

S TAFFIN NEWSLETTER

IRIS AN TAOBH SEAR

SAMHRADH/SUMMER 2016



GOLDEN STAFFIN: Haymaking in Stenscholl.

Fèis Thròndairnis

ORGANISERS are delighted to announce that the fèis is again a sell out - with 60 young participants. The fèis committee is grateful with the continued enthusiasm and support within the Trotternish communities.

Fèis Thròndairnis is an annual five-day teaching festival of traditional Gaelic music, song, drama, and shinty for young people aged 8 – 18 years, in the Trotternish area. As always there is an excellent line-up of tutors, including -

Accordion: John Carmichael and Sìleas Sinclair; Drama, Daibhidh Walker; Pipes, Ian R Finlayson; Guitar, Murdo Cameron; Percussion, Drumming, Andrew MacPherson; Clàrsach, Ciorstaidh Beaton; Tin Whistle and Gàidhlig song, Katherine MacLeod; Shinty, Allan MacLeod; Piano/Keyboards, Andrew (Addie) Harper and Ciorstaidh Beaton; Fiddle: Graham MacKenzie.



Family, friends and members of the public are very welcome to attend the Tutors' Cèilidh on July 26 at Staffin Hall at 7.00pm and the Fèis Participants' Cèilidh on Friday 29th July 2016 at Staffin Hall at 1.30pm

For further information, contact Christine Nicolson on 552260

Staffin Primary School

This has been a really busy term, *writes teacher Marion Wright*. A huge amount of energy was put into the local Mod and the children were very successful, winning prizes for their action song, folk group and Òran Luadh as well as many individual events. The children in Gaelic Medium 5-7 had a fantastic week in Edinburgh and particularly enjoyed Dynamic Earth. The Primary 7 pupils also had a brilliant four days in Raasay taking part in a variety of outdoor activities ranging from kayaking and crafting to toasting marshmallows. It was good for them to meet some of the children that they will be going to Portree High School with after the summer. We were very fortunate with the weather for our annual sports day. Kilmuir Primary School joined us and a great (and energetic!) time was had by all. The highlight of the term for the children was the school trip to Landmark, *pic below*.

One of the children had written to our headteacher Mrs Jenny Kiss asking if they



could go there this year, and she was so impressed with his letter that she arranged it.

Staffin Community Hall

The Staffin Gym opened in the New Year to great success and has attracted more than 80 members. A competition was held to name the gym and design a logo, *below*, won by Staffin Primary School pupils Ellie McIvor and Holly MacLeod, who are also pictured, *below*. Anna MacDonald was appointed trainee fitness instructor and she is now working towards qualifications. Classes started in March, Metafit is on each Tuesday at 6.30pm and Saturday starts at 9.30am. Metafit is high



intensity training, designed to build muscle and burn fat fast. Abs class is each Tuesday 7.15pm. It is only £3 per class. The

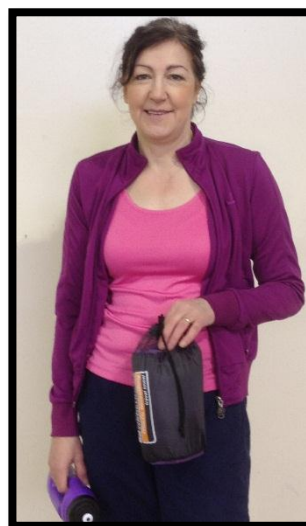
classes are well attended but the male attendees would appreciate some more company! Bi-monthly challenges are also held in the gym. To date there has been a cycle or run, in distance terms, to Inverness. Joseph



Lewa reached the Highland Capital first and received a box of healthy Nak'd bars for his efforts. The following month Nina Gillies,

pictured right, was the winner of the muscle build challenge, increasing her body muscle mass by 2 percent in only one month. Nina received a micro towel and water bottle. Last month Emma Gillies was our winner. Emma tested how fast she could run one mile at the beginning of the month and then made the biggest improvement on that. Her prize is on its way.

