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The *Voice*

The magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs





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Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

The Voice

The Voice is the magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the only conservation charity working solely to protect and enhance the landscape and lochs of Scotland's first National Park.

To join us or to find out more about our work please visit

www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

The Voice is published biannually in spring and autumn. Submissions on topics relating to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park are welcome. Please send submissions to the editor at the address below or email simon@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

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Chairman's welcome

WELCOME TO THIS AUTUMN ISSUE OF **THE VOICE**. Things have been happening! There have been more exciting developments for the Friends with two major new projects now running – 'Wildlife Website – Wild Lomond & Trossachs', and 'It's Our Park' (this was known by its working title of Tourism and Conservation Project when the last edition of VOICE was released).

And the new membership package has been launched including our free guide to the whole of The National Park. If you are a member you should be receiving your own copy of this guide along with this edition of VOICE, and your membership card. Presenting your membership card at a range of businesses and attractions around the Park will get you some great discounts – all the offers are listed in the membership section of this magazine. If you're not a member please do consider joining us and getting your own free copy of the guide and access to the discount offers. Written by Martin Varley and printed in a useful 'backpack size', this is an easy to read and comprehensive guide to enjoying all the parts of the park – there's a full review of the guide by Iain Stuart on page of this edition of VOICE.

Your board has some new members. I'm really delighted that James Fraser and Carron Tobin have joined us, both bringing considerable commitment and expertise to our work. There's more information on them and pictures on page 8 of VOICE

I'd also like to introduce you to new staff we've taken on to manage and develop our charity for the sake of this wonderful part of Scotland: We have appointed Simon Lewis as our new Director to replace Martin Varley. Simon brings over 20 years experience of working for the Arts and the Environment in this part of Scotland. He's getting stuck into the new role with enthusiasm.

Alice Blazy-Winning has come from the acclaimed '7 Stanes' mountain project Project in Dumfries and Galloway to manage the new Tourism and Conservation project 'It's Our Park'

And Sue Cameron has taken on a one day a week role to work on membership and marketing.

Sue Andrews has recently joined us as a volunteer. Having recently moved to Brig 'O Turk she's going to play a major role in keeping our website up to date and interesting, and work with Simon on planning and other issues.

All of our new staff team are happy to talk to any of the Friends at any time – please do feel free to contact them. There's more information on them on page 8 of this edition of VOICE and I've persuaded most of them to include pictures!

Lastly – we are looking for a member who attended the AGM last May and won a raffle prize of a guided walk in the Park with ranger Andy Kerr – if this is you and you'd like to take up the prize, please get in touch with the office.

Letter from the president

Where do the years go? I celebrated my 95th birthday recently and had a great time with lots of visitors. Old age has taken its toll and though I manage with a stick and a helping hand up to the garage, I now need a wheelchair when out shopping.

I have had an interesting time since last I wrote to you. You may remember that I mentioned in our newsletter that I wanted to get the clan videos made into DVDs. I contacted Strathclyde University (who gave me my honorary degree) and they very kindly made the DVDs for us. These are now in our office if you are interested. The clans featured are Colquhoun, Buchannan, MacGregor and MacFarlane.

About this time I had a call from Peter Marrison of Dumbarton DVD club who came up to see me to talk about the John Groome Diaries. We looked through them together and like me he was enchanted by them. He and his friends have worked wonders to capture every page from 1964-1981 – altogether Peter and the Club have scanned and copied over 1,400 pages. This is a fantastic effort and on behalf of the Friends I can say we are very, very grateful indeed.

We plan to use these wonderful diaries, and are planning to publish some of them in book form. Such a treasure should be available to a wider public audience! You will find another captivating extract from the diaries in this edition of *The Voice*, and we will have printed copies of some of the diaries for sale in due course from the office.

After visiting me, Peter said he would like to make a DVD of my life, and this he has now done, capturing memories of a few months old up to the present day. So now I have a DVD – and no, I am not making it public!

On other matters, I await the latest on the 'eyesore' at Stonemullan. I am told by Fiona Logan, CEO of the National Park, that the roads department has 'something' in the pipeline. But I wonder what?

Another project close to my heart is the creation of windows on the A82 by clearing some short sections of the thickets of trees that have grown so much and now hide the Loch almost completely so that it is like driving through a green tunnel up and down the road. I feel that clearing the undergrowth in some places and thinning trees in others could re-open some of the lovely vistas of this beautiful loch that we enjoyed in the years gone by. I have offered a donation of £1,000 from my own charitable trust to get this work started. Considering that these trees were planted by the roads department when the new section of the A82 was built, I think it is very much their responsibility. Those of you old enough to remember the lovely views from the old winding road might be sighing with me.

Do remember my phone number 01301 702240. I am always glad to hear from any of the Friends who would like to contact me.

Yours aye Hannah

From the (new) Director

Simon Lewis writes about challenges and opportunities ahead for the Friends

"The first thing I must say is how excited I am to be the new Director of the Friends, and how much I'm looking forward to working for all of you for the greater protection and enjoyment of this wonderful part of Scotland.

