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The Voice

The magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs





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The Voice

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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@lochlomondrossachs.org.uk

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A letter from the President

My garden at Auchendarroch



It has been a hard winter and much of the loch was frozen, particularly at the South end. Here is a picture taken by Gavin Arneil of the Maid of the Loch, surrounded by ice.

Compared to the rest of the country, here at Tarbet we escaped the worst and the snowfalls were light. Now spring is here again and my Camellia is in full bloom and the garden is coming alive once more. As my friend John Groome says in one of his poems:

*"When wounded Birch trees bleed and sap runs fast
And creeping movement tops the wood ant's mound
When brown protective sheaths, from buds are cast,
And great tits claim their rights with bell-like sound
I know the waiting has not been in vain
And I have lived to see the spring again"*

I have been busy since last I wrote. John Groome's diaries for 1974 and 1975 have been published and have been selling well, with the money ring fenced into a separate diaries account ready for any further publishing developments. Thinking of development - the new three villages community hall at Arrochar is now completed. We've just had our AGM at the hall, and I think it is good for us to be involved in this local enterprise.

Another local enterprise based right beside me here at Auchendarroch, is Cruise Loch Lomond who are launching a new range of cruises, many operating from Tarbet. The services are timed to fit in with popular walks such as along the West Highland way between Rowardennan and Inversnaid, or a drop off and collect service timed to enable the climb of Ben Lomond. The company has been one of the first to sign up to the OUR Park scheme, and they gave us a generous discount on the cruise that we ran after the AGM - I wish them great success with their new services. Their phone number is 01301 702356, and website is www.cruiselochlomondltd.com.

Remembering Duncan Macgregor's Bothy at Ardlui, I am delighted to see that West Dumbartonshire Council have taken the site on to be an outdoor learning centre for all their schools, as well as for other schools and organisations from all around the country. It will be marvelous to see that rather derelict site restored to activity. Hope to see you soon.

Yours aye Hannah



Letter from the Chair

Dear Members

The first few months of 2010 have been very busy for your Friends Committee and we have responded in detail to a number of important planning consultations. In particular, we have objected to the application for a gold mine at Cononish, near Tyndrum and have made a detailed submission in response to the Park's Local Plan.

We have printed in full the letter that was submitted in our objection to the Gold Mine plans on page 8 of this spring edition of VOICE.

Our detailed (some 11 pages) response to the draft Local Plan was an important task for us, as this document, when finalised, will determine the way planning applications are considered over the next five years, setting out detailed policies and site-specific proposals for development. And it will be used to guide day-to-day planning decisions by the National Park Authority. We found much to support in the Local Plan, but have made objections to the proposals in the plan that would allow clusters of wind turbines up to 50m high within the National Park, and to loopholes that we feel are developing in the area of housing – that could allow more inappropriate housing development. We are happy to provide copies of our response to any members who are interested (contact the office), though we would ask for £1 for each copy to cover printing and postal costs.

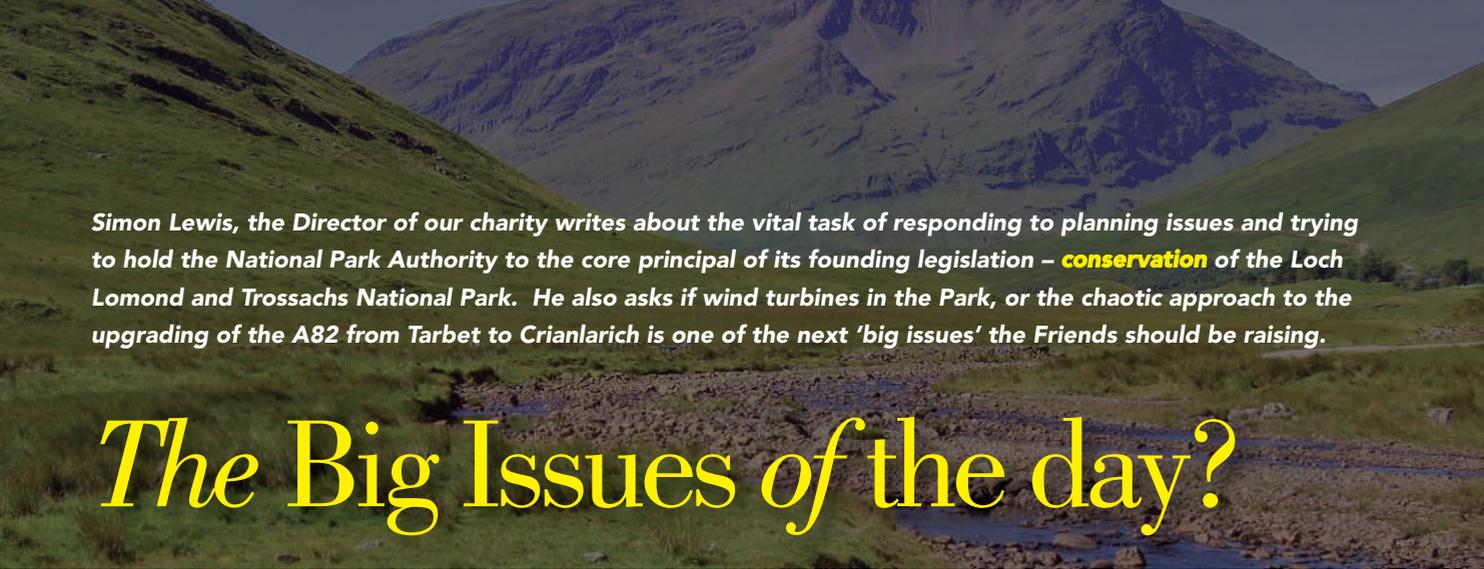
We have also responded to the consultation on new byelaws to control camping and irresponsible behaviour along the Eastern shore of Loch Lomond. We have broadly supported the measures proposed, as we agree with the National Park Authority that there is a real threat to the environment around Loch Lomond that has to be urgently addressed. However, we have proposed that the laws are not brought in until improved camping facilities, WCs, etc. are actually in place, and that steps are taken to limit the chance of the problems simply moving elsewhere within the National Park.