Active Kids - as part of the gym's commitment to bring fitness to the Staffin community a weekly after-school club is held for primary aged children. The club is on Tuesdays between 3.15pm to 4pm and is centred around fun and games to get the children moving and improve their fitness. Wall artwork has just been added to bring a bit of interest to the gym walls. A big thank you to



Ann Marie Ferguson who helped select the art work and took the lead in putting it up. At the beginning of June, **Staffin Stores** celebrated 10 years as a community-owned shop. As we hope you will agree,

the shop keeps on improving, *writes Martin Perry, chairman of the Hall Committee.*

And to cope with the demand two new tills have been ordered to cater for the local custom and visitors to the community. In the past 10 years your shop has transferred/donated £95,000 to the hall funds as the shop still remains a not-for-profit company, the whole building being run as a social enterprise.

This has enabled maintenance work to be carried out in the hall and also helped to establish the new gym. Staffin Stores will soon introduce a loyalty scheme for its regular customers and we will advise you when this will start.

Whilst many improvements have been made, including the new gym and refurbishment of the meeting room to encompass a new dance studio, work needs to carry on to keep the building, and in particular, the roof in good repair and your support for the hall and your custom at the attached shop will help us achieve this.

Staffin Sheepdog Trials



AROUND 60 dogs will be running at the hugely popular Staffin Trials at Ellishadder. The annual event will be judged by a man with an impressive pedigree himself. The dogs and their handlers' performances will come under the watchful eyes of the 2010 Scottish Champion Scott Renwick, of Inverbroom Farm, Ullapool.

Handlers from across Europe and the Home Nations - with former world, international and national champions among the stellar field – will be competing to try and get their hands on the coveted Staffin Sheepdog Trials Winner's Shield.

The event takes place on Friday, July 15. Staffin is the final day of the Hebridean Circuit which starts on Saturday July 9 in Waternish then onto Uist on the Monday, Harris on Tuesday, Shawbost in Lewis on the Wednesday and Lochs on Thursday before crossing the Minch back to Skye and Staffin for the grand finale on Friday.

All money raised will go to a Skye-based cancer charity. The trials' organisers hope to have a good turnout of support and any contributions or help in any way are gladly appreciated with the usual stalls and catering set up.

Valtos and Staffin war memorials

FUNDING has been secured to re-letter the faded inscriptions at the Valtos War Memorial. Prior to the last Remembrance Sunday, there was a community clean-up of the area around the Staffin War Memorial, which saw trees cut back and general overgrown vegetation removed. It was noted

that there was lichen on the memorial and it was looking in need of a general clean up. At Valtos War Memorial, the letters of the men who perished in the First World War have also faded. See picture, *below*.

The Staffin Community Trust and Staffin Community Trust received almost £1,000 last year from Highland Council to create and install a granite plaque to remember the American victims of the Bein Edra air crash. SCT approached the council to see if funding from the war memorials fund could again be sourced. Fortunately, the council's community services department agreed to



fund the re-lettering at Valtos and a specialist clean of the Staffin War Memorial, following the community clean-up efforts. The community council and the north Skye branch of the Royal British Legion have both consented to the work, which will

cost more than £1,400. It will be carried out by the Dingwall-based sculptor firm, John Hood & Son, hopefully by the end of July. Sincere thanks go to council officials Donnie MacLeod, Robin Pope and to Councillor Allan Henderson for their advice and help. An update will be provided once the work is carried out.

The Flodigarry Trust

Although we may have been quiet of late, plans for our proposed development are progressing steadily, *writes Margaret Nicolson*, chairwoman of Urras Fhlòdaigearraidh.

There has been progress and we shall keep our membership and the community updated in due course.