There are urgent threats to be tackled and one of the foremost amongst these seems to me from my short time in and around the Park - the "wild' camping gone wild. This is a real and serious problem, directly despoiling the bonny banks themselves with a litter of tents, rubbish and worse, and spreading tales of much less than bonny banks further a-field. As the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs I hope we can raise awareness of the issue, and help with some solutions to the problem. This is the issue that is most often mentioned in the discussions I have with Friends and with all kinds of people I meet in and around the National Park. Just last week I met someone close to our office in Helensburgh who said that they used to regularly go as a family for a day out to one of Loch Lomond's favourite beauty spots, perhaps taking a picnic, or just going for a few hours to sit and enjoy what they call this 'best part of our country'. They made it quite plain that they wouldn't take their children to Loch Lomond side anymore. If local people are so badly put off visiting their own national park on their own doorstep, I hate to think what damage these 'campsites' may do for this area's reputation in Europe and around the world.

The more members we have, the more 'friends' there are of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the more we can do to protect The Park from this kind of damage. I urge current 'friends' to get in touch with me, tell me how they feel about this issue and what they think could or should be done about it. And I would urge anyone who is not a member, who cares about Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and is worried about these issues, to consider becoming 'A Friend' and help us have much more positive impact with the power of their membership behind us".



'It's Our Park' to look after

Alice Blazy-Winning, Friends project officer, explains how our innovative 'It's OUR park' scheme, modelled on the concept of 'visitor payback' hopes to support a range of vital conservation and enhancement projects in the National Park.

Around three million people come to the National Park each year to enjoy the stunning landscape and wildlife the area has to offer. While spending by visitors contributes towards the local economy thereby indirectly benefitting local communities, there is currently no mechanism in place for visitors to contribute directly to the conservation of the assets they come to enjoy.

'Visitor payback' or 'visitor investment' describes a process whereby visitors to a destination have an opportunity to contribute to the upkeep and enhancement of these assets, traditionally through financial contributions. Funds are typically collected via tourism businesses that interface with visitors. In essence, the concept seeks to convert an emotive value a visitor places on a destination to a financial value, thereby creating a direct link between the tourism industry and natural environment.

There are a number of 'visitor payback' schemes in a variety of forms in operation elsewhere in the UK, primarily in England. One of the most successful schemes is run by the Tourism & Conservation Partnership in the Lake District. Since its establishment in 1996, the scheme has raised over £1m for conservation projects in the area. The Partnership now has over 200 business members fundraising for a portfolio of projects. While it should be noted that it takes several years to establish, it demonstrates the significant fundraising potential of such a scheme.

There are a number of different ways that businesses can get involved and help raise funds, some fundraising mechanisms have proved more successful than others. An opt-out

mechanism whereby a small amount is added to a customer's bill, such as a £1 per bed night/meal/boat trip is financially the most successful fundraising method. Additionally, this method can easily be integrated into a financial booking system which facilitates administration of donations. By participating in the scheme, businesses will be demonstrating a clear commitment to sustainability. Furthermore, it can help staff feel good about the organisation they work for as well as giving a positive impression to customers, suppliers and the community in which the business operates. Participation also offers opportunities for staff and visitors to learn and understand more about the special qualities of the National Park and how to conserve them. We are currently piloting the 'It's OUR Park' scheme in the Argyll and west Loch Lomond area of the Park. Funds raised through the scheme will support projects which benefit not only the natural environment, but also the local community as well as enhance the overall visitor experience.

The types of project that have been identified for support given the fundraising potential and timescales of the pilot include:

- **Helping to safeguard protected species such as the native red squirrel through grey squirrel control, habitat enhancement and installation of viewing hides.**
- **Increasing biodiversity of the rivers and water of Loch Lomond through habitat enhancement works, education delivery to schools and fish monitoring.**
- **Enhancing the visitor experience by providing leaflets, maps and way marker posts for walking and cycling routes.**

Stuart Corder of Cruise Loch Lomond who recently won a prestigious Thistle Award for Innovation in Tourism says *"We are very excited about the opportunity to support conservation and enhancement projects in the National Park through the 'It's OUR Park' scheme. Most of our customers come here to enjoy the beautiful landscape the area has to offer and the scheme is a great way for them to give something back. Through this process, the scheme also encourages visitors to take responsibility for the continued enjoyment of the Park for future generations."*

"From 2010, we will be offering our customers the opportunity to support the scheme with a voluntary donation of £1 per online booking."

We are delighted to have Cruise Loch Lomond 'on board' as a pioneering business partner for the scheme.



The pilot project runs until May 2010 and we are still inviting businesses to participate in this. It is hoped that funding will be secured for the project to roll-out Park-wide in summer 2010.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme please contact Alice on **01389 727 761** or by email alice@lochlomond-trossachs.org.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme please contact Alice on 01389 727 761 or by email alice@lochlomond-trossachs.org. Alice would particularly welcome suggestions for businesses that might want to be involved in this ground breaking conservation enterprise for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.

