Guide to Rally Hebrides 2017: Section Four
£16,000 presented by Rally

The success of last year’s Rally Heb豆 was marked by the handover of a major payment to Macmillan Cancer Support – Isle of Lewis Committee in mid July.

The total raised last year came to £16,129.58.

This year’s post-rally event is being held at the Caladh Inn, which starts at 9pm on Saturday August 19th.

The event has local band Strange Brew playing from 10pm and tickets are available to purchase for the dance from the rally shop or any of the committee members with the cost being a £3 donation.

See Full Rally Heb豆 guide in Section Four

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Another busy year for Western Isles CAB

"O"ur organisation is still kept very busy and that is one thing that is not affected as the years go by as the constant demand for advice never diminishes," said Western Isles Citizens Advice Services Chairman David Blaney.

As WICAS prepares for its 2017 AGM, taking place this month, the organisation looks back over the past year, which saw the four CAB offices in the Western Isles deal with 4,296 client contacts, who raised 7,150 issues.

"I am so grateful to our staff and volunteers for all the hard work they carry out year after year and the excellent service they give to those who contact us for advice on many different and varied issues that come their way," continued Mr Blaney.

The past year saw changes to the structure of our organisation and I was so impressed by the smooth transition from the old to the new, and much credit has to go to our Strategic and Operational Managers in the way they implemented such changes."

Despite going through internal alterations, the Islands’ CAB staff and volunteers remained dedicated to helping local residents, with the top enquiries (36%) received relating to Welfare Benefits.

Debt related problems made up 30% of enquiries, and the remaining 34% related to such matters as education, employment, housing, financial products and services, health and community care, immigration, legal, NHS concerns and complaints, relationships, tax, travel and utilities.

As in previous years many clients were given representation at Social Security and Employment Tribunals with excellent results in most of the cases.

And client financial gains, including the above figure amounted to over £713,716. As some clients do not inform the bureaux of the financial outcome of successful advice, the amount is in all likelihood bound to be greater.

To find out more, island residents are invited to the WICAS Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, August 16th, in Lewis CAB, Viewfield Terrace, Stornoway, at 6pm.

WICAS is grateful to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for their continued core funding and other support that the local authority give towards this vital service to the people of the Western Isles.

As a result of extra fundraising from other sources, over the past year, WICAS manages additional specialised Projects such as courts services, welfare reform, health complaints and concerns and personal pension issues.

This has enabled the organisation to employ extra staff, deal with extra enquiries and bring additional income into the Western Isles.

And the four island bureaux – based in Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra – are continually looking for new volunteers who will be given training to carry out various duties in their offices, such as front line advice work and administrative tasks.

WICAS Training Officer Norah MacPhee said: “Life is never dull in any of our offices and one look at the numerous and varied types of issues raised just goes to show how our volunteers can get hooked on their work as the variety of enquiries is endless.”

The organisation would like to hear from anyone who can give some of their time to volunteer – and you can contact any of the offices for further information.

Volunteer Directors are also required to fill vacancies on the Board of Management; and enquiries can be made to any of the offices on what is involved in being a WICAS Director.

Contact details for local CAB offices are –

Barra CAB – Castlebay, Barra, 01871 810608
Uist CAB – 45 Viewfield Way, Balivanich, Benbecula, 01870 602421
Harris CAB – Pier Road, Tarbert, Harris, 01859 502431
Lewis CAB – 41-43 Westview Terrace, Stornoway, Lewis, 01851 705727

Young skippers recommended for loans

Seven young local fishing skippers and first-time vessel owners across the Outer Hebrides have been recommended for loans totalling over £300,000 from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar’s Fisheries Investment Scheme (FIS). All those involved are aged below 40, with five being just 30 or under. Three are based in North Uist; one each in Benbecula and Barra; and two from Lewis. Collectively, the total value of these projects is almost £1.75m – with the Comhairle investment recommended leveraging-in almost £1.5m of additional external funding and private investment from the applicants’ own resources.

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Together... art and architecture

By Iain A MacSween

The worlds of art and architecture came together in Stornoway on Wednesday July 12, at a celebration of the ‘Building Our Islands’ initiative.

Building Our Islands is a project for everyone in the Outer Hebrides to learn about and engage with their built environment through workshops, illuminations, art and photography. An Lanntair and The Western Isles Architecture Group linked up for this project throughout the Outer Hebrides.

The project is supported by HIE and CNES along with a number of other funders, including Tighean Innse Gall, The Royal Institute of Scottish Architects and The Big Lottery Fund Awards for All.

Three nights of illuminations were held, in Rodel on Friday 24 March, and in Stornoway on Saturday 25 and Monday 27 March.

On each night the buildings had various projections, including over 400 works of ARTecture submitted by members of the public.

Neil Ferguson, President of the Inverness Architectural Association, thanked all who had contributed to the Building our Islands programme.

“This project is an opportunity for engagement and communication which is essential for our next generation’s interest and inspiration in the built environment around them in these islands,” he commented.

Catherine Yeatman, an architect tasked with the educational angle of the project, reported on how Building Our Islands had given Hebridean children an opportunity to go out and find out what the built environment around them consisted of.

Schoolchildren were issued a series of worksheets, and looked at various kinds of buildings and how different buildings with different purposes might look.

After compiling a library of different building types, they then produced a worksheet introducing architectural vocabulary, before using Google Earth to compare and contrast what they found in their local environment with an urban environment like one in Inverness or Glasgow.

“It is important to understand what is different and special about here,” she said.

The final stage in the educational programme was a series of workshops run by Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) on home energy usage, and making lanterns which would form part of the special illumination events.

The final speaker of the afternoon was John Maher, who has been responsible for a special ‘Architectural Trail’, photographing ‘buildings of architectural significance but also other buildings of special significance to islanders’.

“Being totally into architecture and photography and travelling round the islands it was a no brainer for me when I was asked to this,” he said.

The Western Isles Architectural Trail brochure features a map of 29 selected buildings from across the Outer Hebrides, which will be available in tourist offices among other dedicated areas.

John Maher added that the trail was by no means complete, and there was plenty potential for more buildings to be added to the online version in the near future.

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28 Friday 4th August Dementia friendly cafe. Clan MacQuarrie centre, Borve. 1.30-3pm.

Contact Ellie to book a place edonnelly
New SY central office for NFU Mutual

By Iain A MacSween

The NFU Mutual office in Stornoway has moved from Francis Street to Cromwell Street Quay.

Previously based above the Edinburgh Woollen Mill shop (formerly Maciver and Dart), the new office is a great step forward for staff and customers, says Duncan Macintyre, who runs the Western Isles arm of the NFU Mutual operation.

“The previous office was in use for over 20 years and it certainly served its purpose,” said Duncan.

“Unfortunately, access was through a front door and then you had to walk up a very steep stairway.

“We always had problems with access, particularly for our clients with mobility issues.”

An alternative operating location was something that had been spoken of for ‘many years’, said Duncan, and both staff and customers alike are now delighted at the new premises at Unit 2, Harbour View.

“It looks like it will be a busy part of the town with the Blue Lobster café next door, and the former Hydro shop being sold,” said Duncan.

“The new office is brighter and it’s far more professional in it’s layout. Our visual presence has been improved with new signage outside which increases our visibility to the public.”

“And of course it’s on the ground floor, so there are no access issues unlike our previous office.”

Explaining the structure of the local NFU Mutual operation, Duncan said: “I represent NFU Mutual in the Western Isles as an approved and appointed person, and in April of 2016, I merged my business with the Skye NFU Mutual agency, which is run by Jake Scales, out of Portree.

“We are business partners, operating as NFU Western Isles, Skye and Lochalsh.

“Between the two of us and our staff, we cover the Western Isles, Skye and Lochalsh.”

Duncan added: “We believe this new office will be a real step forward and a real sign of our commitment to serving our community for years to come.”

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Nights of India for India and Hebrides

By Eldhish Whiteford

A signature event for Scotland’s Asian music and arts festival, Aberystwyth Asian Music and Arts Festival, which runs from 3rd to 18th August, will be launching the special event ‘Nights of India for India and Hebrides’.

As part of the festival, the event will be a celebration of Indian music and arts, featuring performances by various artists from India and the Hebrides. The event will be held at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, and will include a mix of music, dance, and visual art performances. The aim of the event is to promote cultural exchange and understanding between India and the Hebrides.

Tickets for the event will be available online, and will include access to the main event and the accompanying workshops. The festival is supported by the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council, and is part of the Networks of Change programme, which aims to promote cultural exchange and understanding between different cultures.

The event will feature performances by artists from India and the Hebrides, including traditional music and dance, contemporary art, and poetry. The performances will be held in the main auditorium of the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, and will be followed by a reception and networking event.

The event is open to all, and is an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy a unique cultural experience.

Colin MacKenzie...both famous and unknown!

By Karol Whiteford

He left his post as Curator in the Asian and African Department of the British Museum in 1807, and was responsible for the initial excavation of the Amaravati Stupa in southern India. As such, he is considered one of Scotland’s most famous 19th century explorers.

Born in Stornoway in 1754, Colin Mackenzie, a talented young man who was responsible for the initial excavation of the Amaravati Stupa in southern India, was responsible for the initial excavation of the Amaravati Stupa in southern India. As such, he is considered one of Scotland’s most famous 19th century explorers.

Mackenzie’s personal interest in research and his keenness to explore some of India’s darker historical events, many of which are connected with the East India Company and British Empirical rule, and how those histories have come to shape cultures and identities across the UK and India today.

The biography was never completed however as Mackenzie died in 1821 and the manuscript was lost.

The show will be set to a backdrop of moving imagery. A talented group of musicians has been brought together to perform the music, which will provide a fitting soundtrack to the story.


Indian Classical Music concert of Sitar and Tabla

Kaviraj Singh Dhadyalla

Indian music melodic compositions of Raags, as well as Taals, rhythmic patterns prepared children’s drumming and singing performances amongst others. correlated with Santoor music and vocals.

Kaviraj Singh Dhadyalla left his position as Customs Officer in 1807 to emerge on the Indian music world, and conducted himself as ‘a humanist in the 18th.' He was a gifted musician and composer, and Indian traditions.

Kaviraj Singh is emerging as a unique and celebrated talent of the new British music genre ‘The Asian Blues’, widening the good work he did to life.”

Kaviraj Singh Dhadyalla is a talented musician and composer, and Indian traditions.

Sona will present an illustrated talk of drummers and singers. And the Purvai Club Night is set to set the event goers dance the night away with the return of An Lanntair’s own DJ Collective – Deljeem and Fraser – who have prepared a night of electronic music and images.

The biography was never completed however as Mackenzie died in 1821 and the manuscript was lost.

The show will be set to a backdrop of moving imagery. A talented group of musicians has been brought together to perform the music, which will provide a fitting soundtrack to the story.

Lews Castle College UHI is holding a series of Taster sessions during its Open Day at its Stornoway campus on Wednesday 16th August.

The purpose of the Open Day and Tasters is to provide people with the opportunity to find out more about the college, UHI and the many opportunities available locally through Lews Castle College UHI from August 2017.

“We are conscious that the college and UHI’s main priority is to provide people in our community with the opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge locally, and by doing this we can support local businesses and the local economy with an improved skills base,” said Mr Iain Macmillan, Principal of Lews Castle College UHI.

“Our Open Day and the Taster sessions which we’re running on Wednesday 16th will provide people from throughout our community with the information to find out more about the wide range of opportunities available locally, whether they wish to sign up for a full-time course or try some part-time or on-line courses.

“The Taster sessions will allow people to find out more about specific areas where courses are available locally, ranging from Health and Social Care to Jewellery, Business to Maritime, Engineering and Construction to Hairdressing.

“These are just some examples of the wide range of training which is available to help people improve their skills and knowledge, gain new qualifications, improve their job prospects or help people who are thinking of changing their employment direction.

“The Taster sessions and Open Day will allow people to find out more about the areas that interest them from our staff who deliver these courses, and to find out more about the opportunities which exist when they’ve completed their courses,” added Mr Macmillan.

The Open Day and Taster sessions will run from 10am-3pm on Wednesday 16th August.

For further information on the wide range of opportunities available locally through Lews Castle College UHI, please visit the college website www.lews.uhi.ac.uk
Scalpay’s fishing history

Our Fishing Heritage is the first exhibition of the newly-revived Scalpay Historical Society.

The exhibition tells the story through pictures, personal experience and the written record of fishing in Scalpay over the years.

Scalpay was described by James Miller in his book “Salt in the Blood” as an ‘inhospitable lump’ where the Ice Ages had scraped away most of the soil, where cultivation was almost impossible, but which offered two superb natural harbours (the North and South harbours) and many sheltered inlets.

When the first crofters were moved to Scalpay during the 1840s they turned to the sea for their sustenance and living. During the 1920-30s the island was a bustling port with up to 12 curing stations. Boats came from all over northern Europe to collect barrels of salt herring. Again in the 1960-70s herring once again brought prosperity to Scalpay and the island thrived.

In addition to the exhibition, there are five albums of photographs on loan from the Harris Historical Society. These photographs of Scalpay folk date from around the turn of the 20th century and will be of particular interest to visitors who have family connections to Scalpay.

