part of the developmental phase of the project has been completed to budget. Elspeth McLachlan, the Capital Appeal Director, is the only remaining consultant now and fundraising is her main focus as £1.7 million requires to be raised to draw down HLF funding. The target of over 2,000 volunteer hours has already been exceeded as part of the Steamship Company's contribution to the project. This phase continues until the charity applies for Stage 2 funding, for which HLF have pledged £3.8 million.

The Board of Trustees has been strengthened recently. Robin Naysmith became the charity's Chairman in November. He was formerly Scottish Government Counsellor for North America based at the British Embassy in Washington DC. Prior to this he was the former Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister of Scotland. Anne Urquhart, an energetic 'doer' from Helensburgh and Convener of Helensburgh & District Access Trust joined the Board in August. Jill Farrell also joined in November, and is an economic and business development advisor and former Director of Professional Services at University of Strathclyde. Her business experience will be invaluable as the project moves on, particularly into the operating stage. Maid of the Loch will open again at Easter. Why not visit, as your support would be greatly appreciated.

Follow progress or make a donation via the website at www.maidoftheloch.org.



Balmaha Housing Boost

Plans for 22 low cost houses in an attractive courtyard style development on a former plantation site in the village of Balmaha took a giant step forward recently. At a packed meeting of Buchanan Community Council in the village hall, where there was standing room only, there was an overwhelming vote in favour of the much-needed scheme going ahead.

At the meeting Tony Teasdale of Stirling Rural Housing Association highlighted that 100 households had expressed strong interest in the housing and around 50% of the expressions of interest had come from the immediate Buchanan and Drymen areas. He also outlined the rationale behind the mix of housing that included some for rent and equity ownership as well as some self-build plots.

Buchanan Community Council has now formally supported the planning application.



Luss Parking Proposals Rejected Again

Over the last two years Argyll and Bute Council have consistently rejected strong representations by the community, the Friends and Luss Estates on parking proposals which they seem determined to introduce soon in the historic village of Luss with the recent publication of draft traffic orders. The controversial proposals would result in the introduction of parking charges for residents and visitors in the heart of the village, while making parking illegal in most other areas resulting in an overall reduction of over 150 spaces.

The local community and others believe the Council's proposals are extremely misguided, and do nothing to fix the chronic road safety issues facing the village which currently attracts around 750,000 visitors each year. An alternative plan put forward by the community removing cars from the centre of the village, drawn up by independent traffic consultants, was rejected by Council Officers.

Local MSPs Jackie Baillie and Maurice Cory have stepped in with a plea to pause proceedings while a better solution is found.



Callander Mountain Bike Trails

A network of mountain bike trails in Callander woodlands is a step closer. The Callander Mountain Bike Trail group recently secured funding from the Scottish Land Fund to work up a business plan for managing Coilhullan Wood, which it's hoped will provide the basis for a further funding applications to transfer management of the woods from Forestry Commission Scotland to the local community.

Trossachs Mobility

A Callander-based charity, set up in 2016 to improve access to the countryside for the physically challenged, has created a hub on Callander Main Street. They will provide 'terrain-hoppers' for affordable hire, information on local facilities and access, and guidance and advice on suitable routes within the area, so that people with all levels of ability can freely access the surrounding countryside around the Trossachs town.

Trossachs Mobility was created by friends Gordon Wilson and Wayne Johnson, who wanted to improve access in their community after realising that it's not always possible for everyone to have the same access to their surroundings.

Founder Wayne Johnson said: "I'm so proud to be part of this great charity and grateful to have met Gordon and discovered his vision. Helping him turn his dream into a reality has given me immense satisfaction and joy, and we've already witnessed the freedom and empowerment these vehicles give to their users."

The group have already attracted a great deal of attention. Stirling Council have provided £25,000 to fund two of the all-terrain wheelchairs, they have been shortlisted for Scottish Rural Awards in March and their vision has also been discussed at both Scottish and UK government level, with a motion raised in the Scottish Parliament and a debate in Westminster. Callander Community Hydro Fund is supporting the project with a grant to cover the first year's rent.

Find out more about Trossachs Mobility at www.trossachsmobility.com or follow them on Twitter @Trossachsmobil1 and Facebook @trossachsmobility. For more information on Terrain Hoppers, visit www.terrainhopper.com.



Gordon Wilson at Bracklinn Bridge with one of the hoppers



Celebrity Angler Opened Salmon Season

Celebrity angler Jo Stephenson officially opened the new salmon fishing season on the River Teith on 1st February. The Teith is one of the most popular rivers in the National Park for salmon and trout fishing.

Jo was introduced to fishing at 17 and while traveling in New Zealand eight years ago discovered fly tying. Since then she has been developing her tying skills and now demonstrates at fly shows around the UK and Ireland, and in 2015 was a contestant on BBCs 'Earths Wildest Waters: The Big Fish' – a competition which sent eight anglers to spectacular locations around the world to utilise their existing fishing skills and learn new ones from the locals. The long-established event was held in Callander and included a parade led by Jacobite actors from Clanranald Trust with free hot food and drinks provided by Mhor Group, as well as whisky tasting by Deanston Distillery.



Making Headway at Arrochar

After many years of campaigning work is now underway by Dunbritton Housing Association on building 26 much needed rented, affordable homes in Succoth at the head of Loch Long. In tandem with this an Arrochar Forum Group, initiated by Arrochar & Tarbet Community Council and chaired by Jackie Baillie MSP, with representation from a range of bodies including the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs has met on several occasions during the past year to try and make headway in resolving some major long standing issues which are blighting Arrochar. Issues being tackled include the problem of accumulations of litter being washed up at the Head of Loch Long, trying to get the Ben Arthur Resort site (former torpedo factory site) tidied up which is currently a major eyesore, progressing a pontoon scheme and upgrading the area beside the war memorial beside the busy trunk road.

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Realising Balloch's Tourism Potential

A few years ago Balloch and Haldane Community Council organised a public meeting on the theme of developing tourism in Balloch and in the intervening period much has happened. Here James Fraser, the Friends' current Chairman and former Chief Executive of the Area Tourist Board responsible for tourism in the Loch Lomond area for more than 20 years, sets out some of his thoughts on recent events and the efforts to realise the village's tourism potential.

As the gateway to Loch Lomond and the unofficial capital of Scotland's first National Park the village of Balloch should be the jewel in the crown of Loch Lomond and one of Scotland's top tourist destinations. However, it has failed to live up to this billing for some time now which, in part, is due to its industrial past, fragmented land ownerships, various abortive attempts to develop tourism and changing tourism trends.

Is this all about to change with the recent completion of the Balloch Charrette planning futures exercise and the emergence of the £33 million plans by leisure developer and operator, Flamingo Land Ltd for the former industrial land at West Riverside? Will this turn the village into an attractive year-round family holiday resort destination instead of a dislocated village with the day visitor orientated Loch Lomond Shores separated from the 'old village' by the 20 hectare West Riverside site? It is difficult to say at this stage but the initial signs are promising.

Unfortunately, the poorly handled announcement on Scottish Enterprise's preferred developer for West Riverside last September initially proved to be a setback with negative and ill-informed press coverage and several misleading online petitions jumping on the bandwagon to oppose unseen plans. The name Flamingo Land being associated with the site resulted in many wrongly thinking a major theme park was planned for the lochside when this is not the case. In recent months efforts have been made to retrieve the situation and there is now a more open dialogue taking place with the local community. The final plans will also be greatly influenced by ground condition and various other surveys that are now underway.

A Tourism Mecca

In the pre and post Second World War era Balloch was a popular destination with large numbers of regular visits from West Central Scotland residents. When the factories shut on a Friday night many thousands of workers and their families made a break for the clean air of nearby Balloch and Loch Lomond with its range of, largely free, outdoor recreational opportunities. This began to change in the 1960s and 1970s with the advent of the cheap sun package holidays which, for decades now, has seen tens of thousands from the Greater Glasgow area taking flight overseas for their main holidays and short breaks. Notwithstanding these trends, in Balloch there have been some notable tourism investments by local companies in the past decade such as the long established Sweeney's Cruises and more recently by some national pub and hotel chains including Marstons who recently invested £5 million in the Queen of the Loch Hotel and Restaurant.

The £40 million Loch Lomond Shores development opened in 2002 to coincide with the creation of the National Park. The central feature of this development, Drumkinnon Tower, which cost the taxpayer around £14 million, quickly failed and had to be re-invented following a costly conversion into a Sealife Centre. However, in recent years Loch Lomond Shores has begun to flourish largely due to the introduction of a very successful events programme which has helped boost visitor numbers to over 1 million annually. The Park Authority has encouraged some outdoor activity operators to locate there too and has also invested in boat trip pontoon facilities. Plans are also being progressed to convert the vacant National Park Gateway Centre into a restaurant and events venue.

