

WEEKLY BULLETIN 38

Lochaber Rotary

Wednesday 9 December 2020

As Christmas beckons on the horizon, and Rotarians Paul, Armando and Ken have been involved this week in installing Community Christmas Trees in Corpach, Banavie, Claggan and Upper Achintore, we warmly welcome you to the 38th edition of our weekly bulletin.

It might be cold but we had some superb clear skies over the weekend, and the picture below, from last Sunday, illustrates the beauty of living in lovely Lochaber. Additionally, our spirits have also been lifted by the announcement on Sunday that the roll-out of the Pfizer vaccine is imminent!

This week's bulletin is crammed with interest - it's a good absorbing read and we suggest that you pinch 15 minutes from your day and skim through it!



Photo courtesy of Chris Heardman, Upper Achintore

Today's Lunchtime Meeting of the Club starts at 1pm and is a **Special General Meeting** being held by Zoom.

The first business of the meeting is to approve last year's accounts and Club Secretary John Harvey has forwarded copies for your attention. John also suggests that to save time, if you have any queries, could you raise these with Flora before the meeting.

The second business of the meeting is to elect the Office Bearers for 2021-22. Simon as President-Elect automatically takes over as President and his proposals for the remaining offices are:

President-Elect Flora McKee

Vice President	Jenny Cooper
Secretary	John Harvey
Treasurer	Donald Young

John also points out that, as a quorum of 11 is required for the meeting it would be helpful if as many Members as possible could attend the Zoom meeting and to ensure that those who cannot attend are not "disenfranchised" he also forwarded a proxy voting form which you should complete and return to him as soon as possible and no later than 7.30pm on Tuesday 8th December.

The meeting will be hosted by our Press & Publicity Convenor John Hutchison. The joining code was emailed to you on 4 December and earlier today by Secretary John. Hope to see you at 1pm today!

There was a good turnout at **last Wednesday's regular evening meeting** - 15 members. Updates on business items included the following:

Knitivity Project: President Richard thanked all members and family helpers who turned out for the "construction" and cladding of the tree in the Highland Cinema Café. Sheana reported that well over 1,000 items had been donated from all parts of Lochaber and beyond. John H has forwarded an article to the District 1230 Magazine. We will need to check the tree regularly for fallen knitwear items; David M will collect the cash donations in the bucket daily; at the end of the festivities the items will be donated to charities including the Salvation Army, Highland Support for Refugees, local care homes and others receiving care at home.

General discussion ranged around domestic wind turbines, Gaelic education, events at the Nevis Centre, keeping fit during lockdown, cycling, home decorating, community Christmas trees, golfing, Fort William FC, Covid19 vaccine, gardening, Rugby Club.

The Club Council meeting followed on from the regular meeting.

FERGUSON TRANSPORT & SHIPPING SUPPORT LOCHABER ROTARY

Many thanks to the Directors and Staff of Ferguson Transport for their kind donation of £500 to the Lochaber Rotary Charity Fund.

Our Charity Fund is used in its entirety to support local charities and other worthwhile causes.

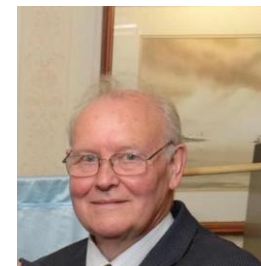
Lochaber Rotary is proud of its year-on-year relationship with Ferguson Transport who fund the whole cost of bringing the Cairngorm Reindeer to Fort William for our annual Christmas Festival.

Ferguson Transport's Business Administrator Jodie Jordan presents a cheque for £500 to Lochaber Rotary President Richard Baxter.



... and a newsy and thought-provoking update from Immediate Past President Clive

Feeling a bit like the Prodigal Son, I am finally crawling out of long silence. All is well with us in downtown Muirshielia commitments are over for now, but the main obstacle to a quiet life is file sharing and



collaboration. People can work simultaneously on a file in real time wherever they live on the Planet, with the main difficulty being how to find a mutually acceptable time across multiple time zones for all the parties involved. Doing a bit of heavy mathematical modelling with a Vietnamese colleague with limited English at midnight UK time, can be quite a challenge!

Anyway, something work, or family-related, always seems to get in the way of doing Rotary things. I have, of course, been following Rotary activities online, including attending several Membership Seminars on Zoom, where most of the discussion seems to be about retaining members rather than launching any specific recruitment events under the constraints of lockdown. The weekly bulletin is a joy - thanks, Ken!

All this use of modern technology reminds me of E. M. Forster's dystopian short story, *The Machine Stops*. This uncannily predicted almost every aspect of the internet age, including video conferencing, remote collaboration, online "shopping" and social media. Published in 1909 (that's right, 111 years ago), it tells the story of a mother and son - Vashti and Kuno - who live in a post-apocalyptic world where people live individually in underground pods, described as being "like the cell of a bee", and have all their needs for heat, light, ventilation, food, drink (aka. online shopping) provided for at the click of a button by the all-encompassing "Machine" (the www).

People have become so reliant on the "Machine" that they have begun to worship it as a living entity. People mostly communicate with each other via video screens (laptops, tablets, smart phones) to attend lectures (Wikipedia, podcasts), entertainment (Spotify & Netflix) and gatherings of friends and family (Zoom). The rarity of face-to-face interaction (lockdown) has rendered personal contact awkward, and knowledge and ideas are only shared by the system that links every cell (Twitter & Facebook). Travel to the surface of the Earth is viewed as dirty, brutish, and full of danger and diseases, and is permitted only with the approval by the government group (tiers).

As the title implies, inevitably, things start going wrong with the Machine.....but, if you don't know the story, you will need to read it yourself to find out what happened (download for free from numerous sites). Anyway, Foster prophesised the internet age with remarkable accuracy only 10 years after the broadcast of the first transatlantic radio signal, and this prediction has increased considerably due to the consequences of Covid-19 and lockdown. It's a good read !!

So, with that, and somewhat early, here's wishing a Merry Christmas to you all, Clive