



Lothlorien Therapeutic Community Newsletter

Summer 2025 Edition



in abundance

This summer, the garden has truly given back. Thanks to our collective care and effort, we've been blessed with full tummies and fuller hearts, enjoying meals grown entirely from our own soil. From the first potatoes to the last of the peas, it's been a season rich in flavour and generosity. The sun shone bright, the soil nurtured our efforts, and the harvest responded in kind.

A Visit to Samye Ling: Honouring Our Roots



Back in May, our community had the joy of visiting [Kagyü Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre](#) in Eskdalemuir. Nestled in the peaceful hills of Dumfries and Galloway, Samye Ling is the first Tibetan Buddhist Centre established in the West, founded in 1967 by Akong Tulku Rinpoche and Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

We were deeply honoured to meet Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche, Abbot of Samye Ling and Director of [Holy Isle](#). Lama Yeshe's life journey, from escaping Tibet in 1959 to becoming a respected teacher and retreat master is a remarkable story of resilience and transformation. You can explore his biography on [Samye Ling's website](#), or better yet, delve into his memoir, '[From a Mountain in Tibet: A Monk's Journey](#)'

A heartfelt thank you to Nick Jennings, who gave us a special VIP guided tour of the grounds. Nick's connection to Samye Ling dates back to the early days, he was even involved in the construction of the temple itself. His stories brought the place to life, with a few good laughs, and

some brilliant photos from the 1980s 😊. Nick's ongoing support of Lothlorien has been invaluable, helping our community stay rooted in its founding values as we continue to evolve and grow.

Our Shared History

While Lothlorien is not a religious community, our origins are deeply intertwined with Samye Ling. Founded in 1974 by the Haughton family, Lothlorien was later entrusted to the [Rokpa Trust](#) in 1989, under the guidance of Akong Tulku Rinpoche, whose vision was to create a therapeutic space rooted in compassion, mutual support, and healing.

Akong Rinpoche believed that everyone is capable of being their own healer, and that mental wellbeing flourishes in an environment of respect, simplicity, and cooperation. These principles drawn from Buddhist mental health philosophy continue to shape our community, even as we've moved further from formal Buddhist practice. Today, we celebrate our secular identity while honouring the values that helped us grow.

What we got up to

During our visit, we enjoyed a delicious lunch and took time to explore the grounds. The Main Temple, with its intricate murals, golden statues, and the captivating sound of mantras being recited, was a truly memorable experience. The gardens were thriving with fresh produce and offered quiet pockets perfect for reflection. We also visited the small museum section, which provided a deeper insight into the story of the monastery and Tibetan culture. It's thoughtfully curated, featuring a range of artifacts and photography that celebrate the temple's history and the journeys of its founders. We wrapped up our day with a cuppa in the Tibetan Tea Rooms, and with full hearts, set off on the journey home.

Thank you to all involved for accommodating us!

Samye Ling is open for day visits, overnight stays, and there is a calendar of retreats and courses you can sign up for. Details can be found on their [official visiting page](#).



Art as therapy



Pottery making!

Equipped with armfuls of terracotta clay, our volunteer Joti led the community in an activity where we built and fired our own pottery vessels, all in house.



the makeshift 'kiln' was particularly impressive, making use of our firepit, souped up with discarded slates from Roan Lodge's roof, to help trap heat. It was watching true alchemy before our very eyes. Thank you, Joti for a memorable afternoon

At its heart, Tara Rokpa is about healing the mind through relaxation, reflection, and creativity. The word "therapy" here translates the Tibetan term *sowa*, which means both "to prevent damage" and "to repair it." The process encourages people to explore their life stories, habitual patterns, and emotional responses in a safe and structured way.

Before picking up our art supplies, we began with a meditation. Then, with paint on paper and other found objects, we took turns making marks, working together in quiet to create a shared masterpiece and enjoy the gentle, collective calm creating art can provide.

<https://www.tararokpa.org/the-rapy/about/index.php>



Plant The Pants Soil Science Experiment

In preparation for a habitat mapping project here at Lothlorien. Funded by the DG Climate Hub and supported by the GSA's Biosphere Nature Recovery Officer. We created an experiment to look at soil types and soil health in five different habitats.



