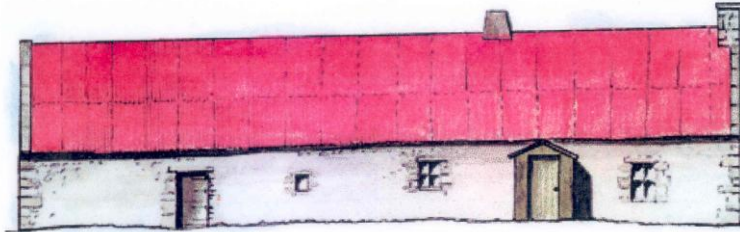


Moirlanich Longhouse Newsletter 2011



Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter, our annual round up of all that has been happening at Moirlanich Longhouse. 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 .

“Hidden Treasure – a great picture into a way of life”

It has been a landmark year for Moirlanich in many ways. The Property Statement and Action List were approved and these now provide the basis for agreed management of the property until 2016. One of the actions was the formation of a Management Group made up of staff from various disciplines and a representative of Killin Heritage Society, who would meet regularly to take forward management. The inaugural meeting of this group took place in July and included a site visit to see the progress on the ongoing external repairs (see below) and positive discussion about future conservation both internal and external, curatorial issues and interpretation. The next meeting will take place in August 2012.

The season started well with our first Easter Egg Trail. A total of 797 visitors came throughout the season, a significant drop from the previous year, but not an unexpected one in the current economic climate.

Vital external repairs began in May and involved shrouding the whole longhouse in a protective scaffold for much of the season. Despite this, most of the property remained open, except during erection and dismantling of the scaffold. Unfortunately, we were unable to open the byre for the duration of the contract because of ongoing repairs to the roof, the underside of which is completely exposed in that part of the building. However, visitors could appreciate the extent of work necessary to conserve buildings of this nature and we received a great deal of praise from people throughout the season, as demonstrated by the above quote from our visitor book.

Moirlanich offers a fantastic educational resource which we hope will be utilised by local schools. To assist teachers considering visits we now have a Teachers Information Sheet available to download from the Trust's website at

http://www.nts.org.uk/learn/downloads/sheets/nts_tis_moirlanich_longhouse2011.pdf and for those requiring further information including suggested activities a Teachers Pack is available at http://www.nts.org.uk/learn/downloads/packs/NTS_TP_Moirlanich-Longhouse.pdf

Killin Heritage Society produced some packs of bookmarks for sale at the property and any children successfully completing the activity sheets were given one as a prize. We are grateful to the Heritage Society for donating half the proceeds to the Trust. We now also have a postcard of the property for sale.

The high winds in December brought down one of the large conifers in the car park, but fortunately no damage was caused. Part of an old wall and some bottles and other artefacts were exposed by the root plate. After consultation with the Trust's Head of Archaeology, these were photographed in situ before the root plate was repositioned.