Various schemes for the West Riverside site have come and gone over the past 30 years. Also, in all the furore about the latest plans many were not aware the site was formerly derelict industrial wasteland.



Artists impression

Various attempts have been made over the years to market all, or part of, the site for hotel and leisure development with mixed success. Occasionally Scottish Enterprise have mooted the idea of part of the land being used for housing but this has been strongly resisted by the Friends and others. Previously a couple of preferred bidders were selected to develop the site but their schemes fell by the wayside for a variety of reasons. The site has also appeared in local Development Plans as an area with tourism and recreation development potential.

Given this site history the Friends and others have been consistent in their desire to see the site being developed for a range of tourism and recreational uses. However, this doesn't mean we will accept anything and we will be reviewing the latest plans very carefully though it does appear the general thrust of what is planned is entirely consistent with what has been proposed for the site for many years with riverside boardwalk and transport links between the centre of Balloch and Loch Lomond Shores and a mix of family and budget orientated tourist accommodation and recreation facilities. Finally, it is great news that West Dunbartonshire Council has committed over £1million for two village squares and public realm works in the centre of Balloch as well as recently commissioning a review of potential future uses for Balloch Castle in the heart of the Country Park. These projects emerged as community priorities during the recent planning charrette exercise.

I hope this article helps bring some balance to the current debate on the future of what is the last major site for tourism and recreation development in the Loch Lomond area. I am optimistic that a scheme will emerge which meets the aspirations of local residents and visitors and is appropriate at this key entry point to Loch Lomond and the wider National Park area. There is now a very real prospect of Balloch emerging as a flourishing year-round quality visitor destination.

Going back to the 1980s much of the site was a 'no go area' with contaminated land linked to its former uses as a silk dye works factory, extensive railway sidings and sand and gravel workings. Much of the site was abandoned derelict land which had been neglected for many years by the owners of fragmented tracts of land.



Derelict Land

The black and white photo here, which was taken around 1960, provides a bird's eye view of the site which is currently the subject of so much controversy. Hardly a picture postcard extolling the scenic qualities of Loch Lomond! Admittedly, much of the dereliction no longer exists but is still generally in a poor condition with pockets of contaminated land and packed ash which is hidden by thin soil and tree cover. The extent of the land covered by railway sidings and the former rail link with the pier, where PS Maid of the Loch, is moored can be clearly seen. Interesting also to see part of the site next to the disused gravel pits in the foreground was used as a caravan park with more than 60 static caravans in view. Part of the former silk dye works site is in the middle right of the picture which has now largely been covered by a housing estate. In the mid-1980s the Scottish Tourist Board joined forces with Bredero to have a comprehensive look at what could be done longer term if the piecemeal land ownerships were brought together. A development options study was undertaken and concluded there was scope to develop

an indoor leisure centre (similar to Rhyl Sun Centre in North Wales) and housing. This later led to Cala Homes coming forward with a controversial plan to cover the site in luxury housing. Dumbarton District Council planners recommended approval but, thankfully, Councillors refused the development planning permission after listening to the strong representation from the Friends of Loch Lomond, the Area Tourist Board and the Balloch community who argued that this was far too important a site for recreation and tourism purposes to be allowed to be developed for housing. A public local inquiry was held and the late Dr Hannah Stirling MBE, the then Chairman of the Friends of Loch Lomond, contributed a substantial sum to hire a QC to fight the case, along with local Councillors and the Area Tourist Board. Fortunately, the case was won by the objectors and Scottish Enterprise was encouraged to purchase the site and to progress plans primarily for tourism and leisure development.

Loch Lomond Shores and West Riverside

This is the background to what led to the phase 1 Loch Lomond Shores development and there was always an intention to develop a phase 2 to link the centre of Balloch with the lochshore more effectively. Much earlier in the days of the Loch Lomond Joint Committee, which preceded the National Park Authority, the then Scottish Development Agency was encouraged to purchase the West Riverside site which was owned by British Rail. They worked with the Joint Committee and the Area Tourist Board to restore the derelict former railway station building in the centre of Balloch which was converted into a tourist information centre and offices. The land between the station building and Balloch Pier beside the River Leven was restored and extensively landscaped with a new path. Derelict moorings and sunken boats were also removed from the West Riverside edge of the River Leven with the help of Loch Lomond Association.



Children's playground at Moss O Balloch

Louis Stott was born in Brighton in 1934 and now lives in Aberfoyle. He is the author of a number of books on Scottish history and literature, including *Smollett's Scotland*, two volumes on Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Enchantment of the Trossachs*, *Literary Loch Lomond* and *The Waterfalls of Scotland*.

Local historian and literary expert Louis Stott takes us on the third of a new series of tours of waterfalls in the National Park.

The Falls of Loch Lomond

LOCH LOMOND drains a considerable basin and has two principal feeders. It is in reality two lochs: the narrow, characteristically Highland, northern trench is fed by the Falloch, a roaring mountain river which descends from remnant pine woods to the head of the loch; the island-studded southern loch derives its water from the Endrick which, with its tributaries, drains the volcanic hills to the south. These two contrasted environments are classic ground for different kinds of waterfall. In the North they arise because of glaciation: there is the dramatic hanging valley waterfall of Ben Glas above the West Highland Way at Inverarnan, and the Falls of Falloch themselves result from the over-deepening of Glen Falloch by the meltwaters of glaciers, and the splendid Eas na Baintighearna, the fall of the proprietor's lady, is situated at a corrie lip on Ben Vorlich. South of Loch Lomond is the Pot of Gartness, near Drymen on red

sandstone, the rock which gives rise to so many fine Scottish falls. The Pot is thronged with spectators when the salmon run. The several delightful falls in the Kilpatrick Hills, owe their origin to the relative hardness of the basaltic sills there.

A trip to Ishneich, the fall of the horse, although it is just outside the National Park, will repay the visitor with unsurpassed views of the loch, end on. You go by the Cameron Road, best walked. At or about the highest point a forest road wanders into the hills and takes you to the Lang Cairn, the finest of several such monuments, prehistoric graves, in the Kilpatrick Hills. Ishneich, on the Gallangad Burn, is a grand amphitheatre fall in the woods at your feet.

Elsewhere at this end of the loch is The Loup of Fintry, the pride of Stirlingshire, on the trunk stream of the Endrick above the village on the road to Loch Carron, well worth seeking out after rain.

It is unlikely that the visitor to these falls will encounter many others, but there will almost certainly be many cars parked at the Inversnaid Hotel where the loch's most famous falls are situated. The Wordsworths,

Walter Scott, James Hogg, Nathaniel Hawthorne (the American Novelist who described his trip in his 'English' Notebooks), and Gerard Manley Hopkins have all contributed to the fame of this spot. The roaring falls that these literary giants encountered are sometimes attenuated nowadays because the burn is below Loch Arklet, a reservoir. However, on the right day the 'darksome burn, horseback brown' still falls, rather more prettily than Hopkins would have us believe, to the very verge of the loch. The Falls of Inversnaid inspired perhaps Wordsworth's finest Scottish poem, *The Highland Girl*:

And these grey rocks; that household lawn

Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn

This fall of water that doth make

A murmur near the silent lake;

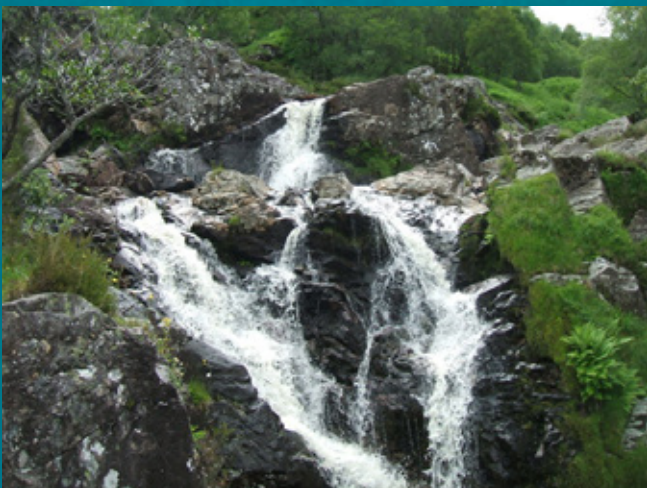
This little bay; a quiet road

That holds in shelter thy abode

In truth together do ye seem

Like something fashioned in a dream.

