

S TAFFIN NEWSLETTER

IRIS AN TAOBH SEAR

AUTUMN/WINTER 2015



An autumnal Stenscholl Island.

Fèis Thròndairnis

THE organisers behind the popular Fèis Thròndairnis have launched an official merchandising arm – just in time for Christmas. The fèis is now selling specially designed tea towels to help with funds. Committee member Christine Nicolson said: "The tea towel design was produced by Peggy Scott-Moncrieff, incorporating the Fèis Thròndairnis Logo, originally drawn by Catherine Macdonald, Digg. The towels are attractive and very good quality. They cost £5 and are available for purchase from Fèis committee members."



The enterprising committee has already pinpointed the date for next year's five-day event. Fèis Thròndairnis 2016 will take place from Monday, July 25 to Friday, July 29 at Staffin Primary School and Staffin Hall.

The committee members are Margaret Nicolson, Flodigarry; Peggy Scott-Moncrieff, Flodigarry; Pat Beaton,

Kilmaluag; Jannette Gillies, Staffin; Donna MacDonald, Digg; Fiona MacDonald, Brogaig; Sam Nicolson, Uig and Christine.

Staffin Crusaders

A RECORD number of shoeboxes filled by Staffin children have left for the long trip to Romania where their contents will be enjoyed by less fortunate youngsters. Forty one shoeboxes packed with small toys, sweets, toiletries, etc were filled by the Staffin Crusaders. One of the group's leaders Wendy Malloy, said: "Last year we made up 23 boxes and this was the highest ever! The appeal was supported by the pupils, parents and the community and it was a great effort from the 14 pupils in the school." Crusaders are a Christian-based club which has been running for many years in Staffin. The pupils enjoy games, a Bible story and crafts. Wendy added: "Every child in the school comes along, not all every week, but we never have less than 10."



Staffin shoeboxes set for Romania.

Staffin Community Hall

CONSTRUCTION work is progressing well at the new gym and it will hopefully be completed before Christmas.

The Staffin Hall Management Committee has announced a key staff appointment at the gym. Committee chairman Martin Perry said he was delighted that Skeabost-based personal trainer Sam Crowe had agreed to take on an important post. "We are pleased to announce the appointment of fitness instructor Sam Crowe to manage the facility with the

help of the steering group,” he said. “Sam is currently managing a task list before the opening. Further support staff will be added in the near future to ensure active community use of the gym and they will look to establish various classes.

“We continue to receive support from The People’s Health Trust with a successful visit from our sponsor HealthKind in October, and are also supported by Highland Council.

The steering group continues to drive the gym project with all key decisions such as its naming, costs, flooring, air-conditioning and furnishing ongoing. In the meantime the stairs have arrived, the gym machines are here and fire doors have been fitted.”

The new gym equipment includes two bikes, two treadmills, a cross-trainer, a rower and a multi-gym.

Opening hours will be on a six-day basis and access through a swipe card system. Martin added: “The gym membership and class cost discussions are ongoing but will be kept as low as possible.

“We thank our funders Highland Council and our main funders, People’s Health Trust, using money raised by HealthKind through The Health Lottery.”

Meanwhile, in Staffin Stores, cash can now be withdrawn from a new ATM machine. The machine is now operational when the shop is open and is the nearest cashpoint for 17 miles. Each transaction cost £1.25 but the feedback from the shop’s customers was that they were prepared to accept that fee as long as there was a new machine.

Colonel Jock MacDonald

STAFFIN’S talented young musicians shone at the Colonel Jock MacDonald Festival earlier this month. The annual event at Viewfield House saw children compete in various different competitions including the chanter, piping, fiddle, clarsach and Gaelic singing. Staffin’s Declan Malloy won the advanced chanter while Erin Gillies was runner-up in the

clarsach intermediate and came second in the 10-11 age group for singing.

Former Staffin Primary pupils also did well with Anna Nicolson winning the clarsach advanced competition while Jonathan Beaton competed in the under-14 piping winning the March and the Strathspey and Reel.

Staffin Community Council

KEY sections of a Community Emergency Plan for Staffin – which swings into action in the event of extreme weather, a power cut or other major disruption – requires to be updated.

Staffin Community Council is keen to ensure the plan, which offers support to local people, particularly elderly and vulnerable residents, is up to date as we head into the winter months.

Part of the plan includes having a list of local organisation and residents who may be able to offer assistance during an emergency. This includes emergency services such as the HM Coastguard and the Scottish Fire Service but also local residents such as the key holders to community venues.

The community council would be delighted to hear from any local people who would like to be included on a volunteer list, if an emergency situation arose.



Staffin winter whiteout conditions.

The community council is also keen to draw up a list of crofters who may be willing to provide assistance, particularly those who could provide tractors.

