



Kinloch Castle

Friends Association

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The world is still working its way through this seemingly never ending Covid-19 pandemic but we in the UK are hopeful that with the vaccination programme now working well, we will soon be able to open up more and more into a social life again. So much has changed and not all for the worse. We have got increasingly used to some ways of communicating that we may have shunned earlier.

The Working Group has been unremitting in trying to find a secure future for Kinloch Castle. We apologise if we have not kept you as informed as you would like – it has been a surprisingly busy time and we are just a team of volunteers! Suffice it to say, work has been ongoing behind the scenes and there may be a chink of light ahead!

1. **AGM 12 June 2021 at 12 noon.** When we set the date and time for this last year, little did we think we would still need to be using Zoom for the meeting. The direct link to this meeting will be sent out nearer the time. I suspect that most people who would wish to join the meeting will have already downloaded Zoom but the link will be sent a couple of days before the meeting via MailChimp and will give you direct access to the Zoom meeting. Please let me know in advance if you have any agenda items you wish to be added.
2. **Webinars.** Many of you have joined our very successful series of webinars culminating for this season in the ‘big one’ on 17th May. More of this one later. For all, we averaged over 50 people joining each from all over the world, including Argentina, Canada, Austria, Switzerland, and Germany as well as all over the UK. Really amazing and one of the benefits of online events! Our grateful thanks to Iain McLachlan for his photographs of the castle, to

Professor Josephine Pemberton and Ali Morris for their masterly exposition on the Rum Deer Study and to Alastair Scott on Eccentric Wealth. Gremlins (or my incompetence) affected each one, so we were unable to record the talks as we would have wished, but Alastair has agreed to give his talk again as part of the next series which will begin in September. We have an interesting group of subjects in course of planning (details and dates to be announced) and I hope you will enjoy them. All will again be free and will be bookable through Eventbrite which again is free for free events. Eventbrite also makes life far easier for me!

3. Kinloch Castle What Next? webinar 17th May 2021.

The webinar was again booked through Eventbrite, and was also advertised to all members and contacts and via social media. Ninety six people booked plus the eight speakers were all given links. The top number joining at any one time was 70, with nearly all sticking with it throughout and of these 36 who joined were already KCFA members. We hope the interest created will encourage more people to join.

We had people joining from Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Turkey, Italy and the US as well as from all over the UK. Many of these had also joined previous webinars. We were blessed with excellent speakers and no technical problems – Josephine had a short power cut on Rum but was able to join for most of the event and had no problems giving her talk.

Ewan chaired the meeting, and after a few opening words Simon Montgomery of Historic Environment Scotland set the ball rolling with a look at how the architecture of Kinloch Castle fitted into the picture. He compared it with several other buildings and brought out fresh points about how Leeming and Leeming had planned the building in the surroundings for maximum impact on arrival by sea, then with the view from the avenue of trees opening to the view of two frontages leading into a comfortable welcoming interior.

This was then ably followed by Hugh Garratt who drew attention to the quality of the work done by Leeming and Leeming within the structure and that this quality has meant that the castle has survived so far but is unlikely to survive much longer because of failures of the response of NatureScot to necessary repairs. He also drew our attention to the mixed results from the installation of the roof vents.

These have killed the dry rot, but the resultant spores were left lying on surfaces throughout.

Chris Donald of NatureScot then spoke about the importance of Rum as a National Nature Reserve, finishing with a brief castle update, mentioning the Conservation Plan. Catherine Duckworth commented in the chat that the Conservation Plan was from 2012 and the chat field started to get very busy. Hugh G asked what NatureScot was planning to do to the building? Alastair Scott asked what was the problem with KCFA's proposals? Angus Macdonald said that it was a shocking example of public sector mismanagement and that he was surprised that NatureScot hadn't been brought to answer about this. Chris Donald tried to respond by mentioning faults in KCFA asset transfer bid and that KCFA should bring that to public attention but got short shrift from Angus. CD for KCFA commented that it had been reported to members and was on our website (Mhairi Ferrier, my wonderful technical assistant then put on the links). Malcolm Younger also got involved, and was also very critical. He is also a building surveyor interested in the Highlands and Islands and has a presence on social media as Islesman.

Denis Rixson spoke about Rum as a place of historical and archaeological importance, illustrating the deer and fish traps. Lord Thurso then spoke about tourism in Scotland and the post Covid understanding that there is a need to rebalance tourism with residents' experiences. He also talked of how the pandemic having impact on flying had cleared the air (literally) over Orkney and that climate change and environment is a major factor for millennials. Tourism = maximum money from minimum disruption, and visitor spend is now perceived as more important than visitor numbers. Future visitors have strong views on the environment so being green is high up on the agenda. People are time poor and appreciate quality.

Toby Fichtner Irvine spoke about their early days creating the Gallanach Lodge on Muck and their need to extend the season. They had got Muck to 95% renewables, and had created pheasant and partridge shoots to extend the season. He also had the stalking for the cull on Rum and 90% of his guests for the stalking stayed on Rum rather than being brought over from Muck, and this was from mid August until November. However, while accommodation in the B and B was excellent, the bunkhouse was not the sort of accommodation the stalkers required. Lack of suitable accommodation is the main problem on Rum. For stalking purists there was nothing and nowhere

to beat Rum and the castle also demonstrated the sporting heritage which appealed to them. Each group was taken round the castle and he had 500 guests onto Muck and Rum each year. Bringing paying clients also needed up to 7 members of staff on Rum to support this with each client also spending £180-£200 on the mainland before getting to the islands. It offers local employment and would be wonderful to get the castle up and running – could take larger parties. His business had brought two new families onto Muck both in full employment which has the knock-on effect as the school had more children and other impacts. The shooting gives winter employment.

