

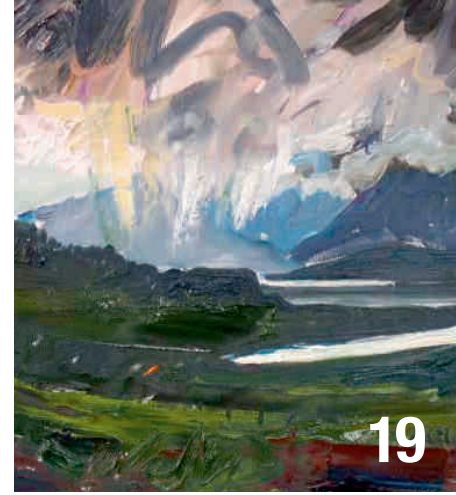
Spring 2009 • Number 3

The *Voice*

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FRIENDS OF LOCH
LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS



Loch Lomond diaries • Walking in Loch Lomond • Cowalfest • King Arthur



4 Letter from the President

5 From the Director's chair

Friends' Director Martin Varley on how members can help the society

6 National Park news

Catch up on what's been happening in the Park

8 Loch Lomond diaries

Excerpts from John Groome's diary telling of life by the loch during the 1970s

12 Loch Lomond through the lens

The winning entries in this year's photographic competition

14 Project news

The latest developments in our new projects

15 Planning news

Update on planning issues in the National Park

16 Walking Loch Lomond

Ronald Turnbull takes a walk in the Luss Hills

18 Spotlight on Cowal

A look at upcoming festivals in the Cowal peninsula

20 Long tradition: 10,000 years at the Carrick

Archaeology at Midross, Loch Lomond

21 Friends events 2009

How you can get involved this summer

22 King Arthur and Loch Lomond

Jim Macdonald explores local Arthurian legends

23 The last word

Plans to change one of the National Park's iconic views are flawed says Margaret Neufeld



✓ **The Voice** is the magazine of the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs, the only conservation charity working solely to protect and enhance the landscape of Scotland's first national park.

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

www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

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Front cover: Boat moored at Luss by Margaret Campbell

Chairman's welcome

Welcome to this issue of *The Voice*. This an exciting time for the Friends. Our development continues and this is reflected in the contents of this issue.

We have a new project taking shape to take shape. By the time you read this we hope to have a new member of staff in place who will work on the Tourism and Conservation Project, helping businesses in the National Park do more to conserve it. We also hope to have secured funding for a second project to help raise awareness of wildlife in the National Park too. You can find out more about these projects on page 14.

The Friends is, of course, about you the members and with this issue we also launch our new membership package. Our new guide to the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park should be on bookshop shelves soon. We hope it will help those who come to the National Park understand more about why it needs to be protected and we are pleased to be able to offer each new member a free copy of this publication. You can read more about this on page 4.

We are also planning more events for members and are working with local businesses to arrange for discounts for our members on presentation of our membership cards. We want membership not only to be a way of protecting the special landscapes of the National Park, but also to help increase members' enjoyment of it.

As well as these changes we continue to keep an watchful eye on development in the National Park and the work of the National Park Authority. You can read more about this work on page 15. As you look over the pages of this issue of *The Voice* I hope you'll agree with me that your membership is really helping to make a difference.

Rowena Ferguson, Chairman

Letter from the President

At the start of this year I had the pleasure of the company of Sir Malcolm Colquhoun and his wife at Auchendarron. Sir Malcolm has accepted our invitation to be Honorary Vice-President of Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and we talked about many of the issues facing the area. I have known the Colquhoun family for more than 30 years and know they have a fond attachment to Loch Lomond. Sir Malcolm's grandfather was rector of Glasgow University and helped to set up the National Trust for Scotland. Sir Malcolm was one of the last Colquhouns to live at Rossdhu from where he went on to study at Eton.

Although much of his time is now spent away from Loch Lomond, his heart is firmly here. The children of his wife Kate's preparatory school even have the Colquhoun tartan in their uniform.

We talked of many of the times we have known over the past decades and Sir Malcolm was very interested to hear of the plans which we have for developing the Friends. In this year when tourism is focusing much on homecoming and getting Scots abroad to come to Scotland I would like to see the Friends share the clan heritage of the area. The Colquhouns are just one of the many clans which have associations with Loch Lomond. We have videos of clan history produced a number of years ago and I would like to see us convert these into DVD format so that more people may be able to hear the fascinating stories which the clans have to tell.

Following my meeting with the National Park Authority and the Highways Agency in the autumn I am still waiting to hear what will be done about my offer to improve the Stonemollan roundabout. Some German visitors who stopped by recently asked when it would be finished - a sentiment I'm sure we can all relate to!

Yours aye!

Hannah

Friends guidebook hits the shops

The Friends' new guidebook to the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park should be in bookshops in early spring. The guide focuses on the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park and the elements of the landscape for which it was designated.

The guide is divided into chapters covering the four areas of the National Park - Loch Lomond, the Trossachs, Breadalbane and the Argyll Forest. Each section offers descriptions of where to go and what to see, with information about facilities and services as well as details of the history and background to the places described.

The guide was produced to help visitors discover the special places of the National Park. Its focus is on natural and cultural heritage. It does not have a lot of information about tourist attractions, accommodation and places to eat as this is readily available from visitor information centres and the internet.

'We want people who come to the National Park to know why it's a special place. We can't expect people to want to conserve a landscape they don't understand' said Friends Director Martin Varley.

'Although there is information out there, it is not always easy for the visitor to get hold of, which is partly why we have written the guide. We want people to get out there and enjoy the National Park and then join us in trying to keep it special.'

'Discover Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park' is published by Birlinn. It will be available in May priced £9.99, but is free to members of Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs.



From the Director's chair

Now more than ever the Friends need you, say Friends Director Martin Varley

These are difficult times for many charities and Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs are no different. We have seen our investments fall, our membership numbers waver and legacies and donations come to a temporary standstill.

But it is not all doom and gloom. There have been great leaps forward for the Friends over the past few months. We are about to embark on two major projects which will help to spread our message of conservation into the farthest corner of the National Park. Our tourism and conservation project is helping us to work with businesses like Cameron House and Ross Priory to achieve practical conservation activity on the ground.

We now have the opportunity to meet with people from Dunoon to Drymen to talk with them about our projects and other ways we can work together to protect the landscape of the National Park on which we all depend.

Our wildlife project, which we hope to have confirmation of funding over the next few weeks, will help people enjoy the National Park more, by bringing all the information about wildlife in the park into to one place. There's more news on these projects on pages 14 and 15.

But more than high profile project we need your support as members, not just through subscriptions, but also through involvement as volunteers and on our events. With this copy of *The Voice* are two copies of our new membership leaflet. As well as filling in one copy yourself we'd like to challenge you to use the other one


to encourage a friend or family member to join the Friends.

Our current membership is less than 500. We would like to see this number increase to 2000 over the next two years. It's a hard target to achieve, but with 70% of Scotland's population less than an hour's drive away we feel that there must be a huge pool of untapped potential members who care about the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs area, and it is this unreached potential to which we would like to appeal.

If every member was able to get one new member, we'd be half way towards our total already. You can give them the leaflet, or enrol them as a gift member if you like.