Music in the Park with the 'Fiddle Folk'

At a recent gathering of all the community groups operating in the National Park, we met some 'fiddle folk', they are keen to spread the word about their group, and have supplied the article below for VOICE:

This Park music charity has received National Awards for helping to revive the playing and performing of traditional music in the area, including the BBC/ Hands Up for Trad Award for the 'Best Community Project of the Year' and the overall Scottish winner of the Carnegie UK Trust's 'Rural Sparks' Award. At the ceremony held at the Eden Project in Cornwall Kate Braithwaite, Carnegie's Rural Director, commented 'Lochgoilhead Fiddle Workshop, now known as Fiddle Folk, has had a profound effect on the community, by encouraging the whole community to preserve their musical culture. The volunteer team have shown an enterprising spirit by branching out to other parts of Argyll, making top quality music and music tuition accessible to many other communities.' Fiddle Folk now teach traditional fiddle to 90 children and 30 adults a week, have developed mixed instrument groups and an out of schools ceilidh group. Their Gaelic arm, Fèis Cheann Loch Goibhle, arrange annual musical schools tours and residential weekends for children. They have an exceptionally gifted and inspirational tutor in Sarah Naylor, a Glenfiddich and Oban Masters Fiddle Champion, and have taken young budding musicians on tour of Ireland and Argyll. But, outside their

own geographic area of Cowal, they are now best known for bringing popular professional concerts to the area. Their 'Hands Across the Seas' Concert Series, supported by the Scottish Arts Council and Argyll and Islands LEADER, is bringing some top international names, as well as up and coming performers from the diaspora, to the Park area. Performers include musicians from USA, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, France and Scotland, and the concerts attract tourists from far and wide, as well as Park residents. Concerts in early 2010 will include a Burns music tour of schools and community venues; a concert with one of the most influential old-time multi instrumentalists around, Bruce Molsky. His high-spirited music melds the archaic mountain sounds of Appalachia, the power of blues and the rhythmic intricacies of traditional African music. He will be joined by Bellevue Rendezvous - formed in 2006 as a result of a mutual love of beautiful, quirky and varied tunes from all over the world. Another concert will involve a rare opportunity to hear top exponents of Gaelic and Scots song sharing a stage. It is very rare to find award winning Gaelic singers and Scots singers on the same stage. Emily Smith has firmly

established herself as a leading light in the Scottish folk scene since winning the 2002 'BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year Award'. At the same concert clarsach player and singer Maggie MacInnes, winner of the Gaelic Singer of the Year Award, will put on a stunning display of Gaelic song. Fiddle Folk are clearly a charity that wants the Park to be a vibrant place to live in. Much of the work in the Park has focussed on natural heritage, but clearly the developing of cultural heritage is just as important to the future of tourism in the area, and the more there are quality choices of events in the Park the better it is for all its residents. Fiddle Folk are looking to work with Music, Arts and Community Groups within the Park area. We would like to work in partnership with others to expand the range of live music on offer in the area. To find out more about our projects, concerts and events please visit www.fiddleworkshop.co.uk or email mark@morvenlodge.co.uk

Membership

The new membership scheme is launched and Simon Lewis tells us more about it and why membership matters to a charity like The Friends

If you have renewed your membership you will find with your copy of Voice a special folder to keep your membership information in, a copy of our new guide to the national park (free to members – retails at £9.99), and your membership card with a list of all the discounts and details of participating businesses. The guide in particular is a wonderful thank-you present for us to be able to give our members. In a handy paperback format to fit easily in a backpack or glove box, and with many colour pictures and lovely illustrations, it gives vital information on where to go, and what to see in the park, places to stay, to eat and relax. All the magic and beauty of the Trossachs and of Loch Lomond are brought to life. You'll find a review of this book by Iain Stewart on page XX of this edition of Voice. Some of our readers may have seen a short and very positive review of the Guide in Scottish Field Magazine. If you are not yet a member I would urge you to join us! Your support will help us achieve the best possible protection for this beautiful and precious part of Scotland, and as a member you too can enjoy the discounts and offers we have secured across Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, and which we will continue to develop. And we hope we can send you your free copy soon when you become a member!

Simon Lewis writes:

"Membership is everything for a charity like The Friends. With many members renewing right now, I estimate that we have over 500 currently supporting the charity, though our aim is certainly to get this figure well beyond 1,000 over the next year or so. Members contribute vital 'free funds' that the charity can use to fund projects, and also to fund the sort of research, staff, office and equipment costs that it can be more difficult to raise from other sources. And quite simply the more 'Friends' there are, the more funds we can spend on the vital conservation and protection for Loch

Lomond and The Trossachs".

Just as vital as the financial resources we can bring into Loch Lomond and The Trossachs is the collective 'voice' of hundreds and hundreds of Friends from this area and from all over the world who feel a great affection and sense of care for this special part of Scotland. Uniquely we are an independent, charitable, membership based organisation concerned solely (to quote from our constitution) to cherish, protect and enhance the natural beauty, amenity and character of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. As Simon says: "We are not a huge council or government agency with high

levels of administration and other costs and burdened with many other issues: almost all of every penny we raise goes directly into Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. We are not a large national charity seeing this part of Scotland as just one small part of our work all across Scotland, even Europe or world wide. We are 500+ people saying together that this place is beautiful, special, valuable, but under threat and needing protection: we put our money exactly where our mouth is – right into Loch Lomond and The Trossachs.