Of the many prints *Cascade d'Inversnaid* drawn by F.A.Pernot and printed by A.Dewasme, published in *Vues Pittoresque De L'Ecosse*, 1827, was one of the first. The Falls of Falloch were encountered by Coleridge who was with the Wordsworths on their 1803 excursion, but who left them in something of a huff to make for the



The Ben Glas Fall - Picture by Iain Russell



The Loup of Fintry - Picture by Robert Murray

North. The falls are in an imposing tree-filled gorge beside which the A82 climbs to Crianlarich. There is a formal car park and a walk to them and there is an architect-designed viewpoint. John Kennedy, the young architect, has created a trellised passageway cantilevered over the water. It permits spectators to experience the falls at close quarters, and to be immersed in the Wordsworths' 'Vale of Awful Sound'. The plunge pool into which they tumble is as deep again as the 12-metre falls themselves. It is given the soubriquet 'Rob Roy's Bath tub' and a hollow in the rock, into which a subsidiary branch of the river falls, at a suitable height above it, is called 'Rob Roy's Soap Dish'.

At the head of the loch, too, are the Garabal Falls which can be seen from the road. They are some 20 metres in height and are worth battling through the heather to see. They command a fine view of Glen Falloch with the Ben Glas Fall dominant across the flatlands at the head of the loch. There are 30

metre falls on the Allt Arnan, too. The Ben Glas Fall is situated on the old march between Dunbartonshire and Perthshire and, at 36 metres, is the highest fall in the former county of Dunbartonshire. It was the fall beside which the Wordsworths climbed out of what they called the Vale of Awful Sound. The burn tumbles over the edge of the moor in a broad cascade and, in spate, a fountain of water is lifted across the face of the main fall. An alternative name for this impressive fall is the Grey Fox. There is no finer excursion from the old posting inn at Inverarnan than to climb by the Ben Glas Burn. It can be noted that proposals for a hydro-electric scheme state that the head (the total height) of the fall is 316 metres, one and a half times the height of Eas Coul Aulin, Scotland's highest fall. Other waterfalls of Loch Lomond are less well-known. Sput Ban deserves a better reputation. After rain it sprawls like spilt milk beside an alternative to the well-trodden way to Ben Lomond. At the entrance to Glen Douglas are the lively Falls of Inverbeg. Finally the Falls of Fruin tumble over the geological edge of the Highlands just below St Bride's Chapel. They are the subject of a splendid painting in the National Gallery of Scotland by John Milne Donald (1817-66).

It would be wrong to belittle Loch Lomond's infinitely varied islands, or the exquisite combination of mountain, wood and water which the loch affords, or the fine country estates which enhance its shores. However, one can assert that its waterfalls make a significant contribution to the scenery of the loch and add much to its charm.



*Left: The Falls of Falloch
Picture by Brian Osborne*



*Right: The Frozen Fall of Ishneich
Picture by Stan Campbell*



Camping in the National Park

Gordon Watson, Chief Executive Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park



Camping is one of the best ways for people to get out and enjoy the spectacular surroundings of the National Park and is very much welcome here. As we head towards the start of the summer season, we know people will be starting to dust off their tents and planning their next trip so it's important for everyone to be aware of changes affecting camping within certain areas of the Park.

After detailed consultation and planning, new camping byelaws came into effect on 1st March 2017, which aim to protect some of our most cherished lochshores and improve the overall experience in these popular areas.

The seasonal byelaws create four Camping Management Zones: East Loch Lomond, West Loch Lomond, Trossachs North and Trossachs West. To stay overnight in a tent, motorhome or campervan within these Zones between March and September visitors will need to get a permit or stay in a campsite.

On top of the many campsites already available across the National Park, camping is available along many of these popular lochshores with a valid camping permit. There are also places for motorhomes and campervans to stay overnight.

Within a Camping Management Zone, camping permits are available within specific areas which have been identified as suitable for camping. Permit areas have no (or very basic) facilities for those who prefer more of a 'wild camping' experience but still want to camp at one of these locations.

As well as the many privately-run campsites throughout the National Park, informal campsites with bookable pitches and basic facilities such as parking, fresh water and toilets are available.

In the Trossachs there is the popular site at The Cabin at Loch Lubnaig and the new National Park campsite on the shores of Loch Chon. On Loch Lomond there is the small, campsite on the beautiful island of Inchcailloch and on East Loch Lomond, the Forestry Commission Scotland campsite at Salloch Bay offers woodland pitches next to the lochshore.



We want everyone who comes to camp to have a positive experience and are running a wide-ranging information campaign to make sure visitors, local residents and businesses know as much as possible about how and where to camp in the National Park.

KEY FACTS

The Camping Management Zones cover less than 4% of the National Park. There is no change to camping outside of these Zones.

The byelaws run from March to September. Camping from October to February is unaffected.

To camp in a Camping Management Zone you must get a camping permit or stay in a campsite.

Camping Management Zones will include the land from the affected lochshore to the nearby road, and for approximately 200m on the other side of the road, or to the nearest visible feature such as field boundaries or tracks.

Camping permits will cost £3 per tent/motorhome per night.

Book your camping permit online at lochlomond-trossachs.org/camping



Our National Park Rangers will continue to offer advice on how and where to camp responsibly. We'll also be using this first season to closely monitor how the byelaws are working and gather feedback on the experience. This will be done through face to face engagement with visitors, local communities and

other stakeholders as well as online through our booking system.

We are confident that these measures will provide more sustainable levels of camping and encourage responsible behaviour. We look forward to welcoming visitors to the National Park over the coming months.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment.



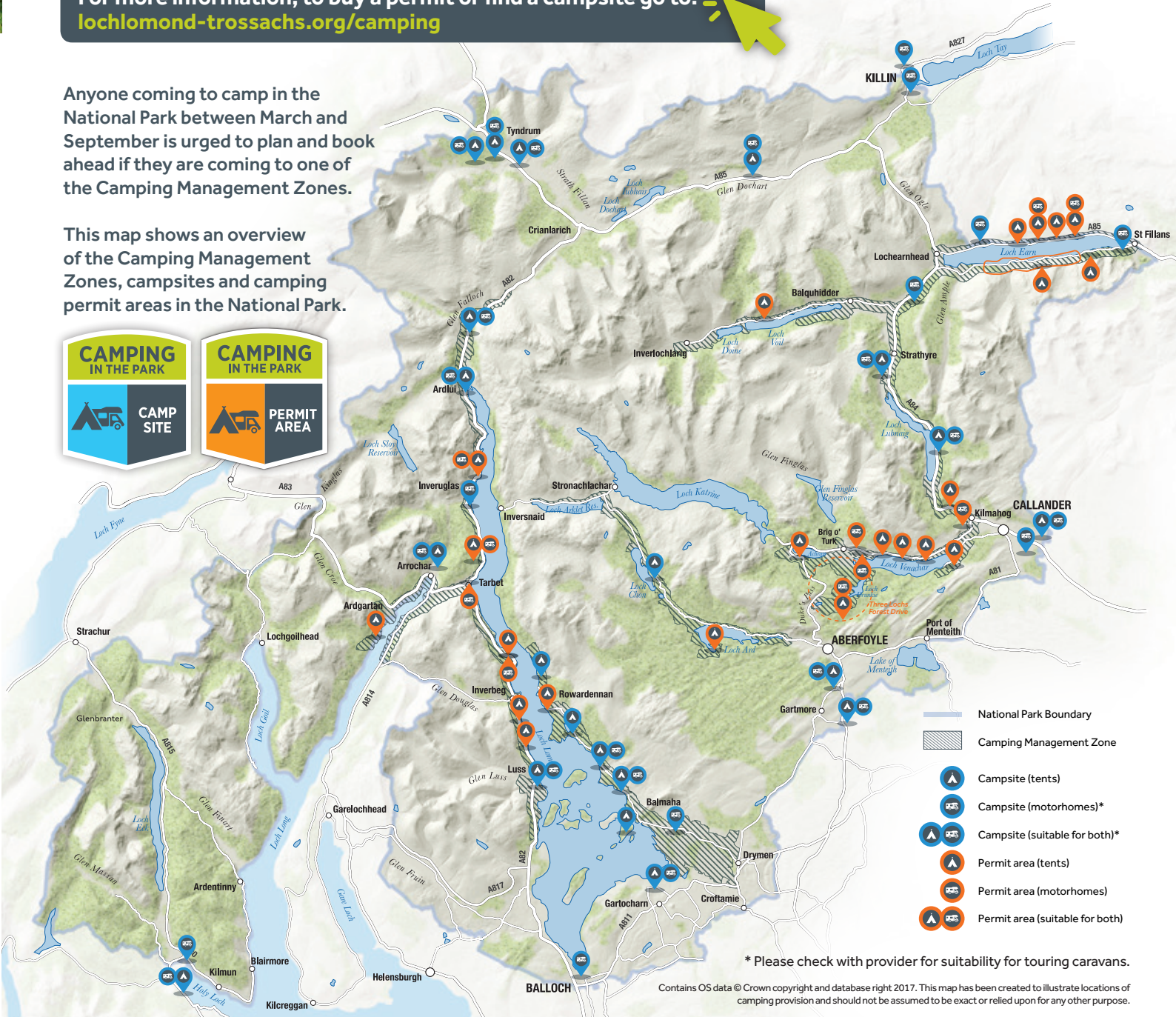
KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE outdooraccess-scotland.com

For more information, to buy a permit or find a campsite go to: lochlomond-trossachs.org/camping

Anyone coming to camp in the National Park between March and September is urged to plan and book ahead if they are coming to one of the Camping Management Zones.

