

SLATEST NEWS

Your free community newsletter produced by Ballachulish Community Forum

Edition 28 – February / March 2021



Don't Worry, Be Happy!! Thanks to Kevin MacColl and everyone else in Croft Road, winners of the 'Best Street' award for putting a smile on all our faces with their lights over Christmas!



The Other winners as voted for by YOU were Iain & Frances MacMillan, Mel & Diana MacAskill and Bill & Alma Strachan, all in Albert Road

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 March 2021** with deliveries by the end of March, so please get in touch if you have any events or ideas!

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 Resilience).

Thank You Everyone.



VILLAGE SPRING TIDY UP

Last year during lockdown, many of you helped to tidy up our village, so that it looked quite beautiful by the time the restrictions were eased. Unfortunately, however, neither nature nor a few people have fully respected all that hard work, and so there are once more bushes needing pruning and litter needing picking. Weather and Coronavirus Restrictions permitting, we would like to encourage you to make a start once more at making our village look beautiful in time for the summer, and so we will have litter pickers available to borrow from the hall over the weekend of the 6th & 7th February (or the following weekend if the weather is too bad – keep an eye on facebook for more details), but please get out and do what you can when you can!

An advertisement for 'the laroch restaurant & bar'. The top part features the restaurant's name in a stylized font with a mountain range background. Below the name, there are three images of different dishes: a salmon steak with vegetables, a roasted chicken with potatoes, and a dessert with a white cream and fruit. The text in the advertisement reads: 'Wonderful seasonal menus served in both our restaurant and bar in the heart of Ballachulish'. Below this, the phone number 'Tel: 01855 811940' is listed. At the bottom, there is a logo for 'sky SPORTS'.

DUROR AND ST MUNDA'S PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



Over the Christmas period we had a number of additional events. The 'Drive-in Carols' at Ballachulish and Duror were good fun, although the former wasn't very well attended and at the latter a gust of wind during torrential rain destroyed the gazebo and meant that the event was conducted out of the back of my car!

Our Zoom Nativity was a great success. We had an excellent script and enthusiastic participants who dressed appropriately for their various parts, some with imaginative backdrops, and delivered

their lines as required from their own homes. Watchnight on video was different but popular and Zoom services on Christmas morning and 3rd January gave attenders the opportunity to greet one another with 'Merry Christmas' and 'Happy New Year'.

Still under restrictions church continues with video worship, Zoom Services and daily readings and prayers on Facebook. We intend to make better use of our website with worship material for those who don't use Facebook or Youtube. With regular phone calls we've been able to keep in touch with one another within and beyond the congregations.

As the New Year unfolds we hope and pray for much better than last year but it looks as though we'll have to be patient. It's great that our communities are so supportive and caring and can provide a wide variety of help for any who are struggling.

Everyone is always welcome to everything the church is doing – just contact me for links or further information.

Best wishes to you and yours for 2021,

Rev Sandy

astoddart@churchofscotland.org.uk 01631 740285



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KEEPING ACTIVE IN COVID

What is going on in our community, and who is doing what?

Marcothon

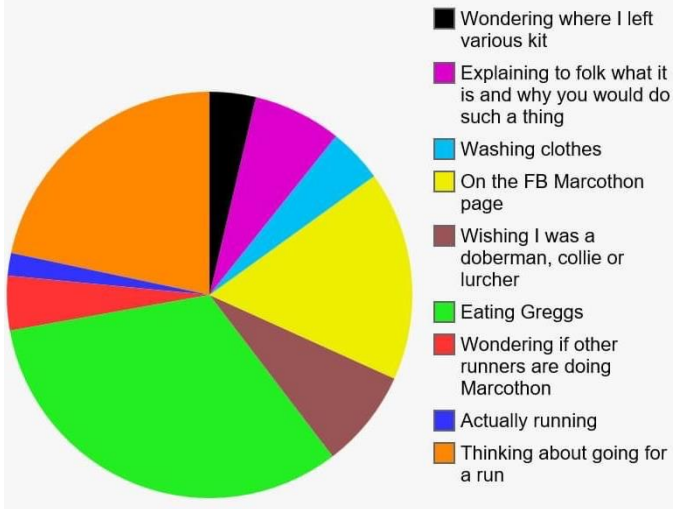
In November 2009 Marco Consani from Glasgow decided to run 5km or run for 25 minutes of each day (whichever came first). His wife, Debbie decided to join him but suggested that to make it harder they run in December. And so the Marcothon was 'born'.

