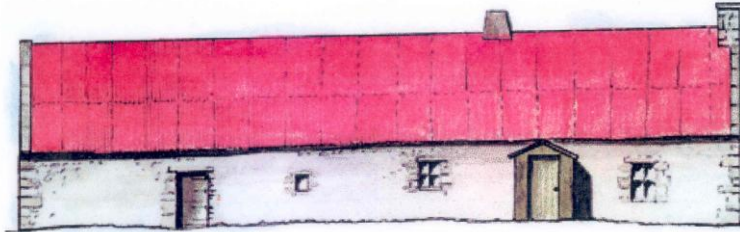


## Moirlanich Longhouse Newsletter 2010



Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter. It is intended to circulate information annually about what's been happening at the property in a readable and non-technical form. We hope you find it interesting and would welcome any feedback or contributions. If you would like to receive future editions please contact the National Trust for Scotland, Lynedoch, Main Street, KILLIN, FK21 8UW, 0844 4932136 or email: [moirlanich@nts.org.uk](mailto:moirlanich@nts.org.uk) .

### "The best National Trust for Scotland property"

Moirlanich is one of the Trust's hidden gems as demonstrated by the above comment from the visitors' book. It was acquired by the Trust in 1992 following a generous donation from the family of the late Sherriff Prain and although it was in a state of decay, it retained many of its original features. The aim of management was to conserve the property with minimum intervention and after a multi-disciplinary project this was achieved. Volunteers from Killin Heritage Society agreed to staff the property and it was opened to the public in 1996 for two afternoons a week during the tourist season. The ongoing commitment of these volunteers has been vital and some have been on the rota since that time. Personal recollections and knowledge of the property, sometimes dating back to its occupation, greatly enhances the visitor experience.

Initially the property was administered from the then Regional Office, but later responsibility devolved to the Ben Lawers Property Manager, now Helen Cole. Property Secretary, Eleanor Murray has responsibility for aspects of the day to day management and other Trust staff (e.g. Buildings Surveyors, Conservators, Curators, and Archaeologists) provide specialist advice and support. The property has a modest revenue budget which is subsidised from the Trust's central funds. The administrative base is shared with Ben Lawers and some management tasks are carried out by other Ben Lawers staff, e.g. some of the work required to upgrade the water supply to meet statutory standards. Funds for larger projects, like the roof repairs, have to be sought elsewhere.

Positive steps towards ensuring advanced planning of management of the property were made this year with the preparation of a Property Statement and Action Plan. An initial pathfinder meeting was held, with staff from various disciplines within the Trust and a representative of Killin Heritage Society, to ensure that all the significant features of the property were recognised and to formalise a vision for management. The resultant draft document was then widely circulated for consultation and submissions are being collated. The final document will be invaluable in guiding future management and supporting bids for funding.

## Pattern on Pattern



A donation from the Stirling Members' Centre enabled Ian Gow, the NTS Head of Collections, Archives and Library Services, to provide new fabrics to replace the curtains on the box beds and new quilts, inspired by the flowery pattern on pattern impression of the wallpaper and the photograph of Lizzie Robertson.

His investigations found a variety of styles for dressing a box bed, perhaps because people used what they had to hand, but one fascinating piece of evidence he used was a painting by Thomas Faed "When the Day is Done", painted in 1870, which is certainly evocative.



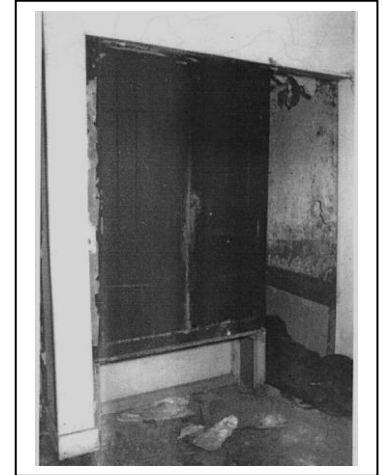
Using this painting and a number of photographs of box beds, Gillean Ford and Gina Angus made the curtains and installed them to great effect.