Thank you for your support over the past year, and here's to another year of hard work and success for the Friends! Lastly we would welcome some new trustees to join the management committee and we are particularly on the look out for a new treasurer. If you would consider helping us in this way, please do get in touch!

Yours

Rowena Fergusson

Chair – Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs



*Simon Lewis, the Director of our charity writes about the vital task of responding to planning issues and trying to hold the National Park Authority to the core principal of its founding legislation – **conservation** of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. He also asks if wind turbines in the Park, or the chaotic approach to the upgrading of the A82 from Tarbet to Crianlarich is one of the next 'big issues' the Friends should be raising.*

The Big Issues of the day?

In all of the three important planning responses we have done, the Sandford Principal has been uppermost in our minds.

Commander John Cyril Edmondson, 2nd Baron Sandford, DSC (1920 –2009) was a decorated Royal Navy officer, Church of England clergyman, conservationist and Conservative politician. As a junior minister charged with a review of policy on National Parks, he formulated what became known as the 'Sandford principle': if there is a conflict between leisure use of a National Park, and protecting its natural state, the state of the Park must be preserved. As he said 'National Park Authorities can do much to reconcile public enjoyment with the preservation of natural beauty by good planning and management and the main emphasis must continue to be on this approach wherever possible. But even so, there will be situations where the two purposes are irreconcilable...

Where this happens, priority must be given to the conservation of natural beauty' (Lord Sandford, 1974).

The Friends have reminded our own National Park Authority of this vital principal in both our 11-page response to the draft local plan, and in the objection we have made to the proposed gold mine at Cononish Farm, Tyndrum. You will see a copy of this letter set out in full on pages 8 and 9. This letter was carefully composed on the instructions of the Friends committee, and we would welcome individual feedback from any of our members on this kind of issue. You will see that we specifically mention the Sandford Principle in the first of our 8 grounds of objection in this letter.

As the Spring advances we see two particular issues looming (literally in one case!) over the national park.

The draft local plan mentioned in our chairman's letter would appear to allow clusters of wind turbines up to 50 metres high within the National Park itself, and while we understand the need for renewable energy and would support as much of it as possible in the Park as long as it is not visually intrusive, we feel that there are thousands

and thousands of 'non-National Park' acres in Scotland that would be more appropriate settings for these turbines. We get the strong feeling that Scottish government pressure is behind the drive for wind turbines. Are we going to need a major campaign against large wind turbines in the Park if our comments are not heeded and the local plan continues to encourage their construction? What do you feel? Meanwhile anyone who has travelled up or down the A82 between Tarbet and Crianlarich will have suffered delay and disruption, seen the felled trees and disturbance of ancient woodland, sat at the endless sets of traffic lights, and may have wondered how long this is going to go on for? We have heard that Transport Scotland, the government agency responsible, is planning to sort out this section of the road over no less than ten years in an attempt to 'save money!' Our view is that the necessary work should be done properly, over one concentrated period, as the Duck Bay to Tarbet section was many years ago. We are not arguing that the work to widen, straighten and level this piece of road is unnecessary – quite the contrary. We are strongly of the view that there must be the necessary investment from Transport Scotland to do the job properly with passing and parking places to enjoy this beautiful north part of Loch Lomond, and that the vital work must be done swiftly, and in one go. We are absolutely convinced that the inefficient, piecemeal approach will actually cost more in the long run, and seems almost to be designed to cause as much difficulty for road users for the longest possible period. Finally we notice the extraordinary fact that the National Park Authority has no powers whatsoever to influence this or indeed any other road issue within the Park; Transport Scotland seem to be answerable only to the powers that be in Edinburgh! What is your view?

Simon Lewis
Director



We came across this wonderful report of a trip across what is now the National Park in 1920 – you can find many, many more diary entries at <http://fannie1920europe.blogspot.com> . Our huge thanks to Jennifer for letting us re-produce her great, great grandmother's diary! As she says: "In 1920, my Great-Great-Grandmother, Fannie Drummond, went on a trip to Europe with a group of women. Departing April 3rd and returning home on May 30th, they travelled throughout England, Scotland, Belgium, Switzerland, and France. Fannie kept a journal of this trip, and I thought it would be fun to post her entries in the form of a blog, with entries on the same dates only 90 years later".

A little background info on Fannie...

Her full name was Frances Arabell Drummond (maiden name was Gregg). She was a member of The Women's Christian Temperance Union; the purpose of this trip, in addition to sightseeing, was to attend the World's Conference of the WCTU in London and to spread the word of the "evils" of alcohol. She was 56 years old at the time, a widow, and she lived in Oberlin, Ohio.

A Trip Abroad in 1920 with my Great-Great-Grandmother

TUESDAY, MAY 4, 1920

Am not equal to writing up this day. It has meant more to me than any day of our tour. We left Edinburgh by tram at 8-31, crossed Firth of Forth bridge, to Stirling, changed cars here for Callander, arriving at 10-38. Charabancs were waiting which took us to the Trossach's Hotel situated upon the estate belonging to Drummond Castle. Here we were upon historic ground, indeed, that had to do with our own family history, for the Clan Drummond had their part in the old heroic days of Scotland. Stirling was the birthplace and early home of that remarkable personality - Henry Drummond who, through the influence of Dwight L. Moody, became such a power with young people. He is best remembered by the address he delivered to the students at Northfield, Mass "Love, the Greatest Thing in the World." We had scarcely time to do justice to the lunch served us so rushed were we to reach the Steamer on schedule time and enjoy the famous trip through the Trossachs.