Urras Fhlòdaigearraidh is again running courses in the community this summer, in collaboration with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. We have in June worked with a new course offered to prospective students for Sabhal

Mòr we held the first of our regular summer courses. This year again we have students from Nova Scotia and Germany, as well as from Scotland. In August we shall once again host the Scottish university summer school students in addition to the regular cohort of students.

This summer we shall be supporting CnaG's Campa Shradagan which will be based at Dun Flodigarry hostel for the week.

Urras Fhlòdaigearraidh would wish to thank Dun Flodigarry Hostel and Columba 1400 for providing facilities to use during course weeks. We offer our congratulations to all the children who participated in the local Mòd competitions. Children are also preparing for the trip across the Minch to participate in the Royal National Mòd in October. The Urras Baile Fhlòdaigearraidh trophy, for Oran Luadh, has this year again been won by Bun-sgoil Stafainn, at the Skye Provincial Mòd. 'S math a' rinn sibh uile a-rithist!

Staffin Community Trust

The Storr: A KEY contract, which will assess the potential purchase and improvements of Highland Council land at the Storr, has been awarded.

Staffin Community Trust (SCT) has appointed an experienced project team to investigate the council site from the roadside up. A consortium led by Dingwall-based Athena Solutions, and partners Richard Heggie of Urban Animation and Sam Foster Architects, were successful in the tendering process and have now started work on an Options Appraisal of the 82-hectare site.

The contract will review all the options at the location, with the estimated costs and community and economic benefit for Staffin, and Skye, investigated.

That will include an assessment of the liabilities, maintenance, potential capital and running costs, etc.

The local community highlighted in the consultation questionnaires, which were returned last November, its concerns about parking congestion, road safety and the absence of toilets at the site, which sparked

public health concerns from a lot of people who responded.

The consultant team will present the options to the SCT board in September. The preferred option will be decided upon, and a business



case will then be presented to the board in October. The options include a proposed buy-out of all the land, a section of the ground or a

lease/partnership arrangement with the council. Following that process, SCT will then look to take the business case to the council. The community will be kept updated throughout the work. *If there are any queries don't hesitate to contact SCT development officer Hugh Ross on 562 464, staffin.lido@gmail.com or call in to the office Monday to Friday.*

Housing: SCT is now working hard on securing funding to progress its preferred site, near the school on a flat piece of Stenscholl Township ground, in partnership with the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust and Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association. It is proposed to build six homes. This development has the support, in principle, of the Stenscholl Township, and Staffin Community Council.

It is without a doubt one of the SCT's most crucial projects and aims to retain, and attract, young people and families in Staffin who cannot afford to purchase on the open market.

A recent economic study carried out for SCT reported that Staffin's resident population has alarmingly dropped by 5 per cent between 2009 and 2013. Staffin now has 30 people less living here, which is a significant number for a small rural community.

Meanwhile, Portree, which has had significant housing developments built in recent years, has seen its population grow by 11 per cent in the last decade.

Staffin Primary School's roll has dropped from a high of more than 50 pupils around 10 years ago to only 14 children and SCT is aware of families leaving Staffin to move to Portree for housing. It is now 17 years since the last affordable homes were built in the district, an unacceptable length of time.

Skye Ecomuseum II: A VIEWING platform at Lealt Gorge is among the plans for a proposed major enhancement of the Skye Ecomuseum which saw interpretation panels, paths and parking first created back in 2008. Funding and planning applications have now been lodged to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Highland Council. SCT wants to construct a viewing platform at Lealt, similar to a structure built by the National Trust for Scotland at Corrieshalloch, near Ullapool. The



platform, *see artist impression, above*, would extend 3-metres over the side offering fantastic views up to the waterfall, the Trotternish Ridge and out to Wester Ross. The Lealt township is an important part of Staffin's industrial heritage with examples of the salmon fishing stations and diatomite mining nearby and SCT wants to illustrate that through attractive interpretive signage. SCT took advice from the council prior to submitting the plans and was advised an extended parking area was required to cater for the anticipated increase in demand. SCT has also submitted details of a new footpath at Grealin to Lealt, path work in Flodigarry at Loch Langaig and renewed interpretation panels at all the existing sites, including "gateway" structures at the Storr, Quiraing and Flodigarry. SCT would also be looking to deliver a comprehensive events programme which

would be managed by the proposed creation of a project manager's job, on a three-year-contract - if the funding bid is approved. A report carried out on the project by respected Highland economist Steve Westbrook has estimated the project's delivery could boost the local community's economy by £165,000 through additional visitor spend.

