

# eilean eisdéal

The Easdale Island Community Development Group

Newsletter 48, February 2012

## **STILL JUST A STONE'S THROW.... The World Stone Skimming Championships 2011**

With the strains of the band still ringing in many ears from the pre-skim party, the day dawned and sore heads slowly lifted off warm pillows. Not the organisers and volunteers though, they were all up (even if Mellon was the walking dead!) and getting things ship-shape for the event that lay ahead.

Crowds gathered for the start of our 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive championships but the darkening skies could do little to stop the feeling of fun and anticipation that was spreading through the island. The hundreds of people who had arrived to spectate or participate or both, looked heavenwards, some



John Macfadyen throws for a 3rd in under 10 boys



Dougie Isaacs with the Dutch team

smiling ruefully; "Well it wouldn't be Easdale if we didn't get some rain!!" Just before high noon The Royal Dutch Stone Skimming Association's team marched down to the quarry edge behind their flag, proudly singing a Dutch good luck anthem! What a start! There were 320 people to get through, as the weather threatened to worsen. We managed to finish the youngsters' section and got halfway through the ladies' before the skies opened. And boy, did they open! It started raining seriously and steadily got heavier!! Apart from a brief period during the men's section, where it got even heavier, the rain stayed on for the rest of the competition. Spirits were not dampened (too much) and in some cases actually added to the fun and spectacle of the day.

At the end of the Men's section it became apparent that we were going to have to have a deciding head-to-head, 3 stone, Toss Off, as 3 men had hit the back wall. Many brave and hardy souls stayed right to the bitter end and watched the head-to-head which saw Dougie Isaacs victorious for the fourth time. He is well deserved of the title, 'The World's Biggest Tosser!!'

Back in the Hall where the medals and prizes were handed out, the Dutch Team handed over a badge and made Mellon an honorary member of the Royal Dutch Stone Skimming Association! They also left a bottle of their local tippie Schelvispeckel; a local fishermen's favourite. The organising committee will be able to tell you what it tastes like after New Year!!

We thank everyone for helping, before and on the day itself; the poor rain-soaked judges, the Hall committee and Wee for the dance the night before, the stall and registration organisers, the ferrymen, the bar staff, our 'First Aider' (who is actually a doctor), Dave and Annabel for the BBQ, Sea.fari for helping bring over the stock for the day, and an especially big thank you to John Forteith of Forteith Foodservice in Oban as our main sponsor. The event raised a total of around £7,500 for community funds.

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## We have a warm Hall - thanks to Green Streets!



The pump outside the Hall



The solar PVs from Ghalia's garden

The air source heat pump was installed in September and immediately made a difference to the temperature in the Hall. Despite some damage to the pump in the December gales, which was swiftly remedied by the installer, it has continued to make the Hall a useful space even in the winter. The solar PVs and heat pump have been registered for the feed-in tariff and should provide us with a small income which will help to offset the cost of running the heat pump. A stone dyke will be erected round the pump in spring as part of the landscaping.

The other major problem in the Hall was water soaking through where the outside tanking had failed. This has now been completely replaced and significantly upgraded by Iain Mitchell Joinery and Building, and although the walls will take some time to dry out, there is already a huge improvement.

We are installing a gallery hanging system for artworks in the Hall - art exhibitions are increasingly popular and provide an additional revenue for Eilean Eisdeal. This system will make life easier for the exhibitors. Many thanks to Alex MacRae for volunteering to fit the system for us.

Suzanne and Bonnie have taken advantage of the Hall improvements to start a toddler group and also a book club. If you'd like to join either please contact Bonnie at [bonniesarahannemarsh@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bonniesarahannemarsh@yahoo.co.uk)

## ----- MUSEUM NEWS -----

- Thanks to our volunteers, the Museum has once again stayed open well into the winter months. The insulation of the roof - part of the Green Streets programme - was completed early in 2011 and has made the building much easier to heat and reduced our electricity bills.
- A new back door will be fitted by Alex MacRae next week which will comply with fire regulations and stop the rain getting in!
- Laura Ellis - who worked for Sea.fari last year - has successfully applied for 'World of Difference' funding from Vodaphone, a project which links graduates with charities. She will be recording oral histories from those with old memories of the island - this will be a huge asset to the museum.



- As part of our 'Scottish Islands' funded project - 'Easdale Slate - from Heritage to Sustainability' a play called 'Skimming the Waves' was written and performed at the Stone Skimming by Sadie Dixon-Spain and the Walking Theatre Company.



The 2012 Easdale panto was another roaring success and enjoyed by an energetic crowd who very kindly donated just under £300 to escape the madness! Our thanks to everyone who helped and played their part!