The rules are simple, every day in December including Christmas Day, participants run for a minimum of 25 minutes each day or 5km. The group now has more than 5000 members and it really is just about getting out there and doing it. It is very much a personal commitment and not prompted by external factors.

Over the last few years and on the back of the Couch25k/ Run Ballachulish Glencoe group organised by our very own Merriol Baldwin (thank you M), some members of our community have made the ultimate commitment every December to pound the Ballachulish / Glencoe pavements. This year was no exception and although small in number they are 'powerful' in their intent to get through it no matter what. Well done, Lorna MacAskill Scott, Eileen Donald, Carol Mackenzie, Jo Watt and joining for the first time Frances Purden .

For further details please contact the group direct for training tips, 'hydration' tips or just for no reason whatsoever!! 😊

Gemma's typical day during Marcothon calculated as a percentage



Spurred on by the Marcothon the group continue to get out there and move with a few taking on Maggie's Centre Challenge of raising funds by running 50 miles in January.

If on the other hand you enjoy exercising to music why not consider Zumba with Lynn Quigg MacMillan, brought to you by Zoom technology in the comfort of your living room. For one to one interaction The PT Nut Fitness and Nutrition ran by Sharon Ashwell is available or independently she offers

kettle bells , boxfit , core or High intensity Interval Training (HIIT) .

We are so lucky to live in such a spectacular area that people flock to (pre Covid) for walking, climbing, cycling, wild swimming and much more. It's all on our doorstep and over the coming months it may be of benefit to our mental and physical health to become more active. We can each find our own niche.

In closing I feel a special mention must go to the local who shall remain 'nameless', supporting and motivating a couple of members recently as they 'glided' past him on an icy road with the most encouraging of words "ya couple of dafties".!!!! Laughter really is the best medicine ☺ Thanks to Lorna for use of the graph which we all follow religiously ☺

Jo Watt

ORIENTEERING

The Community Support Group recently provided Orienteering cards for the courses at the Lochan and the NTS Visitor Centre in Glencoe. We hope that those of you who took part enjoyed the challenge! Don't worry if you missed out, or are keen for more, as we are planning another weekend on 20th / 21st February, with a specially created trail in the Brecklet Forest - cards for the other two courses will also be available again. Everyone who successfully finds all of the posts and returns their card will receive a certificate.

What is Orienteering?

If you and your family enjoy a walk together in our local area, but would also like an extra challenge, then Orienteering might be for you! Using the maps provided you need to seek out the marker posts (right) and use the punches fixed to them to punch your card. Some are easy to find, visible from the path, while others will need a bit of hunting about to locate, all adding to the fun. There are many Orienteering courses around the area which can be explored once Lockdown restrictions are eased once more, so if you enjoy the challenge locally, there will be new adventures available later in the year.



OPEN WATER SWIMMING

You'll be aware that there has been great interest and participation in open water swimming across the UK during 2020 and the same applies here in Ballachulish. For five years or more, a group of us have been swimming in Loch Leven (and further afield) all year round. In the last 18 months or so, we've really embraced skins swimming (no wetsuit - brrr). It's well known that open water swimming is good for your physical and mental health. There's nothing like a chat and swim in calm seas to chill out or an exhilarating cold or wavy swim to clear your head. Right now, we can only swim in twos, but sometime in the future, we can resume more sociable group swimming. Whether you want to swim a good distance or just want to have a quick dip, you will be very welcome. Someone will always swim with you and we have a bit of surplus gear to lend initially. It's very informal and we take no liability. Be warned, the water is very cold just now with the potential for afterdrop but it will warm up from March/April, so you may want to wait.



Here are the views of three of our newest swimmers:

Pamela Griffin

The early lockdown of 2020 really took its toll on me and by August my mental health had taken a real battering. I was determined to try anything to help me and so began my journey into open water swimming. I find it hard to explain the sense of freedom and inner peace you feel, a sense of calm. A wee morning dip really does set you up for the day. So much so that we have even continued to swim when the frost has been lying thick on the ground!



Frances MacMillan

I was persuaded to try open water swimming in September and since that first swim I've been hooked. I love the peace and freedom I get from swimming in the loch. The local group are so encouraging and you can always find someone who is free for a swim.