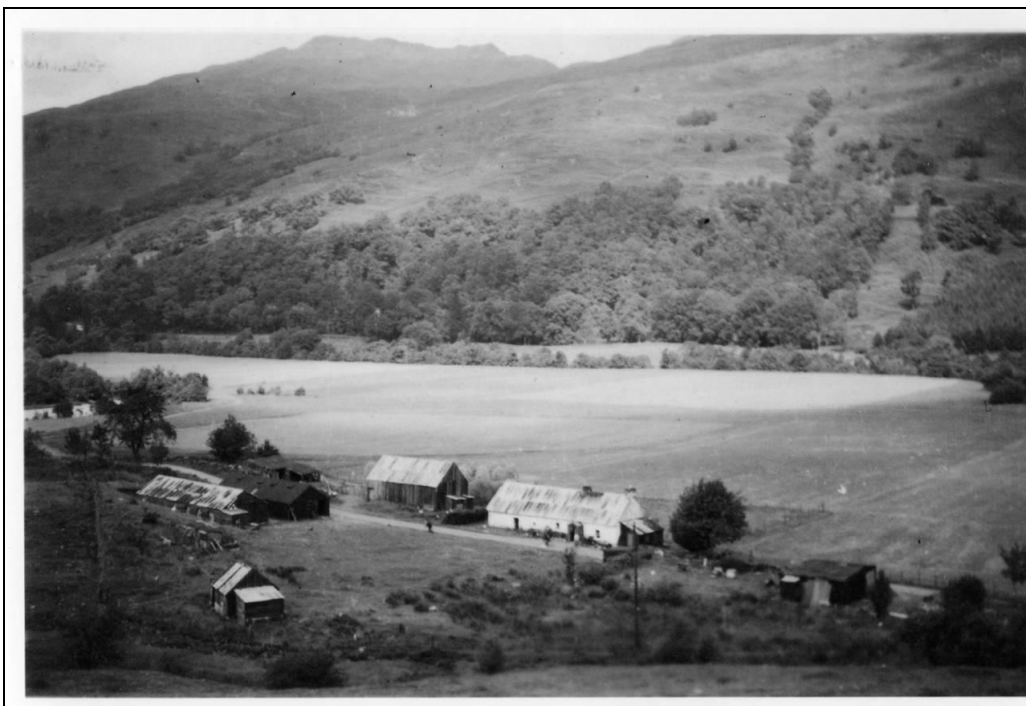


Pre-Season Meeting

Our pre-season meeting was held on Wednesday 20th of April and Jill Harden was our speaker. Jill is an Archaeologist who has recently reviewed all the information held on Moirlanich by the Trust at the Killin and the Edinburgh offices and put it together into a fascinating report which includes many old maps and photographs of the area. The photos were displayed in the digital photo frame kindly loaned by Gina and Willie Angus for use in the Display Hut. Jill's research revealed the development of Moirlanich from a fermtoun of 7 buildings on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1745-1755) to Wester and Easter Moirlanich on Stobie's plan in 1783 and then only Easter Moirlanich by 1895. The development from then until 1959 was shown in detail by a series of photographs, including some Valentine's postcards, where the ruins of the second longhouse could be seen, as well as the array of outhouses, bothies and stables.

After the meeting there was time to chat over the marvellous buffet provided by Maureen Campbell.

This photograph from the 1940s comes from the Trust's collection and clearly shows the tin roof and a fairly new implement shed, which is now our display hut.



There are two sheds opposite the hut, of which, one still stands today. The bothy in the foreground is possibly that used by Tom Proctor. The lean-to on the gable end is still standing at this point and the porch is as we know it.

Where the toilet was is anybody's guess.

Signage



New signs were installed at the start of the season to guide visitors around and ensure the opening hours are absolutely clear.



Cadbury's Easter Egg Trail



As the weather was in our favour, we also put the old toys out to let everyone have a go with them – if anyone is an expert with gird and cleek do come and teach the rest of us.