Don't forget you also need to fill one of the membership forms in yourself if you are renewing your membership. We want to review all our existing members so need to confirm your details and give you the opportunity to take advantage of our new members' services.

As members you can also help by volunteering for us. There are opportunities advertised throughout *The Voice* and new roles will be posted on our website as they are introduced so keep visiting www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk. It's a good way to catch up on news from the area too.

We're always happy to hear from members so if you have any thoughts about what we should be doing in the National Park to help conserve its natural and cultural beauty or what you would like to do as a member then please get in touch. I look forward to sharing ideas with you at our forthcoming AGM. 

volunteer opportunity

Membership assistant

As our membership services expand we are looking for someone who can help with administration in the office, particularly with membership. You will need to have good administration skills and be computer literate. If you have a day or a few hours a week to spare then why not give it a try.

Leaflet distributors

Following the publication of our new membership leaflet, we are looking for volunteers who would be prepared to distribute them at locations around the National Park. This would involve driving around with a supply of leaflets about once a month and stocking up supplies in outlets where our leaflets are made available.

If you would like to help with either of the above roles then get in touch with us at the address on page 3 or visit www.lochlomondtrossachs for more information.

Schoolchildren help conserve endangered Loch Lomond fish



Young rare freshwater fish called Powan, were released into Loch Lomond by Pupils from Drymen Primary School in early March. Impressively, the fish had all been reared by the pupils who, along with Buchanan Primary, are taking part in an education project run by the Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust.

Powan are one of the rarest lake dwelling fish in Scotland

and are native to only two lochs, Loch Lomond and Lock Eck. Worryingly, there is increasing evidence that the Loch Lomond population is under pressure from introductions of non-native fish species.

Speaking about the project, Dr. Colin Adams of the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment, a research facility on the banks of Loch Lomond, said, "The long term survival of rare and endangered species will only be achieved if we can also inspire new generations about their environment and the species that live there. This project has fired the enthusiasm and imagination of the children

who have taken part. I hope that in future years we can engage even more schools in this innovative scheme."

Pupils of the two primary schools have been given a classroom hatchery in which to care for their fish over approximately an eight week period. The hatchery is a simple design and the children have been keeping the water cool using recycled drinks bottles filled with water and frozen as ice packs. During the project the schools are visited weekly by staff from the centre, who teach the children about the fish they are raising and the aquatic ecology of the loch.

New homes for barn owls

Prospects for barn owls in the National Park are looking up following the installation of 20 new nest boxes thanks to the National Park Authority's Natural Heritage Grant Scheme. The scheme, which is also supported by Scottish Natural Heritage, has awarded £3438 to local barn owl enthusiast Mike Steward which has enabled him to identify suitable new nest sites south of Loch Lomond with the help of landowners in the area.

Barn owls are a heavily protected species and although there is plenty of foraging habitat in the National Park they struggle to find nest sites, so increasing the

number of suitable barn owl nest sites has been identified as a priority in the National Park's Biodiversity Action Plan. Mike explains:

"Barn owls need a good supply of field voles which live in long, tussocky grassland, but good safe nest sites are increasingly hard to find. Traditionally barn owls nest in old buildings or hollow trees but many old buildings are being re-developed and hollow trees have a limited life span."

Mike's project has addressed this problem by installing twenty custom built nest boxes, ten of which have gone into buildings and ten into trees. All the sites have

been carefully selected to ensure that each new residence has good hunting ground close by.

As the nest boxes have been put up over the winter there is a chance that some may be used for breeding in 2009. Mike is licensed by Scottish Natural Heritage to ring barn owl chicks and will return over the summer hoping that the new homes have proved attractive.

If you regularly see barn owls within the National Park, know of nest sites, or would like to do your bit to help this species, please contact National Park Ranger Adam Samson on 01389 722102.

Forest heritage comes to David Marshall Lodge

The forgotten remnants of Scotland's past that lay hidden within forests around the country are now being brought back to life by asking the descendants of Scots who lived and worked there to share their memories of the lost communities.



The Forest Heritage Project is an online appeal to descendants to delve into their family backgrounds and post photographs or snippets of family lore on a specially created website.

A permanent memorial – a Wall of Memories – is also to be created at David Marshall Lodge in the heart of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The initiative is part of the contribution being made to the Year of Homecoming Celebrations by the Forestry Commission Scotland and the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments Scotland.

They have come up with a top 10 of abandoned sites that are concealed deep in the forests but deserve their place in the heritage of the nation.

Project co-ordinator Fiona Murray said: "These are mostly places that were once living, breathing communities but later, for a variety of reasons, had trees planted around them. It is quite eerie to visit some of them as the stories behind them are quite poignant. But what we want to do is get people's memories of them and also encourage them to make a visit with their families."

For more information visit www.forestheritagescotland.com.

Carrochan wins Carbon Trust award

The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority received the Carbon Trust Low Carbon Building Award 2009 for Carrochan, the new headquarters based in Balloch.

Now in its third year, the Carbon Trust Low Carbon Building Award aims to recognise the significant carbon saving potential that exists within the building sector, specifically looking at environmental impact, particularly energy demand and emissions, sustainability and quality of the occupant experience.

Some of contributing factors

towards the winning award entry were the maximum use of timber within the building, natural material finishes throughout, the primary biomass heating system and passive design strategies for heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting. In addition, operational demand for energy is minimised within the building through the incorporation of roof lights with automatic opening sections to provide natural ventilation. Carrochan received an excellent BREEAM rating, the industry benchmark for sustainable build.

Underwater Canyon discovered under Loch Lomond

The first survey of Loch Lomond in 147 years has found Scotland's most famous loch is 600 feet deep in places with sheer cliffs lining an underwater canyon.

The British Geological Survey used the latest technology - multi-beam sonar - to map the floor of Loch Lomond. The last time the bottom of the loch was surveyed, in 1861, Captain H.C. Otter of the Admiralty used fishing line with lead weights attached to take soundings from a rowing boat.

Loch Lomond is deeper than the North Sea. The loch was gouged out by a glacier as the last ice age ended with a deeply sculpted northern end. The southern end of the loch is wider and shallower.

"The challenge was to produce a detailed map of the loch floor," said Alan Stevenson, who led the mapping team. "At some points it is 190 metres deep at the north end and you don't find that in the open Atlantic until you get out beyond St. Kilda."

The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park plans to make new charts based on the findings and to provide a 3-D image of the loch floor for visitors.

"I was amazed by the steepness of the sides of the loch," said Graeme Archibald, the head ranger. "It goes down like the Grand Canyon. I have been working on the loch since 1995 but it was only when I saw the BGS maps that I got a real feel for what is underneath the surface."



The Loch Lomond Diaries

During the 1960s and 70s John Groome lived at Culness, a remote cottage on the east shore of Loch Lomond. The journals he wrote during that time are a unique record of life by the loch, revealing the changing seasons he saw and passing characters he met. John died early in 2009 and he has left these remarkable handwritten journals to Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs.

Published here are just a handful of excerpts, illustrated by John's own sketches.

