

SLATEST NEWS

Your free community newsletter produced by Ballachulish Community Forum

Edition 29 – April / May 2021

A snowy, frost covered loch in the Scottish Highlands has been voted BBC Weather Watchers Pic of the Season Winter 2020/21.



The typical elements of winter - mist, frost and snow - was a winning formula for Weather Watcher caralens

I'm sure you can all recognise the place in this stunning photo but do you know who sent it in and won "BBC Pic of the Season Winter 2020/21"? It was our very own paramedic, Carolyn Wilson (right), normally seen behind the wheel of an ambulance or helping the sick or injured. When we asked what got her into photography and what she enjoys most about it, her answer was "it was actually when I moved here six years ago that I got into photography properly and started going out taking pics, don't think there is a better place for it. I enjoy showing the beauty of Scotland that I see and ended up having my own page on Facebook, it now has over 20000 followers which is incredible as I'm not a professional in any way".



WELCOME!

Thank you to everyone who has supplied articles for this edition of Slatest. This is your magazine, and it always has room for new items. If you have some interesting snippets of local news or history or have found some old photos or want to share a memory, please get in touch – rileyrob@btinternet.com, we can also help put articles together.

Slatest belongs to the community, and needs your support to continue being a success. The deadline for the next edition is **14th May 2021** with deliveries by the end of March, so please get in touch if you have any events or ideas!

THE WELL-BEING SHED

Lockdown may be coming to an end but some of the community support projects are here to stay. Most importantly is our Wellbeing Shed next to the Chippy. It is stocked full of Books, DVDs, Puzzles and craft materials, not to mention foodshare. Please feel free to take anything you can make use of, however at present we have a large stock of books so please only exchange them on a one for one basis.

You will also notice the shed has been painted and is sporting some wonderful new signs, courtesy of 'London' John Downey, Caroline Cooke and All Round Signs. Thank you to them all.



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DUROR AND ST MUNDA'S PARISH

At the time of writing the Scottish Government have said that it might be possible for churches to open for worship from 26th March and our Kirk Sessions are going to meet in the coming week to discuss this among many other things.

Even if churches do open there is to be social distancing, wearing of masks, no singing, no mixing to chat and so on. This is currently the way of things even if Highland Region was to be moved down to the lowest level.

Our worship at the moment is mostly on Zoom. Today 36 of us were together onscreen sharing hymns, meditative music, prayers, Bible reading and an address. We're able to greet each other as we arrive, take a moment to catch up on how folk are and then worship together, singing as loudly as we like in the comfort and privacy of our own home.

I can't say what even the short-term future holds for our churches but, among many other things, we'll share communion together online on Maundy Thursday, watch a video service prepared collectively by all of the ministers in Presbytery for Good Friday and celebrate Christ's rising on Easter Sunday. Worship goes on whether or not buildings are open and you're very welcome to join in. I'm also planning a wee treat for some of the children at Easter.

The caring and supporting work of the Church goes on too, in most of the usual ways and many new ones, in the community and beyond. Ministers and others are as busy (or busier) than ever and I'll be very happy to respond to any requests for help or support.

Best wishes to you all,

Rev Sandy

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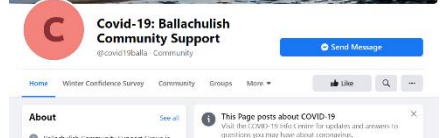
A: Ar Dachaidh, West Laroach, Ballachulish, PH49 4JJ

ONE YEAR OF COVID

The 13th March marks the one year “birthday” of our Ballachulish Community Support Group. At a meeting in the Shinty Pavillion, the threat of Covid 19 was discussed and it was agreed that proactive steps should be taken to care for our community.

When first setting up this Facebook page and calling for volunteers, none of us had any idea what lay ahead. We certainly had no idea that we would be in operation one year later. And it may be no surprise that we have no ambition to celebrate a 2nd birthday!

The initial thinking was to create a Facebook page, and an accompanying community helpline number, which would serve as a hub for information sharing, volunteering, calls for assistance and general community support. The page certainly did all of these. The astonishing number of volunteers combined with the gravity of the pandemic and impending lockdown, quickly ensured that the group scope grew arms and legs!



Our initial stated aim was “to assist and inform our community as we join together to identify and support those who are vulnerable, in self isolation or in other difficult circumstances”.

