

Boat of Garten Community Hall

2011-12 Winter Season of Illustrated Talks

10th October, 2011: '**ALONG THE YANGTSE**'. Chris Carter

24th October, 2011: '**SCOTTISH CASTLES FROM ABOVE**'. Gary Brindle

7th November 2011: '**JUST TAKE THE CHILDREN TOO**'. Margaret Farquharson

28th November 2011: '**RIBBON OF WILDNESS**'. Peter Wright

5th December 2011: '**JOURNEY TO LADY OF THE SNOWS**'. Frank Johnstone

13th February 2012: '**RUNNING THE CORBETTS IN 70 DAYS**'. Manny Gorman

27th February 2012: '**THE HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK**'. Douglas Richardson

12th March 2012: '**THE HIMALAYAN DHAULAGIRI CIRCUIT**'. Michael Martin

See inside for details of these talks and the speakers

£5.00 adult admission

Season ticket: £30.00 (8 for the price of 6)

Under 16s free if accompanied by an adult

Includes free entry to Art Exhibition by local artists

Licensed bar selling wine by the glass and soft drinks

A fundraising activity for Boat of Garten Community Hall

www.boatofgarten.com/communityhall

Boat of Garten Community Hall is a charitable company limited by guarantee Regd in Scotland No SC267713

Scottish Charity No SCO35682. Regd Office: The Old Schoolhouse, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore, PH22 1QH



.....

“ALONG THE YANGTSE” A journey across Southern China from Hong Kong to Shanghai, with CHRIS CARTER

Monday 10th October 2011 at 7.30 pm

The journey by coach, train and boat begins and ends in two of China’s most thriving and bustling cities, Hong Kong and Shanghai, but in-between, it passes through the stunning limestone scenery of the Li River Valley near Guilin, and the amazing rice terraces near Ping An, a village which is home to one of China’s several minority population groups. It visits the Giant Panda Research Centre near Chengdu and the exquisite Buddhist rock carvings at Dazu before arriving at Chungqing for embarkation on a three day cruise through the gorges of the Yangtse and Daning Rivers to Yichang, a city just below the new Three Gorges Dam, the largest engineering project in the world.

Chris Carter is a geography graduate of Birmingham and Glasgow Universities who has given several well received talks in Boat of Garten over the past ten years. Three years ago he and his wife, Ann, travelled through Northern China when following the Silk Road from Xi’an, the ancient capital of China, to Samarkand in Central Asia, and although that proved an enjoyable and interesting trip, much of it was in the Gobi Desert and as a result did not portray an image typical of China as we usually think of it. Evidently there was a great deal more of China to see, much of it very different from the north. This talk covers a journey in 2010 which attempted to redress the balance.

“SCOTTISH CASTLES FROM ABOVE” Aerial photography and the history and tales of some of Scotland’s most famous castles, with GARY BRINDLE

Monday 24th October 2011 at 7.30pm

Scotland has been gifted with the geology for great castle building and a turbulent history which ensured the need for fortification. From the seat of a light aircraft Gary Brindle has gathered images of well-known and obscure locations, revealing the beauty, boldness and variety of designs from Dark Age Brochs, to Norman Mottes, Medieval fortresses built to control seaways, Clan strongholds, Towers of Power and Redoubts of the Rich. Many castles have a story attached, which include the Jester who saved a Clan from the fires, the hostage who fell from high battlements and sparked a Clan feud, the piper who won a bet for his chief only to collapse from his exertions, the Man of Steel and several more.

Gary Brindle

Gary’s fascination with aviation goes back to his schooldays when he would often be reprimanded for looking out of the window whenever an aircraft engine could be heard! He later developed an interest in photography, and a chance conversation in an oil support base office led to his first commission. He soon learned that aerial photography is demanding. As the person holding the camera, he has to remain calm, relaxed and confident despite the aircraft moving in three dimensions. All flights are carefully planned with attention given to the very changeable weather across Scotland. Locations are marked on detailed maps, and sketches and notes are made to ensure that the correct approaches are chosen avoiding natural hazards and military danger areas. Three digital cameras are taken on each flight, all prepared for use with different lenses. Castles are attractive subjects from the air which is sometimes the only way of gaining access for photographs. Gary’s research has unearthed some strange tales about many castles and he believes that with a total of over 3,000 in Scotland, it will be a long time before he runs out of castles to photograph.