1978

29 January

'The worst blizzard for 20 years', 'Train lost in snow', 'Bus lost between Ullapool and Inverness', 'Hundreds trapped in snowed up cars'. These headlines in the morning news indicate the state of the weather here in Scotland. But here at Culness, no snow fell overnight, and there was no frost, so there was even more grass visible today than yesterday. It was still very cold in the strong north wind, but bearable. My first surprise today was to find a line of badger tracks in the far park. The badger had walked along the edge of the loch, then crossed the snow towards the woods, which now contain little snow. My second surprise was to find a dead deer calf. Its presence was revealed by two hooded crows. The deer had lost one eye to the crows but was otherwise unmarked. It had not been dead very long for it was still warm. I dragged it down the hill to a sheltered spot near the house, gralloched it, skinned it and cut off the haunches and left the rest for the predators. The paunch was full and the large intestine packed solid enough for it to have died of constipation. Certainly it had not starved to death and there were no external injuries. But whatever the cause of death I shall not hesitate to make good use of the meat on the haunches. The offal was best left to the buzzards. At sundown the grey clouds blushed and hurried away.

6 April

Promise of a fine though cloudy day brought an opportunity to climb the hills for the first time this year. It was cool in the easterly wind,

but pleasant for walking. I did not expect many signs of life, but my first surprise was a hairy caterpillar. Then a skylark ran up a scale or two to get in trim for warmer days. I hoped to find the eyrie at Black Rock in use, but it had not been added to this year. I found an eagle pellet nearby, and a dead ewe – the only one I found all day, but it was not until I reached Ben Uamh that I found an eyrie with signs of recent occupation. Unfortunately this is the one which is very easily approached, and if the eagles are using it there is little likelihood of a brood. On my return journey I saw a ring ouzel and a wheatear. I have not checked my records, but I think these must be the earliest sightings. There were masses of purple saxifrage on the rock faces, and in the sheltered places a little green among the heather. Snow still lingers in the gullies. Today has been sunny and dry, so I got on with the garden retrieving a few sheets of glass from old cars at Tarbet.

2 May

Damn, damn, damn! Another error of judgement costing the life of a lamb. Yesterday evening I found a pathetically small hungry lamb near the forest fence. I could see no ewe, but in case it was one of twins I fed the lamb hoping the ewe would return. It was getting dusk, the time when sheep and lambs settle down, but I did not want to move the lamb in case its mother returned. I hung a scarf over it to scare away the foxes. But this morning there was just a body among a scatter of blood stained leaves and bits of wool. The crows had killed it and taken its eyes. I found a dead ewe, perhaps its mother, though I think



it had been dead for longer than the lamb could have lived without milk. It lay doubled up in the burn, into which it had no doubt slipped when reaching for an odd blade of grass growing out of the rocks. Removal of the body will be difficult, but I must get it out as walkers sometimes drink from the burn. The other lamb will be more fortunate, as the shepherd chanced to find a lamb of similar size, which had slipped and hanged itself in a cleft of rock on the hill. He brought its mother down to the fank, and in a short time had dressed the live lamb in the dead lamb's skin. Thus clad it was introduced to its foster mother, and without hesitation it made a dive for the milk-swollen udder. Both are now housed quietly together in the confines of the pen. The pen is matier than the sward. Tree pipits have returned. I planted potatoes today.

30 May

Yesterday was a bank holiday and the Queen's Birthday holiday for Glasgow, so with temperature above 80°F I expected the lochside to be very busy, particularly as the Maid of the Loch had started its summer excursions. However, although I

have never seen the Maid so packed with people on the upper decks, users of the path were no more numerous than usual. The road on the other side of the loch was busy, and the build up on the Inversnaid road was considerable by the afternoon. I walked up to the picnic area in the morning and it was empty except for the shepherd's car. I went there to touch up a notice on the gate and to expose my final films on the old pipe line used to convey water to power the turbines for the Loch Arklet construction scheme about 80 years ago. Today has again been fine and warm. I did find time to take a close look at one of the pear trees to see what fruit had set. Some of the small fruit had already been damaged by caterpillar. The tree is over big to spray with my hand sprayer, but I found that I could shake a lot of the grubs off and prevent their re-climbing the tree by putting a grease band around the trunk. If I continue to give the tree a shake I may get a pear or two this year. Rowan blossom scents the air with its heady perfume, and the bluebells are more beautiful this year than I have seen them for some time. They look splendid in the evening



just before sundown when all the flower colours are enhanced. The lamb which I was feeding was taken away to be brought up with others of its kind. Just as well as here milk costs 13½ p a pint and it drank a pint a day. Keeping it here would have cost a mint, and I would not even get mint sauce for my troubles. Toad spawn has hatched much quicker than frog spawn. I was able to save a lot of the frog tadpoles this year by moving them from the sump to the burn before sheep dip ran into the sump.

20 August

Yesterday was foul, low cloud and drenching rain for most of the day, so when I saw a party of young men at the bridge consulting a map I went to see if they needed advice. They were a party of military cadets on a training exercise. Their leader, Michael Harrison, was thinking of taking them across the hill to sleep out in waterproof sleeping bags somewhere along Loch Arklet. With hill fog well down I thought a night out in existing weather conditions might be more misery provoking than their training warranted and offered use of the barn. After a little consideration the offer was accepted – to cheers from the cadets. Their kits were left in the barn and they continued unladen to Loch Arklet to carry out map reading exercises, returning before dusk to settle down in the barn. The senior officer I had already spoken to and his assistant Mark Hallums left the boys at the dam 'to give them unsupervised responsibility' and went down to Inversnaid Hotel. They came to my door about 9pm with a thanks offering from that source, so I invited them in. We had been chatting for a while →



Danish cyclists visiting Cuilness in August 1978

when another knock at the door was heard. Two young men wanted permission to put up a tent. They had experienced some difficulties getting along the forest paths with their cycles! I told them to put up their tents by the Lochside and then come up for a cup of coffee. They were from Denmark, handsome lads of 21, and 22, both training as teachers. They had been told in Glasgow that there was a path from Rowardennan to Inversnaid, but, loaded as they were with even light camping gear, they found the going to be the toughest they had had in 1700 miles of cycling from Denmark. It was a better day today for their journey to Edinburgh. I took their kit to Inversnaid by boat so they could enjoy the remainder of the path to Inversnaid. The cadets left for their climb up the Ben and down to Rowardennan. The sun came out and it was quite hot. Another long distance walker asked for a site for the night and two university students on their way from John o' Groats to Land's End stopped for a chat this evening,

so this week I have had plenty of interesting company. The first of the Czar plums were ripe enough to pick.

