

The

Voice

The magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

**Making the National Park
more accessible for
walkers and cyclists**

ALSO INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

Luss at a Crossroads, Nature in the Park, Park News, Events *and more*



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WELCOME TO THIS AUTUMN EDITION OF VOICE, with features 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 try and make a difference through campaigning, fundraising and volunteering activities working closely with partners such the Park Authority, local communities and tourism groups.

In this edition we include a special feature on a range of access issues including the ambitious five-year Mountains and the People project that is making a positive impact in the National Park with a number of paths being improved by trainee path builders and contractors. We are pleased to be supporting this project through the popular OUR park visitor giving scheme we operate with 100 local tourism businesses.

There is now a real momentum behind improving access for walkers and cyclists in many parts of the National Park and it is encouraging to see a raft of local community groups taking the lead in improving existing, and creating new, low level family friendly path networks with the support of the National Park, the Friends and other partners.

A series of paths leaflets, produced by local groups for the Loch Lomond and Clyde Sea Lochs area, have recently been funded by the Friends from the OUR park visitor giving scheme. The Friends also recently joined forces with the Scottish Woodland Trust and Love Loch Lomond to invest in much needed improvements to the muddy Whinneyhill path at the southern end of Loch Lomond and, with the help of a range of partners, path projects in Glenbranter, Killin, Tyndrum, Lochearnside, Lochgoilhead, Balmaha and Luss are currently being progressed.

The Friends' Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland HLF-funded initiative has been

a great success. An attractive booklet and exhibition featuring the wonders of Loch Lomond, through the writings of Tom and the work of 300 schoolchildren attending the six primary schools around the loch, were launched at Weirfest in June. The exhibition featuring the children's work has been on display for the summer months at Balmaha Visitor Centre and has proved to be very popular as has the booklet which provides a great introduction to Loch Lomond and is a useful educational resource for schools.

Although the weather conditions were variable over the summer months, the National Park has continued to be a popular destination for UK and overseas holidaymakers and day visitors from different parts of Scotland. There are reports that despite the uncertainty created by the Brexit vote there has been a noticeable rise in European and long haul visitors, no doubt encouraged by the weak pound. However, the visitor infrastructure and support visitor management services in areas such as Loch Lomond have struggled to cope at busy times.

There are also some underlying issues concerning the quality of visitor management which, in part, can be attributed to public sector cuts in frontline services and the unsatisfactory management arrangements for some facilities in public ownership. Interestingly, in recent months some community groups have been



expressing interest in taking over the ownership and management of public car parks and toilets in visitor honeypot locations such as Luss, Balmaha and Callander.

Pleasingly, Stirling Council has recently stepped up investment in upgrading public toilets in popular tourist spots such as Killin and Tyndrum and hopefully the roll out of the Your Park camping initiative and the revitalised Respect campaign, led by the National Park with the support of partners, will help improve the situation on the ground. But this will require effective back up with adequate staffing resources across a large area at peak times in particular to supplement the already very stretched ranger and police services.

I hope you will enjoy reading this latest edition of 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. Why not try out one of the many new and improved paths featured in this edition of Voice and appreciate the stunning autumnal colours at their best? Thank you for continuing to support the work of the Friends.

All the very best.

JAMES FRASER
Chair - Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs



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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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Cover photo – Walkers enjoying the Great Trossachs Forest. Photo courtesy of Forestry Commission Scotland. Photo courtesy of National Trust for Scotland. Some beautiful photographs of the National Park are available to purchase as framed or canvas wrap pictures from our online shop at www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

The historic conservation village of Luss on the banks of Loch Lomond is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the National Park and has just had one of its busiest summer ever following record levels of investment by Luss Estates and other local tourism businesses in recent years. However, the village has struggled to cope with the large influx in visitors and there is an urgent need for a well-coordinated visitor management action plan involving public agencies such as the National Park Authority and Argyll and Bute Council working closely with local community and business groups to improve the situation. If there is no co-ordinated action then Luss is in danger of losing its appeal to visitors and no longer being a jewel in Loch Lomond's tourist crown.

Here we explore some of the recent developments and the major visitor management challenges facing Luss which is widely recognised as one of Scotland's top visitor destinations with almost 1 million visitors each year.

Setting the Scene

The threat of Luss Primary School closure several years ago was the trigger for Sir Malcolm Colquhoun of Luss Estates to commission a masterplan to revitalise the village of Luss and the surrounding area. With the strong leadership of Sir Malcolm supported by his Chief Executive, Simon Miller and other staff, they have made a major contribution to strengthening the appeal of the village with an investment of over £8 million in a number of projects including the transformation of Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, opening of quality gift shops, a seafood restaurant and smokehouse as well as re-instating the village petrol station. A series of civic pride initiatives have also been supported including installing a network of information boards and producing a new guidebook to tell the story of the historic village. A best kept garden competition has been introduced and plans for a new clan museum are being progressed. Some low cost housing is also planned on land donated by Luss Estates to help provide homes for people working in the village.

Alongside this a number of other local businesses, such as the Lodge on Loch Lomond Hotel and the Coach House, have invested in upgrading and expansion schemes. Encouragingly, Luss has grown more popular as a loch cruising destination and departure point with three cruise companies now offering a range of cruise options from the pier while nearby a wide variety of watersports opportunities are now available. The Pier Shop has also been

recently re-opened by the enterprising Fraser family who run the award winning Oak Tree Inn and St Mocha Coffee Shop in Balmaha on the other side of the loch.

Visitor Management Challenges

As visitor numbers have steadily grown to almost 1 million annually the compact historic planned village (population 120 residents) has struggled to cope and is now facing a number of major visitor management challenges that urgently need to be addressed.

Most of the visitors arrive by car or coach and often at peak times such as weekends and the main holiday periods. The growth in visitor numbers has often led to gridlock in the village with the main car park full and the narrow village street struggling to cope due to indiscriminate car parking and cars circulating in conflict with large flows of pedestrians. The main public toilets have also struggled to cope and this has been exacerbated by the Park Authority's decision to reduce the period of staffing cover over the main tourist season as part of budget cuts. There are also major challenges staying on top of other basic issues such as the proliferation of signs and A-boards, litter clearance and street sweeping to maintain the overall quality of the streetscape and ambience of the village.

Argyll and Bute Council has been grappling with traffic management issues for a number of years.

The Council recently proposed introducing coach parking charges in the main car park and this quickly led to the formation of a business action group to lobby successfully against the introduction of charges. With an estimated 200,000 coach passengers a year and the volatility of the coach market local businesses, understandably, were concerned that the imposition of charges would simply lead to coaches by-passing Luss and moving on to other destinations where coach parking is free. This of course would have a serious impact on business trading conditions in the village and, fortunately, Argyll and Bute Council accepted these arguments.