‘Our Fishing Heritage’ is on at the Scalpay Community Centre until Thursday, 31 August. It’s open three days a week – Tuesdays to Thursdays – from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm. Admission is free and tea and coffee available.

MP in plea to Whitehall over fishing jobs

A h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus B MacNeil has appealed to UK Government’s Minister of State for Immigration, Brandon Lewis MP, calling on him to step in to help the West Coast fishing industry as they struggle with a shortage of crew and to meet with fishing representatives.

In March, Mr MacNeil hit out at the Home Office for failing to consider reintroducing a scheme which would allow non-European Economic Area workers to work in the industry.

Angus MacNeil MP said: ‘The Home Office suggested that the reintroduction of a scheme which would allow non-European Economic Area workers would ‘entrench a reliance on non-EEA labour’ - a suggestion which is frankly ridiculous.

The inaction from the UK Government’s Home Office is hurting the West Coast Scottish fishing industry as they struggle to crew their vessels and I know of men desperate to return to the west coast to boats they once worked on.

‘This affects Northern Ireland too and I would expect the Tories now to make these sensible concessions to communities in Scotland and Northern Ireland which would increase domestic tax revenue and also enable people to send money home to the Philippines.

‘Skippers need crew and they have people from non-European Economic Areas ready and willing to work – but the UK Government continues to turn a blind eye and recklessly ignore the crisis hitting our fishing industry.

Plans to demolish former Police Station

Plans have been submitted to demolish the former police station building in Tarbert, and build eight new apartments.

An application has been lodged with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar by Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP), which last month had an application to build four new flats in the centre of Tarbert rejected.

The proposed development entails ‘provision of eight flats with two-bedrooms each with associated parking and outdoor facilities, to be delivered to align with the Hebridean Housing Partnership’s set requirements with regard to space standards, energy efficiency and materials’.

A two-storey terrace is proposed, with a mono-pitch roof that allows it to sit down on the site, substantially lower than the existing house. The whole of the existing lawn and shrubbery will be retained.

The parking area to the rear is extended to provide the 12 spaces required, but is entirely screened from the Main Street. The flats are then clustered around two common stairs, each allowing entry from the front or the rear.

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**Housing Minister opens new homes**

The latest phase of a brand new housing scheme was officially opened on the outskirts of Stornoway on Monday July 10 by Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Housing and Local Government. Mackenzie Lane is the third stage of the Mackenzie Park housing complex on Melboll Farm, and comprises 24 new homes.

By Iain A MacSweeney

**Go snorkelling in Harris waters!**

The public exhibitions will take place on the 1st July, we had a small launch at one of the snorkel trail locations has been carefully chosen to highlight different marine habitats and ecosystems from seaweed meadows to kelp forests.

"We are blessed up here to have incredibly rich marine environment. We have been developing the snorkel trail locations to provide a unique experience, especially for those who have never snorkelled before. The trails are located in Hushinish, Seilamol and Loch Mharaig, and have been developed in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

"Our project aims to create a trail that allows people to explore the marine environment up close and understand the importance of protecting these fragile ecosystems. We are working with local schools and community groups to educate people about marine conservation and encourage them to get involved in conservation efforts."}

**Ferry-port meetings**

Lochmaddy Village Hall, North Uist , Wednesday 6th September, 16.00-19.00hrs.

The port changes are needed to accommodate the new bigger, dual-fuel ferries currently being built in Port Glasgow which are earmarked for the Arran and Harris Triangle routes. Comments can be provided at the events or afterwards in writing to CMAL or by email to communications@cmalscotlands.co.uk by 29th September 2017. Further information is available on CMAL’s website.
A new face behind the Festival lens!

By Eilidh Whiteford

I was all change for the ‘ladies behind the lens’ at HebCelt this year as Leila Angus handed over to Fiona Rennie.

After 20 years spent behind the camera, HebCelt 2017 saw Leila enjoying the festival from a punter’s point of view. “It was very strange this year,” she said. “I was still people watching, I just didn’t have to hold a camera for four days this time!”

“It was lovely just to relax and spend four days sitting in the sunshine on the Green with my friends and family. I only took a total of three photos over the whole weekend!”

It was in 1997 that Leila first became involved with the Hebridean Celtic Festival, working with the legendary Sam MacNiven as part of the Esolas Media team, before going solo to capture all the HebCelt happenings from 2000.

Working in pre-digital days, she recalls the pressures of taking and developing film photographs, as well as an 18-hour, fast and physically exhausting days.

“In the first few years you were allocated so many rolls of film... six rolls a night, around 30 shots per roll, you gave you about 180 photos from each night – compare that to the 500+ images taken on digital now.

“Lighting was also a big issue, especially when the festival changed from the little white tent to the big blue I walked into it the first night and thought this is too dark, I’m never going to get anything!”

“Then from 2000 to 2010 I was on covering the festival in full on my own. I’d be up and out for the family concerts at 9.30am, then covering events in the town, gigs outside Stornoway or taking photos for sponsors or bands through the day, leave those photos downloading over teatime before going out again in the evening to cover the pub sessions, An Lanntair gigs and of course the tent shows.

“Then it was home to edit everything and upload photos to the festival website!”

Leila was also heavily involved in capturing other aspects of the Scottish music scene, covering bands at Skye Festival and the 30th Orkney Folk Festival, working for Capercaillie at the Cambridge Folk Festival, publishing Julie Fowlis and Runrig, including taking shots for the Scots rockers Stamping Ground album and The Runrig Songbook.

“But HebCelt was always a special job: ‘Aside from the bands, I loved photographing the people’, she said.

“Since 2010, as HebCelt grew, so did the demands on Leila and after being joined by photographer Dougie Coulter for a few years, she was commanding a team of around six local snappers.

And when Fiona Rennie joined the team a couple of years ago, Leila saw someone who she felt could take over. Leila said: “It’s always been a part of a festival and I felt very much that it was mine’. I was terrified to hand it over as I knew I wanted someone with the same commitment and passion for HebCelt as I had.

“Fiona brings that with her, and she brings a new slant and a different perspective and photography style.”

And Fiona came into her own this year, heading the six-strong photography team to ensure nothing was missed. “Working as part of a team as close knit as HebCelt was a bit daunting at first, but they are all so welcoming and friendly and so full of support, especially Caroline [Maclean, Festival Director] I cannot thank her enough for her support in my joining the team, and her encouragement and reassurance this year,” said Fiona.

“Leila’s advice was to capture the flavour of the festival, the people, the lights, the general ambience, the bands too, of course, but the people are what make HeBcelt unique.

“We try to work with a team of about six photographers, mostly local if possible, and we all capture the festival in our own style, and from our own perspectives and this is important too,” Fiona continued.

“It was definitely a lot of fun, and very intense! It all started like a normal HebCelt week, and then as usual by Saturday, after four nights of late night editing and early mornings shot it gets a bit blury (my head, not the photos!). I love meeting the musicians, making new friends, and being part of the HebCelt family!”

You can check out Fiona and the team’s HebCelt 2017 photos on the Hebridean Celtic Festival website (www.hebcelfestival) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hebcelt).

And throughout August Fiona’s exhibition ‘Buntas: A Sense of Belonging’ – created to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Galson Estate buyout with over 40 photographs and interviews with people living and working in the area – is on show at the Estate Trust offices.

Local voices on an international stage

By Eilidh Whiteford

For many in the Western Isles the Hebridean Celtic Festival will always be their ‘home’ show.

And for local singers, songwriters, and musicians, HebCelt has long provided a platform to showcase the home-grown talents of the Outer Hebrides also – with 2017 proving no different.

Fresh from signing a three-album deal with global label BMG, Point singer-songwriter Colin MacLeod was delighted with his HebCelt Main Stage slot on festival Saturday.

“It was incredible,” he said. “It was such a warm crowd and such a good feeling all day. There’s so much goodwill and support and encouragement from everyone, it really means a lot.”

Colin is also set to play the Belladrum festival, Fresh from signing a three-album deal with global label BMG, Point singer-songwriter Colin MacLeod was delighted with his HebCelt Main Stage slot on festival Saturday.

“We didn’t just ‘put on a concert’ – we explored the links and similarities between the islands. We didn’t play anything because we thought they were ‘cool’ or ‘contemporary’, we played those particular pieces for a reason, and we learned the stories behind them.”

Viewing the success of the Hebridean musicians before them, Stephen Drummond of Faram was delighted to have the chance to step onto the HebCelt main stage this year also.

“It is just great to see so many young musicians around similar ages working hard to produce good music,” he said.

“The privilege of being given the opportunity to play at the festival at such a young age really opens your eyes to what you can achieve in the future. Hard work really does pay off. “HebCelt 2017 has just been amazing,” he added. “Between the weather and the music it’s really brought together everyone to appreciate how brilliant the island can be!”

Dougie Maclean fan Sophie Vaudoux-Lochrie is pictured with the man himself. Sophie – a former EVENTS staff member who returned to take some photographs at this year’s HebCelt – lives in Burgundy and last year was also in Stornoway for the Runrig concert at HebCelt 2016. She first met the band after a concert in Paris in 1989. However, she suffered a medical emergency and was being treated in Western Isles Hospital at the time of Runrig’s appearance. This time, there were no mishaps and Sophie not only met the star himself but also attended and enjoyed his performance.

Another successful HebCelt

Organisers of the 22nd Hebridean Celtic Festival celebrated another resounding success for the four-day event.

The festival in July featured more than 40 acts and over 70 hours of performances in the main arena, in Stornoway town centre and in sell-out community shows in Lewis and Harris, reaching nearly 16,000 attendances over its four-day run.

Festival director Caroline Maclean said: “The beautiful weather added to the wonderful atmosphere in and around the arena and the feedback from the artists, audience and traders has been extremely positive.

“The demise of other festivals underline just how brilliant it is to organise these large-scale events, particularly outside the bigger population centres. Our continued success is testament to the fantastic support we get from our audiences, funders, sponsors, supporters and from this community.”

During festival week Stornoway and surrounding villages were crammed with visitors, with nearly 60 per cent coming from outside the islands – from across the UK, Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand – filling hotels, guest houses and campsites in the area. Numbers visiting the Stornoway Information Centre were up by more than 40 per cent on the corresponding week in 2016. Alan Mackenzie, VisitScotland islands manager for the Outer Hebrides, said: “Many people came for the whole week so they had a chance to see all the amazing scenery and attractions and to get to offer guests, many saying they will definitely come back to visit again.

The privilege of being given the opportunity to play at the festival at such a young age really opens your eyes to what you can achieve in the future. Hard work really does pay off. “HebCelt 2017 has just been amazing,” he added. “Between the weather and the music it’s really brought together everyone to appreciate how brilliant the island can be!”

Another successful HebCelt
definitely not least, is the opportunity to witness first is the opportunity to visit, enjoy and be inspired Manifestations of the Faith and the Centre of the each other in old Jerusalem, as well as Haifa and House of Justice. The Shrines and other holy places are located in and around the cities of Haifa and Akka.

We will have a chance to visit Christian, Jewish and Muslim Holy Places, all three very close to each other in Old Jerusalem, as well as Haifa and Akka.

Another element to savour during pilgrimage is the unique opportunity has arisen to acquire his important collection of rare and important books. His lifetime of collecting and commitment to creating a full-scale historical presence in remote places means there is a significant library available for someone with the interest in maintaining it for themselves and others.

If an individual purchaser cannot be found and efforts have been made unsuccessfully to achieve this over the past few years then the collection (which can be seen on www.scottishbookcollection.com) will be broken up through an auction salesroom. As a whole, the collection tells the fascinating story of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and includes some unique copies, as well as difficult-to-find books, maps, atlases, and varied publications that extend from the early 17th century through to modern times.

This collection represents a deep exploration into all aspects of Scotland's landscape, historical, economic, political, and social.

The shape of this 'library' is the result of much more than a passion for books. The collection's origins lie in more than one person's quest, in pursuit of the colours, the shapes, and the stories of a much-loved land. Travelling from hill to hill, from island to island, this collection is filled with a tapestry of searching and finding. Michael Robson absorbed the land and its history through constant physical contact as well as through reading, and the widest possible contact with people and their stories. His method involved passionate and meticulous research that always included talking to the people who live and work in the places involved.

But the interest of the collection spreads far beyond Scotland. For instance, in 1772 scientist Joseph Banks made an exploratory visit to Iceland, and thus stirred up a considerable interest in that island, about which at that time little was known by anybody living south of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Just over 30 years later, another and much younger person, Sir George Steuart (sic) Mackenzie, who owned the estate of Coul in Ross-shire and who had similar scientific interests to those of Banks, made the same journey and the following year wrote an expensive and splendid-looking volume entitled 'Travels in the Island of Iceland, During the Summer of the Year 1810'. Mackenzie's studies were widespread in range, beginning perhaps with the more domestic discoveries which he made at first, including buildings and their occupants – illustrated with a bright, colourful and cheerful row of men, women, and a child in 'Icelandic Costume'.

The selections on www.scottishbookcollection.com offer just glimpses into the nature of this collection, which numbers around 3200 volumes. A 22-page pdf document is available with other information and a full catalogue should be available soon.