20 October

Yesterday I went to Comrie to see Robert Shanklin who was shepherd here in the 1930s. He was as eager to get information about Cuilness as I was, and was thrilled to see photographs I had taken to show him, particularly ones of the house. He had come as shepherd to an empty house with no bathroom or toilet – not even an outside one. As shepherds tend to move from place to place in Scotland he had little furniture, so when R.S. Brown came as a raw trainee he must have been quite shocked and uncomfortable. I heard of the devastation caused among the sheep by maggots in those days and how hard it was to find sheep on the hills. Rowing boat was the only means of transport, and Robert rowed as many as 36 wool bags, two at a time every year up to Inversnaid after clipping. Groceries were carried by boat from

Inversnaid once a fortnight. Robert was compensated by the Post Office for collecting his own mail. There was a post office in Inversnaid in those days and he was paid 3s 6d a week as his own postman, quite a lot in the 1930s. Sometimes he swam across the loch. He even swam from Inveruglas once. In those days there was a horse drawn coach service from Inversnaid Hotel to Loch Katrine, and when Mrs. Blair who owned the hotel at the time retired in 1938, Robert ferried buyers from the west side of the loch, demanding £18 for his services in addition to what he got from the passengers. He must have been a man of extraordinary stamina to do this kind of thing. On one occasion, laden with bales of hay, his boat hit a log and sank. Darkness had fallen and Robert had to swim ashore and make his way home. Many times he walked from Rowchoish and Rowardennan in the darkness, his path lighted only by a candle held in a lantern made from a bottle by winding a paraffin soaked string round the glass, lighting the string to crack the base of the bottle, then sticking a candle in the neck. A candle would last the distance from Rowardennan. When his son



was of school age, Robert took him across to Tarbet school, but when Dumbartonshire Education Authority found they had a Stirlingshire boy in their midst they stopped him going there. Another thing not new is theft. Robert was robbed of 26 pullets one night. He kept them and his cow in the shed I now use as an engine shed. The barn suffered loss of slates in a storm, and to save his hay Robert carried it into his house and stored it in one of his upstairs bedrooms. Time went all too fast and I had to leave for the return journey to Glasgow and then on to a meeting of the Friends of Loch Lomond. I have been away from Cuilness since Monday afternoon and was glad to find when I got back that last night's dream that somebody had stolen the garden gate had not come true.

31 December

The old year dies of hypothermia. I was away for Christmas and what a joy it was on Christmas Day to walk in brilliant sunshine and see birds which are rare here at this time of year, reed bunting, yellowhammer and wagtail, great flocks of lapwing and even a brace of partridges. But foul weather was on the way, heralded by floods in Yorkshire the like of which I have not seen on my journeys south. This side of the Yorkshire moors snow had fallen, and by the time I reached Glasgow snow was falling there. The wind had moved round to the east and there it remained. After spending the night in Glasgow I returned to Tarbet

by bus. Little snow had fallen in the west, but a fresh wind blew and I was a little anxious about crossing the loch. However, it looked not too bad. The level of the loch had fallen since I pulled the boat out of the water, but I had no difficulty with the launching. The ground was hard with frost but inside the boat had no ice in it. The shop had sold out of fresh milk so I bought dried. Just as well as things turned out. When there is an east wind I usually head across the loch towards Rowchoish, then turn north, so avoiding the down sweep of wind from Windy Glen, but this time the choice was wrong. I soon found myself among waves coming from the north and no shelter was to be found on the east side. The waves breaking against the boat sent spray high in the air where the wind caught it and flung more back over me than I am accustomed to. I had to bale out several times and the water down my neck wetted my underclothes. I was glad to get into harbour. It did not take me long to change into dry clothes, light the oil stove and get a fire going, but the house was very cold for a time. Every breath was visible in the saturated air. That was on Friday. Saturday bought reports of heavy snowfall in the east and south, blizzard conditions, York isolated by floods and snow, villages in Devon and Cornwall cut off, and general chaos. Here only a flurry of snow, but a biting wind made a trip across to Tarbet a hazard, so I cut what wood I had gathered and kept two fires going. By this morning the

mouth of the burn was frozen over, and the midday sunrise, reflected in icicles fringing the rocks, had no power to thaw the frozen ground. Only a thin film of snow lay on the ground, thick enough to show that there are still a few rabbits about and that although badgers have been eliminated from Cuilness, foxes still roam about. Mice and voles, too, left their footprints where they ventured from holes in search of food, never remaining exposed for long, but seeking cover under grass and bracken. Sheep, about thirty of them, find little to eat in the pastures and lower woods, but the lamb which I released from confinement before I went south is not with them. It returned to the fank last night but is not with them. I have not seen it today.

So the year ends in bitter cold, but I shall remember it not for that, but for the lack of midges, the disappearance of the badger, family encounters some of which were due to the awful wet summer, and for the continued enjoyment of my life here at Cuilness. ❖

John's journals cover a 16-year period between 1965 and 1981 and are an important archive relating to Loch Lomond. We would like to make them more accessible without risking the original handwritten manuscripts by transcribing the journals and would like to hear from any experienced typists who would be interested in getting involved in this fascinating project. Contact details are on page 3.



1st

*Boat at Luss by
Margaret Campbell*



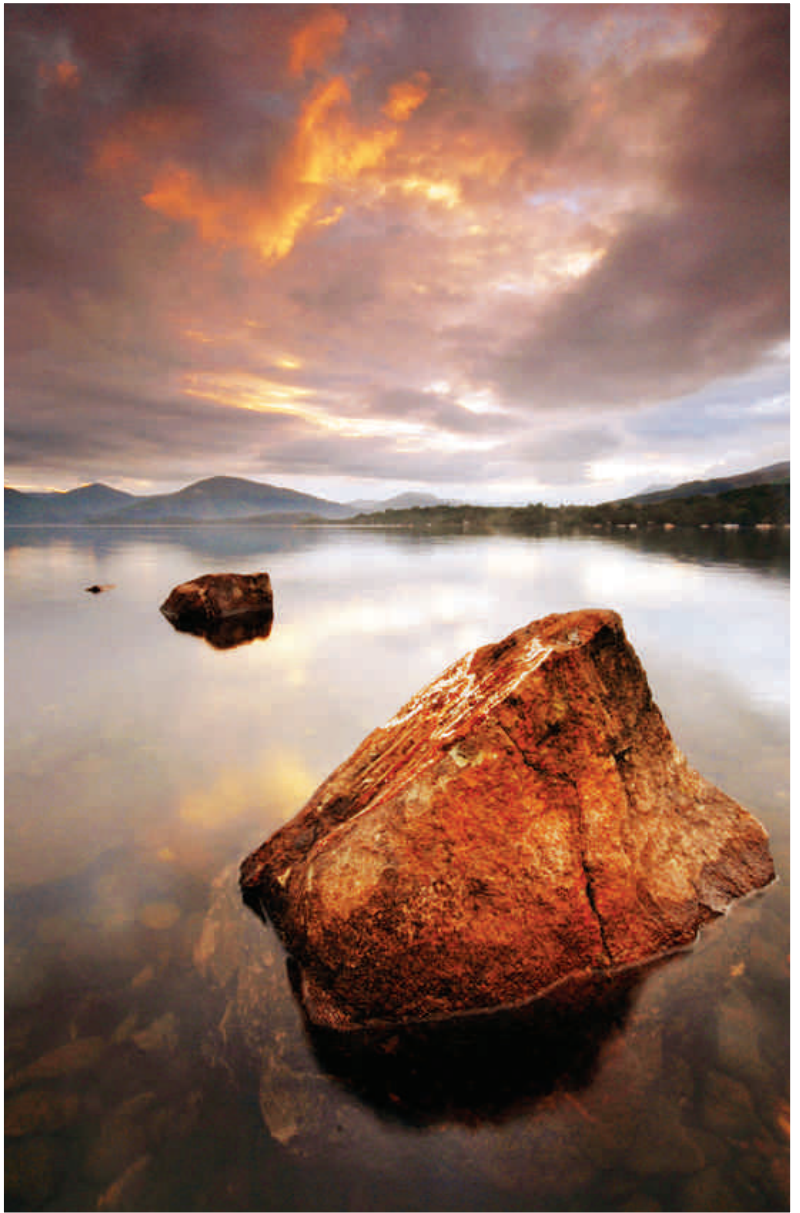
3rd

*Loch Lomond sunrises
by Neil MacGregor*

Loch Lomond through the lens 2009

Every year Helensburgh
Photographic Club and Friends of
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs
hold a photographic competition
highlighting the scenic beauty of
Loch Lomond. Here we reproduce
this year's winners.