There are currently controversial plans to introduce street parking charges and no parking areas but this is considered to be seriously flawed by a number of local businesses, the Community Council, Luss Estates and the Friends. The plans fail to address the fundamental issue of increasing car parking capacity on the edge of the village and creating a more pedestrian friendly area in the heart of the village with resident parking only. There are also serious doubts that the package of parking restrictions and meter charging would be adequately patrolled to improve the situation.

Luss Estates has generously offered to build a new car park on the edge of the village at their expense and this is identified as an opportunity in the latest National Park Local Development Plan. This offer should be taken up by the Council

without delay and linked to a more workable set of car parking and traffic management proposals that enjoys the support of the local community (residents and businesses). These alternative proposals are strongly supported by the Friends, Luss Estates and others locally.

Public toilet management is also a major current issue in the village. Several years ago the Park Authority invested over £100,000 in much needed new toilets in the village and introduced a turnstile arrangement with toilet users having to pay 30p. The charging policy was generally supported as it was recognised that visitors wouldn't mind paying if the monies raised were used to invest in staff to maintain the toilet cleanliness to a high standard. Unfortunately the turnstile arrangement has led to large queues at peak times as visitors scramble for change with delays getting through the turnstile. The Park Authority also cut back the hours of staff cover which has led to problems of cleanliness and lots of complaints to neighbouring businesses. The newly formed Luss Business Association, the Friends and the Community Council are all lobbying for an improvement in the toilet management arrangements as they are currently deficient and not fit for purpose in such a busy and high profile location in the National Park.

The Community Development Trust are at the early stages of exploring the possibility of taking on the ownership/lease of the main car park with a view to the car parking income being used to strengthen visitor management in the village. It has been suggested some of the funds generated could employ a village officer to help address issues such as more regular litter collections and to provide information to visitors.

The Way Forward

Following a recent walkabout in the village and discussions with local businesses and community representatives the Friends Chairman, James Fraser said: "It is great to see so many businesses doing so well in the village and the recent substantial investment in new and upgraded businesses is impressive, as is the ongoing effort by local residents to maintain such attractive floral displays. However, the village is facing serious challenges coping with the growing influx of visitors at a time public agencies are faced with cutbacks in funding which is sadly increasingly evident on the ground with a dilution in investment maintaining the basic village visitor infrastructure."

He added: "It is clear if Luss is going to maintain its popularity as one of Scotland's top visitor destinations in a fiercely competitive market then efforts to improve visitor management issues need to be given a higher priority and they require to be addressed on a more comprehensive and consistent basis by public agencies working closely with local community and business interests. There are a number of emerging destinations that are working hard to provide a quality visitor experience in the central belt and elsewhere and there is a great danger that inaction in addressing visitor management issues in Luss could lead to an erosion in its appeal to visitors."



Luss at a Crossroads



Development Digest

Some of the most recent developments in the village include:

Village Housing

A site close to the village school has recently been gifted by Luss Estates to Link Housing Association for building five affordable houses. In addition to donating the land Luss Estates has also very generously agreed to provide financial support to bridge the gap between available grant funding and the actual build costs to help ensure the development happens soon to accommodate local families.

Luss Filling Station

This unmanned 24 hour filling station was opened in July by Luss Estates and has been developed on the old filling station site in the car park in Luss. The old filling station had ceased operation over twenty years ago.

Luss Coach House

The popular Coach House Coffee Shop, which is owned and managed by former Friends Chair, Rowena Ferguson, has recently been extended and given a makeover with the addition of an attractive covered glass courtyard and a bothy area.



The well-established coffee shop is famous for its home-made soups and scones and is a firm favourite with regular visitors to Luss as is the quirky gift shop in the foyer area.

Luss Pier Shop

Stuart and David Fraser from the St Mocha Coffee Shop in Balmaha secured the lease of the Luss Pier Shop and they have tastefully renovated the interior of the shop which re-opened in June. Visitors can buy cruise and waterbus tickets for all services leaving Luss Pier, enjoy Scottish roasted coffee and homemade ice creams, and make use of the reopened toilets.



Clan Shop

Luss Estates has recently transformed Shore Cottage into The Clan Shop. The village's oldest cottage underwent an internal refurbishment with clan memorabilia and sells traditional Scottish handicrafts.

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

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.

The Falls of Cowal and Argyll Forest Park

Much of Cowal and all of the Argyll Forest Park are in the National Park. Its waterfalls are not spectacular, but many of them have both charm and distinctiveness, enhancing a visit to this rugged peninsula. For most visitors Cowal is likely to be entered from Arrochar by the A83. At first the road crosses the head of Loch Long, just beyond which a singular mountain burn tumbles in a series of falls from the Cobbler to the road at the lochside. These are the Falls of Allt a' Bhalachain, the burn of the young man. Beside the burn the path up the hill climbs steeply until it reaches the corrie beneath the fantastic rock summits of The Cobbler (Ben Arthur). Here there are fine waterfalls which, unlike those lower down, are unobscured by the spruce trees of the Ardgarten Forest. Further on is Easan Dubh. Bealach an Easain Duibh, the pass of the place of the black waterfalls, is the older name of the defile universally known as the 'Rest and be Thankful' between

Arrochar and Inveraray. It is situated under Beinnan Lochain, on the rather more unfashionable side of the pass. The waterfall which gives its name to the place is at the foot of Loch Restil and is best seen on the ascent of the pass from Butterbridge.

From the Rest an appealing side-road descends to Lochgoilhead. The Donich Falls constitute a favourite excursion from the village. They are situated on the Cowal Way a short distance from Lochgoilhead, and are called Easan Dubh, the black falls, on the map.

Opposite Lochgoilhead there are attractive mountain falls situated on the steep descent between Curra Lochan and Lettermay Burn on the Cowal Way. Sruth Ban, the white spout, falls 120 metres in an extended series of cascades. For Strachur follow Hell's Glen from Lochgoilhead. A local fall, another Eas Dubh, provides a short excursion for visitors to Strachur. Nearby is a prominent hill-fort, An Dun.

Somewhat disconcertingly the Glenbranter forest car park is on the site of the late Sir Harry Lauder's old house. The rascally entertainer haunts the district at the head of Loch Eck. From the car park the Lauder Walk [yellow markers] leads through the forest to the gorge of the Allt Robuic, Robert's Burn. The walk is circular and marker posts guide you unmistakably to the Glenbranter Falls well-set in woodland. A diversion from the Cowal Way also takes in the falls. Glenbranter was acquired as an arboretum by the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1921, and there are some fine specimen trees to be seen on this walk. Every variety of rhododendron was planted because it was considered that the conditions resembled the Himalayas, but as is the case elsewhere, the rhododendrons are now thought to be rather a nuisance. The Younger Botanic Gardens became more important than Glenbranter after that garden was gifted to the nation in 1925.

Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), the poet, visited Glenfinart, the country residence near Ardentiny of George Murray, 5th Earl of Dunmore (1762-1836) twice. In Written in the Highlands of Scotland Sep 12th, he wrote a poem [1812], reminiscent of Wordsworth, in which he refers to Fingal's Falls, near the head of the glen:

*Oft shall my weary mind recall
Amid the hum and stir of men,
Thy beechen grove and waterfall*

Although Rogers states that the falls were "near the head of the glen" they are almost certainly those situated opposite the entrance to Glenfinart House. Not far away is Fingal's Well. North of Dunoon is the most attractive glen in Cowal, Glen Massan. The glen begins among the great trees of Benmore and the clear waters of the river tumble

splendidly beside the road. Where the road climbs steeply the river flows through a considerable gorge. There is no complete view of the Falls of Glen Massan, which consist of a series of steps. The upper river is a gentle stream. It falls three metres into a fine pool and then tumbles into a sequence of potholes, which illustrate the way in which such falls are formed. The water is crystal clear in the summertime and every detail of the river bed is visible. In places the sides of two potholes have collapsed; elsewhere there are natural arches. The brilliant water then falls five metres down a further staircase. The Falls of Glen Massan are quite the most picturesque river falls in the Clyde basin. It is an idyllic place. Above these falls, in the corrie where the river rises, is Eas an Laoigh.

Opposite the entrance to the younger Botanic Garden at Benmore is Puck's Glen. There are a number of walks in the forest and a variety of ways of reaching the glen, the most usual way being the path from the car park opposite the entrance to the botanic garden. This path passes the ruins of Puck's House, a Victorian Folly, before dropping steeply into the rocky chasm. There are twelve little falls in this glen, which shelters a wide variety of ferns and mosses in a damp environment.

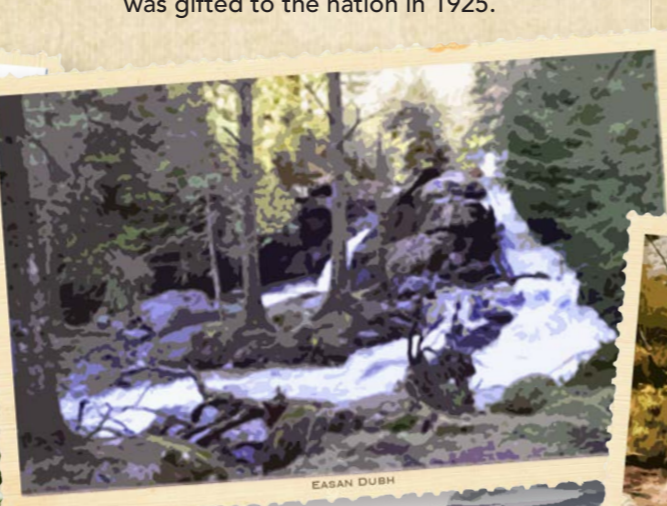
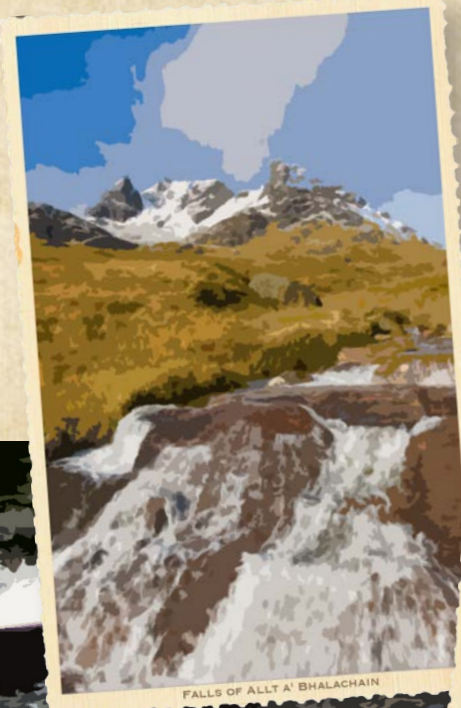


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Outdoor Recreation Plan bearing fruit in the National Park

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



Improving and expanding the ways that people can access and enjoy the stunning landscape of the National Park is a key role of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, and a priority for so many communities, businesses and organisations across the Park.

When we published the National Park's £8.7m five year Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2013 our aim was to transform access across the Park. Creating new and improved paths provides fantastic experiences for visitors and residents, protects our fragile habitats, helps land managers and boosts the economy.

This year has been significant in the delivery of these goals, as we see the work of the first years of the Outdoor Recreation Plan bearing fruit with more than 450 miles of pathways joined up by the new sections that have been built.

'Scotland's National Parks: The Mountains & The People' is the most significant long-term access partnership project being supported by the Park Authority. The project is improving paths across both of Scotland's National Parks. The feature on the project in this edition of The Voice gives wonderful insight into the remarkable, challenging work of repairing paths on our iconic hills. It is great to see this edition showcasing a number of new and improved paths in the Park.

One project I would like to highlight in more detail is the Loch Earn Railway Path which celebrated the completion of its £550,000 second phase in August. The ribbon was cut on the Tynreoch section of the path between Lochearnhead, St Fillans and Comrie, which used to be the section of railway line that connected the Callander and Oban line of the Caledonian Railway. A further £240,000 has been secured for Phase 3 later this year which will link St Fillans further west in to Gientarken Woods.

The project, led by St Fillans Community Trust demonstrates how to successfully tackle the complex work of opening up routes that cross land with different owners, in different communities, with different opportunities for funding.

St Fillans Community Trust is leading the work, with support, funding and services from a broad range of organisations and landowners. We are proud to be one of those partners.



The Loch Earn Railway Path is one of many routes in the National Park that reach beyond our borders. Not only does this project join up communities to create an easy way to explore more of the Park, it will also form part of the cross-Scotland Pilgrim's Way. This will extend from Iona to St Andrews, and is a priority within Scotland's National Walking and Cycling Network. We are working with Sustrans and other partners to connect up more long distance routes through the National Park.

Along with increasing access, the Outdoor Recreation Plan is also about making it easier for people to find and use information about routes in the Park. We have made a real effort to increase the amount of information available online, including making it can easier to be accessed by mobile when out and about. We have produced routes cards and itineraries for cycling and walking, and routes are in development for kayak trails on our many inland lochs, and also the sea lochs in Argyll. More on that soon!



A wide range of projects big and small are opening up and improving routes on land and water across the National Park, including on paths on our most popular hills, cycling and shared use paths, and extending the Waterbus service on Loch Lomond. Creating and extending routes and trails is only possible through collaboration with many partners, and we thank the communities, landowners, agencies and organisations - including The Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs - for working with us to achieve so much.

Find out more at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org

find us on facebook, follow us on twitter, watch us on youtube





The Park is an ever-changing kaleidoscope of mood and colour but constant is that ever changing panoply of wildlife

Nature of the Park



Keith Graham writes about the changing colours of the seasons and how the rich variety of wildlife in the National Park deals with the transition from summer to autumn and winter.

