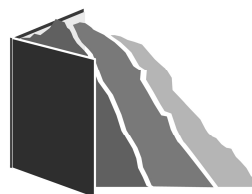




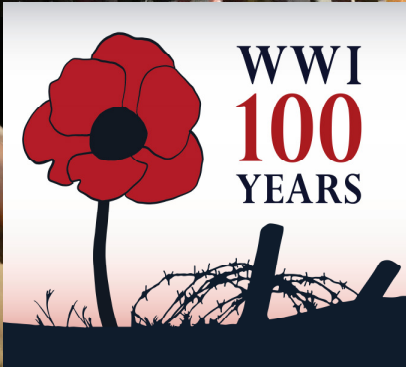
WORLD WAR ONE

1914 - 1918

A project to understand the impact of
World War One on the area of
South Lochaber.



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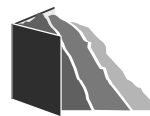
WORLD WAR ONE

1914 - 1918

A project to understand the impact of
World War One on the area of
South Lochaber.



Undertaken by pupils from Ardnamurchan High School and Kinlochleven High School
with support from Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival and funding from
the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2018



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Introduction

As we approached the centenary of the end of what became known as The Great War, people and organisations throughout the country were seeking ways to acknowledge the event, to ensure younger generations understood its lasting significance, and to give thanks for the sacrifice made by so many. Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival was no different, and having introduced the concept of a large schools project as part of our biennial activities ahead of the previous Festival, it seemed only right that we should attempt to undertake something similar in recognition of the end of WW1.

Our first project in 2016 had helped celebrate 400 years since the death of Shakespeare, through the writing and filming of short plays. The work on that occasion was undertaken by Ardnamurchan High School (Three Lochs host school) and had been a huge success. The work by pupils was outstanding, their enthusiasm and commitment to the project showed just how much they enjoyed it, the cross-curricular benefits were greatly appreciated by teaching staff, and the community turnout to see the results was fantastic. The project has had a lasting impact for the participants, and provided a route to appreciation of the Bard and his works, by some who previously thought him boring, fusty and irrelevant. If we have encouraged an appreciation of historical works in just one student, the project was worthwhile.

But what to undertake this time around? It quickly became apparent to the Festival committee that we are 'fortunate', if that is an appropriate term, in having in the area, a number of significant

A plan developed to undertake research into the lasting impact of World War One on our area, to find the stories both large and small, and to attempt to convey to those at school today, the issues faced by the people involved. Living in a small rural community, there are families among us whose ancestors lived in the same villages, and sometimes the same homes, during the period. This gave us a rare opportunity to trace stories with direct relevance to people known to us, within our community, something which would have been virtually impossible to achieve for a town or city community.

In line with Three Lochs ambitions to grow within Locharber, and being aware of a similar project completed in 2016 in Kinlochleven, we decided to invite pupils from Kinlochleven High School to participate, and we hope this collaboration will continue. Kinlochleven High School has an active drama club and regularly undertake performances. As part of the 2016 community project, which centred around a WW1 Prisoner of War camp in Kinlochleven, the club performed a short play “The History Lesson”, which formed part of a weekend of activities in the August. We wanted to benefit from sharing their work, and also to enable them to undertake more work on other WW1 stories.

What we had in mind was ambitious, and certainly beyond the financial means of Three Lochs Festival, so funding was sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund, via their ‘First World War: then and now’ programme, which we secured early in 2018.

Initial investigations were undertaken by a team of two local historical researchers, Riona and Alasdair Whyte, and their findings

find out more, and further investigate the parts of our local history which particularly interested them.

As part of their English curriculum, we invited pupils to work in small groups and write short plays inspired by the stories they had been researching. Three were to be chosen from Ardnamurchan, which would be developed and turned into productions to be performed as part of 'An Evening of Music and Drama', to be staged on Friday 21st September, forming part of the main Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival 2018. A further two plays would come from Kinlochleven, and all pupils would work together to finalise the Friday night production, an active collaboration not previously attempted between the two schools.

The results were astounding. In Ardnamurchan, the project occupied nearly all English lessons and some History lessons during the final term, but the vast majority of work was done outside of school, at home or during supervised youth club sessions.

Any worries we might have had about the pupils not being interested, or not feeling connected to the timeframe were quickly laid to rest, as the teaching staff enthused about the bits of memorabilia brought into school, the family stories and local anecdotes being regaled by pupils, and taking over all sorts of activities in school. As the high school pupils went away for the summer holidays, with promises to keep asking, looking, talking and otherwise researching, the team were presented with over fifty plays for consideration!

stories with the best potential for creating impactful productions. By the time the pupils returned in August a selection had been made and Ilona Munro of Bright Productions and Dramafish (located in Kinlochleven) began the work of making the plays stageable.