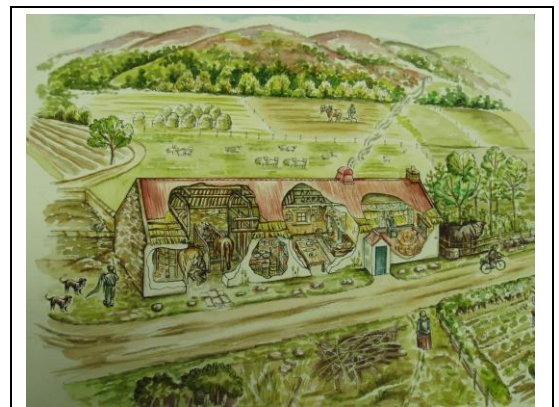
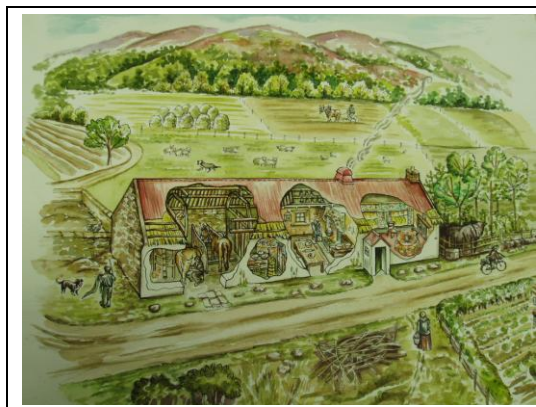
This year we joined many other NTS properties by offering a Cadbury's Easter Egg trail for children. Moirlanich doesn't have the surrounding land for an outdoor trail but our missing letters sheets took the children on their own tour of the house and Display Hut and earned each one a Cadbury's egg in return for the careful searching. The sheets help the children learn the names of the objects and provided an opportunity to discuss life in the house in previous centuries.

We had 63 visitors on the day, including many locals, so we will certainly continue with this event.

Children's Activities



The mice have multiplied, as they tend to do, and we now have a family of three for children to find in the house. We have also added a spot the difference sheet, using the illustration from the new Interpretation Board. Can you spot the 12 differences?



Conservation Work



An £80,000 project of repairs was completed this year, financed by the National Trust for Scotland's President's Fund and Historic Scotland's Annual Repair Grant.



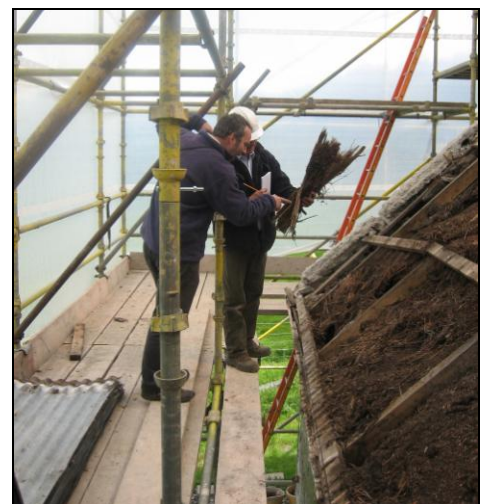
The project carried out a series of external repairs to the property, including the repair of its distinctive red corrugated iron roof, joinery repairs to the windows and doors and lime repointing and limewashing the exterior of the building.

Whilst the protective scaffold was in place archaeological recording of the underlying original thatched roof also took place. Tim Holden from Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd provided a detailed report, analysing the roof in four sections:

South Pitch – East end; mainly turf in this section, with some bracken over the top and a few patches of oat straw. North Pitch – East End; turf with some bracken. South Pitch – West end; rye and wheat straw laid over the turf. North Pitch – West end; a base layer of turf, laid face down on the cabers with a compact layer of rush on top. Over this were layers of rye straw and then layers of wheat straw containing crooks, suggesting the crook and caber technique was used. This used 3-4cm long forked pegs pushed in horizontally to support narrow cabers running parallel to the roof. Cabers like this can be seen in the old postcards from the early 20th Century.



There was clearly a split in the early styles of thatching, with bracken and oat thatch over the house and rush over the byre. Interestingly, at Lochearnhead, the combination of bracken and oat thatch was also found in another 19th Century dwelling, so it is possible that the same thatcher worked on both properties, with the byre being thatched by the tenants, using the inferior, but locally available rush. In the 20th Century a uniform surface of rye and then wheat straw was used, with crooks and cabers to hold it down. This would have needed replacing after around 20 years, but by then, tin was cheap and easily available and the remaining thatch would have been raked down to form an insulating layer underneath.





Once the scaffolding was removed, revealing the house in all its glory, the new Interpretation Panel was put in place.

