



ATHOLL ESTATES

Issue 7

Summer 2006

An exciting start to the summer lies ahead of us. On May the 27th there is a very special Atholl Highlander's parade when new colours are to be presented. The gathering will take place on the Sunday, as usual, and the following Tuesday the estate is having its second open day. In June the castle will host a food festival for the first time, where we hope to focus on some fine local and Scottish produce, with Atholl Glens meat being a major feature.

In January we welcomed Melanie Hoskin to the estate as the marketing manager. She has already started to help pull together departmental marketing and co-ordinate the various different activities we offer. In June David Greer will join us as the rural manager. Both jobs are a

result of the management restructuring that came out of the consultant's report that Frontline completed last year.

We will be sorry to see Rosalind leave us as Caravan Park Manager, although we are enormously grateful to her continuing in the role until we finally manage to appoint a replacement and we hope that she will continue to contribute to the running of the Park.

Finally I would like to say what a very happy day Jamie and I had when our daughter Jane married Alex Bonsor on the 1st April. The enthusiastic help we received was wonderful. The highly efficient castle team, Prestige Sodexo's catering, the flower arranging team, the Atholl Highlanders, the atmosphere in the church and the welcome outside, not to mention the minister's car all made it a day way beyond our expectations.

Sarah Troughton

Atholl Estates Open Day 2006 30th May

Following the huge success of the inaugural Atholl Estates Open Day in 2004, it has been decided to repeat the venture this year, and the date has been set for Tuesday 30th May. The event is open to all, with free entry and parking, and is being publicised to schools in Perth, Dundee and Fife.



Visitors enjoying a Farm Tour

One of the most popular activities at the previous Open Day was tractor and trailer rides around the farm. This year, the tours will be expanded to take in not only fields of ponies, cattle

and sheep, but also part of the Horse Trials cross-country course, where the course builder will be hard at work constructing a new fence.

The Works department will have a game where children can build houses from kits, whilst the Game department will be offering the chance to look through the scope of a rifle. The Ranger Service will run countryside education games and visitors can plant a tree with the Forestry department. Also on site will be the Scottish Equestrian Association's mechanical horse, an ideal mount on which to try riding for the first time.

The information tent will be filled with display boards illustrating every aspect of the Estate's work and staff will be on hand to answer any questions. Every one of the various Estate departments will be contributing to making the day a success, with plenty of activities to watch and join in. We look forward to seeing you there!



A New Look for 2006!

Blair Castle International Horse Trials and Country Fair has launched a new logo for 2006, and the team are very pleased with the new, modern design.

Several other developments are in place for 2006, including the building of a third cross-country track. Blair has been awarded the running of the European Young Rider Championships for 2007, a prestigious competition that will really add to the excitement and will attract Young Riders from around 15 countries. The EYRC runs over a CCI** level course, which is being built in preparation for a trial run this year. Blair will therefore run CCI*, CCI** and CCI*** competitions concurrently, the first time this has been done in Britain.



Claire Chamberlayne and Astronave jump the Moonen Yacht

An innovation on the Sunday will be the Blair Castle Cross-Country Challenge, a race around the cross country course for human participants. Also taking place on Sunday will be the final of a new Scottish series for ridden Clydesdales, the first time Clydesdales have actually competed at Blair.

The event will also be supporting a new charity, the Equine Grass Sickness Fund. The EGSF is the only charity in the world raising funds specifically for research into grass sickness, an extremely painful and distressing disease which can strike horses, ponies or donkeys at any time and in a high proportion of cases is fatal. Blair Castle Trekking Centre has lost ponies to grass sickness in the past, so the Estate was keen to support this important charity.

The Atholl Highlanders

The original Atholl Highlanders were a regular regiment, the 77th, raised in 1777 for service in America. However, after being stationed in Ireland, the war had concluded before they embarked for America and they were disbanded in 1783.

