



Black Grouse

The Craic Monthly

May 2019

FREE

Wildlife on your doorstep

by Simon McLaughlin

Cannich is surrounded by an abundance of Black Grouse, you may not have seen or heard them much as they tend to be a discrete and secretive bird apart from in the wee hours of the morning where the males can be heard and maybe even seen lekking. Lekking refers to the Black Grouse courtship behaviour, it also refers to the place that is the lek or lekking ground. The name Lek supposedly comes from Germanic/Scandinavian roots meaning “to play”.

When lekking the Black Grouse males fill up their distinctive red wattle over the eye with blood, they raise their tail feathers to show off their white bloomer like ass and unique curved lyre feathers. The sound these birds make can only be described as quite weird “bubbling, hissing and squarking”. I’m sure this is obvious to most, the reason for all this early morning fuss is to of course attract the female Black Grouse, the females are not black at all, they are brown and grey, commonly referred to as Grey Hens. Their camouflage is excellent as it needs to be for they are ground nesting birds and they need to be hidden from predators. Once the female is ready to lay her huge clutch of up to 16 eggs usually in May and June she will sit and incubate until the chick’s hatch, it is quite usual for most of these chicks to not survive unfortunately due to weather, food availability, predation, this is probably why they lay so many eggs?

The tails of the male Black Grouse have, since late Victorian times, been popular adornments for hats worn with highland dress. Most commonly associated with caps such as the Glengarry and the Tam o’ Shanter, they still continue to be worn by pipers of civilian and military pipe bands. Since 1904, all ranks of the Royal Scots and Kings own Scottish Borderers have worn them in their full-dress headgear and that tradition is carried on in the dress glengarries of the current Scottish super regiment, the Royal Regiment of Scotland.



Black Grouse have made a remarkable recovery over the past 10+ years due to habitat improvements like tree planting and a cease in shooting. It was estimated after the last national survey there where 5,100 lekking males in the UK and over 3,000 where in Scotland, within your local Beaully catchment the population is estimated at 390 lekking males in 2018 this is an estimated increase from 290 lekking males counted in 2007, so the birds are on the increase which is great news.

What's on May

- 1 – Whist: Cannich Hall 130pm – 430pm
- 3 – Scottish Country Dance: Cannich Hall 7pm – Midnight
- 8 – Craft Club: Cannich Hall 7pm – 9pm
- 8 – Community Council: Cannich Hall from 730pm
- 11 – SPAR Glen Affric Duathlon: Glen Affric from 11am**
- 13 – Tarradale Through Time: Marydale Church from 730pm
- 15 – Whist: Cannich Hall 130pm – 430pm
- 22 – Craft Club: Cannich Hall 7pm – 9pm
- 25 – Dusk Ramble: Easter Crochail*
- 29 – Whist: Cannich Hall 130pm – 430pm

June

- 5 – Craft Club: Cannich Hall 7pm – 9pm
- 12 – Whist: Cannich Hall 130pm – 430pm
- 19 – Craft Club: Cannich Hall 7pm – 9pm
- 19 – Community Council: Cannich Hall from 730pm
- 26 – Whist: Cannich Hall 130pm – 430pm
- 29 – Mega Moths: Culbokie Cottage, Guisachan 10am – 12pm*

SPAR 
**Glen Affric Duathlon
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If you have an event coming up let us know at the shop or email the details to shop@cannichstores.co.uk to get your event listed in our community diary.

More and more people are reading our newsletter and it's a great way to promote your event to the community.

Regular Events:

Black Dragon Hapkido: Cannich Hall 6:30pm – 8pm every Wednesday

Junior Youth Club: Cannich Hall 6:30pm – 8:00 every Friday**

Senior Youth Club: Cannich Hall 8:00pm – 9:30pm every Friday**

GP Surgery: Cannich Hall 11:00am – 1:00pm every Thursday

GP Surgery: Cannich Hall 9:30am – 11:30am every Tuesday

Indoor Bowling: Cannich Hall 1:30pm – 4:30pm every Monday

Slainte Fitness Training: Cannich Hall 7pm every Monday

Pilates Classes: Cannich Hall 9.45am & 11am every Tuesday

* All Shinty fixtures/throw ups are subject to change due to weather, unforeseen circumstances etc. For further information see www.strathglassshintyclub.co.uk

** Youth Club is not held during the school holidays

* RSPB Wildlife Explorers programme is aimed at children 8-12 years old but younger children are welcome as long as an adult stays with them.

Please ensure that all children are prepared for a walk, even for indoor events. Unless otherwise stated all meetings are £1 per child

A fond farewell

by Brad Collins



In the last few days of April we bid a fond farewell to one of our outstanding and longest serving members of the Cannich community.

At the spritely age of 92; Mrs Phimister (Margaret to those who know her best) will be moving on and leaving decades of memories behind as she takes up residence in one of the new homes that the Glenurquhart Care Centre have built in Drumnadrochit.

Mrs Phimister moved to Cannich 68 years ago from Fochabers with her late husband George. George was at the time employed by the Hydro Board as a turbine driver.

The family lived in 2 other houses in the area before finally moving to 13 MacColl Road where until the other day she still lived. Margaret & George were the first family to move in to the then brand new hydro houses that were built for staff and today form the major part of the village.

A family of four was then raised in that house; all children going to Cannich Bridge Primary and then moving on to Beauly Junior Secondary and latterly Glenurquhart High School.

Over the years Mrs Phimister played a pivotal role in many aspects of village life; she was the winner of many competitions run by the Womens Rural Institute and was award prizes for her knitting & Sewing. She spent many years helping to organise and of course play in the Whist drives that were held in the Glen Affric Hotel and still run today in the village hall. Thanks to all her many friends who offered lifts to the hall she remained an active player right up to the move.

She helped organise and run the Childrens Christmas Party, another function that still runs till today, along with the local library that she ran in a small hall. The hall was later demolished to be replaced by a private residence which is where Mavis lives today. Mrs Phimister also spent many years during the 1970s working in the village shop as well.

Of course one of the greatest thrills each year for Mrs. Phimister was the presentation of the George J Phimister Trophy (pictured). This was awarded during a special competition day to the Strathglass player who exhibits most the qualities in which George himself admired in a player; Skill, Aggression & Leadership.

So with a tear in our eyes we wish Mrs. Phimister all the best for her future and thank her for all that she and her family have done for the village, the Shinty club and the area over many decades.



George Phimister Trophy

5 years on, whats next?

by Brad Collins

It was 5 years ago this month that Nicole & I made the move from Australia to take up the running of the village shop. In that time we have completely overhauled the shop, transformed its look & feel. Created a well-used little picnic area for those visiting the village along with a place for our visitors to get information on the area which we are lucky to live in.

You might not know but our work with Spar Scotland has lead to a greatly improved range of products at prices that are the same or better than 5 years ago.



Did you know that a 2 litre bottle of milk 5 years ago cost you £1.79 now its just £1.24 ; A loaf of Kingsmill 50/50 was £1.75 now its just £1.19 ; a 380ml bottle of Lucozade Orange was £1.20 now they are just £1.09 or two for £2

These savings are not the only thing, we now have hot food, takeaway pizza, a fresh bakery, extended post office & shop hours, a cheaper more reliable gas supply and so many more new services.

Of course, all of this was only possible with the support we receive from our valued customers that support us all year round and with their continued support we are able to do more with the shop and provide more to the community in terms of support and sponsorship.

So whats next? What do we have planned for the next 5 years?

We have plenty of ideas and thoughts although space & cost play a factor so we shall have to wait and see what we can do over the next 5 years and more.

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The Craic

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