A period of frantic activity followed, during which costumes were sewn and borrowed, lines were learned, music rehearsed, posters printed and circulated and press articles written. Bear in mind that alongside all of this, the Three Lochs committee were also busy with the final stages of preparation for the main Festival activities. This included a morning of curriculum-related and age-specific workshops for all local cluster primary school children, involving the transportation of around 300 pupils to Ardnamurchan to join in activities with four authors, and a packed programme of workshops, talks, presentations and discussions open to the general public on Saturday. It is hardly surprising that on the Tuesday night preceding the event, at our last preparatory meeting, tempers were a little frayed! The fact that in spite of the vast amount of work involved and the huge amount of pressure it placed upon our team of volunteers, largely working outside of and in addition to their day time work duties, they were able to remain focused on the job in hand and on speaking terms, is a testament to their professionalism and general brilliance! The resounding motivator was “we can’t let the kids down, after all the hard work they’ve put in”.

Friday 21st September 2018 arrived and our Evening of Music and Drama was a resounding success. The auditorium was filled by friends, family and neighbours wanting to see the results of the

an evocative rendition of a piece of pipe music written by a local musician at the time of the Great War; poetry was recited, letters stored for years in attics were read, photographs were shown and research work was on display to be enjoyed during the interval. The words ‘incredible’ and ‘astounding’ were heard over and over and over again.

We did not film or record the show, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Those fortunate enough to have seen it won’t forget it in a hurry, and the young people involved in its production are sure to retain fond memories of the project well into adulthood. The most important thing is that they now understand the sorts of hardships their grandparents and great-grandparents had to endure; what the local War Memorial is really all about, and why we stop for two minutes silence on 11th November every year.

Here we present a selection of materials collected by the project, which we hope will provide a lasting record of just some of the WW1 stories of South Lochaber.

Joanne Matheson

Chair - Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival

November 2018

*Pages 11 and 12 show the programme
from our evening of drama, music and
poetry*



With special thanks to

Veronique Walraven, Project Manger

Ilona Munro, Bright Productions Director

Joanne Matheson, Festival Chair

Debbie White, AHS/Three Lochs Co-ordinator

Riona and Alastair Whyte, Historical Researchers

Donald McIsaac, Smirisary Guide

Michael Campbell, Food Advisor

Colm O’Rua, Display

Emma Lamont, Powerpoint

Mya Carmichael, Sound

Emma Mellis, Isabella Sutherland, Make Up

Katie McGillivray, Ishbel Macintyre, Wardrobe Mistresses

Ellen Munro, Callum McIntyre, Stage Managers



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BRIGHT
PRODUCTIONS

Heritage Lottery Fund

heritage
lottery fund

World War One and the West Highlands

A Celebratory Evening of Drama, Poetry and
Music by Ardnamurchan and Kinlochleven
High Schools



CHAPTER ONE

Letters

Hear From You Soon by Maisie Gregg

"Hear from you soon" was the first play we chose from over 50 that were written by the S2 and S3 pupils from Ardnamurchan High School. In this beautifully written short play Maisie Gregg has managed to give us an insight into what life was like in the trenches, and what life was like for those left behind in the Highlands. With simple means she has created an incredibly poignant play which very cleverly gave the audience a sense of the passing of time. Maisie has loosely based her play on her great-great-uncle who was killed in action just a couple of days before the end of war, after fighting for four years. (*Not all of the stage directions were included in the show, but the plays are presented here as originally written.*)

The stage is set up so that on stage left there is a desk with paper and a small pot with a wooden spoon on it and a chair. Next to the desk is a wicker basket with a sheepskin rug, wool and wool carders in it. On stage right there is a pile of tartan blankets and a small bag/satchel.

Act 1.

A woman enters from stage right and sits down at the desk. When she is sitting, a soldier marches in carrying some papers. He stops

Background

Maisie's play appears to be set in the community of Anaheilt within the village of Strontian, which at the time was exclusively a crofting community. Crofts were small parcels of land owned or rented by a single family on which to keep animals and grow produce. Often what was produced on the croft went towards sustaining the family, but was rarely enough to entirely support them, so surpluses would be sold, or some amount of additional work would need to be found.

The archives of *The Oban Times* of the period were trawled for stories relating to the whole of the area being researched. The majority of stories found related to signings-up or the death of local young men. A few of the pieces are included here, along with any additional information we were able to find from various online sources.



Left to right, James Ramsay, Indigo Grier, Nieve Mullen and Britney Nicol performing in the play Hear From You Soon by Maisie Gregg

WITH THE ARGYLLS.