“JUST TAKE THE CHILDREN TOO” The joys and hazards of taking children on round-the-world travel to exotic locations, with MARGARET FARQUHARSON

Monday 7th November 2011 at 7.30pm

This talk explores some of the challenges of travelling with children, whether skiing with a baby or sailing with a teenager, but it focuses in particular on three periods of sabbatical leave which allowed more extensive travel,

including one on which a 5 and an 8 year old were taken out of school for three months and the family travelled round the world together. This was a budget trip. They left with a rucksack each, a series of air tickets and some 'Lonely Planet Guides'. The planning and the benefits and risks of such a venture are considered along with the mixed reactions of schools, family and friends.

Margaret Farquharson is a retired surgeon who spoke in Boat of Garten in 2009 about her year as a voluntary health worker in Nepal in 1971. Her medical husband had also done some interesting travelling before they married and, unlike most of their friends, they saw little reason to change the style of the holidays after the children were born. A few minor compromises were essential, but basically they simply took the children too – travelling, trekking and skiing—first as toddlers, then as children and finally as teenagers.

“RIBBON OF WILDNESS” Discovering the watershed of Scotland from the Border to the north coast, with PETER WRIGHT

Monday 28th November 2011 at 7.30pm

The watershed of Scotland is the notional line of high ground from which water to the east drains to the North Sea and water to the west drains to the Atlantic Ocean or the Irish Sea. This talk is an account of a long walk, following the watershed or the 'spine of Scotland' from the Scottish Border to the north coast; one man, one journey and 1,200km of rock, mountain, bog, moor and forest! Throughout the 64 days of walking, which was undertaken mostly solo and mostly off-track, the most striking thing was the largely continuous wildness, even in some unlikely places. That wildness and the factors that contribute to it are described, leading to the conclusion that the watershed is 'the sleeping giant' of the Scottish landscape. Peter Wright has published a book entitled 'Ribbon of Wildness' which will be on sale at the talk. It is hoped that the book, together with this and other talks will help to waken the sleeping giant simply by raising awareness of the watershed and all that it has to offer. "No other journey through Scotland can give so sublime a sense of unity – a feeling of how the nation's various different landscapes link together to form a coherent whole".

Peter Wright has pursued a career in Youth Work. Allied to this he has been able to pursue a number of worthwhile interests and developments, including being co-founder of 'Youth in Trust' within the National Trust for Scotland, and being co-founder of The John Muir Award, as well as being involved in the creation of The Green Team in Edinburgh and transforming the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the Edinburgh area for which he was awarded the MBE in 2003. The common thread through all of this has been a passion for the outdoors and for promoting young people's active involvement. 'Let's make it happen' might be an apt motto for him, because that is what he has done, and he admits to getting much pleasure out of continuing to watch much of it 'happen'.

“JOURNEY TO LADY OF THE SNOWS” Climbing in New Zealand's Fiordland and one particular remote and beautiful peak, with FRANK JOHNSTONE

Monday 5th December 2011 at 7.30pm

New Zealand's Fiordland is renowned for its beautiful scenery, but for the climber it also contains some very remote and rarely climbed peaks. Ten years ago a climbing friend from New Zealand shared with Frank his project to climb one such mountain, Lady of the Snows. It had been first climbed in 1933, but he could find no record of a second ascent, even though it had been described as the highest and most attractive mountain in the area. The talk tells the story of this project, with Frank spending over three months in New Zealand on two separate visits. It describes the attempts to climb this mountain and several others, amidst the particular difficulties of Fiordland alpinism, with a focus on the marvellous wildlife and reflections on the overall experience.

Frank Johnstone is based in Boat of Garten. He has always loved the Scottish mountains, and has also climbed in the European Alps, Norway and Iran, plus two expeditions to the Himalayas. In recent times, his preference has been for long, solo backpacking trips, including following the watershed of the Pyrenees from Atlantic to Mediterranean, and two long Scottish trips while completing his first round of the Munros and then the Corbetts. While in New Zealand in the 90's, he had chance meetings with two people who became friends. One contact led to joining a group of canyoneers in the US, and several trips exploring the canyons of the south-western states. The many developments that led from the other contact are related in this talk.



