



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Collaboration with Trees for Life

We have been working with Trees for Life with the aim of raising the profile of our native woodland habitats and helping to 're-connect' people with nature in the area surrounding their reserve at Dundreggan (in Glen Moriston). As part of this Trees for

Life prepared a fundraising bid to the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA) which we found out was successful in April. This funding package will form the basis of a number of joint events and activities with Tfl in autumn 2016, and which also involves delivery of outdoor learning and environmental education activities

with In-



vergarry Primary School by Joyce Gilbert (Tfl) and ourselves.

Tree Planting - April 22nd 2016

One of the first of these activities was a visit by the 'School Grounds Committee' from Invergarry primary school to the community woodland. The children planted two fruit trees (kindly provided by Voluntary Action Lochaber) and ventured further into the wood for a number of activities with Joyce - including the creation of some 'micro nature reserves' and some leaf-based poetry!

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EASTER EVENT

We organised a treasure hunt and BBQ event on Easter Monday - the weather was kind and both the treasure hunt, the BBQ and the childrens' Easter egg hunt were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The **next event** will be an 'Open Garden and Plant

Sale' event on **4 July 11.00am - 3pm**

Watch the website and facebook page for more details.



RECREATION AND FOOTPATHS

As part of the process of improving the amenity value of the woodland and developing our own path network, we have been exploring the existing footpaths around Invergarry and setting up a new health walking group - with support from the 'Step It Up Highland' project (<http://www.pfw.org.uk/projects/step-it-up-highland>).

The health walk group meets at the Community Hall every Tuesday at 10am for a brief walk tailored to meet the abilities of everyone who can make it along (generally anything from 10 minutes to an hour).

It is usually followed by coffee and chat

HEALTH WALKS— APRIL/MAY 2016

Riverside walk (east)

Our first health walk involved walking up to the old depot at the community woodland for a quick peek inside, followed by heading through the cemetery and down to the riverside path. We walked along the path back towards the village (passing a group of 20 or so walkers from a Fort William walking group!) and re-joining the pavement beside the Post Office. We were soon back to the hall for a well-earned cuppa!

Distance: Approximately 3 km

Time: Approximately 30 minutes walking

Old Invergarry Castle

We set off along the lovely riverside path eastwards again from the community hall, passing through the short tunnel under the A82 bridge and along a good path through mature woodland until we reached the Invergarry War Memorial and the old bridge.

Heading over this bridge and bearing left we soon reached the front of Old Invergarry Castle Hotel, from where we swung right (southwards) along the drive passing magnificent parkland trees and soon reaching the old Invergarry Castle itself and the sad remnants of the walled garden and its dilapidated greenhouses - which were once famous for their peaches!

at one of the local cafes!

More details of the walks we've done so far, and the walks we have planned can be found below.

We have also been developing a funding application for the 'Paths for All Community Path Fund' to improve the condition and the signage on the riverside walk within the lower part of the community woodland. This will hopefully also include production of maps or leaflets and the installation of benches and resting places along the footpath.



Allt na Cailliche falls

Retracing our steps we stopped in for refreshment at the Invergarry Hotel, before finishing back at the community hall.

Distance: Approximately 6 km

Time: Approximately 60 minutes walking

Allt na Caillich

(Forestry Commission)

Despite an unpromising start with heavy rain showers, we decided to head for the FC White Bridge car park, just west of the community woodland at Invergarry, and to sample the waymarked trails provided by the Forestry Commission. We set off southwards along the river Garry for a few hundred metres and then followed the well-marked path up along the north side of the Allt na Cailliche through a mixture of mature well-spaced Norway Spruce and native pinewoods with lush carpets of Blaeberry. The ascent was quite strenuous but we were rewarded with a great viewpoint (with seats!) of an amazing waterfall. At the top of the footpath we joined a forest track which led us back down through the Mandally birchwoods to Tom a Bhodaich, from where a good footpath took us back across the footbridge and back to the car park. A hidden gem of a walk!

Distance: 3.9 km (130m of ascent!)
Time: Approximately an hour and a quarter.

HEALTH WALKS (continued)

Loch Lundie via the Aldernaig Burn

Another great walk starting right in the middle of Invergarry! We set off eastwards along the road from the community hall, before turning onto a track which runs north along the west side of the Aldernaig Burn, and we were soon amongst lovely birch and pine woodland ascending fairly gradually to pass a dam until we met the track coming in from Faichem on our left. We decided to carry on along the good track to Loch Lundie, although a boggy section prevented some of us from reaching the boat house on the shore of the loch itself. Lots of interest in the area from both historical/cultural heritage and a natural heritage point of view, and also a number of longer walks which allow you to make a full circuit of the loch passing the ruined settlement of Lundie. We returned via the track beside Coille Craig an t-Sagairt ('the wood of the crag of the priest'), and down to the hall.

Distance: Approximately 7 km (and 120m ascent)

Time: Approximately an hour and a quarter

Riverside walk (west)

We set off from the community hall around the back of the shinty pitch and

crossed the two stiles to reach the riverside path. Heading westwards along the river path we soon passed the cemetery and then walked into the lower section of the community woodland (around five hectares of birch, scots pine and Douglas fir between the footpath and the road). Stopping occasionally to discuss ideas for the woodland and possible improvements needed for the footpath, we soon reached the White Bridge beside the FC car park. From here we carried on westwards along a track below the road which comes out just opposite the Manse Brae. We crossed the road and headed up to Faichem along the old road and back down the Car-ruadh to the hall.