THE PASSAGE of the year is most clearly defined by colour change. If the onset of spring brings fresh greenery to the landscape of the Park, as summer begins to ebb, its lush greenery gives way to an insidious blush of warmer colours. Bell heather begins to purple the hillsides in August and then later comes the more common ling; yet also to be seen are the subtle hues of blue in the shape of delicate Scottish bluebells, better known by some as harebells. Soon however, as the hours of daylight perceptibly shorten, approaching autumn begins to make its influence properly felt. Yellows, golds, browns and reds embellish deciduous woodland and copper coloured brackens further transform hillsides. It is almost as if our amazingly varied landscape is going through a metamorphosis. Gradually, the colours become ever stronger, in this final last fling before the onset of winter.

Winter is of course, a testing time for wildlife. But this challenge provokes a range of different responses from our animals and birds. Some meet that challenge by departing for warmer climes. Some left many weeks ago. Cuckoos can be regarded as the exceptions that prove the rule for, unlike any of their avian cousins, they do not appear to have concern about the welfare of their off-spring, leaving their future entirely in the hands of doting foster parents and departing these shores as early as July. The sojourn of swifts here is also surprisingly short. They arrive in May and are gone again by mid-August.

First-time Migrants

Others linger a mite longer. Swallows begin to gather in September in preparation for their enormous six thousand-mile migration to South Africa but martins tend to dwell a little longer before departing sometimes as late as October. They really do fulfil their breeding ambitions often rearing three broods during their summer time in these northern latitudes. The ospreys, that have fished our lochs the summer long, are also quite early to depart, most of them being gone by early September. What an adventure this must be for those first-time migrants? Whilst swallows and martins travel in family groups which are loosely a part of larger congregations, young ospreys have to find their own way to West Africa where they winter. Their parents, having lavished plenty of TLC upon them during the first three months of their lives, are suddenly gone leaving their progeny to find their own way

across some three thousand-mile of land and sea. You might say this is a challenging start to their young lives!

Some of our animals such as hedgehogs and bats face winter in a totally different way. They use late summer and early autumn to feast on as much food as possible.

Hedgehogs, in particular, must acquire lots of body fat to sustain them through the winter months. Then, as nights draw in they find a nice snug hibernaculum and simply go to sleep until spring arrives, their entire metabolism slowing down to the point of merely ticking over. Contrary to some stories, squirrels do not hibernate. They notoriously collect vast hoards of food – mainly nuts and beech-mast – which they stash carefully away for those rainy, or perhaps snowy days of forthcoming winter.

One woodland dwelling bird follows a similar procedure by collecting acorns and burying them in vast quantities. The jay, a member of the crow clan, is one of our more colourful birds, its largely pink body plumage offset by a startlingly bright blue flash on each wing and its head strikingly black and white. Being of a nervous disposition, jays are usually seen flying away from approaching humans, revealing a prominent white flash just above the tail. Another creature sometimes regarded as one that hibernates, is the badger. However badgers do not hibernate either, although they will remain underground in their cosy setts for days if the weather is particularly inclement. Like hedgehogs they eat feverishly in the autumn so that their body fat will sustain them during those bad spells.

Sharp Eyes

All of the year's young birds and animals find their first winter very challenging. Survival is the name of the game and there are many hazards to face, not just the weather but the very task of finding sufficient food is in its self, a question to which they must constantly find the answer. And of course, there are predators to avoid. All small birds are threatened by sparrowhawks and now in many parts of the Park, goshawks too, whilst owls, including the ghostly barn owl, the more familiar tawny and the secretive long-eared owl, prey heavily on small mammals. The year's crop of hares, of both the brown and mountain varieties, is the target of our magnificent golden eagles, albeit that the mountain hares increase their chances of evading the sharp eyes of our eagles by adopting a white coat during the winter months as a means of obfuscation. One of the commonest birds of prey in the Park is the buzzard, all too often mistaken for an eagle. Yet if it is perched on a telegraph pole for instance, it is definitely not an eagle! Buzzards may often be seen drifting about



the sky, some might think, aimlessly. However these are birds with excellent eyesight and their 'aimless' drifting is actually a means to spotting something to eat! In recent years, increasing numbers of red kites, readily identified from their long, forked tails have added their rather more athletic presence to the Park's skies.

Foxes too take their toll of both small mammals and ground hugging birds although it may come as a surprise to know that foxes also consume large numbers of worms. More arboreal in habit increasing numbers of pine marten are now present in most parts of the Park. Indeed, their increasing presence has seen a reduction of the alien grey squirrel. Happily the vacuum has been filled in many areas, by native red squirrels of which there is a growing population.

But as all creatures great and small prepare for and anticipate the advance of winter, there is one final act of creation to fulfil. Those Monarchs of the Glens, our red deer, wander our hills and mountains during the summer months but as winter advances, they tend to come to lower ground.


But before they do, they must go through the ritual of the rut. October is the month during which stag challenges stag; when the glens echo to the sonorous roaring and the clashing of mighty antlers as they challenge each other for the right to mate with as many hinds as possible. It is a time of great drama of raging passion when the master stags are indeed at war with one another. I doubt whether in nature there is anything quite as spectacular or theatrical. The stags do not eat during these challenging days and they make themselves look even more threatening by plastering themselves in mud and peat and adorning their antlers with strands of vegetation. They certainly look awesome.

Red Flaming Breasts

As winter finally settles in, the landscape in some ways may look startlingly black and white especially following snowfalls but there is plenty of colour to discover. Apart from the woodland jays already mentioned, there are the little flocks of goldfinches to admire as they flit between the banks of thistles and rosebay feeding enthusiastically on the seeds. Goudspinks, as they are known, are

probably the most colourful of all our native birds. Indeed, in some parts of the country they are known as 'seven coloured linnets'! Outstanding are their bright red faces and the golden flashes on their wings. Their close cousins, chaffinches also stand out with their pink breasts, blue grey topknots and their willingness to live cheek by jowl with us. And, there is music too almost exclusively supplied by robin redbreast – always ready to challenge fellow robins for winter territory and blurring out those cheerful, bell-like but essentially sweet phrases of music. And there's colour too of course, in those flaming red breasts.