Another addition to this layering of colour and pattern is our rag rugs. Janet Sommerville restored one of the rugs in the house and also created one. The NTS Weaver's Cottage kindly donated yet another rug.

Even more colour and pattern comes from a stool donated by Margaret Ogilvie and this is now displayed in the 'best' room.

## Pre-Season Meeting

Our pre-season meeting was held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 and was well attended. Linda Frost kindly prepared the rota for staffing and this was distributed. Ian Gow was the speaker and talked about the initial project to conserve the house which led to a discussion about the decisions taken at the time. The difficulties in making these decisions were illustrated by the cupboard which was discovered attached to the box bed area in the kitchen, as this photograph from 1991 shows. It now resides in the dairy, between the kitchen and the byre, allowing the box bed to be displayed openly in the kitchen, but there was an argument for placing it back as it was found. After the meeting there was time to chat over a marvellous buffet provided by Maureen Campbell.



## Education

The P1/2 class from Killin Primary School came to visit the Longhouse in June as part of their topic work on "Houses and Homes". The class dressed up in period costume, investigated objects from the house and explored to solve the mystery of where the family got their water from. Finally they listened to the tale of Lizzie's Bannock while they sat by the fireplace. An updated Teacher's Pack for the house has been passed to the NTS Education staff to encourage more schools to use Moirlanich as a resource.



One of the activities we aim to offer allows the children to become archaeologists, unearthing objects from a sandbox, describing their finds and drawing conclusions about the inhabitants of the house.



We need lots of objects for this, so if anyone has anything suitable they would be willing to donate, please contact Eleanor Murray at Lynedoch. For example, a piece from an old bridle would be a clue that the family kept horses, and an old bicycle bell tells us that someone used a bicycle.

## Children's Activities

Families make up a small proportion of the visitors to the house and to encourage them two new activities were introduced to capture the interest of children and give parents a chance to absorb the exhibits and chat to the volunteers.

Older children were offered eye spy sheets to find objects in the house and display hut and learn their names and uses. Younger children could hunt for Lizzie's mouse – Volunteers hid the mouse wherever they liked and this encouraged children to look carefully around and perhaps spot other objects that interested them.



We have previously offered word puzzles and colouring sheets and next season we will bring all of these activities together so that children can choose what they like to do. The Killin Heritage Society have very kindly offered to provide small prizes for those who complete their sheet during their visit.

## Clocks



Kenneth Chapelle, a restorer of antique clocks, came to see the two clocks at Moirlanich this year, as part of an NTS audit of clocks.

In the best room there is an American Gingerbread clock. The clock is in good working order and has since been adding its tick to the atmosphere of this room. Unfortunately it does require winding every week, so it may be silent on occasion.

Mrs Nan MacDonald was brought up in Wester Moirlanich and provided many memories of Moirlanich Longhouse as a family home including a recollection of a Wag at the Wa' clock hanging in the kitchen. We have one of these ready to hang but it requires a very secure fixing – a previous clock came to an inglorious end when it smashed to the unforgiving floor surface. It is a pendulum clock, powered by brass weights, also known as a Dutch Clock, although this is in fact a corruption of a Deutsch clock, i.e. it was made in the Black Forest in Germany.

## Events

### Moth and Bat Night



Moirlanich Longhouse was the base for a National Moth Night (NMN) event hosted by National Trust for Scotland rangers on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May. NMN is the UK's annual celebration of moths and moth recording but the theme for 2010 included bats too, with the aim of raising the profile of both groups of widely misunderstood nocturnal creatures.

Participants travelled from as far as Stirling and Comrie to watch for bats emerging from the longhouse as dusk fell and to watch moths attracted to a harmless light trap. Bats proved elusive for a while, but patience was eventually rewarded with excellent views of a pipistrelle swooping above us and entering the roof.

Many participants returned early the next day to examine those moths that arrived after we had gone to bed. A total of 16 different species were caught and released after being admired. The real stars were the Red Sword-grass, which does a good imitation of a piece of stick, and the Lesser Swallow Prominent (both pictured).