In practice this meant assembling an amazing admin team to log volunteers, field enquiries, share information, and do anything asked of them. At the same time many others were working tirelessly to distribute the window signs, establish patrols, share guidance on mental health, build and install hand washing stations, collect shopping and run errands for all who were shielding, undertake small diy tasks and more. And in parallel to our group activities, an initiative to source and share PPE was launched locally and grew to a national campaign!

Our efforts were shared, used as templates for other groups and communities, and we were showcased on radio and tv!

With no clear sense of how serious the situation might become locally, hands up – some of the planning might have appeared a little “too much”, but we were never underprepared.

As time passed, it became evident that the pandemic was serious and that we were dealing with a longer-term situation. As well as concerns around health and well-being, we became worried about the economic impact on people's lives. So on 3rd April we started to work with the (wonderful) Coop to collect a nightly foodshare which initially was stored in a freezer trailer donated to us by Quayside and housed and powered by Geo-rope! Since then, our volunteers have collected from the Coop every night, allowing vast quantities of unsold food to be distributed locally and saved from landfill. (The number is staggering, at least 10,000 kilos to date.) Local businesses and individuals also donated generously to the Foodbank and general group funds.

Soon after the Foodbank/Larder was established, and later the Well-being Bank was set up outside the shinty pavilion. During the summer we were able to purchase our own dedicated freezers. These are owned by Ballachulish Community Association (BCA) and will be a community asset for years to come. BCA has also made the hall available to the group to use as a hub for foodshare and other activities.



As lockdown continued the sun shone. Disney characters and other friends made regular socially distant wanders round the village bringing smiles to all. Plants were shared, afternoon teas delivered to senior citizens, sweet treats distributed to kids and Random Acts of Kindness made sure that those struggling or feeling down knew that someone was thinking of them. Zoom quizzes started but in an amazing turn of events, the weather was too nice for people to want to be indoors!

Later, as lockdown eased, furloughs ended, visitors returned to the area, the patrols ceased, the original

helpline number changed and volunteers returned to work, but the group continued, there to help if needed.

In late summer 2020, HIE funding made it possible to employ a community support worker to help coordinate our foodshare and larder initiatives and the volunteers who made these possible.

In the latter part of the year when tiered restrictions were introduced, the group decided to plan activities to help raise community morale as a priority.

As winter crept in the Well-being shed was erected and fitted out creating a permanent home for this community sharing resource, and an ongoing legacy of our Support Group work.

Online advent calendars, amazing garden light displays, the Christmas market and Santa's visit all helped keep us smiling through December. But the



return of lockdown and the cancellation of the Hogmanay light parade was a blow for all, curtailing plans and limiting activities and human contact.

During the 2021 lockdown, the community has once again come together to look after one another. Much of this happens without any involvement from the group - because that's what community is all about. From our side, we loved the Burns video tribute and have coordinated orienteering trails, run gentle stretching sessions, shared gratitude with you and more. Volunteers from Glencoe and Ballachulish have staffed twice weekly larders and the shed continues to be a well-used resource. We've asked for your help and each time been overwhelmed at the response!

Over the coming weeks, we are all hoping for a safe and steady release from lockdown. Our group will continue for some time, but the intention is to eventually wind up as life and our freedoms are slowly restored.

We are keen to remember this time when the community worked together in such a remarkable way. The Well-being Shed will remain open. Our wish is that the foodshare project with the Coop will continue using the shed as a distribution point and we as a community continue to prevent food waste. For this to be achieved, we will need to access funding, and recruit more volunteers (the core team would like a break!).

To close, it was so tempting in this article to name volunteers, but there are simply too many and the contribution of every single person has been important and appreciated. Thank you to everyone in our wonderful community.



