

KAILYARD DIARY REPORTS – 2021

NAME	MONTH	COMMENTS	WORK REQUIRED	DONE
Chris Foster	1/1/21	Jobs for the New Year:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew bracken weed suppressent. • Minor fence repairs required. • Prune Autumn raspberries Feb/March. 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Colin Miller	4/1/21	Kailyard resting under an inch of frozen snow. All OK. No footprints inside fence. Only footprints off the main trail were an adult and child down the Shepherds Lodge spur.	Work required: as per CF's notes above. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bracken harvesting not feasible under current snow conditions. • Ideally, entire back fence needs reconstruction, but meanwhile still functional. • Unstable gatepost still functional. Could be lashed to adjacent fencepost as an interim fix. • Would be a nice gesture to cut back laurel and broom, etc. around the memorial tree at top right of kailyard. • Young broom shoots 1-2 ft. high appearing within the buildings. 	
January 2021 Due to the corona virus work in the Kailyard is suspended until further notice.				
Volunteers living local to Bennachie have agreed to keep a check on the Kailyard until restrictions are lifted.				

Jackie Cumberbirch	23/2/21	<p>Managed to get to the Kailyard. Still snow in the garden but the rhubarb is starting to appear.</p> <p>Fence around kailyard fine...not much else to report except broom cutting back at Shepherds Lodge required so hopefully will get done when we start work parties etc.</p>	General tidy up of Shepherds Lodge as soon as possible once restrictions lifted!	√
<p>Joint Volunteer Group:</p> <p>Willie Linklater Anne Reid Allan Will Andrew Wainwright</p>	March 2021	<p>Many thanks to Willie, Anne, Allan and Andrew for checking out the Kailyard during March.</p> <p>A summary of their joint reports: All looking good. Everything nicely pruned, weeded and staked, although the Autumn Raspberries now need their Spring pruning. Fairly dormant at the beginning of the month but things starting to turn green by the end.</p>	Prune Autumn raspberries.	√
Colin Miller	15/4/21	<p>A lovely day today at the Kailyard -- with butterflies and bumblebees bumbling and almost everything coming into leaf. The exception is about 40% of the raspberry clumps, those in the middle of the row, where there's no sign of leaves yet. The other 60% of the rasps are fine.</p> <p>I was there to catch up on a task I'd intended to do on my January rota visit -- gathering dead bracken for mulch. The conditions and then lockdown put paid to that. All done now. For the record, one tarpaulin load of bracken is just sufficient to cover the area. Before spreading the mulch I tivated the soil and any tiny weeds with a garden trowel, as if using a hoe. Interesting that there was moss colonising under the raspberries in particular.</p> <p>I've stabilised the gatepost, and also fixed a hole in the fence which a dog went through while its owners and I were chatting. They visit every day, and had downloaded the App too, which they thought was very good. Later, a mother and two children came along and enjoyed looking around, having just moved to Alford.</p>	<p>Lack of leaves on 40% of the raspberries may be due to these being an autumn variety. These should have been pruned down to the ground in March but have been delayed due to Lockdown.</p> <p>Bracken mulch completed.</p> <p>Minor fence repairs carried out</p> <p>Good to see visitors!</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>

		I may have mentioned that some spare willow wands from the Back o' Bennachie sculpture were hidden under the laurels in case we needed them for fence repairs. They have completely rotted on the ground and are no longer of any use.		
Barry & Chris Foster	22/4/21	<p>Now travel restrictions within Scotland have been lifted, we were able to visit the Kailyard today and catch up with the pruning of the Autumn raspberries. We also removed some unwanted self-seeded blackcurrant plantlets.</p> <p>Everything looking good and well maintained thanks to all the help from a number of volunteers through lockdown.</p> <p>The various bushes are leafing up nicely and blossoms are starting to form. A wasp was visiting some of the blossoms so hopefully fruit will be forming later in the year! We removed the protection from around the Rhubarb as it is growing well and looking quite healthy. Should soon be ready for cropping.</p>	Autumn Raspberries Pruned	√
<p>With the easing of certain restrictions we are now returning to our normal rota duty volunteers. Many thanks to all those who have help with the Kailyard over the last four months.</p>				
Gary Middleton	27/5/21	<p>The Kailyard was in good shape, not much to do really. I was surprised how good it was. Had a tidy round and removed some wild raspberries that were encroaching. Tried for a general tidy and removed the few weeds I saw. Patched a small piece of fence that was open. Could not see any caterpillars. The Rhubarb is ready for a first harvest, I think. Chatted with a guy & his springer who passes every day, says he always looks in. Took him and showed him the well at the back, it is now full of clear water - his Springer much appreciated a long cool drink. Re photo - think these are not wild raspberries so left them. (That's correct Gary - See note opposite)</p>	<p>Keep looking for sawfly grubs, the seasons are a bit later this year.</p> <p>Some rhubarb needs picking - feel free to help yourselves, but please make sure there are always a few sticks left to keep the plant healthy for next year.</p>	