So any individual or organization interested in making a bid for the collection – particularly to allow it to remain on the Hebrides as a hub of historical interest is asked to contact scottishbookcollection@gmail.com

My Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
A Bahá’í Presentation by Mina
Saturday 19th August, 7-9 pm
At the Retirement Centre, Bayhead, Stornoway

My Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
From the earliest times, pilgrimage has been a cherished part of human life, be it individual or collective, writes Mina Sheppard.

In the Bahá’í context, pilgrimage is a law ordained by Bahá’u’lláh "if one can afford it and is able to do so, and if no obstacle stands in one's way". Today, Bahá’ís make their pilgrimage at the invitation, and as honoured guests of the Universal House of Justice. The Shrines and other holy places are located in and around the cities of Haifa and Akka in the Holy Land.

We will have a chance to visit Christian, Jewish and Muslim Holy Places, all three very close to each other in Old Jerusalem, as well as Haifa and Akka.

Bahá’í pilgrimage is simple but profound in its ultimate aim: to pay homage to the Twin Manifestations of the Faith and the Centre of the Covenant.

Another element to savour during pilgrimage is the opportunity to visit, enjoy and be inspired by the magnificent edifices, situated on Mount Carmel, the “Mountain of the Lord”, that constitute the Administrative Centre of the Faith. Last but most definitely not least, is the opportunity to witness first hand the beauty and diversity of the Bahá’í family, some from places we never even knew existed.

To visit the tiny cell into which He was thrown in the barracks of Akká, and then to witness this hand the beauty and diversity of the Bahá’í family, some from places we never even knew existed.

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One last time for Festival

By Elidh Whiteford

Each year Ullapool's very own festival Loopallu sees many cross The Minch to enjoy the last festival of the season – but Loopallu 2017 will be the last time!

It's been decided that the festival's 13th outing – September 29th to 30th – is going to be its last. "There's no time to be sad, it's time to celebrate what has made Loopallu so special over the years," say the organisers. "Time to celebrate how the little event with a big heart transformed a small West Coast village at the end of the season, bringing millions of pounds into the economy over the years, and not to mention the priceless friendships established."

So the organisers hail the return of The View as Friday headliners, who will celebrate the 10th anniversary of their debut album ‘Hats Off To The Buskers’ by playing it in full; and welcomed to Loopallu for the first time this year are indie darlings Glasvegas, topping the bill on the Saturday night.

Local heroes Hunter & The Bear are back to celebrate the release of their debut album; the return of Turin Brakes with their only Scottish festival play of the summer; and The Rezzillos keep up the festival’s reputation for delivering great punk acts.

The Pigeon Detectives bring their explosive energy to the Loopallu stage; up and coming and Tide Lines – greeted with huge enthusiasm at July’s HebCelt – are expected to draw a huge crowd, as is Callum Beattie, who has enjoyed having his recent releases playlist on BBC Radio 2.

Loopallu has always tried to bring new acts to excite its audience, and even the last ever festival is no exception with the hotly tipped Tynesider Sam Fender; Edinburgh's finest Hamish Hawk; buzz act The Howl and The Hum, and Stornoway's new super group Willie Campbell & The Tumbling Souls.

Over the years the festival, in association with Ullapool Book Fest, has brought some incredible names over to Ullapool, and this reign will be ended in style with no other than the legendary Ian Rankin; children's favourite Mairi Hedderwick making a popular return, and a warm welcome being extended to the award-winning Malachy Tallock.

And the infamous Loopallu fringe will play host to Rhytmreef, Little Mammots, Ruairidh Maclean, Sons of the Sea, Will & the Wild Horse, Vic Galloway, and of course Davy & the Hosebeast.

But how to send off the little fest in the west in style, make sure things go with a real bang?

There is only one way,” say organisers. “Closing the main stage on the Saturday night, and the final Loopallu act, will be The Vatersay Boys!”

Taking place on Friday, September 29th and Saturday, September 30th, festival camping is no longer available in the village, however Ardmean Holiday Park, located approximately two miles north of Ullapool, still has availability. To find out more visit www.ardmean.com

And for further information about Loopallu 2017, visit www.loopallu.co.uk

As the Loopallu organisers add: “The whole team would like to say a big thank you to all who have come over the years, your support and enthusiasm made the event what it was and what it is.”
Angus Morrison

COMMRAIE LOAN HELPS YOUNG UIST FISHERMAN LAND NEW BOAT

Securing a Commraie loan to help purchase a new fishing boat provided Angus Morrison with the stability needed to grow his North Uist based business.

Using guidance and support from Business Gateway Outer Hebrides, the 33-year-old, who set up Morrison Shellfish in 2012, was awarded a £73,000 loan from the Commraie’s Fisheries Investment Scheme earlier this year.

The money allowed the 33-year-old to retire his first boat, the 42-year-old ‘Lizanna’, and replace her with the ‘Sapphire’ which was built in 2004. Angus, originally from Eoligary in Barra, now lives in Sollas, North Uist with his partner Judith and two sons.

Angus said: “Without this loan from the Commraie I would not be where I am today. I’d worked my first boat hard and, although she’d never let me down, I was worried that if something did go wrong on a boat her age she’d either end up rotting on the shore or at the bottom of the sea.

Getting the new boat has given me greater peace of mind as she is far superior in terms of build and technology.”

He added: “Having my loan application accepted was a great boost as it helped pay for a large chunk of the new vessel. During the process Business Gateway ensured all the right boxes were ticked so I could draw down the money.”

Norman MacLean, Business Gateway said: “We’re delighted that Angus was able to secure the loan and happy that our input was useful. Acquiring the new vessel allows him to continue to go out in all weathers, catching crayfish and lobster from May to September and crab all year round – selling his crayfish to China and the rest of his catch to C&J Shellfish Ltd.”

Angus’ love of fishing arose at a young age when he began landing crab on a beach in Barra at seven-years-of-age. Then in secondary school he started leading catch onto the lorrys to earn extra pocket money.

On leaving school, he started out as a crew member on a number of fishing boats eventually going his way up to skipper. However, his ambition to buy and operate his own boat never left him – even after the doctor told him to get a day job when he broke his ankle.

Angus said: “I knew I couldn’t sit behind a desk all day so I skipped sitting down until my ankle healed. It was at that time I decided I really wanted to make money for myself. I saved a fair bit which allowed me to buy the ‘Lizanna’ from Grimsay in North Uist. I then took on my two crew, who will work with me today, and launched the business.

“I suppose I’m the black sheep of the family, as they are all crofters. I was always attracted to fishing because of my work and the money it made. Running the business has been exactly what I thought it would be - hard work but rewarding.”

He added: “I would like to thank all crew members that I have worked with past and present. It takes a team job and I am glad that I was able to work with some of the best fishermen in Scotland.”

To find out how Business Gateway Outer Hebrides can help your business visit: www.bgateway.com/western-isles or call 01851 822775.

BUSINESS GATEWAY WORKSHOPS

Who not come and join us on the new season of Business Gateway Masterclasses and workshops starting in August!

Our Masterclasses are designed to help anyone involved in business, whatever stage they are at. From the first spark of a business idea, through to those who have previously attended courses, there is something for everyone.

They are a great way to learn new skills, brush up on all your current business development ideas and meet some great people.

They are open to everyone and take place all over the Highlands and Islands, in key locations.

For more information on the programme, please contact Donald Murray on 01851 707700.

FREE INNOVATION WORKSHOPS FOR SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

In an ever changing and increasingly competitive marketplace, innovation is integral to business growth and success. With Co-Innovate, you can learn about the benefits of innovation, identify opportunities for growth in your business and create a vision to make it happen.

A free workshop on Co-Innovate has been organised for Wednesday 30 August at 10am in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise offices in Stornoway. To register your interest in the workshop please visit www.co-innovateprogramme.com

For more information on the programme, please contact Donald Murray on 01851 707700.

FUNDING SCHEMES

Grants for Growth

Grants for Growth is a business development scheme funded by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The scheme aimed at businesses based in the Outer Hebrides, in key sectors, with significant plans for growth (increasing annual turnover by at least £50,000 within three years and creating employment).

Outer Hebrides Youth Entrepreneurship Fund

The Outer Hebrides Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (OHYES) is a new grant scheme expected to run until March 2019. It is part-financed by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Scapa Reinsure Communities Fund and open to all young entrepreneurs aged 18 to 40 wishing to set up a new business venture based in the Outer Hebrides.

To find out more about either of these schemes, please contact the Business Gateway office on 01851 822775 or businessgateway@cne-siar.gov.uk
STARTING UP IN BUSINESS?
Sign up to our workshops

Why do Business Gateway Outer Hebrides workshops book up so quickly? Yes, they’re free, but also very valuable, with 95% of attendees giving them a thumbs up.

You’ll be surprised by the sheer diversity of workshops and training sessions we provide. From business basics to sophisticated digital marketing, there’s sure to be a topic to enhance your skills and build your business confidence.

See the full range of events on our website and book your free workshop online.

Business Gateway’s workshops provided us with the confidence to run our own enterprise

Murdo Maciver
Western Isles Fire Protection

Practical Business Planning & Market Research
Wednesday 30 August
9.30am to 12.30pm

Marketing Principles & Content Creation
Wednesday 6 September
9.30am - 12.30pm

Accounting & Practical Record Keeping
Monday 11 September
9.30am - 12.30pm

How to Write a Business Plan
Thursday 28 September
9.30am to 12.30pm

Press Releases & Website Brief Writing
Wednesday 11 October
9.30am to 12.30pm

Find out more about free workshops visit bgateway.com/events or call Business Gateway Outer Hebrides on 01851 808240
A poem of remote life...  
Julie Brook on Aird Bheag

By Fred Silver

The sky was solid grey. The rain was total. Our elegant waterproofs were clearly inadequate. We accepted the offer of full-scale seagoing rain-averting garments from Miavaig-based Seatrek.

And braced ourselves for a foray out to the tormented swell of the North Atlantic Ocean.

This was the Islands Book Trust trip on Saturday July 15th to Aird Bheag, a remote peninsula on the west coast of Lewis that is only accessible by sea.

Because of the weather conditions, the boat had been upgraded in advance from a RIB to the Seatrek flagship, the Lochlann, an Interceptor 42 built by Safehaven Marine, and launched in 2007.

Under the command of Seatrek’s chief Murray Macleod, ably assisted by Lynne Buchan, the Lochlann had plenty of room inside and out for our 12-person party.

The Aird Bheag peninsula was bought two years ago by Skye-based Chris Young, founder of Young Films, producer of Gaelic TV’s Bannan and creator of the Inbetweeners on Channel Four and in the cinema.

More important, he is the partner of artist Julie Brook, whose extraordinary outdoor art installations and creations have involved long periods of living on Mingulay, Jura, the deserts of Tunisia and now, Aird Bheag.

Based in the former schoolhouse, she and her youngest daughter Meredith were waiting to welcome us.

But first, the voyage. Leaving the lagoon around Pabbay and passing Gallan Head, we were exposed to the full strength of the Atlantic swell as the boat’s wipers worked furiously to keep the view ahead clear in the downpour and the spray.

Inevitably, some in the party succumbed to seasickness as the boat powered its way south, finally getting into the lee of Mealasta Island and calmer waters after about an hour.

Now we approached the ruins of Aird Bheag village, on the opposite side of Loch Harmanaway from the lodge and its modern track snaking its way up the opposing hillside.

Why come by sea? The nearest public road is several miles walk away and the ground in between rises to more than 1,600ft.

The aim had been to make the visit in the company of Ina Macdonald. Ina is the sister of the late John Macdonald (author of An Trusadh: Memories of Crofting in Ardviej) and was herself born in Aird Bheag.

Until the early 1950s the area was occupied by a vibrant, crofting community and Ina lived there until she was 18. However, on Saturday, she was delayed for a thoroughly modern reason. Heathrow Airport! Not because she was coming from Heathrow herself, but because Chris Young had been delayed there the day before and they were all due to arrive at Aird Bheag together.

Once we had arrived, Julie and Meredith were to set off to Huisinis in their own fast inshore boat to pick up Chris, Ina and

Continued on page B5
**Stornoway Shouts**

The volunteer crew of Stornoway RNLI lifeboat were paged by HM Coastguard at 1914 hours on Thursday, July 13th, following reports of a 121.5Mhz distress beacon transmission being received.

The ‘Tom Sanderson’ RNLI lifeboat launch, and along with the Coastguard rescue helicopter, proceeded to search an area in The Minch, eight miles east of Stornoway.

After a comprehensive but fruitless search, all involved were stood down, the signal from the beacon no longer being received. The shout has been classed as a false alarm with good intent.

The RNLI lifeboat and volunteer crew returned to Stornoway and was refuelled and ready for the next shout by 2200 hours.

Everyone had great fun on the day which kicked off with the annual Stornoway Lifeboat Family 5K Fundraiser.

Around 60 people took part in the 5K with Finlay Emmott first across the finish line in a time of 19 minutes and 23 seconds. Second place went to Aodhan Finnegan (20 minutes and 39 seconds), and Sam Greenslade was third to cross the line, running the 5K in 21 minutes and 14 seconds.