### Clanscape

This free annual event is organised by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and brings the history of the area alive. While the Killin Heritage Society displayed the model of Moirlanich Longhouse alongside their photographs from Killin's past, visitors were given a chance to make rag rugs, peg dolls and rush lights. The event proved very popular with all ages, some remembering their mothers and grandmothers making rag rugs at home. Thank you to Willie Angus for this photograph.



The materials for rag rug making were kindly donated by Janet Somerville and we hope to have a permanent stand in the Display hut so that all visitors can try this traditional craft.

### Doors Open Day



Doors Open Days is Scotland's largest free annual architectural event. It is coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust and is part of European Heritage Days alongside Scottish Archaeology Month, coordinated by Archaeology Scotland. Both are supported by Historic Scotland.

We once again took part in this event opening Moirlanich on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of September and attracting 52 visitors over the weekend.

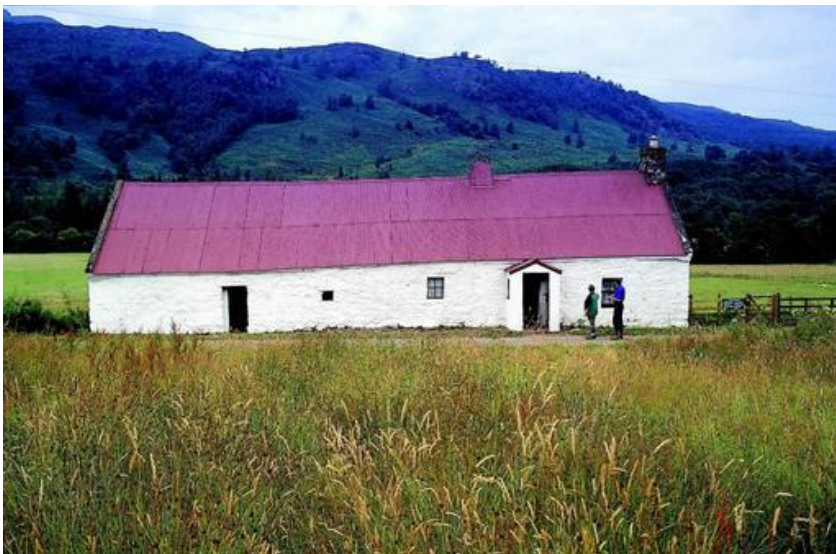
## Green Tourism Business Scheme

This scheme encourages all businesses involved with tourists to promote sustainability where they can. This covers a wide range of criteria: encouraging visitors to walk, changing to low energy bulbs, using recycled paper, reducing the amount of water used, recycling rubbish, buying locally, buying Fair-trade, encouraging dog owners to keep the area clean – and so on. This year, the valuable contribution of the Ben Lawers Rangers, who organised the bat and moth watching evening, added to the visitors' understanding and enjoyment of the area which also counts towards the scheme. With all these efforts we were successful in moving up a grade from Bronze to Silver and we can now display a Silver Plaque on the Display Hut.



But we haven't rested on our laurels – Conservator, Suzanne Lamb has installed three new humidistats to control the relative humidity and temperature within the house and the Display Hut. This should prolong the life of all our exhibits and reduce our energy bills. A generous grant from the Stirling Members' Centre enabled us to buy these, so many thanks again to them.

We are constantly reviewing our management of the property to improve on these issues and if you have any suggestions please contact Eleanor Murray, and if you walked, cycled or shared a lift to Moirlanich this season, pat yourself on the back.



## Acknowledgements

The Trust gratefully acknowledges the ongoing commitment of volunteers from Killin Heritage Society and other individuals who enable the property to be opened to the public.

A generous grant from Stirling Members Centre enabled us to purchase humidistats for the heaters and quilts and fabric for curtains for the box beds.



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The Trust is an independent charity, supported by more than 310,000 members and contributions from grants and donors. We are Scotland's largest and most diverse conservation charity, caring for more than 100 places for the benefit of the nation, including 28 castles, palaces and great houses; 12 social and industrial heritage sites; 3 historic burghs; 76,000 hectares of countryside; 16 island groups; 7 national nature reserves; 46 Munros; and 1 Dual World Heritage Site.

Join the Trust at Moirlanich and contribute directly to the management work at the property or online at [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)