In 1839 Lord Glenlyon, later 6th Duke, participated in a tournament at Eglinton in Ayrshire, taking with him a retinue of Athollmen. On Queen Victoria's first visit to Scotland at



Atholl Highlanders during the visit of Queen Victoria in 1844

Dunkeld in 1842 and during her stay at Blair Castle in 1844 these men provided her Guard of Honour. In recognition of this service she granted them the Queen's Colours and thus the right to bear arms. This unique grant constituted the Atholl Highlanders. The original colours, which still survive in the castle, were presented on September 4th, 1845.



The Atholl Gathering

paraded, and then competed in trials of strength and stamina was held the first week of September.

After the First World War regimental parades fell into abeyance although the pipers appeared on special occasions such as the visits to Blair of The Crown Prince of Japan in 1921 and King Feisal of Iraq in 1933 and the funeral of the 8th Duke in 1942.

In 1966 the 10th Duke decided to revive the rank and file and hold an annual parade, from small beginnings it grew to the present strength of about 100. Officers are usually local lairds. The rest of the men are recruited by invitation from the Duke, and have estate or local connections. At the parade each recruit is presented with a sprig of juniper. One of this year's recruits Sandy Crerar, says: "Having lived in Atholl virtually all my life and worked in the grounds of Blair Castle over many summers, it is a special honour to be invited to join the Atholl Highlanders. This is especially so as I will become a third generation Atholl Highlander."

Under the 7th Duke, the Highlanders provided royal visitors with a guard of honour, visited the Braemar Games and participated in the opening of the Glasgow water supply by Queen Victoria at Loch Katrine. An annual Gathering when they



Iain the 10th Duke inspects the Highlanders in the 1960s

In 1979 the revived corps received new Regimental and Queens Colours but these have now become damaged and new ones have been made. It is very appropriate that on the 40th anniversary of the revival, to be held in May the new colours will be presented to the regiment by the Duchess of Atholl. The Duke comments "As Colonel, I am intensely proud to make



The new colours being presented in 1979

the journey from South Africa to Scotland each year, to inspect the Regiment and to take the salute at the Parade. The occasion is for me a privilege; a privilege bestowed only on a few: The Dukes of Atholl."

Long Service



John the 11th Duke inspects the Highlanders

A much older recruit is C/ Sgt Jocky Crichton who was invited to join the Atholl Highlanders in 1966. Jocky is still an active member of the Highlanders having served for 40 years. He has enjoyed very much being a member and going on 'tour' at home and abroad with the Highlanders. Jocky worked at the Home Farm, Ballanloan, Blair Atholl but has now retired.

Jane Anderson

**The Parade, 27th May,
Gathering 28th May.**

Castle Opening Times: 9.30 am – 4.30 pm every day to the end of October

01796 481207 www.blair-castle.co.uk

www.blaircastlefunctions.co.uk www.blaircastleweddings.co.uk

Caravan Park Open every day to 30th November 2006

Big Tree Country



Diana's Grove

Two new projects that should be starting this summer within the Atholl Estate Woodlands The Big Tree Country Project in Diana's Grove and a Cattle Grazing Trial at Newtyle Hill aimed at helping the regeneration of Juniper.

The Big Tree Country Project is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Forestry Commission and aims to improve the visitor experience in the world famous stand of big trees that makes up Diana's Grove next to the Castle. Included in this work is the area of woodland that lies to the east of Hercules Garden known as Hercules Wilderness, an area of Policy Woodland dating back to the 18th century. Here we hope to create a new grove of specimen conifers to compliment Diana's Grove.

The Cattle grazing Trial at Newtyle involves the Forestry Research branch of the Forrestry Commission and is aiming to use cattle to break up the old grass sward around the juniper bushes opposite Fungarth. This is a site designated for its conservation value but needs new young juniper bushes to be established to replace the old and dying specimens. There is a lot of interest nationally in the use of cattle to create the right environmental conditions for allowing the germination of such plants. This work which involves the collaboration of the Estate with Alastair Morrison of Port of Tummel and the Forrestry Commission researchers is part of a nationwide trial looking at this subject in different woodland types.