Jane Moran

My first experience of open water swimming was during the first lockdown. I didn't think

I would like it but from that swim around the island at bishops Bay I was hooked. Now, I try to go every week. The initial shock of the cold wears off quickly and I just concentrate on swimming. My head feels empty and it's nice seeing everything from a different perspective. A seal has appeared a few times to say hello! If you have been thinking about trying it, just go for it!

Find us on Facebook : Loch Leven (Glencoe) Open Water Swimmers

OSS Responsibility Statement Loch Leven (Glencoe) Open Water Swimmers operate all swimming activity under the OSS Swim Responsibility Statement guidelines. The Loch Leven (Glencoe) Open Water Swimmers group is purely a network of people interested in swimming with others at entirely their own risk. We maintain to be an open and welcoming group for swimmers of all abilities.

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.



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THE WELL-BEING SHED

Maybe getting out and about isn't quite your thing. If so, then have you visited our Wellbeing Shed next to the Chippy? It is stocked full of Books, DVDs, Puzzles and craft materials to help you fill the long winter evenings or start a new hobby. 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. Unfortunately, it isn't always staffed by Mickey and Minnie!

We are also providing a range of helpful ideas from Recipes to crafty links and links to puzzles on the Ballachulish Community Support Facebook Page, and there are other posts of local interest, history and community news on the Slatest News Facebook Page.

Winter Essentials

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Claymore Limited Tyndrum Road Glencoe Tel 01855 811308

WHO WILL BE OFFERED THE CORONA VACCINE?

Your local NHS health board will be in touch with you to arrange your vaccination appointment when you are eligible.

It's important not to contact your GP practice for a vaccination before then.

Who'll be offered the coronavirus vaccine first?

The groups most at risk will be vaccinated first. These are:

- residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- people aged 80 and over
- frontline health and social care workers

Vaccination for other groups will begin as soon as the supply of vaccines becomes available. The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

People most at risk

People aged 50 or over are most at risk, and the risk increases with age.

Older adults living in care homes are at greater risk because large groups of especially vulnerable people are living together, in surroundings where the virus can spread quickly.

Frontline healthcare and social care workers are also at risk as they may be exposed to infection.

JCVI advises the order of priority for the coronavirus vaccination is:

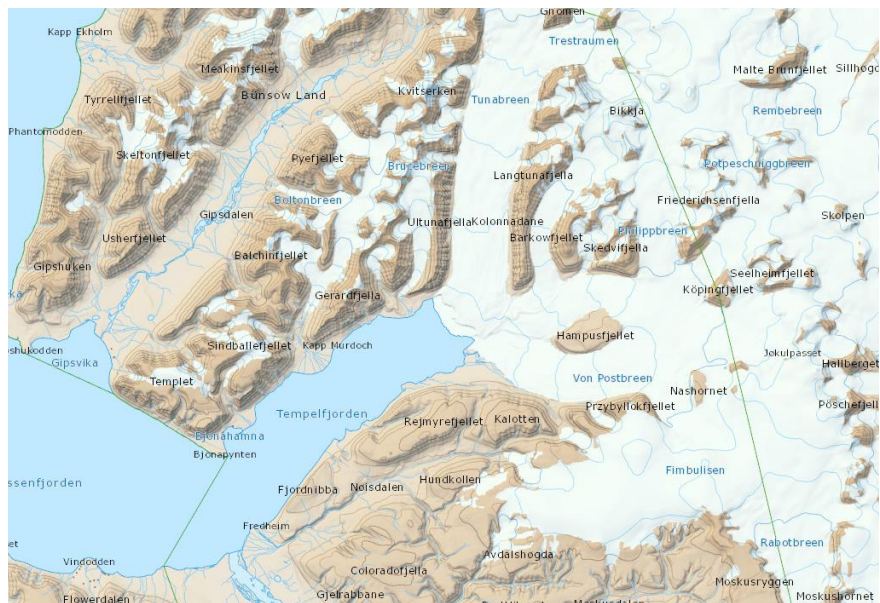
1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Read further information about JCVI advice on priority groups for the coronavirus vaccination on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM:

A PERSONAL LOG BY E W WYLD ON HER FIRST VISIT TO THE HIGH ARCTIC – PART 4

Monday 2nd April



Haggis was up at 7.30 making a brew. I woke up and was ready to get up. Everyone was up by 8.00, having had a first brew. I learnt how to make expedition porridge – dry instant porridge, condensed milk, salt and water. Added to this could be syrup, sugar, jam or honey provided you remembered to thaw them out. This was followed by ham and toast and another brew. It was decided that Haggis and Kelvin would go to Longyearbyen to get paraffin, the stashed petrol, bread and to post the mail.