This map shows an overview of the Camping Management Zones, campsites and camping permit areas in the National Park.



- National Park Boundary
- ▨ Camping Management Zone
- ▲ Campsite (tents)
- ▲ Campsite (motorhomes)*
- ▲ Campsite (suitable for both)*
- ▲ Permit area (tents)
- ▲ Permit area (motorhomes)
- ▲ Permit area (suitable for both)

* Please check with provider for suitability for touring caravans.

Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2017. This map has been created to illustrate locations of camping provision and should not be assumed to be exact or relied upon for any other purpose.

Find out more at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/camping



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stones and bones on loch lomond's

TREASURE islands

*Contributed by John Urquhart,
Vice-Chairman of the Friends of
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs*



**HISTORY
HERITAGE &
ARCHAEOLOGY**
• 2017 •

When we heard this was to be 'stones and bones year' (2017 is 'Scotland's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology'), we knew it was time to dust down the weighty reports produced by Fiona Baker's archaeological services company, Firat, who were commissioned by the Friends of Loch Lomond 20 years ago to assess and report on the 'archaeology, history and legends' of the loch's 38 islands.

There isn't space here to do justice to the huge wealth of material in the reports, so we offer here just a brief overview of the 390 archaeological sites which were identified. We hope to highlight some of the more outstanding items in more detail in the autumn edition of Voice.

The large number of remains is doubtless a tribute to the historic importance of Loch Lomond as a transport artery as well as its abundant fish and timber resources. These were lawless and dangerous times and the islands also offered a measure of safety. Two thousand years ago these factors were so important that Iron Age people built many crannogs on the loch - lake dwellings constructed on small islands usually close to the shore or on timber

platforms built in shallow water. Ten of these remarkable features were positively identified, but it is thought there were probably many more.



Site of the Illicit still on Inchfad

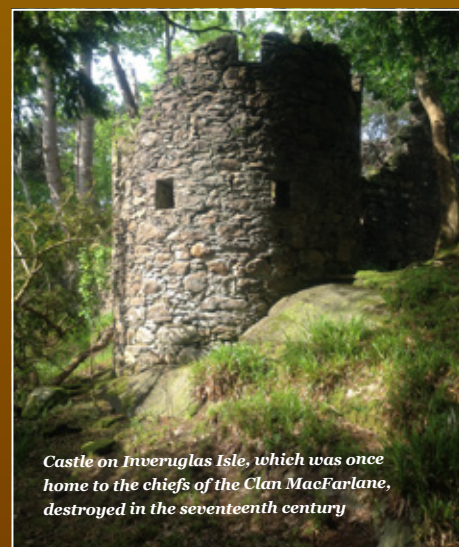
Illicit Stills

The sanctuary afforded by the islands was also important to 6th century Christian missionaries who established monastic retreats on Inchcaillach, Inchmurrin and Inchtavannach. Further evidence of this need for safety is found on Inchgalbraith, Inchmurrin and Inveruglas Isle, all of which have substantial remains of mediaeval defensive buildings. In the 18th century, illicit whisky distillers also sought the seclusion of the islands where they felt relatively safe from disturbance by government excise patrols! No less than 19 separate sites on Inchfad were identified as being related to whisky distillation!

Timber was not only a vital fuel resource for the distillers, it could also be made into barrel staves. Other important uses were for boat building and construction as well as for producing charcoal used in iron smelting and gunpowder manufacture. Woodlands on the islands and around the loch shores were managed by coppicing, a 20-year rotational system which produced a regular crop of handily sized poles suitable for all of these purposes. Oak tree bark was useful too as a source of tannin for leather making. In the 19th century, oak coppice woodland was developed on an industrial scale to produce pyroligneous

acid (acetic acid or vinegar) for use as a dye fixative in the textile printing and dyeing works in the Vale of Leven and a number of sites on the islands bore evidence of this once widespread activity. The irony is that the woodland which was planted and managed for industrial purposes all those years ago has come down to us now as a wonderful repository of nature - truly one of the treasures of the Loch Lomond islands.

The archaeologists discovered another kind of treasure on the tiny islet of Inchgalbraith - a 5,000 year old flint axe head from the Neolithic (New Stone Age) period. The axe head was the oldest artefact turned up by the study. Tell-tale carbon deposits together with stone tools and bone artefacts, typical signs of early hunting and gathering activity from the even older Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods (Old and Middle Stone Ages), are fairly rare in Scotland and it is no surprise that Firat found nothing from these periods, times when the area was repeatedly buried by glacial ice. It was only towards the end of the Palaeolithic, approximately 10,000 years ago, that the ice finally released its grip and the loch began to emerge in something like its modern form with its islands ready for colonisation and exploitation by man. (Mesolithic remains were identified during the 2003-2005 excavations at the Carrick Golf course on the loch's south western shore.)



Castle on Inveruglas Isle, which was once home to the chiefs of the Clan MacFarlane, destroyed in the seventeenth century



To learn more about the stones and bones of Loch Lomond's 'treasure islands' why not purchase 'The Islands of Loch Lomond', a beautifully illustrated booklet published by the Friends and available from our online shop.

Nature of the Park

Spring is in the air



Keith Graham writes about the rich variety of wildlife in the National Park and how different species respond to changing seasons.

SPRING THIS YEAR seems to have been springing intermittently for many weeks now. As the first traditional flowers of the year, the delicate looking yet clearly hardy snowdrops began to bloom in mid-January, so too were there early signals being issued that winter was already in retreat. However, beware of these potentially false dawns! The chanting of a cock great tit, also in mid January, was one such signal, together with a few fragments of song thrush music. And all that with February knocking on the door, a month which can paradoxically, turn its face as readily into smiling spring as frowning winter!

There was, during that first month of the year – Burns' 'Januar' is essentially a winter month – another flower to behold, yellow gorse, furze or whin. They say that you can see those yellow flowers somewhere in these isles, in every month of the year and they certainly provide that encouraging flash of colour in the otherwise relatively monochrome winter landscape of the Park. Yet, new life is beginning to stir ... even in January.

Vast Array of Wildlife

During the course of these early weeks of the year, there is a sense that ever so slowly, the landscapes of the Park seem to be waking, as if from a kind of hibernation. Days are slowly lengthening so the birds at last have longer hours of daylight in which to find the food they need to survive through the final days of winter. These are vastly varying landscapes, which offer anything from soft, rolling, Lowland vistas, to sea-lashed coasts, lochs of every size and magnificent, snow-capped Highland peaks, together with snaking rivers and tumbling mountain burns. This panoply of scenic beauty confidently offers a wide range of habitats just as it exhibits an equally vast array of wildlife. But each bird, each animal has its own particular preference.

And if we think that this renewal of life starts most naturally at lower levels and, only as spring advances, begins later to gain influence in the uplands, we can quickly be proved wrong. Even though they dwell among that harsher environment of the Highland mountains, the likes of golden eagles and ravens are exceptionally quick off the mark in welcoming the advent of spring, often before it has arrived! Already in February, plans have been laid for the forthcoming season of re-birth. Indeed, eagles may well begin their preparations early as the old year is giving way to the new, and partnerships are renewed and eyrie sites inspected and the one they will use, chosen.

For those eagles, residents exclusively of the higher places, the production of the next generation of their kind is a long-term activity, occupying the greater part of the year from winter, through spring and on into the late summer. Only as the first breaths of autumn air begin to be felt, perhaps in September, can they finally draw a line under the year's principle activity and send their newly fledged offspring out into the world on their own. For a high percentage of visitors to the Park, the sighting of this iconic symbol of Scotland, the fabulous golden eagle, is a priority ambition. However, don't be fooled into thinking that the large birds of prey often to be seen perched atop telegraph poles are eagles, for eagles do not deign to show themselves in this way. The pole topping bird is almost certain



The well-established population of pine martens producing their kits usually in April



*The fabulous golden eagle,
the iconic symbol of Scotland*

to be a buzzard, often also to be seen in springtime wheeling high in the sky, prescribing courtship circles in the air on outstretched, fingered wings with other competing buzzards.