Any residents who could provide a generator(s) are also urged to get in touch. Staffin Community Hall and Columba 1400 have been identified as “places of safety” should there be an emergency. Please note that if you were to volunteer to be included on the Emergency Plan your name and address is *not* published publicly. If you think you can help please contact Staffin Community Council chairwoman Norma Young via e-mail norma.young@highland.gov.uk or Highland Council’s Skye ward manager Willie MacKinnon on 01478 6138649 or e-mail Willie.Mackinnon@highland.gov.uk *Meanwhile*, the new Staffin Community Council will meet for the first time on December 3. Several long-serving members, who had contributed a great deal over the years on important issues, had stepped down. It is hoped to create a page dedicated to the community council on the Staffin Trust website so updates, including meeting minutes, can be published.

Staffin War Memorials

TREES at the Staffin War memorial were cut back and the general area tidied up ahead of the Remembrance Sunday services. The trees were obscuring the memorial from the roadside and it is hoped the pruning will open up the area again. Two Remembrance Sunday services were held at Staffin and Culnacnoc. Janet Lamont, Valtos, laid a wreath at Culnacnoc on behalf of Staffin Community Council, as did Allan MacLeod, Clachan, for the Staffin fire brigade. Donald MacLeod of Culnacnoc then read out the names of the men listed on the memorial who died in the First World War. They were all pupils of the old Valtos School. The memorial was erected in 1921 and the cost was met by subscriptions from former pupils at home and abroad. A two-minute silence was held after the last name. There was a short reading from Angus Ross, Elishadder, and a prayer

from Donald MacDonald, Glasphein, who led the service. Following that, there was a service at the Staffin memorial, which was moved to



the nearby Columba 1400, because of the weather conditions. There were about 25 people in attendance. Royal Navy veteran Norman Poole, of Tighean na Glebe, laid a wreath along with Angus Gillies, Digg, and Colin Wilson, Trotternish Avenue. Lachie Gillies, Stenscholl, then read out the names of every man who is on the memorial. Like Donald at Culnacnoc, Lachie read out what they were known as locally in Gaelic, and there was a two-minute silence. The wreaths were later laid at the war memorial. Thanks to Jackie Gillies for opening up Columba.

Highland Council has a war memorials fund and SCT development officer Hugh Ross, after consulting the community council, has sought advice about applying for a grant. The council said a specialist power wash of the Staffin memorial could qualify, as could renewing the faded lettering at Culnacnoc – *see picture above*. The council will investigate sourcing quotes for the work.

Staffin Community Trust



Old Man of Storr: THE Old Man of Storr consultation survey has sparked an encouraging response in Staffin. The SCT is grateful to everybody who has made their views known on this hugely important community project. After the Friday November 27 deadline for survey returns, SCT and Highland Council will analyse the results and produce a report which will be published for everybody to access, both online and hardcopies. SCT is in discussions with Highland Council regarding the purchase or lease of the land (or part of) for the community benefit of Staffin. SCT sees it is a fantastic opportunity for the community to have a direct involvement at the site, potentially creating local employment and marketing Staffin and local businesses far more strongly.



The Storr deadline is looming.

The SCT views the Storr as a vital entry point and economic driver to Staffin for shops, cafes, accommodation providers and other key businesses. More than 100,000 people have already visited the Storr this year and traffic surveys - carried out by council transport officials - have identified that 70% of that total continue north on the A855 to Staffin. Surveys were hand delivered to every household in Staffin by SCT directors or e-mailed directly.

Housing: SCT's preferred site for a mixed-use affordable housing development is on Stenscholl Common Grazing, just past the school playing field and cattle grid, on the right-hand side. The Stenscholl township, in principle, supports the development which could

see six new homes and a commercial unit built. The SCT is leading the project with the Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association and the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. It has been proposed that SCT owns two of the houses which could see it allocate properties using its own policy. That could also provide the SCT with a regular income. Ground investigations involving a digger on site on Monday, November 23 were carried out to establish if the land is suitable for the development. A structural engineer's report will be submitted to SCT but the indications are that it is suitable for construction and the peat depth is not excessive.

Walking Group & Ceumannan II:

THERE is significant local interest in the suggested formation of a walking group in Staffin, which was mooted earlier in the summer. Since then three local people – Gordon Higgins, Martin Perry and Rachel Mitchell – have completed a day's training in Portree so they are qualified to lead a regular walking group. SCT is very grateful to all three for giving up their time that day and willingness to get involved as unpaid volunteers.

The SCT is working in partnership with a respected health-orientated organisation called Step It up Highland, which has links to NHS Highland, and already runs similar groups in Dunvegan, Waternish and Broadford.

The idea is that there is a weekly meeting time and everybody, of all ages, goes out together on the walk using the Ceumannan routes.

It is hoped to launch the walking group early in New Year - full details will be advertised closer to the time.

Please let Hugh Ross know by phoning 01470 562 464, calling in at the SCT office or e-mailing staffin.lido@gmail.com if you are interested in participating.

Meanwhile, SCT is working hard to progress new footpaths in Staffin through the next phase of its Ceumannan project which will also include a viewing platform

at Lealt and a new footbridge to the Brothers Point. A community consultation drop in event will be held early in the New Year.

Gaelic course: THE Staffin Community Trust and respected Gaelic broadcaster Roddy MacLean were short listed for the national Duaisean Ghaidhlig (the Gaelic awards).