So if you haven't already, please join us! "

The discounts and offers available at a range of businesses in and around the park are:

- 50% off entrance fees at Drumkinnon Tower, Loch Lomond Shores
- 10% off Sail Loch Katrine on the 'Sir Walter Scott'
- 10% off cruises with Cruise Loch Lomond, sailing from Tarbet
- 10% off food and beverages at The Coach House Coffee Shop, Luss
- 10% off food and beverages at The Buchannan Arms Hotel, Drymen
- 10% off food and beverages at The Waterfront, Balmaha
- 10% off entrance fees at Go Ape, Aberfoyle

We will also be developing a special section on membership on the new website

www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk where all the membership information and special member offers will be listed.



Staff and Trustees – new faces!

We welcome two new trustees.



James Fraser

James has been associated with the area for many years as the former Chief Executive of Tourist Boards covering the National Park (1983-2006:23 years) and Tourism Adviser to the bodies which preceded the Park Authority. As James says:

"This association with the area has continued through my tourism

consultancy work and involvement as a Board member of the Scottish Campaign for National Parks and now through the Friends. I have a passionate life long interest in National Parks which goes back to my youth when I brought up and worked in the Cairngorms. I believe the Friends are entering an interesting and challenging phase with the 'roll out' of major initiatives such as the voluntary visitor scheme 'It's OUR Park' which has great potential to strengthen the work of the Friends in protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the Park for the enjoyment of everyone. With other trustees and support staff I intend to help the Friends to realise this potential over the coming years".



Carron Tobin

Carron is a 'well kent face' around the National Park having been an executive director with the Authority until very recently. Carron devoted over 15 years of her career to the early development of the Park and over this period successfully delivered a £25million package of partnership funded initiatives including Carrochan, the

National Park's award winning HQ in Balloch. With her passion for making a difference on the ground, since leaving the authority she has established her own freelance consultancy in Callander specialising in sustainable rural development. Through her work with the Park, Carron has always had a close involvement with the Friends and in recent years helped develop a few joint initiatives including the Visitor Scheme 'It's Our Park'. As Carron says:

"I am delighted to become a trustee and have the opportunity to not only continue to have an active involvement in these initiatives but also help the Friends go from strength to strength in helping conserve and enhance the special qualities of this wonderful place".

And staff:



Simon Lewis

Simon started as the new Director of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs in August. He has many years experience working for Scottish conservation charities including WWF Scotland, and an early career in the Arts both north and south of the Border. He is looking forward to using all his experience and creativity to

increase the number of the Friends and the impact of our work for this most precious part of Scotland's natural heritage.

"I've spent most of my life living around and visiting what is now the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Like so many people in Scotland and around the world, it has always felt a very special place to me. I am looking forward to doing all I can for this fantastic part of the country and its wonderful wild life, land and water".

Simon can be contacted by email - simon@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk, by phone at the office on 01436 677733 or mobile 07799262742.



Alice Blazy-Winning:

Alice joined Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs in May 2009 to take forward our Tourism & Conservation Scheme – now called 'It's OUR Park'. Alice has an MSc in Ecotourism and a background in project co-ordination in the tourism sector; she has most recently worked with the successful 7stanes mountain project in the south

of Scotland.'

Alice says *"I am delighted to have joined the Friends to take forward this exciting and innovative scheme. Having worked and travelled not only in other parts of Scotland, but also extensively abroad, I recognise that Loch Lomond & The Trossachs is a very special place.*

'Through the establishment of the scheme, I hope to raise significant funds to further expand the project work of the Friends, contributing towards the protection and further enhancement of this iconic part of the world for the enjoyment of future generations.'

Alice works from the National Park Office at Carrochan – email alice@lochlomond-trossachs.org by phone on 01389 727 761 or mobile 07500 575 580

And Sue Cameron has taken on a one day a week role as membership and marketing officer for anything to do with membership, renewals, etc.

The great Trossachs forest



We asked the Scottish Forest Alliance (list members) to tell us about this growing forest that will be the size of Glasgow, and all set within the National Park:

The Great Trossachs Forest opens for business – by Liz Shorthall of the Scottish Forest Alliance

One of the most significant native woodland regeneration projects to take place in the UK in a generation was officially inaugurated by Environment Minister Roseanna Cunningham on Friday 2 October.

The Great Trossachs Forest covers approximately 166.5 square kilometres – roughly the size of the City of Glasgow. It stretches from Loch Lomond in the west to Callander in the east and lies in the heart of the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park.

This legacy project of the innovative Scottish Forest Alliance will probably become the biggest broadleaf woodland in Scotland, providing visitors and local people with a range of

opportunities to experience magical woodlands set in this iconic landscape. The project partners, BP, the Forestry Commission Scotland, RSPB Scotland and the Woodland Trust Scotland who work across the area are committed to delivering this flagship project so that it becomes a showcase for sustainable land management.

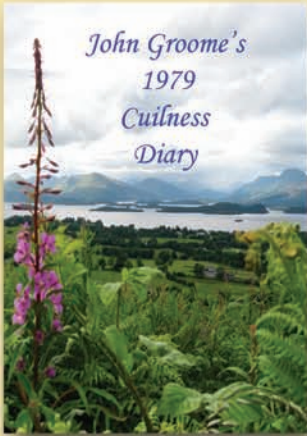
In time there will be approximately 4400ha of new or naturally regenerated woodlands and a range of habitats including moorland, wetlands, grasslands and montane scrub that will bring significant benefits to biodiversity and provide enough habitat for species to adapt to climate change.

