

EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.31 - APRIL 2005

To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

At long last, it would appear that the weather is brightening up{apart from the last 2 or 3 days!} and the nights are stretching that bit further each day, reminding us of the long summer evenings which we have to look forward to and enjoy over the coming months. There has been a flurry of activity in the harbour recently as boats are made ready for exploring the area and taking advantage of the scenery and weather.

Slate Sign for Hall

In the last newsletter, we asked for your views on names for the Hall to be carved into a piece of slate as a Hall sign. As you will have read in that newsletter, Gillian Forbes, a Stone Carver from Perthshire, who was commissioned to collect and engrave stones from all over Scotland for the new Scottish Parliament, is going to do this for us. The two main names were; 1 Eilean Eisdeal Community Hall and 2 Easdale Island Community Hall. We had some other names suggested as well and we thank those who responded for doing so. I will now, as they say, announce the results in reverse order;

Eilean Eisdeal Community Hall	1
Easdale Island Hall	2
Drill Hall	2
Easdale Island Community Hall	11

'Easdale Island Community Hall' is therefore the officially declared name for the Hall.

Thanks again for taking the time to vote.

Harbour

Pontoon - We are almost ready to start the construction of the pontoon for the smaller boats in the harbour and we are awaiting prices back from several suppliers for the required materials. As previously intimated, volunteer labour will be utilised as part of the installation of the pontoon and we will be arranging a weekend work group once we know when we will have all the materials on site.

Harbour purchase application process - As most of you will remember we sent out an invitation to an Open Public meeting which was held on the 28th March in the Hall. This meeting was well attended and thank you for turning up. Mike and Sandra, from the Harbour Steering Group talked us through a presentation explaining the whole process in detail. Instead of re-iterating the minutes, Mike has produced a separate document describing the process which I have attached to this email. It makes very interesting and enlightening reading and shows just how much work has gone into this process. We are grateful to them for their time and energy and also to Fiona, for producing the professional reports and application documentation, and to Adrian, for providing his expertise in Engineer's reports , all free of charge.

Renewable Energy

One of the other items on the Trust's Community Plan is Renewable Energy. We have recently opened up dialogue with the local energy company, ALIenergy, to progress investigations for all sources of renewable energy for the Hall and for a possible Community Energy Scheme. After initial investigations by a consultant energy firm, we will have an open public meeting where the findings will be presented by the consultants to us all. The consultants will explain the various sources of renewable energy open to us and it will be up to the community to decide where we go from there. We will be led by what the community want.

Website

As many of you will know we have a superb website constructed by John Hendry, still currently in Canada, and who has done a fantastic 'transatlantic' job for us. John has generously donated his time and expertise to this for us and we are most grateful to him for this. Not content with doing such a great job, he has just completed a separate section devoted to the Hall! This too is more than worth visiting. May we take this opportunity to publicly state our debt of gratitude to John for all his hard and professional work. If any of you have websites in need of construction, I would thoroughly recommend John's services. He can be contacted at pict@pict.co.uk

Hall Events

Since the last newsletter went out there has been the usual varied use of the Hall. First of all on January 29th there was the BURNS' SUPPER. Again run in conjunction with the Trust and the Puffer Bar it was a great success even with a couple of 'virtual' performances by Adrian and me. We were captured on video by Lynn MacKenzie doing our 'bit' and shown larger than life{the way Adrian and I like to be thought of!!!} on the screen via the digital projector. A bit of a shock to most but Ghalia and Sandra were happy to be able to stop us talking at the flick of a switch! On Easter Saturday we had the island's second ROCK NIGHT, again organised by John Merrilees and ably assisted by Geoff and the usual gang of volunteers. The event had a young slant as the opening band this year was 'The Jack Blacks' and contains two of the island's younger inhabitants in the shape of Bethan Noble and Allan Laycock, both aged 12. Bethan plays bass guitar in the band and Allan plays lead guitar and, along with 'Wee' Brown and Phil Bull, have been practicing in preparation for their inaugural gig. They opened the evening's proceedings and went down a storm. Expect to hear more from them in the future. The evening was a great success and islanders and friends from Seil and further afield were entertained by another two local bands; DILLWGGAFF', led by part-time resident John Merrilees and 'Framed' comprising Jack MacGregor, Donnie Campbell, Dougie Robertson, Ty Williamson and Daniel Griffiths. On 25th April, following on from the success of their RYA YACHTMASTER'S THEORY COURSE AND EXAMINATION, Sea.fari organised and ran a WiSe marine wildlife training course. WiSe is a scheme set up to deliver Training and Accreditation for operators of registered passenger and charter vessels who wish to view marine wildlife. In all 28 people attended the day's training, another first in Hall usage.

Goodbye to Geoff

Well, only as Hall Manager! He says we can't get rid of him that easily! Sadly, the Trust is not in a strong enough financial position to be able to keep the Hall Manager's post running once the grant funding runs out at the end of this month. On behalf of all the directors and the rest of the community, we'd like to extend our gratitude and thanks to Geoff for all the work that he has done over the last two years as Hall Manager and wish him all the best for the future. We have thoroughly enjoyed the guest artists over the last two years, many of whom would not have been here had it not been for Geoff's contacts.