Aerial Tag

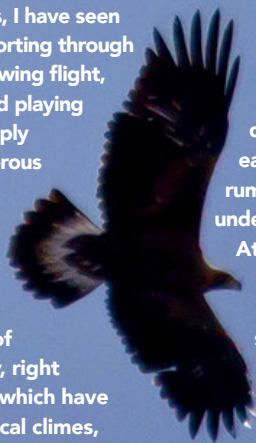
They will often also renew their vows as early as January – certainly courtship and the renewal of bonds, is well under way in February. And they too are primarily although not exclusively, residents of the higher places. However, far from being full of menace, ravens are actually extremely intelligent and mischievous. They undoubtedly have both a sense of humour and a sense of fun as well as an ability to fly more ambitiously than most of us may imagine. On many occasions, I have seen family groups of ravens cavorting through the air, performing corkscrewing flight, even flying upside down and playing aerial forms of tag ... all simply for fun. Listen for their sonorous kronking and then watch their fun and games. Mind you ravens do not only 'kronk' for they possess a remarkable vocabulary. Spring is of course a time of mass movement ... literally, right across the globe, as birds, which have spent their winters in tropical climes, now head back north and home for their breeding seasons. This huge translocation has probably been happening since the last great Ice Age at the end of which land previously covered by ice was accessible again and quickly re-colonised. Those migrants that base themselves in the Park will be focussed throughout their summer-long stay, on the production of further generations. Among the first to arrive the fish hawks - the extra special ospreys - may also be regarded as being among the most spectacular.

There is an amazing story for by sometime around 1916 they were thought to be extinct as breeding birds in Scotland and therefore in Britain. However, in the mid 1950s ospreys returned to Scotland of their own volition and, despite the nefarious

activities of egg collectors and thanks largely to the dedication of a hard core of enthusiasts who watched over them, began to breed. During subsequent years, they have expanded right across Scotland and indeed now also have a breeding toe-hold in both England and Wales. As each year passes, the population of ospreys in the Park grows, so they can now be seen on so many of our lochs. There are few more dramatic sights in nature than that of an osprey fishing.

Their arrival, usually in late March, often heralds the passage of millions of immigrant birds. The Park's remarkable range of landscapes again guarantees the arrival of a fantastic range of migrants from the fish catching ospreys to the tiny warblers that decorate heaths and woodlands and which are usually more easily recognised by their sweet voices than by their appearance. Indeed, many warblers may be regarded as being quite plain little brown birds. Among the earliest of these travellers are the white-rumped wheatears, often darting from under the very feet of hill-walkers.

At the same time, of course, other migrants, which flew here in the autumn from the Arctic north to spend the winter months, now become restless in anticipation of a return northwards. Thus the skeins of pink-footed geese, the Greenland white-fronted geese, so familiar in the southern waters of Loch Lomond and the graceful whooper swans, now leave us to return to their northern breeding grounds. Other winter migrants such as the many short-eared owls and the minuscule goldcrests that sought winter solace here also head back north and east.



Roe deer kids, more often than not are twins

Superb Woodlands

And although one 'doth not a summer make', swallows too eventually return together with martins, to further animate the Park's skies. The martins usually arrive before the swallows and can often be seen skimming over our lochs picking off the blooms of emerging insect life. And of course, the poet's famous 'harbinger of spring', the cuckoo, is one of the later arrivals, its comic but unique voice not usually evident until May, which is also when the 'devil screamers' - the fast-flying swifts - pitch up. Adult cuckoos famously rely on other birds to nurture their young before heading back south as early as July.

There's new life to be seen in the Park's superb woodlands when, during the 'merry' month of May, roe deer drop their kids, more often than not twins. Meanwhile, there are other newcomers with fox and badger cubs born in late winter and early spring and the now well-established population of pine martens producing their kits usually in April. The increasing numbers of martens is certainly making inroads into the population of the alien grey squirrels, which in turn, is enabling our native red squirrels to expand their territories. High up in the glens, it is June before the next generation of our largest land mammals, red deer, arrives, the calves sporting obfuscating white spots, an indication that these were once forest based animals. In many parts of the Park, although most of them calve on quite high ground, more of our red deer are reverting to type, returning in numbers to their woodland heritage.

As spring days advance towards high summer, our days lengthen, giving all birds, other than the nocturnal owls and the rare and mysterious nightjars which still have a presence in the Park, more time in which to gather food for their growing young. Indeed, these long days encourage many birds to go for broke and produce not just one but two or even three broods of youngsters in a single season. For most of the migrant birds, as summer progresses, there is an ever-present sense of urgency. Once midsummer is past and the year begins to decline, they are aware that they have a deadline by which they will have to prepare themselves for the return journey back from whence they came, the Dark Continent of Africa.

Yet, as days draw shorter, there is a sense that we are not necessarily heading for an ending. In fact there is more, a sense of beginning. The year's progeny are beginning their lives, young birds and animals must find their own way in the world. The Monarchs of the Glen, as September comes on to the calendar, are preparing themselves for the big event of their year, the rut, when master stags will compete with each other for the privilege of siring the next generation. But that's another story to be told next time.... in the autumn!

Recent Grant Awards

An impressive £20,000 was raised by businesses participating in the OUR park visitor giving scheme in 2016 which enabled the Friends to support 18 projects throughout the National Park. Some of the most recent grant awards are featured below.



Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui Community Council received cheques for two projects, £800 towards the purchase of a public access defibrillator in Ardlui and £200 towards restoration work on the local war memorial. Pictured from left to right are Friends Chairman James Fraser; Community Council Secretary Mary Haggarty; Anne Bax of Fasadail House; Fred Moore of Cruise Loch Lomond; Community Council member Dawn Gourlay and Friends Vice-Chairman John Urquhart.



Friends Chairman James Fraser presented a cheque for £500 to Cormonachan Woodlands Association Treasurer Jimmy Sim and Chair Liz Evans. The money is being used to create a small new car park at the woodlands south of Lochgoilhead.



Friends Trustee Joyce Deans handed over a cheque for £300 to Paul Cookson of Green Aspirations towards providing woodland skills training courses for youngsters from the Vale of Leven.



The Mountains and The People project received a stage 1 £5,000 grant towards footpath repairs and upgrades on the popular 'frontier hills' throughout the National Park. Tom Wallace, who is Project Manager with the programme, operated by Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, collected the cheque.

Friends of OUR Park is a very successful voluntary visitor giving and volunteering initiative led by the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs with support from 100 local businesses, Scottish Enterprise and the National Park Authority. Here we briefly feature recent grant awards and volunteering activities and profile one of the OUR Park businesses helping to make a real difference in the National Park.

Focus on Local Business



Alistair Morgan, Manager of Tree Zone at Loch Lomond Shores, talks about their business and involvement with the Friends of OUR park scheme.



What attracted you to business in Balloch with TreeZone?

We were attracted to Balloch for various reasons. Its location in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park was quite a draw for TreeZone, with the stunning scenery and natural beauty of the local area, views down the Loch and on those clear sunny days – Ben Lomond dominating the landscape. It all makes for a breath-taking spot to work in, and share with our customers.

With our centre also being within the Loch Lomond Shores shopping centre, it also provided us with access to the existing facilities that they offer, and put us in close and easily accessible proximity to the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area. The Shores are also a favourite stopping off point for many of Scotland's tourists and day-trippers, providing us with an excellent opportunity to provide a memorable experience for anyone visiting the Balloch area.

Tell us about your inspiration and plans for TreeZone.

We were inspired to open our TreeZone courses as we wanted to provide a high quality, nature-based attraction for people of all ages. We wanted to bring people into the outdoors, and give our customers a fun, challenging experience from a perspective they wouldn't normally have the chance to experience. Our aim for the future is to encourage more families, school and youth groups to venture into the trees and woodlands, and nurture the woodlands we use – both at Loch Lomond and Aviemore – so that they can continue to be enjoyed in the future.

www.treezone.co.uk

Why do you support Friends of OUR park?

We wanted to support Friends of OUR park, as we feel it is important to give something back to the area. TreeZone and our customers benefit from the facilities in the National Park and the natural beauty and heritage that the Park has to offer. All of this unfortunately comes at a cost, and without supporting the work of Friends of Loch Lomond and its hardworking volunteers the Park would not be able to sustain the amount of visitors that it currently sees. It is important to us that we support organisations that encourage the accessibility and sustainability of the outdoors for all to enjoy.

What is particularly special for you about the Balloch area?

Balloch is a fantastic location, set on the edge of the loch and the River Leven. There is no shortage of stunning scenery right on its doorstep, and most importantly it is easily accessible by almost every form of transport, even by boat! Even for those without a boat – or a car – you are able to get the train straight from Glasgow into Balloch station.



