

EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.35 - MARCH 2006

To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

It hardly seems like any time at all since I sent the last newsletter to you all but it would now appear that most of us have recovered from the excesses of Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to spring. There has been some gloriously sunny weather to enjoy and the sun has even had a touch of warmth to it recently! Here is to a long hot summer {no point in not hoping!}.

It is always good to start off with something encouraging and the first piece is exactly that; the Museum. This unexpected project has taken up the vast majority of our time since we last spoke but we have made good progress.

EASDALE ISLAND MUSEUM

The Trust is continuing its efforts to try and save the museum and is optimistic of a successful outcome. The public funding world moves fairly slowly and it always takes longer than anticipated to successfully achieve funding for community projects. We are very grateful to Chris Nicholson, current owner of the museum, who shares our hopes of saving the museum and has been able to extend the time available.

In the meantime it is important that the museum is opened and continues to run this season not least because of the contribution it makes to the local economy. Chris has asked if we would be prepared to run the museum on his behalf for the time being on a voluntary basis. Pat Jones is unfortunately unable to continue working in the museum and we have been lucky to secure the services of Colin and Phil who will open and manage the museum for the next few weeks. The building will be staffed by volunteers and will open from the start of the Easter holidays (Saturday 1 April), from 10.30 am to 5 pm daily. Any one interested in helping out please get in touch with Mike.

The Trust is also launching a museum fund with proceeds to go towards the purchase and development of the museum. We have already received some generous support including a contribution of £40 from Hamish Haswell Smith. This project has widespread support throughout the community. We are very grateful for all the help we have received so far and hope to be able to report a successful outcome in the not too distant future.

PONTOON

We have been in touch with the pontoon supplier and it is all but ready for delivery. Once it is ready for collection, we will be co-ordinating its delivery to the island then putting together a team of volunteers to assist with its installation; a big thank you those of you who have already put their names forward to assist with this part of the project.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

We met with a representative of ALI Energy, the local renewable energy company, in mid January to discuss where we were with this project and to catch up with the latest from them. There is an ultimate deadline with one of the major funders of April 2008 so we do have quite a while yet to progress certain matters but obviously the sooner the better as it should hopefully provide us with some renewable, cheaper energy. The report for the Hall energy alternatives was not conclusive but pointed in one or two main directions; wind turbines and heat-pumps. Wind turbines have planning and visual impact issues, heat-pumps have installation issues and don't best deliver the sort of energy that the Hall would best be serviced by, i.e. they deliver a low but constant heat for a building which is used constantly {police stations, hospitals etc} whereas the Hall needs a more instantly available heat irregularly. For a wider community scheme, the report really leads us to having to do something in conjunction with Seil as the rough reckoning is that the infrastructural requirements of a larger wind turbine on Easdale Island would be too much for the island. There are obviously the larger planning and visual impact issues with a large wind turbine capable of delivering enough energy for the whole island and possibly having excess which we could sell to the National Grid and create an income for

community projects. There are also one or two more traditional methods of heating that we are considering which combine more modern technology and may be possibilities such as high temperature bio-mass stoves but we will keep you posted on any developments.