The brand new, cotton underpants were buried around 30cm deep and marked with a stake, a stone and What 3 words so we can find them again. At regular intervals we will dig them up, record what we see to assess their degradation and what discover what that means about each soil situation. The five habitats are: woodland; compost heap; veg garden; wetland; and grassland.



Here is Luke burying the pants in a one year old compost heap. The stake with a white flag marks the spot. If all the cotton is decomposed we will be left with the elastic waistband and button, so that we know we are in the right place. Follow us on [Facebook](#) to find out what we discover.

Visit from DGMHA

In July, we had the privilege to welcome the lovely team from *Dumfries and Galloway Mental Health Association* for a visit, have a look at what they had to say:



"On Wednesday Byron, Nicola and I went for a visit to Lothlorien Therapeutic Community. Lesley,

Outreach Coordinator at Lothlorien introduced us to two of the staff before showing us about the grounds, with the assistance of Skye the collie.

Lesley showed us the part of the woodlands where the residents and visitors can take mindfulness walks and sometimes, they use tarpaulins to make shelters and undertake some workshops there also.

Lesley spoke of the plans they have for making the walkways more accessible so that more people with different abilities can use the outbuildings, meditation hut and enjoy the pond, which she is hoping in the future, service users, residents and visitors can all walk right around the pond to take in the scenery and admire the different wildlife, making Lothlorien even more inclusive.

From there, Lesley showed us the workshop, where bat and bird boxes are made, all from the wood on their grounds. They also take part in willow weaving which can be seen through the gardens on their bean stalks etc.

At Lothlorien they grow an extensive array of fruit and vegetables, which visitors can learn how to plant and harvest through the spring and summer months. The nectarine was delicious!

We chatted about how DGMHA and Lothlorien can work together to improve the lives of the people we support.

We felt the service users within DGMHA would benefit from using Lothlorien, for their Nature Based Day workshops.

We hope to make these visits to Lothlorien a regular occurrence with our service users, as we feel the life skills they would learn or reignite would benefit their mental wellbeing. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Lothlorien!"

Emma Telfer - Deputy Team Leader, Castle Douglas

To find out more about DGMHA and the work they do, check out their website at:

<https://dgmha.org/>

Group Gardening Sessions



This summer we offered a series of six social gardening sessions for day visitors. Facilitated by Abi from Propagate. We learnt about lots of topics including seeds and how to sow them, herbs and their beneficial properties, composting, companion planting, friends



Our willing participants worked really hard to transform two much overgrown beds into well tended productive herb, fruit and veg spaces. They did a grand job 🌻 Thank you all 🙌

We sampled the bounty of the garden by harvesting tatties,

and foes in the garden and harvesting.



beetroots, kale and herbs to make a delicious lunch around the campfire for our last session together. We hope to run more of these groups in 2026.

Nature Connection Workshops

This summer's public workshops delivered creativity and soil science to connect folk to nature.

Sketch Booking and Observational Drawing



Emily Tough delivered an inspiring workshop to encourage us to slow down and observe nature. Here she is 'painting' the sky.



Natural painting materials from **Old Mill Arts** were used to draw the natural world around us. From charcoal, and inks to crayon and paints.

Compost Teas and Mulches!



Abi from **Propagate** shared her knowledge of creating nutritious compost using Lothlorien's well honed system as an example. We also learned about using comfrey as a fresh mulch around plants and steeping it in water to make a weak 'tea' to feed plants with.





Medicinal Plant Walk & Talk

Local medical herbalist Sarah Jane Scouten guided us on a walk and talk around Lothlorien's grounds. The walk was short in distance but big on information, we were surrounded at every turn by nature's medicine cabinet!

Comfrey for healing skin and bones, feverfew for, you've guessed it, helping fevers, golden rods anti microbial properties clear up UTI's and hawthorn can support blood pressure issues.

A lovely group of both locals and visitors from overseas joined us for a fascinating discussion over herbal tea and elderberry cordial and David's homemade scones and jam from Lothlorien's fruit. A perfect Sunday morning



For future events follow us on Facebook or check out the [Events](#) page on our website.