The investment has also helped lever in £1m of Heritage Lottery funding for The Great Trossachs Forest which is being used to improve the access and interpretation of the area. This will help different audiences enjoy and engage with the forest in ways that will not only inspire

them to visit, and visit again, but also to generate a sense of ownership and care.

The alliance has taken on Development Officer, Liz Shortall to work with each of the organisations to develop, strengthen and maximise the benefits of the partnership. Between the alliance and the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs there are many areas of mutual interests and we are keen to identify opportunities to work together in the future. For further information please contact Liz Shortall liz.shortall@scottishforestalliance.org.uk or on **07810 856335**.

As Liz says: ***“above all I’d encourage the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs to visit ‘the Great Trossachs Forest and enjoy all it has to offer – and to spread the word amongst all their own friends about this huge, spreading and magical woodland right on their doorstep...”***



John Groome's Dairies

We include a series of pieces from the dairies at around this time of year in 1979.

On a different kind of camping to that mentioned on page XX in this edition of Voice, on Autumn colours, stags calling on Ben Lomond, and depressingly persistent rain, and rain...and rain (this feels a wee bit familiar!), and fish making love.

24TH SEPTEMBER Monday.

Three patrols of 43rd Scouts arrived for a weekend camp. I carried their kit (across the loch), a full boat load. It rained heavily at night, but before it started they had settled in and gathered dry firewood. It remained fine until after their departure this afternoon, so they were able to enjoy their visit with no greater casualty than an upset canoe – not surprising as three senior boys tried to get into a two-seater. They got the soaking they deserved and I got an array of wet kilts round the range which I didn't mind.

27TH SEPTEMBER Thursday.

What a good thing the boys left when they did, for during the following 24 hours 3 inches of rain fell, and not even a good tent would keep out surface water. Neither would they have managed to cook over wood fires as they had been doing. Their sites were left clean, as one would expect of scouts. I enjoyed having them here.....

Yesterday gave a short respite from the rain, but frequent heavy showers today made me glad I picked a few plums yesterday, victorias...

6th OCTOBER Saturday.

Did I really need to be re-acclimatised after a few days away in the sun dried Midlands? Only two days after crossing the border I was once again subjected to a wetting. Not only did I have to face an East wind as I crossed the loch to Cuilness, but the rest of the day on Thursday was wet.for a short time after lunch yesterday the loch was flat calm and the sun shone, so instead of resting after eating I took the camera and crossed the loch to take photographs of Tarbet Isle where the aspens and rowans have taken on a brilliance of Autumn colour. A heron sat on one of the pine trees. Today has again been fair

8th OCTOBER Monday.

Yesterday was wet again so I rested, but today has been dry and as warm as we have had it for most of the summer, 60°F....This afternoon a small party of boys hurried past. As they had walked from Crainlarich today by way of the hills, their speed was remarkable. They were on their way to Rowardennan on the last lap of the West Highland Way from Fort William. I should say they were 14 or 15 years old. A good effort.

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8 OCTOBER Monday Yesterday

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10th OCTOBER Wednesday.

... Today I hear a stag 'belling', the first this year. A forest ranger called at the house and asked to use the telephone. He had left his land rover at Ptarmigan Lodge, and wanted one of the foresters to meet him at the road end. He had shot a stag on the hill and carried it down to the loch side. He offered me the heart, liver and kidneys - generous reward for the use of the phone. ...

14th OCTOBER - Sunday.

I hope for a clear sunny day today, as stags are 'belling' on the hill and rowan trees are a mass of colour against the bare rocks. Today I could have roamed the hillside without disturbing any stalkers. But I have been unlucky and it has been dull and damp... I saw a large herd of deer through binoculars and one big stag. Stags were belling all along the hillside and across the loch....



The ruin of the house with fireplace and chimney on the hillside south of Cuisness.

18th OCTOBER Thursday

Monday was fair but overcast. The sun tried to get through but failed. I climbed the hill, taking my camera, but the light did not bring out the colours. A pity, as they would have been so lovely, and there was enough dark cloud to make the loch inky black. Stags were belling, but I got a good view of only one, a stirk marshalling three or four hinds. Six geese flew over, honking their way eastward. Tuesday started so clear and still that I postponed a visit to Glasgow until late in the day and climbed the hill once again. The sun had not risen over the hill, and as I waited the Ben drew to it a few wisps of cloud. But waiting was rewarded and I got the pictures I wanted. None too soon as more clouds gathered before noon. A few fieldfares have come in to feast on the abundant rowan berries, and soon they will be joined by others. Perhaps the pigeons will help strip the crop, as acorns are scarce this year. A pair of young buzzards circled above me as I came down the old pony track, and another older bird mewed over the Ashlan woods. Much of the lower slopes show signs of badgers, so they have increased again after the losses of last year. The air was still and pleasantly warm for October. Bracken, which had wetted my clothes with morning dew was now dry, but the grass on my lawn still showed a darker green track where I had crossed it in the morning. Rough weather returned briefly last night, for the harbour was lined with birch leaves which had been washed in by a rough loch, but today was pleasant and calm....

Glasgow, then to East Lothian where a dry summer has resulted in almost drought conditions. But even there we had a little rain. I do not seem to be able to escape it. All was well when I returned yesterday, there were few tracks to be seen

21st OCTOBER Sunday .