The 30th Scottish International Patrol Jamborette

In July, some 1200 Scouts and leaders from all round the world will arrive at Blair Atholl for the 30th Scottish International Patrol Jamborette. Over the few days before the Scouts arrive, a team of leaders will transform Target Park into a village to service the camp. Scouts from 17 different countries will join Scottish scouts and they will then live and work together for two weeks.

During the camp, Scouts will have the chance to take part in a wide range of activities on site and in the surrounding area. The camp is open to visitors on the afternoon and evening of 22 July when visitors will have the opportunity to join in the international Country Fair in the afternoon and campfire in the evening.

The first Jamborette was held in America Park (now the caravan site) in 1946, and was the idea of Jack Stewart, International Commissioner for Scotland. The arrangement then, as now was that a Scottish Patrol would arrive and set up a 'double' Patrol site to allow their overseas patrol to travel to Scotland without tentage and camping equipment.

Flag break at the first Jamborette in 1946

The idea worked extremely well. The relatively small size of camp allowed more international contact, and friendships, made in camp, were encouraged to continue at a Scottish home during a short period of hospitality after the camp – which is still

Blair Castle Food Festival

A new event for 2006, Blair Castle Food Festival is set to be a delicious celebration of food and drink from the Highlands and beyond. Running on 17th and 18th June, the Festival is to be held in the Ballroom and Banvie Hall of Blair Castle, and will feature quality produce from leading producers, including Atholl Glens Organic Meat.

Trade stands will offer samples and tasters galore, as well as the opportunity to buy. The Theatre Kitchen will feature some of Scotland's best chefs in action, including Wendy Barrie, founder of The Scottish Food Guide. The Scottish Liqueur Centre will be in attendance, and their Tasting Bar will not only showcase their leading brands Bruadar and Columba Cream, but will also highlight some of the more unusual ways of serving them – in cocktails and liqueur coffees.

Atholl Estates look forward to welcoming you to this exciting new event.

Property Development Update

The site at Old Struan is now complete with landscaping and minor roadworks left to do when the weather improves. One of the units has been sold to Perthshire Housing Association under the Homestake split equity scheme, two have been kept for estate rentals and three are being sold on the open market this spring.

An estate managed 4 house project at Guay has just started using the same building design and main contractor, Alexander & Co.

Tighmhor are planning to start the Kindallachan project after A9 junction upgrades this summer. A revised design and layout for six houses along a more contemporary style has been submitted to the local authority.

An infill site for one house at Inver will be taken forward by the estate to planning and building control stage this summer. The property will be developed and retained for letting.

Finally, an infill site with planning approval at Auldclune is being sold on the open market this spring.

a very important part of the event." In this way, the Blair Atholl concept was born and has continued along



Scouts at Blair Castle in 2004

very similar lines every two years. In 1972 the Jamborette moved to its present 'Target Park' site.

Involvement with the local community is important. Since 1946, representatives of more than 50 countries have visited Blair Atholl and many leaders return regularly to the area. The locals always make us feel very welcome and grateful thanks are extended to all who support the many aspects of the Scouts' involvement locally during the Jamborette.

More information about the Jamborette can be obtained on line at www.jamborette.org.uk

New Faces



Vicky Bogan joined the pony trekking team as Centre Operator in February, taking over from Susan Laing. Vicky will take a lead in developing the trekking business while Debbie McLaughlan maintains the Centre's high standards of pony training for hill deer work.



David and Lesley Greer are joining us in June and will be living at Drummin Farmhouse, Tulliemet. David is taking up the post of Rural Manager with particular emphasis on directing our forestry, farming, let property and hill keeping operations. Lesley will be Estate Office PA following Carolyn Ferguson's retirement this spring.