And whilst many of our summer songsters leave us and spend their winters in Africa, there are also immigrants arriving from the top of the world. From Greenland, Scandinavia, Iceland, Northern Russia – all Arctic or near Arctic regions – come thousands of geese, mainly barnacles, pinkfeet, and Greenland white fronts. And sailing magnificently across our autumn and winter skies, also come whooper swans. During the winter months these high flying swans can be seen in various locations throughout the Park. Most of incoming geese are to be seen in the more lowland southern parts of the Park with the Greenland white fronted geese settling on or around Loch Lomond. And adding to the clamour of geese, are the fast flying flocks of Scandinavian thrushes, the grey headed and rumped fieldfares and the smaller redwings. There are many other winter migrants from the far north, among them woodcock, goldcrests and short-eared owls. They demonstrate that the Park is always alive with an ever-changing tapestry of wildlife throughout the seasons. And often surprisingly early in the New Year, evidence that the cycle of life is stirring again comes as hints of new growth begin to emerge. Before the end of March the first ospreys can be seen coursing over our lochs once more after spending their winter in West Africa. Early bird song is provided by chanting great tits, tuneful blackbirds and thrushes and of course the ever-musical robins. They breathe new, exciting life into an expectant Park. Slowly spring begins to nudge winter aside and the annual movement of migrating birds is renewed as the winter visitors begin once more to look north and the first travellers from Africa arrive. Seasons come and go and over the course of each year, the Park is an ever-changing kaleidoscope of mood and colour but constant is that ever changing panoply of wildlife.



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Paths Around the Park

There is currently a real momentum behind improving access for walkers and cyclists in many parts of the National Park and it is encouraging to see how many initiatives are being taken to create new and improved low level family friendly path networks by local groups with the support of the National Park, the Friends and other partners. Here we provide a brief update on some of these initiatives.

New Gruffalo Trail

Walkers in Tyndrum can now explore a scenic and artistic trek in the village with the launch of the new and imaginative Gruffalo Trail developed by the Strathfillan Community Development Trust. Along the new trail there are five animal sculptures - a mouse, a fox, a snake, an owl and, of course, the gruffalo.



Overflowing litter bin at Balmaha

The trail takes walkers on a short, but interesting journey through the Tyndrum woodlands shelterbelt (opposite the Highland Heritage Hotel). There is also a forest classroom at the beginning of the trail which is part of an effort to establish a community hub in the area. An open day at the trail took place during the summer and was very popular. Meanwhile, work on the first section of the Crianlarich to Tyndrum cycle path is due to be completed later this year. This first stretch will be from Tyndrum to Kirkton Farm and will run through Tyndrum Community Woodland. This is being progressed by the National Park's Countryside Trust.

Whinney Hill Woodland Path Upgrade

The Friends joined forces with Love Loch Lomond and the Woodland Trust to invest more than £30,000 in the much needed and long awaited improvement to the Whinney Hill woodland path north of Balloch Country Park and this has now been completed. The Woodland Trust, the charity which manages the Whinney Hill Wood on a long term lease, has been trying for several years now to make improvements to the unmade woodland trod whose condition was deteriorating badly, being widened more and more by walkers trying to avoid wet sections.



Friends Vice chairman, John Urquhart, who has been keeping an eye on the situation, said, "This problem was becoming more and more urgent as the woodland environment was being seriously compromised by the ever widening quagmire. The Friends gave money for this a couple of years ago, but unfortunately, it seems that planning issues had been holding up progress unnecessarily. The Woodland Trust is to be congratulated on its tenacity in seeing this project through to completion because the new path represents a major step forward for countryside access in the National Park, which is surprisingly poor in the Balloch area, despite Balloch's position as a principal gateway to the Park."

New Luss Quarries Path Plans Progress

The Friends have stepped in to facilitate a new addition to the path network around the beautiful village of Luss which welcomes 750,000 visitors annually. Keen to improve access around the village, Luss Estates applied last year for funding under the European Community backed Scottish Rural Development Programme, but the decision to go ahead had been held up owing to difficulties in recruiting a public body to enter into the path agreement necessary to provide guarantees covering future management and maintenance. At the eleventh hour the Friends offered to take on the legal burden to avoid £47,000 worth of funding being lost for the project. Luss Estates Rural Business Manager, Iain Wilkinson said: "The Friends' offer has been crucial for us

getting this development underway as we were at risk of losing the funding because we couldn't identify a suitable public body willing to shoulder this particular aspect of the scheme." Friends Chairman, James Fraser added: "This is absolutely the kind of development we want to see taking place and we are especially pleased the funding secured will also cover interpretation about the Luss slate quarries - something which delivers on our desire to see the stories of the park's people told more effectively." Branching off the existing and very popular riverside trail, the new path will thread a scenic route around the old slate quarries which dot the slopes behind the village. Work is expected to start early in 2017.

In Brief...

Tarbet
Following representation from the Friends and Helensburgh and District Access Trust-the promoters of the Three Lochs Way Great Trail-Forestry Commission Scotland has agreed to temporarily re-open the Tarbet Loop and a stretch of the Three Lochs Way near Tarbet Railway Station. These popular paths have been closed in the Tarbet area for some time to enable forestry operations to take place and they were due to remain closed until 2018. Engineers are due to complete a new forest road shortly and there will likely be a 6-month gap before tree extraction works get underway. Eventually the new road should make a big improvement to the access to Cruach Tairbeir, a minor summit which has superb views owing to its position at the head of Loch Long between the Arrochar Alps and Loch Lomond.

Highlandman's Road, Glen Fruin

A lot of the issues with this historic, but problematic, path have been resolved recently due to assistance from Argyll and Bute Council Roads Dept, Argyll the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) and the volunteer efforts of the Helensburgh and District Access Trust (HADAT) who manage the popular Three Lochs Way long distance route from Balloch to Inveruglas. It has taken years to fix this route and it is now possible to walk from Helensburgh and Rhu to Glen Fruin with dry feet.

St Fillans to Lochearnhead Cycleway

Good progress is being made with this important cycleway route on the former disused railway line. Work on the £540,000 stretch from St Fillans west to Tynreoch has been completed and a further £240,000 has been secured by the Park Authority for the next phase which will link St Fillans eastwards to Glentarken Woods.

Drymen to Balmaha

Following the completion of a £500,000 package of improvements to the cycleway and path network between Drymen and Milton of Buchanan last year led by the Drymen Community Development Trust, with support from the Park Authority and a variety of funders, further funding has been secured from Sustrans for improvements between Milton of Buchanan and Balmaha. The Friends also covered the printing costs of a new paths booklet from the OUR park visitor giving scheme and copies are available in local outlets such as the Drymen Library.

Funding Bids

In collaboration with the landowners, the Park Authority has submitted a bid to the Scottish Government's Improving Public Access Fund for improvements to the Rob Roy Way in the Menteith Hills and jointly with the Lochgoilhead Community Development Trust for a new River Goil path and bridge.



Caption

A £6 million initiative, spanning a five-year period, to restore mountain paths and upland habitats in Scotland's two National Parks is underway and here Project Manager Tom Wallace explains the background to the project and what progress is being made in the area covered by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.

If you have visited Ben A'an, Ben Lomond or the Cobbler over recent months you may have encountered small teams of mountain weathered men and women working hard to repair paths on these popular mountains. This work is all part of The Mountains and The People, an ambitious partnership project developed and led by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT).