To find out more about Helensburgh
Photographic Club visit
www.helensburghphotoclub.org.uk



2nd

.....
*Millarochy calm by Guy
Phillips*

New project links tourism and conservation

A project with the potential to raise thousands of pounds for local conservation projects in the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is about to be launched by the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs.

The project, which works with businesses to raise funds through visitors to the National Park, received confirmation of funding in February and it is hoped that a dedicated officer will be in place in early spring to take the project forward.

The idea behind the scheme is very simple. Funds raised are then matched up to conservation, heritage or community projects submitted by local groups and organisations into a projects 'bank'.

Typically funds are raised by voluntary contributions from visitors. This may be in the form of an additional charge for a bed night or a meal, but the scheme is flexible for novel approaches to be developed by businesses too.

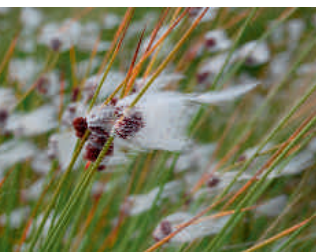
'Everyone is a winner with the scheme,' said Friends' Director Martin Varley. 'Most businesses in the National Park are here because it's a great place to live and work. This project means businesses and visitors can now make a contribution to keeping it that way.'



The initial 12-months project has been funded by LEADER, Scottish Enterprise, the Loch Lomond National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage and West Dumbartonshire Council.

Find out more about the new project at our AGM.

Patient wait for wildlife project



As *The Voice* goes to press we are still waiting for confirmation from the National Park

Authority's Natural Heritage Grant Scheme that we have secured funding to run a wildlife awareness project covering the National Park.

If we are successful the money will allow us to create a wildlife network, gathering together all the information about wildlife onto a single website. From here visitors and businesses will be able to discover where to go to see wildlife in the National Park and learn more

about the special species which live here.

We also hope to have a listing of wildlife events taking place in the National Park, so visitors can easily find what's on. There will also be opportunity for wildlife enthusiasts to record their own sightings.

The Park's natural heritage is a key quality which needs to be conserved and we hope that this project will help increase its value for visitors to the area.

Printed guides with a summary of the website information will also be available. We hope to report on the results of the application at the AGM. If we are successful the website should be online by the summer.

volunteeropportunity

Wildlife volunteers wanted

We are looking for volunteers to help us with the wildlife project we are hoping to take forward in 2009. The project will focus on making people more aware of what wildlife there is to see in the National Park. We are looking for computer literate volunteers who are enthusiastic about wildlife to help maintain the website proposed as part of the project. If you know about wildlife and would like to share your knowledge with others then get in touch and we will give you more details of what's involved - email your name and address to martin@lochlomondtrossachs.org, phone 01436 677733 or write to us at the address on page 3.

Disappointment at approval of Rowardennan Hotel expansion

Plans for extending the Rowardennan Hotel on the eastern side of Loch Lomond were given the go-ahead by the National Park Authority in December. This is disappointing news as it brings into question the commitment of the Authority to sustainable development within the Park.

The approval allows for a substantial increase in the capacity of the hotel and the incorporation of a conference centre. This will impact on the character of the existing buildings and the views from Ben Lomond. But of greater concern is the threat to the tranquillity of the eastern shore, particularly along the narrow lochside road.

There is arguably a need to improve the quality of tourism provision in the National Park, but this needs to be carried out in a sustainable way, which does not threaten the qualities for which the Park was designated.

The Park is a national asset and we hope that when the local plan is adopted the National Park Authority will adopt a responsible approach to balancing the national and local needs of the area.

The consultation period for the National Park Draft Local Plan finished at the end of February. This document will guide the planning process over the next few years and it is important to get any significant concerns about the plan raised at this stage, before the policy is fixed.

We contacted local communities to ask for their thoughts on the Plan. Large allocations of housing are planned for Drymen and Callander and there are clearly concerns in the communities there about the impact

these may have.

The Park is a large area and we have only recently taken an interest in issues across the whole Park. As such we did not feel confident to comment about plans for parts of the Park with which we have little experience.

However, we have used the consultation process as an opportunity to make links with communities in the Park which we hope to build upon in the future.

Big wheel planned for Loch Lomond Shores

Tourism issues were again in the spotlight following an application for a temporary fairground wheel at Loch Lomond Shores. Although only a short-term structure we have concerns about the precedent such an installation would set. The National Park is a world famous landscape which attract people from across the globe. We would like to see tourism develop in a way which respects the reputation which the area already has as a tourism destination.

Aside from the impact such a structure would have on the loch shore, we do not feel that a fairground attraction really reflects the vision which we would like to see for the tourism industry in the National Park. Similar attractions already exist in more appropriate locations in Glasgow. We feel that the tourism industry should be promoting the attractions which makes the National Park unique - enjoyment of its natural and cultural heritage.

As we go to press we are awaiting the outcome of the decision.

Strategic review of national parks

During the Autumn the Scottish Government carried out a strategic review of national parks. We had hoped that this might lead to a clearer vision about plans to designate more national parks in Scotland. However, it concentrated on more management of bureaucratic controls within national park authorities, such as reducing the number of members of national park boards. We hope that whatever the outcome of the review the important emphasis on both national and local representation on park boards is not diluted.

During the same period the people of Harris voted in favour of the area becoming a national park. While designation of a special landscape is to be welcomed, the decision appears to have been based on the economic benefits of national park status rather than any natural or cultural heritage criteria. We hope that the government will be clearer about its policy on national park designations in the future.

The Luss Hills



In an excerpt from his new book 'Walking in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs', Ronald Turnbull takes a walk on the west side of Loch Lomond

The west side of Loch Lomond isn't just for looking across at Ben Lomond. The Luss Hills, though technically part of the Highlands, have a character of their own. Because they fail to reach even the height of 2500ft (782m), walkers mostly ignore them. This is a mistake. The Luss heights have an atmosphere all their own, made up of elegant ridgelines, easy going underfoot, and deep winding hollows sprinkled with oak trees. The views are long, as well as of Loch Long, of both Lomond and Lowlands; and they are as striking visually as they are in their alliteration.

But for baggers of summits, Luss has one unique feature. Here a strong walker can achieve eight Grahams (Scottish 2000-footers) in a day, without any interference from higher Corbetts (2500-footers) and

Munros. Anywhere else at all, even a three-Graham day is a remarkable tally. The Luss Grahams are a tough day, it's true; but if you do end up doing Beinn Dubh in the dark, the path is good and Ben Lomond is a fine sight by starlight. On this walk we'll do just three.

Luss village car park is pricy for an all-day ticket (and who carries £7 in coin anyway?) Lay-bys are either side of the village on the A82. A small pulloff is at the start of the Glen Luss road (NS356932) beside a footpath signpost. Start at Luss pier, which has a beautiful view along the loch to Ben Lomond. Head into the village past rose-covered cottages, then turn right towards the car park. Pass to left of it, and cross the Luss link road (former A82) into a short cul-de-sac with an ancient signpost for Glen Luss. It ends at steps leading up to a footbridge over the A82.