And congratulations to the MacIver/Murray Clan who scooped the whole walk.

To donate to the local lifesavers of Stornoway RNLI, or help raise funds through an event, contact Stornoway Lifeboat Ladies Guild Chair, Eileen MacDonell on 01851 702154, or Guild Treasurer Maggie MacLeod on 01851 705407.

**Open Day and Family 5K Fundraiser**

A huge thank you to everyone who joined for Stornoway RNLI’s Open Day 2017, with sky-splitting sunshine on Saturday, July 22nd.

Over 600 people enjoyed a tour around the ‘Tom Sanderson’ RNLI Lifeboat, and over £5,000 was raised for the local lifesavers of Stornoway RNLI.

To donate to Stornoway RNLI, or help raise funds through an event, contact Stornoway Lifeboat Ladies Guild Chair, Eileen MacDonell on 01851 702154, or Guild Treasurer Maggie MacLeod on 01851 705407.

You can keep up to date with the RNLI charity at www.rnli.org.uk – or why not ‘Like’ the Stornoway RNLI Facebook page to keep up with their latest adventures!
The deadly toll of car bomb attacks

By Lorna Norgrove

I write this a day after yet another car bomb attack by the Taliban in Kabul.

They targeted an area in which the Hazara ethnic minority live close to the Afghan Government mining institute which is mostly staffed by better educated, younger, ‘middle class’ professionals. These are the Taliban’s opponents – those from minorities, the educated and the progressives.

Unfortunately, it was also next to Zabul University where seven of the ten medical students whose study is sponsored by the Linda Norgrove Foundation. None were hurt and it was so encouraging for us to hear that, although 31 civilians were killed outside and many injured and there was no glass left in the front of the building, that night the University reopened and classes were resumed.

Last month there was a particularly devastating suicide lorry bomb near to the embassy sector in a supposedly highly secure area which killed civilians were killed outside and many injured.

One of our students who studies at the Nawbahar Institute lost her brother. Hers was in a supposedly highly secure area which killed suicide lorry bomb near to the embassy sector.

Gawharshad Institute lost her brother. Hers was in a supposedly highly secure area which killed suicide lorry bomb near to the embassy sector.

After hours and hours of unsuccessfully trying to access wards in the hospitals as a woman, she eventually found her brother’s body. He had been alive when he reached the hospital but had lost lots of blood. Blood supplies were exhausted and he died an hour before Razia came. She feels that, if she had managed to get there sooner, she might have been able to give her blood and he might have been saved.

Razia’s family relied on her brother’s wages as a technician at the Canadian Embassy. Her father is paralysed on the left side, the mother is old and Razia earns less than $100 a month as a part time school teacher, which is not enough to provide food and shelter for a family of four. LNF have agreed to give $200 a month for six months to give the family some breathing space and to allow them to try and find some way in which they might be able to survive afterwards.

It’s a privilege for us that we are able to step in at times like this and provide relatively small sums that are so vital for people who really do need help.

The Linda Norgrove Foundation 10K

Still plenty of time to train for our annual 10K event which will be held on Saturday 30th September on the Valtos Peninsula. We hope you can join us there or that you will run, walk, cycle, or whatever takes your fancy wherever you happen to be on the day. All proceeds will go towards helping women and children who have been affected by the decades of conflict in Afghanistan.
Summer soups
By John Dory

High summer is a term which epitomises the best elements of summer. It is not a precise weather term but it encapsulates something inhabitants of the Northern Hemisphere yearn for, although rarely experience, but is a guaranteed facet of life in the Southern Hemisphere. Sparkling sunshine, long days, barbecues, beach picnics, sunny music, easy eating are all part of the "high summer" scenario.

It's not often that all the elements of the "high summer equation" come together in the Hebrides to give us a taste of something we regularly wish for but which comes along every 30 years or so. Remember the summer of 1976? However, we certainly enjoyed our version of "high summer" last month during the week of the HebrCeltFest. It was so hot during that special week that I was even served cold soup on one particularly hot day.

Now, soup is always on our menus in the islands but it is soup that warms you up and sets you up to challenge the driving rain and wind that we permanently live with. Cold soup! It's the antithesis of Hebridean soup which often means lentil soup, Scotch broth or leek and potato soup, at all times of the year. However, there is such a thing as summer soup and although we are not overly familiar with it, it is delicious, tasty and nutritional.

Cold soup or summer soup has been a feature of the Mediterranean and Eastern European cuisine since time immemorial and is a natural way to many regional ingredients with intense summer heat. In the blazing heat of the mid-day summer sun in Spain, Portugal, Greece or other southern countries, it is often easier to throw the exquisitely flavoured natural resources of the land together without recourse to heating or cooking food. The quality of the produce such as tomatoes, cucumbers or peppers, with a splash of olive oil, can produce a simple but memorable feast without a Michelin chef present.

Probably the most famous of summer soups is Gazpacho, beloved of peasants and celebrities alike and one of the easiest and tastiest "high summer" dishes for any menu in a hot country in summer. Gazpacho is often referred to as 'the salad soup' and is an excellent description of a soup that is full of the ripe flavours of summer vegetables. Gazpacho comes originally from Andalusia in Southern Spain. It was considered a peasant soup in the dim and distant past when it consisted of olive oil, garlic, whatever vegetables were available, stale bread and water. All the ingredients were pounded together, thrown into a pot and mixed and served cold. Most Gazpacho recipes include tomatoes, garlic, cucumber, peppers, olive oil, vinegar and stale bread. However, there are many versions of this soup, even within Spain, so there is probably no definitive version. Chefs even argue as to whether the tomatoes should be peeled and de-seeded or left whole and others argue that an onion is needed to give this soup its traditional flavour. The one thing that is not in dispute is that Gazpacho was invented in Andalusia.

However, the origins of another internationally famous summer soup are apparently in doubt, according to some people. Vichyssoise is known the world over as a velvety summer soup. The name suggests that it originated in France and there is even a town in that country called Vichy. There is also some evidence from old French cookery books that a type of soup which uses the main ingredients in Vichyssoise was common in France in the late 1860's. However, a French/ American chef called Louis Diat laid claim to Vichyssoise in 1950. He was a chef in the Ritz Carlton restaurant in New York who became famous on account of his delicious version of this traditional soup. Wherever it came from, Vichyssoise is a delicious soup which is made with leeks, potatoes, onions, butter, stock, cream and full fat milk. Some chefs also add a splash of white wine although this could be for effect rather than additional flavour.

This recipe for Gazpacho can be used in August if we get another blast of "high summer."

Gazpacho

Ingredients

- 100 g stale white bread. Cut into chunks and soak in cold water for 20 minutes.
- 1 kg ripe tomatoes, diced.
- 1 red bell pepper, deseeded and chopped
- 1 green bell pepper as above.
- 1 medium cucumber.
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped. More, if you prefer a stronger garlic flavour.
- 150 ml olive oil.
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar.
- Salt and black pepper to taste.
- Chopped chives, parsley, mint to garnish.

Method

Mix the diced tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, garlic and olive oil.
Whiz in food processor till smooth.
Squeeze the water out of the bread and add to contents of the liquidiser with the vinegar.
Whiz again.
Spoon to taste.
Put through a sieve.
Serve with mint, parsley, chives or sliced gherkins to serve.

Our P7 pupils looking very smart before they took part in their Final Fling. This is a dinner and disco evening to celebrate their seventh and final year in the School. It was very much enjoyed by all who attended. A big thank you is extended to the parents of the P7 pupils who organised the evening, Mrs Duncan who cooked a lovely dinner, Mr Sineath the Disco King and Sandy Mackinnon for taking the pictures.
A poem of remote life...

Continued from page B1

others, along with supplies. Which tells you a lot about Julie and Meredith. They had already warmly welcomed a party of extremely wet Book Trust visitors to their sitting room, chatting enthusiastically with everyone - now they were off down to the little slipway, paddling out to unload their own boat offshore to make space, then setting off for Harris and bringing back their next party of visitors. This is art but not as normally understood. This is the art of living, the art of hospitality, and the true art of life.

After she arrived, Ina told us all that when she was young, scarcely a day went by when the little community of three houses did not welcome visitors, from other parts of land, providing food, a welcome bed and a bed as required. And there was always enough food for all concerned.

Now the door is open and the hearth is warm again, as Julie welcomes a modern-day stream of visitors.

Also part of the community are some cats, kittens and a very sociable horse, all of whom were totally-at-ease with the attention from the visitors. And if someone prefers a cat from an exotic location, homes are being sought for the kittens once they are weaned.

Once refuelled with coffee, tea and biscuits, the party headed out to explore the remains of the blackhouses, the paths across the hills and to see some of the views as the weather started to improve and the clouds lifted.

Particularly impressive is the narrow stone road up from the jetty, well-engineered with embankments and stream-crossings. Ina told of how her elder sister had been daring enough to climb one of the few trees in one small adjoining valley...but she had not. She remembered how people used to get to And Bheag from the Mealasta road end climbing up and over the hill. They never used the ‘monotonous’ route over the moors now followed by the Hamnaway track.

And then, too soon, it was time to return. A welter of hugs and goodbyes, and pledges to return some time. Back to the Lochlann.

Coffee, tea and biscuits were served on board.

Back to sea. Going north, the boat was travelling with the swell. So the voyage was calmer. The sun came out, empowering the gleaming beaches of Mealasta Island. The sunshine revealed the textures of the vast cliffs at Mangenta and taunted us travellers with reminders of what the day at And Bheag could have been like. Blue skies spread from horizon to horizon.

Back into Miosaig. A great day. A great trip.

Heartfelt thanks to the Islands Book Trust, to SeaTrek, to Ina Macdonald, and to Julie Brook and her family.

(And for the author, an utterly memorable day for his 63rd birthday which concluded with an impromptu meal at Lochchristiean - thanks to Marianne and her team.)

Revealing the history hidden in soil

Ursa Eaglais na h-Aoidhe is using a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to carry out research this summer to understand more about the archaeology of Eaglais na h-Aoidhe and its Graveyard.

‘Understanding Our Community’s Past’ is one part of a wider project called ‘Building a Future from the Past’, which the Urras is developing. The aim of this initiative is to develop an iconic tourist amenity to attract more visitors to Point.

The development is based around Eaglais na h-Aoidhe (St Columba’s Ui Church and Graveyard) which is a medieval Scheduled Ancient Monument and one of the most important archaeological sites on the Isle of Lewis.

The grant of £5,700 which HLF has awarded will specifically be used to enable research to be carried out in the Church and surrounding Graveyard. The objective is to identify the existence of any buried grave slabs and other underground features and early structures which will lead to a greater understanding of the historical development of the whole area. This will be done by Rose Geophysical Consultants LLP of Orkney who are specialist archaeological surveyors.

They will conduct a Geophysical Survey which involves using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and a Resistance Survey. The Resistance Survey will only provide information to a depth of 0.75m - 1.00m. However, GPR can give more detail about different layers and features to a depth of about 2.0m.

Dr Susan Ovendon, one of the archaeological consultants, explained that earth resistance surveys are particularly suited to locating stone structures, walls and rubble spreads, pits, ditches, and banks.

She also explained that a GPR survey is the best technique for providing information on the depth and stratigraphy of a site. In GPR surveys pulses of electromagnetic energy are directed downwards into the earth. The transmitted wave is affected by variations in the electrical properties in the subsurface, which are influenced by material type, moisture content and pore fluids.

This project will begin on Monday 21 August and should be completed within two weeks. Pupils from Sgoil an Rubha will have the opportunity to visit while the survey is in progress and there will be an Open Day on Saturday 26 August, from 10am to 4pm.

Everyone is welcome to come along and see what is happening, gain hands-on experience of doing archaeological research and find out what can be learned from these research methods.

This important stage in the project will end with an Evening Lecture at 7.30pm on Friday 1 September in Ionad Stoodie. The project archaeologists will talk about their research and present their preliminary findings - come along and be the first to find out what has been learnt and celebrate the results.

Later the Urras will produce a leaflet summarising the results. This will be freely available to the local community and visitors to Buth an Rubha and Eaglais na h-Aoidhe. We will also share the full report with all interested parties and everyone will be able to read it on our website – www.uichurch.co.uk.

Exhibition by artist Margarita

A new Hebridean Flowers and Landscape exhibition is running at Iala na Mara in Nisalbost in West Harris throughout August.

The exhibition features artwork by Harris-born artist Margarita Williams, a graduate of Glasgow School of Art.

A Gaelic speaker, she lives and works in her home village, Quaidinish in the Bays of Harris.

The inspiration for her work is the unique Hebridean environment, the sea, land, birds and wild flowers leading to work in various water based media, including pure watercolour, acrylic, Indian Ink, mixed media, and Japanese woodblock printing.