The Mountains & The People

Stepping up for Scotland's National Parks



The project, which started in June 2015 and will continue until summer 2020, focuses on the conservation of the vulnerable mountain landscapes of both of Scotland's National Parks - Loch Lomond & the Trossachs and Cairngorms. Funding for the project has been secured by COAT from the Heritage Lottery Fund who are contributing over £3.2million which is being matched in cash and in kind by project partners – both National Park Authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland and COAT themselves.

Raising funding contributions from other sources is also important and I am delighted that the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs has recently confirmed an annual contribution of £5,000 from their successful OUR park visitor giving scheme that involves 100 local businesses raising funds for conservation activities. The project includes a significant capital investment in physical conservation activities, including the upgrade of over 84,000m of upland paths within the Loch



Caption

Lomond and The Trossachs National Park area alone, as well as a wide range of information, events and opportunities for the people of Scotland and beyond to get involved and play our part. All project activities focus around our messages of RESPECT for the mountains, RESKILLING for conservation and REPAIRING damage to our most iconic mountains.

Respect the mountains

The Mountains and the People project was developed in response to a recognition that the fragile upland habitats in our National Parks were at risk due to a lack of ongoing investment in infrastructure and a continued increase in the popularity of our Parks and their mountains as a place to retreat to from the city, to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life. These factors combined resulted in the physical scarring of hillsides across most of the mountains in both Parks and a situation which was only getting worse.

Through their work within central and



northern Cairngorms, the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust identified that investing only in the physical repairs to the maintains would not solve the problem and that winning the hearts and minds of those visiting or yet to visit the hills must also be achieved for the project to be a success.

Therefore, a dedicated project team, based in Balloch, have been recruited who will be working with schools, communities, visitors and the wider public to highlight the unique nature of our mountains and to encourage those who visit to respect them and be aware of the impact they may have. Reskilling for the future

Along with raising awareness of the impacts people have on the environment when visiting, the project will equip members of the public to play their part in improving the landscapes for generations to come. This will be achieved through the development of educational resources, training of teachers and the delivery of 36 SVQ trainee placements in Environmental Conservation.

Working with Education Scotland and



schools such as McLaren and Balfron High, who have already been out to complete some practical tasks on the hills with us, we will be developing real life case studies for use in subjects such as geography where the conflict between land use and recreation in National Parks is already recognised as a significant concern.

We will then deliver a range of training opportunities for teachers and support staff to become more confident in using the mountains as part of their classroom.

Our Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) training will be undertaken at our new training centre in Balloch. The first intake of 8 trainees are now nearing the end of their 6 month paid training opportunity with us and have already been involved in path works on Craigmore, above Aberfoyle, and on Luss Estates where they also learned the craft of dry stone walling. In addition to this they have carried out some more traditional conservation tasks with the RSPB as well as restoring upland peatbogs on Ben Lomond. The final stage of their course will be to complete complex path restoration works on the Cobbler as well as supporting the Friends in the restoration of the Lauder Memorial site in Glenbranter.

We will start to recruit for our next intake of trainees in February with the course starting



in April 2017. Anyone interested in taking part should contact the team on training@themountainsandthepeople.org.uk.

Repairing the damage

A large proportion of the project budget will be invested in repairing upland paths and their surrounding habitats across the two National Parks. Within the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs area our work is spread throughout the park including significant works along 23 routes on 18 mountains including Ben Lui, Ben Ledi, Ben Venue and Ben More, as well as those mentioned previously.

Works are carried out by teams of highly skilled upland contractors who work in extreme locations and often challenging conditions. Wherever possible materials for the works are sourced close to the path, ensuring minimal impact to the environment and cost effective delivery. However, given the geology of some of the mountains needing repair this is not always possible and at times, helicopters are needed to import stone from nearby locations. All

capital works are managed by the project's Technical Projects Team, with Projects Officer Gordon Paxton White overseeing all day to day activities.

The project will also be delivering real impacts on the hills as well as enriching people's lives through a wide range of conservation volunteering opportunities. With both mid-week and weekend practical path maintenance days available every month and the opportunity for members of the public to 'Adopt A Path' and help by reporting on the condition of key routes across the Park there is something for everyone.

So if you are interested in getting out to meet like-minded people and do your bit for the conservation of our mountains or if you just want to know more about what routes are going to be repaired and when then don't hesitate to get in touch.

To find out more about what is happening next with The Mountains & The People visit www.themountainsandthepeople.org.uk



Adventure Star Mark Beaumont Launches New Walks Map

During a recent Wild Argyll Challenge involving 12 days and 12 sports, including cycling, running, canoeing, sailing, fell running and riding, adventure personality Mark Beaumont joined up with keen outdoor man and local hotel proprietor, Niall Colquhoun and John Urquhart of Helensburgh and District Access Trust (HADAT) to launch the Trust's new footpath map which features 14 local walks in the Helensburgh, West Loch Lomond and Clyde Sea Lochs area.

John Urquhart said: "The map was financed by the Friends popular OUR park visitor giving scheme. Niall Colquhoun of the Lodge at Loch Lomond and the Inn on Loch Lomond hotels and ourselves at Balmillig B&B here in Helensburgh, are both long term supporters of OUR park and our guests are major contributors to the scheme."

Niall, who is a keen mountain biker himself, had accompanied Mark from Arrochar to Helensburgh, cycling along the Three Lochs Way, the popular long distance walking and mountain biking route between Balloch and Inveruglas which has been developed by the Helensburgh based trust with OUR Park support over the last 5 years or so.

Chair of The Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, James Fraser, said: "Ensuring good quality maps and information on local walks is available in printed format is a high priority for the Friends and with the help of local businesses and their guests we were pleased to provide HADAT with the funding to print 5,000 copies of this latest map which I am sure will be popular with local residents and visitors."

The map is on sale for £1 at a number of local outlets and all proceeds will be used to help maintain and improve local paths.



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 feature different aspects of OUR Park which is going from strength to strength and making a real difference in the National Park.



Milestone for a Safer Park

At a special celebration event at the Oak Tree Inn, Balmaha a mobile app was launched to enable members of the public to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and surrounding area to easily locate life-saving defibrillators. The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs helped fund the development of the app with a £1,000 grant from the OUR park visitor giving scheme and this formed part of a more ambitious joint initiative with Trossachs Search and Rescue and local communities that has led to the installation of dozens of public access defibrillators to improve the safety of the 4 million annual visitors to the National Park and the 16,000 residents who live in the Park

At the event Trossachs Search and Rescue also handed over its 75th defibrillator to Clyde Regional Scout Council, who operate Auchengillan Outdoor Centre in Blanefield. The celebration event was attended by Bruce Crawford MSP and Jackie Baillie MSP and a group of volunteers and supporters including representatives from the Friends, Trossachs Search and Rescue, Helensburgh and District CPR/Defibrillator Association, Garelochhead and Rosneath Peninsula Community First Responders.

