

# eilean eisdale

Supported by



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## Regatta

After a year's holiday the regatta made a revitalised come-back, raising a record amount in the region of £3000 for our funds. Neither weather nor sharks(!) could dampen the spirits and 17 brave swimmers took to the waters to "swim the channel", collectively raising more than half the proceeds. The raft race seems to be growing in popularity and was more colourful and entertaining than ever this year, whilst May's duck race, the rowing race, wheelbarrow race and kayak races added to the fun. Many thanks to everyone for all their help and let's hope we can even add a little sunshine to the proceedings next year!

## Museum

It has been a successful season for the museum especially when the uncertainty of ownership right at the start of the season, the weather and the general economic slowdown are taken into account. In July a marketing brochure was produced and circulated throughout the district with the kind help of the Sea-Fari team which helped to increase the revenue by some 14%. It was reported at the Argyll & Bute Museums Forum that visitor numbers had declined by around 9% but we have not experienced any significant drop in numbers (4.9%) and in conjunction with the Slate Island Heritage Trust we now have had the welcome return of the American visitors.

Without the help of the of all the volunteers Lynn and Elaine could not have coped. The museum was open throughout the bulk of the day, 7 days a week and actually extended the opening hours during July and August. The team have had a significant amount of enquiries from visitors seeking information on relatives that in the main we have been able to satisfy as the comments in the visitor book shows. Although the museum is closed during the winter months it can be opened by prior arrangement

A start has been made in respect of the museum attaining accredited standard, thus ensuring its long term future. This will involve a large amount of work for the staff and the volunteers but we have every reason to be optimistic.

Taking everything into account for the first season the museum has been in community ownership it has been a highly successful time and the directors give their thanks to all who contributed.

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## Hall Events and Arts Programme

Through late summer and autumn there have been some fantastic events in the hall. Local band the Jump-Jive Boogie band entertained us at the Regatta Dance with an infectious mix of foot stomping music ranging through blues, Cajun, rock and pop. Former Mouth Music Vocalist Kaela Rowan brought her silky, velvet voice and very, very talented friends to warm us up on a pretty dreich September night.

Mull theatre packed out the hall with their hilarious take on a highland ceilidh. Brilliant! Who would have thought you could go to the theatre and get to dance?!

The pre Stone Skimming dance brought us some rowdy bluegrass from the Shed Inspectors. They certainly had us all jumping and set the scene for an overall fantastic weekend.

On a very cold November night (almost) local – by way of the Wirral- singer Caroline England entertained us and we were also treated to some jazz tinged pop from Mary Mac.

On a different note running through August we had “Hanging on the Washing” a collection of paintings and installations by Lucy Johnstone which was a reflection of living on Colonsay, Easdale and in Scotland.

And finally, on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November a time rift opened below Easdale and we were transported back to sometime in the 1970’s. Some very scary people with even scarier dress sense and hairdos partied the night away, to some seriously, groovy tunes, as a final goodbye to the last of the Sea.fari crew. Good luck guys – we’ll miss you, and haste ye back!

Huge thanks must go to Wee for all his time and effort in organizing the arts programme and to the hall committee for creating another successful year of events

## The World Stone Skimming Championships Story 2008

Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 saw the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive annual World Stone Skimming Championships take place on the island. The event was of course preceded by the Pre-Skim Party the night before in the Hall. We were entertained by island friend and musician extraordinaire Rob Welsh and his band, The Shed Inspectors. Great debate was held amongst the band members but even by the end of the evening, they had still not decided who was the ‘Chief’ Inspector!!! The night was danced away by all and during the band’s break, the raffle was drawn and the auction held. This year’s special item at the auction was the Barr’s Irn-Bru mountain bike which attracted a huge amount of interest and alone raised a massive £250! The total realised through the auction was £430 and the raffle raised a further £172; a huge thank you to all our donators.

The next day dawned and I woke to the sound of a short sharp shower battering down! Surely the weather Gods were not going to be so cruel to us again? Nothing more to do than just get on with it, so with all the major setting-up things done the day before, a team of volunteers put the final touches in place; registration tables laid out, forms printed and taken round to the Hall, cross fingers that the rain stays away, take the T-shirts and hats to the Hall to be sold, shelter erected and {eventually} taken down to quarryside, forget to put up brand new REGISTER HERE sign!, cross **legs** that the rain stays away, distribute radios and Stewards’ vests, put up banners, put the barrier tape onto the posts, talk a few final ‘volunteers’ into being judges, cross **eyes** that the rain stays away, speak to BBC Wales, speak to 2 radio stations, nothing left to cross now so here goes!! I left to go down to the quarry with a crowd-entertainer cycling round on a six-foot high bike and the band from the night before tuning-up

and starting to pay around the island, in the pub and the Hall! I was just sorry to be leaving this behind but someone has to be the loud-mouth at the quarryside!

High noon comes and proceedings kick off with the Under 10 Girls, as is customary. Next came the Under 10 Boys then the Girls and Boys 10-15 year olds, followed by the Adult Ladies finishing off with the Adult Men. Conditions were slightly challenging with a stiff head-breeze coming down the quarry straight towards the contestants. Many fell foul of this as the stones were sent slightly off level and splashed to a halt not managing to bounce the required number of times!

Breaths were held as last year's winner was called down to the throwing stone and made himself ready to attempt to regain his title. Sadly Dougie's throw felt short of what was to be the winning throw which had already been thrown early on in the Men's section and he left the quarryside never to be seen again that day.