Keep ahead to a kissing gate, and at once turn right over a stile onto the base of Beinn Dubh. Go up to a gate with a stile, where a wide track leads up through bracken. At about 300m the ridge levels off and becomes boggy; the path is now more sketchy. The ridge continues upwards. A fence reaches the ridgeline: the path runs up to left of it, then crosses it by a stile. From the first Beinn Dubh, continue along the flat peaty plateau, bending round left to reach the second and main Beinn Dubh (657m, named as Coire na h-Eanachan on Landranger maps). [As a footnote to the history of hill lists, the 2000- to 2499-footers are named Grahams after Fiona Graham who allowed her list of such to be subsumed into a pre-existing list compiled by Alan Dawson. Among her stipulations were that the list be named after

Walk Facts

Start/finish: Luss GR NS359932
Distance: 21km/13 miles
Ascent: 1500m/5100ft
Approx time: 9hr
Max altitude: Doune Hill 734m
Terrain: grassy ridges and hilltops

her not him, and that Mid Hill be named in Gaelic not English. Normally a nameless hill subsumes the nearest bit of writing on the map, 'Mid Hill' being the shoulder to the southwest. Here, though, it borrowed Beinn Dubh from the more distant, but Gaelic, south-eastern outlier.]

A small path descends southwest for 400 metres onto the shoulder called Mid Hill. Here the ridge and path turn left [For a shorter day just follow this ridge path down southeast to Glenmolloch farm] but turn off down to the right, northwest, onto a lower spur. This steepens with a few peat hags to reach the broad valley col, with a few scattered trees, between Beinn Dubh and Doune Hill.

Slant up to the right, to find a shepherd's path running up Doune Hill's eastern spur. [The odd little groove and crag formation, presumably a landslip, is named 'Sith Mor' or the Big Fairy.] Once above the bracken of the lowest slope the path is no longer needed and disappears. Head up onto the north-eastern top (unnamed, 701m). A path leads down into a col, and up to the trig point on Doune Hill.

Various MoD structures in the hollow to the northwest are unmarked on maps. The UK's nuclear submarines are based at Faslane on the Gare Loch, a few miles away.



Descend the grassy ridge southwest to the slight rise of Beinn Lochain. [Dedicated Graham-baggers will now divert to take in the featureless grass hump of Cruach an t-Sidhein, the Fairies' Stack. It's easy enough to contour back round from the Sidhein col to the Eich col, but you miss some of the pleasant ridge-walking.] Follow the charming grass ridge, with path, southeast, with the elegant cone of Beinn Eich rising ahead. The ridge becomes still more shapely up to Beinn Eich's summit.

The path continues down the spur eastwards. At 400m the path fades, but converging fences guide you down to a gateway and stile directly above Edentaggart farm. Slant slightly left, to a ladder stile 200 metres to left of the farm. A path leads down to a stile onto the access track below the farm.

Turn left down the track, which at the next stream becomes a tarred lane. (Don't park at this point, which is a turning area: there are a couple of small parking points above Glenmolloch farm.) Follow the lane out for 3km to Luss village. ✓



Walking Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

by Ronald Turnbull
Cicerone Press £12.95

Long overdue, at last a guidebook to help explore the multitude of options open to walkers in the National Park. Split into the four areas this excellently produced book offers 60 varied routes ranging from a stroll up Fairy Knoll from Aberfoyle to a day long expedition up in the wilds of Cruach Ardtrain.

There are detailed descriptions of routes on Ben Lui and the Cobbler as well as the long distance routes and useful background information. This guide should be an essential addition to anybody's book shelf who wants to discover more about where to walk in the National Park.

Friends members can get 10% off the price of the guide by ordering online at www.cicerone.co.uk and entering the promotion code FRIENDLT at the checkout.



Cowal Open Studios 25th-28th September

Last year's Cowal Open Studios was a veritable treat for the eyes. This year's event promises to address the other senses as well with exhibitions, 'hands-on' workshops and a concert. 2009's Open Studio event will take place from 25th to 28th September across the Cowal Peninsula in Argyll. This stimulating and vibrant annual weekend event offers free access to a wide variety of artists' studios throughout the Cowal area.

Visitors will be able to see a range of traditional and contemporary artwork in a diversity of materials and techniques including drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, textiles, ceramics, glass and silver work. In addition residents and visitors will have unique access to working artists' studios and a rare opportunity to talk to artists about their ideas, inspiration and techniques. It will also allow people to buy an original work of art directly from the artist with more appreciation of its artistic production.

There is a wealth of varied and exciting artists working in the unique environment of the Cowal. Artists

Spotlight on Cowal

The Cowal peninsula stretches northwards into the National Park and has plenty going on as *The Voice* discovers

Cowalfest 2009

Cowalfest can be compared to a heartening autumn stew, full of wholesome, fresh ingredients, reinvigorating, satisfying and providing a sense of pleasurable wellbeing. To the basic ingredient of wonderful walking we add other special elements that enhance the flavour, giving diversity and a soupçon of spice.

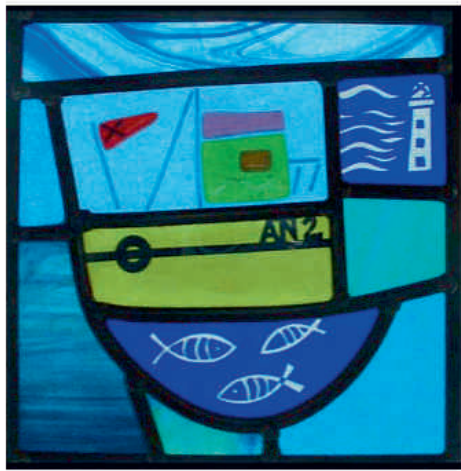
Cowalfest was initiated seven years ago by a group of people who recognised that the Cowal Peninsula's stunning scenery and potential for outdoor activities, its fascinating if sometimes treacherous and bloody history and its charming villages, should be attracting more visitors. This coincided with Forestry Commission Scotland undertaking significant upgrading of paths, including links to make better walking routes. So the festival was born.

Run by volunteers, each Cowalfest has been designed with a mixture of forethought and research, a concentrated infusion of opportunism and masses of very hard work. That has been our recipe for success, our opportunism and flexibility of attitude guiding us through challenges and difficulties to produce an event.

The festival committee work tirelessly throughout the year to make ten days in October memorable. Our walk leaders, over forty dedicated people who turn out irrespective of the vagaries of Cowal's autumn weather, give local people and visitors a very personal experience of the landscape they walk through. They make each walk, irrespective of length or grade, a truly unique experience. Over the years, a large number of people have offered events, whether mountain biking, horse riding, drama, arts, music, exhibitions or talks. We have grasped the opportunity of new input with gratitude.