The panel includes an artist's interpretation of the longhouse as a family home, with surrounding farm, to help visitors imagine daily life and hopefully encourage those tourists who miss our opening hours into making a return visit.

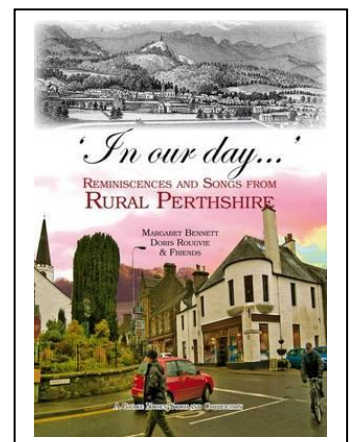
The work of course is not complete. There will be ongoing monitoring of cracks in the kitchen wall to determine whether these are getting any larger and repairs are required to the front facing section of the best room wall.



Events

Margaret Bennett

In August, a capacity audience at Lynedoch enjoyed an evening with Margaret Bennett, the acclaimed storyteller, author, ethnologist and musician. Margaret provided a fascinating, entertaining and educational evening, quoting from 'In Our Day', her recently published book of Perthshire memories, including some of life at Moirlanich, and singing some of the songs from the accompanying CD. Recollections included those of Pat McNab, who sadly passed away earlier this year at the age of 98. Pat actually lived in the Longhouse in 1928 and his son wrote a song about his experiences, which Margaret played.



The book 'In Our Day' is available from our office at Lynedoch for £10.00 and Margaret has kindly agreed to donate part of the proceeds from these sales to Moirlanich Longhouse.



We also have copies of her CD "Take the Road to Aberfeldy" in which Margaret Bennett joins with friends from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama (RSAMD) and Aberfeldy District Gaelic Choir for this lovely CD of Scots and Gaelic song. They are accompanied by Seylan Baxter, Cheyenne Brown, Heather Downie, Ruairidh MacMillan and Stuart Peters. Proceeds go to the Bethesda Hospice and to the promotion of traditional music, as well to the upkeep of Moirlanich Longhouse. The CD is £10.00.

Doors Open Days



We opened the building as part of the Doors Open Days on the 17th and 18th of September, attracting 46 visitors over the weekend, including a couple from Australia and one of our Ben Lawers volunteers, Gwen Raes, who took this photograph.

The Glasgow Paranormal Investigators

A team of investigators set up a range of recording equipment overnight in the Longhouse to gather any evidence for paranormal activity – they have promised to return in the summer to reveal their findings.

The Old Mill

The closure of the Breadalbane Heritage Centre left many display items homeless. The Killin Heritage Society has generously lent three items for display at Moirlanich – a spinning wheel, a wool winder and a butter churn, all of which have come from homes locally. We would like to display the wheel and the winder alongside the clothing and would welcome any advice on interpretation of the items and the history of local home industry. As far as we know a spinning wheel was a common sight in homes along the north side of Loch Tay for the production of yarn.



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. It has been a challenging year, with the ongoing works and everyone has coped admirably.

At the start of this season we welcomed Don and Alicja Fraser and Tim Frost to our volunteer rota and said goodbye to Anna and David Robertson. We must give a special mention to Don and Alicja as they have been responsible this year for keeping the garden around Moirlanich under control and they have done an excellent job.

At the end of the season, Beryl Maclean also said goodbye to us – Beryl has volunteered at the property since 1998, giving us an impressive 13 years of support.

If you know anyone who would be interested in volunteering at Moirlanich Longhouse, do put them in touch with us at the Lynedoch office – the property is open for 46 days in the year, requiring 2 volunteers for each three-hour slot, so it is a case of the more, the merrier. Once a season is completed, volunteers receive an NTS Volunteer Card, providing free entry to all NTS properties and 20% discount in all NTS shops.



the National Trust
for Scotland
a place for everyone

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 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 Longhouse and contribute directly to the management work at the property or online at www.nts.org.uk