

Friends Make a Difference to Clan MacFarlane Stronghold

Tuesday 15 September, 2026

On the 24th of August the Friends joined forces with the Elan I Vow Preservation Fund * and some hardy volunteers to tackle non-native invasive species, disrupting the natural ecosystem on Island I Vow, situated near the head of **Loch Lomond**, opposite the Loch Sloy hydroelectric plant.

Archaeologist, Fiona Baker was on hand to explain about the islands past and to advise on how work should be completed to protect the historical integrity of the site.

The castle at Island I Vow (Elanvow / Ellan Vhow) was built in 1577 by Andrew Macfarlane, 11th Chief of the Clan Macfarlane. In honour of his support for future King James VI/I at the Battle of Langside, Andrew was awarded the addition of a new crest and motto to his armorial bearings. The crest was a demi-savage holding a sheaf of arrows in one hand and pointing to the royal crown with the other hand, giving the clan its motto "This I'll Defend". King James VI/I is said to have later visited the island as evidenced by the Scottish proverb of "Macfarlane's Geese". The island was the seat of Clan Macfarlane after Inveruglas was burned by forces loyal to Cromwell in the mid 17th century and it remained this way through the end of the 17th century.

Chairman of Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, John Urquhart commented that "The Island I Vow MAD (Make a Difference) day was another huge success for the charity, put together by our Project Officer, Lloyd Weir. Sadly, this was Lloyd's last duty for us as he is heading abroad to explore new career opportunities. Mr Weir will be replaced by Blair Wilson-Scott who joins us to lead the charity forward in our quest to support our beloved National Park.

Our thanks go out to The Ardlui Hotel for proving a packed lunch for the volunteers and for allowing us to use their Marina on the day. Thanks also go out to Loch Lomond Leisure for providing a boat and skipper (at a heavily reduced rate) to enable us to carry out the work.

**** The Elanvow Preservation Fund is a non-profit corporation dedicated to archaeological study, preservation and maintenance of the sixteenth century castle, buildings and site on Island I Vow (Elanvow), Loch Lomond, Scotland and other Macfarlane-relevant sites in collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland.***

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