Stuart Ballantyne of Trossachs Search and Rescue said: "The idea came around three and a half years ago when we decided to place public access defibrillators in areas where we had been on the go for many years, delivering training. Sometimes we are attending incidents where, by the time we get there, we cannot do anything due to the time difference. The app will give people a greater chance of survival as there are public

access defibrillators out there and they will find out where they are. All our defibrillators are checked on a monthly basis and if any are found not to be working, they will not be displayed on the app." Bruce Crawford said: "I first met Trossachs Search and Rescue when a defibrillator was being installed in Croftamie and didn't understand the impact these devices can have, so I am grateful to them for introducing me to them. To have 75 of them available in the National Park is a fantastic achievement and to look at the app makes me realise that this should be an example for the whole of Scotland – to save as many lives as we can, in as many parts of the country as we can."

Jackie Baillie added: "Defibrillators save lives and bring obvious benefits to people who live here as well as the many visitors. I am delighted that this is the 75th defibrillator to be installed in the National Park. I am very well aware of the effort that goes into raising funds for these devices, so thanks to you all because I think this is a very impressive achievement."

Friends Chairman James Fraser said: "Having 75 defibrillators available has required over £100,000 of investment, which has been raised through donations by local residents, fundraising events, contributions from local businesses, and sponsorship, along with the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme which we run with 100 local businesses participating.

"We were delighted to sponsor the new mobile app and we congratulate Trossachs Search and Rescue and other local groups in what they have achieved to ensure the area is safer for locals and visitors."

Stop Press... Stop Press... Stop Press...

In the latest round of grants from the funds raised by local businesses from visitors via the OUR park visitor giving scheme the Friends Trustees agreed to award £20,000 (£5,000/year over four years) to the park-wide Mountains and the People Project for path repair works; £1,000 to Lomond Mountain Rescue Team as a contribution towards the purchase of a new landrover; £950 to Arrochar and Tarbet Community Council for a public access defibrillator at Ardlui and a new platform at the war memorial on the edge of Arrochar; £300 to Greenspace for training youths from the Vale of Leven in woodland skills; £2,330 for improvements at Tom Weir's Rest in Balmaha; £500 to Cormonachan Woodland Trust for a new car park beside the community woodland south of Lochgoilhead; £1,500 for Lauder Statue path and signage improvements in Glenbranter; and £250 for Callander Summerfest.

A sum of £18,000 has been disbursed on a total of 18 grant awards so far this year. A big thank you to the many thousands of visitors who have made donations through the visitor giving scheme and also to the many businesses participating in the scheme which continues to make a real difference in and around the National Park.



Young Ranger Programme Support

The Friends joined forces with the National Park Authority to help fund an expansion of the popular Young Ranger Programme that was successfully piloted last year. The funding from the OUR park visitor giving scheme helped the Park Authority to support 10 young people from McLaren High School in Callander and 12 young people from Balfron High School to join National Park and partner agency staff in a week long programme of activities just before the school summer holidays. The programme was successful in helping connect young people to the outdoors and gave them an appreciation of and respect for wild places in the National Park. The youngsters participated in a range of outdoor activities and practical tasks often with National Park Rangers and staff from partner bodies. They also all completed their John Muir Award, gaining invaluable knowledge, skills and experience in conservation and challenges managing protected areas that are popular visitor destinations. There is great scope and demand to expand the Young Ranger Programme in future years but this will depend on additional funding being available to support what Marc Fleming, Head Teacher at McLaren High School described as "a very exciting and innovative opportunity for pupils to be more involved in National Park related activities with tangible outputs that they greatly benefit from."

Making a Difference at Inversnaid

A group of over 40 volunteers were taken by boat from Tarbet courtesy of Cruise Loch Lomond to participate in a very successful 'Make a Difference Day' at Inversnaid on the east side of Loch Lomond. This volunteering event was jointly organised by the Friends and the Mountains and the People project team on 28th September and was supported by the Park Authority. Tasks undertaken on the day included the removal of rhododendrons and path improvements works. Photos from the event will feature in the next edition.

Pointing the Way to Loch Tay

Despite Loch Tay being Scotland's sixth largest freshwater loch and famous for its salmon and pike fishing, the largest village on Loch Tay, Killin, has until recently had no access signage to the loch. Now, thanks to support from the Friends, visitors are guided to the head of the loch along a scenic path long popular with locals. The Friends provided a grant of £790 from the OUR park visitor giving scheme to sign an all abilities circular path linking the main village car park with Loch Tay. A series of attractive finger post signs have now been installed by the Breadalbane Tourism Co-operative whose Chairman, Ken Chew said: "This signing has helped to raise awareness of this easy walk to Loch Tay and we are grateful to the Friends for their support."

Meanwhile, Ken is continuing to lead an ongoing campaign to secure better road signing for Loch Tay from Lix Toll and in the village itself. The campaign has met with mixed success so far but pressure on the public bodies responsible for road signing is due to be stepped up to address this issue.



focus on Cruise Loch Lomond

Stuart Cordner, Managing Director of family run Cruise Loch Lomond, talks about their business and involvement with the Friends of OUR park scheme.

What attracted you to do business in Tarbet with Cruise Loch Lomond?

My late father started the business in Tarbet in the early 1980s. He always claimed it was good fortune that made him choose Tarbet. However he recognised that location was everything particularly for travel trade business on the A82. The village can be accessed by regular public transport connections and now benefits from being at the centre of the National Park, offering ease of access by boat to some of the hidden gems on the eastern shore of the loch. The family business has expanded since the early days operating cruises, ferries and waterbus services from a number of locations around the Loch. I now run the Company with my cousin Fred and step Mum Marie.

Tell us about your inspiration and plans for Cruise Loch Lomond.

I am very fortunate to work where I do and I never tire of the loch, the unique scenery and in particular the light on the hills. Some of my mates reckon I have the 'Carlsberg job', a job which I really do love. I spend a lot of my leisure time in, on and around the loch so I find it an easy sell to day trippers; holiday-makers and visitors. Cruise Loch Lomond has expanded into the outdoor activity market in recent years offering a variety of 'soft' adventure cycling / walking and cruise combinations on and around Loch Lomond. Our new products appeal to a wider audience for multi generations that combine outdoor activity with food / drink experiences in riparian restaurants and pubs. I would like to see the company continue to grow in this area and we are currently collaborating with other businesses to create exciting new products for 2017.

Why do you support Friends of OUR Park?

Cruise Loch Lomond has been a supporter of OUR park scheme for a number of years as we recognise the significant impact the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs has made in conserving the special qualities of the area, providing support for projects that will make the National Park a better place to visit and in promoting the heritage of our local area. The company recently launched a new website www.cruiselochlomond.co.uk with a new booking system that allows visitors to make donations to OUR park when booking cruises online. To date we have been delighted with the number of visitors donating to the project.