We sorted the boxes, cleared out the snowdrift under the table, put cardboard on the bench and down the side of the bunks and organized food for the next few days. I had cut my nails very short, but this was a mistake as the skin began to split; however ‘newskin’ gave a coating and prevented further deterioration. Mike and Si cut wood of various sizes and thicknesses so that we could determine what was best for the stove.

At 2.00 we set off towards the Tunabreen. The sun was out and many pictures were taken. Simon decided the snout had receded about 400m since 1977. We started off intending to go up onto Von Postbreen but Mike saw water lying on the surface. This seemed very odd to be me as the temperature had been -26°C at the last reading. So we had tea and chocolate biscuits under the Tunabreen. The light on the lumps of ice was fascinating and I could have

stayed there for a long time had it not been so cold. I drove back to the hut and unfortunately bumped Si as we went over the tide crack and he fell into the pannier and hurt his back. As we neared the hut we noticed Haggis and Kelvin were back – they must have moved! They told us about a blood trail near a seal hole so after a cuppa we set off to investigate. Kelvin and Haggis had seen three hunters plus empty sledges and fuel tank so we presumed they had shot the seal. I was surprised how clean the sides of the hole were. We followed the blood trail to find a pelt and entrails lying near open water near Kapp Murdoch. I have not discovered the reason for this open water. We went back home speeding across the clear fjord at 60kph. (I was not driving!)

It was decided that the passengers on the ET340 skidoos were uncomfortable as they had no backrest so a prototype was made. Various bits of wood, string, foam mat, cardboard and a fuel can were used.

The gauntlets were not proving as good as we had hoped, possibly because the inner lining was not attached to the outer and when trying to work with other gloves underneath, the thumb was not in the right place. It was difficult to pull them up over the various inner gloves used and then get them over the ends of the anorak sleeves. Everything seems to be freezing, including the washing up liquid. They tell me it is much colder than last year.

It was time to get tea on, we would be more organized tonight and not have to wait between courses. The menu was choice of cuppa soup, beef jerky and potatoes, apricots in honey, custard and coffee. What more could you want? Avril and Mike had made the beef jerky, a very time consuming operation but appreciated by all. It went cold quickly, -25°C by 8.00. Still very clear and bright with lovely colours in the sky. We were all quite tired and ready to go to bed at 9.30. I could not get to sleep because of the chorus of snores.

To be continued in the next edition of Slatest News!

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GLENCOE MUSEUM UPDATE

Happy New Year from all of us here at Glencoe Folk Museum! We just want to take this opportunity to thank the community so much for all the support we've been shown during what has been a very difficult year for everyone, and to give you a brief update on how our future is looking.

We are very grateful to have received a grant from Museums Galleries Scotland's Recovery and Resilience Fund, which will cover some of our losses in the short term and develop our sustainability in the long term.

We will also be taking part in "Steps to Sustainability" this year – a programme run by the National Lottery Heritage Fund which aims to help participants run projects. Our project will centre on our gift shop, expanding our product selection, developing unique gifts and also collaborating with local producers in order to increase revenue and support local business. If you are a local craftsperson/artist etc and are interested in being stocked in our gift shop then please do get in touch at the email address below!

Despite setbacks related to the pandemic, our Redevelopment Project is continuing and we hope to make real progress in 2021. David, our Redevelopment Manager, was furloughed for most of last year but he is back and working away behind the scenes in anticipation of funding streams reopening this Spring.

We are still collecting items as part our Covid Pandemic project. Please get in touch if you have something you'd like to donate which reflects 'Life in Lockdown' in the area – this could be photos, signs, rainbow/NHS drawings, shopping lists from neighbours, home-schooling equipment, evidence of a new hobby or skill, letters from afar, diaries or journals... Thank you to those who have already donated, and to everyone who filled out our online survey!

Finally, work continues behind the scenes as we prepare to (hopefully!) open in the spring. Our collections cataloguing project has uncovered some fascinating objects, including some lace wine mats from the 1700s and a beautiful velvet dress (right) belonging to a descendant of Chief Maclain of Glencoe. We are missing our regular collections volunteers, but hope that they will be allowed to join us again soon.

Stay safe everyone!