		 <p>Thought I had taken the right tools up with me, spade, trowel and secateurs, only to discover shears would have been good as grass around Kailgarden could use cutting back a little, could you pass on for next month.</p>	<p>NB: These raspberries are the Autumn variety which have to be pruned down to their base early Spring. This was done in April (a bit late due to covid restrictions!) so good to see the new shoots coming along nicely.</p> <p>Grass needs a trim</p>	√
Karen Main	6/6/21	<p>Today was first time I've been up to Kailyard in June this year. Grass was very long but I had shears with me as I remembered from last time I was on. I will trim the grass round the edges next week as it took a bit longer cutting back grass than anticipated but made a start.</p> <p>I checked for sawfly and did not see any obvious signs of them. However, tiny white spots on leaves of first currant bush as you enter kailyard from gate. I could wipe it off but wasn't sure if this was start of powdery mildew? I've attached photo of leaf.</p>		

		<p>Some of the fence horizontal branches are coming loose so I stuck back in as best as I could. However, fence still functioning well.</p> <p>Rhubarb started to shoot so I pulled it out along with a few more sticks of rhubarb. I looked at Theodora Fitzgibbon cookbook (focusses on traditional Scottish recipes) and only one I could see was for rhubarb oatmeal crumble but no mention of origin. I'm sure in the past, sweet cicely was used alongside rhubarb in puddings? Anyway I look forward to my first taste of kailyard rhubarb.</p>		
Chris Foster	8/6/21	<p>I was a bit concerned about the tiny white spots on the leaves so yesterday, as we were near Bennachie, Barry and I popped up the kailyard to have a look. I'm not well up on plant diseases but have come to the conclusion that it was possibly tree pollen. The reason being that many of the leaves around the Shepherds Lodge area have these white spots on too. I took a few different leaves back home to have a look at and when magnified could see white individual circular specks which could easily be picked off. When talking to Alison Sutherland (Ranger) she said she had been watching clouds of pollen blowing off some of the trees. Just hope I'm right and we don't go back and find all the leaves striped off or gone brown!! We did a few odd jobs while there too, including opening up the centres of the gooseberries to enable a bit more air to circulate and watering the raspberries. No evidence of Sawfly – yet!</p>		
Chris Foster	6/21	<p>Rhubarb and Sweet Cicely</p> <p>Following Karen's comment about sweet cicely and its mention at the BLP meeting, I tried this theory out from a recipe found on the Internet:-</p> <p><i>“Traditionally sweet cicely is cooked with rhubarb. Choose the juiciest young stems, before the fibres have formed, and just chip both stem and leaf up and mix them with your chopped rhubarb. There's no rule but I generally do 50/50. The aniseed flavour is very mild as it doesn't survive the heat well but you won't need to</i></p>		

		<p><i>use any added sugar. This is because anethole, a natural compound found in sweet cicely, is actually sweeter than sucrose."</i></p> <p>The sweet cicely didn't seem to cook quick enough for the rhubarb, so it was very chewy (perhaps the shoots were too old), whereas the rhubarb had pulped right down. The result was not overly palatable to eat as it was. I ended up squeezing out the juice, adding a small amount of sugar and turning it into a rhubarb syrup. This was very tasty and had a delicate hint of aniseed - lovely over icecream!</p>		
Karen Main	12/6/21	<p>Just a wee update on kailyard. I went up yesterday and continued trimming grass which now seems a bit more under control. It's looking good although everything is very dry. Did a bit of weeding. White stuff still on leaves but just rubs off and not widespread over all bushes so will just keep monitoring in the meantime.</p>		
Karen Main	26/6/21	<p>I was at Kailyard this morning and everything is fine. Thankfully, it has been raining so plants have been watered. It has been a bit gusty over last few days and I noticed a couple of the smaller gooseberry branches had been snapped by wind. I've tried to support the rest using old bits of branches but probably these will need adjusting and maybe more added.</p> <p>A few leaves on currant bushes are turning yellow which I removed but fruit looks fine. Rhubarb is beginning to get past it's best but still stalks to pick.</p> <p>I did weeding and trimmed grass inside kailyard again. This was my last visit to Kailyard before end of month.</p> <p>I made a crumble with the lovely rhubarb I used from kailyard so thank you very much. Quite a few folk noticed the rhubarb I was carrying back to the car so it was a nice chance to mention the kailyard which everyone seemed genuinely interested to hear about.</p>		