What is particularly special for you about the Tarbet area?

Tarbet has strategically played a significant role in accessibility and travel since 13th century when Vikings sailed up Loch Long and dragged their long boats across the isthmus to Tarbet and then sailed south on Loch Lomond. Today, at the hub of the National Park, Tarbet offers numerous outdoor adventure offerings with numerous walks and ferry / waterbus options to the eastern shore. However, the views that can be enjoyed from Tarbet Pier are second to none.

Deli Ecosse

We are a small family run delicatessen and café. We've been trading since 2007, serving home cooked food, including full breakfast, tasty soups and made to order sandwiches and Panini.

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Help us Make a Difference



We are passionate about protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park for the benefit of people and nature. If you are too, join us and help keep it beautiful, accessible and unspoilt.



For details of membership please
call 01389 298008 or
visit www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

The landmark Trossachs Hotel has been attracting visitors to the heart of the National Park since it first opened in 1849. It was originally built to cope with the influx of visitors attracted to the Trossachs by the popularity of Sir Walter Scott's book Lady of the Lake. Over the years the hotel had a chequered ownership history and eventually fell into a state of disrepair. Its long term future was secured in 1992 when Friends Business Supporters, Holiday Property Bond (HPB) had the foresight to rescue the hotel and, with the assistance of the Scottish Tourist Board, invested millions transforming it into a high quality resort which re-opened in 1993. Here we chart the success story of An Tigh Mor (The Big House) that now attracts 12,000 guests each year to the Trossachs through the innovative holiday property bond investment scheme. We also feature some of the Tigh Mor staff who continue to ensure the success of the resort

Holiday Property Bond at Tigh Mor Trossachs

HPB
The Holiday Property Bond

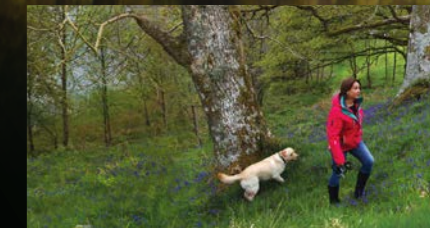
WITH 76 one, two and three bedroom apartments Tigh Mor is Holiday Property Bond's largest resort in the U.K. All the apartments are fitted out and equipped to a very high standard and on site there is a leisure centre with swimming pool, sauna, solarium, steam room, snooker tables, indoor carpet bowling and gymnasium. There is also a range of other leisure facilities including a bistro, library and three all-weather tennis courts and fishing boats.

Situated in a sensitive scenic location, the site is very environmentally friendly despite the large number of guests who now stay at Tigh Mor. Sophisticated energy conservation systems are installed and the sewage treatment plant includes three 'duck ponds' with ornate water cascades.

The Holiday Property Bond concept, developed by Geoffrey Baber and Robert Boyce in the early 1980s, is a simple

but original idea with investors putting money into a life assurance bond. The bond is linked to a fund investing in high quality holiday properties and securities giving investors a financial interest not just in the fund but the portfolio of properties as well as the right to use them for their own holidays rent-free. The number of investors (bondholders) has grown every year and now stands at more than 46,000.

Nikki Cirillo, who has been at Tigh Mor since 2008 and became Manager in 2009, says: "I count myself very lucky as I live and work in a very special part of Scotland. My journey to work from Callander is a delight with the changing moods and colours of the Trossachs throughout the year. I am also fortunate to work with a great bunch of people who are dedicated to ensuring our thousands of guests have truly memorable holiday experiences in first class facilities and surroundings."



Nikki added: "It's interesting to see how the profiles of our visitors change throughout the seasons-from retired couples to large family groups, sometimes spanning three generations. However, there's plenty for them to do -both onsite and in the surrounding area-at all times of the year."

Tigh Mor is a major employer in the area with 23 full and part-time staff. The resort is also not resting on its laurels as HPB have continued to invest in maintaining the fabric of the buildings and grounds and there are currently plans to increase the number of holiday apartments by converting a nearby large house that has recently been purchased.



Scott's Bistro, situated in the grounds of Tigh Mor, was opened in 1999 and was named after Sir Walter Scott himself. Since 2002, Mark Nicols has been at the head of dishing up delicious traditional, local food to well over 100,000 bondholders, a large percentage of who are repeat customers. He is joined by his long serving maitre d', Prasad, who has an uncanny gift for remembering everyone's names and faces. A blessing in a job like his! In between being head chef and boss, Mark is also a member of the Killin Mountain Rescue team and can sometimes be called away in the middle of service. Fortunately for him, he has a dedicated team in the kitchen who can take over when the need arises and free Mark to undertake this worthy cause. Scott's Bistro is also open to the locals and can be contacted on 01877-376389 for bookings.

Foundation Supporters £500 MINIMUM

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 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.
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 email: enquiries@opticalexpress.com
www.opticalexpress.com
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www.lochsandglens.com
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- 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**
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 email: luke@ardoch-scotland.com
www.ardoch-scotland.com
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- 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**
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- DEEPSTREAM DESIGN**
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Business Supporters £100 MINIMUM

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Special events to enjoy at Loch Katrine



The Steamship Sir Walter Scott is fully wheelchair friendly

Sailings and events with added sparkle

- Daily sailings on the steamship Sir Walter Scott (Until Monday 2nd January 2017)
- Legends of the Loch cruises on Lady of the Lake (Until Easter Sunday 16th April 2017)
- Katrine Gifts & Katrine Café

FIREWORKS CRUISE & LIVE MUSIC SPECTACULAR - 5th November

– Join us onboard the classic steamship Sir Walter Scott for live music from the fabulous Shaky, complimentary burgers and delicious hot dogs from our barbecue, and round off the perfect end to your evening onboard with a spectacular, dazzling fireworks display against the magical surroundings of The Trossachs National Park.

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS AND SAIL WITH SANTA - Weekends 10th, 11th, 17th & 18th December

– A great experience for both children and adults - join our very popular "Sail with Santa" cruise on the iconic steamship Sir Walter Scott. Santa and his helpers will spend time with each child and give them a wrapped up present on this festive hour long sail. Adults are not left out as our price also includes a glass of mulled wine for the adults and local Christmas fayre.

NEW YEAR CELEBRATION CRUISE - Sunday 1st & Monday 2nd January 2017

– Come along and enjoy our one hour New Year Celebration Cruise aboard the steamship Sir Walter Scott, and in addition to taking in the magical scenery of Loch Katrine and The Trossachs, we invite you to join us in a complimentary toast to the Auld and New Year with traditional, locally produced black-bun and shortbread whilst listening to live music from Iain Barrie & Friends.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE FULL LIST OF DATES & TIMES OF ALL EVENTS



Trossachs Pier, Loch Katrine, by Callander, Stirling FK17 8HZ
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