Roddy's 10-day course, 'Arainneachd, Canan is Dualchas' – Gaelic in the Environment – has been hosted in Staffin by SCT for three years and directors Sine Gillespie and Dugald Ross have played a key role in the course delivery. SCT and Roddy were nominated in the Community, Heritage and Tourism category at the Daily Record and Bòrd na Gàidhlig Scottish Gaelic Awards. The awards ceremony was held on Wednesday, November 18 in Glasgow with well-known Gaelic personality Cathy MacDonald hosting the event.



Roddy MacLean during the Staffin course.

The Staffin course is innovative in offering the Gaelic view of Scotland's environment and habitats. Participants have included students and teachers, countryside rangers, artists, musicians, broadcasters and anthropologists. Staffin has a growing reputation as one of the best places in Scotland to deliver outdoor Gaelic courses. In partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Flodigarry Township Trust (Urras Fhlòdaigearraidh) also delivers

summer courses which offer 'total immersion plus'.

SCT website: NINE Staffin businesses are now advertised on the Staffin Trust website, which has been growing in popularity over the summer and autumn months. At present around 60 per cent of the website hits are coming from people who have not been on the site before so they are using it as a key source of information to find out more about Staffin.

In October, there were almost 6,000 page views with 1,600 users from the UK, USA, China, Spain, Germany, Canada and other countries. The website has been used to market Staffin, update the community about SCT projects and promote local businesses. The featured local businesses pay a nominal £20 annual sum which goes towards the website's running costs. SCT is keen to add as many businesses as possible so visitors can discover what Staffin can offer - if there are businesses interested please get in touch.

Staffin Football

FOOTBALL is played every Friday night at the Columba pitch from 7.30pm to 9pm. Players of secondary school age upwards are welcome.

New Trotternish Mòd Club

AN after-school Mòd club is in the pipeline, after further Trotternish success at the Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail. There was an excellent showing from the north end youngsters in Oban in October. The Clann Thronairnis organisers would like to thank Margaret Nicolson, the former Staffin and Kilmuir head teacher, for helping out with organising the trip; Kirsteen Graham for her huge help in preparing the children for competitions; retired teachers Amy Cruickshank and Catherine Budge who also took the time to support the children with their preparations and all the parents at both schools. In 2016 it is hoped to run an after-school Mòd Club each Friday at Staffin Primary School. If any members

of the community would like to help at this club they can contact Josie Macleod by e-mailing josienicleoid@aol.com or Marion Gillies mazgillies@aol.com



The winning Clann Thronairnis Folk Group with Skye Highland Councillor Hamish Fraser and Kate Dunbar, of the IT company Fujitsu. Highland Council sponsored the folk group competition in partnership with the firm which awarded a £500 voucher for IT equipment.

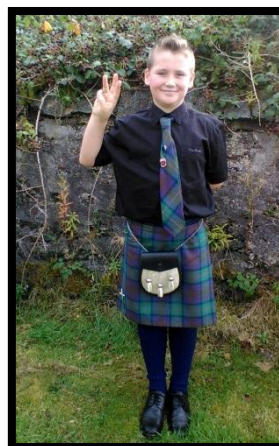
Results: Megan MacIver - 2nd Sgeulachd 11-12, 2nd presenting under 13, 3rd unseen reading 11-12, 3rd writing 11-12. Erin Gillies - 1st clarsach elementary, winning the Florence Wilson Trophy, 1st unseen reading 11-12, 2nd writing 11-12. Declan Malloy, *pic right* - 3rd chanter - under 13. Alexander Whitehead - 1st poster 7-8. Willow Ferguson - 2nd poster 7-8. Freddy Wallwork - 3rd poster 7-8. Lexy MacLeod - 3rd poem, age 9. Group prizes saw Staffin Primary team up with Kilmuir Primary as the Clann Thronairnis Folk Group – under-13, Action Song, Oran Luaidh. Flodigarry's Anna Nicolson won the clarsach competition for Intermediate 2 juniors, taking home the Lawrence MacDuff cup. Isla MacLeod, Portree High School, won the girls Traditional Silver medal competition for girls aged 13-16. Ross MacLeod won the boys 9-10 solo singing and the poster 9-10. In Highland dancing, novice 10 years and over, Megan MacIver was the runner up. For Highland Dancing, Intermediate, 9 years and under, Lexy

MacLeod got 1st place, 2 x 2nd places, a 3rd place and 3 x 4th places.



Press & Journal photographer Sandy McCook lines up the victorious Oran Luaidh Group.

Also for the Highland dancing novice competition, 10 years and over, Erin Gillies, *pic below*, received 2 x 3rd places and a 5th place.



The Kilmuir pupils' individual results were: Seumas Campbell - 1st in presenting, 3rd in prescribed solo (9-10) and 3rd in writing. Eoghann Campbell - 1st in conversation, 2nd in prescribed solo (7 years) and 3rd in poem (7 years). Beth Campbell - 3rd in traditional singing (10 years and under). In Highland dancing premier 10 years, Beth won Overall Winner trophy. Emma Campbell - 2nd in poem (7 years). Mia Mutch was 2nd in poem (11-12) (learners) and her brother Jack came 2nd in poem (9-10) (learners).