When did Wordsworth write "Daffodils"? Surely not after he visited Scotland, for anything less lonely than a cloud is hard to imagine. Here they are as gregarious as football enthusiasts, and when they get together they can be devastating. They shed two inches of rain on Thursday night, causing the loch to rise three inches. Heavy rain continued on Friday.

30th OCTOBER Tuesday.

I returned to the kind of weather I have become used to, for it rained heavily last night and of today. I have been away for a few days, first to Glasgow and then to East Lothian where a dry summer has resulted in almost drought conditions. But even there we had a little rain. I do not seem to be able to escape it...

1st NOVEMBER Thursday.

The most violent thunderstorms of the year have left the tops of the mountains white with hail and added a further inch of rain to the sodden landscape. For a time atmospheric made me switch off the radio, and thunder followed lightning flash with little interval. When it cleared I tried to cross the loch, but engine trouble drove me back. I should have said 'drove me to row back'...

2nd NOVEMBER Friday

A.M. Washing has now been hanging on the line for three days and nights and it is as wet as it was when hung. The turf has been stripped of its roots by chafer grubs, and now rests on a bed of mud so that the foot slides on it, leaving imprints and bare patches. Sheep, goats and deer leave imprints in the yellowing turf and where the grubs are most prolific there are bare patches with sorrel, moss and bedstraw and perhaps a tuft of rushes, easily uprooted from its depleted anchorage. Only an invasion of starlings could cope with this lasting plague, but they are so well fed on human discardings in town that this abundant supply of natural food remains untouched except by a few badgers, crows and other birds. Trees are now losing their uniform greenness so that larches form distinct patterns on the hills, contrasting with the dark greens of the pines and spruces, the rust of bracken and the umber of heather on the tops. Evening. Rain held off until darkness, so the washing dried. I trimmed the hedge to discourage the white goat. Its browsing does not do too much damage to the hedge, but its hooves make holes in the wire netting. I left plenty of trimmings for it to eat without having to climb. It is now a mature looking animal with a good pair of horns. ...



Pygmy shrew - actual size

barely up to the foot of the gabions n
warm, nearly 60°

3rd NOVEMBER Saturday.

A wild night; just how wild I did not realise until I heard a report on the radio. Most unusual for the BBC to comment on weather in Scotland. I slept well through it all, but when I got up and looked out of the window I could see the boats were afloat and bobbing about in the harbour, which meant a substantial rise in loch level (9"). In made their security my first job after breakfast. They were safe but full of water. Most of the rain must have fallen before dawn as the burn was not high. My rain gauge was full...

7 NOVEMBER

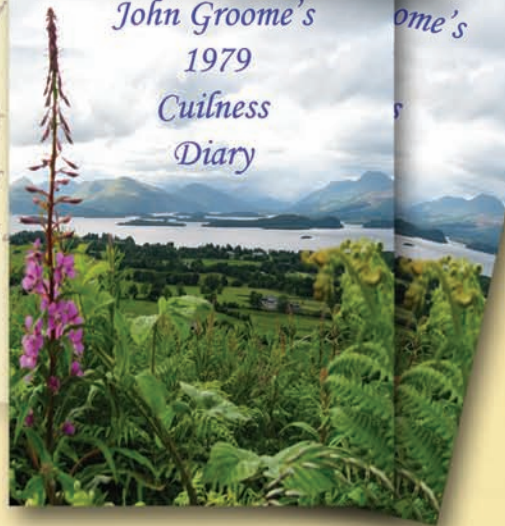
7th NOVEMBER Wednesday .

I had to cross the loch on Monday to get necessary parts for the outboard engine petrol pipe. ... I returned yesterday. The weather had become much colder and the hills were white above 2000 feet... on Sunday there were fish spawning in the Cruachan burn, some a good size (2') and none showing any fungus growth. It would have been easy to net one, but I am always opposed to taking them during their love making unless I am in great need of food.

the outbo
I was luck
showers continued during the day. The sten
showers, and I risked leaving the engine on
would be a short one. In Glasgow I boug
safe side I got a new pipe. It cost me
at half the price, but that is the way most
The weather had become much colder and hi
harbour was choked with leaves and debr
it. There was little wind, but even so the
rather than float out. Eventually I prevented its return by
the harbour with
a good size (2') and none showing any fungus growth. It
net one, but I am always
in great need of food. They
water coming down throu

NB: Our president Hannah Stirling is publishing some of these diaries next year, and you can get full information on when and how you can buy copies from the office.

John Groome's
1979
Cuilness
Diary



Veteran and Heritage Trees

in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park



The most enduring living things on earth are trees. Iona Hyde of the National Park Authority tells VOICE of their value in Scotland and particularly in the National Park.

"In Scotland we have an enormous wealth of ancient and veteran trees as well as heritage trees that are associated with particular events, people and folklore or are exceptional because of their size, shape, species or location. These trees are increasingly recognised as playing a vital and defining role in Scotland's natural and cultural heritage. Of course the value and importance of these arboricultural heirlooms has not always been appreciated and many have been lost, particularly during the latter half of the 20th century.