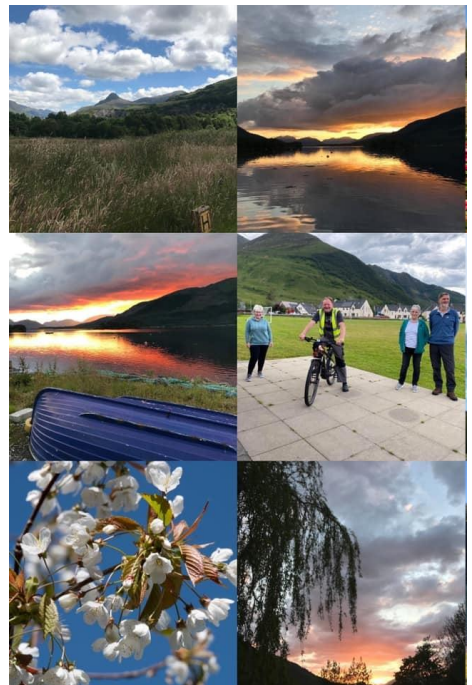
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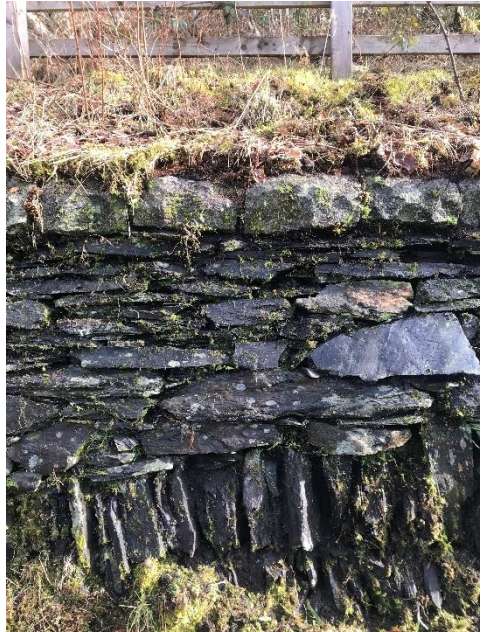


sky SPORTS



PROJECT WALL

Some of you may have noticed some clearing going on off the wall right opposite you coming out from the Co-op . There is a little section left to do and once that is done then we will be planting some wildflower seeds and indeed anything that may like to use the wall to grow against. Thanks to everyone who has donated seedlings from their gardens. If you would like to contribute in any way please get in touch and many thanks to the volunteers who have helped so far .



Above Left: Before

Above Right: After

Right: The Vision!



BALLA ON THE PICK!

On Saturday Feb 6th 25 energetic volunteers took part in a community litter pick taking into account Covid guidelines, Approximately 41 bags were gathered in a matter of hours. Areas of concern had been identified previously and the day was well organised and coordinated.

To complement the litter pick a family duo cleaned and scrubbed graffiti off bus stops and gave street signs the sparkle treatment.

A hardy lone volunteer also made good use of his day by successfully demolishing the overgrowth of brambles by the hall adjacent to the A82 (below).

A good productive day had by all with thanks to all who took part and additional recognition to the people who regularly pick and tidy up.

Project 'Bramble' anyone?



The plan for this bank is to plant some ground cover bushes as the bank is too steep for the mower, and hopefully add some seasonal colour, and keep the weeds at bay. If you have any suggestions, or indeed cuttings please get in touch.

Some of you will also be aware of the intrepid litter picker who has been working their way up the A82 from Corran Ferry to the 40 limit signs. They started on 13/12/20 and finished

on 8/1/21, collecting 178 bags of litter, an inspiration to us all.

BALLACHULISH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey regarding BCA acquiring the land around the village hall and the harbour car park from the Highland Council for the Community. Our consultants, Impact Hub Inverness, are now working on the business plan and other documents. However, the initial results show strong support for BCA acquiring the land, and there was a lot of support for the ideas we put forward, as well as some interesting new ideas for us to explore.

STOPPING FOOD WASTE

Hands up who has visited the Well-being Shed? If you enjoy swapping books or DVDs, thank you. If you also grab a bag of salad, a loaf or some other goodies, even better! Since the Foodshare began to be collected in April 2020 we've saved at least 10,000 kilograms of food from going to landfill.

This all takes a bit of time and effort from the local Coop and our team of volunteers. Every evening, the amazing Coop staff sort the Foodshare for us ready to be collected by a volunteer. From there the food is taken to the hall for sorting. Whole meats, ready meals, desserts, and other goodies are frozen for distribution in the weekly Larder, and also in the Glencoe Zero Waste Shed. Salad, bread, fruit, sandwiches and treats go to the Well-being Shed. The Glencoe group collect the Foodshare two nights a week and follow the same process. The leftover items are composted or distributed to local animal owners. Wherever possible nothing goes to waste.

The Shed is very well used and we're proud that our community is now actively participating in the movement to stop food waste. This is why we want to continue collecting Foodshare even when the Covid Support Group winds down. At the time of writing we're actively seeking a part-time Co-ordinator who will work with us on two jobs. Firstly, they will help us to continue our existing foodwaste efforts and secondly, they conduct a feasibility study on the continuation of our work culminating in a foodwaste project plan in a post-pandemic environment, ideally commencing in June 2021.