# NEW YEAR 2012 IN PICTURES

**NEW YEAR'S DAY FOOTBALL MATCH**  
a totally unbiased report by chief sports correspondent Des Ballantyne!



Hangovers, friendships and the mud bath were all forgotten about for 60 minutes, and the crowds were not disappointed at the quality on offer at the annual football match. Des and Rory were team captains and Ballantyne led his team in style bagging himself a brace of goals and setting up another. Allan Hunter was chief whistler although he seemed to struggle with the fast pace set by the players but he did OK. The game finished 4-1.



**'Loony' swim**  
Following the mud bath of a football pitch what better way to clean up than a 'lovely' dip in the harbour!

## DIY CEILIDH

Master MC Tommo introduced a great variety of Easdale talent at the DIY ceilidh on New Years Day in the hall. The evening culminated with the first ever public performance from the Easdale Male Choir with a rather uplifting (and clean) version of the 12 days of Christmas!

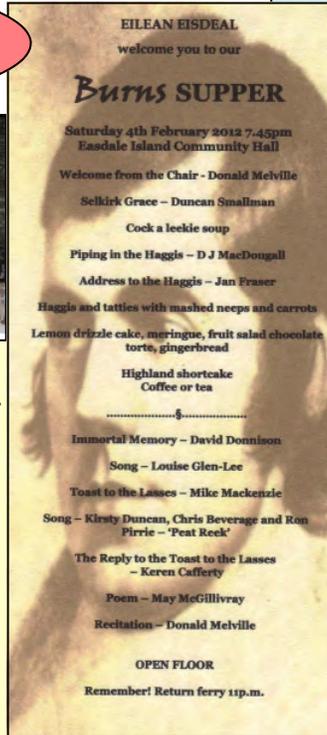




## Burns SUPPER



The Bard's birthday was celebrated in the Hall on the 4th February, with around 35 enjoying a night of 'sangs and clatter', admirably chaired by Mellon. David Donnison gave us a thought-provoking 'Immortal Memory', Mike Mackenzie made a uproarious Toast to the Lasses, and Keren gave us a heartfelt reply. Voirrey and family provided a superb dinner following the Selkirk Grace from Duncan Smallman, and the haggis was piped in by D J McDougall and addressed by Jan. Music from 'Peat Reek' and the many other contributions made it a night to remember, and a Supper that we are sure Rabbie would have loved.



## AGM 29TH December 2011

Many thanks to all who came to the AGM despite the dismal weather. Some points of interest were:

- the funding for the Arts programme in the Hall is likely to be reduced this year. We had hoped to get a small revenue from our wind turbine, which would have plugged this gap. Since this has been turned down we may have to have fewer events, since we cannot afford to fund these entirely ourselves.
- the members agreed to change our accountants to a company with more experience in the charity sector - Simmers and Co in Oban. Thanks to Jean Ainsley and Co for their previous work on our behalf.
- we have also changed our solicitors to a firm with more experience with charities - Burness LLP in Glasgow. Many thanks to Wolfson's for their many years of work with Eilean Eisdeal.
- Burness are currently redrafting our Memorandum and Articles in line with the recommendations made by OSCR. These will require to be approved at an EGM of members which we hope to hold at Easter.

### Defending the 'Bull'

Argyll and Bute Council have recently fitted additional gabions in an attempt to prevent gales closing the harbour entrance. We are looking into long term plans to combat this problem.

### A new Director!

We are delighted that Duncan Smallman has agreed to be co-opted to the board of Eilean Eisdeal and look forward to working with him

### HALL CLEANING

David Knox has agreed to take on the hall cleaning from mid-February. Many thanks to Voirrey for keeping it spick and span for the last few years.

## DIARY DATES

- Saturday 24th March -Michael Marra and the Hazy Janes - see [www.easdale.org/hall](http://www.easdale.org/hall)
- April, *date to be confirmed* - Community consultation on Cuan Sound tidal energy project
- Friday 4th to Monday 7th May - **RIB rendezvous** - see: [easdaleribrendezvous.org.uk](http://easdaleribrendezvous.org.uk)
- Saturday 11TH August  
**ATLANTIC ADVENTURE DAY**

Eilean Eisdeal is the community development group for Easdale Island, the smallest permanently inhabited inner Hebridean island. The directors are all volunteers, and rely on their members for support in fundraising to enable us to maintain our magnificent Community Hall and continue the Arts Programme despite cuts in funding. The island Folk Museum and the historic harbour are also owned by the community and managed by Eilean Eisdeal as valuable community assets. We welcome ideas which would help us improve the sustainability of this unique island community.

The current Directors are:

Keren Cafferty (chair)  
Donald Melville (treasurer)  
Jan Fraser (secretary)  
Iain McDougall  
Duncan Smallman

Our address is:

Easdale Island Community Hall, Easdale Island, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4TB,  
or email [secretary@easdale.org](mailto:secretary@easdale.org)

For more information on Eilean Eisdeal go to our website [www.easdale.org](http://www.easdale.org)

Information on the Arts Programme and Ticket sales are on: [www.easdaleislandhall.org](http://www.easdaleislandhall.org)

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