“RUNNING THE CORBETTS IN 70 DAYS” Completing them all in one continuous journey without powered transport with MANNY GORMAN

Monday 13th February 2012 at 7.30pm

The Corbetts are Scottish Mountains between 2,500 and 3,000 feet in height, with at least 500 feet of ascent (from neighbouring peaks) on all sides. This talk describes Manny Gorman’s successful 2009 traverse of all 219 Corbetts in 70 days, in one continuous journey by running, cycling and sailing without any motorised transport and covering 2,400 miles and 544,000 feet of ascent. It discusses the escapism of long distance hill running while travelling through world-class scenery in every kind of weather and the searching of every human emotion. It also draws attention to the problems of exhaustion and disasters aplenty, just to keep things exciting!

Manny Gorman, from Kingussie, has been hill running and racing for nearly 30 years, competing at the highest level, mainly in Scotland, but also in England and Europe. As a member of Westerlands Cross Country Club, he also has a passion for long journeys in wild and remote places. His exploits include, in 2007, running 200+ miles around the Badenoch and Strathspey boundary – the watershed of the River Spey. Also, in 1998 he ran 450 miles in 21 days from the most northerly Munro, Ben Hope, to the most southerly Munro, Ben Lomond, taking-in 110 other Munros along the way. Bizarrely he has not finished the Munros, yet! A friend, Stuart Simpson, said of Manny: “You’re an idiot, but a truly inspirational one!”

“THE HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK: FROM LOCAL ATTRACTION TO GLOBAL PLAYER” with DOUGLAS RICHARDSON

Monday 27th February 2012 at 7.30pm

Opened in 1972, the Highland Wildlife Park originally focused exclusively on Scottish species, past and present. A few years ago, the Park’s species remit was broadened to include cold weather adapted species from other parts of the world. Although the Park still has red deer and wildcats, it now also has polar bears and Amur tigers. Whilst not ignoring its Scottish roots, the Park now looks further afield. Staff at the Park coordinate a number of European Zoo Association breeding programmes and the Park now has one of the highest percentages of threatened species in its care compared to any other animal collection in the British Isles. Novel enclosure design is an area where the Park is pushing the zoological envelope, and its polar bear enclosure is now seen internationally as the way forward from both an animal welfare and a financial perspective.

Douglas Richardson is currently the Animal Collection Manager at the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland’s Highland Wildlife Park near Kincaig. He has been working in zoos around the world since 1975, with much of his career focused on the husbandry of carnivores (including wildcats), population management and novel enclosure design. Prior to moving back to Scotland, Douglas held senior positions in zoological institutions in Singapore, British Columbia, Italy and London, and has consulted on a range of conservation projects throughout South-east Asia and in Russia, India and Tunisia. He has lectured at a number of major UK and Singaporean universities and is an author of multiple journal articles and a book on the 8 largest species of wild cat.

“THE DHAULAGIRI CIRCUIT AND DHAMPUS PEAK” A less well-known Himalayan trek and climb in an area adjacent to the Annapurnas, with MIKE MARTIN

Monday 12th March 2012 at 7.30pm

This talk gives an account of an expedition to a little visited part of Nepal, where, in perfect weather, Dhaulagiri, the seventh highest mountain in the world, was circumnavigated and the 6,000 metre Dhampus Peak was climbed along the way. The early part of the trek passed through remote farming villages where the harvest of rice and corn was in full swing; then through jungle with the sound of monkeys in the canopy. As the trek continued to gain altitude it moved into more arid and glaciated mountain terrain with stunning views in every direction. The highlight was crossing the 5,000 metre French pass into the remote Hidden Valley together with the group’s attempt at Dhampus Peak. The final days of the trek gave spectacular views of the Annapurnas as the group descended into Jomson on the Annapurna Circuit before catching the short flights to Pokhara and Kathmandu. While not involving technical climbing, this expedition required stamina and commitment on some tough trekking at altitude, with temperatures ranging from +20C to -20C in 24 hours, all adding up to a superb trip in a wonderful part of the world.

.....

Mike Martin loves the great outdoors and has had the good fortune to visit many stunning places – ski touring in Norway and Iceland, trekking and climbing in the Karakoram, Bolivia, Mongolia and Nepal in addition to skiing and climbing in Canada, the Alps and Scotland. This all provides an invigorating contrast to his working life in the Health Directorate at the Scottish Government as Director of the Joint Improvement Team, which strives to ensure that health boards and councils work well together. Now virtually fully retired and a full-time resident in Boat of Garten, his work-life balance has shifted from work to travel and adventure – most recently including an extended trip to Nepal and India with his wife Trice, with more planned for 2012.