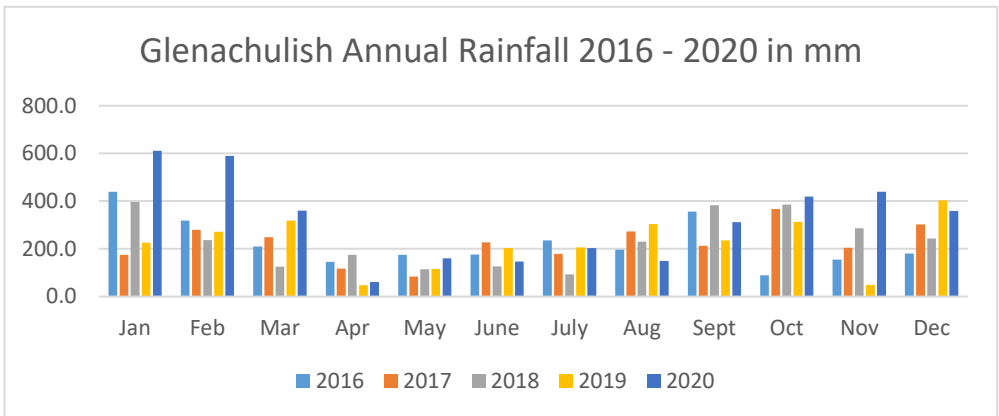
Catriona Davidson, Curator Glencoe Folk Museum

curator@glencoemuseum.com



NOTES ON GLENACHULISH WEATHER

2020 has certainly been a memorable year, and not just because of the weather, but people I have spoken to remember it as a year with a lot of good weather. January and February were very wet months and this continued into the first half of March after which the weather settled down. We then had 3 months with very low or average rainfall, which was the fine spell we remember from the first lockdown. April and August were drier than average while May, June, July and September were about average. Unfortunately the last 3 months of the year have all been wetter than the average, which means that our rainfall for 2020 is 3,512 mm (150 inches or 12' 6" in imperial measure) which is 40% higher than the average of the previous 4 years, 2,710 mm.



August gave us a wonderful spell of weather in the middle of the month when we had a fortnight with the maximum temperature climbing into the twenties each day and only falling to around 13 degrees at night time.

The wettest day in the last six months was the 13th September with 95 mm of rain. November gave us half of the total rain for the month in 8 days, 11th - 18th, and 65 mm on the wettest day, the 17th. After Storm Bella, on the 26th December, when we had 60 mm of rain, the weather settled down and gave us a couple of weeks of mainly dry and frosty weather. The coldest day I recorded was the 6th January 2021 when the temperature stayed near to -4 degrees all day.

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A CHRISTMAS LIKE NO OTHER

There are many things that were different about 2020, but it was perhaps at Christmas time when the changes to everyday life were most keenly felt. Despite everything, however, our Community worked wonders to bring a little sparkle to the festive period, from the fabulous Christmas Light displays throughout the village to the busy, but freezing Christmas Market in front of the hall, and Santa's visit on Christmas Eve. There are too many people to thank individually for making this all happen, but thank you to everyone who helped.



CHILDHOOD MEMORIES — IAIN MACMILLAN

I thought it would be good to gather memories and stories of Ballachulish from some of our “older” residents. I recently caught up with Iain MacMillan, one of the “older” generation born in the village. There were too many interesting stories and anecdotes for this article but here are a few of them.

Iain was born and lived at 34 West Laroch, old quarry houses (now gone). He can't remember much about that house except that it was “cosy”. He recalls various blocks of toilets around the village as the quarry houses had no inside toilets. There were nine children and two adults in his family, so when he moved at the age of four to a newly-built, four-bedroomed house in Park Road in 1949, it seemed like a palace. Not only did it have a bathroom but it also had electricity a while after they moved in. He has a memory of running up and down the stairs switching the lights on! He attended the Public School (the current school). There were three teachers and three classrooms, one being the current hall. The teacher's house was attached to the school (with an orchard at the back) and there was a separate canteen, outside boys and girls toilets and a small playground at the back of the school where they played shinty. The teacher's house was later knocked down for an extension to the school. He thought there might have been about 80 children in the Public School and another 30 at St Johns. A lot more children than just now. His father worked in the quarries and he can remember he came home injured one day after a rogue blast in the quarry. For general safety, after blasting, one person would check each of the blast holes and if one had not gone off, they would shout “droch toll” or “bad hole”. His father was one of the men who took down the second arch. Wagons went up and down the arches taking slate to the piers, one where the Isles is now and the other at the other side of the East Peninsula near Clach an Tobhar where there were about four houses.