Friends support officer Andrew Galloway receives the £264 cheque from Alistair Morgan, Manager of Tree Zone Loch Lomond

Make a Difference Day

The latest successful Make a Difference volunteer day was held in the autumn, with the Friends working together with the National Park Authority, the Mountains and The People project and the Countryside Trust.

Although the weather caused havoc with the event at Inversnaid, a successful day was enjoyed by numerous volunteers who came along. Thanks are expressed to Cruise Loch Lomond for providing free transport for the volunteers to Inversnaid from Tarbet Pier.



Participants ready to set off from Tarbet Pier for Make a Difference Day

A WALK ROUND Argyll's Bowling Green

Friend's member, Alistair McIntyre takes us on the first leg of two stages of a walk round Argyll's Bowling Green from the Forestry Commission car park at the mouth of Coilessan Glen to Lochgoilhead. In the next edition of Voice he will take us from Lochgoilhead to the starting-point car park. While the walk can easily be done as one outing, in this account Alistair took 8 hours on a fine day in late July. Covering it over two visits obviously allows more time to explore and savour the landscape. Use of a bicycle could cut the time appreciably, but a certain amount of 'portage' becomes necessary. The first section coincides with part of the Cowal Way, and detailed route-finding, along with public transport information, may be found in the official guide.

Coilessan Glen to Lochgoilhead

As we head off from the car park and take the forestry road up the south side of Coilessan Burn, it's worth looking straight across Loch Long, where a gap in the hills advertises the entrance to Glen Douglas. Geologists tell us that before glaciers gouged out what is now Loch Long, Coilessan Glen and Glen Douglas were as one.

Our route leads through a conifer plantation, but it's not a dull place, with copses of broad-leaved trees, pleasant glades, rugged boulders, and the pools and waterfalls of the gurgling burn. On my most recent visit, in late July, verges are awash with the colour of many flowers. I gather a handful of the ripe seed-heads of yellow rattle, useful if you're hoping to nurture a wildflower corner, since, as a semi-parasitic, it helps suppress grasses. The road seamlessly gives way to a path, enhancing the sense of impending adventure.

Progressing ever upwards and onwards, we leave the realm of the trees behind, and our way to the col becomes ever clearer. Near the top, the route is clearly marked with poles. The people behind the Cowal Way are to be commended for this, and for the various bridges and stiles.

Arriving at the col there is a large pond; it's always worth looking to see who's at home and I spot tadpoles, caddis-fly larvae, and the lurking menace of a large dragonfly larva, probably that of a common hawkler. Your thoughts may turn to an ascent of the Brack to the right, or Cnoc Coinnich to the left, and indeed that is entirely feasible if you're devoting a whole day to this stage.

Rugged Tops

The pleasures of the descent now beckon, and a whole new vista sweeps into view, with Lochgoilhead and its surrounding retinue of rugged tops. This peaceful scene belies a terrible tragedy that took place high above the village. On 17 January 1949 an American B29 Superfortress, returning home after a stint with the legendary Berlin Airlift, crashed near one of the summits in poor weather. All 20 crew were killed and there is a commemorative cairn on the site. Continuing the descent, you should be able to pick out a large isolated boulder on the other side of the glen (NN 217 025). This is Clach nam Breatunnach, the Stone of the Britons, and brings to mind a similarly-named boulder in Glen Falloch. In a fascinating study, members of Cowal Archaeological and Historical Society have used these with other evidence to postulate a possible boundary between the Dark Age kingdoms of Strathclyde (British) and Dalriada, passing close to these stones. Continuing downhill, you pass by several lovely little waterfalls. Stopping to photograph one of these I disturb a roe deer with my antics. Near Lochgoilhead, the track meets a forestry road coming in from the left, the route for those wishing to do the rest of the walk. Here I pass a group of young people with their leaders, most likely from Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre, thankfully saved from recent threat of closure by some heroic souls. If you've planned to end the day here, the village has much to offer.



Cowal Way

with Isle of Bute



Ardgoil Peninsula - a translation might be 'Boiling Heights', a reference to its knobbly profile.



Harry Lauder and the Cowal Connection

It is difficult today to appreciate the extent of the fame of Harry Lauder, who was one of the last of the great music hall entertainers and at one time the highest paid entertainer in the world. Think of Elvis, Sinatra or the Beatles. While he has largely slipped into the past Harry is well known in Cowal, where he settled for some years. The singer and comedian wrote many of his own songs and gave homesick Scottish exiles an idealised version of Scotland, with tartan, heather, cosy crofts and bonnie lasses. What really made Harry the superstar of his day was the availability of gramophone recordings of his sentimental songs with their catchy tunes. He was a pioneer of the recording medium and the first British entertainer to sell a million records. The release of 'I Love a Lassie' in 1900 led to over 20 tours of the USA and Canada, with frequent visits to Australia, New Zealand and other places which had attracted Scottish settlers. It is rare indeed that an individual from any walk of life attracts universal approval and there was some criticism from a small minority who felt that the outlandish 'Scotch' outfits and the characterisations Harry adopted were demeaning rather than amusing and presented a nightmare portrayal of a Scotsman. Some were just jealous of his huge success.

Harry worshipped Nance Valance, who he married in 1891, and their only son John was born later that year. They were rarely apart. In 1903 Harry bought a modest property in London, convenient for his work and near John's school, but it was not 'home'. The family knew Dunoon very well, and although they spend many months travelling or living in London, they had grown very fond of the town and the beautiful countryside around it and wanted it to be their home.

Laudervale

Harry and Nance bought a house just south of Dunoon named Gerhallow House, soon changing its name to Laudervale – a combination of Lauder and Valance. It was regarded as their home from 1908 until the 1930s. Laudervale had lovely gardens, was a stone's throw from the shore and looked out to the Clyde. The grounds

included a Coachman's House and a Lodge, occupied by the family of Tom Vallance who was Lauder's manager. The family made local friends and joined in social life whenever possible. The family had several dogs, an African grey parrot and enjoyed the beautiful scenery and wildlife. There was plenty of fishing and Harry became a member of Cowal Golf Club. John joined the local Volunteers, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. The celebration arranged for John's 21st birthday made a real splash at McColl's Hotel on 10th December 1912. Over a hundred guests enjoyed a special dinner, entertainment and dancing. As John grew to manhood, Harry decided that he wanted to provide him with an estate of his own. Money was no problem, and knowing John's love of the area, he at first leased and then in 1916 bought the lovely Glenbranter estate, with 14,000 acres of land, and a large mansion house. There were farms and all the usual elements which make up a minor laird's estate. Three shepherds, a ploughman, a gamekeeper, a chauffeur and a joiner were some of the staff. The property was a place where John could settle down to an independent, comfortable life fitting for a rich country gentleman, his future assured, and his parents not far away.

Robust Patriot

All these dreams of the future were shattered by the Great War. Harry was a robust patriot, raised huge sums of money for war charities and participated in recruitment drives as well as entertaining the troops. John was sent to the Western Front with the Argylls, was wounded and later tragically killed in action on 28th December 1916. He never became the Laird of Glenbranter but Harry ensured that his memory would live on in the form of the monument which can be visited today. John's uncle Harry designed the sculpture which is dated 1918 and stands on the east side of the A815. It was executed by Samuel Rose Cameron, in marble and bronze and was erected in 1921. The estate was a ghostly presence in the comedian's mind and in his autobiography he described it as being 'tenanted with ghosts' and in 1922 was sold.

Contributed by Ann Galliard

Harry Lauder's 1st Album
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MUSIC ARRANGEMENT

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I LOVE A LASSIE
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Composed by HARRY LAUDER

THE HARRY LAUDER £100,000 FUND
for WOUNDED SCOTTISH SOLDIERS and SAILORS

Celebrating Harry Lauder's Cowal Connections

A series of community led events are planned throughout 2017 to celebrate Harry Lauder's Cowal connections. Some of the events planned so far are listed below.

SATURDAY 15th APRIL ONWARDS

HARRY LAUDER EXHIBITION

The existing Harry Lauder exhibition in the Castle House Museum in Dunoon is being extended to showcase his links with Dunoon and Cowal. The exhibition will include a selection of photographs and memorabilia.

FRIDAY 12th MAY

LAUDER VARIETY CONCERT

A varied programme featuring local singers, fiddlers, pipers, and good humour in Strachur Memorial Hall. Tickets £10 & £8; accompanied schoolchildren free. Proceeds to hall fund.

