

Ugadale Hotel reopens to the call of The Herd's Horn



Yesterday, Saturday 25th February, saw day long celebrations to launch the once and now again fabulous [Ugadale Hotel](#) in the beachside village of Machrihanish on the west Mull of Kintyre.

His Grace the Duke of Argyll formally opened the hotel, cutting the ceremonial ribbon. The Duke also opened the restitution of The Kintyre Club, celebrated in the name of the lavish new bar at the hotel.

Benevolent philanthropic clubs of this kind were a feature of Georgian and Victorian times, with wealthy merchants and businessmen coming together to support the needy in their localities in the days before state funded social welfare.

The original Kintyre Club began in 1825, in the days of George IV (aka Nigel Hawthorne) when '12 gentlemen came together to form the Kintyre Club, a club dedicated to the "social and rational enjoyment of the Members, in union with the relief and support of decayed and indigent individuals or families resident in this neighbourhood (*Ed: for Kintyre and for Kintyre folk in Glasgow*), who have been either born or are the descendants of parents born in the district from which the club takes its title." '

In a way these clubs were the beginnings of what is translated today into corporate social responsibility and planning gain – but they were embedded in their place and had a first hand commitment to it.

One of their major achievements, which was the case at The Kintyre Club as well, was the funding of education for the children of the area's poorer residents, sending children on bursaries to school and to universities.

This enlightened stance could be said to have been paternalistic but it proved the case for paternalism in the able folk it assisted to betterment and in the wider benefit to humanity these developing abilities brought with them.

The Kintyre Club also had a 'Lady Associates Branch'. The main club, from its beginning, had, as its patron, the Duke of Argyll of the day; and, throughout her long life, Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, as patroness of the 'Lady Associate Branch'. So the reopening of The Kintyre Club – and membership forms are [online here](#), under its new President, His Grace the 13th Duke of Argyll, is picking up where his father left it when the original club was wound up in 1981. That link remains unbroken.

The formal restitution yesterday of The Kintyre Club by the 13th Duke of Argyll was marked by the restoration to the club of an unusual and potent relic of its – and Campbeltown's – past.

Bob Clark, Development Manager at the preserved Auchindrain farm township in Mid Argyll and one of the team of specialists engaged with the Campbeltown Museum, presented to the club the historic 'Herd's Horn'.

This originally came into the possession of The Kintyre Club through the late Peter Reid. Before it eventually adopted a President's Chain (with a link for each) The Kintyre Club's main insignia was this Herd's Horn, engraved progressively with the names of the presidents of the day.

As recorded in the [online history of the club](#), in and before the 18th century this horn 'had been sounded by the Town Herd "to rouse the slumbering natives that they might turn out their cows to be driven to the Whinny Hill till lately the Town Common at Witchburn"'.

When it was discovered that Mr Reid had bought the horn from 'auld McGregor', the Town Herd at Whinney Hill – who may not have had the right to sell it – 'the townsfolk of Campbeltown strongly objected to the purchase, as the horn had been part of their heritage for as long as they could remember'. Too late.

The horn was 'transformed and silvermounted' and presented by Mr. Reid to the Club in 1837. It was used as a Snuff Mull, passed around members after dinner.

When the club was wound up in 1981, the President's Chain, the Herd's Horn and another key artefact, the Lowland Church Bell (used at ceremonial dinners), were presented to the Campbeltown Museum.

Mr Clark's presentation of it to the Duke yesterday was, of course followed by its swift return to the care of the Museum where it may be seen.

The Ugadale Hotel

[The Ugadale Hotel](#) today has twenty-two guest rooms and suites, finished to the highest standard and marrying classic comfort with modern facilities and technologies.

It has The Kintyre Club Bar, of course and a restaurant dedicated to fine dining, which yesterday's guests will have memorably enjoyed.

