

## EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.36 - NOVEMBER 2006

*To all Easdale islanders, members and friends*

---

It has been quite a while since the last newsletter has been sent out, so please accept my apologies. This has certainly not been through lack of activity, probably quite the opposite in fact. Summer this year seemed to take too long to start, lasted for too short a period and ended all too quickly! The winter's winds have got off to a strong start already so let's hope that Mother Nature is getting this out of the way first so that we can have a relatively peaceful season.

### **EASDALE ISLAND MUSEUM**

As you will probably know, Eilean Eisdeal was asked by the Scottish Slate Islands Heritage Trust to help save the museum. With the assistance of a mix of volunteers and paid staff, the museum stayed open this year for the full season. Our thanks goes to these people, the volunteers who have given freely of their time, the people who found time to work in the museum and especially to one person who donated the money that they were paid! This donation will go towards funds to help buy the museum. Thank you all. Due to the hard work of these people and to Annabel and Mike for their financial diligence, this year has seen a turnaround for the museum and for the first time in quite a while, it has made a significant profit. We could hardly be more pleased and thank everyone involved enormously. We continue to progress funding for the purchase of the museum and remain eternally grateful to Chris Nicholson, current owner of the museum, for his patience and understanding of our position.

We are also grateful to both the Seil and Easdale Community Council and the Easdale Island Residents' and Property Owners' Association for their endorsements of your efforts to save the museum. These documents of support will go a long way to helping secure the future of the museum.

### **PONTOON**

As can be seen, the pontoon has been constructed and floated down to its position, shackled in place and attached to its anchors which had been dug in by Mike and his digger, ably assisted by Jan, Neil, Jess, Tony and myself. We await fabrication of a ladder which will allow safe access down on to the pontoon at varying states of the tide but respectfully request that in the meantime people refrain from using it until it is safe to do so. Our thanks go to the volunteers who helped out on what was the hottest day of the summer to assist in the construction of the pontoon under the guidance of Fusion Marine's Allan MacLeod. We are hugely indebted to Mike MacKenzie Builders Ltd for the free use of machinery and workforce, all of which would have added a substantial amount to the overall cost of the project had we had to pay for this. We would also like to say a huge thank you to Tony Hill for donning his dry-suit and plunging into the cold water of the harbour to help shackle the chains to the pontoon.

### **REFUSE AND RECYCLING**

Following the encouraging open meeting on Easter Sunday, we held another open meeting to inform everyone of progress on this important project. In spite of atrocious weather there was a great turnout to see the presentation and be kept up to speed with the latest information. Again, this was well received and the feeling from the floor was positive although there have been some objections to the planning application by a small number of people. However, this project has enjoyed robust community support since it was first suggested to us, with the last questionnaire showing 84% of respondents in favour of it. We would encourage anyone who wishes to do so to write in support of the planning application and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask one of the directors for further information.

### **HALL UPDATE {from Fiona}**

Well, what a busy season the hall has had this year, breaking the previous footfall records. It has been well used since the last newsletter with a variety of groups hiring the hall for different purposes. The fiddle group 'Blazin Fiddles' came for a couple of days to rehearse before a summer of touring

well known venues and festivals, and then we had the Pradistas who came to do a four day photo shoot. They were so impressed by the facilities we had to offer, they stayed for an extra couple of days! This use of the hall by different, low impact groups is exactly part of the vision that we had when we started the whole hall project and it is satisfying to see the use of the hall increasing slowly year by year in this way. Also this summer has seen more local use than ever before, not just with arts events, birthday parties, a wedding dance and cinema, but music rehearsals and a huge increase in children's play times, as the wee ones all reach different ages and stages. Arts highlights have included Bert Jansch, Mull Theatre, Goler Jaan from Bangladesh (and their excellent pakora), and others too numerous to mention. The two big party nights of the regatta and the pre-skim party were great this year with top class live music from dance bands brought in from central Scotland to get us jigging. We have hosted meetings and exhibitions this year as well as welcoming a weekly tour of the hall from the Scottish Slate Islands Heritage Trust and their American visitors. Keeping the hall open during October at lunchtimes seemed to have been welcomed by the autumnal tourists and later in the season we held a two day Big Draw event with the whole of Easdale Primary and a fancy dress guy fawkes/fireworks party with local stars playing live music. Our hall is a fantastic space for anyone to use so please remember it is there for you. The housekeeping is running smoothly and the main hall is benefiting from the extra insulation work Mike kindly did last winter.