SUNDAY 14th MAY

ROAMIN' IN THE GLOAMIN' HERITAGE TOUR

MONDAY 2nd - SATURDAY 7th OCTOBER

WORLD WAR 1 COMMEMORATION

A series of concerts, events, exhibitions, and talks, including a focus on Harry Lauder and his son John, who was tragically killed in 1916 in WW1. All events being held in the recently transformed Dunoon Burgh Hall-for more details see- www.dunoonburghhall.org.uk

FRIDAY 6th – SUNDAY 15th OCTOBER

COWALFEST 2017

A programme of walks and events at venues throughout Cowal that will also feature Harry Lauder's Cowal Connections. For further details see- www.cowalfest.org



ROAMIN' IN THE GLOAMIN' HERITAGE TOUR

SUNDAY 14TH MAY

The Cowal Peninsula has stunningly beautiful scenery and a rich cultural heritage and as part of our contribution to the special year celebrating Harry Lauder's Cowal Connection we would like to share a few of Cowal's gems with you.

Our coach will leave from Balloch and travel north along Loch Lomondside, over the Rest and be Thankful and then south to Glenbranter. Here we will visit the recently improved memorial site that Harry Lauder, who was one of the last of the great music hall entertainers, built to honour his son, John, who was killed 100 years ago during WW1.

Our journey then continues south by Loch Eck to the wonderful Benmore Botanic Garden that in May is a riot of colour and a delight for anyone – gardener or not!

Lunch will be provided here followed by an opportunity to explore the gardens on foot or on the Explorer bus which will allow access to those less able to walk a distance. The journey then continues over the delightful winding road to Glendaruel and if time permits we may visit the historic church at Kilmodan. Return then north to Strachur, Arrochar and Balloch.

JOIN US ON THIS UNIQUE TRIP BY BOOKING YOUR SPACE NOW.

We only have space for 33, just £25 for an all-inclusive ticket. Phone the Friends Balloch office 01389 727761 now to book your place and confirm by sending a cheque payable to Friends of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs.

Tour Price £25 including lunch and admission to Benmore Botanic Garden

Depart from Balloch at 9.15am and return approx 4.30pm (pick up points en route).



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www.lusshighlandgames.co.uk

Dates for the diary

SUNDAY 30th APRIL

HAMPDEN TO LOCH LOMOND KILT WALK

A unique Scottish charity event where every penny raised by walkers and fundraisers goes towards supporting children throughout Scotland. Revamped for 2016, the 26-mile walk will finish in Moss o' Balloch Park.

TUESDAY 16th MAY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This annual member's event with a buffet meal and guest speakers on interesting heritage topics including Loch Lomond's Treasure Islands and Harry Lauder's Cowal Connection. To be held at Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, Luss. An optional buffet meal between 6.00pm and 7.30pm followed by the AGM and guest speakers with a 9pm finish. Please book the buffet meal in advance (£10).

SATURDAY 1st JULY

LUSS HIGHLAND GAMES & FRIENDS WELCOME TENT

Come along and enjoy one of Scotland's oldest Highland Games events and visit our welcome tent to meet some of our Trustees and volunteers. The Games take place from 11am to 5pm and more details are available at www.lusshighlandgames.co.uk.

SAT 15th TO SUN 30th JULY

CALLANDER SUMMERFEST

Celebrate the summer holidays in Callander! Music, film, exhibitions, art & craft workshops, children's activities, walks and lots more from 15 to 29 July and featuring Phil Cunningham & Ali Bain on 17 August.

Full details on www.callandercdt.org.uk or Facebook @CallanderSummerfest

WEDNESDAY 16th AUGUST

A LOCH LOMOND SUNSET CRUISE

Held in conjunction with the Lennox Literary Society, this evening event offers members the chance to enjoy a scenic trip on Loch Lomond complete with musical entertainment. Leaves Sweeney's Boatyard in Balloch at 7pm, returning at 9pm. Tickets cost £12 and booking in advance is essential.

SUNDAY 26th NOVEMBER

CHRISTMAS AT ROSS PRIORY

Begin your festive celebrations with a popular informal gathering with musical entertainment, craft stalls and light Christmas fare. More details will be published in the autumn edition of Voice, but our annual reception is worth pencilling into your diary now.

For full details of any of the above events, or to make a booking, please email Andrew Galloway at info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk or call 01389 727761 between 9.30am and 4pm Tuesday to Friday. Our office address is Carrochan, Carrochan Road, Balloch G83 8EG.



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A successful family farm diversification holiday business

Oakwoods Farm, near the village of Drymen at the south east corner of Loch Lomond, has been in the ownership of the Martin family for three generations and the current owners and custodians, Jamie and Ingeborg Martin, have worked hard over the past 20 years to develop a cluster of high quality holiday lodges which enjoy very high year round occupancy levels. They have plans to develop the business further as part of an effort to sustain the small farm and provide a future for their two children who also help out with running their labour-intensive tourism enterprise.



MANY YEARS AGO, Jamie Martin, who has lived on Oakwoods Farm all his life, recognised he needed to diversify the farm business to secure its long-term viability and to enable his family to continue living there. Since his marriage to Ingeborg in 1992 they have jointly built up and successfully operated several tourism enterprises on the farm.

Initially, alongside the farm operation, they ran a successful bed and breakfast business and then, on a phased basis, they gradually built up a very successful self-catering holiday business with the development of four luxury lodges that consistently achieve five-star quality

assurance gradings from VisitScotland. More recently, they have added a fifth property to their self-catering holiday business with the purchase of Dalnair Castle Lodge in nearby Croftamie which has also achieved a five-star rating and they now have plans to expand their operation with the installation of a cluster of 'wee lodges'.

In the medium term the Martins would like to move into semi-retirement with daughter Evelyn taking on the day to day running of the self-catering business and Jamie being able to devote more time to directly running the stock and grazing side of their small farm (and Ingeborg being able to put her feet up with a few well deserved G&Ts now and then). With this in mind they recently secured planning permission for a retiral home on the farm with the support of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, local MSP Bruce Crawford and other bodies.

Jamie takes up the story: "I think our family business is fairly unique in today's market. We offer high quality self-catering accommodation lodges

each with their own hot tub in what is an increasingly competitive environment and we recognise we need to stay on top of our game providing high quality customer service which has been the cornerstone of our success.

"Our family business has gone from strength because of the quality of the customer service we are able to provide to our guests. What was once a modest family business has grown to become a well-established business sleeping 38 guests running at 80-90% year-round occupancy rates with regular repeat guests from all over the world.

"Over 80% of our guests are on short breaks which means in any one week we can have as many as 114 guests on site with 15 changeovers and all this entails. This requires a family effort to stay on top of things with daughter Evelyn, son Jordan and Ingeborg's mum all helping out."

For further details of Loch Lomond Luxury Lodges see www.lochlomond-holidays.co.uk.

Meet the Martins

Jamie has worked on the small family farm since he was a youngster and married Ingeborg in 1992. Ingeborg is a qualified primary teacher and continued to work while they built up their tourism business. They have two children, Evelyn (20) who is studying at Stirling University and Jordan (17) who has ambitions to train as a commercial pilot when he leaves Balfron High School. Jamie and Ingeborg's dream is to eventually retire on the farm and to keep the lodge business in the family with their daughter, Evelyn taking this on gradually while Jamie builds up a herd of 15-20 Highland cows and 20 or so pedigree Textel sheep. Meanwhile, Jamie and Ingeborg are kept busy running the self-catering business and shuttling their son and daughter to various sporting activities and events.



Foundation Supporters £500 MINIMUM

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www.hpb-trossachs.co.uk

Tigh Mor Trossachs is the Scottish flagship of the Holiday Property Bond (www.hpb.co.uk). It was formerly the Trossachs Hotel which by 1990 had fallen into a state of disrepair. Tigh Mor was completely renovated in 1992 and now has 76 properties, an indoor swimming pool and extensive leisure facilities.

• OPTICAL EXPRESS & MOULSDALE FOUNDATION

Telephone: 0800 023 20 20

email: enquiries@opticalexpress.com

www.opticalexpress.com

The Mouldsdale Foundation & Optical Express are proud to support the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. For 35 years, the friends have been working to protect the area's environmental heritage, promote it as a most special part of Scotland, and provide for its future through a range of projects for people and for wildlife.

• ROSS PRIORY

Gartocharn G83 8NL 0141 548 3565

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The 4-star Lodge on Loch Lomond Hotel has a unique lochside setting. It offers stylish accommodation, some with en-suite saunas and private balconies, Colquhoun's, a 2 AA rosette restaurant with panoramic views of the Loch and mountains and leisure facilities with swimming pool.

• LOCH KATRINE

Trossachs Pier, Loch Katrine, By Callander,

Stirling FK17 8HZ

Information and Reservations - (01877) 332000

www.lochkatrine.com

Loch Katrine - a special experience for everyone to enjoy. Cruising Loch Katrine in the heart of The Trossachs is a special experience - on the classic steamship 'Sir Walter Scott', or on 'Lady of the Lake'. Visitor amenities include lochside walks, shopping, cycle hire and Katrine Café. Cruises depart daily (April until October), with the first sailing at 10:30am.