To continue this project. we will need funding and an important part of the Co-ordinator role will be looking at potential sources of future funding. We are also keen to hear from anyone who is interested in joining the rota of nightly Foodshare collection volunteers. The more volunteers, the better! If you want to help, send a PM to the Covid-19: Ballachulish Community Support Group facebook page OR email us at ballavolunteers@gmail.com.



A PERSONAL LOG BY E W WYLD ON HER FIRST VISIT TO THE HIGH ARCTIC – PART 5

Tuesday 3rd April

The temperature had gone down to -32°C during the night and the porridge cans are swelling and it is difficult to open them. Simon was up at 7.30 to light the stoves and the fire and get the tea on. Haggis was close behind him and I had to get up to take a walk. Haggis was disappointed that the temperatures had not gone off the scale. Everyone else was just glad that there was no wind. After breakfast of porridge and scrambled egg, Haggis and Kelvin finished their designer backrests for the skidoos. The machines were checked while we washed up. The water froze on the dishes before you could wipe them and we had dirty pans from porridge and scrambled egg. The fire didn't want to draw, the stove didn't want to light, the loo wasn't finished and Simon broke the spade. This was mended by shortening the handle and reattaching it to the blade. We found two sheepskin rugs from the freight and arranged these for ladies and older gents. Feeling sorry for the other two, we gave them the casualty bag for extra insulation.

Lunch was soup, thawed pate, crackers, chocolate and tea. We backed a brew box (primus, fuel, billie, tea, coffee, chocolate, milk and so on plus thermos flasks), first aid and an emergency bivvi bag. We also wore full harnesses, where available - waist belts otherwise, and carried ropes. We were away at 12.45 towards the end of Tempelfjorden and onto Von Postbreen. The water had solidified from yesterday, so Mike was flag man and we went tentatively across. We weaved our way through the moraine onto the surface of the glacier. I thought that it was 'hairy' but off they went onto the Panoramaberget, 800m. It was breezy on top with tremendous views all round. We dropped off into a valley for shelter and to make a brew. I was driving and used the brake for the first time. The stove did not want to light so we dug a snow hole for it and eventually had a welcome brew.

There were beautiful patterns in the snow like desert sand. It made such a noise when you walked on it that it was a pity to spoil it. It began to feel very cold out of the sun, so we went back onto Maritbreen. A sudden halt as there were lumps of ice and crevasses. So we moved out down the middle of Maritbreen and then past Haggisbreen and Wandbreen on the Von Postbreen. I was 'encouraged' to drive through the moraine and when the machine looked as if it was not going to make a corner, I abandoned ship again! I was feeling a little more confident up to that point. I got back on again and finished the course. (Perhaps I could drive the flat bits and Avril the curly bits). I was glad to be back home. It is very beautiful but I was feeling very tired.

A brew was soon on with toast and pate to go with it. We were to have cordon bleu à Mike and Kelvin that night. The rule was if you cooked the tea then you didn't wash up. The

Frenchmen were seen on the shore with four skidoos and sledges on their way back to Fredheim. Simon has cold feet, he can't get his overboots on top of his climbing boots so he tried a combination of socks, foam liner boots and overboots. The duvets are coming out for inside wear, it must be cold. Avril and I had found the harnesses made us cold because they compressed the insulating layers. This effect was also noticed when our sleeping bags touched the side of the bunks against the outside walls when a cold spot was felt. We improved this slightly by putting cardboard around the sides of the bunks.

We had worked out the amount of paraffin we would need to be self sufficient (half a pint per man day), but because of the low temperatures and the need for more drinks, we were using a lot more. We must watch this carefully. We had heard no birds so far but Mike and Simon saw a glaucous gull yesterday. The kettle was re-mended with wire and Milliput. Outside the hut we flew a Union Jack and MH+A Polar Bear. I have decided the most important jobs are to keep the snow and dry wood coming in to the hut.

At last dinner was ready 'Tempel Chalet Ham Ragout'. They tell me that I may need 7000 calories a day to exist! At 9.00 it was bitterly cold, -26°C, the moon shone over the mountain and the sky was a beautiful pink. We were ready for bed early again.

To be continued in the next edition of Slatest News!