Meet Skye- Our New Four Legged Friend

"Hi! My name is Skye and I am the latest furry friend addition to the Lothlorien Community. I brought my most favourite human along as a residential volunteer called Veritie Yates at the beginning of April 2025.

I do hope you will come and visit me at Lothlorien and you can throw a stick or two for me which will make us both happy." -Skye the Dog



The Great Corsock Show!

It's with great pride that we can say Lothlorien has yet again kept with tradition and won several rosettes at this year's Great Corsock Show!



Our claims are:

Veritie's Knitted Jumper 🏆
Lothlorien's own Apple Juice 🏆
Home Grown Beetroot 🏆
Home Grown Onions 🏆

Well done everyone!



Facebook Fiasco!

Unfortunately, several months back we have had issues with our original Facebook page, resulting in us not being able to log in anymore. Despite our best efforts, it looks as if this can't be resolved. Therefore we have gone ahead and created a fresh, new, and secure Facebook page for Lothlorien Community.

Please check it out, and follow us there. It would be great if you could share the link, and spread the word to anyone who may be interested in following us.

here's the new link:

<https://www.facebook.com/LothlorienCommunity/>

Farewell to Iain

This summer we say goodbye to Lothlorien's gardener extraordinaire, Iain. Iain has been with Lothlorien since 2018, and in that time has seen us and the garden through so many seasons of change with a steady presence and seeming evergreen calm. Iain introduced the habit of 'meditation walks' to our community, and we hope to carry on your tradition in our Thursdays going forward. Iain, thank you for your heartfelt support, dedication, and encyclopaedic knowledge of all things happening in the Lothlorien Garden. We will miss you. Wishing you all the best in your next adventures !!!



And with our tearful goodbyes, we want to extend a loving welcome our newest members of staff:



**Our Newest Garden Coordinator
Welcome Michael!**

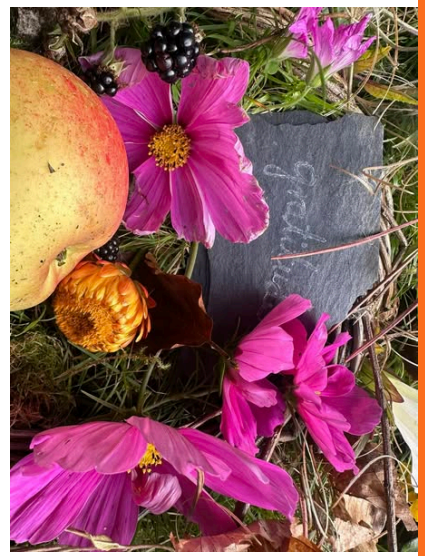
"I'm very delighted to have joined Lothlorien as Garden Coordinator. With a background in organic gardening, community volunteering, and a long-standing interest in mental health recovery and meditation, I'm excited to contribute to a place that brings these threads together so meaningfully. I've recently completed a year-long gardener mentoring programme and bring with me practical experience, a love of working outdoors, and a deep respect for the healing potential of nature and community."



**Our Newest Deputy Manager
Welcome David!**

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity to join the community at Lothlorien. Already the residents, volunteers and staff have made me feel really at home. Throughout my life I've worked in voluntary and statutory roles as a Social Worker and Community Development Worker. This included establishing a Therapeutic Community in West Africa."

A Few of our Favourite Photos





Until next time, dear friends

[Visit our Website](#)

Lothlorien Therapeutic Community
(Rokpa Trust)
Corsock
Castle Douglas
DG7 3DR

www.lothlorien.tc

Lothlorien is a member of the Association of
Therapeutic Communities.
Rokpa Trust is a registered charity (no.
1059293)

Opening Hours
Monday- Friday 9-5pm

01644 - 440602
Email address: lucy@lothlorien.tc

[A positive approach to mental health](#)

Lothlorien and Roan Lodge received
'Excellent' grades from the Care
Inspectorate.



Lothlorien Therapeutic Community | Corsock Castle Douglas | Dumfriesshire, DG7 3DR GB

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