

What's On Abriachan Library

The second Sunday of the month from 11.00 am or by arrangement - phone 861278. We have a good selection of fiction and non-fiction for all ages and interests.

Associated with the library is the Abriachan Book Group. We meet on a Friday evening every 5 or 6 weeks. This is a great opportunity to read books you may never have considered reading and then to join in a friendly and lively discussion. Recent titles have included "The People's Act of Love", "Friends, Lovers and Chocolate" and we are currently reading "Arthur and George". If you would like to join phone 861278

Membership

Annual subscriptions are now due. All members will shortly be sent a new membership form with details of the new subscription rates as well as a form for setting up a standing order.

Fire Wood

Firewood is now available at £40.00 per cubic metre and a delivery charge of £5.00 for residents in Abriachan. For deliveries outwith the Abriachan area a delivery charge will be based on mileage.

To order a load phone 861315



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Girls on the Move

The Abriachan Forest Trust, supported by funding from an award allocated by the councillors from Aird and Loch Ness, is running a project - "Girls on the move".

The aim is to introduce a wide range of physical activities to Primary 7 girls and to encourage them to include some form of exercise in their daily lives.

The project was launched on Wednesday 22nd April in Abriachan by Helen Carmichael and Margaret Davidson, two of the local councillors who are supporting "Girls on the Move".

Throughout the summer term, girls from Kilchuimen, Glenurquhart and Cannich Bridge Primary schools will have the opportunity to try out various activities including mountain biking, Nordic walking, and orienteering.

The funding was used to buy Nordic walking poles, specialist waterproof clothing, to pay for instructors and, crucially, to cover transport costs.

An added benefit is that girls from small rural schools are having the opportunity to meet girls who will attend the same secondary school.



Two of the girls with Margaret Davidson and Helen Carmichael - Helen is modelling some of the new equipment.



Lee is teaching the girls some mountain biking skills to prepare them for the trails.

On the day of the launch the girls had many positive female role models to aspire to - councillors, head teachers and - Lee Craigie the mountain bike leader is the Scottish Cross Country Mountain biking champion.

BIODIVERSITY ISSUE

BLACK GROUSE

Although still widespread in Scotland, it is estimated that the UK range of the black grouse declined by 28 per cent in the two decades to 1990, and that the population size declined by 74 per cent between 1990 and 1996. Whereas the declines might not have been so large in Scotland as elsewhere in the UK, they nevertheless give cause for concern for this bird that lives on the woodland/moorland edge.

The good news is that our black grouse population is showing signs of a recovery. This is a very critical time of the year for black grouse and so far the conditions have been favourable - a dry and fairly warm spring. Their breeding success depends on lack of human disturbance of their nesting areas so we need your help. **Could we appeal to all dog owners to keep their dogs on the lead when walking on the hill ground.**

Local dog owners have a critical role to play in setting a good example. There are many areas in the woods where your dogs can run freely so we would be very grateful if you would help us to help our black grouse.



Scotland's moorland is one of the most distinctive habitats in Europe. The plant and animal species found in heather moorland are remarkably diverse, with representatives from arctic, boreal, alpine, continental and Mediterranean communities.

As you may remember in the summer of 2007 we had a fire which swept through the hill ground around the sheiling. The recolonisation of the ground started with bryophytes - polytrichum juniperinum.



The Ling heather and cross-leaved heath are making a good recovery. Other early colonists include the purple moor grass, deer grass and the polypody fern. After the fire, the burnt area was replanted and in spite of the heavy grazing by deer the beat up has been successful.



Filaments of mycorrhizal fungi associated with the roots of a pine tree.

Mycorrhizae literally means fungus-root and is a symbiotic relationship between plant roots and certain specialized soil fungi. All known tree species form this relationship with fungi. The fungus sends out a microscopic network of filaments which can collect water and dissolve nutrients. The tree provides the fungi with complex sugars and starches which they can not make. Trees with mycorrhizae are healthier and more robust; they have more resistance to disease and insect attack and are more tolerant to drought. Intense burning of moorland damages the mycorrhizal fungi that pines partly depend on for successful growth. Without a healthy mycorrhizal community, pine seedlings struggle to become established.

LICHENS

The fire completely destroyed the lichen communities living on the ground and on the rocks in the affected area. It is estimated that it will take 20 years for the recovery of the lichen population and to restore the diversity of species.

MAMMAL SURVEY

RED SQUIRREL

There is evidence that red squirrel are increasing their range and feeding remains have been found for the first time in areas of



conifers along the new extraction road.

OTTERS

Droppings or spraints have been found along the shores of Loch Laide indicating that otters are active in this area. Since we restored the flow of water from the feeder burn into Loch Laide the fish population has increased which has attracted otters to the loch.



Spraints are usually deposited on prominent rocks. We can conclude that this is an otter spraint because of the presence of fish bones.

BADGERS

Can you remember the snow we had at the beginning of the year? It was a good time to assess our mammal population by following their tracks and to see the extent of their territory. It is interesting to see that after an absence of a few years, badgers have made a comeback and are penetrating further up the hill into the woods above the Corryfoyness road.

BATS

This is the time of year when bats come out of hibernation. Bats appreciate a warm dry environment for roosting. A bat survey was conducted in autumn it appears that some pipistrelle bats have adopted the Forest School as a roost site. The less common Daubenton bats can be seen feeding on Loch Laide.



Pipistrelle bat