They swam at the shore, played on the Bank and where the 6-hole golf course had been north of the railway and putted on the shore-land to the west of the River Laroch. Most of all they played shinty - at the Jubilee and anywhere and everywhere around the village, always taking a shinty stick and ball wherever they went. Shinty was so important in the village for adults and children.

Iain said it was a lovely childhood, but life wasn't totally idyllic. People had to work hard and play and shinty in particular were an escape. “We were never bored and never in, even if it was raining”.

Ruth Sime



The First Ballachulish Snowman of 2021?

Created by Fionn Wallace

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Anniversary wishes for my parents, who celebrated their 63rd Anniversary on 18th of January. They are Joan & Ronnie Mclauchlan, of Ballachulish.

They came to the village in November 1959 from Pitlochry to farm at Gorteneorn. After a move to farm in Aberdeenshire in 1989 they returned & built the Dragons Tooth Golf Course, which opened in 2002.

They have 1 son & 3 daughters, 1 in Australia, 10 grandchildren & 8 great grandchildren.

Wishing them both a wonderful day, from all the family here & in Australia.

Eilidh Taylor (daughter)



RAINBOW BABY & TODDLER GROUP

After 8 months of the group being suspended due to Covid-19 on the 24th of November we were finally able to re-start playgroup. There were a few changes put in place to allow us to follow the new government guidelines. Registers moved to online, as did payments, social distancing & face masks were compulsory and enhanced cleaning & hygiene procedures put in place.

The group was so in demand that we could not accommodate everyone who wanted to attend both days and therefore we set up a booking system for each day in order to allocate places fairly.

It was so lovely to see all the babies & toddlers getting to play together, some of them for the first time, never having had the opportunity before, due to being born in lockdown.

I think it would be fair to say the parents all enjoyed being at the group just as much as the children, and regaining a little bit of normality. Everyone did really well abiding by the new rules and we did not encounter any problems.

Sadly with lockdown 3.0 coming into place in late December the group has had to close its doors once again.

Hopefully things will ease over the coming weeks/ months and we can all get back together as soon as possible.

Keep your eyes peeled for updates on our Facebook page.

Stay Safe

Alice MacDonald



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 (Vice-Chair), Alisdair Jack (Treasurer), Dave Kitson (Secretary), Rob Malpas, Anthony McKenna, Kevin Smith (Chair)

Community Association: www.ball-a-hall.co.uk

Our Trustees are: Brian Dickie (Vice Chair), Mags Ingram, Donella MacDonald, Rob Malpas (Secretary), Sheila McLean, Ruth Sime, Sandy Stoddart

Community Company: [on Facebook](#)

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

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SLATEST BOOKS

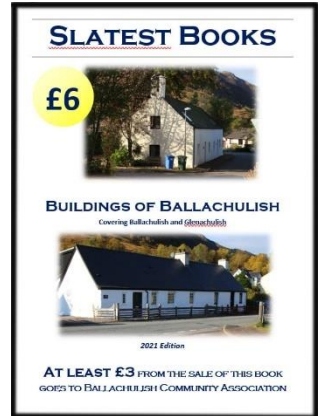
We are pleased to announce the launch of Slatest Books, where all of the profits from the sale of the books will now go to Ballachulish Community Association SCIO. The money will be used to maintain the hall, support Slatest News, and assist with the ongoing resilience project, amongst other community projects.

Four titles are available now, three fully revised and one brand new, with others due before Easter. The first four titles are:

- Ballachulish Timeline – revised and updated to 2020
- Exploring the Ballachulish – Connel Railway – fully revised
- Ferries of Lochaber and North Lorne – revised
- Buildings of Ballachulish – *new*

The last title is the new one, and has been created with help from our facebook readers who contributed much of the fascinating history of some of our village's most interesting buildings.

If you would like to purchase any of the above, they can be ordered with the slip below, returned to the Black Letterbox at the village hall. If you don't live in the village, they are available on Ebay – please search Slatest Books on Ebay for details.



Please can I order the following books, I enclose £6 per book ordered. Please make cheques payable to Ballachulish Community Association.

- Ballachulish Timeline
- Exploring the Ballachulish – Connel Railway
- Ferries of Lochaber and North Lorne
- Buildings of Ballachulish

Name:

Address:

LOCAL WILDLIFE

It is still difficult to provide a local calendar with the current restrictions, so instead here are some photos of local wildlife spotted when out and about in January:



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