Margarita was one of two Scottish artists awarded the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Assoc/ France Residency in Collioure in 2014.
ADULT EDUCATION
Monday-Friday: Adult Literacy Classes, Western Isles Learning Shop, Town Hall. Free, flexible, confident help with reading, writing, general confidence, preparing for interviews, homework and learning English as a second language. Later opening hours 7-9pm on Monday. For more information: 01851 822716

ART & CRAFTS
Thursdays: Knitters on the Edge, 11am till 1pm, at Woodlea House, on Church Street. Local knitters and holidaying knitters welcome, just bring your knitting and a sense of humour! More info on our Facebook page Knitters on the Edge. Tel: 01851 700959 Email: woodlewesterneyarnow@gmail.com

CHURCHES
Tuesdays: High Free Church Stornoway, English prayer and study, 7.30pm, Retirement Centre, Bayhead.
Wednesdays: Salvation Army Stornoway Corps, Bible Study, 12-1pm, 59 Bayhead. 01851 703875
Wednesdays: High Free Church Stornoway, Prayer meeting, 7.30pm, Matheson road Church.
Thursdays: Associated Presbyterian Church, Service, 7.30pm, 700 St. Peter’s, Old Toll Road.
Thursdays: St Columba’s Church of Scotland, Prayer and Bible study meeting, 7.30pm, Lewis Street, Stornoway.
Thursdays: High Free Church, Stornoway, Gaelic prayer and study, 7.30pm, Retirement Centre, Bayhead.
Saturdays: High Free Church Stornoway, English prayer meeting, 7.30pm Retirement Centre, Bayhead.

Sundays: Associated Presbyterian Church, Services, 11am and 6.30pm, APC, 72 Keith Street.
Sundays: Salvation Army Stornoway Corps, Prayer Meeting, 10.30-30am, 59 Bayhead. 01851 703875
Sundays: Salvation Army Stornoway Corps, Sunday School, 1pm-3pm, 59 Bayhead. 01851 703875
Sundays: Salvation Army Stornoway Corps, Service, 11am-12pm, 59 Bayhead. 01851 703875
Sundays: Stornoway Baptist Church, Gospel Preaching Service, 6-7pm, Westside Road. All questions from “Is there a God!” to “What am I here for?” answered. Surprise yourself and come! For more information: 01851 704770
Sundays: St Columba’s Church of Scotland, Worship, Còr Chrùc, Sunday-school & Bible Class, 11.00am, Worship, 6.30pm, Lewis Street, Stornoway.
Sundays: St Peter’s Scottish Episcopal Church, Services, 11am Eucharist Service; 7pm Evensong. All are welcome! Our church is open every day for quiet prayer. Francis Street, Stornoway.
Sundays: High Free Church, Gaelic and English services, 11.00am and 6.30pm, Sunday School (P1 – S3) and crèche meet during morning service. Stornoway Primary school, Jethrovin Drive.
Sundays (last of the month): Martin’s Memorial Church, Praise and Testimony service, 6.30pm, 11 Francis Street, Stornoway. A warm welcome awaits you! Tel: 01851 700820

CLUBS/GROUPS (ADULT)
Tuesdays (first of the month): Stornoway Astronomical Society. Please see our website www.stornowayastro.org for details of our regular lectures and observing sessions with times and venues etc. Beginners always welcome.
Tuesdays: Stornoway Bridge Club, 7pm, Stornoway Golf Club. Meet for Bridge, chat, competitions and cheese.

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### Events in Stornoway and East Lewis (continued)

#### MEDIA
- **Mondays:** Digi-Heb, the Bridge Centre, Bayhead. Aspiring actors, actresses, filmmakers and writers welcome. 
- **Thursdays:** Studio 7, Young Musicians Hebrides, from 7pm. Are you under 18? Interested in being in a band? Or being a solo performer? Are you in a band and want to develop your potential? YMH Studio 7 is OPEN. Contact studio7.ymh@gmail.com

#### MUSIC & DANCE
- **Mondays:** MILC Piping School, 7-9pm, Laxdale Hall. All levels and all ages welcome. Tel. 704241 or email milcuk@yahoo.co.uk
- **Tuesdays (first of the month):** Dementia Friendly Café, Stornoway, 11am, Alzheimers Library Resource Centre, 18 Bells Road. For more information phone the Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Resource Centre, Stornoway on 01851 670418 or email Dementia@alzscott.org
- **Tuesdays (second of every month):** Highland Dancing (Pre-school) with Jamie and Catriona Mackay, 7.30-8pm, £4 per class, Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Habost, for more information: e-mail Joanne – niseach@yahoo.co.uk
- **Tuesdays:** Lunch Club at the Salvation Army Stornoway Corps, 12-1pm, 59 Bayhead. 01851 703875
- **Wednesdays (second of the month):** Autism/Aspergers Support Group, 12-noon, Newton Community Association, Seabost Road, Stornoway. We welcome all those who have an interest in Autism and Aspergers, e.g. people affected by the condition, family and carers.
- **Thursdays:** Kids’ art club, 1pm to 2.30pm, Grianan, Westview Terrace. Chat, family and carers. Teas and coffees served after meeting. Contact autism.eileen.siari@gmail.com
- **Thursdays:** Highland Dancing (Pre-school) with Jamie and Catriona Mackay, 7.30-8pm, £4 per class, Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Habost, for more information: e-mail Joanne – niseach@yahoo.co.uk

#### SOCIAL
- **Mondays:** Singing Group, 1pm to 2.30pm, Grianan, Western Terrace. Cafe refreshments and group singing with musicians and singers. For information please contact: Eilidh Donnelly Tel: 05700-7620/041 / Email: Eilidh057@gmail.com

#### ART & CRAFTS
- **Wednesdays:** Creative re-awakening open studio sessions, 10.30am-3.30pm. 4pm Blue Pig Studio, 11 Upper Carloway. Develop your own artwork in a peaceful, mutually supportive atmosphere. Coffee followed by exploration of group agreed themes. Soup lunch. £10. To book a place: 01851 643225
- **Thursday:** Art club, 10am, Uig Community Centre

#### CATERING
- **Sundays:** Po’d’s Pantry, opening for the season on Easter Sunday, 16th April, 12 noon to 9pm. Leumadair Gueshouse, 7A Callanish just off the main road. Teas, coffees, home baking and light lunches, contact: 01851 621706

#### CHURCHES
- **Sundays:** Family Service (English) at Ness Church of Scotland, Cross, Ness. 11am. Crèche available. English Service, 6pm. All welcome.
- **Sundays:** Gaelic Service at Uig Church of Scotland. All welcome. To book a place: 01851 621706
- **Sundays:** St. Molla’s Scottish Episcopal Church, Eoropaidh, April to September: Eucharist, 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, 3pm. Communion, every alternate Wednesday, 8pm. Other services as announced. All welcome.

#### CLUBS/GROUPS (ADULT)
- **Wednesdays:** Careideas, 1.30-3.30pm, Uig Community Centre. An informal get together club for the over 60s

#### CLUBS/GROUPS (U16/18)
- **Mondays:** Army Cadets, for ages 12-16, 7pm, Barvas and Brue Community Centre. New recruits welcome!
- **Mondays (term-time):** Carloway Youth Club Junior Club, 7-8pm, Carloway Community Centre

#### EVENTS SECTION TWO - Page 87

#### HORTICULTURE
- **Tuesdays:** Sporsnis, Habost, Ness. Call: 01851 81077
- **Wednesdays:** Alma Bay Flowers, 6pm, Barvas and Brue Community Centre. Call: 01851 810039

#### MUSIC & DANCE
- **Mondays:** Gaelic Group, 10am, Uig Community Centre

#### GAMES
- **Saturdays:** Bingo, 9pm, Ness Social Club, Lionel. For more information: 01851 810039

#### HEALTH & FITNESS
- **Mondays:** Westside Runners & Fitness Club - Junior & adults sessions, 7pm, Barvas and Brue Community Centre. Adults meet at 7pm at the entrance to Barvas machair for all abilities run / jog sessions and training
- **Wednesdays:** Masters Football, 8.15-9.15pm, Spòrsnis, Ness. For more information: 01851 810039
- **Wednesdays:** Ladies’ Keep Fit class, 8pm, upstairs in the Breasclete hall. All welcome!
- **Thursday:** Adult swimming session, 8-9pm, Lionel School, Lionel, Ness.

#### HORTICULTURE
- **Wednesdays (second of the month):** Carloway and Breascelete Gardeners Club, 7.30pm, Breascelete/ Carloway Community Centre (alternating between Breascelete and Carloway). For more information: Kirsty – 01851 643947
- **Wednesdays (second of the month):** Garden Club, 7.30pm, Carloway Community Centre. Everyone welcome. For more information: 01851 840743

#### MUSIC & DANCE
- **Mondays:** Guitar class with Catriona Mackay, 6-7pm, £4 per class, Gaelic Singing class with Ceilín Smith, 7-8pm, £4 per class, Primary Folk Group with Catriona Mackay, 7-8pm, £4 per class, Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Habost, Ness. For more information: 01851 810166; olief@taighdhonnchaidh.com
- **Tuesdays:** Meleodion (P1 - P3) with Mary Duff, 7-7.30pm, £2 per class, Meleodion with Mary Duff and Catriona Mackay, 7-8.30pm, £4 per class, Piano Accordion with Ashleigh NicDornnail, 6-7pm, £4 per class Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Habost, Ness. For more information: 01851 810166; olief@taighdhonnchaidh.com
- **Tuesdays:** Ceilidh Dancing, 8pm, Shawbost Old School Centre. For more information: 01851 70 4870
- **Wednesdays:** Highland Dancing (Pre-school) with Claire Wilson, 6-6.30pm, £2 per class, Highland Dancing (Beginners), 6.30-7pm, £2 per class, Highland Dancing (Novice), 7-8pm, £4 per class, Piping (Advanced) with Calum Murdo Maclean, 7.30-8.30pm, £4 per class Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Habost, Ness. For more information: 01851 810166; olief@taighdhonnchaidh.com

Send us your events. LISTINGS ARE FREE! E-mail to chat@welovestornoway.com or ring 01851 705749
**Events in West Lewis (continued)**

**Thursdays** (first of every month): Young at Heart Club, Clan MacQuarrie Centre, Boyre, 2pm - 4pm.

**Thursdays** (first of every month): Dementia Friendly Café Carloway, Carloway Day Centre, 2pm - 3.30pm. For more information phone the Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Resource Centre, 18 Bells Road, Stornoway on 01851 70 2123 or email mmacinnes@alzscot.org

**AUGUST**

Great Bernera Freshwater Fishing Competition: Monday 7th August, registration 10am at Bernera Community Centre, weigh in at 5pm. Entry Adults £5 per rod, Under 16's £3 per rod. Food available in the cafe from noon and after the competition.

**SEPTEMBER**


**Club welcomes new members**

The Rotary Club of Stornoway has been delighted to welcome three new members recently.

Transferring to Stornoway Rotary from Southport Meols Rotary Club are husband and wife Sue and Kevin Long. Sue and Kevin have moved to Lewis having recently purchased the Hallway Garage and are busy making plans for its renovation.

Sue is immediate Past President of Southport Meols Rotary Club and both she and Kevin are looking forward to being members of Stornoway Rotary, playing a full and active role in the Club. Showing her commitment to her new Club, Sue has already accepted the role of Youth Chair at Stornoway Rotary.

Also joined the Stornoway Rotary Club ranks is retired surgeon Andrew Sim. Mr Sim is well known in the Western Isles following a number of years working in, and enhancing, the isles’ medical services. In November 1998 Andrew, aged 50, swapped the heat and humidity of Malaysia, where he was Foundation Professor of Surgery and Anaestheisa in the Asean Sheffield Medical College, for the colder, clearer air of the Outer Hebrides.

With the initial thought of being a locum consultant surgeon in Western Isles Hospital for a short stop-gap, the move to Lewis proved instead to be a game changer and the start of a new lifestyle and career – that of rural general hospital surgeon.

“At the time the Scottish Executive Health Department had invested £8 million in the three year project ‘Remote and Rural Area Resource Initiative (RARAI),” said Andrew. “I became the RARAI Surgical Educational Facilitator, and ran a project cataloguing surgical operations in Scotland’s rural general hospitals.”

Mr Sim served on a number of national working groups, exploring ways of delivering healthcare to people in remote and isolated areas of Scotland; and for three years (2003-2006), was NHS Western Isles Medical Director for Hospital Services.

Andrew was also appointed to the NHS Western Isles and UHI Chair of Remote and Rural Medicine in 2005 and held the post until he retired from NHS Western Isles in 2011.

He expanded: “During this six year period, along with clinical and administrative commitments, I published articles, lectured and gave tutorials on remote and rural medicine, was the Clinical Lead for the Rural General Hospital project of the National Rural Steering Group, and was part of the NHS Western Isles involvement in the Remote and Rural Medicine. This project ran a project cataloguing surgical operations in Scotland’s rural general hospitals.”

After retiring from clinical practice in 2011, Andrew returned to the United Arab Emirates as an Adviser to the UAE Minister of Health. He had previously worked as Foundation Professor of Surgery in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science at University of Technology, Dubai, working on hospital performance indicator measurement and playing lots of golf, Andrew returned to the Western Isles last summer.

He, and his wife Jackie and two dogs, now live in Achmore. The couple have three children, two have medical careers – one as a general practitioner in Aberdeen and the other as a neurological nursing sister in Shetland – and the third is a freelance specialist in examinations for English as a second language.