Scotland probably has the richest legacy of surviving veteran and heritage trees in Europe. The contribution they make as unique wildlife habitats, as landscape features, as cultural and historic monuments as well as to our understanding of trees and their processes is immense and immeasurable. In recognition of the important role each of these irreplaceable and unique organisms has in the cultural and natural heritage of the National Park, the Park Authority is collecting information to improve our knowledge and awareness about veteran and heritage trees in the National Park. In order to do this we need to enlist the help of the Parks residents and visitors to identify these

trees and tell us about them. We are also looking for volunteers to record and monitor the trees throughout the National Park and will provide training and guidance as necessary.

Within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park there are many known and well-documented veteran and heritage trees. These include The Balmaha Oak in Balmaha Boatyard, an enormous survivor of the coppice industry which was once prevalent in the woodlands around Loch Lomond; The Bicycle Tree at Brig O' Turk, which stands close to the site of a former smithy and which still bears evidence of its use by the blacksmith for displaying his wares, including a bicycle, some of which is still visible as the tree has grown around and absorbed it; the Fairy Tree on Doon Hill near Aberfoyle, a tree of no great age or distinction but which legend has it is associated with the spirit world of elves and fairies; and the impressive Benmore Redwood Avenue at Benmore Botanic Garden near Dunoon.

As well as those more obvious trees which are well-documented, there are many lesser-known examples of heritage trees in the National Park which are no less important for not being well-known. For example, the elder tree in Drymen Churchyard...or the Douglas fir in the Forestry Commission car park at Milton by Aberfoyle which was reputedly the first tree to be planted in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. There will be many other examples in the National Park of

impressive specimens or trees that are the subject of local folklore and traditions or that are associated with people or events that few people outside the local area will be aware of. These trees may not be located in obvious or prominent locations but may be found in woodlands, ancient or otherwise, they may be in churchyards, or gardens, on public or private land. Heritage and veteran trees may be found in abandoned wood pasture in remote valleys or on landed estates and designed landscapes. They may stand on the historic boundaries between properties, on old drovers' roads in remote mountain locations or in and around villages. Wherever they are we would like to hear about them.

We can provide advice on the management of these trees if necessary, although we recognise that the very fact that these trees are still standing is testament in the vast majority of cases to their good management. We plan only to document their existence and monitor their condition. Information about trees on land that is not accessible to the public will not be made available to the public without the owners permission". If you know of any trees which you think may be heritage or veteran trees or would like to volunteer to help with this project, please email Matt Drew at the National Park on matt.drew@lochlomond-trossachs.org or write to him at LL&TTNPA, National Park HQ, Carrochan, 20 Carrochan Road, Balloch, G83 8EG.



Volunteers raise money for friends at Caledonian Challenge...



If you would like to be kept informed of future volunteer opportunities, including marshalling at next years Caledonian Challenge, please email your name and contact details to info@lochlomondrossachs.org.uk.

A group of dedicated Friends supporters raised £800 for our charity's conservation work by volunteer marshalling at this year's Caledonian Challenge.

It was an early 4am start for the 8 volunteers who gave up their Sunday on 14th June to volunteer marshal at the finish check-point at Strathfillan for the Caledonian Challenge. The Caledonian Challenge is a 54-mile sponsored walk over 24 hours along the northern section of the West Highland Way. The ascent of the walk is equivalent to two ascents of Ben Nevis, without sleep! The event has been running since 1996 and this year's event saw around 1,200 walkers successfully complete the challenge raising around £1m for the Scottish Community Foundation.

Each year, the event requires marshals to volunteer at each of the check-point to ensure the event runs smoothly, roles include marshalling the car park, directing walkers to facilities and monitoring road crossings. In return each volunteer receives £100 to be distributed to the

charity of their choice.

Alice Blazy-Winning, Friends Project Officer who co-ordinated Friends volunteers said 'Having the opportunity to volunteer marshal at the event was not only a good way to support this important event, but also a fantastic way for Friends supporters to get out and meet each other while raising important funds for our conservation work across the National Park.' James Ashby, one of the volunteers said 'When I saw Friends wanted volunteers, my wife and I were very happy to offer our support.' He added 'Having been involved on three previous occasions, I was also aware of the value of the Caledonian Challenge to Scottish Charities. There is a good buzz of camaraderie at the checkpoints and at the finish which makes taking part, particularly without the walking bit, such a worthwhile activity.'

Many thanks go to our volunteers Callum & David MacGregor, James & Sue Ashby, John & Sara Cassidy, and Iain Stewart.