• LOVE LOCH LOMOND

email: info@lovelochlomond.com

www.lovelochlomond.com

Love Loch Lomond is a recently formed industry led Destination

Organisation that operates in the Loch Lomond, Strathendrick, West Dunbartonshire and Clyde Sea Lochs areas. It is dedicated to working on a collaborative basis to capitalise on the area's strong tourism potential.

• ARDOCH

Gartocharn G83 8ND 01389 710401

email: luke@ardoch-scotland.com

www.ardoch-scotland.com

Ardoch is an exceptional venue for business seminars and family reunions. There are 18 bedrooms and numerous meeting rooms in a mix of traditional and contemporary spaces most of which overlook Loch Lomond. Hire Ardoch on an exclusive basis and be assured of total privacy. Phone Luke for details.

• LUSS ESTATES

Luss Estates Company, Arnburn Arden

Argyll, G83 8RH

email: estateoffice@lussestates.co.uk

www.lussestates.co.uk

One of Scotland's greatest Estates, spanning 40,000+ acres and eight centuries of continuous ownership by the family of Colquhoun of Luss. Today we combine farming, forestry, tourism, property and power generation - protecting, preserving and developing the estate to enrich and ensure the future of the land, resources, villages, communities and people which are at our heart.

• ARGYLL HOLIDAYS

Lochgoilhead PA24 8AD 08454596412

www.argyllholidays.com

The Campbell family have developed quality holiday parks and hotels in seven stunning scenic locations in Argyll with a number in, or close to, the National Park. They are all easily accessible and just within an hour from Glasgow. As part of their growing emphasis on green and active holidays, Argyll Holidays are delighted to be supporting the work of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs.

Business Plus Supporters £250 MINIMUM

• THE OAK TREE INN BALMAHA

Glasgow, G63 0JQ Tel: 01360 870 357

email: info@oak-tree-inn.co.uk

www.oak-tree-inn.co.uk

Family run inn on east side of Loch Lomond adjacent to WHW, serving good food all day with bunk, standard and deluxe accommodation available

• THE WINNOCK HOTEL

The Square, Drymen, Loch Lomond, G63 0BL

Tel: 01360 660 245

email: info@winnockhotel.com

www.winnockhotel.com

The Winnock Hotel in Drymen is the perfect choice for everything from a delicious bar meal through to a fun-filled party-night, ceilidh or special event.

• BEST WESTERN BUCHANAN ARMS HOTEL AND SPA

23 Main Street, Drymen, Glasgow G63 0BQ

Tel: 01360 660 588

email: info@buchananarms.co.uk

www.buchananarms.co.uk

One of the finest and most popular small hotels in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, with a character and charm which sits peacefully and calmly with the qualities of its surroundings.

• CRUISE LOCH LOMOND

The Boatyard, Tarbet, Loch Lomond, G83 7DG

Tel: 01301 702 356

email: enquiries@cruiselochlomond.co.uk

www.cruiselochlomond.co.uk

Experience the serenity of the bonnie banks through the winter on award winning cruises - Rambler; Explorer; Rob Roy Discovery, Ben Lomond Hike. From Tarbet, Luss, Inversnaid, Balmaha, Rowardennan.

• SWEENEY'S CRUISES

Balloch, Loch Lomond, G83 8SS

Tel: 01389 752 376

email: info@sweeneyscruises.com

www.sweeneyscruises.com

Scottish Tourist Board 4-star tours on Loch Lomond. All cruises have live commentary, bar and toilet facilities. Open 7 days a week all year round.

• BALMILLIG B & B

64B Colquhoun St, Helensburgh, G84 9JP

Tel: 01436 674 922

email: anne@balmillig.co.uk

www.balmillig.co.uk

Superb 4 star accommodation minutes from the National Park's southern edge. An environmentally committed business also offering bespoke guided tours - day walking and mountain guiding.

• LOMOND LUXURY LODGES

Croftamie, By Glasgow G63 0EX

Tel: 01360 660054

email: info@lochlomond-holidays.co.uk

www.lochlomond-holidays.co.uk

5 Star luxury lodges located within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park making this family-run business an ideal base for touring this truly exceptional area.

• CALLANDER ENTERPRISE

email: cal-ent@incallander.co.uk

www.twitter.com/incallander

www.incallander.co.uk

Callander Enterprise is dynamic business group with ambitious objectives to benefit the entire business community in the area. The 200+ members cover the largest settlement within the National Park

• THE MYRTLE INN HOLIDAY COTTAGE

Tel: 01877 330 919 Mobile 07703838800

myrtleinn@btconnect.com

New on the self-catering list - cottage sleeps up to five, only a few minutes from all the shops with a handy Spar even closer and a brand new coffee shop opening in May!

• DEEPSTREAM DESIGN

Coach House Cottage, Station Rd, Rhu G84

Tel: 07795 156681 pyko@me.com

Coming from an experienced blue-chip background. Deepstream offer a full range of graphic design services. Friends supporters receive a 15% discount on first project.


• LOCH LOMOND SEAPLANES

PO Box 26613, Helensburgh G84 9YG

Tel 01436675030

info@lochlomondseaplanes.com

Fly in a luxury seaplane back to the halycon days of travel with a first class seat over the most magnificent landscape in the world. Take off from the romantic shores of Loch Lomond. Discovery tours from £129 to £169. Flight vouchers make the perfect gift.

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Friends of Loch Lomond

and The Trossachs

Carrochan, Carrochan Road,

Balloch G83 8EG

Telephone: 01389 727761

Email: [info@](mailto:info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk)

lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

Business Supporters £100 MINIMUM

• POPPIES HOTEL & RESTAURANT

Leny Road, Callander FK17 8AL

Tel: 01877 330 329

www.poppieshotel.com

• VENACHAR LOCHSIDE

Loch Venachar, Callander FK17 8HP

Tel: 01877 330 011

www.venachar-lochside.co.uk

• WHEELS CYCLING CENTRE - BIKES / HIRE

Invertrossachs Rd, Callander, FK17 8HW

Tel: 01877 331 100

www.scottish-cycling.com

• THE KILTED SKIRLIE

Ben Lomond Way, Loch Lomond Shores, Balloch

G83 8QPTel: 01389 754 759 www.kiltedskirlie.co.uk

• MAID OF THE LOCH

The Pier, Pier Road, Balloch G83 8QX

Tel: 01389 711865 www.maidoftheloch.com

• PAUL SAUNDERS PHOTOGRAPHY

7 Gartness Court Drymen, Glasgow G63 0AX

Tel: 01360 661029

www.paulsaundersphotography.com

• FOREST HOLIDAYS www.forestholidays.co.uk

Argyll Forest and Strathyre Tel 08451308223

• ASHTINS AROMATICS

Loch Lomond Shores, Balloch.

Tel: 01389 720888 www.ashtins.co.uk

• DELI ECOSSE

Ancaster Square, Callander FK17 8ED.

Tel: 01877 331220 www.deliecosse.co.uk

• WWW.HOLIDAYCOTTAGES.CO.UK

Tel: 01237 426287

www.holidaycottages.co.uk/scotland

• APPLEJACKS


2 Ancaster Square, Callander FK17 8ED.

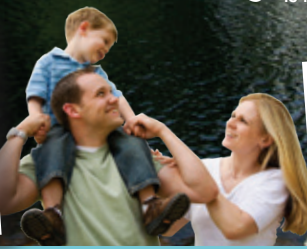
Tel: 01877 330370

LOCH KATRINE.COM

Home of the Steamship Sir Walter Scott

Sailings and events throughout the year

 The Steamship Sir Walter Scott is fully wheelchair friendly



Steeped in history and legend, Loch Katrine is the perfect place to start your Trossachs adventure. Take a minute, enjoy the breathtaking scenery and explore somewhere special.

- Classic steamship cruises on the iconic *Sir Walter Scott*
- Legends of the Loch cruise on the *Lady of the Lake*
- Family friendly special events throughout the year
- Walking & cycling on the shores of Loch Katrine
- Brenachoile Restaurant • Katrine Gifts
- Katrinewheelz - Cycle hire • Borg Grech Photography
- Stronachlachar Tearoom



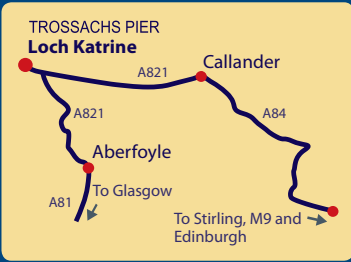
Actors in period dress as Queen Victoria and Prince Albert



COMING SOON

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Trossachs Pier, Loch Katrine, by Callander, Stirling FK17 8HZ
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www.lochkatrine.com







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