We found the steamer, Sir Walter Scott, waiting to carry us across Loch Katrine. It was such a beautiful ride. We were the first tourists that had come through this pass in six years and the Captain smiled his hearty welcome, as he pointed out to us the pass of the McGregors, Ellen's Isle, the Silver Strand and other places mentioned in Scott's Lady of the Lake. Rob Roy and his wife Helen and many things we have read about this section always seemed so mythical, but now they seem very real.

Reaching Stronachlachar, we coached to Inversnaid and I enjoyed a seat by the liveried driver, who smiled at our accent when the party attempted to sing Scotch airs, but he was a good talker and told us many things of interest.

The ride on the Prince Edward down Loch Lomond to Balloch Pier was equally interesting. The day was beautiful, scenery fine, and the background historical. We visit, promenade, take pictures and sing. We enjoyed the splendid dinner served on board.

We will always carry with us the memory of the Highlands, the glens, Stately Ben Lomond, and the entire romantic and beautiful

region made doubly so by Scott. It is no longer traditional geography, but very, very real, and we call to mind the fierce struggles of old border warfare in which England and Scotland shivered lances for long years.

Our great disappointment was, that it was too early to see the heather in bloom - only now and then could we catch a glimpse of the famous blossoms.

From Balloch Pier we took train for Glasgow. We were interested in seeing the funny black-faced sheep with their long tails, the Highland cows with their furry coats, the hillsides covered with heather, the strange birds, the blooming cowslips and primroses and always the snow-capped mountains in sight. Wild deer and goats live in the mountains and the goats are never killed. There is a story that once Robert Bruce and his men were caught in the mountains in a heavy snow storm and the goats driven down to the valley laid down beside the men and kept them warm. Then the edict went forth that they must never be killed.

We had a fall of 400 ft., in descending from the mountain to the boat landing. We had one hour's wait in Glasgow, before our train was due to take us back to Edinburgh - Glasgow is a commercial city and unlike Edinburgh, London or other cities. I can hardly describe the difference. The Scots are also a nation of workers and the national energy is in the blood, and they give you the impression that they are terribly in earnest.

We are interested in Glasgow, for families of the Drummonds live there.

*"A city dull and somewhat plain of face
Yet some there are, who with a lover's eye
Are quick to mark an unexpected grace
Where strangers would indifferent, pass by.
May it be yours for a brief spell to share
Old Glasgow's smiles - to pierce the veil of day
That screens her charms from hurried eyes - to bear
The best of her in memory away!"*



Join Us! Membership renewal time!

We are holding membership prices for 2010/2011 at £15 individual and £20 family/joint, with renewals due from April. We hope that as many as possible of our valued existing members will renew their membership this year. To encourage early renewal we are offering a set of 4 lovely 'Wild Lomond' postcards as a free gift to every member that pays their subscription by 31st July 2010. These cards have been created to publicise the new wildlife website (wildlomond.co.uk) that has been created by the Friends with funding from the Park's Natural Heritage Grant Scheme. There's more information on this project on page 20 of VOICE.

For new members we are again able to make the special offer of a free copy (retail price £9.99) for each new member of the guide to The National Park – 'Explore Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park' that was very well reviewed in the last edition of VOICE. It's a comprehensive guide to the Park, with all the vital information about where to go, what to see, and how to get there – but it's still a small handy size just right for a generous pocket or a small back-pack.

We are still discussing the issue of direct debits for membership with the Royal Bank of Scotland, and unfortunately cannot take this payment method at the moment. In the meantime, we cheerfully accept cheques made payable to 'The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs'.



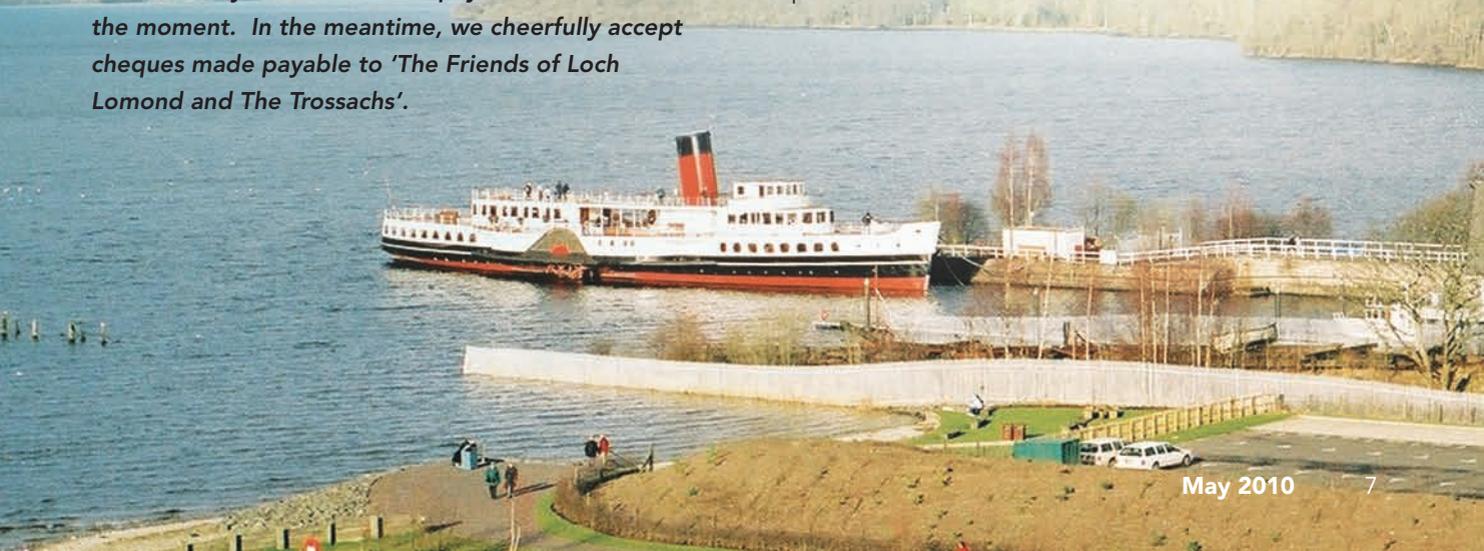
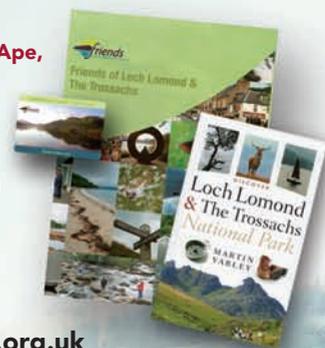
The discounts and offers available at a range of businesses in and around the park are:

- 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.



With its apparent offers of local employment (which we would naturally wish to support), and potential for great visual and other damage in one of the more accessible parts of the Park, the Tyndrum Gold Mine proposal was always going to be a challenging issue for us to respond to. Here we reproduce the considered response, made after much discussion and consideration. As VOICE goes to press we hear that the applicants 'ScotGold' have not provided all the necessary information that the National Park Authority had requested as part of the application – a decision on the proposal may be delayed while this additional information is being sought.

Watch this space!



Mr Gordon Watson
Director of Planning
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
Carrochan
Carrochan Road
Balloch G83 8EG

25th February 2010

Application Number: LT/2009/0235/PAC/S

**Development Proposed: Proposed Gold Mine with associated service and production buildings, plant, tailings storage area, pond and gauging station, access roads and bridges and diversion of burn.
Cononish Farm, Cononish Road, Tyndrum.**

Dear Gordon

I am writing on behalf of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs to formally object to this planning application.

The 'Friends' is a membership charity whose objectives are: to cherish, protect and enhance the natural beauty, amenity and character of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and its environs; to promote and encourage the preservation, conservation and improvement of features of public amenity or historic interest within the above area; to promote and encourage an energetic and consistent implementation of good planning policies appropriate to the above area and consistent with these objects; to stimulate public interest in these objects by means of publications, meetings, exhibitions, appeals and other forms of publicity; and to co-operate with other bodies to promote the foregoing objects.

Our grounds of objection are as follows:

1. Permanent physical damage to the natural heritage and special qualities of the National Park
2. Damage in one of the most accessible, yet 'wild' parts of the Park
3. Disturbance within this 'wilderness area'
4. Lack of overriding national interest
5. Negligible guaranteed benefit to the local community
6. Uncertain employment opportunities
7. Uncertain future of the scheme, likely abandonment and damage to the National Park's reputation and integrity
8. Refuting the argument that 'if the site is already damaged, mining may as well re-commence'

1. Permanent physical damage to the natural heritage and other special qualities of the Park

Our primary objection is to the very significant damage and detrimental visual impact that the proposed mine workings and large scale, associated landscaping would make to this part of the National Park. This area is popular with visitors and local residents due to its dramatic landscape, outstanding natural heritage and other special qualities: these are the very reasons why it was included within the boundary of the National Park from the outset. For example, there is one of the few remaining remnants of ancient Caledonian pine forest in the Park, right beside the proposed development.

This major and inappropriate development in such a sensitive location is clearly against both the letter and the spirit of the legislation with which the park was set up. In the act, it is stated that the four aims of the Park are to be pursued collectively: 'however if it appears that there is conflict between the first aim, the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage, and any of the others, we must give greater weight to the first aim (section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000'. If this type of visually intrusive and environmentally damaging development is allowed in a National Park of all places, there is in our view simply no point at all in having such a designation. Such a development may be considered to be appropriate outside the National Park, but surely cannot be considered within it.

2. Damage to one of the most accessible yet 'wild' parts of the National Park

The proposed development involves extensive works over a lengthy period of time which will lead to the visually intrusive and environmentally damaging mining spoil being deposited in some of the most accessible and beautiful parts of the Park landscape, in particular below the peak of Ben Lui from which none of the damaged landscape and intrusive industrial buildings will be screened. There are many other popular Munros close by, in a part of the National Park readily accessed from Tyndrum, the railway and the busy A82 /A85 tourist routes. The walk up the beautiful 'Y' shaped glen by Cononish river towards Ben Lui into the National Park's dramatic, wild mountain scenery would be particularly blighted by the vast blunt edged 42m high embankment containing the mine spoil and settlement area proposed in this industrial development. The site is right beside Scotland's most popular long distance route on which up 50,000 visitors walk every year - the West Highland way.

3. Disturbance within this 'wilderness area'

Rock blasting will create disturbance for walkers on and beyond the West Highland Way and the adjacent Munros who will have come to the area for the peace and quiet of this outstanding 'wilderness area'. In addition, for those walking up the Glen towards Ben Lui, and from the slopes around and above the site there will certainly be some disturbance from rock crushing (despite the enclosure) and other 24/7 site operations, including unnatural light pollution. This is entirely inappropriate in a National Park environment.

4. Lack of overriding national interest

From the detail of the plans submitted to you, we can see no overriding national interest demonstrated. In this scenario the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park as planning authority is obliged to proceed in terms of its own guidelines, placing environmental protection above other considerations and firmly applying the Sandford Principle. Taking into account the actual proposal submitted to you, rather than the 'talk' surrounding the plans, we can

The Park Authority should be in no doubt that should planning permission be granted, long term damage to the special environmental and landscape qualities of this northern part of the Park will be guaranteed. The Park's integrity will be questioned and damage to its reputation will be certain. We urge you to reject this application.

Yours Sincerely

Simon Lewis Director

see no justification whatsoever for the 4th aim of the Park – economic (very uncertain in this case) – to override the first – environmental.