In other Stornoway Rotary news, Club members are getting excited about progress on the new Friends of The Nicolson Institute project. Established to support pupils of The Nicolson Institute attending events or training on the mainland, the charitable trust will seek small regular donations from former Nicolson pupils to help the next generation achieve success.

It is hoped to launch the Friends of The Nicolson fund later this summer – keep an eye out on local press for more details, or email info@stornowayrotary.org.

And you can find out more and keep up to date with The Rotary Club of Stornoway at the website www.stornowayrotary.org, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/StornowayRotary.

**Send us your events. LISTINGS ARE FREE! E-mail to chat@welovestornoway.com or ring 01851 705749**
In every moment
we are still alive
by Tom Malmqvist

The prize-winning, bestselling tale of love, loss, family and the lives we live moment by moment, Henry Marsh has taught us that this is the work of prose.

Tom’s heavily pregnant girlfriend Karin is rushed to hospital with severe flu.

Henry faces up to the burden of responsibility that can come with those he treats in the more extreme circumstances of his work abroad, and in a moment as fleeting as it is cruel Tom gains a daughter but loses his soul-mate. In Every Moment is the story of a year that changes everything, as Tom must reconcile what transpires to be acute Leukemia, while the doctors are able to save the baby, they are helpless in the face of what transpires to be acute Leukemia, and in a moment as fleeting as it is cruel Tom gains a daughter but loses his soul-mate.

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Don’t forget to look at our eBooks and eAudio titles as well – new titles are added every month

Search the library catalogue online – www.cne-siar.gov.uk/library

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Ballaivanich......................................................01870 604984
Castlebay..............................................................01871 617217

Business Gateway.................................................01851 822775

Harbour Office/Marine Fuels.................................................01870 604990
Stornoway Bus Station.................................................01851 704327
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Roads & Pavement/Street Lighting.................................................01851 822656
Clansing Services/Refuse Collection.................................................01851 822669
Recyling.................................................................01870 709900
Planning (Stornoway).................................................01851 822690
Planning (Ballaivanich).................................................01870 604990

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enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk
www.cne-siar.gov.uk
Automated Payment Line
0300 323 0900

Ag Obair...............................................................Working Together for the Western Isles
The 2017 Blas Festival is coming to Scalpay, Lewis and North Uist for the first time between 1 and 9 September to celebrate the best of Gaelic culture and particular landmarks in the lives of people pivotal to Gaelic culture.

On Friday 1 September in Scalpay, Blas will celebrate Morag MacLeod’s contribution to Gaelic culture with a special 80th birthday Cèilidh featuring her choice of singers and musicians. Morag received the Hamish Henderson Award for Services to Traditional Music at the Scots Traditional Music Awards in 2007 having had a long career collecting and cataloguing Gaelic songs through her work at the School of Scottish Studies.

Joining her in Scalpay Community Hall will be Rona Lightfoot, Margaret Stewart, Murdo ‘Wasp’ MacDonald, Ewan Morrison, David MacKenzie, Amy MacKay, Iain ‘Costello’ MacIver and Coisir Bhan na Hearadh. There will be a dance to follow with the Iain Angus MacLeod Band.

Another great collector of Gaelic song, the late Rev William Matheson, will be celebrated in a series of concerts at this year’s Blas Festival in Dìleab Uilleim (William’s Legacy).

Given that Willie Matheson spent his formative years in North Uist, it seems entirely appropriate for the opening show to be in Carinish Hall on Tuesday 5 September featuring Rachel Walker, Robert Robertson, Linda MacLeod and Ross Wilson. The evening will be hosted by Gaelic song expert, Jo MacDonald, whose career at BBC Radio nan Gàidheal included a central role in its 2010 Bliadhna nan Òran (Year of Song) initiative.

Glenfiann dìdler, Iain MacFarlane, will be joined by ex-Altan box player Dermot Byrne and Breabach’s Ewan Robertson at the Clan MacQuarrie Centre in Borgh on Lewis on Thursday 7 September.

Uist-born Gaelic singer Mairi Macinnes will share the bill along with the Ness Melodeon Band and young musicians from Fèis Taigh Dhonnchaidh in what should be a cracking evening of Gaelic song and music.

The final evening in the Western Isles will mark the lifelong contribution to Gaelic culture of Finlay MacLeod – or Doctor Finlay as he is better known.

Finlay, a writer, educator and broadcaster, celebrates his 80th birthday this year and will do so in the company of Seonaidh Beag Macmillan, Murdo ‘Wasp’ MacDonald, Isobel Ann Martin and piper Donald MacKay. An t-Ionnsachadh Bòidheach at An Lanntair in Stornoway on Friday 8 September will be an evening of music, song and conversation with Finlay facilitated by Annella MacLeod to which Donald ‘Ryno’ Morrison and Iain Gordon MacDonald will contribute readings. Agnes Rennie will be bean an taighe.

Tickets for all Western Isles events are available online in advance at ticketline.co.uk or by phoning 0844 888 9991 except for the event at An Lanntair, tickets for which are available on 01851 708480. Keep an eye on blas-festival.com for further details of all events at this year’s Blas Festival.
Building our communities

Island schools reach Education Awards finals

By Katie Macleod

The school year ended on a high note this summer for the two island schools who reached the finals of the 2017 Scottish Education Awards in Glasgow.

Held at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel on 7th June, the annual awards recognized the achievements of pupils and staff throughout Scotland – and this year both Sgoil an Taobh Siar in Lewis and Iochdar Primary School in South Uist were among those celebrated for their work.

Staff and pupils from Primary 5-7 at Sgoil an Taobh Siar were among the three finalists for the Gaelic Education Award, while Mairi MacInnes, Head Teacher at Iochdar Primary School, was a finalist for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

“We are so thankful to CnES education department for giving us the opportunity to go, as it was a huge achievement for the school, and the trip was amazing,” says Margaret Macleod, who teaches at Sgoil an Taobh Siar and attended the awards ceremony with her colleague, Anne Macarthur, and Primary 6 pupils Emma Mason, Catriona Macarthur, and Katie Morrison.

“Seeing what was going on in Scotland’s schools was fantastic. It was a real celebration of achievement and although we didn’t win on the day, we weren’t disappointed. We got £200 for the school fund. Our pupils did so well to get down to the final three and we are so proud of them all.

The day was definitely a highlight of our teaching careers.”

The pupils at Sgoil an Taobh Siar, which has long had links with Historic Environment Scotland, were recognized for their work on two films – one in Gaelic and one in English – that acted as educational tools detailing the history of the Arnol Blackhouse.

Some pupils took on acting roles in the films, while others got technical behind the scenes. Three judges visited the school in May, when the pupils involved put on a presentation for them.

“They went through the whole filming process, sharing their highs and lows, and they showed both films to the judges who were so impressed,” remembers Margaret.

“The school choir sang for them at the end of the presentation, as the choir sing at the end of the films, so we thought it would be nice for the judges to hear it ‘live’. We were glad we did, as it made one of the judges cry!”

Mairi MacInnes, who has been Head Teacher at Iochdar Primary School for 14 years, also met the judges when they visited the South Uist school.

“The school staff, the children, the parent council, and various groups in the community all came together and set up meetings, presentations, and a whole book of evidence of things that we had been involved in over the years, and presented that to the judges. And they had an interview with me, about what I had to say, and for the first time in my life I had very little to say!” she laughs.

Although she has been Head Teacher at Iochdar for 14 years, Mairi has been teaching since 1974. “I’ve been a teacher for a long, long time, and now I’m teaching the grandchildren of pupils I had in these early years, so I think that tells its own story,” says Mairi.

Mairi is no stranger to the Scottish Education Awards, either – Iochdar Primary School has won a Gaelic Award in the past, among others – and she enjoyed her time at the awards ceremony in June. “It’s certainly a grand ceremony, completely arranged with schools and children at the centre of it.”

While she admits she wasn’t interested in any personal gratification from making the final three out of a long list of 70 for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Mairi says the nomination was reflective of “all the good work that happens around the school and the community, of which I have been a part, and I was very happy to see that recognized.”

“Iochdar School is very much rooted in the community, and we have had several highlights, and as well as that we’ve had several low times and bad things as well. The school’s always at the heart of everything that’s happening the community. I’m grateful for the ongoing support that I’ve had from colleagues, community members, and the education authority throughout the many years I’ve been there.”

Applications pour in for ‘new apprenticeship’ opportunities

By Katie Macleod

The launch of new apprenticeships in the Outer Hebrides is being hailed as a success, after 250 applications were submitted for the 40 work placements, which were announced by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in May.

Given the chance for hands-on experience in industries such as Business Management, Learning and Development, and Multimedia, demand for the apprenticeships was high. Qualifications are available at a wide variety of levels, from SVQ postgraduate degree, and all apprenticeships offered a structured Gaelic programme, from beginner-level tuition to more advanced skills in reading and writing.

“It’s been really, really positive,” says Dolina Smith, the Comhairle’s Apprenticeship Manager, of the response to the apprenticeships. “By providing a wide range of opportunities we are providing people the opportunity to study to a high level and work in the islands. We also hope this will encourage people to relocate to the islands.”

The new apprenticeships, which will begin next month, also meet the requirements of the islands’ workforce plan, which outlines the training needed to bridge future skills gaps. For the first time, the Comhairle is offering apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with the private sector, as well as the public sector.

And the popularity of these latest opportunities builds on an already successful year for the apprenticeship scheme, as last year’s candidates – ranging in age from their late teens to early Fifties – have seen their skills go from strength to strength.

“It’s been a whirlwind of a year,” says Dolina of the apprentices’ achievements. For example, of the 17 new apprentices that started their placements in November 2016, four have already completed their SVQ qualifications in just over six months.

As a result, Matthew Campbell, Calum Mackay and Alison Macleod from IT schools are about to begin IT degrees through a Skills Development Scotland Graduate Placement Scheme with Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. Dena Macleod, from the Comhairle’s Multi-Media unit, is preparing to undertake a degree in media at the University of the Highlands and Islands. “We try and be person-centred as much as we can, and it seems to be working,” says Dolina.

E-Sgoil has been instrumental in the success of the apprenticeships, allowing for online learning and teaching not just within the Outer Hebrides but also between mainland institutions and the apprentices in the islands. Partnerships have already been established with Robert Gordon University, Inverness College, and Glasgow Kelvin College.

The implementation of E-Sgoil has opened up opportunities that previously were impossible. Candidates from the Butt to Barra can link into tutorials like everyone else, and it makes so many accreditation routes, previously undeliverable locally, now accessible,” says Dolina.

She adds that the apprenticeship scheme has a strong team behind it, including everyone from Angus Maclean, Head Teacher of E-Sgoil, Multimedia Manager Evelyn Coull, and the Comhairle’s Accreditation team. Local councillors have also given their full support. “We’ve had a fantastic response from departments,” says Dolina.

“It has been a very encouraging year.”
Council sets up new learning route to go to sea

By Katie Macleod

The only ones to look at the fishing, aquaculture or ferry sectors in the Outer Hebrides to see that the maritime industry plays an important role in the local economy.

It's fitting, then, that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is in the process of creating a new national qualification tailored to meet the needs of the maritime industry – and the career aspirations of young people in the islands.

In conjunction with representatives from the fishing, aquaculture, ferry, and port authority sectors across Scotland, as well as schools and colleges in the Highlands and Islands, the Comhairle is working towards the launch of a National Progression Award at SCQF Level 5 in Maritime Skills, with the aim of it being up and running for senior pupils in the 2018-2019 school year.

On 22 March, a meeting of the Qualification Development Group for the course was held in E-Sgoil on Francis Street, and a proposal for the new course has now been accepted by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Chairied by Iain MacKinnon, Secretary of the Maritime Skills Alliance, the meeting was also attended by representatives of Lewis Castle College, Orkney College, West Highland College, and Shetland North Atlantic Fisheries College.

"I'm full of praise for the initiative taken by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar," says Iain MacKinnon, who is based in London but has family ties to the islands. "They've recognised that many young people in the islands want a career in some part of the maritime sector and they've established an excellent partnership of employers and schools and colleges to create the best opportunity for those young people."

"For our part in the Maritime Skills Alliance, we're really keen to see young people across Scotland introduced to the terrific range of opportunities in the maritime sector. People in the islands know about CalMac of course, and aquaculture, and fishing, and all three are very much involved in the work."

"The leisure sector – marinas – are very interesting," notes Iain, "but asked what topics they would like to study more generally.

"It's a partnership effort," agrees Iain Stewart, who works in the Comhairle's Education and Children's Services and is a member of the Qualification Development Group. "The Comhairle here is taking the lead, but also assuming the responsibility. This is a national development, but locally led."

The new qualification will follow on from the current Skills for Work Maritime Skills qualification, offering in-depth training for senior pupils who know for certain that they want to enter the industry on leaving school. It does this by providing students with the skills, experience, and formal accreditation necessary for work at sea, covering the overlap in skills required by the ferry, fishing, aquaculture, and port sectors.