Lance-Corporal THOMAS WATSON, Callart.

The above is a portrait of Lance-Corporal Thomas Watson, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who died of wounds in France. He was the youngest son of Mr Thomas Watson, manager, Callart Farm, late of Glenhurich, Strontian. The deceased was aged 29 years, and was for many years gardener at Drymen, and at the outbreak of the War joined up. Besides being through the Battle of Loos, he had seen much other hard fighting. He was of a retiring disposition, and had the respect of the whole community.

Many letters of sympathy have been received by his parents from the districts in which his life had been passed, and his bright and cheery spirit was appreciated and admired by all with whom he came in contact. Much sympathy is felt for his family, especially his mother and sisters, in their bereavement.

Thomas Watson

Lance Corporal

Buried: Duisans British Cemetery Etrun, Pas De Calais, France

Army No. 1540

10th Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

Died of wounds 13th June 1917 age 28. Son of Thomas and Barbara Watson of Carnress Farm Onich, Inverness-shire. Native of Strontian, Ardgour, Argyll

Strontian War Memorial

There are a total of 35 names engraved on the 1914–1919 section of the Strontian war memorial, many of which the research group were able to find a little information about, some of which is included here. The names Cameron, McIntyre and McPherson appear repeatedly, each of which are still common names in the area.



Strontian war memorial 1914–1918 inscriptions

Other Information

This book is by no means exhaustive, and merely acts to commemorate the project which was undertaken in 2018, and record some of its findings. In no particular order, here are a few of the other interesting pieces of information we came across, which



We learn that Mr C. D. Rudd of Ardnamurchan has placed his fine steam yacht Mingary at the disposal of the Admiralty, to be used as a hospital ship or for any other purpose which may be thought proper. The Mingary is a fine yacht with a tonnage of 639 tons. In the South African War she was also lent by Mr Rudd, and did good service as a hospital ship.

Charles D Rudd (22 October 1844 - 15 November 1916) was a founding member of the De Beers Mining Company along with his friend Cecil Rhodes and others. He became extremely wealthy through the proceeds of diamond and gold mining. He purchased both Shielbridge and Ardnamurchan Estates in around 1897, retiring to Scotland in 1902 after having built Shielbridge House (for himself) and Glenborrodale Castle (for guests).

Credits

We wish to extend our grateful thanks to the following for their contributions to, and assistance with the production of this book:-

De tha Dol? (*community newspaper for Moidart, Ardnamurchan and Morvern*) for songs, features and articles.

The Oban Times for their extensive archive which enabled us to learn so much about what was going on at the time. We have not dated the articles, unless the date was especially relevant. We are particularly grateful to Wyvex Media for allowing us to reproduce obituaries and other notices from old copies of *The Oban Times*.

Martin Briscoe of Fort William for images and assistance regarding local area war memorials, and for permission to use information from his website mbriscoe.me.uk.

Jim McGillivray, Andrew Berthoff and www.pipetunes.ca for use of the piece about William Lawrie and photographs.

Creina Jackson, Lochaline - for allowing us to refer to and publish some of her family letters from the period.

Heather Allen for use of her photograph on page 113.

Jed Grimes for images and information from his website jedgrimesmusic.co.uk.

Made in Lochaber for use of the map shown on page 162.

All the local families who contributed artefacts and information which made this project such an enjoyable success for all concerned.

Editors Veronica Petford, Justine Dunn and Veronique Walraven, for their careful attention to detail.

This book has been collated by Joanne Matheson - any errors will surely be mine.

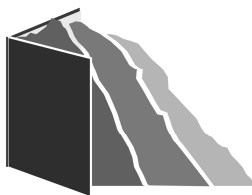
Extensive online research was undertaken where facts were checked and information cross-referenced . Websites referred to, and which might be of interest to anyone undertaking further research, include but are not limited to the following:

- greatwar.co.uk
- The Oban Times
- The National Archives
- The Telegraph, online archive
- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Historic UK
- Encyclopaedia Britannica online
- Visit Scotland
- Wikipedia
- Great War Forum
- Canmore - National Record of the Historic Environment
- The Press and Journal

We have made every effort to check the accuracy of the information contained, and apologise for any errors or omissions.

This book was printed by online printing service **Book Printing UK**, and we gratefully acknowledge their assistance.

A collection of notes, articles and stories discovered by pupils of Kinlochleven High School and Ardnamurchan High School as part of the Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival School Project, 2018. Using announcements, obituaries and other pieces from newspapers of the time, together with letters sent home and background research, this book brings together some of what was discovered, to show what life was like in Lochaber during World War One, and of its lasting impact on the area.



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