Distance: Approximately 5 km

Time: Approximately an hour.

Planned future walks

We always adjust the length and difficulty of our route every week to suit the wishes or ability of **everyone** who comes along, but we have proposed the follow-

ing walks over the next few weeks and hope you will be able to join us! **Meet at the community hall at 10am** on Tuesdays.

17th May: The Ciste Dubh trail (from the FC car park at the White Bridge)

24th May: The Daingean Trail (Ardochy FC block)

31st May: Port Macdonell via the war memorial and the Great Glen Way (from the Invergarry Hotel)

7th June: Old Invergarry Castle

ANCIENT WOODLAND RESTORATION PROJECT

Steve Morris of the Woodland Trust has spent some time on site completing a survey of the ancient woodland features of the community woodland on our behalf, and providing advice and recommendations on how to manage and improve the native woodland remnants. He also co-ordinated a visit to the site by the Woodland Trust's senior 'Ancient Woodland Restoration Project Managers' from all over the UK in late April - providing a forum for discussion about community woodlands, interpretation techniques and native woodland restoration, and helping to raise the profile of the great work being done by Glengarry Community Woodlands team.

VOLUNTEERING

Our volunteers have been busy over the past few months - not least with the running of GCW itself - and the main focus has been getting the old forestry shed back into shape, and beginning to think about how to manage the woodland itself.

Landfill Communities Fund - Upland Birchwood Project

Following our successful bid for funding from the Landfill Communities Fund

(plus a generous donation from Bryan Millar) we have now been able to arrange insurance for volunteer conservation work, and have purchased handtools and personal protective equipment for conservation volunteers.

Over the next six months or so we will be able to offer regular volunteer sessions aimed at removing rhododendron seedlings and non-native conifers from

the native Upland Birchwood BAP Priority Habitats in the area of the community woodland below the road near the river.

Come along to find out more, to get some fresh air, have fun and to help clear YOUR community woodland of this invasive plant!

DEPOT RENOVATIONS

We have made good progress with the safety works and upgrade of the old forestry depot in recent months - clearing out rubbish, stripping out the old deer larder, remodelling the toilet area, and reconnecting the water, electricity and drainage systems.

We've had formal floor plans and a condition report drawn up by local architect David Mee, and we hope to have the washroom, office space and workshop facilities fully functional in the near future.



SHED / WORKSHOP SPACE TO RENT IN INVERGARRY

Please get in touch with us (woodland@glengarry.org.uk) if you would be interested in renting some space in the shed/workshop in the next few months.

Great potential for storage, craft workshop or studio space!

JOB VACANCY

Community Development Officer

Glengarry Community Woodlands

See the GCW website or contact us for further details (woodland@glengarry.org.uk)

NEWS OF OTHER COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

Morvern Community Woodlands

The existing community woodland group acquired the 8 ha Achnaha Wood from FCS with help from the Scottish Land Fund in 2015, having already managed and developed the site under a management agreement since 2002. MCW is now working with the local community development company and has set up a new steering group ('Morvern Community Forest Development Group') to try to ensure greater community involvement in the management of the extensive FCS-owned plantations in the area.

They have also recently felled a large mature oak tree and are in the process of making a dugout canoe using traditional techniques, and with the help of an archeologist and ancient woodwork specialist!

www.morverncommunitywoods.org

Arkaig Community Forest

Across at Achnacarry the community woodland group has signed a partnership agreement with the Woodland Trust which will see them jointly acquire and manage the two forest blocks which FCS are disposing of - totalling 1086 hectares. The Arkaig Community Forest group will end up only owning around 5% of the remote and challenging site (some 50 hectares), but will play a key role in the overall management of the 'Loch Arkaig Pine Forest'. A recent media and fundraising campaign by the Woodland Trust has already raised over £400 000 towards the acquisition and future management of the site!

www.arkaigforest.org

Knoydart Forest Trust

The folk in Knoydart have been learning about mosses and bryophytes in their woodlands with Alasdair Firth, and they also had a stall - 'Knoydart Wood' - at the Highland Haggis Festival in Spean Bridge recently. They are continuing to tackle invasive Rhododendron - with the help of John Muir Trust volunteers, and are in the process of reviewing the forest plan for the woodlands (which are owned by the Knoydart Foundation and managed by Knoydart Forest Trust).

www.knoydartforestrust.org



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Forthcoming volunteer sessions:

Tuesday 17th May (2-4pm) - clearing rhododendrons and scrub in the riverside woodland (training/introductory session)

Friday 20th May (10-4pm) - litter pick and scrub clearance around the depot

Tuesday 24th May (2-4pm) - clearing rhododendrons and scrub in the riverside woodland

Friday 27th May - (10-4pm) - clearing rhododendrons and scrub in the riverside woodland

Monday 30th May (9-4pm) - clearing rhododendrons and scrub in the riverside woodland

'Leaf'

A poem by Invergarry Primary School pupils

A leaf,
Like a veiny desert,
Like a boy with a jacket,
Like waves,
Like a man running away from a tree,
Light-dappled,
Shiny,
Matt, dull, rusty,
Like an old, crumbly map,
And a sandy beach,
Or a chocolate chip biscuit,
Crinkly, like an old lady's hand,
Or a stick insect,
On an autumn background