"The skills are transferable between the sectors so that when the economy shifts, there's a flexible, mobile workforce, making it more economically efficient for the public and private sector," explains Iain Stewart.

"He notes that one of the other driving forces behind the new course, aside from workforce planning, is the introduction of ‘personlisation and choice’ into the curriculum, where young people are not simply presented with set subject choices, but asked what topics they would like to study more generally.

"We asked them what they would like to see on the list, and the maritime sector has come out high, year after year, hence the existing maritime skills qualification being popular," says Iain Stewart. "But this one will actually provide them with the knowledge, skills, experience, and tickets, which will make them much, much more employable."

As the award is being designed with input and support from industry leaders themselves, it will not only cover their needs but also help move the responsibility and cost of training away from businesses and into the classroom. Some of the topics covered in the course include Vessel Rope Work, Anchoring and Mooring Operations, Basic Seamanship, and Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting.

The recent developments of the working group build on the success of the official launch of the project in April 2016, when representatives from Caledonian MacBrayne, the Merchant Navy Training Board, and the Scottish Salmon Company, among others, met to discuss the possibility – and need – for such a qualification.

"The degree of interest in it is very high," says Iain Stewart. "Young people are asking for it, the sectors require and are asking for it, and the idea is that we will meet their workforce planning requirements with a skilled young maritime workforce."
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Fencing stock in or fencing stock out?

By Rob Black

A lot of ambiguity surrounds the laws and rules relating to who is responsible for the fencing that keeps stock from going places they are not supposed to, whether that is to keep them in the area they are supposed to graze, or keeping them off the prized flowerbed.

Information on the matter is somewhat scattered and doesn’t always provide the best means of fully understanding the requirements or where liability lands when fencing or boundaries fail.

The scenarios can very much vary and often is the case can fall within a grey area with the general answer being ‘It depends…’ But there are rules in place and certain things to consider when this issue arises. Crofting is subject to the Animal (Scotland) Act of 1987. In a very basic sense the ‘strict’ liability of any damage or injury caused by kept animals is the responsibility of the animal keeper. By strict we mean that irrespective of whether the livestock keeper was negligent or not, the liability is with that person.

However, there are exceptions to the rule if a) if the cause of the damage/injury was due to the fault of the injured person and or b) the cause of injury or damage was a result of the mere fact of the animal being there rather than attributed to the physical or behavioural characteristics of that animal – such as the animal having escaped and is standing in the middle of the road as opposed to the animal breaking into a neighbouring field of crops and foraging.

The understanding of the rules complicates somewhat when it comes to the boundaries of a common grazings and the by-lying land or gardens attributed to a housing property that abuts to that boundary. Effectively it is the responsibility of the Grazings Committee to ensure appropriate fencing and prevention of animal caused damage or injury. If there is no committee then it is the responsibility of the shareholders associated to that particular grazings.

However it is not quite as simple as merely blaming the common grazings. If the common land is an ‘open township’ then the responsibility falls to the individual crofters or the property owners to make provisions to keep the animals out. An open township allows for animals to effectively go wherever they please which means simply leaving your garden gate open allows for stock access. Additionally the responsibility of the fencing and the maintenance of a boundary may be part of the title deed that comes with the property. This, again, makes it the responsibility of the individual to make provision for stock proofing their property, and not that of the common grazings.

Not all instances are left to the property owners, where the responsibility lies with them, as a common grazings may get access to 60% grant, as a goodwill gesture there have been instances of the grazings making provision to offset a boundary fence to protect the land associated to those living within the township, although this is not a responsibility of the common grazings.

If you wish to find out more about the laws surrounding boundary and livestock responsibilities then refer to the Animal (Scotland) Act 1987 or if you have a specific scenario that you are unsure about, it is worth contacting the Crofting Commission with the details of your situation on grazings@crofting.scotland.gov.uk and they will help with regards to that case.

Agri-Environment Scheme Plans 2018

With a new round of AECs applications having been announced it is time to start thinking about what this could mean for you.

The purpose of the Agri-environment Climate Scheme is to provide funding for agricultural producers to take a considered approach to land management that targets low carbon farming and promote greener and more sustainable land use and changing land use to more efficient and effective means. This creates a more beneficial and attractive habitat to wildlife whilst negating the risks associated to agricultural practice through diffuse pollution and promoting more natural habitat in key areas, such as moorland. All with the overall aim of achieving all-important climate-change targets.

If you have been part of an SRDP scheme in the past that is up for renewal or you wish to find out more about your eligibility for applying for the AECs 2018-2022 cycle then please get in touch with your local SAC office, Stornoway on 01599 703103 to speak with one of our consultants.

Crofters’ destiny being decided by others

By Patrick Krause

In response to a Parliamentary debate in January on the future of funding for rural development, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, Fergus Ewing, recently launched the National Council of Rural Advisors (NCRA).

It is a very influential group with the remit of providing advice to the Scottish Government on the implications of Brussels and making “recommendations on future policy and support, with the aim of ensuring a vibrant, sustainable and productive rural economy”.

It is therefore quite astonishing that among the appointments to the NCRA there is no representation by anyone based north of Perth and no one with any obvious connection to, or expertise in, crofting.

Given that crofts comprise something in the region of 20% of agricultural holdings in Scotland and manage some of the most iconic, high nature value landscapes in Scotland, this omission is glaring.

When challenged, Mr Ewing assured us that he “gave very careful consideration to the make-up of the Council and received extensive advice from officials in Government – and with government – on the approach to take and which people to appoint.”

Who are these advisors, who advise on who should be advisors; those who think it unnecessary to have anyone from the Highlands and Islands, let alone from crofting, on a National Council for Rural Advisors?

Unfortunately this isn’t the first time for crofting or the Scottish Highlands and Islands to be completely omitted from national advisory bodies. In fact it is all too familiar. Scottish Government advisors seem to take the view that rural Scotland ends north of Perthshire and west of Morayshire.

I have been wondering what happened to the CAP funds, the ‘convergence uplift’, as it is known, that came back to the UK from Brussels in 2013. If you will recall, the Scottish Government, with cross-party support, made the justifiable claim that the convergence uplift should come to Scotland, the only reason that the UK qualifies for the uplift being that Scotland’s very low payments in the upland areas bring the UK average down. The SCF emphatically agreed with this claim, particularly because the low payments afforded crofting and other rough grazings in Scotland are the main reason the UK average falls below that of Europe.

Passing the up-lift payments on to Scotland does not incur any deductions to farmers in the rest of the UK. Allowing the money to come to where it is needed, the areas that bring the average payment down and therefore qualify for uplift would be fair. There is simply no argument that can justify keeping this cash, which is meant to bring average payments up to somewhere closer to the European average, in UK areas that are already at that level or above.

Were the payments to come to Scotland, would we then find ourselves having to make the same case for the Scottish uplands versus the lowlands, that the very low payments in the upland areas bring the Scottish average down, and that there is therefore no argument that can justify keeping this cash in Scottish areas that are already at the average European level or above? Or would the advisors balk at that?
The Outer Hebrides are a crucible for Gaelic culture and, under the banner of The Language of Islands and Territories, but for writers it is an endless territory to explore, revisit and reinvent.

In the popular imagination, this is the northern lands and territories, but for writers it is an endless territory to explore, revisit and reinvent.

Faclan 2017 – early bird tickets now available – presents a diverse, intense and ambitious programme that includes talks, discussion, film, launches, exhibitions and workshops viewed via a series of chapters and through different lenses.

D'Ombh na Còisge: People In Place will open the annual festival and bring together Gaelic cultural historian, Finlay Macleod with Murdo Macleod, long-time staff photographer with the Guardian.

This is the northern lands beyond the pale. Beyond the North Lands, while with Winter is coming, the world’s only Gaelic speaking teddy! The world’s only Gaelic speaking teddy! is lamented by Adam Nicolson in oceanic birds is lamented by Adam Nicolson in oceanic birds is lamented by Adam Nicolson in oceanic birds is lamented by Adam Nicolson in oceanic birds is lamented by Adam Nicolson in.

In similarly elegiac mood, the decline of Iceland’s culture is lamented by Adam Nicolson in his new book The Seabird’s Cry, described by the FT as a masterpiece.

Over Land brings geographical and philosophical perspective through Mapping Scotland’s Islands with the National Library’s Christopher Fleet, followed by Into the Unwild, presented by and showcasing the aerial photography of Patricia and Angus Macdonald.

The overture to Absolute North will be a silent film of Iceland from 1925 with live accompaniment by Jessica Danz, followed by internationally acclaimed Icelandic photographer Ragnar ‘Rax’ Axelsson whose austere yet lush images document The Last Days of the Arctic.

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Hebridean Book Festival seeks out lands beyond the pale

Llantrair Box Office on 01851 708480.

Fascinating collection detailing a number of lives who greatly benefitted from a Lewis education at the turn of the last century.

‘Ultima Thule’ is the theme of Faclan 2017 as the Hebridean Book Festival delves into a place, in mediaeval geographies, beyond the borders of the known world.

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They will celebrate the 40th anniversary of Gaelic publisher Acair with a look at historic photography of Patricia and Angus Macdonald.

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Anchor these themes-within-a-theme and bringing the programme to a conclusion will be High Altitude High Latitude with mountaineering legend Doug Scott CBE, followed by best-selling author Michelle Paver’s on her chilling ghost stories Dark Matter and Thin Air.

Threaded throughout is a film programme that includes Capra’s Lost Horizon and Powell’s The Edge of the World (both 1937), Herzog’s Aguirre: The Wrath of God and documentaries The Epic of Everest on Mallory and Irvine’s doomed attempt and The Great White Silence (both 1924) on Scott’s failed expedition to the South Pole.

Other events include arts journalist and author, Jan Patience, on the much-missed, charismatic artist George Whyllie, also known as The Why’s Man.

Two exhibitions will form a backdrop to these events: HYPERBOREA: Lands of the North featuring the work of three established and acclaimed photographers – Alex Boyd, Chris Friel, and Ragnar Axelsson – in a show-within-a-show.

And Forradh: Sly Cooking by former Sunday Herald Art Critic Càitríona Black presents an exhibition of linocut illustrations of Gaelic Words and Expressions, collected by Fr. Allan McDonald, revealing the sophistication of a language full to the brim with folklore.

Early Bird Faclan Festival passes are now available for £55, which will give pass holders entry to all Faclan events, at a savings of over £70.

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Early Bird passes are available until mid-August; and individual tickets will go on sale in mid-August with the release of the full schedule of events.

Faclan: The Hebridean Book Festival, takes place in An Lanntair arts centre from Wednesday October 25th to Saturday October 28th.

For further information, or to book tickets, please visit www.lanntair.com/faclan or call An Lanntair Box Office on 01851 708480.
Princess Anne opens new extension to tweed mill

By Iain A MacSween

A new extension at the Harris Tweed Hebrides mill in Shawbost was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal on Friday July 28th.

Princess Anne told assembled guests that she loved her visits to Lewis and Harris, and assured those present that she liked to be kept up-to-date on how the tweed industry was doing.

On a tour of the mill, The Princess Royal was given demonstrations on weaving by Calum Ian Macleod, from Carloway, and Ian Angus Mackenzie, Chief Executive of Harris Tweed Hebrides.

She then stamped a roll of tweed under the watchful eye of mill workers Kenneth John Maclennan and Alex Morrison.

At the unveiling of the new extension, Harris Tweed Hebrides chairman Brian Wilson began by paying tribute to the late Derick Murray, who died earlier this week.

“As we meet today to celebrate this article of faith in the industry’s future, we also mourn a sad loss from its past,” he said.

“This was the family mill, founded by Derick’s grandfather. Derick was a major, respected figure in the industry for over half a century. He carried it through the hard times of the 1990s and he kept this mill open for a long time, when it would have made purely economic sense to close it.

“That was why it was capable of being brought back to life in 2007 when Harris Tweed Hebrides acquired it from Derick.

“We will miss him as a friend and as a neighbour, and we salute the lifelong contribution he made to the industry and we express our sympathy to his family on this sad day.”

The opening of the new extension was, said Mr Wilson, a symbol of continuity.

“It is a statement of faith in the future of the Harris Tweed industry and a landmark in the development of our own company,” he said.

“We are very appreciative of our principal guest’s presence in her capacity as President of the UK Fashion and Textiles Association, through which she has taken a very deep and genuine interest in the industry.

“On our last encounter, the Princess Royal presented us with the award as UK Textile Manufacturer of the Year, and we hope that what she has seen today will reassure her that that was a well-earned title.”

After thanking all who had contributed to the new extension, Mr Wilson added: “The word ‘unique’ is greatly over-used but in the case of Harris Tweed it is entirely justified.

“This is a unique industry with unique protections, unique structures and unique responsibilities to the Hebridean community to maintain it in robust health.

“Today marks another chapter in our commitment to that end.”

After being invited to unveil a plaque commemorating the occasion, The Princess Royal was then presented with a roll of tweed and a bouquet of flowers by grandchildren of Ian Angus Mackenzie – James Bain (7), Andrew Bain (4) and Christina Stewart (5).
**Excellent turnout for Teddy Bears’ Picnic**

Bosom Buddies, the local breastfeeding support group, recently hosted its Teddy Bear’s Picnic. Organised by the NHS Western Isles Health Visiting team, and held as part of National Breastfeeding Celebration Week to promote the benefits of breastfeeding with local families, the event greeted over 25 parents, including visiting grandparents from Columbia in South America, with their babies and young children, in the recently renovated Retirement Centre.