Chris Foster	2/7/21	<p>Today I was at Shepherds Lodge helping the Bailies Work Party tidy up the colony house, so had a quick look at the Kailyard. All looked fine thanks to Karen's care during June.</p> <p>Plenty of fruit on the blackcurrants and the summer raspberries have fruit forming.</p> <p>The gooseberries are not particularly abundant but the "Essons" cutting taken in 2017 is showing its first fruit.</p> <p>Disappointingly, nothing on the white currants and little on the red currants.</p> <p>The rhubarb season is finished so what sticks are still there should be left to help the plant re-establish itself for next year.</p>	<p>It would be interesting to find out what variety this actually is.</p> <p>Check pruning methods!!</p> <p>A third of the crop should be left to help the plant regenerate next year.</p>	
Jo Vergunst	18/7/21	<p>I visited with my boys and Adam Calo, a geographer at the James Hutton Institute interested in land tenure and agriculture.</p> <p>All seems in order in the kailyard with fruit growing well. We did a little weeding (not much required) and harvested about a kilo of blackcurrants, which is now jam and will be distributed if we have a face to face BLP meeting at some point! Adam had a tub too.</p> <p>Raspberries are growing well but not ripe yet.</p> <p>There are some redcurrants that can be harvested now by anyone who is around. There are also a few whitecurrants.</p> <p>The gooseberries are coming along and are ripening (red variety) though as noted they are not very numerous.</p> <p>On and around the blackcurrant bushes we found three Magpie moths, which according to the moth book are common in northern moorlands but also have currant bushes as a food plant</p>		

		<p>for the caterpillars. There may have been a bit of leaf damage but it didn't seem to be significant. It might be worth looking out for the caterpillars and pupae (yellow and black).</p> <p>I didn't take shears and the grass could do with a cut again.</p>	<p>Watch for Magpie moth caterpillars/pupae.</p>	
Chris Foster	26/7/21	<p>Had a quick check of the kailyard. Picked the small amount of red and white currants, and the odd few gooseberries, which were lovely and sweet (so didn't last long!), Unfortunately, it has not been a very good harvest for any of these particular fruit bushes. However, the blackcurrants seem to have done better. Trimmed the grass.</p>		
Anne Reid	02/8/21	<p>Visited kailyard .. looking good! Cut the grass .. growing quickly.</p> <p>What a difference from last year when the blackcurrant crop was huge for the whole month & lots of gooseberries. No fruit today.</p> <p>The rasps seem to be starting to ripen & potentially a good crop? All the wild rasps around are ready, however.</p>		
Anne Reid	13/8/21	<p>All looking good.</p> <p>Trimmed the grass, pulled out some weeds along the side & some rotted rhubarb stems. Rhubarb looking good but expect it would be quite tough!</p> <p>The rasps starting to ripen but not looking that good. I picked 3oz. The autumn rasps to the N of the plot looking much better. I picked 2 big juicy ones!</p>		

Chris Foster	18/8/21	<p>Visiting Bennachie today so popped along to view the Kailyard. Anne doing a good job of keeping it tidy, so nothing much to do except sample a few raspberries! Took a couple of raspberry leaves to analyse the white marks on leaves, which also appear on the wild varieties close by.</p>		
Anne Reid	23/8/21	<p>Looking good on a muggy overcast day with lots of midges! I picked 12 oz of rasps. They are ripening nicely but several a bit blemished by the recent rain. There should be quite a bit more to pick over the next week or so. I will be unable to return this month so hopefully they will be used!</p> <p>Picked a couple of autumn rasps .. hopefully more to ripen. I trimmed the grass & did some weeding.</p>		