

ALPS update for Management Group 2nd May 2011

- Work on the Cruary-Heritage Centre path has begun with good progress made. It is anticipated that this first path will be largely complete by the end of the first week in May. The final section is being delayed until the 5th May as a 'Watching Brief' (a condition of planning) is required, and an archaeologist needs to be present to supervise trench digging. On completion of this path, attention will focus on opening up drainage of the beechwood path.
- A new planning application and Scheduled Monument Consent have been applied for the Clachan path. It is hoped that this will be granted during the three month period that the contractors will initially be on site.
- The deadline for all tenders related to Clachan Church work was the 2nd May. There were fourteen initial notes of interest with five going to a full tender. Consideration of these quotes will be done at the next Management Group meeting in June. A maternity roost bat survey has been scheduled for May. A bat license will be required before works can begin on Clachan. After discussions on the relative merits of various heating systems, Bill Hall made a return visit to Clachan accompanied by Alistair McCowan and Sam Bridgewater, and a new plan for an air source heat pump has been submitted to David Somerville, with the proposed placement of the units re-positioned in front of the gallery. This appears to be feasible, cost-effective, efficient and would remove most of the aesthetic objections to this heating system.
- Work has continued on Smiddy Wood with the fencing phase of the work nearing completion, and tree planting beginning of the north-eastern corner.
- The first stage of the interpretive planning process began on the 4th and 5th April with Verity Walker and Steve Wiseman holding an initial focus group meeting, with subsequent 'drop-in' sessions for the community. A draft structure for the plan has been prepared for comment. This process is generally acknowledged as being an uncomfortable one, but has generated healthy debate as to what is and isn't required/appropriate in Applecross. The planning phase will continue on the 20th May with three dedicated discussions planned on 'themes' and 'messages' in the Community Hall (10am-12noon; 3pm-5pm; 7pm-9pm), with all welcome to participate in whatever sessions they are able to attend. It is hoped that this event will broaden out the consultation process.
- Jeff Walker from the Highland Council has continued to lead work on the restoration of the bealach dykes (phase 1). Excellent progress has been made. Potential future work extending this programme of restoration (funding required) will be discussed with him on Monday 4th May.
- Tender specifications have been finalized and prepared by Martin Wildgoose for the limekiln and securing the northernmost hebridean barn which is in a perilous state of repair. This contract opportunity has been advertised in the WHFP and in the May edition of An Carranach.
- Counterpart funding has now been fully approved by ERDF and the first two claims (capital and revenue projects) have been submitted.
- A report on the Archaeological Trail has been received from the path builder Bob Brown, and a second opinion subsequently sought from George Mundell on the 27th April who is contracted to undertake the paths around the bay area. Both shared the opinion that only nominal work (some

step building/snedding/vegetation management/waymarking of lines) is required, with a construction of a pitched stone ford (or bridge) over the burn immediately to the south of Langwell, and a stile. The cost of the proposed works is about £5,000

- Despite advertisement of the contract opportunity locally, in the WHFP and via the Highland Branch of the Institute of Archaeologists, only one tender was received for coordinating the Archaeological Training project. This was from Cathy Dagg who has specialist knowledge of the archaeology of the peninsula and who has worked successfully with the Archaeological Society in the past.
- A Gaelic version of the ALPS website is now live (<http://gd.visit-applecross.org/index.asp>)
- A programme of events/speakers for the Bardic school has been finalized and a website launched (www.sgoilbhardachd.co.uk). Press releases and adverts for the course have been submitted to almost all local and national newspapers and the drive is now on to ensure attendance of the ca. 35-40 people required to make the event a success.
- A wildfood walk event with Miles Irving (author of the Forager Handbook) was held on the 23rd April with 27 people attending.
- A weekend workshop on willow weaving was held on the 16th and 17th April, led by Jane Wilkinson. Ten people attended this event.
- A First Aid course has been organised for the 30th April (Training programme). Ten people have booked into this one-day course.

Heritage Centre Update (29th April 2011)

General snippets

- The major developments at the Heritage Centre since the last update have been structural as Alan Cross has installed new insulation and plaster boarding in the shop area and the reading room, and partitioned off an office for the curator. With a lick of paint, new shop shelving installed and new bookcases in the reading room, things are looking brighter. John McKeown is kindly helping out with the new computers which should be up and running presently. The Heritage Centre opened for business again in 22nd April.
- The curator has helped out a little with the **Bardic School** in terms of persuading BBC Alba to come and report on the upcoming event on both their daily radio news programme 'Aithris na Maidne' and their TV news 'An Là'. BBC Alba will be sending a reporter and cameraman to the Bardic School on 29th June for further coverage. He was also involved in a story on the imminent works at, and importance of, Clachan Church while representing Applecross Trust and the Historical Society.

Placenames Project

- Work continues on collating data from OS maps and name books. There is also the process of trying to match some of the lesser-known names from Kenneth MacRae's notes (in the Heritage Centre archives) with their locations. A call for help will go out in the next AHS newsletter so anyone with any names or anecdotes ... get in touch.

Graveyard Mapping Project

- This project has moved forward as the curator has been visiting the Highland Council Service Point in Lochcarron to study the Register of Lairs and the Register of interments for Clachan Church. Highland Council TEC services have also kindly provided a copy of their graveyard map. The curator has also had instructive chats with Sandy Stephens of the Hallin Cemetery project in South Uist. The Paper recording forms have been compiled which will allow the Historical Society to cover as many bases as possible with the survey process – i.e. not just the information on the gravestones and locations, but the conditions and materials of the stones, any symbols which appear, etc., so that we can build up as comprehensive a picture as possible. Shortly, a call for volunteers to help with the recording process will go out – then training can be given on recording techniques, a "Do/Don't" list, and Health and Safety information when dealing with locations where stones may be unstable.

Spout Well

- A couple of new snippets of information about the spout well area have come to light since the last update; one in an early 20th century song by the Applecross Bard John MacKenzie, and one courtesy of the late, much-missed Roddy MacRae of Milltown who remembered stories of a pre-'Improvement' smiddy building in the area of Maelruba's Cell. Sam Bridgewater and Gordon Cameron helped archaeologist Cathy Dagg to mark out the boundary of the Cell to protect it during upcoming path works. The next step will be to feed information appropriately into the ongoing interpretation plan.

Digitisation Project

- The curator has been in touch with a number of similar sized organisations in Scotland, Canada and Belgium who are using the collection management system we intend to install. Fact-finding trips to Greenock and Edinburgh looked at similar CMSs but the costs were too prohibitive. The open source community has been supportive of our plan.
- Now that the dust has settled (literally) in the reading room, we have been able to unwrap the scanner and printer so we look forward to pushing this project on in the weeks ahead.