Anna Mackay, Health Visitor, said: “Despite our change of venue due to cooler weather, it was fantastic to see everyone having fun at our relaunch following the renovation at the retirement centre and we were truly delighted with the turnout. A number of new mums and babies came along, many of which had never attended Bosom Buddies before and all were welcomed into the group.

“Bosom Buddies is a great way for local mums to meet, which is particularly useful for parents of similarly aged children to their own. In fact, one mum who has three children and has attended Bosom Buddies over the last 6 years told us that some of the friends she made at the group are now her closest friends!”

“The group also encourages nursing mums to come together and offer support to each other. Our nursing mums can also offer a fantastic source of breastfeeding tips and are great for ongoing support, particularly when there is nothing “wrong” but a bit of moral support is needed, a friendly person to chat to and reassurance that you are doing it “right”.

“Staff from our friendly Health Visiting team are usually in attendance at the group, should parents ever wish to seek advice without a formal home visit. In addition to the breastfeeding support and advice we give, we also have local breastfeeding peer supporters who attend bosom buddies.”

During the event, mums and mums-to-be were given the opportunity to help plan the group’s future activities such as practical advice on weaning and healthy snack demonstrations, information on the Healthy Start Scheme, first aid, music and movement, baby massage, keeping active, and talks from local services and groups to help families.

Staff from the Public Library’s Bookbug team also attended to host a session featuring songs, stories and rhymes, with everyone taking part.

Bosom Buddies, meets every Wednesday from 10am-11pm in The Retirement Centre located on Bayhead, Stornoway. Women who are pregnant and those already breastfeeding are welcome to attend and take part in activities, obtain advice and support, and make new friends whilst their babies play in friendly and safe surroundings.

Free swimming sessions are also held for Bosom Buddies members on the first Friday of every month at the Grianan Centre, Westview Terrace, Stornoway.

For further information please contact the HV team on (01851) 709842.
Texts transform lives of local heart failure patients

Earlier this year, after a period of deteriorating health, Agnes Munro, from Point, was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy and advanced heart failure. After a period of treatment on the mainland she returned home and is now under the supervision of the NHS Western Isles nurse-led Heart Failure Service team in Stornoway, through the use of the Florence programme (or Flo as she is better known) for home health monitoring.

The Heart Failure Service team is a unique service, providing early diagnostic support and ongoing management of heart failure for those living with the condition in the Western Isles.

The team operate on their own without an onsite cardiologist, and building support networks with mainland centres so patients can easily be referred to specialist consultants for treatment, if required.

Agnes explained, “Flo helps to keep me healthy and in fact helps to keep my blood pressure in check. This is even more peculiar because she’s a cardiologist, and have excellent links and support service, providing early diagnostic support and the introduction of a new drug for heart failure, called Entresto. Although potentially life changing, if the drug is not carefully introduced it can affect someone’s blood pressure and can make them feel dizzy or lightheaded. The team were also early adopters of this new drug and the first patient in Scotland to be prescribed it lives in the Western Isles.

Debra Vickers, NHS Western Isles Lead Heart Failure Nurse, said, “Named after Florence Nightingale, the Florence programme (orFlo) is a web based text messaging clinical interface now being used to help people who have been prescribed this new drug by remotely monitoring their blood pressure as the new medication is introduced.”

“Flo helps us to keep in touch with and offer an extra level of support to our patients and their families, both the nursing team and the patients find it easy to use and helpful. It was exciting for us to have one of our patients as the 1st recipient of a new HF drug in Scotland. The fact that we could keep an eye on the patient remotely was great, they have a full time job so it can be a hassle to attend regular follow up appointments to check their response to the drug, and we could do it all using Flo.”

The Florence programme initially proved successful after one local teenager transformed her diabetes management in only three months after starting to use the Flo system on her mobile phone, managing to reduce her risk of complications by a massive 80 per cent.

Iain Trayner, NHS Western Isles TEC Project Manager, said: “Using the Florence programme, all patients need is a mobile phone and most people have these nowadays, and if they don’t we can give them one. The programme itself is very cheap and doesn’t cost the patient anything to run.

“Flo is tailored to each patient by clinicians who adjust the settings, define when messages should be sent, what information they are asking for and how the system should respond. It enables us to have more detailed and regular monitoring of a patient than routine appointments do. As of July 2017 Flo has helped over 700 patients in the Western Isles to monitor or manage their health using everyday technology.”

How we walk can better your health

The Big Fit Walk is a national campaign run by Scottish charity Paths for All, to encourage people to walk more and experience the physical, mental and social benefits of a short walk.

NHS Western Isles’ Health Promotion Department held Big Fit Walks in Stornoway and Benbecula during June.

Walkers from Lewis met on Monday 26th June for a 30 minute walk in the Lewis Castle Grounds. It was a great opportunity to get active, get out in the fresh air, meet new people and have a chat while enjoying local natural and historical heritage.

Walkers from the Uists were joined by a local Scottish Natural Heritage Officer on Thursday 29th June for a short walk around Loananacht, enjoying the outdoors and learning about the unique natural environment.

Ian Fidtlay, Chief Officer at Paths for All, said: “In a nation where too many of us are unfit and inactive, walking is one of the easiest ways to incorporate a little more activity into our day. A simple short walk is free, accessible for most and has a wealth of benefits.

“The Big Fit Walk helps put the fun into walking! Walking in groups can boost self-esteem, create opportunities to meet new people in our area, or discover some local hidden treasures.”

While the Big Fit Walk is an annual campaign there are national and local initiatives to help people become more physically active all year round.

For up to date information visit NHS Western Isles Health Promotion Department website: www.promotionowi.scot.nhs.uk

How to become a member of Paths for All

To join Paths for All, all you need to do is become a member and agree to four things:

1. Become more active
2. Encourage people to walk
3. Promote walking
4. Have fun

All members of Paths for All will benefit from having access to information on the latest research into the health benefits of walking. There are a variety of different walks to choose from, such as leisurely walks, guided walks or competitive events.

Learn more about Paths for All and how to become a member here: www.pathsforall.org

Kind donations to help bereaved parents

During a visit from SIMBA (Simpson’s Memory Box Appeal) for a Bereavement Care and Memory Making Study Day on 18th November 2016, Heather Lawrence, a SIMBA parent representative, officially handed over a Cuddle Cot and photography equipment to the Western Isles Hospital Maternity Unit. The donation was made possible through donations to SIMBA in Heather’s daughter Aeryn’s name, who was stillborn in April 2016.

“The community midwifery service on the Isle of Barra have now been generously gifted a Cuddle Cot through a donation made possible from fundraising by Leigh and Adam, parents of Madelyn Jess Gordon, who sadly passed away two days after being born in August 2015.

Leigh said, “We were very lucky to have spent two days with Madelyn while she was being cared for in the neonatal unit, but having the use of the Cuddle Cot in the family room also meant we did not have to say goodbye as soon as her treatment was withdrawn. We could spend more time with her, without tubes and wires in the way of her little face.”

Leigh added, “We learned a lot about the work SIMBA does and were sad to find out that not everyone would have had the same chance as us, since not every maternity unit has a Cuddle Cot. It was important for us to try and raise the money to donate one in Madelyn’s name as every bereaved parent should have the same opportunity to spend as much time with their baby as they’d like to.”

Meanwhile, a third Cuddle Cot has been kindly donated to the Uists community midwifery service. The special cot was donated by parents Sarah and Jonathan, in memory of their baby boy Harris Michael Smith. Sarah said, “After suffering a late miscarriage and giving birth to Harris in June last year, Jonathan and I were given the option of spending precious time with our son. This is where we learned of the benefits of a Cuddle Cot.

“SIMBA does so many meaningful things to help families overcome miscarriage and stillbirth. Most importantly, they give parents the confidence to create memories without fear of judgement and so when I set out to do something in memory of Harris, I wanted to support the charity and other families.”

The couple, from Edinburgh, decided to donate their Cuddle Cot to the Uists team due to Sarah’s island connections of her father being born and raised in Stornoway and having family residing on islands. They hope that other parents will have the Cuddle Cot for use in the sad event that it’s needed and know just how much it will mean to have that time with their little one.

Catherine Macdonald, NHS Western Isles Maternity Ward Nurse, said, “We cannot express just how grateful we are for this kind donation from Sarah and Jonathan. As islanders we can all appreciate the difficulties associated to the geographical spread of our islands, meaning we may travel for more than 6 hours between Stornoway to Barra.

“The donations of these Cuddle Cots now mean that parents can have access to them when required, rather than having to wait for the cot to be delivered from a neighbouring island.”
**Saturday 9th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surf lessons</td>
<td>Two hours</td>
<td>10am and 2pm / Talla na Mara, West Harris</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£35 including equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain biking for beginners</td>
<td>Two hours</td>
<td>10am and 2pm / Lewis Castle, Stornoway</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands book Trust boat trip Scarf</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>10am / Hushinish beach</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Walk- West Harris</td>
<td>10-J</td>
<td>10am / Talla na Mara, West Harris</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain skills day 1</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>10am / NHT office, Tarbert</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>£50 for two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker-Sarah Outen</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>7.30pm / Harris Hotel</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Cole Photography field trip workshop</td>
<td>6.5 hours</td>
<td>10am / Hebscape gallery</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£155 for two days and boat trip to the Shiant Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monday 11th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darren Cole Photography field trip- Shiant Islands</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Please note that there is a two day standby for this trip: 9am / Leverburgh harbour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£155 for two days and boat trip to the Shiant Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale and Dolphin walk</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>10am / Outend Scalpay</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain skills day 2</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>10am / NHT office, Tarbert</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>£50 for two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided walk- Uisgneabhal Mor</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>10am / Meabhaig Nam Beann</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film night: 'Life of a Mountain: Blencathra'</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>6.30 / Tarbert Library, Sir E Scott School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Tuesday 12th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darren Cole field trip- Shiant Islands</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Please note that there is a two day standby for this trip: 9am / Leverburgh harbour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£155 for two days and boat trip to the Shiant Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Walk- Bogha Glas to Meabhaig</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>10am / Bogha Glas car park</td>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea fishing</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>1pm / Scarasta beach</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Kayaking-beginners</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>5pm / Slipway behind Sir E Scott School playing field, West Tarbert</td>
<td>Easy / moderate</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerboat Tours of Loch Seaforth</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>10am-12pm, 1pm-3pm/ Maraig Slipway</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker-Cameron McNeill</td>
<td>1.5hrs</td>
<td>7.30pm / Isle of Harris Distillery</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wednesday 13th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eagle walk</td>
<td>3.5 hours</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Easy - moderate</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snorkelling session</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>10am and 2pm / Hushinish beach</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community walk</td>
<td>2.5 hours</td>
<td>7.30pm / Temple cafe, Northton</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock climbing for beginners</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>10am-12pm, 4pm-5pm, 6pm / Caolas Scalpay – details available on booking</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerboat Tours of Loch Seaforth</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>10am-12pm, 1pm-3pm / Maraig Slipway</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thursday 14th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clisham Horseshoe</td>
<td>8-10 hours</td>
<td>9am / Car park on the 4859 below Caisteal Ard (NB215507)</td>
<td>Hard / Challenging</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea kayaking Intermediate</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>5pm / Slipway behind Sir E Scott School playing field, West Tarbert</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh water fishing</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>1pm / Lochs car park</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerboat Tours of Loch Seaforth</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>10am-12pm, 1pm-3pm / Maraig Slipway</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Friday 15th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided walk with James Ogilvie</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>10am / Uisgneabhal, Ulladhal, Muladal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddleboarding taster sessions</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>1.30pm and 3-5pm / Talla na Mara, West Harris</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea kayaking advanced</td>
<td>overnight</td>
<td>5pm / Slipway behind Sir E Scott School playing field, West Tarbert</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker- James Ogilvie</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>7.30pm / Harris Hotel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill skills- day 1</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>10am / NHT office, Tarbert</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>£50 for the two days plus £20 registration with Mountain Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Saturday 16th September**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Meeting time/location</th>
<th>Technical rating</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain bike Race</td>
<td>2-5 hours</td>
<td>12pm / Meabhaig Nam Beann</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided mountain bike ride</td>
<td>4-6 hours</td>
<td>12pm / Meabhaig Nam Beann</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Cole photography workshop</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
<td>10am - 5pm / Hebscape gallery</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postman path with the last postman</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>10am - 5pm / Lochs car park</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Raft race</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>3pm-5pm / Slipway behind the distillery</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>£10 per team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reingeadal Hill Race</td>
<td>2-4 hours</td>
<td>4.30pm / Lochs car park</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill skills- day 2</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>10am / NHT office, Tarbert</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing night featuring Tide Lines</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.30pm / Tarbert community centre</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full programme information and booking at www.iohmf.co.uk. Alternatively, phone 01859 502222