

EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.27 - AUGUST 2004

To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

It has been very busy with a lot happening on the Island and it is time to catch up with you again.

Harbour

We are delighted to inform members that our application for funding to buy the harbour has been successful. This has now been passed to our solicitors who are dealing with the legal technicalities of the purchase.

Members will know that Funding has also been confirmed for a range of interim improvements and first aid measures to prevent further decline of the harbour. There is ever more competition for funding for these kinds of projects and thanks are due to the Harbour Steering Group (Sandra Melville, Fiona Blakey, John Merrilees, Mike MacKenzie) for the enormous amount of work they have done to get this funding. Improvements include:

- Digital topographical survey and engineering survey of harbour
- Dredging adjacent to South wall of harbour
- Provision of Pontoon
- Mooring Trot
- Stabilisation and propping of collapsed corner at North harbour wall
- Levelling of Rush and Gush area and creation of hard standing for boat storage
- Provision of Timber fenders at some places on harbour wall

The specifications are currently being fine-tuned and we hope to be able to announce a start date for the work soon. Prior to work commencing, directors will meet with boat owners to ensure that the specification of work meet the needs of boat owners as closely as possible

Hall

The Hall opened its doors yet again on Saturday 22nd May when we had a visit from Scottish Dance Group DANNSA as part of Turas Nan Innse Gall (The Hebridean Tour) entitled "Crossing the Bridge". They brought a band of talented players with them and performed their own unique arrangements. It was particularly appreciated that they interspersed these performance dances with ones that we could do.

The next weekend gave us The Ballochmyle Ceilidh Band playing a superb variety of music ranging from traditional Ceilidh dance tunes to more contemporary songs. Nearly a full house danced the night away. The Ceilidh was also well attended by a large group from an 'old island family' who have had long-standing connections with the island for generations. One of this family group was Margaret MacQueen, who was born on the island and actually christened in the Hall itself. The entrance fees collected were in aid of Macmillan Cancer Relief and £400 was raised.

Youth Drama came to Easdale from Benderloch & North Connel Drama Club Juniors performing "Fireflies" A child's-eye view of Chernobyl. The result was a very moving and thoughtful performance. The musical and vocal talents of the cast as well as children from Easdale Primary School also entertained us. Proceeds from the evening went to the Chernobyl Children's Charities.

We were very fortunate on the 9th June to have a visit from two of Scotland's most talented artists. Liz Lochhead and Michael Marra presented an evening of poetry, songs and readings, which captivated us with a range of material both touching and just plain funny.

Although they sound like a heavy metal outfit, Heathen played songs of the last thirty years at the Regatta Dance and Disco on 10th July with great style. We also had a first outing for Leo'e Juke Box Disco, where we could choose our own music, so we all had quite a night.

On 17th July the legendary Blues artist Tam White, ably assisted by Dutch singer/songwriter Joost, entertained us in his unique, inimitable style. There was barely a still foot as he romped through a set of his old favourites and some new songs as well. Everyone enjoyed the evening and both artists expressed a desire to return, as they loved playing in the Hall.

The busiest concert since The Waterboys was the Shipbuilder's Night. Great performances by Ribbon Road (Brenda, Geoff and Wee) and Orchestra Macaroon (Colin, Phil, Stephen, Wee and guests from many lands. A new CD "Breakfast in Balquhiddar" was celebrated and we all had quite a night.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The work of Jean Adams MBE of Easdale Island is known around the world. From Saturday 14th to 20th August there will be an exhibition celebrating her artistic achievements to be opened by Cllr. Duncan MacIntyre. Jean is the curator of the award-winning Easdale Island Folk Museum now in its 23rd year. We have all admired different aspects of Jean's work, which include her models of the quarries of the Slate Islands, her display of photography at the Slate Centre of the Slate Island Heritage Trust at Ellenabeich. The exhibition will also include other sides of her work including set and costume design from the stage and sketches from her many travels to all parts of the world. She will also be giving demonstrations of painting her famous cat stones. All proceeds will go towards the works of the Slate Islands Heritage Trust.

We are looking forward to classical music on Friday 17th September from The Ceoil Quartet and in October or November another visit from The Mull Theatre presenting "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hide", the date to be confirmed.

Regatta

This took place on 10th July and was a great success both socially and financially. This was due in no small measure to the organization of the event by Jan Fraser, Denise Whyatt and Lynn MacKenzie. Thanks are also due to the numerous people who helped and participated on the day particularly Colin Blakey's Easdale Island Orchestra entertaining us with music with a Caribbean flavour and the people who participated in this year's Sponsored Swim. Thanks are also due to this year's supporters: The Build Centre, Oban; Keyline, Oban; Atam, Oban; Tigh an Truish, M. Mackenzie Builders Ltd; Puffer Bar & Restaurant; Highland Arts Studio; Balvicar Shop & Post Office; Adrian Laycock Ltd and Sea.fari adventures.

Membership

Thank you to many of you who have renewed your membership to the Eilean Eisdeal Trust. The increase in membership fees is helping to stabilize our finances in order to ensure that the basic running costs of the hall are being met. If you have yet to renew, a membership form is attached for your use. Thank you very much.

Grand Prize Raffle

Raffle tickets, for the grand draw at the Stone Skimming on 26th September, are now available with many folk taking books of tickets to sell to their friends and acquaintances. If you would like any more information on this or would like some raffle tickets, please contact Annabel.

Coal Day

Coal day is Saturday 28th August and in the evening an eclectic mixture of light-hearted music will take place in the Puffer Bar with food available around midnight. For information about this you can contact Fiona.

Stone Skimming

The 8th World Stone Skimming will be held on Sunday 26th September, with a Pre-Skim Dance and Party featuring 'Framed' on Saturday evening 25th September. There will be a late night ferry.

Contact Information

Email contact information for Trust Directors is:

Chair, Donald Melville

Secretary, Jess Hill

Treasurer, Annabel Gregory

Directors, Denise Whyatt

Bert Baker

Mike MacKenzie

Hall Manager - Geoff Heslop

Thank you all for all your help and support

Donald Melville - Chair