Further, we would question a number of the arguments stated or inferred in the application before you and in the media coverage of the plans, in particular:

5. Negligible guaranteed benefit to the local community

The proposal submitted to you for planning permission brings no guarantee whatsoever of any significant economic or other long term benefit to the community of Tyndrum, the National Park as a whole, or indeed the Scottish economy. In other National Parks small scale mining of local building materials such as stone has historically been allowed. These materials tend to be used locally or regionally and contribute to reinforcing the distinctive character of communities. We understand the final production of 75% of the gold from this mining operation would take place outside of the UK, further dispersing any significant economic benefit away from the local community.

6. Uncertain employment opportunities

The applicants suggest that circa 50+ jobs will be created of which 13 would be specialists brought in from outside the Park. It is stated that the rest will be taken up by local people, though there is no obligation for ScotGold to offer or continue to offer employment to residents from within the Park, and experience from elsewhere in the UK suggests that 'locals' gain/retain a tiny percentage of the jobs on offer in this type of development. A much more likely outcome is that short term migrant workers come from outwith the area which, in turn, could have an adverse social impact on the local communities of Crainlarich and Tyndrum where there is already a shortage of housing and workers to support the busy tourist industry.

7. Uncertain future of the scheme, likely abandonment and damage to the National Park's reputation and integrity

The proposed development is predicated on the value on gold in world markets – a quite uncertain proposal hanging on a most uncertain and volatile premise. If permission is granted this means there is then a very real danger that the project is suddenly abandoned with the site left in a worst possible 'visual' state (as the mine was left previously when exploratory works were deemed not to be viable – the mistake has been made once already). The NPA as planning authority will have allowed the damage without any of the so called 'benefits' having come to the local communities. Bonds and guarantees may be demanded but the huge ground works - tailings storage area, pond, etc – would remain as lasting physical evidence of poor planning decisions. Evidence from elsewhere is that the tons of mine waste are never going to be removed or put back into the mountainside.

8. Refuting the argument that 'if the site is already damaged, mining may as well re-commence'

This is not a relevant argument, and further damage should not be built on the foundations of an earlier planning mistake. The remains of the old mine appear to be derelict and abandoned although it is supposed to be being managed on a 'care and maintenance basis'. Indeed the NPA should firmly and swiftly take the necessary enforcement action to restore the damaged landscape created by the earlier mining: using the bond that was deposited with Stirling District Council. We argue that the current abandoned remains of the earlier mining is no justification at all for allowing this large environmentally damaging development in Scotland's first National Park.

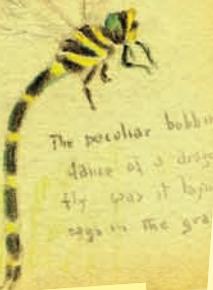
John Groome's 1975 Diary

With the camping issue and new byelaws planned, we feature an extract from John Groome's 1975 Diary in which we see that this is not a new issue – though the scale is somewhat different! As before, his writing is enthralling, drawing us into his life on Loch Lomond side. The last entry we feature (9th August 1975) is particularly beautifully written as he tells of a hot still day and thunder in the mountains.

Our president Dr Hannah Stirling has published both this 1975 diary and one covering 1974.

Copies are available from the office @ £5 each with £1 to cover postage.

We have plans to make earlier un-illustrated dairies available free on-line to members via the website.



1st AUGUST - Friday.

On Wednesday, I returned from a three day visit to Glasgow rather later than planned owing to yet another change to the bus timetable. A pity as I was just too late to catch vandals. When one sees branches torn from trees, one is sorry if natural causes have done the damage, but when the cause is human I feel angry. Some people had lit a fire on the shore of the Loch, and twisted off branches from overhanging oak trees to screen them from the wind. The fire was still burning when I checked the far park in the evening, but the culprits, perhaps a boating party, had gone. Tom and Rhona Weir had walked over from Inversnaid yesterday, after a holiday in Barra, so we had a lot to talk about.

5th AUGUST - Tuesday.

One of the least exciting months of the year began with a heat wave. Shade temperature yesterday reached 85° Fahrenheit and the humidity was high. I admired the vigour and the physique of a party of Manchester youths who climbed the Ben (Lomond) after climbing Ben Luss earlier in the day. They had started from Wick some ten days earlier, following a route over mountain tops including Ben Nevis – quite a feat of endurance! I found yesterday too hot even for thinking, but Sunday was a superb day, just right for working in the burns, making good some of the flood damage.

Two pleasant youngsters from Paisley camped in the far park and there were other holiday makers on foot and in boats taking advantage of the sunshine. I woke to the sound of thunder this morning. A little heavy rain fell, which cleared up for a few hours, but returned in the afternoon with more thunder. It was fair for long enough for me to get water running in the pipe from the burn. Rocks brought down by the flood had covered the inlet strainer, and although water still percolated through for a few days, the strainer ultimately became blocked...

I picked the first of the cultivated brambles yesterday. Raspberries are now finished, and only a few gooseberries and blackcurrants remain for the passing nibble and a treat for the birds. The flush of vegetables has begun. New potatoes are of very good quality, and there are peas, beans, carrots and turnip available in quantity.