Kate Forbes MSP talked about repopulation of the islands as being really important and there has been discussion of an island bond to give encouragement to live and work on the islands. Other important points are climate change and environmental damage. Kate took questions at this point as she had to leave. It had been her first constituency event following her re-election. Hugh G asked that if help were needed to organise funds etc for the future would she be able to? She talked of cross-party initiatives for how to work with certain islands re green initiatives.

Josephine Pemberton, speaking from Rum, started by giving the vision of Rum possessed by the founding fathers of Rum National Nature Reserve as quoted by J Morton Boyd in 1987, listing Rum as an outdoor laboratory and demonstration area. She talked about the success of Rum for this. There were woodland trials of 14 different trial plots led by Peter Wormell, finding that growing more trees gives understory plants emerging and subsequent birds coming back in. John Love led the return of the sea eagle. The shearwaters have been regularly monitored and there have been three projects on red deer from 1971 onwards, one of which follows specific individuals from birth to death. One of the longest running studies of mammals that there has been in the world is that on Rum. She had statistics showing that Rum is on the top four of the national nature reserves in Scotland for amount of research papers published but the very top in those which are subsequently cited. The public understanding of science has been immense. During the time the castle was open there were many field courses helped by the lab in the castle. Now there is limited accommodation and no study space. There were questions about whether there may be funding from universities towards the castle accommodation but it was thought unlikely.

Comments from chat included that if NatureScot don't want the castle, then what is wrong with the KCFA proposals? It was clear that there was huge support for the castle becoming visitor accommodation and going out of NatureScot control.

The whole event was recorded and will be made available to anyone who wishes to work their way through and there has been subsequent exciting proposal from an attendee that is being put to Scottish Government and if there is any progress we will report at the AGM. As always progress will depend on political will.

4. Subscriptions In accordance with the decisions made at the AGM last year, the annual subscriptions have increased slightly to £15.00 p.a. for an individual and £25.00 p.a. for a family subscription. Please consider setting up a standing order if possible as this makes things easier for both yourself and the treasurer.

5. Fundraising KCFA has been run on a tight budget with very little expenses being claimed by the team. Thankfully working online has reduced costs but there are still many costs we have to find, such as professional costs. We have been very fortunate in that these have been kept to the minimum and we have received excellent support and advice. But the time is fast approaching when we will need to raise considerable sums of money if the restoration of the castle is to be achieved. Please consider how much you can give to the cause. There are many ways in which you can help that places little strain on your pocket but these tend not to raise great sums. But as the advert says, every little helps. Please register with Easyfundraising.com for when you are buying online. This gives a percentage from a whole host of online suppliers to KCFA funds at no extra cost to yourself. We have also recently registered with Ziffit.com. This is a system whereby you can sell books, CD's DVD's and computer games and raise money for KCFA. Recycle4charity takes used computer cartridges. We will be setting up a new Crowdfunding scheme shortly.

6. **Golden Myth** Trudi Clark, who was the Ranger on Rum until last year, has produced a delightful drawing of Golden Myth, one of Sir George Bullough's racehorses. She is selling prints (with half the proceeds of each coming to KCFA) for £20.00 for the A4 size and £60.00 for A3 size. Each comes beautifully wrapped and packaged and can be bought through her [Etsy shop online](#).



7. **Topotheque.** At last year's AGM Thomas Krebs spoke about the Topotheque projects which are now setting up all over Europe. This is a series of projects which relate photographs and other documents to Google mapping. As archivist for the Grandhotel Giessbach, a superb Belle Epoque hotel in Switzerland with Bullough family connections, Thomas has set up the [topotheque](#) for the Giessbach (follow this link to see the Giessbach topotheque as an example). At his suggestion we have been working on one for [Kinloch Castle and the Isle of Rum](#). This means that we can link together specific places on the map with particular photographs. Follow the link to check it out. This is the very first topotheque for the UK – there are many others throughout Europe but we have a first here. It has gone live on the 29th May 2021 and if people have suitable photographs, postcards or documents etc we would be delighted to add them. Those on the topotheque so far are just a start.

8. **Work party 2021** I have been asked several times about the possibility of this and have now made a booking for the 2nd weekend in October ie from 8th through to 11th. Calmac is still operating on the summer timetable so no Thursday ferry, Friday ferry leaves at 12.35 and the return ferry on Monday arrives Mallaig at 18.00. There is a new manager now, Alex Mumford who is from one of the new houses on Rum. I have booked the entire bunkhouse and opened booking first to members of our main team who have taken the two pods and the current bunkhouse spaces. Rum is very short of accommodation as we know, and there is no space at all that weekend with Fliss. As

current Covid regulations stand the bunkhouse is open for 8 from three households rather than the more usual 20 which has impacted on our booking, but things may change before October. If you want to book, please contact me, Catherine Duckworth, as soon as possible to go on the waiting list which will later be taken in date order of receipt of deposit. Please do not send a deposit until I can confirm that you can book.

9. **Contacts:** Hon Secretary Catherine Duckworth 1 Mitton Road, Whalley, Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9RX kcfasec@gmail.com
01254 823323 07946 736344
Hon Treasurer Jackie Roberts, 13 Corrie Drive, BOLTON, BL4 8RG. Jr.corrie@gmail.com 0161 794 5096

Website : www.kinlochcastlefriends.org

Bank account: Sort code 05-09-44 Acc no. 3577795