BURNS' SUPPER

The 14th Annual Burns' Supper on the island took place on Saturday 28th January in the Hall. This year the Trust organised the event and made good use of not only home-grown talent but home-grown food as well with our resident island chef, Lynn Noble, taking charge in the kitchen and Jess Hill's Easdale-Island-grown turnips garnishing the traditional fare of haggis and potato. The event was well attended and the evening's guests were entertained by the speeches and enjoyed the meal, joining in on the relaxed and fun atmosphere that has come to be expected of our island Burns' Suppers. Dave Rockley took on the role of Chairman for the evening and did an excellent job. The proceedings included the usual speeches but this year the gauntlet had been laid down between the Toast to the Lassies and the Reply as they were done respectively by husband and wife duo of Sandra and myself! The other traditional speeches and recitals on the night were the Address to the Haggis {Willie Melville, you can't beat family contacts} and The Immortal Memory {Mike MacKenzie}. Interspersed between these there were several other recitals and songs delivered in professional style by a range of local, talented performers. These came in the shape of Kern and Eathan Grier, who recited poems that they had learnt at school followed by Stephen McNally who piped in the Haggis 'virtually', courtesy of the digital projector and screen {due to him being in Edinburgh at the time!}. Brenda and Geoff Heslop treated us to delightfully sensitive interpretations of Burns songs, singing a Burns' song together, and then one each with Brenda also reciting one of her own Burns' influenced poems. The evening's formal entertainment finished off with a powerfully romantic delivery of Red Red Rose by John Merrilees, usually more noted as Easdale's King of Rock, then Jan Fraser recited Holy Willie's Prayer. All in attendance agreed that they had had a superb evening, listening to the speakers and sampling the 'Bill O' Fare'. Roll on next year!

CADISPA WORKSHOP

Jan, Mike and I attended a workshop organised by CADISPA {the community regeneration group} in Oban recently. It was based on the theme of Heritage and we made some excellent contacts, especially for the museum, and renewed some old friendships. It was an extremely well run event which left everyone feeling enthused and encouraged to head back home to their respective projects.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING

As one of the main items on the Community Plan and following on from the meeting that we mentioned at the AGM that we had had with the Council in connection with the above, we have further investigated some of the options open to us. To update you on this we propose to have an Open Public meeting on Easter Sunday in the Hall. Confirmation and details of this will be issued nearer the time on posters in the usual places; hall, phone-box and ferry-shed.

HALL UPDATE {from Fiona}

The hall has been used frequently through the winter for keep fit and meetings and with spring upon us its time for a clean-up. If anyone could give an hour on Sunday 9th April from 11am, we could get the hall squared up for the start of the season. Last time we did this it was fantastic with at least a dozen folk turning up so if you can make it please do. We'll get the milk in for the coffee! (and maybe biscuits too) The arts programme is waiting confirmation of funding from the arts council which is anticipated mid April, after which we can publish confirmed dates of the whole programme. Please check the web site www.easdale.org/hall now for these dates already confirmed and in a few weeks for the full list of events. Remember if you want to use/hire the hall for anything just get in touch with Fiona tel. 01852 300500 or anyone on the list at the front door. Volunteers will be needed in the coming months to help out at events, mainly at the ticket desk and in the bar, so please let us know if you can help. The bar revenue and raffles etc. helps cover the running costs of our beautiful hall and without your help we all couldn't have the pleasure of using it, so thanks to everyone in advance! Here's to a great summer of fun, music, theatre and dancing ahead, Cheers!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – DATES FOR THE DIARY

Easdale Paradiso - Film Shows – 'Festival' (18) Friday 7th April @ 7.30pm and Saturday 8th April - Howl's Moving Castle (U) @ 3.30pm - Easdale Island Community Hall Annual Rock Night – Easter

Saturday, 15th April, 7.30pm A bargain at £5 for two live bands; local band 'Framed' and John Merrilees with DILLWGAFF!

Fun Day and Regatta – Saturday 5th August with the sailing race on Sunday 6th {this year Adrian might even get the course right!} As always, there will be Entertainment in the evening in the Hall.

World Stone Skimming Championships – Sunday 24th September with the Pre-Skim dance on Saturday 23rd Easdale Island Community Hall; further details nearer the time. Coal Day has yet to be confirmed but will be very shortly!

MEMBERSHIP FEES

A good number of people have renewed their membership and we would encourage everyone else to send off your payment to Annabel please. Remember, your membership fees go a long way to assisting the Trust in its work and help to put improvements in place for us all now and in the future. Thank you.

Your continuing support is valued and very much appreciated. Thank you.

Our kindest regards and best wishes.

Donald Melville
Chairman.

Chairman: Donald Melville
Secretary: Jess Hill
Treasurer: Annabel Gregory
Directors: Mike MacKenzie, Jan Fraser

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

For Hall access contact any one of the above.