The hotel has a custom designed spa and world class golf courses literally on its doorstep, the exciting, radical and uniquely ecologically responsible [Machrihanish Dunes](#) course with which it is associated in corporate terms; and the [Machrihanish course](#) designed golf's major legendary figure, Old Tom Morris.

It also sits virtually on the sandy surfing beach whose historic and protected dunes hold the Machrihanish Dunes course; and round the corner is a series of rocky inlets, beaches and seal colonies on the west side of the Mull

Come rain, come shine, come grey or come 'mist rolling in from the sea', no one need be bored or confined at the glorious Ugadale. The grace and proportions of the restored building itself say a lot about the promises for its interior.

The Kintyre Club is open to all comers from today, as is the hotel. The [Special Offers available on the website](#) make immediate experience irresistible and open up group and club visits to play golf and look after themselves at the lovely [Ugadale Cottages](#) – with all other facilities to hand. It is hard to think of a more original holiday or a break that really will take you away from it all and into something quite wonderfully different.

Southworth Developments

For Argyll received a very generous set of invitations to yesterday's events from Southworth Developments, responsible for the Machrihanish Dunes golf course, the Ugadale Cottages, this restoration of the Ugadale Hotel and the parallel restoration of the signature Royal Hotel on the front at Campbeltown.

That we did not go is the simple result of a puritan attitude to the work we do. We feel that working journalists do not belong as guests at such events. For Argyll needs to feel free to enthuse about significant enterprises without being thought to benefit from them in any way. Since yesterday's celebrations were intimate and not designed with the presence of an objective notebook, lens and questions in mind, we will make our private acquaintance with the Ugadale later.

We do, however, wish to record our thanks to Southworth Developments for their thoughtfulness and generosity in these invitations, which we much appreciated.

As with everyone who has a care for Campbeltown and Kintyre and an admiration for imaginative and dauntless entrepreneurship, we wish every element of Southworth Developments' initiatives in Kintyre all possible success – and all success impossible until they make it happen.

They have shouldered a mass of heavy lifting in dedicating themselves to the regeneration of this wonderful part of the world. Their existing and potential relationships with other go ahead and ideas-centred local businesses, have the capacity to form the critical mass needed to get Campbeltown and Kintyre over the threshold of self belief, firing on four cylinders in a drive for a bright and sustainable future.

Responses to yesterday's launch celebrations

We will be adding responses here, as we get them, to the event and to the promise for the future of The Village at Machrihanish.

South Kintyre Councillor, John Semple: Mr Semple was present yesterday with Argyll and Bute's MSP, Michael Russell, who spoke during the proceedings. He says: 'the opening of this hotel could be a turning point for Kintyre, today's events should reassure the community that Southworth are committed to Kintyre and to working with the community.'

'I firmly believe that Southworth's redevelopment of this hotel and the Royal in Campbeltown has the potential to change the fortunes of South Kintyre by making it a destination for many more people.'

'For local businesses to take advantage, they will need to have the confidence to invest, and fundamental to that will be better transport links into Kintyre. Air, sea and road connections must be improved.'

'I am happy to have assisted Southworth Developments with this project and to have been involved with Brian Keating who's vision Mach Dunes was, I wish them good luck and look forward to working closely with them in the years ahead.'

Colin Craig, Managing Director of West Coast Motors and of Kintyre Express, says: 'I went out to the Ugadale opening yesterday. The quality of the renovation is utterly fantastic. I don't think I'm exaggerating by describing what they're doing as world class. This is something the whole community can be proud of.'

'I have no doubt it will be a major asset to Kintyre for a very long time.'

Southworth Development are to be congratulated for their vision, their ambition, investment and commitment in Kintyre and I wish them every success.

'This is a hugely exciting time for Kintyre. The Ugadale and Royal hotel developments are real game changers as far tourism is concerned. We will be working hard to ensure we provide the best possible transport links, by land and sea, to ensure the journey and not just the destination is part of the magic of coming to Kintyre.'

The photograph above of The Herd's Horn is © Rebecca Martin of [Auchindrain](#) farm township.