With all the throws over, it was back up to my house to check the winners of each section, make up some more medals for the placings that had equal winners and then round to the Hall for the big announcements. Medals were worn with pride and T-shirts donned for photos to be taken. All in all another successful event, the best to date in fact, and I just can't thank enough all the people who helped make the day go so well; you all know who you are, so Thank You, Thanks You, Thank You!!!

This year was the first of what we hope to be many years with Forteith Foodservice as our key Sponsor. We worked very closely with John Forteith, who is a Senior Partner and the 'main man' at Forteith's and we are eternally grateful to him, to Forteith's and the staff that John brought down on the day itself, all of whom volunteered too. Thanks to Forteith's input this year we made the biggest profit to date and doubled last year's amount, which was in turn a doubling of the year's before! John managed to persuade many of his suppliers to donate goods that we would normally have had to pay for as well as talking them in to donating hard cash in some cases too. In total we managed to raise just over £5,700!!! I would personally like to thank everyone for helping out and I know that the Trust would too.

I hope you had fun on the day and weren't too disappointed at your result if you entered, if you were, keep practising for next year!

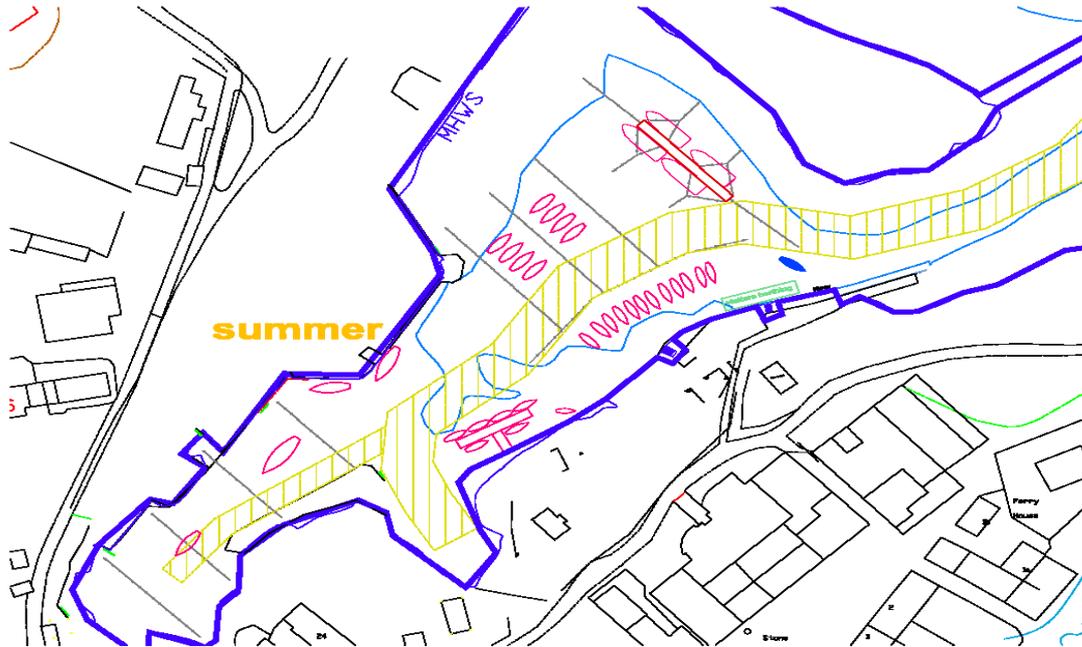
Mellon.

### **Lorn Plan**

Many members will be aware that the new Lorn Local Plan was the subject of an extensive public inquiry. The Reporter has now published his recommendations and regarding Easdale Island these conclude that limited development should still be considered in order for communities to achieve their aspirations for sustainable development and regeneration. Many members have expressed concern over the lack of visitor accommodation on the island, which would undoubtedly do much to help sustain our tourist-based economy. In addition, the provision of such a facility would be a key element in helping secure funding to regenerate our harbour. We are therefore considering submitting an outline planning application for high quality visitor accommodation on land to the northwest of the harbour. This would only be an outline application in the first instance and we would hope to engage an architect to suggest designs for consultation with the community should the initial application be successful. We would welcome your views on this.

## Harbour

At September's Boat Owner's meeting proposals (see map below) to rearrange the moorings in the harbour were discussed. Current arrangements have space availability at a premium. There should be safeguards for 2 x ferries and a clear passage within the harbour for the Grey Dogs. A pro active approach for better use of space is necessary. Eilean Eisdal Directors have agreed to lease Seafari space for a commercial pontoon. The arrangements for both large boats and dinghies will differ between winter and summer. The consensus from those attending was this was a positive way forward



(the yellow hatched area is for access and the black lines denote approximate chain positions)

A generous donation of chain has arrived on the island. Eilean Eisdal will fund all other expenses. The next phase – lay out all chains to rationalise them (estimated at 10 tons) before placing within the harbour in March. Following the success of last year's harbour clean up it is hoped to organise a community work day (sort the chains and clear the Hall loft) between Xmas and Hogmanay. If you can spare a few hours we will be delighted to see you.

## The Easdale Challenge

We were recently approached by a charity who are interested in exploring new avenues of funding which include a renewable energy component. They visited the island with a view to examining possibilities which would be suitable for Easdale, including reinstating a windmill in one of the quarries! We have not committed to anything at this stage but it may be useful to ask them to present their ideas to the community for consideration.

## AGM

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm, in the hall. We hope to see you all there.