I think a huge thank you is due to the hall team at this stage in the year as they have been working away voluntarily all the time ensuring you all enjoy great events in a clean and well run hall. Here is some feedback from a visitor this summer: "I just wanted to compliment you for providing me and the few other lucky ones present for such a private and magical night with Bert Jansch earlier on this month. Not only were your staff friendly and helpful, the hall clean (and the pint good), but the whole evening was one of my most memorable experiences. I have been to many live performances from Miles Davis, Carlos Santana and Led Zeppelin but for atmosphere your night comes top without a lie. You really surpassed yourselves and I think you can rightly give each other a pat on the back."

There are so many aspects to running a hall successfully and the tasks are shared between us but any offers of help are greatly appreciated especially when it comes to big clean-ups and if anyone can help at the end of events, even for 5 minutes to help close down the bar and put away tables, that would be appreciated. Sometimes the tidying up seems a big task at the end of the night but many hands etc. etc. So I hope you enjoy the rest of the winter and keep checking the web site [www.easdale.org/hall](http://www.easdale.org/hall) for event news.

### **FUN DAY AND SAILING RACE**

Saturday 5th August saw the Fun Day go ahead even if the weather did look a bit on the dodgy side! A damp start did not stop a number of visitors from coming over to see what was happening and to witness the first Easdale Raft Race. There were four entrants and Catriona and Beth, the only female competitors, showed all the boys how it was done and won convincingly without even breaking sweat or finger nails! The following day the sailing race attracted the usual suspects with 'Amity', skipper Jan, winning, 'Isabella' skipper Sandra coming second and Adrian on 'Nameless' coming in a respectable third, or last as we call it in the trade!!

### **COAL DAY**

This year saw the usual turnout of people to put themselves through the tortuous task of 'humffing' literally hundreds of bags of coal all over the island! Thanks go to Shane Cadzow for bringing the coal over to the island on the Grey Dog and to Mike MacKenzie for the use of his forklift. The task was completed in good time and the pub was soon busy with chat over pints about who had carried more than whom. In the evening we were fed well on one of Lynn Noble's famous island curries and then entertained by local lasses Beth and Caitlan, accompanied by yours truly on the drums! The mike was then left open to all for Easdale Island's first Kurryoke Night.

### **STONESKIMMING**

This year's event attracted the largest number of entrants so far and seemed, by all accounts, to run as smoothly if not smoother than before. Our thanks goes to the committee who organised the event and for their extremely generous contribution from the proceeds of the day. As always Eilean Eisdeal ran the pre-skim dance the night before and got well into the swing of things in preparation for the next day's exuberations. A great deal of thanks must go to the ferrymen on the day, Chris and Willie, and to their ticket organiser, Tom Tinney, whose efforts really did make a big difference to the running

of the day. The title has gone back 'down-under' again; we must pay a visit there and see how they do it.

### **DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY ARTS ASSOCIATION {DGAA} CONFERENCE**

Eilean Eisdeal was approached to deliver a presentation to the DGAA's conference on 'The Value of Small Events in the Community'. We were pleased to be asked to do this and Jan and I went to give the Keynote presentation for the conference. We met a wonderful group of people who were organising the conference and further groups of people all undertaking similar community development projects. We forged some good links and made several new friends and look forward to speaking to them at some point again in the future.

### **AGM**

As you will know from recent separate correspondence to this newsletter, this year's AGM is on Saturday the 30th December. Official notification will be sent to you shortly along with the associated paperwork and possibly ballot papers, should an election be required again this year. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

### **MEMBERSHIP FEES**

We are grateful to many of you who have renewed your subscriptions to Eilean Eisdeal after our recent reminder. Your membership fees go a long way to assisting us in our work on behalf of the community and helping to implement improvements for us all now and in the future.

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS – DATES FOR THE DIARY**

Eilean Eisdeal AGM – Saturday 30th December 2006 @ 7.30pm

Easdale Paraiso – Film Show – Dr Who: Daleks Invasion Earth 2150 A.D. This year's Fancy Dress theme is Dr. Who/Alien/Otherworld – see you there to be spooked!

Easdale Island Panto – Sh'wreck' – Tuesday 2nd January 2007 @ 2.30pm

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

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.