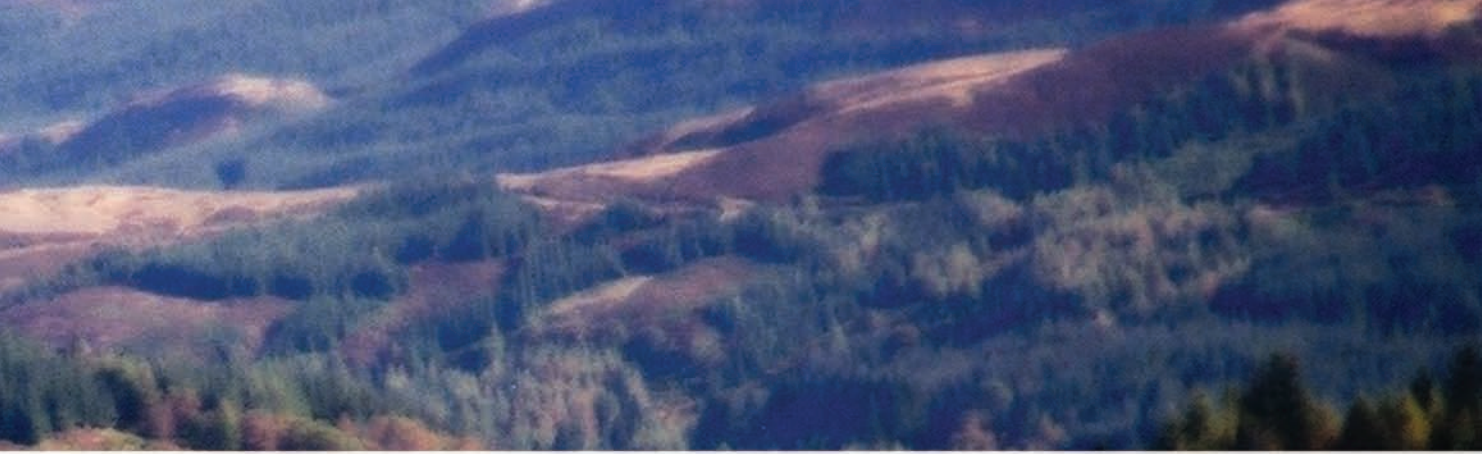


Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

by Martin Varley

This is a guidebook with instant appeal, the glossy cover has a series of representative and evocative images, it is well presented throughout, coherent, readable and, within the authors definition of content, comprehensive. He tells you when to go, what to visit and how to get around. There is no information on shopping, accommodation and food, but on page 20, it tells you where all this can be found. The great John Muir, founding father of National Parks felt they should preserve wild places and wild animals, both of which are scarce or non existent in the new Park. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs is more a National playground, a managed lung of outdoor experiences for city dwellers of Scotland and further a field. There is more heritage than wilderness here. There is also, as Martin Varley's pictures make clear, great beauty. The book is well researched and has an index, so vital to really finding your way around.

Such is often neglected in a publication of this size. The symbols used are large enough to be read, comprehensive and easily decipherable. It begins with a short historical, geological and ecological overview from Ice Age to Tourist Age. Perhaps here he might have made room for a brief look at the history of the National Park movement and where the present park stands in that; the first in Scotland, and the 14th in Great Britain. Nothing is said of the thinking behind the park, of the views of pioneers like Sir Robert Grieve. There is an opportunity here to draw tourists into the debate on the balance between conservation and access, allowing them to share in the process. You will find excellent material on clans, churches, place names and towns; long and short walks, and the Munros (of which there are 21 in the Park.) All this information and more is given a geographical location by treating the area in its four



parts, Loch Lomond, The Trossachs, Breadalbane, the Argyll Forest and the Arrochar Alps. You can choose to spend time in one, or more or all of the sections of the Park.

The text is broken up with excellent photographs and a series of boxes, green for walks, and, blue for Park People. The illustrations, reminiscent of Victorian travel diaries, are delightful, obviously a labour of love by the author's wife. They do much to soften and enhance the book, as do the engaging pictorial maps at the beginning of each section. Maps can be a problem in guide books and these personal sketches are pleasing and informative bringing alive the 'dry' Park map at the beginning of the guide. The latter is on too small a scale with place names difficult to read. This official map does little for the guide.

The Trossachs and Loch Lomond have been visited by and featured in the works of many writers. Scott and the Wordsworth are mentioned but

so too might have been Tobias Smollet and Burns. The latter after a long night with the Buchanans at Bannachra fell off the faithful Meg when riding along the Loch shore to Dumbarton. More recently Tom Weir, our local John Muir, did much to publicise the area on T.V. and in books and magazines. The great families whose influence covered the whole area are well chronicled. Their physical presence has dwindled, or metamorphed, as with Rossdhu, the Colquhoun home, into a golf club. The Grahams still live on the East side of the loch. A major landowner and influence that has been overlooked is the Corporation of Glasgow which owned Rob Roy's Glengyle estate and established the Loch Katrine water scheme. The authority also created Balloch Park as an extension of the Glasgow Parks; a taste of what was to come on a larger scale with the present National Park.

However it is too easy to comment on emphasis and

omissions in a book of this size (125 pages). It should prove a popular introduction for tourists, walkers, students of local lore and lovers of the outdoors generally. It will encourage readers to go to these places, and some even to read more about them. The co-sponsors of the publication, The Park authority and the Friends of Loch Lomond should be well pleased with this, the first guide to Scotland's first National Park. Yet, that said, an opportunity has been missed. The Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs have played a large part in fostering the production of this guide. It would have been fitting for there to have been a more overt credit to The Friends on the cover and it would not have been out of place for there to have been a note of thanks to The Friends' President Dr Hannah Stirling M.B.E. who made a most generous financial contribution to its production from her own fund. Perhaps this may be recognised in future editions.

The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs needs you



To help us do more for the future of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs we are looking for volunteers to help with many aspects of running the society.

We are looking for specific volunteers in areas such as:

- Helping with administration at our office in Helensburgh
 - Editing and producing the Voice
- Sharing expertise in areas relevant to the Friends like planning, tourism and land management

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