Trust's Arts Programme / New Hall Committee

Taking over the mantle of organising the Trust's Arts Programme and Hall Committee, we are lucky in having our very own Fiona Blakey. Fiona did this for the Trust for the 6 years prior to Geoff doing it and we are very pleased that she has stepped in to do this for us. I am sure that we will continue to see the high calibre and variety of events that we have had for the last 8 years. Fiona has written a bit about the forthcoming new Arts Programme for this year and also on the new Hall committee so I'll hand over to her;

'Our year long arts programme, to be held in the newly named Easdale Island Community Hall, has attracted top quality performers, all keen to sample the unique experience of travelling to Easdale Island and enjoying the enthusiastic response of the Community Hall audiences. Our audiences who attend arts events here have become as famous as the artistes who have visited, for their open appreciation of performances and warmth of welcome. The Trust has performances planned every fortnight, catering for a wide range of interests, age groups and artistic disciplines. The programme includes children's percussion workshops, Rapture and Mull Theatre Companies, jazz cabaret with Fiona Duncan and Brian Kellock, exhibitions of recent work by local artists and rare brass rubbings, a middle eastern dance band, animation weekend, Dick Gaughan and storytelling with Ian Stephen. We have attracted funding from The Scottish Arts Council and hopes to be supported by Argyll & Bute Council. We have also recently put on line a brand new web site for the Community Hall which covers

all the information needed to attend one of the performances including previews, ticket prices, and performance times. The web site also holds a fascinating list of every performer to have visited Easdale Island in the eight year history of the arts programme and the Trust hopes that this year it will be able to welcome bumper audiences to the hall for some very special live performances. The web address is www.easdale.org/hall

On the conclusion of Geoff's contract as Hall Manager at the end of April, the baton has been passed to a willing and energetic group of volunteers who will carry forward the good work he has done to date. The team is made up of Fiona, Phil, Lynn, Hannah, Wee, Annabel and Wendy and will try to cover all the tasks required to run the Community Hall as effectively as possible but please bear with us as we are all on a steep learning curve!

Access arrangements are covered on the poster on the front door and we would like to stress that the Hall is a wonderful facility and is there for your use. We have also recently put on line a brand new web site for the Community Hall which covers all the information needed to attend one of the performances including a full events diary, previews, ticket prices, and performance times. The web site also holds a fascinating list of every performer to have visited Easdale Island in the eight year history of the arts programme. It has an in-depth technical spec. page and accommodation section. Thanks to John Hendry, Phil and Wee for designing a wee sweetie of a site. Please use it and join the mailing list for regular updates on the arts events. Keep fit is being kept up by a few stalwarts and Fiona and Lynn have started a successful 'Teen Café for 11 to 16 year olds, which will be held monthly and more frequently during the summer.

The Hall has recently been used for a couple of seminars/courses in marine/wildlife conservation and this type of low impact usage seems a perfect use for the Hall. If anyone knows of any groups who may be interested in finding a sympathetic conference facility, let Fiona know. Recently a brain storming coffee morning was held to discuss the furtherance of the arts programme and proved to be a fruitful exercise with 44 new ideas springing forth. There are two archive diaries now available at reception charting the triumphs of the last two years since opening in May 2003. These make excellent reading and are there for your interest. They contain posters, tickets, and reviews etc of every event and if anyone has any spare photos or other items that could be included, give them to Fiona.

We are searching, grovelling, pleading for small raffle prizes to be given away during the summer events to boost hall funds, so if you have anything appropriate, please hand it into the Hall or the Puffer.

We hope to see you in the Hall soon!

Thanks for your time in putting this together Fiona.

Joint Voluntary Groups Meeting

At a meeting, instigated by the Trust, on the 19th of March the Trust, the Residents' Association and The Scottish Slate Islands Heritage met to allow each organisation to explain their various projects, activities and roles and to foster a climate of co-operation between the various voluntary organisations. There was huge feeling that the meeting was a great success and in fact two people commented that it was one of the best meetings that they had ever attended. We feel sure that this will pave the way forward for the dissemination of information and networking between the groups. On the 14th of May there will be an open public meeting in the Hall following on from this one, the purpose of which is to present the aims and objectives of the groups and to invite questions and suggestions.

Membership Fees

Finally, a reminder to members who have not yet paid, that their membership fees became due on January the 1st. Fees are £25 per person per annum and cheques should be made payable to 'Eilean Eisdeal Trust'. You will find that a membership form is attached and it would assist us greatly if you complete it when returning your fees so we can check that we have your up-to-date details.

Your continuing support is valued and very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Kindest regards.

Donald Melville
Chairman.

Chairman Donald Melville
Secretary Jess Hill
Treasurer Annabel Gregory
Directors Wendy Blakey
Mike MacKenzie
Jan Fraser

For Hall bookings contact: Fiona Blakey - Arts Program Co-ordinator

For Hall access contact any one of the above.