We've also been lucky having a historic legacy that proffers a myriad of fascinating stories to draw on. Castles and great houses,



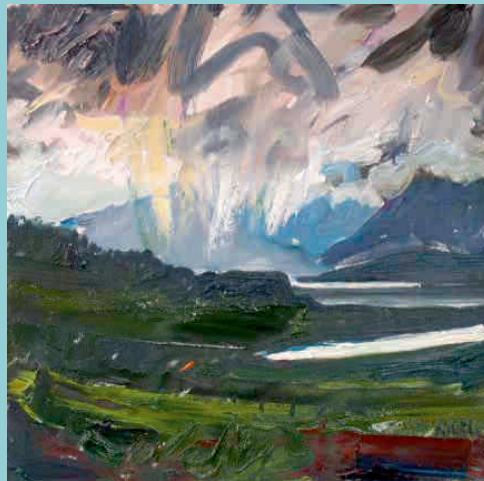


anne e. ferguson **green fishing boat**
7" x 7" stained glass panel

such as ceramicist Bill Williamson whose work includes delightfully quirky sculptures in stoneware and raku fired thrown pots. There are young artists like Amy Neville, a recent graduate of Glasgow School of Art, who work across several media - nature is used directly in Amy's unique art - leaves, flowers and shells from Argyll are the inspirational elements and real components of her work, making stunning and distinctive pieces. Or treat yourself to a visit to the fabulous Hidden Studios of painters Don McNeil and Jean Bell, delightfully situated on the shores of Loch Fyne or the enchanting Chapel in Glendaruel where you can

meet Anne Ferguson and see her beautiful stained glass works. The Cowal peninsula is filled with amazing artists and crafts folk working in magical locations and producing truly inspirational work. Spoil yourself with a whole weekend of intriguing locations, wonderful hospitality, fantastic scenery and great art!

The event will be launched with a special exhibition of works from all the participants at the Creggans Hotel on the shores of Loch Fyne. This exciting exhibition will herald the event of the following weekend and many of the artists will be in attendance. This free event will allow the public to plan their visits for the following weekend whilst picking up their copy of the specially designed and illustrated



some of them now little more than heaps of stones, nevertheless breathe tales of a rich and colourful past that adds intrigue and distinctiveness to Cowal's walking experience.

Cowalfest 2009 is special - a Homecoming partner event and also a Japan-UK 150 event in a year of celebrations marking the signing 150 years ago of a treaty of friendship and trade between the two countries, signalling the end of Japan's 300 years of isolation.

Alexander Reid and the Japanese Influence – Art, ships and plants will be an irresistible, multi-faceted exhibition highlighting the significant Scottish contribution to the industrialisation of Japan and the

considerable Japanese influence on the west. Alexander Reid was extremely influential in the art world; Vincent Van Gogh's only British subject, a Glasgow art dealer who was friendly with the artist, worked alongside his brother Theo, lodged with them both, and who later lived for twenty years in Dunoon.

Sushi and Shortbread will explore cultural cuisine, a haiku event will feature a Scottish poet, plus a talk on a Scot who gave the Japanese modern sanitation whilst recording them for posterity in his wonderful early photographs. ▣

Cowalfest 2009 takes place between 9-18 October. For more information visit www.cowalfest.org



annual Artist Directory which displays the locations and details of all involved. This beautiful directory will also be available throughout the following year. This year's weekend will include workshops in batik, papermaking, felting, painting and sculpture as well as a singing workshop with 'Muldoon's Picnic' and a concert at Strachur Memorial Hall organised by the Lochgoilhead Fiddle Workshop. It should prove to be a weekend to remember!

For further details and updates on the weekend's events visit www.cowalopenstudios.co.uk call 01369 860099 or email info@cowalopenstudios.co.uk

Long Traditions: 10,000 Years at the Carrick, Midross, Loch Lomond

Our guest speaker at this year's AGM is **Gavin MacGregor**, an archaeologist from Glasgow University. Here he gives us a taster of his talk exploring the work carried out by the University at Midross on the shores of Loch Lomond

Tradition gives a sense of identity, relating past and present together. Recent research has demonstrated that people have returned to the same place on Loch Lomond side, albeit intermittently for nearly 10,000 years.

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken by Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division (GUARD) between 2003 and 2005 on behalf of De Vere Hotels and Leisure Ltd in advance of the development of the Golf Course at The Carrick. Excavation took place at 30 locations within the area of development producing a wide variety of archaeological evidence. The evidence ranged from small groups of pits and post-holes to a ditch defined enclosure up to 50 metres across. Following excavation there has been a phase of analysis, involving the specialist

study of artefacts, the processing of samples and obtaining radiocarbon dates. The results of this analysis are currently being written up as part of a forthcoming monograph but it is possible to highlight some of the important discoveries.

Shortly after the retreat of the Ice Sheet, the earliest evidence, dating from c 8000 BC, was a series of pits which relate to the activity of groups of hunters, fishermen and gatherers during the Mesolithic period. People returned to the same spot intermittently over the next four thousand years. During this time, with rising sea levels, Loch Lomond eventually (c 5000 – 3500 BC) became the northern part of a sea loch extending from the Clyde through the Vale of Leven. There was some evidence from Carrick for the earliest farming groups in the area, who established themselves at about the same time Loch Lomond became a loch again. People probably continued to occupy the landscape here, and evidence was found for two Bronze Age cemeteries and cult houses or shrines at several locations. There was also evidence for more substantial settlements at Carrick in the Iron Age, including a bloomery.

Perhaps most striking is the range of evidence dating to the second half of the first millennium AD, or early Historic period. The large enclosure was created in the late 8th century AD and may have



contained a rectangular timber structure: possibly a church. The evidence suggests craft working was taking place in the enclosure including the production of shale artefacts and specialised working of yew wood. Only 50 metres to the south of the enclosure was discovered an ironworking area comprising two possible workshops. In the 10th century AD, the enclosure became the focus for burial. Artefacts accompanied several of the burials, including a whetstone from Norway. The presence of such artefacts raises interesting questions about whether it was people who lived locally who were buried here or if it was individuals who had come from further away. It would appear that the enclosure and cemetery was abandoned to some extent in the 11th and 12th centuries AD but was ultimately reused for burial again in the 13th or 14th centuries AD.

Loch Lomond is renowned

Marshals wanted to raise funds for Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs

The Caledonian Challenge relies upon volunteers to help marshal participants and see that the event runs smoothly. In return volunteers receive a £100 donation to the charity of their choice. Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs is planning to have a team of 30 marshals to help with the event in 2009 and raise £3000 for our work.

If you want to be involved in this exciting opportunity and help raise money to protect the National Park, then we'd like to hear from you. The 2009 event takes place on June 13th and marshals are needed at the finish at Auchertyre.

At this stage we just want expressions of interest from those keen to take part. We can then give you more information about what's involved and you can make your mind up whether you would like to take part. In you are interested email your name and address to info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk, phone 01436 677733 or write to us at the address on page 3.



for its Natural Heritage, with nationally and internationally important animals, plants and geology. The results of excavations at the Carrick are a useful reminder of the importance of cultural heritage in the National Park. ❖



Photos: The excavations site at Midross (left). A whetstone recovered from the site (above)

AGM kicks off season of Friends' events

This year's AGM takes place at Ross Priory on Thursday 11 May. Following the business meeting we welcome Gavin MacGregor from Glasgow University who will give a talk about the findings from the archaeological excavations carried out at Midross on Loch Lomond.

This is the first in a new programme of events we are planning over the summer as part of our services to member. We would like members to get more involved in the Friends and hope that these events are one way for people to visit the National Park more, meet other members and get

to know a little bit more about us.