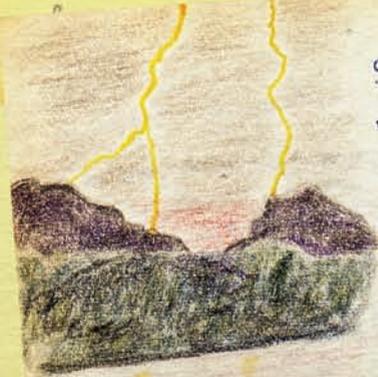
on the high Plateau

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9th AUGUST Saturday

Hot, sunny days continued, with a build up of humidity, so enervating for me that on Thursday, when a tone of coal was delivered to the far side of the loch I was tempted to let it lie for a bit. However with so many rogues about and the price of coal as high as it is, I started to move it in the afternoon. I got 15 cwt across to this side and completed shipping it yesterday morning in the cool of the day. I finished wheeling it the 150 paces from harbour to barn this morning. Yesterday was so warm that the slightest exertion brought trickles of sweat from brow to nose tip, so I spent a good part of the afternoon lounging by the lochside in the shade. Gradually the sun was veiled from sight so that only a pink glow remained. A stillness came over the land. Pleasure boats with beautiful bronzed bodies vanished from the scene, traffic noise were hushed and it became so silent that even the buzz of a fly would seem an intrusion. One was tempted to go on tiptoe through the grass, so as not to cause the seeds to rattle to the ground. Then came a distant rumble of thunder, and a puff of breeze which warned the trees to wake themselves. By eight o'clock the storm was at its height. Not much rain fell but lightning tore through the sky in spectacular flashes, silhouetting the hills and lighting up the landscape. A' Crois and Ben Vane seemed to be particular targets for the anger of the gods. I watched from a bedroom window and counted a hundred flashes in ten minutes, so there few moments when thunder was not rolling. The storm was over before I went to bed, but I feel more thunder in the air. I saw a mother goosander with eight well grown young yesterday, or perhaps they were red breasted mergansers. They are very similar at this time of year and the drake was not with them for positive identification. I also saw a family of four buzzards above the house a day or two ago.

dilivered to the far side of the loch when the air was up in humidity.



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OUR park
voluntary investment
scheme



This flagship project for the Friends has completed a first set-up year, concentrating on the West side of the Park and we are now deep in the process of building on the support and the funding provided by Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Argyll and the Islands LEADER to secure a full three year programme across the whole of the National Park. After three years we are aiming for the project to be effectively self sufficient and to be contributing around £100,000 to conservation in this special place. Since the last edition of VOICE – the scheme now has a great logo, and around 20 businesses have joined up, demonstrating their commitment to conserving and improving the wonderful landscape and wildlife of the Park for us to enjoy now and into the future. Watch out for details of funds raised by OUR member businesses in the next edition of VOICE.

THE MAN BEHIND THE POTS



The man behind our beautiful new donation pots, as used in the scheme's participating businesses, is John Maguire, a skilled potter with many years experience hand-throwing, glazing and firing pots of all shapes and sizes. John graduated in 1985 from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, where he studied under the inspirational Donald Logie.

He is an award-winning potter who divides his time between producing and expanding his eclectic ranges, and over the years has been involved in over 100 exhibitions.

A variety of glazes are used such as cobalt and titanium to obtain the blue and purple tones, with careful spraying applied to softly blur edges. The individual making process and the nature of

the glazes combine to ensure each pot is unique.

John works from his studio at Aberdona in Clackmannanshire, surrounded by the beautiful Scottish countryside. Visitors are very welcome at his studio, where he displays a huge range of ceramics.

You can see more examples of John's work here on his website:

www.johnmaguire.co.uk



Powan protection



Threatened fish species released in Loch Lomond by school children

A programme to increase numbers of one of the rarest varieties of freshwater fish in the UK has been hailed a success following the release of ancient powan into Loch Lomond. Over 400 young fish were released this March by pupils from local primary schools around the Loch who have been involved in a seven-week education programme to rear this endangered species.

Led by Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust and funded by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, the programme involved placing small hatcheries in classrooms and rearing native powan from eggs. The moment of release was captured as pupils controlled an underwater camera

which relayed footage on a nearby screen.

The Powan is an ancient relic species from the last ice age and is native in only two Scottish Lochs, Lomond and Eck, both of which lie within the National Park. The population in Loch Lomond is coming under increasing pressure from alien species such as the Ruffe. Staff from the Fisheries Trust, supported by National Park Rangers, have been teaching the children about the ecology of the fish they are rearing as well as the aquatic environment of Loch Lomond. Releasing the fish, Dr Andy Burrows, LLFT Senior Biologist spoke about the success of the project: "This whole programme is about inspiring the next

generation to understand the special nature of Loch Lomond, its biodiversity and the fragility of the environment that they will inherit. It is heartening to see the genuine enthusiasm the kids have when they feel they are contributing to conservation efforts and helping to make to a difference "

Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust is based at the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment where a major rearing programme is currently underway to establish new refuge populations of powan from both Loch Lomond and Loch Eck.

POWAN FACTS:

- Powan is a variety of the freshwater whitefish (*Coregonus Lavaretus*)
- Powan is a distinctive fish with a dark bluish or green back and pale silvery underside
- Powan is a protected species (schedule 5 of WACA 1981) and must not be caught by anglers
- They can be seen spawning early January, with spawning taking place on certain gravelly shallows in the loch margins
- Eggs usually hatch about 60-80 days later,
- They can live up to 10 years of age in the right conditions
- Adult fish live in deep water and feed on zooplankton and crustaceans
- They undergo diurnal migrations following the zooplankton as it changes depth, particularly in summer when they move to the surface layers of the loch at dusk and descend to deeper water as it gets light



FISH MONITORING AT LOCH LOMOND

Events will take place during the summer, dates to be confirmed. Watch the website or email for more information

OUR park
voluntary investment
scheme



VOLUNTEERS HELP US SPRING CLEAN LOCH GOIL



Many thanks to our volunteers who gathered on Wednesday 7 April to help tackle the issue of marine litter at Lochgoilhead and Carrick Castle beaches. The day was kick started by National Park Ranger Rowan Fraser, who gave a talk about Marine Conservation and the impacts of litter on marine species. In total, over 25 bags weighing over 140 kilos were collected by the group, and given that the vast majority of items cleared were small pieces of plastic such as fast food wrappers and cotton buds this is an impressive amount!