The HLF will assess the funding application and will visit Staffin later this summer before a decision is made in September.

SCT would like to thank all the local businesses, residents and crofting townships for their input and support in lodging the funding bid.

SCT website: Nine Staffin businesses are now featured on the Staffin Community Trust business listings. www.staffin-trust.co.uk For an annual £20 fee, information about each business, pictures and contact details are provided. There were more than 3,750 page views of the website in the past month alone.

Archaeological project: Following the success of last September's archaeological dig, SCT and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) have been in discussions about a possible follow-up dig, roughly the same size. Pupils from Staffin and Kilmuir primary schools, 10 volunteers and around 200 people in total visited the dig over the five days. Tests on hazelnuts found during the dig concluded they were from the hunter gatherer period more than 8,000 years ago. SCT is again keen to involve the local schools and will investigate whether funding can be secured for this important educational project, but not until it has spoken to Garafad township tenants and residents.

Haymaking in Staffin 1962

A WELSH teenager who had a memorable holiday at a Staffin youth hostel in the early 1960s has uncovered old images of haymaking from that era.

More than 50 years later and David Evans is now able to share the pictures for the first time, captured when he was only 17 in

September 1962. David stayed in the former youth hostel at Quiraing Lodge and took several pictures showing how communal crofting was at that time, including the cover image, and the Stenscholl picture, *below*.



David is keen to donate the images to the Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre. They can be viewed at www.staffin-trust.co.uk Staffin Community Trust has compiled a growing online collection of old Staffin pictures, any additions are very welcome.

Staffin Community Council

Extracts from meetings in May and April are published below.

Dog waste campaign poster

CC happy with the poster & competition (closing date 27th May). It was agreed that the council would provide a prize of £50 for the school & £10 as a prize to the winning student.

Public toilet facilities in Staffin:

Simon had spoken with Martin Perry at Community Hall association. There was no problem in constitutionally with the facilities being open 7 days per week. The problem was with the opening, closing & supervision of them for the Sunday without the shop & gym being open on that day.

Village speed limit update:

Simon emailed Bruce Crawford [police sergeant] to thank him for his efforts. He confirmed that a number of people had been

stopped, one doing 55mph through the village.

Feedback from NHS SoS meeting in Portree – Isobel [MacDonald, community council member].

Well supported meeting in Portree. Petitions Committee of Scottish Parliament upheld case but things on hold until after elections. NHS not helping consultation by holding meetings at difficult times & apparently carrying on with their plans regardless of people's opinions. Considering suitable protest action after elections.

The minutes of all community council meetings are displayed to read at Staffin Hall and Mackenzie Stores, or online at <http://www.staffincc.org.uk/index.asp>

Staffin girls are Skye shinty stars!

TEENAGERS from Staffin, and with direct ties to the district, are playing a starring role in Skye Camanachd Ladies successful season to date.

Brogaig's Christina MacDonald and Digg's Anna MacDonald are joined in the island team by Caitlin MacLean, whose mother Maureen is from the Taobh Sear and sisters Abbie and Holly MacLean, whose mother Kathleen hails



from Digg. At the time of writing the team sit top of the WCA Marine Harvest National Division One, with Lochaber two points behind.

Skye are also through to the final of the WCA Valerie Fraser Camanachd Cup, having beaten Badenoch and Strathspey 5-1 last month.