Melanie Hoskin filled our new post of Marketing Manager in January and lives at Halfway House, Tulliemet. Melanie's role is to integrate and expand our tourism marketing across the Estate and take a leading role in developing new business.

Increased Castle Dining Facilities

Blair Castle is well known as a top venue for large banquets, dinners, receptions and corporate events held in the grand Ballroom but in the past it has not been able to provide for smaller banquets and private entertaining. To meet the needs of this market at an exclusive level, the State Dining Room in the heart of the castle is now to be made available for the first time.



Groups of 16 to 50 guests will be able to dine in full style in the baroque grandeur of an interior which was created in the mid-eighteenth century from the medieval Great Hall. To match the splendour of the setting, world quality catering and fine wines will provide events of the highest quality.

Between the various facilities now available, Blair Castle can host seated dinners and banquets for between 16 and 220 guests. For weddings and balls, larger numbers can be accommodated when required.

Further information is available from the castle office.

Staff Changes

Willie McLaughlan has left Fealar Estate due to ill health and has moved back into Blair Atholl.

Derek Sinclair will be joining the Works Department in the summer time after 40+ years service with Balachallan Home Farm.

Nick Page is leaving the Woods Department at the end of April and will be doing Forestry contracting work.

Vicky Greig has retired from the housekeeping team at the castle.

Charlotte Todd has retired as leader of the reception team and Ronnie Owens has succeeded her under the overall management of Head Guide Sandy McGill.

Bruce Gillespie is leaving Blair Castle Caravan Park.

Births

Rosemary (Rosie) Morough-Bernard, a new daughter for Gill and Dominic (Keeper at Glen Bruar), who arrived safely on 15th March 2006 weighing in at 6 lbs 2 oz.

Deaths

We were very sorry to hear about the deaths of Gordon Duncan (14th December 2005), piper with the Atholl Highlanders and Mr Morris Dow (27th February 2006) - Ex gamekeeper at Tulliemet and an Atholl Highlander

New/Seasonal Staff

Jim Irvine - Ranger Service; **Liz Miller** - Ranger Service; **Wilma Ladgraf** - Garden Assistant; **Lillian Lamond** the castle housekeeping team; **Ondrej Hostacky** from Slovakia has joined the castle as a guide; **Rhiann Macleod** joins the gift shop team for the summer; And we welcome all new seasonal staff (too many to name) to the guiding and reception areas of the castle and caravan park. **Mark Reid** has joined the summer grounds staff.

May 27th Atholl Highlanders Parade

Your chance to see the Annual Parade of The Atholl Highlanders with inspection by His Grace The Duke of Atholl. This year will be a very special occasion because new colours are to be presented to the Atholl Highlanders, only the 4th time in the history of the regiment that this has ever happened. Parade begins at 2.30pm.

May 28th Atholl Gathering and Highland Games

Annual Highland Games at Blair Castle. Things to see: March on by The Atholl Highlanders, traditional Highland Games events including tossing the caber, tug-of-war, etc. Trade stands and refreshments. Games start at 1.15pm.

May 30th Estate Open Day

An opportunity to come along and learn about the different departments of Atholl Estates.

June 17-18 Blair Castle Food Festival

A celebration of Highland Produce in a most appropriate setting.

June 23-25 Galloway Antiques Fair

Exhibiting furniture, china, rugs, books, prints etc. in the Ballroom and Banvie Hall

July 19 Celtic Evening

Pitlochry and Blair Atholl Pipe Band and Highland Dancers. 7.15 pm

August 16 Celtic Evening

Details as above. 7.15 pm

August 24-27 Blair Castle International Horse Trials

October 28-29 Glenfiddich Piping and Fiddling Championships

Details from Mrs. Liz Maxwell, Glenfiddich Distillery. 01698 843843

For further information contact us at (see at foot of this page).

Competition Winner



Mr Harry Robertson from Dundee Road in Perth. His caption read:

Salmon(d) was always my favourite!!!!