Photos © E.W.Wyld 1990

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RAINBOW BABY & TODDLER GROUP

We think that Rainbow Baby & Toddler Group started in the early 1970s. If this is right, we will be coming up for our 50th anniversary soon! If you were involved with setting up the group in the early days, please let Meg know at:



meg_pollock@yahoo.com Thank You.

THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT BALLACHULISH

Throughout February The Slatest News Facebook Page suggested some of the things we love about Ballachulish, inviting comments and likes from our readers. We put forward 28 of our thoughts, and while our readers agreed with most, a few apparently left them thinking! At the end of the month we summarised as follows:

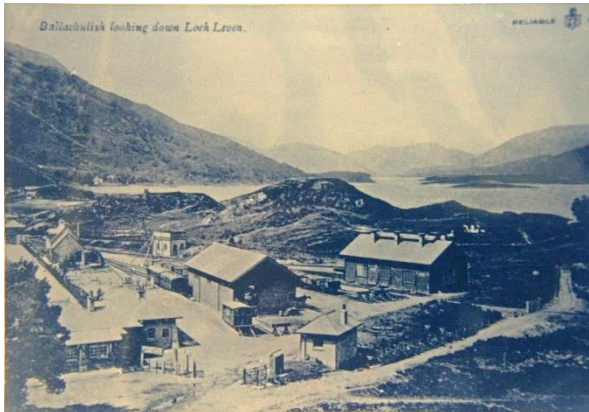
So what do we love most about Ballachulish? Thanks to the power of Facebook we have a lot of numbers to crunch - most likes, most comments, most views and so on, and the winners may surprise you. Despite being an outdoorsy group of people, with rich and varied interests, in the end it was some surprising things that got you liking and talking.

The top three are clear winners by whichever statistics you look at, but there are a group of runners up which it is less easy to rank - The Croft, St John's Church, The Co-op, Glenachulish and of course the people of Ballachulish. In third place then we have The Ballachulish Bridge (Who saw that coming?)

In second place we have Barrs Stores with its long history of serving our community through a variety of businesses.

And the winner, by several country miles is the Ballachulish Railway. Yes, the post got shared onto some railway forums, but despite that enough of our regular Slatest readers liked the railway for it to be a winner!

So what is your favourite thing about Ballachulish? We would love to hear your thoughts.



THANK YOU DAVID & ABBEYFIELD

On Friday 12th March we said a big thank you to David Susans and to Abbeyfield. Nearly a year earlier, Abbeyfield agreed to provide meals to some of our older folk who didn't cook for themselves. David said it was "no problem" to deliver them. Roll on nearly 12 months and he has just made his final delivery! It looked very tasty too! A sign that we are getting back to normal. Thank you David and Abbeyfield.



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TAKE YOUR PARTNERS

The photo, taken a number of years ago, shows glowing dancers enjoying a Christmas party in the village hall (opposite).

Also, from yesteryear, etiquette reminders for dancers (below) - read and smile.

Let's hope it is not too long before we can all meet and dance together again, in the meantime, stay safe.

- *Don't stay away from the dance because you are feeling glum. Don't look glum that's all Dancing will cure any ordinary fit of the blues!*
- *Don't wear shoes that are even the least bit small for you. Better that your feet should appear a trifle longer than they really are than that they should be uncomfortable. On the other hand, Don't wear shoes that are too large for you. Shoes that slip up & down will spoil your dancing, and give you blisters and even corns!*
- *Don't wear stockings or socks that have been badly darned A rough clumsy darn may cause you as much discomfort as a badly finished shoe.*
- *Don't be unhappy because you are wearing an old frock. Remember that it is not so old to other people as it is to you. You may think it shabby, but you are invariably more critical than they. And it isn't your frock, but the way you dance, that matters to your partner.*
- *Don't stretch out your left arm like a pump-handle. It is not only ungainly, but dangerous to other dancers.*
- *Don't get mad if your partner gets out of step occasionally. These little things are not to be taken seriously.*
- *Don't be noisy. The breezy, boisterous dancer who howls the choruses of all the popular tunes is a nuisance to his partner and everybody else.*
- *Don't be lured by the spirit of adventure into sampling an unrecognised nightclub in Ballachulish. There are numerous shady establishments with high sounding and intriguing titles that are mere shelters for the sale of intoxicating liquors during prohibited hours. There is nothing romantic or artistic about such places. They are merely rather sordid and depressing dens where the only thrill is the possibility of a police raid Stick with the village hall & enjoy the dancing!!!*



4th Lochaber Scout Group

Beavers 6-8 years, 5.30-6.30pm

Cubs 8-10½ years, 6.45-7.45pm

Scouts 10-14 years, 8-9.15pm

We meet at Ballachulish Village Hall on Thursdays

Thanks to the relaxation of the rules, Ballachulish Beavers, Cubs and Scouts will restart after the Easter holidays. At first we will be meeting outside, so we have planned a full summer program, making the most of what will hopefully be some fine summer evenings.