Elspeth Quinn, one of our volunteers who lives in Lochgoilhead said 'When I saw volunteers were needed for the beach clean, I was delighted to help. It was a fun and extremely worthwhile day – it was fascinating learning more about marine conservation and very satisfying relieving the environment of 140kg of litter.'

The event was organised through the 'OUR park' scheme as part of the National Spring Clean Campaign in partnership with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority.

Above: Some of the volunteers with a few of the bags collected from Lochgoilhead

Below: Volunteers hard at work litter picking the beach break at Lochgoilhead



For more information on any of our volunteer events, or to register for an event please call our project officer Alice on **01389 727 761** or by email alice@lochlomond-trossachs.org

Balmillig B&B and 'OUR Park'

As the first of a new regular feature on OUR Park businesses, we have pleasure featuring one of the first business to join the scheme – one of the partners in the business John Urquhart - tells VOICE why they're involved:

"As a long established tourism business since 1977 on the edge of what has now become Scotland's first the National Park, we have always been keenly aware of the need to look after our prime asset, the wonderful environment which draws so many visitors to our area.

But it was on a Scottish Enterprise tourism study visit to the Lake District a few years ago that we first heard about the great work The Lake District Tourism and Conservation Partnership was doing with their "visitor payback" idea.

The potential for us here was obvious and when the Friends came along with "Our Park" we were one of the first businesses to sign up. The idea of matching visitor donations seemed the right thing to do since we could hardly ask guests to make a contribution without Balmillig making a similar commitment. With our new Lomond Guides operation and as long term outdoor enthusiasts who have been canoeing, sailing and walking around Loch Lomond and the Trossachs since the 1960s, we care deeply about the area and are in a good position to pass

our enthusiasm on to our visitors. Being members of "Our Park" shows our customers that we really do care and that we are serious about the issues. It is also an important plus factor in maintaining our Green Tourism Business Scheme Gold award. In the three months we have been with the "Our Park" scheme not one customer has refused to participate and indeed a number have given substantially more than the suggested £1.00 per person donation. Many years of work with local organisations such as Helensburgh and District Access Trust and the town's Tree Conservation Trust have taught us how difficult it is to obtain funds to preserve and develop our natural assets and with looming public funding cutbacks, the "Our Park" scheme has come along just at the right time. Operation of the scheme couldn't be more straightforward. Our own website and standard enquiry reply emails alert customers to Balmillig's participation in the scheme, the "Our Park" donation is shown as one of the fields in our standard invoice/receipt slip and at the point of sale a quick



verbal enquiry confirms that the customer is happy to participate. It is of course important to present the scheme positively by employing carefully chosen terminology. For example in our literature we describe "Our Park" as a "Tourism/Conservation Investment Scheme" as opposed to a term like "Visitor Payback". The insertion of a new column or field in your daily bookkeeping system is also important to keep track of the donations you are receiving. We have no doubt that this is a win win situation for everyone concerned. Visitors get a chance to contribute to the conservation of the place they have come to enjoy and businesses get a chance to protect and improve the product on which they rely. Both parties get to feel good and of course the "Our Park" platform makes a very useful show case and marketing device, presenting your business in the best possible light and feeding through directly to the bottom line.

OTHER EVENTS FOR THE DIARY...

CALEDONIAN CHALLENGE - 12 & 13th JUNE

We are once again looking for volunteers to help raise funds for our conservation work by marshalling at this year's Caledonian Challenge. The event takes place on 12 & 13th June along the northern half of the West Highland Way. Last year we raised £800 which helps us deliver the 'OUR park' project. This year we are looking to build on this success by providing up to 25 volunteers. It really is a fun event to be part of, and a great way to do something worthwhile in a beautiful part of Scotland.

FISH MONITORING AT LOCH LOMOND – JULY/AUGUST

Find out more about what lies beneath the surface of Loch Lomond while learning about and performing fish population monitoring for key species such as salmon and trout. Events will take place during the summer, dates to be confirmed.

For more information on any of our volunteer events, or to register for an event please call our project officer Alice on 01389 727 761 or by email alice@lochlomond-trossachs.org

OUR Park business members listing

Here we start a new feature, listing the various businesses that are supporting conservation projects in the National Park through the OUR Park scheme

BUSINESS NAMES	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT DETAILS
 <p>ARDACHEARNBEG COTTAGES</p>	<p>Quality letting cottages in tranquil, but glorious Glendaruel, Argyll – home to red squirrels and abundant other wildlife.</p> <p>Just get here and let the REST happen!</p>	<p>Ardachearnbeg, Glendaruel, Argyll PA22 3AE Telephone: 01369 820 272 Email: info@ardachearnbeg.co.uk www.ardachearnbeg.co.uk</p>
 <p>ARGYLL HOLIDAYS</p>	<p>Self cater in any of our seven locations within Argyll. Holiday lodges, cottages, caravans and apartments. On site leisure centres and entertainment. Choose from fun & lively, ideal for families, to peace & tranquillity. We have a location for you.</p>	<p>Drimsynie Estate, Lochgoilhead, Argyll, PA24 8AD Telephone: 0845 459 9772 Email: info@argyllholidays.com www.argyllholidays.com</p>
 <p>BALMILLIG B&B</p>	<p>Balmillig B&B offers superb 4 Star quality accommodation minutes from the southern edge of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. This environmentally aware business also offers guiding services for small groups including a range of bespoke, private, guiding services, private car sightseeing tours, day walking expeditions and mountain guiding.</p>	<p>64b Colquhoun Street Helensburgh G84 9JP Telephone: 01436 674922 Email: anne@balmillig.co.uk www.balmillig.co.uk</p>



BENMORE LODGE

A traditional log cabin set on a quiet site of 18 lodges a mile south of Benmore Gardens. The lodge sleeps 6 in three double/twin bedrooms. It has a well equipped kitchen and comfortable lounge. Prices from £150 for a two night break.

