

CARNEGIE AWARD WINNER

Lochgoilhead Fiddle Workshop has been recognised by Carnegie UK Trust for championing the preservation of local heritage in Argyll. The workshop is one of five 'Rural Sparks' to be recognised by Carnegie UK Trust for extraordinary work within rural communities in the UK and Eire, and was selected from all the Scottish groups. The Rural Sparks awards recognise innovative projects that have most improved the lives of large numbers of people in rural areas.

At the Awards ceremony held at the Eden Project in Cornwall Kate Braithwaite, Carnegie's Rural Director, commented 'Lochgoilhead Fiddle Workshop has had a profound effect on the community, by encouraging the whole community to preserve their musical culture. The volunteer team have shown an enterprising spirit by branching out to other parts of Argyll, making top quality music and music tuition accessible to many other communities.'

The award winners were chosen by a high profile judging panel, which include TV personality, Jimmy Doherty from "Jimmy's Farm", Eden Project founder, Tim Smit, Deputy Editor of Regeneration & Renewal, Ben Walker, and Margaret Clark, former Director of The Commission for Rural Communities. The Chairman of Carnegie UK, Angus Hogg, felt that the project "is one of the five that the panel thinks are especially transferable and that will inspire other groups."

The background is that six years ago in the area around the village of Lochgoilhead, and throughout a large part of rural Argyll outside Dunoon, there were no opportunities to learn a stringed instrument, although traditional music was a strong part of the area's cultural heritage.

The Workshop was established to preserve and transmit the musical heritage of the area, and now holds weekly classes for adults in two rural venues, attracting players from a fifty- mile radius. In partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, it also provides fiddle tuition currently to 90 children in five local schools. The project has grown from strength to strength, and programmes a series of concerts each year featuring world - class performers. It has a growing youth community music programme featuring an annual tour of ten local schools, and residential weekends for children combining the Gaelic arts and outdoor pursuits. The Workshop also runs a website (www.fiddleworkshop.co.uk), publishes a regular newsletter and arranges music & craft weekends.

Mark Morpurgo, who is responsible for the Workshop's concert programme, said: "We have been working tirelessly over the last few years and we feel proud to receive a Rural Sparks award, as representatives from Scotland, and of traditional music. Although we have won awards before, to be chosen for this award by judges outside the traditional music scene is a validation of the work that has been put into this project. The financial award will help towards the expansion of the programme, but more importantly we hope that working with Carnegie and their partners will, over the years, bring further benefits to the area."