Throughout the summer we are running Know Your National Park days. These are specially organised full day tours to the four areas of the National Park exploring sites of natural and cultural heritage and discovering what are the key issues which the landscape and local communities face. We hope to be joined by experts on the day and each tour will include a short walk and a lunch stop to enjoy local food and drink. Places are limited, so book early if you want to join.

During the summer holidays we are also hoping to run a programme

of guided walks starting and finishing at stations on the West Highland Railway. We are hoping to run these events to encourage people to come to the National Park by public transport. These walks will be open to the public, but will be available to Friends members' at a reduced rate and will be free to those who travel by train.

To attend any event please use the booking form included with this issue of *The Voice*. To keep up to date with events during the summer sign up for our e-newsletter or visit www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk regularly.



King Arthur and Loch Lomond

- Did the legendary king really fight on its shores asks Jim Macdonald

There can be no doubt that such a charismatic figure existed during the 6th century AD and various poets and historians have provided plausible evidence of the great knight's activities. However, it is fact that many different areas of the present U.K. have laid claim to his prowess on their patch and this has given rise to conflicting and sometimes fanciful local tales, not the least of which are stories of his land and "sea" battles in the Loch Lomond area and elsewhere in Scotland.

This tale results from the acceptance that the Celts spread north from Brittany through Cornwall, Wales and Ireland and eventually north to Scotland where it is said that King Arthur lead the drive to remove, first the Saxons and then the Scots and Picts from an area at least as far North as Strathclyde and also in what is now Stirling and Perthshire.

Many of these stories appear to have some facts to support them but most are unsubstantiated. Welsh poets may have been the first to claim that Arthur was a Celtic King who freed the Welsh population from Saxon tyranny, but the most apparently complete background to the Knight's life and legends was written by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his imaginative and fanciful "History of the Kings of Britain" some three hundred years after Arthur's reported death at the battle of Camlann in 537.

That name gives rise to the claim that the battle was not in western

England but at Camelon near Falkirk. This is probably the result of the similarity of names between Camelot and Camelon but, there again, there is no proof these were anything other than coincidence and to use the name of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh as evidence that Arthur was established nearby is misguided.

A further claim which attempts to confirm Arthur's Scottish background, states that Lady Guinevere came from Perth. That there are truly many bonny lasses in that Fair City cannot be disputed but nobody has been able to prove that Arthur's bride was from that area even though it has been said that her father, the Laird of Mellin, required him to prove his worth by swimming across Loch Linnie in December – a long way from Perth!

Similarly the report that the sword of Excalibur was drawn from the Lochmaben Stone is surely nonsense since that single standing stone in Dumfries & Galloway is a Druidic remain dated back to 3500 BC and Excalibur was always said to have come from the water while another, drawn from a stone, is unnamed.

Arguments are made by various areas who claim that Arthur was a King and was born there. The most likely is that he was from Cornwall as evidence from a slate tablet recovered from the ruins of Tintagel castle appears to confirm that Arthur, or more correctly "Arthnou" which was the earlier form of Arthur, had built that castle in the 6th century.

Then we are told that in

that same century, King Arthur based himself and his armies at Dumbarton while he waged war to drive the heathen Scots and Picts from what was then The kingdom of Strathclyde and also areas further east. At that time, Strathclyde was ruled by King of the Britons, Riderch Hael of Norse descent but it is not clear if Arthur did depose him in 508 AD or was it another chief known as Huail of Hoel. There is no evidence that Arthur reigned over Strathclyde from 508 to 542 AD.

In any case, there was no castle at that time and only fortified earthworks near the rock have been found. The castle was not built until much later and only then did it become a sometime residence of various Scottish kings including Robert the Bruce and others.

Nevertheless, King Arthur was said to have fought battles on Loch Lomondside at Glen Douglas and other sites but if any really did occur near the Loch, it is more probable they were against Scots and not Picts who were more active further east. In fact, of the total of 13 battles listed in the 9th century *Historia Brittonum* by Nennius, none are identified as being fought in Scotland by King Arthur.

This makes it even more improbable that "sea" battles were fought on Loch Lomond where Arthur was said to have viewed the proceedings from "Mount Misery" the 175m peak of Whinney Hill above the south shore of Loch Lomond. That seems about as likely as Boadicea hurtling north in her chariot up the M74! ❖

The Last Word

Seeing the wood for the trees

Plans to change one of the National Park's iconic views are flawed says **Margaret Neufeld**



Loch Arklet

When one thinks of Scotland what immediately springs to the minds of most people? High on the list must be our magnificent scenery: mountain, moorland, heather and lochs with the chance to see an eagle soaring above. Here in Glen Arklet, that is exactly what we have. One would think that Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park (“the Park”) would be striving to protect such an iconic landscape, and indeed in the 2007 Park Plan conservation of this specific area was given high priority for those very reasons. However in a complete turnaround the Park is now supporting plans by Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) to create a new native woodland here.

We are not opposed to the planting of native trees and have not objected to the expansion of the native woodland at nearby Loch Katrine, nor indeed to the Great Trossachs Forest concept which underpins that. However, based on geological and other scientific evidence, the creation of a new forest in Glen Arklet would not be a forest restoration project but landscape and habitat change over a wide area. How can this have been adopted as Park policy without proper consideration and in breach of the Park Plan and Principles?

The suggestion is that this will increase biodiversity. We, the tiny communities of Inversnaid and Stronachlachar, have been trying for the last 15 months to find out just what work was done to back up this sweeping statement, but no evidence at all has been presented to show that adequate examination was given by the Park to the weighty (but flawed) Environmental Impact Assessment prepared by FCS.

The fact remains that we have been unable to establish how altering and removing protected habitats containing rare species will increase biodiversity. Suggestions that a need will be met for a missing ‘wildlife corridor’ also appear without substance, since an alternative route linking the Trossachs to Loch Lomond already exists.

The local community has highlighted many environmental and landscape issues that the Park has failed to identify and consider. The 2006 European Landscape Convention “undertakes to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity”. Environmental legislation too requires ‘human habitat’ to be a key consideration, but the views of local people and many visitors to the area have been ignored. Surely it is the job of the statutory consultees like the Park to produce impartial assessments of the impact such a large project will have and not to allow a ‘concept’ to override full and proper consideration?

We assume that the Park values this particular landscape since the view across Glen Arklet to the Arrochar Alps is featured above its “Guiding Principles” on pages 12 and 13 of the latest Park Plan. But what is the point of having a National Park if large development proposals receive less scrutiny and democratic consideration than under the previous system. ❖

More information on the community’s campaign can be found at www.locharkletview.org.uk

If you have a view on a subject which you would like included as a Last Word send it to the editor at the address on page 3



The Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs needs you!

To help us move forward with our ambitious plans for the future we need your help. 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 in our office in Helensburgh
- editing and producing *The Voice*
- distributing our leaflets and magazines
- sharing expertise in areas relevant to the Friends like planning, tourism and land management

We are also looking for **trustees** to join our Executive Committee. If you have a particular knowledge relevant to Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park or experience of working with charities and would like to be involved in this exciting phase of development for us, then we'd love to hear from you. We are particularly looking for people with business, charity and financial experience or experience of working in the National Park. As well as trustees we are keen to develop a role for advisors to the charity, who, while not having the responsibilities of trustees, we can call upon for their specific knowledge in a given area.

If you think you might be interested in getting involved in any of the above opportunities with the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs then please get in touch with us at the address on page 3