

WEEKLY BULLETIN 45

Lochaber Rotary

Wednesday 10 February 2021

Welcome to the 45th edition of our little newsletter. In respect of the virus there is slightly encouraging news in that the number of deaths and ICU admissions in Scotland dropped steadily by about 20% over the course of the last week. Many of our Lochaber Care Home residents have actually had their second vaccination. Everybody - stay safe and stay at home - and we'll hope for a similar decrease next week!!!!

It's a Strange World!

"Be sure your past will catch up with you," are the thoughts of President Richard this week! When his son was a teenager he played with the Methil and District Pipe Band, and several times Richard was the organiser for band trips to a festival in Guingamp in Brittany.

Last week Cameron Barnes, who was in the band at that time and is the son of the pipe major, asked for clips of people associated with the band dancing for a 25th anniversary video of the band. At ten minutes notice and while getting ready for a funeral service, Richard filmed and passed down his clip, which was included in the video*.

Richard explains. "In the year or so since lockdown began, I've put a huge amount of work into devising, filming, editing and distributing videos. Putting talks, pictures and music together has been a huge job, but on more than 10,000 occasions someone has watched one of the online services (16,000 times if you add video funerals). Cameron's song, with my 10 second dancing clip was seen by over 200,000 people in less than a week. Social media makes this a very strange world."

The clip is available to download - <https://threads.lnk.to/methilfno>



An excellent attendance at last week's online meeting included Faye Steele direct from Canada. Faye is the widow of Charlie Steele, one of the original founding members of our club in 1950. Faye and Charlie joined us as special guests to commemorate our 60th anniversary dinner in 2010 and we presented them with a bottle of whisky - one of 60 we had bottled for the occasion. Faye still has her bottle, intact, and she intends to open it on our 70th anniversary. Faye is keen to maintain her family's relationship with Lochaber Rotary and, to this end, is in regular contact with John Hutchison. She hopes to attend our 70th celebration - whenever that will be!!!! - virus dependent of course!

General discussion ranged over a wide range of topics. John Goodall in Arisaig, has had his jag and has been dog walking; John Harvey has also been walking and reported everything quiet in Onich; Flora has been busy with Voluntary Action Lochaber and discovering a mysterious musical *video; David M has been following the online Celtic Connections festival as well as getting back to his cycling; Jenny has walked 117km in her challenge including ascending Cow Hill; she is also practising with her online music group and walked out to the Invermallie Bothy; Eduardo has been watching television, walking, reading books, writing pub quizzes and helping with Lochaber Foodbank;

Continuing .. Ron has been cycling - including from the Commando Monument to Banavie; he also told an interesting tale about walking in New Zealand and meeting someone with connections with the Long John Distillery in Fort William - and recalling that Charlie Steele had been the estate manager of the Great Glen estate; Simon had been decorating; Finlay had been going through old documents that included ancient planning material signed by Ken; he also reported that Peter Hamlyn was now vice-president of a new "virtual" rotary club; Ken recalled the Club hosting Faye and Charlie in 2010; Mike still busy at work; Donald has also had his jag, and been dog walking. Richard has had a hectic week; new colleague settling in and busy on the funeral front.

Last Week's Club Council Meeting

- £138.79 raised from the Knitvity Tree bucket.
- Funding application turned down as it was felt the applicant body's aims were too general and also because many of the areas they aim to support are projects of the type Rotary already supports directly, and by similar means.
- Our Area ADG Bob Tomlinson is keen to arrange an area-wide post Covid recovery project and discussion is on-going.
- We are unlikely to have any 70th Charter celebration before September.
- We are looking into organising a "Pub Quiz" night with the help of Edoardo.
- Looking ahead we need to arrange storage for Club property such as equipment and Christmas Festival items etc.

My favourite mountain - Ben na Keil by Ken

I love Ben na Keil. Sitting above the village of Ardgour, this fabulous little mountain is a photographer's dream - sea loch and ferry in the foreground, village at the foot backdropped by steep rising hillside, and crowned by a crisp, clear and often snow-capped summit that is also a fantastic viewpoint.

I've driven past it probably thousands of times and climbed it twice. My first ascent was in the 80s when we circled the south ridge, stopping for lunch at the hidden lochan below the summit and then on to the little peak before descending into the grounds of Ardgour House. It was a long day. My second ascent was in 2007 when we climbed the steep face direct from the village to the little summit, had lunch there, and walked north along the wide ridge and descended at Inverscaddle Bay, returning by the public road to the Corran Ferry. Another great day!

A striking visual feature of the mountain is its main watercourse in spate - the Allt Ishbel (Isobel's Burn) - which pierces across the south west flank facing onto Loch Linnhe. Coincidentally, my sister, my late mother and grandmother are all "Isobels"



Past-President and mountaineer **George Bruce** also has a fond memory of **Ben na Keil**.

"I used to look onto Ben na Keil from my flat over the shop we owned at Upper Achintore and made it my plan to climb every hill that I could see from the living room window and Ben Na Keil was one of them. The name means hill of the church and it's a wonderful day out - get the ferry over from Corran leaving the car at this side and it's a steep climb up to the top from the north side wandering round to the summit with great views both up and down Loch Linnhe and great views of Ben Nevis showing how narrow the ridge off the summit really is"

... and a really interesting update from Rotarian Margaret on life in Castle Douglas

Hello everyone, Hope you have all also had your first dose of the vaccine and seeing a light at the end of this restrictive stage of the pandemic.

Last week I completed my 12-month contract with the community owned Palnackie Village Shop. It's an interesting model made possible with the support of Scottish Land Funding. The community now own their village shop and café, and the adjoining house is rented out to a local family. The income from the house rental helps the sustainability of the shop. Although the pandemic made the work tricky, it was also a blessing in disguise as we were able to tap into additional funding. It felt good being able to complete the contract knowing that funding was in place for a further year for a development post which is all to do with increasing the range of locally produced foods, art and crafts available for sale through the shop.

Our Castle Douglas Rotary meetings continue to work well by zoom. It's my turn to do a presentation next week on what it was like to grow up in a remote Highland Glen in the 60s. Whilst doing prep for it came across this old picture of Loch Quoich before the loch was flooded pre1950. My parents lived at the head of the loch (before I was born) and had to move as a result of the hydro scheme; they came back to the Glen when I was 4.

The other picture captures what a typical day of Granny duties involves! Alasdair got hold of an old bottle of sun creameven my poor old dog got covered in it. Isn't it grand to see the days getting that bit longer. Will look forward to joining you for lunch in the not too distant future. Kindest regards, Margaret.

ps. just waiting on my copy of George's book to arrive from Amazon. Well done to him.

