

# CALL Little Assynt Tree Nursery News

## Trees of Culag Wood Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

The rowan is a slender deciduous tree, typically 10-15 metres in height. It has grey-brown smooth bark and leaves made up of matched pairs of leaflets either side of the stem. New leaves appear in April which turn bright orange red in autumn. Flowers appear in May to June which are creamy white in colour and form dense clusters. The distinctive red berries appear in August and are rich in vitamin C. The berries are eaten and dispersed by birds. In areas of wet climate the tree lungwort lichen is commonly found on rowan trunks.

Rowan can grow at high altitudes up to 1,000 metres and is also known as the Mountain Ash.

In popular British folklore the rowan is a tree which protects against witchcraft and enchantment. The gaelic for rowan is caorunn (*choroon*).



### Tree Nursery Opening Event

In October the Tree Nursery was officially opened. The ribbon cutting event was attended by a large number of local people and visitors who were treated to music and songs from Scourie Primary School children and the Assynt Brownies and Rainbows. The children then planted some of the first seedlings at the nursery and everyone enjoyed the tea and cakes provided. A guided walk was also led around part of Little Assynt inbetween the hail showers.



Cutting the ribbon at the Little Assynt Tree Nursery



Assynt Rainbows & Brownies show off their hand-made tree t-shirts.

### Tree Nursery Outreach Officer starts work

Romany Garnett has joined the CALL project as the Tree Nursery Outreach Officer, tasked with involving the community in the developing nursery. Romany lives on a croft in Achmelvich and has previously worked as a temporary Highland Council Ranger. As a first event, Romany attended the Lochinver, Made in Assynt Christmas Craft Fayre, selling wreaths and raising awareness of the CALL project and its partners. Future planned events include volunteer days, guided walks, skills training, work placement opportunities and a hazel celebration day. Romany would be delighted to hear from you whether you'd like to get involved or just want to know anything about the project. Her contact details are: [rgarnett@coigach-assynt.org](mailto:rgarnett@coigach-assynt.org)



Romany's Christmas Wreath stall at the Craft Fayre.

The CALL Tree Nursery Project is currently funded by:

The Albert George and Nancy Caroline Youngman Trust



## Pilot Assynt Festival: CCWT's Survival Skills Training Event

October 2012 was the date of the inaugural Assynt Festival. The festival was a series of events across the parish designed to extend the tourism season and offer activities for local people to attend at the start of the October School holidays. The theme of the festival was a celebration of the cultural and natural heritage of the area. Some of the activities on offer were: Made in Assynt Craft Fayre, a talk on whales and dolphins, Scottish Country Dancing demonstrations, Highland Stoneware plate painting. There were also events run by Historic Assynt as part of the Fire and Water Project which included heritage trail guided walks and an excavation of a Bronze Age burnt mound. The Festival was rounded off by a torchlight procession and fireworks in Lochinver.

CCWT ran a Survival Skills event in Culag Wood as part of the festival where children and adults alike learnt how to build a shelter and start a fire with a few sticks. The day was quite cold and damp but by the time they had all built their shelters and tried to start a fire (it fairly warms you up just trying to start a fire!) we realised that time had run away with us and we'd spent over an hour longer than planned "surviving" in Culag Woods.



### NEWS UPDATE



#### Lochinver Pre School say "thank you".

At the end of the summer term, Lochinver Pre School planted an oak in Culag Wood to say thank you for another year of Forest School sessions. They also presented a gift to local volunteer, Ken Fairchild for his continued support to the Pre School. Some of the help Ken has given over the last year includes providing a decorated storage box in the woods for the Pre School and taking out the Sutherland chair he built, to the shelter at Little Assynt for their visit in the spring.



#### A successful summer of Ranger Events

The Highland Council Rangers have been busy again this summer running events all over Assynt for locals and visitors alike. Activities held at Culag Wood included Fungi walks, survival skills training and a visit from the Gruffalo family again! Whilst at Leitir Easaigh all abilities wildlife walks were led.



**Contact:**  
Get in touch with your news and views  
01571 844368  
info@culagwoods.org.uk

## Dark Sky Site at Little Assynt

Leitir Easaigh All Abilities Path at Little Assynt Estate has been granted Dark Sky Site status. The site was nominated by local author and artist, Jeanette McCarthy and the following is an extract of the press release from Jeanette.

*"The UK Dark Sky Discovery Project is a network of local and national astronomy and environmental organisations whose main aims are to interest people in the night sky, educate positive attitudes towards science and technology and encourage tourism. The project has the backing of the Royal Astronomical Society and the Royal Observatory Edinburgh, amongst others.*

*The skies in the Highlands are perfect for stargazing, as the degree of light pollution is minimal and there are few obstructions to viewing the sky. Leitir Easaigh has been granted the highest class of award, being a place where the Milky Way can easily be seen with the naked eye.*

*Regular meteor showers can be seen throughout the year (next will be on 3rd and 4th January) In addition 2013 -14 are years of Solar maximum when it is very likely that the Northern Lights will be visible on many nights".*

For further information please see the Dark Skies website: [www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk/](http://www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk/)



## New benches in Culag Woods

As part of the ongoing work in Culag Wood, several new benches have been installed. Some of them are at strategic points along the paths, giving the chance to catch your breath as you climb up from the White Shore or up to the Viewpoint. There are also picnic benches at the beaches within the woods, so pack up your flask and sandwiches and head off to Culag Woods for a day out exploring.

All the benches have to be solid enough to withstand the elements which meant that they were pretty heavy to carry. CCWT Director, Jimmy Crooks, constructed, painted and installed most of the benches. The majority of them were constructed from reclaimed timber and carried into position using the muck truck pictured below.



Two of the new resting points along the paths. Can you find the others?