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DONALD BAIN – THE BALLACHULISH COLOURIST.

“If you approve of Picasso as a painter, you must approve of Donald Bain.”

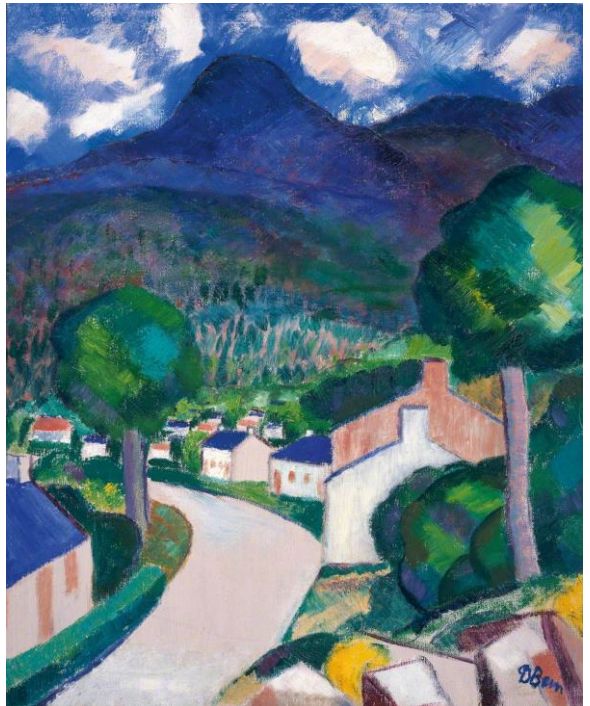
That glowing recommendation was made by the renowned broadcaster Joseph MacLeod in 1951, of an artist with strong Ballachulish connections who was proud of his Highland heritage throughout his life.

Born in Kilmalcolm in 1904, his links with Ballachulish came via his Mother, Lily, one of the Ballachulish Stewarts. In fact Donald was to receive part of his education at the village school before the family moved away.

Donald also claimed to possess French bloodlines which may explain his love of the French art styles of the early 20th century. He became friends with J.D.Ferguson, one of the giants of the Scottish Colourist movement, and his wife Margaret Morris. Ferguson’s encouragement to go painting in France saw Donald head off abroad after the Second World War on what was the first of many painting expeditions. He got to know Picasso and Matisse and gained a recognition in France and Italy that he was not to enjoy in his homeland.

However, he did have loyal patrons in Scotland and he continued to paint landscapes especially up and down the West Coast. Those who remember McTavish’s Kitchen in Oban may well have seen some of Donald’s work gracing the walls of the upstairs restaurant – the owners at that time, the Inglis family, were keen collectors.

Donald shared certain character traits with his friend, the poet Hugh MacDiarmid. Anti-establishment, of strong opinions and not hesitant in expressing them - all these factors may have worked against him getting the attention his work deserved while he was alive. His travels came to an end in the 60s when he settled with his wife, Eunice, in their room and kitchen tenement flat in Springburn in Glasgow. Donald never forgot his love of France – nor its champagne – and was often seen wearing a traditional French beret.



“The Pap of Glencoe” – 1966

Friends and relations were more likely to be given a cup of Donald's tar-like black tea which he had constantly brewing in a pot on the range.

Donald continued to paint, his bedroom doubling as a studio. Within his lifetime, ironically, Donald was both honoured and neglected, indeed he was said to be "the last of the Scottish Colourists".

He died in 1979 and was given a major retrospective exhibition in 2000 in the University of Strathclyde's Collins Gallery. Importantly, he was given his rightful place in Scottish Art in William Hardie's 2010 definitive work "Scottish Painting 1837 to the Present."

To bring things full circle and complete his Ballachulish connection, the last painting he ever did from his hospital bed is hanging in a house in the village.

And to close with a few words from Donald himself;

"There is nothing like success. People believe in it. A Parisian dealer once said to me 'I'm glad that you have success as an artist, not the kind of success which achieves a Rolls-Royce and a chauffeur.'"

Marjie Thornton March 2021

SOUTH LOCHABER BOWMEN

Archery Club at the Leven
Centre, Kinlochleven

Although we are currently not meeting, please keep an eye on our facebook page for re-activated meeting times and dates as soon as we can.

Archery sessions are run by qualified coaches in both Field and Target Archery.

Find us on facebook: www.facebook.com/SLBowmen.





Ballachulish Visitor Centre



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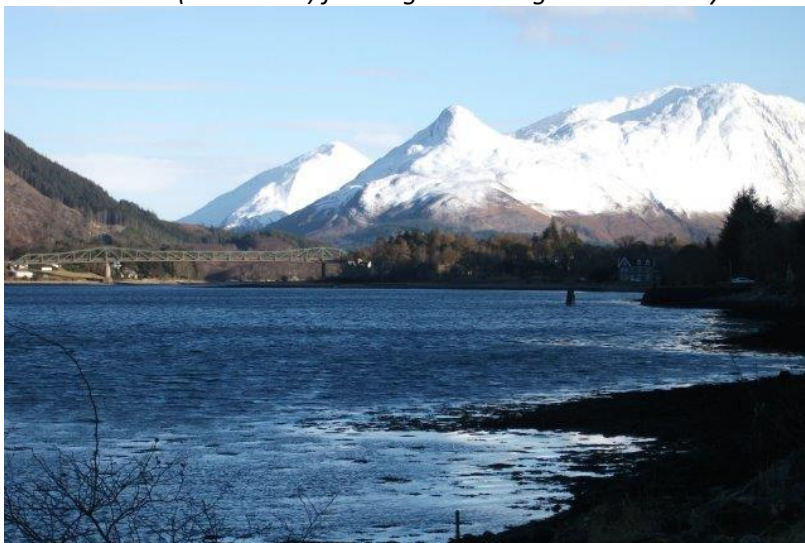


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WINTER PHOTOS



10.2.21 icicles (stalactites) forming a covering over the rocky hillside



*Snow on Pap of Coe - remember those freezing days in February
Photos from Hilary Malpas*

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you have any questions about what is going on in the community, or would like to help with anything, please get in touch with someone below:

Community Council: www.ballachulish.org.uk

Our Community Councillors are: Michael Chisholm, Shirley Grant, Alisdair Jack, Dave Kitson, Rob Malpas, Anthony McKenna, Kevin Smith

Community Association: www.ballah-hall.co.uk

Our Trustees are: Brian Dickie, Mags Ingram, Donella MacDonald, Rob Malpas, Sheila McLean, Ruth Sime, Sandy Stoddart

Community Company: [on Facebook](#)

Brian Dickie, Simon Ingram, Dave Kitson, Angus MacInnes, Niall McLean, Ruth Sime, Kevin Smith, Morgan Smith

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

With the recent news that restrictions will be easing in April, a number of community activities will be resuming, but precise details are still uncertain. However, please keep an eye on Facebook and local notice boards for more details.

The Community Support Group have also got some plans for events as soon as we can go ahead, again keep an eye open for more details.

Donations

Donations can be made anonymously and dropped into the Black letterbox at the village hall, or paid direct to the Ballachulish Community Association bank account (please put Slatest News in as a reference): RBS 83-20-16 / 10833089. The same applies for any other donations you wish to make – please put in an appropriate reference (eg: Foodbank or Wellbeing).

Advertising

If you would like to advertise your local business in this newsletter, please get in touch. Adverts will cost £20 per issue, for a quarter page. We will take a maximum of 12 adverts per issue, and can do the artwork for you if that helps.

Ballachulish Community Council, Ballachulish Community Company and Ballachulish Community Association SCIO (SC023308) have worked together to produce this newsletter.

Editors: Rob Malpas and Sheila McLean

Distribution: Sheila McLean (with helpers) to approximately 380 properties in the Ballachulish and Glenachulish community. Funded through Ballachulish Community Association SCIO, Ballachulish Village Hall, East Pier Road, Ballachulish PH49 4LE



The advertisement features a collection of garden-related items: a large silver metal compost bin, a bag of Westland Multi-Purpose Compost, a row of wooden sheds of various sizes, several blue and white planters, a green wheelbarrow, and a blue and white striped garden hose reel. The items are arranged in a grid-like fashion.

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