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Dunoon PA23 8RA
Telephone: 01369 706591
Email:
benmorelodge@btinternet.com
www.benmorelodge.co.uk



BOOK POINT

A traditional bookshop on the main street in Dunoon, specialising in the local area, nature and the environment, maritime and military history. We have a growing children's section. We run author's events and host a book club. We like to support local events with a bookstall

147 Argyll Street,
Dunoon
PA23 7DD
Telephone:
01369 702377
Email:
book-point@btconnect.com



**CAMERON HOUSE ON
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Dunbartonshire, G83 8QZ
Telephone: 01389 755565
Email:
reservations@cameronhouse.co.uk
www.cameronhouse.co.uk



COACH HOUSE COFFEE SHOP

Award winning coffee shop set in the picturesque village of Luss, on the banks of Loch Lomond. Gorgeous food, hearty soups, great coffee and cake. We have roaring log fires in the winter and tables outside in the summer – and all year round all our staff see to your refreshment needs resplendent in their kilts!

Open 7 days all year round
10am – 5pm

Luss, Loch Lomond,
Argyll, G83 8NN
Tel: 01436 860341
Enquiries:
info@lochlomondtrading.com



CRUISE LOCH LOMOND

The Company offers a variety of cruises at the northern fjord end of the Loch. Enjoy the tranquility of a 2 hour Rob Roy themed cruise; relax at the peaceful haven of Inversnaid or access the inaccessible with the Award winning West Highland Way Rambler cruise. Private functions with catering on board can also be provided.

The Boatyard,
Tarbet,
Loch Lomond, G83 7DG
Tel:01301702356
Email:
stuart@cruiselochlomond.co.uk
www.cruiselochlomond.co.uk



FASCADAIL HOUSE

Relax in the comfort of this elegant historic home set in its own gardens with stunning views of the loch and the Arrochar Alps. All en-suite rooms are recently refurbished and rated 4 star. We also hold a gold Green Tourism Business Award. Hearty Scottish Breakfast. Walking distance to restaurants.

Arrochar, G83 7AB
Telephone: 01301 702 344
Email: enquiries@fascadail.com
www.fascadail.com



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Glendaruel, Argyll, PA22 3AB
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Email:
mail@glendaruelcaravanpark.co.uk
www.glendaruelcaravanpark.co.uk



**INVERUGLAS
VISITOR FACILITY –
CRUISE LOCH LOMOND**

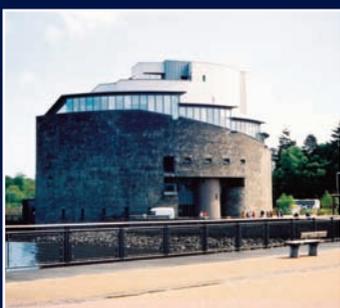
The Inveruglas Visitor facility situated on the bonnie banks offers day trippers and holidaymakers to the National Park a stunning location to experience the breathtaking scenery while enjoying a latte or the renowned homemade soup

The site also provides clean public facilities and ample parking for walkers wishing to climb local Munros.

Telephone: 01301 702 356

Email:

stuart@cruiselochlomond.co.uk



LOCH LOMOND SHORES

Loch Lomond Shores is a tourist and retail destination housed within the National Park. Our special features include the Loch Lomond Aquarium, Jenners department store, water activities, markets, events, and the most stunning view up the Loch towards Ben Lomond!

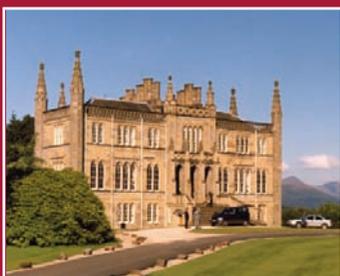
Ben Lomond Way,
Balloch , G83 8QL

Telephone:01389 751035

Email:

info@lochlomondshores.com

www.lochlomondshores.com



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Alexandria G83 8NL

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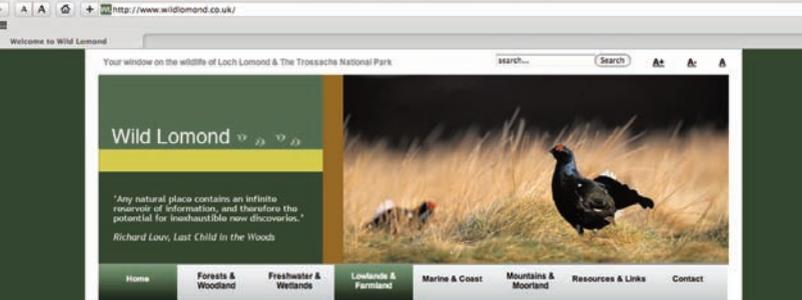
01389 830398 (house)

0141 548 3565 (sales)

Email:

lesley.brownlee@strath.ac.uk

www.strath.ac.uk/rescat/rosspriory



Wild Lomond Wildlife Website launch

There is a new window on wildlife in the National Park as a result of a project just completed by the Friends. With funding from the natural heritage grant scheme a comprehensive 'one-stop website' has been produced for anyone living in, or visiting (on the ground or 'virtually') the National Park and wanting to know more about all the fantastic wildlife species that live here.

The site has information on over 70 species that are in our wonderful national park and is specially designed to make it as easy as possible to find out more about them, where and when is the best time to see them.

The site was launched on Saturday 22nd May which was Biodiversity Day – you can visit it at

www.wildlomond.co.uk

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 volunteers
in specific areas such as:*

- Helping with administration at our office in Helensburgh
- Writing for or editing this magazine
- Taking minutes at our monthly meetings

Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
63 West Princes Street,
Helensburgh Scotland G84 8BN
Telephone: 01436 677733
Email: info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk



www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk