

# Ness - Barva

## FREE Community Newsletter

Issue No. 5 ~ Friday 5 June 2020

Published by Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn with volunteer support

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is a company registered in Scotland No.273903 and a charity registered in Scotland No. SC036903

Volunteer  
Week 1- 7 June

A big thank you to  
all volunteers in our  
communities for  
the difference  
they make

## Càrlabhagh in harmony - despite lockdown!

Coronavirus restrictions may have prevented Còisir Ghàidhlig Chàrlabhaigh [Carloway Gaelic Choir] from meeting in person, but they have still managed to create harmonious work. A collaborative musical project featuring the choir members has been uploaded as a video to social media channels and Youtube, showcasing the talent residing in and the natural beauty of this west-side village. A melodious cover of Rob Calum Macleod's 'Àite Mo Ghaoil' ('The Place of my Heart/Beloved Place'), the video is entitled 'Càrlabhagh', and serves as both a tribute to the 'wonderful and supportive' community of Carloway, and, where appropriate, as a fundraising helping hand for the choir.

As Còisir Ghàidhlig Chàrlabhaigh were unable to run their usual fundraisers owing to COVID-19 associated restrictions, a new strategy was necessary. Instead of their usual soup, pudding and baking skills being put to use to raise money, members of the choir were instead asked to record themselves singing 'Àite Mo Ghaoil' from their respective lockdown locations. Choir members from across the island and the country then submitted their audio and video clips to conductor Màiri, who painstakingly sewed together each separate clip. This was to ensure all voices in the end product were in sync, creating a perfect harmony for the final video. When asked how she achieved this, in an email to the newsletter Mairi said: "I recorded a piano accompaniment and sang along with it. Our Gaelic tutor recorded the pronunciation, and once distributed, I left it up to each individual to do with it what they pleased. Some came back to me with visual scenery displaying our local beauty, others were happiest recording an audio first before attempting a video. I allowed the process to organically grow, being guided by the wide array of material I received. Who knew it would turn into such a masterpiece!"

On 26th May 2020, the compiled clips went live, in the form of two beautiful and moving videos – one version with Gaelic subtitles, and one with English. Alongside the tune is a link to the fundraising website Just Giving, should people wish to donate. Thus far, the

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCTxEXWNCpE>



Còisir Ghàidhlig Chàrlabhaigh/Carloway Gaelic Choir  
celebrate their wins at the Mòd in 2019.

## Opening next week

Habost Household Waste and Recycling Centre

Due to revised guidelines announced by the Scottish Government, Habost Household Waste and Recycling Centre will re-open on Thursday 11 June from 10am – 12noon.

From Monday 15 June and until further notice, the amenity site will open as follows:

Monday 2pm - 4pm  
Thursday 10am – 12pm

Initially, these guidelines must be followed:

- ▶ Only cars will be permitted – no vans, pick-ups or trailers
- ▶ One vehicle allowed entry to the site at any one time
- ▶ To avoid overcrowding, a queuing system will be in operation
- ▶ To avoid traffic management issues, there will be a cut-off point for vehicles to queue to enter. You may be asked to come back at a different time if the queue becomes too long
- ▶ While queuing, please remain in your vehicle, with your engine switched off while stationary
- ▶ Please follow all signage and verbal instructions from our staff
- ▶ Please have your waste sorted before arriving
- ▶ To maintain social distancing, staff will not be able to help deposit your waste items, so ensure you only bring what you can manage yourself
- ▶ Please wash your hands before and after attending.
- ▶ Government guidance on social distancing must be followed, stay at least 2 metres apart at all times
- ▶ If you or anyone else in your household has Coronavirus symptoms, or has been asked to self-isolate, DO NOT attend any of our recycling centres

It is important to remember that government travel restrictions still apply if visiting a recycling centre. You should only visit a household waste recycling centre when it is absolutely essential for you to dispose of items that cannot safely be stored at home, and you should not visit more than once per week.

UOG would like to thank the community for their patience as they seek re-introduce this service with the new ways of working.

## Schools to return in August - with some changes

On Thursday 21st May, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced to the Scottish Parliament that schools should begin preparations for the return of pupils come August. The ways of teaching, however, will be quite altered from the norm, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic.

When children return to school from the 11th of August onwards, learning will take place in a 'blended' format. This will comprise ordinary

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### EORODALE

Happy Birthday to Max Maclean (2 Eorodale) who turns 2 on the 5th of June. Lots of love from mum, dad, big sister Ella and all the family.

### CROSS SKIGERSTA

Dolly Beag and Seonag Froig, 127 Cross Skigersta Rd, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Wednesday 27th May. Wishing them a happy anniversary from all the family near and far.

### CROSS SKIGERSTA

Thanks to family and friends for remembering me on my recent birthday.

Thanks also to Paddy and his gang at Cross Stores for the nice surprise. All very much appreciated.

Roddy - 31 Cross Skigersta

### HABOST

A very Happy 60th Birthday to Isobel Maclean 32a Habost, whose birthday is on the 25th June. Lots of love and hugs, Calum, Dougie, Kareen, Archie and Lexie, Derek, Sarah, Seumas and Fergus. XXX

### MELBOST BORVE

THANKS - We would like to thank everyone very much for remembering us and taking the time to mark the occasion of our 50th Wedding Anniversary recently.

Firstly, to our daughters Jane Ann and Helen, for organising the outdoor celebration to mark the day. Thank you to the neighbours and friends who gathered, socially distanced, outside the house. Also, a big thank you to those responsible for the fantastic display of banners and balloons on our front gate. The first surprise of the day! A special thank you

to Alex John and Violet, along with Ashleigh the piper for providing the excellent musical entertainment.

Further thanks go to all those who phoned, sent cards, monies and other gifts. Your kindness was very much appreciated. We were both very touched and we had a lovely day to remember.

Thanks again,  
Donald John and Sina  
3 Melbost, Borge

### HIGH BORVE

A Happy Birthday to Duncan Maclean (Duncan a' Pheic) of 2 High Borge, who was 80 on Sunday 24th May.



Above: Duncan a'Pheic (see High Borge)



Above: Max Maclean (see Eorodale)



Dolly Beag and Seonag Froig (see Cross Skigersta Rd)



Above, below left and below right: Isobel Maclean (see Habost)



### THANKS

We, the family of the late Christina Smith, 10 Lionel, wish to sincerely thank relatives, friends and neighbours for the support and kindness shown at the time of our recent sad loss.

We would like to thank The Reverend Ewen Matheson for his spiritual support.

Thanks to all who telephoned, sent cards, messages, flowers, and gifts. Also, thanks to all who remembered us in prayer.

Grateful thanks to all staff at Habost Clinic, especially the community nurses for their unfailing care and compassion during our mother's illness.

Thanks to A Macrae, undertakers, for their sensitive handling of the funeral arrangements, and to DK Maclean, cemetery attendant.

Finally, we wish to thank all relatives, friends, and neighbours who came to pay their respects at the roadside on the day of the funeral.



## Taic le Gàidhlig - Gaelic Support

With the schools closed, non-fluent parents and carers of Gaelic Medium children, both at sgoil àraich and primary level, may worry about their Gaelic ability suffering without daily contact, and about homework or classwork being set with which they feel they are unable to help. If this is the case, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn's Gaelic Development officer, Shona, with any queries or for a chat at: [shona@uoglt.com](mailto:shona@uoglt.com).

### Sgeama Meantairidh

THA COLAISTE A' CHAISTEIL a' sireadh dhaoine de gach aois a bhiodh deònach a bhith na meantairean dha luchd-ionnsachaidh Gàidhlig san àm ri teachd. Tha an sgeama seo airson cothrom a thoirt dha luchd-ionnsachaidh an cànan a chleachdadh agus a leasachadh. Bhiodh aig gach meantair ri coinneachadh ri aon duine a tha ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig agus a bhith a' còmhraidh riutha ann an suidheachadh neo-fhoirmeil. Chan fheum sibh a bhith comasach air Gàidhlig a leughadh no a sgrìobhadh – chan eil sinn ag iarraidh ach comas còmhraidh.



Gheibheadh na meantairean am pàigheadh. Ma tha ùidh agaibh ann a bhith an sàs anns a' phrògram mheantairidh seo, neo ma tha ceistean sam bith agaibh, faodaidh sibh fios a chur gun a' phost-dealain seo: [le41cb@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:le41cb@uhi.ac.uk)

### Mentoring Scheme

LEWIS CASTLE COLLEGE is looking for people of different ages who would be willing to be Gaelic mentors for individuals who are learning Gaelic. This would involve meeting and chatting to Gaelic learners on a regular basis. This programme gives the learners the opportunity to use the language in an informal situation. You do not have to be able to read or write Gaelic – this is about speaking the language.

The mentors would be paid for their time. If you are interested in being a Gaelic mentor, or have any questions, you can contact the following email: [le41cb@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:le41cb@uhi.ac.uk)

## More places made available for Foundation Apprenticeships

There has been much national discussion as to how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect the job opportunities of young people. But in late May Comhairle nan Eilean Siar announced that they have made additional allocations within their Foundation Apprenticeship Programme as a result of demand.

More of the pupils entering S4 and S5 in 2020 in Castlebay School, Sgoil Lionacleit, Sir E Scott School and the Nicolson Institute will now be able to apply for a Foundation Apprenticeship. This year, there will be seven categories accepting applications, to equip pupils with skills required to meet future job opportunities. These categories are: Business, Creative and Digital Media (delivered in both English and Gàidhlig), Food and Drink Technologies, Social Services and Healthcare, Social Services and Childcare, Engineering, Information and Computing Technology (ICT), and Gàidhlig /Gaelic.

Foundation Apprenticeships provide a strong base to build upon, providing young people with the knowledge and experience to allow them to progress to both modern and graduate apprenticeship programmes, within the local economy and nationally.

Cllr Angus McCormack, Chairman of Education, Skills and Children's Services said:

"This funding, supported by our charter development programme with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG), Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme and European Structural Fund (ESF) funding application, provides a major opportunity for local economic development, education, training and employment opportunities for our young people. I would encourage young people who may be looking to go to university or into graduate placements, to consider the exciting opportunities that are presented through this scheme.

"For each of the past five years, young people have left CnES schools with SQA vocational qualifications at SCQF5 at three times the national average. Concordantly post-school positive and sustained destinations, particularly into employment and university, are high."

Dolina Smith, Apprenticeship Manager added:

"Foundation Apprenticeships offer young people in the Western Isles the chance to develop the future skills needed to grow the local economy. They also provide a new and innovative career pathway which encourages more young people to stay on the islands with the offer of a job closer to home.

Foundation Apprenticeships are closing the gap between the classroom and the workplace, with pupils realising the benefits of work-based learning. Employers are telling us that pupils who have taken a Foundation Apprenticeship are more job ready and better qualified candidates for apprenticeships and jobs."

Anyone interested, or for more information, contact:

01851822840, 07866915153, or [apprenticeships@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@cne-siar.gov.uk)

### Condolences

On Thursday 21 May, **Kenneth Maciver**, age 85, originally from Shawbost, husband of Margaret, (Peigi Aonghais Fhionnlaigh formerly of 51 Cross Skigersta) died suddenly at their home in Aberdeen. We extend condolences to Peigi and the family, Lena, Angus and Anne and their loved ones and to all who mourn the passing of Kenneth.

On Sunday 31 May, **Charles Mackinnon**, 89, originally from Brue, formerly of 88 Cross Skigersta, husband of Maggie Ann a' Phadaidh died in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. Tearlach and Maggie Ann lived in Ness for a number of years with their family before settling in Easter Ross in the 1980s. We extend condolences to Maggie Ann and the family, Calum, Ina, Màiri and Duncan and their loved ones and to all who have fond memories of Tearlach. Many in the villages will also remember Kenneth Angus, the son and brother they lost aged 8 years in 1972.

If you have any greetings, birthdays or well wishes you would like to include in the newsletter, please email: [jasmine@uoglt.com](mailto:jasmine@uoglt.com)

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## Tom's Titbits

There has been a fair bit of coverage given on Facebook to a challenge event in aid of the NHS and other essential workers who gave of their time and some their lives during this Covid-19 era. I don't fully understand the significance of the way it's done, but it involves drinking a raw egg, swallowing a spoonful of sugar and a dram of alcohol in quick succession. The participants are nominated by friends and they film themselves whilst carrying out this seemingly arduous task. Some of the facial contortions, severe *gomadaich* and regurgitations that were on display need to be seen to be believed and many of these people would have been wiser not to broadcast their efforts to the public. Even the blones were having a go at it and what a carry on. Man up folks. What's the problem here? For a good number of years before my arrival in these parts I consumed two raw eggs in milk every single morning for breakfast. Not whisked, just cracked and plonked into the glass with a smattering of milk and down the hatch it slid quite easily. There were mornings when circumstances demanded that alcohol accompanied the eggs and sugar is always sweet in tea so I managed without any great fuss until I realised I was allergic to the hard stuff. So where is the challenge? Eggs, sugar and booze? Just get it down you. One thing that I noticed was that some of the participants were a bit pretentious and displayed the fancy whisky bottles for the drams, as you do. Quaint curved ones containing malts and special blends, not the good old Haig and Johnnie Walker that we had back in the day, which shows how times have changed. If I was to adjudicate the performances, I think for the men joint first place would have to be shared between the Guga Hunter Retired and the Borve Hydro Man, who both made it look as if they were sipping a cup of tea. The awards for the ladies would go to the Borve Hair Stylist and a blone from Back who should know better. It's all being done for a good cause though and my comments are observations and not criticisms. Well done to those who participated.

The May is out, the clouts have long ago been cast and, believe it or not, we have witnessed the rare event of a case of sunstroke in High Borve. Most people around here are usually to be seen attired in boiler suits, bonnets and wellies in any kind of weather, but some who haven't been with us for long still have a lot to learn. I will not reveal the identity of the fair skinned maiden who was silly enough to get caught out but suffice to say it's only the second case ever recorded in this village. I married the first case. Such is life at the moment as we go through this strange new way of living which has been enforced upon us.

by Tom Maciver



My previously mentioned retirement happened officially last Friday when I received my last ever pay cheque, which was a wee bit more than my first one in 1966, which amounted to three pounds and one shilling in hard cash in a wee brown envelope, courtesy of Mitchell's Garage in Stornoway. This final one came via email and I'm led to believe the money is in the bank. Some people have been asking me how I feel about it all. I have to admit that it is a strange experience, given the current circumstances, as I come to terms with the fact that technically my working life is over. Hold on a minute, I wanted to go out with a bang! Covid-19 has robbed me of what I have to believe with my vivid imagination would have been a huge event. The Motor Trade would have been rocked by the news of my departure and Coinneach Mor, Cathy Bhan and Pluto would have been clamouring for the privilege of interviews. Visions of me being driven through the town like the Carnival Queen, with crowds lining the street cheering me as a gesture of appreciation for my fifty odd years of service to the Motor Trade, went through my deluded mind. Then we would head for the Council Chambers for a Civic Reception where I was to be presented by the CEO of Denis Autos with a golden fan belt and a framed painting of an oil filter. Then I came to my senses and the realisation that nobody else gives a toss hit me right between the eyes because people retire every day, but one has to have a dream. Three cards, two phone calls and a bottle of Schloer later I'm still waiting for the party, so I keep dreaming. Seriously though, we did have a rather tasty wee barbecue with the neighbours last Friday evening after Nicola loosened the ties a bit, and that'll do me. When I visited Stornoway last week I met two acquaintances from the motor trade and

we stood at a social distance having a twenty minute yarn about life in general. Despite the seriousness of the situation we are in, we had a good laugh. This is what I'm going to miss about the job. The banter and the interaction with people on a daily basis, as it was such a big part of my life. I met a *Bacach* who is resident in Ness the other day at the Post Office and he shared with me that after a working life at sea he still wonders who's on watch when he sees a big ship sailing by heading for one of the far away destinations that he frequented so often. I'm thankful for having had a good, full working life though, grateful that I never had to sign on for any benefits or dole and appreciative of everyone who played a part in it, whether it be employer, employee or customer. If you fall into any of these categories... Thank you.

I saw this the other day when I returned from Gress Cemetery after attending the funeral of a good friend who died of cancer at the age of 57 and I felt the need to share it with you.

*"Every minute someone leaves this world behind.  
We are all in 'the line' without knowing it.  
We never know how many people are before us.  
We can not move to the back of the line.  
We can not step out of the line.  
We can not avoid the line.  
So while we wait in line -  
Make moments count.  
Make priorities.  
Make the time.  
Make your gifts known.  
Make a nobody feel like a somebody.  
Make your voice heard.  
Make the small things big.  
Make someone smile.  
Make the change.  
Make love.  
Make up.  
Make peace.  
Make sure to tell your people they are loved.  
Make sure to have no regrets.  
Make sure you are ready."*

Mar sin leibh an-dràsta,  
Tom



*There have been rumours of another Ness Tractor Run coming soon to aid some worthy cause and you need look no further than this well-kent bodach for the first participant. He celebrated his 70th birthday the other day and is still raring to go.*



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### VACANCY

### Dreuchd Bàn

#### OIFIGEAR LEASACHAIDH GÀIDHLIG Gaelic Development Officer

Hours: 37 hours per week  
Salary: £23,500 per annum (pro rata)  
Fixed Term: 1 year (to cover maternity leave)  
Location: UOG Business Centre, South Dell, Ness, Isle of Lewis

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG) aims to maximise the economic and social value of Gaelic language and heritage to the estate and is currently undertaking various projects and initiatives to stimulate economic and social opportunities.

UOG is seeking to recruit a self-motivated individual to engage with the community of the Galson Estate to proactively promote, support learning of, and use Gaelic to deliver against recognised priorities e.g. tourism, health and wellbeing, childcare and thereby place importance on the Gaelic language as a socio-economic driver.

UOG delivers a Community Investment Programme and it is expected the post holder would support organisations to seek opportunities to use the language to support their growth and development, adding value to their offering.

The successful applicant will have excellent verbal and written communication skills with fluency in Gaelic, both verbal and written. Experience of heritage related projects and community led development would be advantageous.

The ability to work on your own initiative is essential.

This post is part-funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The closing date for applications is Friday 12th June 2020.

For an application pack please contact:  
Christine Amos, Operations Manager  
UOG Business Centre, South Dell, Ness, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0SP

Tel: 01851 850393 Email: office@uogtd.com Web: www.galsontrust.com

[WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM](http://WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM)

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## DELIVERY SERVICE FROM LEWIS CROFTERS TO GALSON ESTATE DURING COVID-19



Please note we will only be able to take relatively small /essential orders across in a transit van. We ask for your patience while we trial this service which is in an effort to support the crofting community during this time of crisis. We expect to run the service on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week and we will review on an ongoing basis. If you can get items on the estate then please do so. This service is for items that need to be brought from town and is primarily to support those who aren't going to drive to town for just a few items.

**DELIVERIES WILL BE: MONDAY WEDNESDAY FRIDAY**

**YOU MUST LET US KNOW YOU WANT A COLLECTION BY CALLING US BETWEEN 10AM AND 1PM ON ONE OF THESE DAYS. WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO COLLECT ON THE SAME DAY.**



DROP OFF  
POINTS

BARVAS COMMUNITY CENTRE

CLAN MACQUARRIE  
COMMUNITY CENTRE

SPORSNIS

PLEASE DO NOT OVER ORDER!  
IF AN ORDER IS TOO LARGE FOR THE RUN WE WE WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE IT TO A DROP OFF POINT.

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# seo a-Nis

## Shona Nic a' Mhaoilein



### Beagan Saorsa

Nach do dh'fhosgail an saoghal air an deireadh sheachdain 's sinn a' faighinn cothrom coinneachadh ri aon thaigh eile sa ghrèin, a' seasamh còmhla ach fada bho chèile? Tha e annasach mar a rinn sin diofar dhuinn anns na làithean a dh'fhalbh, gu h-àraidh leis cho math 's a bha an t-side. Bha mi a' suidhe sa ghàrradh Disathairne, a' gabhail iongnadh leis cho àlainn 's a bha an latha agus am baile beag anns a bheil mi cho fortanach a bhith a' fuireach, nuair a stad bhan aig taigh mo nàbaidh a tha a' fuireach na h-aonar agus leum teaghlach de cheathrar a-mach gus ùine a chur seachad còmhla rithe a-muigh. Thug e de thoileachas dhomh 's nach cuala mise na bha a' tachairt air mo chùlaibh-sa fhèin. Nach ann a nochd an Sgitheanach, an-dèidh sia seachdainean air falbh! Abair thusa toileachas! Feumaidh mi aideachadh gun robh mi ga ionndrainn, agus cha chuala mi fuaim cho binn ris na soithichean san t-sinc gan glanadh le cuideigin eile an oidhche ud! Bha an uairsin a chò-là-breith ann Latha na Sàbaid agus fhuair sinn air latha a chaitheamh còmhla a' gabhail beagan fois ro thoiseach sheachdain eile.

### Càrlabhadh

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, fhuair sinn air foillseachadh na bha sinn air a bhith trang ag obair air leis a' chòisir. Air Dimàirt chaidh bhideo air ar duilleag Facebook agus air ar sianal YouTube den chòisir a' seinn 'Càrlabhadh'. Bha sinn uile air ar clàraidhean fhèin a dhèanamh fa leth, sgapte bho chèile ann an Càrlabhadh, Tolastadh a' Chaolais, Inbhir Nis, Baile an Truiseil, Dùn Phris, Glaschu, Barraigh, Dùn Èideann agus Uibhist, agus rinn ar stiùiriche obair air leth air a h-uile càil a tharraing còmhla gus an robh sinn ann an deagh cho-sheirm le seallaidhean àlainn de Chàrlabhadh agus na h-àiteachan anns an robh sinn. Abair thusa gun robh e na thlachd dhuinn beagan toileachais a thoirt do dhaoine san latha a th' ann (agus thug sinn a' chianalas orra cuideachd – duilich!) agus tha sinn dìreach air ar dòigh leis na tha daoine air a bhith ag ràdh mu dheidhinn. Bheir sùil air duilleag Facebook 'Còisir Ghàidhlig Chàrlabhaigh' no air ar sianal YouTube mura h-eil sibh air fhaicinn fhathast! Sgaoil sinn cuideachd bhideo goirid le criomagan nach d' fhuair air a' phrìomh bhideo, le camaras a' tuiteam, facail a' dol cearr agus gigealais a' gabhail thairis. Tha mi gu mòr an dòchas gum faic sinn a leithid bho chòisirean eile – tha Còisir Ghàidhlig an Eilein Mhuilich air tionndadh àlainn a dhèanamh air 'An t-Eilean Muileach' agus 's fhiach iadsan a choimhead cuideachd. Cò aig a tha fios, 's dòcha gu bheil sinn a-nis ag obair air pròiseact eile?

### Fallain

Tha mi cho taingeil gu bheil cùisean fhathast an ìre mhath mar bu chòir aig an ospadal. Bha mi ann an t-seachdain sa chaidh airson sùil a thoirt air mar a tha am bèibidh a' fàs – chan eil mo theaghlach fhèin ainmeil airson leanabhan beaga a chruthachadh idir agus gu dearbh leis gun robh an Sgitheanach 12lb 3oz tha mi air a bhith a' dèanamh mo dhicheall a bhith ag ithe gu fallain! Fhuair mi sùil eile air a' bhèibidh agus nach e/i bha sona, a' suidhe gu sàmhach agus a' leigeil leis an tè a bh' ann na meudan a ghabhail. Chan fhaigh mi seachad air cho luath 's a tha an ùine air a dhol seachad agus gum bi sinn a' cur fàilte air Leòdhasach/ Sgitheanach ùr an ceann beagan mìosan. Tha mi cinnteach gum biodh granaidh agus shen Chàrlabhaigh agus granaidh Reanatra air an dòigh le cèilidh sa ghàrradh mura h-eil e ceadachd dhaibh fhathast a thighinn ro fhaisg. Abair smuain!

Còimheadaibh as dèidh càch a chèile agus tha mi an dòchas gun seas an t-side mhath greiseag fhathast.



URRAS DIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN

WALSON ESTATE TRUST

Lisa's column

by Lisa Maclean

### Volunteers

This week is national volunteers' week, an annual celebration of the contribution people make through volunteering. Volunteering is second nature to so many people on Galson Estate, not just a means of giving, but more a way of life and this is even more apparent at the current time of crisis. We have committed volunteers who deliver prescriptions across the estate on a regular basis, those who give up their time to create the content for the newsletter, those who proofread, fold, deliver, etc. We have many willing volunteers who step in at short notice to carry out tasks as requested, even supporting deer management! There are so many different roles and every single one is of huge value. When speaking about volunteering I cannot forget the commitment of UOG's own board of directors. They are all volunteers and give up a tremendous amount of time, and many have done so for several years. We also have volunteers on sub-committees and they too give up their time selflessly. I am certain a small thanks in this column is not enough, but for what it is worth, thank you to every single person who volunteers in whatever capacity - the value added to the whole community is immense. When we can, I hope we can make plans to gather and celebrate the amazing culture of "service to others" that exists on the estate.

### Deer Management

In my last column I mentioned we had applied for an out-of-season authorisation to support management of the deer population on the estate. A local volunteer shooter has been placed on the fit and competent register and authorisation has been granted for work to be carried out to ensure no further damage to agricultural ground. We are just a month away from open season and whilst that is good news for management purposes, we are still in lockdown and therefore are somewhat restricted. We will continue to monitor the situation and do all we can to effectively manage the deer population, whilst maintaining safe working practices. We once again thank the community for their patience, we are aware the deer are causing concerns and causing damage.

### Habost Household Waste and Recycling Centre

We are preparing to open the Habost site this month and all details of the site opening and the guidance for visiting the site are included in a short article in this issue of the newsletter. Please take a look at this as we want to be able to operate safely and as efficiently as possible. Please remember our own staff are working from home. If you wish to discuss anything relating to the COVID-19 response from UOG or indeed any usual UOG business then please contact: office@uogltd.com or call 01851 850393 (this number diverts to a mobile). You can also visit the website at [www.galsontrust.com](http://www.galsontrust.com) for further information or to read our official response and an update on current activities in relation to Covid-19.

## Land Reform Parliamentary Debate Paper

"On the 2nd June, MSPs attended a Parliamentary Debate to discuss the next economic steps in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Community Land Scotland (CLS) issued a briefing paper for that debate on the subject of land reform. It is CLS's belief that land reform could help to accelerate Scotland's economic recovery after the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper attests that: "Land reform is critical to the [economic] recovery because the issues of how land is owned and used, and who benefits from these arrangements, are central to determining Scotland's progress towards becoming a greener, fairer and more sustainable society."

The paper has been made public on Calum Macleod (Policy Director for CLS)'s website, and is free to read there. Visit:

<https://calummacleodblog.wordpress.com/>





Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is a company registered in Scotland - No. 273903 and a charity registered in Scotland - No. SC036903

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is a company registered in Scotland No.273903 and a charity registered in Scotland No. SC036903

## New Bookbug Schedule

**Seiseanan Bookbug Air-loidhne**  
Online Bookbug Sessions

**Diluain / Monday**  
English with Lindy, 10.30am

**Diciadain / Wednesday**  
Sgeulachdan Le Shona, 10.15am  
Storytime with Lindy, 10.45am

**Dihaoine / Friday**  
Gàidhlig Le Shona, 10.30am

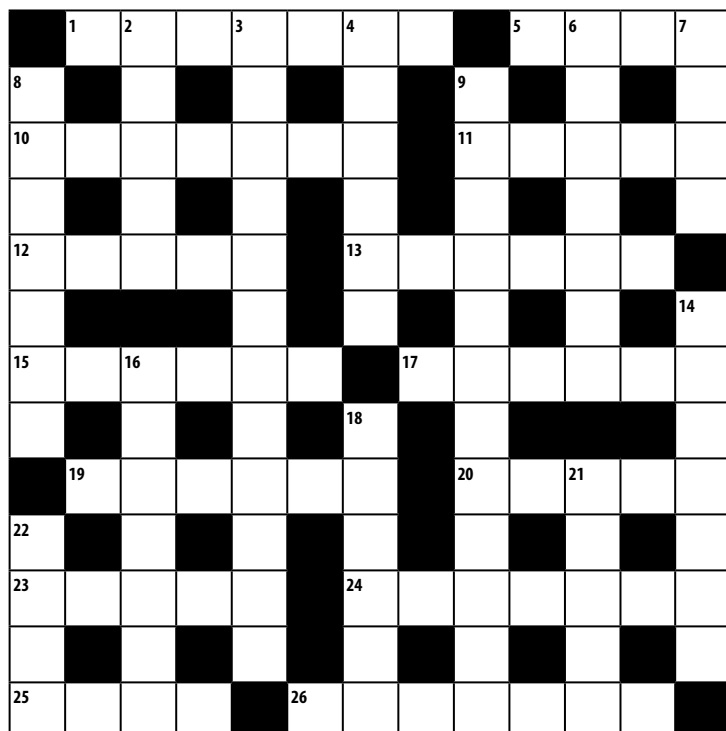
Find us on **Youtube Live** by searching Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn!

**Thig còmhla rinn airson seinn, sgeulachd agus spòrs!**  
Come along for singing, stories and fun!

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is a company registered in Scotland No.273903 and a charity registered in Scotland No. SC036903

If you are languishing in lockdown at home with time on your hands, do try and solve the puzzle and text or email your solution or attach a photo of the completed grid. It will encourage our compilers to produce more hand-woven puzzles and you may even get your name in the next issue of the freesheet! email: [jasmine@uogtld.com](mailto:jasmine@uogtld.com) mobile text: 07460 853 728

### Ness-Barvas No.5 Crossword 5 June 2020



#### ACROSS

- 1 Is a note in this country? (7, anag)
- 5 Said at the end of a prayer (4)
- 10 Wild (7)
- 11 Wheel spindles (5)
- 12 Subject of old chocolate bar? (5)
- 13 Village slogan (6, anag)
- 15 Palm stems made into tartan (6, anag)
- 17 Football team is joined (6)
- 19 Snake learns to climb it (6)
- 20 Sweet little person (5)
- 23 Eccentric French route (5, anag)
- 24 John Lennon asked us to do this (7)
- 25 Bend in the road (4)
- 26 Singularly painful condition on a beach (7)

#### DOWN

- 2 Establish that tennis player is winning (3,2)
- 3 Steinbeck's novel taken from Burns (2,4,3,3)
- 4 I'd go in for this colour (6, anag)
- 6 Met slob in the village (7, anag)
- 7 Facial feature one is aware of? (4)

- 8 Sad, curt trifle ingredient (7, anag)
- 9 Orb and link keep one fettered (4,3,5)
- 14 Stuck to (7)
- 16 Croft vehicle (7)
- 18 Beach (Gaelic) (6)
- 21 Test of law (5)
- 22 Echo of horse's foot (4)

#### No. 4 Crossword 22 May 2020 solution



Agus chuir an Tighearna plàigh air Israel, on mhadainn eadhon gu ruig an t-àm suidhichte: agus bhàsaich den t-sluagh o Dhan gu Beerseba deich agus trì-fhead mìle fear. 2 Samuel 24: 15 [ABG 1992]

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

Psalm 119: 37 [KJV]

## INTELLIGENCE SERVICE?

It's been over two months since life as we knew it ceased to exist. We've become so preoccupied with the Coronavirus crisis in this country that it is easy to overlook other things that are happening around the world that could also impact on our lives one way or another, such as civil wars, famine, floods, pestilence, Old Firm matches!

One little corner of our planet that has been a source of constant tension throughout much of the 20th century and right up to current times is the India-Pakistan border, particularly around Kashmir, with India, Pakistan and China all laying claim to parts of this otherwise stunning region of Asia. What makes the situation even more incendiary is that all three countries are nuclear powers, and if 'the balloon goes up', as they say, we could all end up getting extra crispy around the edges.

One example of the fragile nature of the peace that exists around Kashmir, and the mutual suspicion between the Indian and Pakistani authorities along the border areas, was the recent detention of a pigeon, accused of espionage! The alleged 'spook' was discovered by homeowner Geeta Devi after entering her house in May, uninvited, by gaining access through an open window. Ms Devi, who lives in the Kathua district of Kashmir, noticed that the pigeon's wings had been coloured pink and it also had a ring with numbers attached to its leg. She promptly made a citizen's arrest and handed the bird over to the Indian police.

One of the beaks on the case, the Senior Superintendent of Kathua Police, Shailendra Kumar Mishra, said: "We don't know from where it came. Locals captured it near our fences. We have found a ring in its foot on which some numbers are written. Further investigation is underway." It was also stated that this was not the first time that a spying pigeon had been caught passing across the border between India and Pakistan.

A police spokesman told the Times of India: "Though birds have no boundaries and many fly across international borders during migration, a coded ring tagged to the captured pigeon's body is a cause for concern as migratory birds don't have such rings."

Clearly, pigeon racing is not yet a national sport in India, where birds' times are recorded on rings attached to their legs to ascertain the eventual race winner. Despite this, Indian interrogators apparently grilled the bird for hours in search of a confession. Meanwhile, a Pakistani villager known as Habibullah who lives just two and a half miles from the border was claiming that one of his birds was missing after earlier releasing it to celebrate the Eid festival. The villager, who has certainly ruffled a few feathers within the Indian intelligence community, claimed that the code inscribed on the pigeon's leg ring was actually his mobile phone number and that the pink colouring was to help distinguish the bird from other racers.

Habibullah told the waiting media that his pigeon was a "symbol of peace" and India should "refrain from victimising innocent birds". He has since petitioned the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, for the return of his favourite racer – a year-old black and white female called Golden Madi. This may all sound like pie in the sky to the more rational readers of our Ness-Barvas community newsletter, although any mention of 'pie' around the alleged spy apparently sends the hapless pigeon into a right flap.

Fortunately, the Nisich and Siarich have shared a common border for generations without any question of detaining each other's pigeons. But, ohh, ohh, if they mess with our gugas!

## HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW?

For anyone experiencing lockdown, normally mundane aspects of life seem to take on a new significance. The things we previously did as a matter of routine and took for granted without conscious thought now somehow register that bit more, such as cooking or getting the Hoover out for a sweep across the living room carpet. Personally, I've become a bit of an 'anorak' these days when it comes to rubbish as I'm finding myself obsessing with properly recycling household refuse into the blue or green bins, and placing stuff in

the black 'organics' bin with a view to cutting deposits in the 'non-recyclable' one to an absolute minimum.

Anyone with livestock to feed, or lambs to manage, may also have discovered a new-found enthusiasm for our woolly friends as contact with the human variety is currently out of bounds to many of us. I can imagine that those who have chickens will have struck up a whole new accord with 'the girls', managing to break the monotony of 'the new normal' Covid day with regular feeding and the collection and sorting of eggs. By this stage of lockdown, I wouldn't be surprised if Sweeny had a name for every bird in his harem?

For columnists such as myself, lockdown can be quite challenging when faced with a blank page at the beginning of the week. Normal engagement with folk around the community is obviously on hold at present, with those brave enough to venture out, such as shopworkers, routinely donning facemasks as if they've just robbed the premises rather than replenished it with stock.

One of my own particular distractions during these difficult times is trying to control my mane as barbers, like many others, are currently on furlough. Normally, my hair is attended to by Murdo, the travelling barber, who visits the house every few months for a short back and sides (unfortunately, the top no longer needs that much attention). However, Covid has meant that the dome has gone somewhat rogue over recent weeks, and my decision to grow some facial hair as a distraction to lockdown was also beginning to worry the neighbours. Therefore, I decided some weeks ago to invest in hair-cutting gear that could hopefully exert some kind of control over both my head and chin problems.

My initial attempt at purchasing hair clippers online did not go according to plan, as outlined in the last issue of the newsletter. However, my second foray into online shopping proved to be more successful and said croppers duly turned up earlier this week. I have been called many things over the years, but the thought of becoming known as 'the Lionel Ayatollah' because of my wayward beard was not something I was looking forward to.

Shopping has never been one of my favourite hobbies, whether in a shop or via the internet. Sifting through the myriad of cordless hair clippers and beard trimmers that were available online, I finally settled on the Hatteker RFC-892. It seemed to tick all the right boxes, with a selection of comb attachments or cutting guards offering a range of trimming depths, and it also intriguingly had a 'fine-tuning' dial that could be set between 0.5mm and 2.5mm to achieve optimal cutting depths. The brand name - Hatteker - also suggested we were talking about quality German precision engineering.

Following my purchase I thought that I'd check, out of interest, to see where the equipment was manufactured and found that the company is based in Yiwu city in Central Xhejiang Province, which I assume is one of the lesser-known German industrial regions?

I guesstimated that the 7-9mm cutting guard would be the best one for running the machine across my face, and so it proved to be. My Ayatollah-like appearance has been replaced by a more 'refined' look – okay, admittedly, maybe more retarded than refined(!).

Now that the facial hair has been dealt with without drawing blood or doing a Van Gogh around the ear department, it is finally time to tackle the dome. I'm certainly in dire need of a transformation from primate-like to something that'll not look unduly out of place around the village. However, I fear that this is a two-man job, and the chosen one holding the shears will be somebody with a steady hand who is willing to accept instruction in front of the mirror; bears no malice for past wrongs, and does not possess the kind of mischievous streak that could leave me donning a 'Mohican', or worse.

Certainly, I've been scaring myself each morning as I peer into the mirror before I've had a chance to drag a comb through my hair. The thought of temporarily becoming a born-again Sikh had also crossed my mind as I believe I could hide a whole passel of hair issues under a turban.

Onwards and upwards, as they say.



The Lionel Ayatollah



**FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT**

Mrs Catherine Macleod has registered her croft 6 & 7 Swainbost, Swainbost, Barvas, on the Crofting Register held by Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 03 December 2020

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C6885.

**FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT**

Mrs Catherine Macleod has registered her croft 8 Swainbost, Swainbost, Barvas, on the Crofting Register held by Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 11 December 2020

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C6910.

**FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT**

Mrs Catherine Macleod has registered her croft 17 Swainbost, Swainbost, Barvas, on the Crofting Register held by Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 02 December 2020

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C6886.

**FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT**

Mr Iain Murdo MacLeod has registered his croft at 23 Cross, Cross, Barvas on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 06 December 2020

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C6908

**PROPOSED ASSIGNATION OF A CROFT**

**DOLINA NICHOLS** is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to assign the tenancy of the croft at **14 CALLICVOL, BARVAS, ISLE OF LEWIS** to **CATRIONA ELSPEETH MUNRO**, 14 Port of Ness, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0XA.

If you consider you have a relevant interest in this application, you may submit comments in writing to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW or email [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert.

Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

[from front page]

**Schools to return in August - with some changes**

classroom learning, homework, and online learning, meaning that children and young people will study part-time in school, and part-time at home. To reflect this, addressing the need for necessary computer equipment, £30m is being offered by the Government to provide laptops for disadvantaged children. Children of key workers will continue to have educational provision throughout June.

It is expected that teaching staff will begin work in the second week of this month (June) in preparation for the altered new term. Cllr Angus McCormack, Comhairle Chair of the Education, Sport and Children's Services Committee, said on the 29th May: "We are planning for school staff to begin to return to schools from the week beginning 8th June to start preparing for the return of pupils and the planning of learning approaches to be used in August."

In conjunction with these aforementioned changes, schools will also have to impose physical distance measures, such as staggering arrivals, departures and breaks, and seating children 2m apart. Class sizes will reduce as most children will spend around half of their time in class and half at home. Time spent in school will increase as it becomes safer to do so.

Other suggested amendments could see former teachers being invited to teach virtually or to return to the classroom to support existing teaching staff. Different spaces are also being considered to expand physical space for teaching. These could see libraries, community halls, leisure centres even empty business accommodation on short-term leases being used for teaching purposes.

**Sporting Viewpoint** *by Alastair Dunlop*

I returned on the ferry last night. It will be good when you are free to travel without interrogation. When I left, I explained I was going to care for my elderly mother, to be told this was not essential therefore I should not be travelling. I did travel, but I confess to be annoyed by this comment but I suppose they were only carrying out instructions.

I wrote in the last issue about patiently waiting for an easing of restrictions so I could resume hill walking. The good news was it is now possible as long as it is close to your home. I await Phase 3, when travel restrictions will be lifted. I did walk in the Gargunnock Hills close to my home village and after hundreds of days in the hills I had a new unpleasant experience. I have often heard about walkers getting 'ticks' but it had never happened to me. None in fifty years and now three in one day. I will be extra vigilant in future. Golfers, tennis players and anglers can return to their hobby. I'm sure the golfers are pleased but I know it is not quite the same when you cannot put the ball in the proper hole.

This week the sports of horse racing and snooker restarted - neither of these is of any interest to me but at least it is a start. The English Premier League will resume soon and the Scottish Premiership hopefully in August, probably without spectators, but it will still be interesting. No word on our lower league teams yet but I will not be the first to point out given the size of their crowds that it would not be too difficult to apply social distancing to those watching. In Germany the players are tested before and after the games, which I suppose causes some expense but it is not an insurmountable barrier surely. Thousands of players of all ages are desperate to play again and we await guidance from the Scottish Football Association when we might resume.

Runners are more fortunate as there are no restrictions on individuals but hundreds of events have been cancelled. However as I have written here often recently there are many virtual events taking place locally and nationally. SRAC are currently running a local league. There are six teams on an area basis, which includes the rest of the world. The West / South team which includes Barvas is top and the North team, which includes Ness is currently third. There are various ways of scoring points, one being the total number of runners participating which in every week so far has been the North team. Ness FC remain at the top of the Football 5K league. This Saturday all are encouraged to run either 5k or 10k as part of the Leanne Fund which would normally have taken place in Point. Details of how to enter are on the SRAC website.

Many local runners have also entered national competitions. I am pleased to be back running and I joined the recent Scottish Athletics event where the idea was to run as far as you can in 15 mins and then submit your result electronically. I ran on a hot day (they were all hot in the last week) and was happy with my performance. When I attempted to submit my time I was asked to 'embed my link' which was akin to me attempting to replace a window (or in fact any practical, skilled technical job). I had to ask a friend to do it, thanks Norman.

It is true in this Lockdown I should be attempting to learn new skills. I have not but I did spend many hours researching my family tree. When I was young my grandmother would tell us we were directly descended from Rob Roy. My great, great etc grandfather William Macgregor was born about 1770 near Balquidder but I could not confirm his relationship to Rob Roy Macgregor. However the more I researched this character the more I realised so much is a myth, thanks to Sir Walter Scott, Liam Neeson etc. He was part of this romanticised Highlander hero fiction which we Scots are famous for, especially abroad. The great majority of Scots are not from the Highlands but it remains a wonderful place to visit.

As I drove home from last night there was another first, pleasant this time. Sitting on a fence post beside the road approaching South Dell was a golden eagle. It was an absolutely stunning image and no, sadly, I did not take a picture. Did anyone else see this?

## Càrlabhagh in harmony

(continued from front page)

fundraiser has received more than £1,000, and is certainly making waves online - at the time of writing (02/06/2020), it has clocked up over 2,700 views on YouTube and more than 450 shares on Facebook. In her email, Mairi went on to say: "The reaction has been incredible. Not in our wildest dreams could we have envisaged this kind of response. From 'old friends' coming out of the woodwork, to relatives all the way around the world experiencing *cianalas* and non-Gaelic speakers engaging with our language, we have loved every minute of experiencing the views on Facebook rising dramatically, seeing the wonderful comments and knowing that we have brought pure and simple joy to people."

"What we have achieved by releasing this video is far more than we set out to. It has given a beam of hope to our local community, far and wide, who either live here or are from here. Heritage is something very close to the hearts of the Carlowegians and that heritage has been recognised by all and many have identified with it. Everyone has their idea of 'home' and this has reminded them of what is important, where their hearts may feel at 'home' and an overwhelming sense of belonging. We feel so fortunate to be able to share music together and the importance of keeping in touch. Technology has kept the choir going since 2011 and it has allowed us to further explore our potential in 2020."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCTxEWXNCpE>

### Volunteers and contributors who supported this issue of the Ness-Barvas Community Newsletter:

Donald A. Morrison, Jasmine M. Wilkie, Lisa Maclean, Simon Amos, Shona Macmillan, Hugh MacInnes, Samantha Hawkins, Tom MacIver, Alistair Dunlop, Peter Moger, Christine Amos, David Green.

## Community LED Project closes on a high

The Community LED by Energy Champions project, run as a partnership between Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh (UOC) and Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG), has now come to a close.

Between April 2018 and March 2020, the Community LED team delivered a plethora of positive, energy-related results for members of the two communities, in the form of home visits, training days, informative events and workshops. Individuals across the demographic benefited from these visits and sessions, with some receiving official qualifications and training as a direct result of their involvement. Additionally, 319 homes across the two Estates gained advice on how to make their homes more energy efficient.

Prior to the Community LED by Energy Champions project, both UOC and UOG had previously been involved in a similar development, delivered by Tighean Innse Gall. This preceding project had provided LED lightbulbs and home energy advice to residents on the Estates. However, as a result of excellent uptake and long waiting lists for visits, clear demand for these services within the community was demonstrated. Community consultation carried out by the Trusts only further reiterated that fuel poverty and climate change were important subjects in the lives of people on the Estates. It was felt that the Community Led by Energy Champions project could build upon this demand, creating more home visits across the estates. Therefore, funding was sought from the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). With dedicated staff employed to deliver the project in-house, and a Project Administrator joining on a part-time basis for the last 13 months of the development, the team could focus fully on delivering the project targets and goals. Significant energy achievements have been made as a result, with lasting legacies.

Home visits carried out by the project staff focused on helping households to cut down on energy bills and make homes more efficient. These visits have made individuals more aware of their usage and of methods to help save carbon, which will have many lasting benefits, outwith the obvious economic ones. Individuals who participated in carbon literacy training are now able to provide advice to colleagues and family alike, enabling them to better refer others to key associated services. And aside from these achievements, the Community LED by Energy Champions project also enabled 36 volunteers, many of them young people, to gain film-making and editing experience through creating a bilingual documentary called 'An-Dràsta' (Now!).

'An-Dràsta', which focussed on the effects of and responses to climate change in the Outer Hebrides, is the only documentary of its kind, making it a valuable resource. It has gone on to be screened at several notable events, including the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network meeting. In February 2020, the film won a prestigious FilmG award in the Dùthchais as Fheàrr category, which explores the connection between the Gaelic language and the environment. This aspect of the project has created strong vocational outputs for the young people involved, with one saying: "I learnt loads of different things about filming". Civic engagement amongst them has also increased as a result.

Further praise has been echoed from partners involved in the overall project. Kathleen Macdonald of Community Energy Scotland said: "Community Energy Scotland would like to highlight our support for the Community LED project and all it has achieved since it began. It has showcased the drive and desire for community groups to take the real and serious issues being faced by individuals within their communities and try and positively impact on these". Rachel Elliott of Scottish Water added: "By working directly with the community, Carloway Estate Trust [were] able to give personalised advice, ensuring residents [got] the advice and water saving devices that they will get the most benefit from."

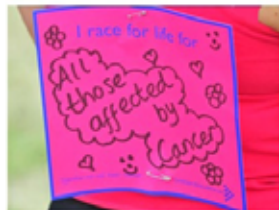
From the results listed, it is clear that the project has delivered significant outputs for local residents, and some food for thought for wider audiences. Economic and educational benefit surrounding carbon literacy will have a lasting impact on people's behaviour towards their energy usage, which will only benefit future generations. Congratulations to Louise Senior, Alasdair MacIver, Abigail Leach and the two Trusts involved on the completion of such a successful project.



*Sgoil Lionail Parent Council would like to encourage all children, family and friends in the area to take part in a race at home to help raise money for Cancer Research.*

*It can be any race suitable for your children, from a 3k run/walk, to a potato and spoon race. Have your race anytime between Mon 8th-Sat 16th June and share photos with us.*

Remember to follow social distancing rules



**We ask that you please make a small donation to Cancer Research using the link below**

**<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/lionel-school>**



*You can pick up back signs and medals from a box outside Lionel School, any day next week (during school hours). Or download your own here*

[https://raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/Race\\_for\\_Life\\_Schools\\_sports\\_day\\_back\\_sign.pdf](https://raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/Race_for_Life_Schools_sports_day_back_sign.pdf)

*Please share photos of your race by sending them to Lionel School Parent Council facebook page or emailing the school.*





## Coming out of Lockdown

The past ten weeks have been a strange time for us all. Lockdown: the closure of schools, churches, shops, businesses and the tourist trade, isolation and shielding, has had a profound—and for some on the island, a devastating—impact. The future is spoken of not in terms of 'returning to normal' but as a 'new normal', which is likely to remain the case for some time to come.

This time of lockdown has overlapped with the season of Eastertide – when, in the weeks following Easter Day, Christians celebrate the good news of everlasting life in Jesus Christ, and the hope which that brings. At the first Easter though, this good news took a while to land. St John's Gospel records that, on the evening of the day when Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples had gathered behind locked doors 'for fear'. Some had seen Jesus' tomb empty, and Mary Magdalene had met the risen Jesus, but the truth of the resurrection hadn't sunk in; it hadn't really made any difference. The disciples still lacked confidence, they continued to live in fear of those who had crucified Jesus, and they went... into lockdown!

The threat posed by Covid-19 is still very much with us. Although the national death rate is reducing weekly, and we have been exceptionally fortunate here in the Western Isles, the future is still fraught with uncertainty. Uncertainty can be a fertile breeding ground for genuine fears: fear of a second outbreak of the virus, fear that there will be loved ones we might never see again, fear around mass unemployment and economic collapse, fear around the likelihood of the gap between rich and poor widening still further, fear of not easily being able to trust those in authority. The list is a long one.

The response to this fear can very easily be to bolt the door—as the disciples did—and go into a perpetual downward spiral of pessimism and insecurity in our lockdown. But in the end that way lies death, and not life. It was into the disciples' lockdown that Jesus appeared, saying two things: 'Peace be with you', and 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. In other words, he reassured them, and he turned the situation around.

Last Sunday, Christians gave thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit—God's life within us—on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Easter. In the early centuries of the Christian Church, people agonised over exactly how the Holy Spirit might fit into the scheme of things. We speak of God as Father, Son and Spirit, but where does the Spirit fit, and who exactly is the Spirit? St Paul writes of the Spirit 'shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts' and St Augustine, in the fourth century, suggested that the Spirit is the love which binds together the Father and the Son. Now that's not the full picture, but it's a helpful lens through which we can read Jesus' 'lockdown appearance'.

Elsewhere in the writings of St John – in the first letter – we read that 'God is love', that if 'we live in love then we live in God', and that 'perfect love casts out fear' [1 John 4.18]. Was that not precisely the experience of those disciples huddled together behind locked doors? They were utterly afraid; and it was the experience of the gift of the Holy Spirit – of God's love around them and within them – which cast out their fear. Perfect love – God's Holy Spirit – casts out fear. The gift of the Spirit turned around an apparently hopeless situation: it helped them come out of lockdown, transformed from being frightened people into fearless people; from being powerless to having God's power within them; and becoming fully the people God was calling them to be.

As we look towards the phases which will mark the eventual lifting of the lockdown of our national life – a lockdown which has been crucial for our survival – let us face our fears, secure in the knowledge that God's love, around us and within us can banish fear, and equip us to live life in all its fullness.

### A prayer by Andrew Nunn

Ever-present God,  
be with us in our isolation,  
be close to us in our distancing,  
be healing in our sickness,  
be joy in our sadness,  
be light in our darkness,  
be wisdom in our confusion,  
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,  
that when the doors reopen  
we may with the zeal of Pentecost  
inhabit our communities  
and speak of your goodness  
to an emerging world.  
For Jesus Christ's sake.

**Amen.**



## Spòrsnis roof appeal update

by Simon Amos

Alongside the mundane maintenance work at spòrsnis (the painting, the cleaning, scraping tape from the hall floor and reorganizing), we have been slowly making progress on the main challenge - the roof.

The new guttering is being installed bit by bit. Despite the efforts of the nesting starlings to make me jump off the scaffold, my total lack of experience doesn't seem to be too much of a handicap, other than to make me extremely slow....

Progress is being made and that's enough for me. In fact I quite like the look of the new rones - they have clean lines and I certainly like the 20-year guarantee that accompanies them!

The funding response has been really amazing, with over £2,500 from donations alone. We have also been pledged £2,000 from our local councilors through their ward funding, a recognition of the good work that spòrsnis undertakes for the local community and we are grateful to them for their support. There are other funding sources being explored and I am optimistic that we will be able to raise enough money to complete the urgent repairs this year.

If you wish to donate to the roof appeal you can see the campaign on our facebook page and donate through the Localgiving link there.

The lock-down has provided us with the opportunity to tackle lots of jobs, not just the roof, and we hope that by the time we are able to reopen spòrsnis will have had a comprehensive renovation. Just when that day will be is still somewhat uncertain.

I'm expecting that a lot of people are looking forward to the gym, bowling, circuits, netball, football and the rest of our activities to restart and I'm curious to see how people's fitness levels have changed, if they have changed. Surely there will be some rusty skills with racquets and balls, but at least we know that everyone else in the world will be going through the same experience. I'm hoping that there will be a reignited enthusiasm for team sports and physical activity and we will certainly do our best to have plenty of activities available.

I'd like to send our best wishes to Alison Macleod, recently qualified fitness instructor, who has been running online circuits classes during the lockdown. Anyone who knows Alison will know that she is supremely fit, rarely slowing to anything less than a sprint. Alison was taken ill last week and has some more treatment to undergo. We wish her a complete and speedy recovery.

# We're here to support you...



**REMEMBER TO WASH YOUR HANDS FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS TO KILL GERMS**

## ABOUT COVID-19

The most common symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature (37.8C or greater)
- and/or a new and continuous cough
- and/or a loss or change in your sense of smell and/or taste.

If you are concerned about possible COVID-19 symptoms, view our handy guide below...

### I DON'T HAVE SYMPTOMS

If you do not have symptoms but want to find out more information visit [www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus)

A free free helpline is also available if you do not have symptoms but are looking for general advice - tel. **0800 028 2816**.

### I HAVE MILD SYMPTOMS

If you have mild symptoms you are expected to stay at home for 7 days from the start of your symptoms even if you think your symptoms are mild. Do not go to your GP, pharmacy or hospital.

All other household members should isolate as a household for 14 days even if they don't have symptoms themselves. The 14-day period starts from the first day the person had symptoms.

Further information is available at: [www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus)

### MY SYMPTOMS ARE GETTING WORSE

You should phone 111 if:

- your symptoms worsen during home isolation, especially if you're in a high or extremely high risk group
- breathlessness develops or worsens, particularly if you're in a high or extremely high risk group
- your symptoms haven't improved in 7 days.

If you have a medical emergency, phone 999 and tell them you have COVID-19 symptoms.

## Your NHS is still here to help!

NHS Western Isles is reminding communities that their local Health Service remains available to them when needed.

If you have an issue that you would normally have contacted your GP Practice, Emergency Department or other healthcare staff with before coronavirus, please continue to seek advice as normal.

Be assured that anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms is being treated separately to patients attending for other reasons.

## Get checked early

Whilst NHS screening services for breast, bowel and cervical cancer have been paused during COVID-19, if you have noticed symptoms and are concerned, your GP practice is open and ready to help.

Getting checked early is one of the main reasons why more people survive cancer. For further information visit [www.getcheckedearly.org](http://www.getcheckedearly.org)

## Get immunised!

If you or your child has an immunisation appointment, make sure you attend, or reschedule if you're showing symptoms of COVID-19.

## Regular appointments

If you have a regular appointment for a chronic condition such as asthma or diabetes you should contact your GP for advice. If your hospital appointment has not been cancelled you should still attend.

## Local support

Many of us living on the Outer Hebrides are feeling the strain of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, and some of us may be struggling to make ends meet.

If your usual food bill has increased, you are not alone. Buying even basic food supplies and paying for heating/electric has many people and families worried. We want to reassure you that there are systems to support you, even if you have never needed extra help before.

This could be supplying you with free food shopping, offering free food vouchers, or other financial support.

If you are not sure who best to contact, please call in the first instance the **Community Support Hub and Helpline**, led by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, on 01851 600 501. It offers community support for anyone in the Outer Hebrides who requires assistance whilst self-isolating or may be considered vulnerable or at high risk during COVID-19.

We would also ask you to share this information safely with others in your community where possible, and look out for our vulnerable neighbours, who may benefit from additional support, but are not aware of the helpline number.

**Community Support Hub and Helpline:**

**01851 600 501**



A dedicated Coronavirus (COVID-19) website is available at [www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot](http://www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot) and offers easy access to:

- essential and accurate information on COVID-19 and links to the latest guidance from NHS Inform, Scottish and UK Government
- local information on support and services, commonly asked questions and answers and local film updates provided by Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive
- support, tools and tips to help individuals and families keep well whilst at home during isolation
- support on how to stay in touch with family and friends outwith your household.
- information on the local Community Support Hub and Helpline for those who require support whilst self-isolating or may be considered vulnerable during this time.
- local support, financial and accommodation support, as well as water and energy supplier information.



**Local COVID-19 website: [www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot](http://www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot)**

A local **COVID-19 Health Concern Helpline** is available to help answer general Coronavirus health-related queries or concerns from members of the public, health and social care staff and category 1 responders. Please note that the local helpline is not a replacement to NHS24's advice line on 111, and NHS24 should always be used in the first instance.

The local helpline offers support to help you understand more about the virus, the symptoms it causes and the important ways in which you can help reduce its impact in our communities. It is open from 9am-5.30pm Monday-Friday.

**Local COVID-19 health concerns helpline:**  
**01851 601 151**

A new **Psychological Wellbeing Hub service** has recently been launched to help people of all ages across the Outer Hebrides manage their anxiety while coping with the coronavirus outbreak.

The Western Isles Psychological Wellbeing Service will operate the normal working hours of 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday. Referral to the hub can be made by downloading the referral form at <https://bit.ly/3eYa3RQ> and then emailing it to:

**[wi-hb.PsychologicalSupportForCorona@nhs.net](mailto:wi-hb.PsychologicalSupportForCorona@nhs.net)**

For those without internet access, a referral or self-referral can be made by phoning the Community Navigator Team on 01851 708022 or the NHS Western Isles COVID-19 telephone line on 01851 601 151.

## USEFUL CONTACTS



### Western Isles Citizens Advice Service

01851 705727  
[bureau@lewiscab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:bureau@lewiscab.casonline.org.uk)



### Hebridean Housing Partnership

0300 123 0773  
[customerservices@hebrideanhousing.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@hebrideanhousing.co.uk)  
[www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk](http://www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk)



### Tighean Innse Gall

01851 706 121  
[info@tighean.co.uk](mailto:info@tighean.co.uk)  
[www.tighean.co.uk](http://www.tighean.co.uk)



### Jobcentre

01851 743 663 or 01851 743 664  
[stornoway-jobcentre@dw.gov.uk](mailto:stornoway-jobcentre@dw.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)



### Western Isles Women's Aid

01851 704750  
[office@wiwasty.org](mailto:office@wiwasty.org)  
[westernisleswomensaid.co.uk](http://westernisleswomensaid.co.uk)

### CnES COVID-19 Information

[www.cne-siar.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/coronavirus](http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/coronavirus)

### CnES Homelessness Service

01851 822 821 (Lewis & Harris)  
01870 602 425 (Uists & Barra)  
Out of Hours: 01851 701 702  
[hservice@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:hservice@cne-siar.gov.uk)

### CnES Financial Inclusion Service

Financial Inclusion: 01851 822 654  
[inclusion@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion@cne-siar.gov.uk)

### CnES Benefits Office

01851 822 642  
[benefits@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@cne-siar.gov.uk)

### CnES Social Work Service

01851 600 501  
Out of Hours: 01851 701 702

If you would like to join our e-subscription list to receive the latest COVID-19 news from NHS Western Isles, simply email [coms.wi@nhs.net](mailto:coms.wi@nhs.net)

## Tarmod sits for 'Dealbhan Fraoich'

Next week on BBC Alba, Heather Dewar continues her 'Dealbhan Fraoich' series. In the programme to be broadcast for the first time on Tuesday 9 June at 8.30 pm, Fraoch will be creating a colour portrait of Tarmod Macleòid, the Lower Shader bard.

Tarmod will be sitting for the Islay-born artist and telling his own story as she stands at her easel sketching his features.

This is the fourth series of 'Dealbhan Fraoich'. On Tuesday this week, Fraoch's 'subject' was Rachel MacPherson, a former teacher and lecturer, who played an integral role in the development of Gaelic Medium Education in Glasgow.

In the first programme in the series Heather met Murdo Macdonald, now living in Penicuik, Midlothian, with family connections to Scalpay and North Uist. Murdo's life has involved extensive travel and adventure from backpacking around the south of France to factor on an island estate and army officer in Iraq.

Heather was in Point, Lewis for the second programme to meet Maggie Mackenzie known to many as the actress who played Fiona Macaskill in the long-running soap 'Machair'.

She then met former fisherman and ferryman Ewen Mackenzie in Applecross in the third programme.

Singer and BBC weather presenter Joy Dunlop features in programme six. Joy's passion for music developed into an enthusiasm for the Gaelic language and culture that produced many of her favourite songs. Since learning the language she has worked tirelessly to encourage its use in everyday life.

Heather travels to Edinburgh in programme seven where she meets Iagan MacNeil, journalist and newsreader and whose roots are in Barra.

And in programme eight Heather travels to Gairloch in Wester Ross where her 'subject' is former teacher Alice Mackenzie.

All of the programmes become available on BBC iPlayer shortly after they are broadcast.



Heather in her studio

Some of Tarmod's bardachd has been published by Acair



## The Story of a Ness Exile (Part 3)

Donald Madeod, Michigan, U.S.A. (Dòmhnall Tullag, formerly from Knockaird) left home for Canada aboard the SS Metagama in the spring of 1923. In this final part of his story for Comunn Eachdraidh Nis he remembers his first visit back to Ness 34 years later. Donald died in April 1997 at age 95.

"As I was growing older, the desire to see my native Island was also growing and the time came when I had to go. In August 1957 I boarded a plane in Detroit, and in nine hours I was in Prestwick. Thirty-four years had passed and what a change! It took eleven days to cross the Atlantic when I came over in 1923. I had also changed. I was coming back an alien but to me, I was coming home. My cousin in Grangemouth met me in Glasgow, but I did not recognise her, as I did not recognise much of the landscape I remembered. I spent a few days in Glasgow, Grangemouth and Edinburgh and then proceeded to Stornoway. Ness had changed. Hardly any of the old houses remained and many of the old friends were no more. The old hearth was gone where we sat in a circle around the open fire, telling and listening to our favourite stories. But the seashore was the same, untouched by the hands of man. Its cool breezes were swirling around my favourite rocks, working in unison with the sound of the waves, dashing against the familiar cliffs with the same warm touch as if saying, 'Welcome home!' My reply was 'Thank you, but I was here many times in my dreams.'"

"The days of old to mind I called, and oft did think upon the times and ages that are part full many years ago." Psalm 77.

"I spent two happy months with my father and sisters, seeing old friends and making new ones, and I visited many parts of the Island. I was delighted to meet those I knew in America who had returned to settle in Lewis and it was like meeting old friends from home. But my holiday passed too quickly and, again, it was time to part. The tears flowed as I said goodbye to my aged father, knowing we would not meet again in this world. (He passed away the following year). I was again homesick leaving, but this time it was different than that day in April of 1923. I was eager to get back to my own family. My roots were now in America.

"When I retired I returned once again to Ness. In 1969 Annie and I went home together. My wife is from Skigersta. This time I rented a car and saw more of the island. I enjoyed driving to Stornoway. Time had again taken its toll; nearly all of the old friends were gone. We were home about two months. The weather was cold and damp, but the warm welcome we always got made up for it.

"I am now in my declining years but I am healthy and active in church affairs and gardening. Our son's home is twenty miles from our apartment in the city. It is out in the country on five acres of land, where I spend the warm days of summer in the solitude of the country, just the way I started life so many, many miles away - growing potatoes and vegetables. I didn't acquire wealth, but we are comfortable and were never in need. God was good to us. I had wealth other than money; my Christian upbringing and Lewis heritage was a stronghold in the day of trouble and a deterrent against the evil we were exposed to."





### Barvas Foodbank

(Dalbeg - Port of Ness)

HERE TO HELP YOU!

The foodbank was set up to help you!

We all need a little help now and again, if you or someone you know needs this service, please get in touch!

To receive food parcel please contact any of the following numbers -

Sarah - 07927236450  
Murdo - 07770824552/840 284  
Louis - 07870362449

or message us via our Facebook page.

Please advise of any specific requirements you may have. We will tailor your box to suit your family's needs as much as we can.

ALL request will be dealt with discreetly and in confidence



## HELP & SUPPORT

### CORONAVIRUS UPDATE - BENEFIT REVIEWS AND REASSESSMENTS SUSPENDED

Reviews and reassessments for disability benefits are being suspended for the next three months. [Last checked 03/06/2020, no further updates at this time]

### NHS SCOTLAND CORONAVIRUS ADVICE

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

### HMRC SCOTLAND CORONAVIRUS ADVICE

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-scotland>

### DWP SCOTLAND

#### Coronavirus support for employees, benefit claimants and businesses

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>

### CITIZENS' ADVICE SCOTLAND

#### Coronavirus – What it means for you

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you-s/>

### ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INSURERS

#### ABI Coronavirus Information Hub

<https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/topics-and-issues/coronavirus-hub/>

### PARENT CLUB

#### Information for parents on what to do if you have to stay at home with kids and some useful advice on coronavirus and how it might affect you and your family

<https://www.parentclub.scot/topics/health/coronavirus?age=0>

## PHONE ADVICE

### Coronavirus: if you feel the symptoms

NHS 111

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### NO Coronavirus symptoms advice

#### NHS Scotland

0800 028 2816

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#### ELDERLY

#### Age Scotland

0800 470 8090

~~

#### FAMILIES

#### Parentline Scotland

0800 028 2233

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### FINANCIAL AND DEBT ADVICE

#### Money Advice Scotland

0141 572 0237

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#### BUSINESS

#### Business Helpline

0300 303 0660

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#### MND Scotland

0141 332 3903

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#### SAMARITANS

116123

## TAKEAWAY MEALS

### Cross Inn TEL: 810152

Takeaways available Wed & Thurs 4-7pm, Fri & Sat 4-8pm, collect or deliver, both hot and cold food. Drinks are available with food orders and will also be available for takeaways only, 7-10pm.

Cross Inn is now closed Sun, Mon, Tues. However, for those 'at risk' or in vulnerable categories, an exception can be made and cold food can be made available on these days. Can phone in all orders on TEL: 810152 and payment can be made on the phone. Further details available on Facebook.

### The Decca TEL: 810571

Fresh artisan bread made to order. Please phone to place an order by 10am that day. We can offer loaves, rolls and bagels. Loaves (about 600g) are £2.50, rolls - 50p each, bagels - 60p each.

Bread orders can be collected from The Decca (usually ready about lunchtime) or non-contact delivered (50p extra). You can pay over the phone by card.

We can also provide prepared food for same day or for the freezer - can be collected or delivered.

### Porkies

In future the Porkies takeaway kiosk will be at **Spòrsnis** on Thursdays between 4.30-6.30pm.

The move away from the Ness Hall is due to the lack of a signal required for the card payment machine.

### Borve House Hotel TEL: 850 223

Borve House Hotel is open Thursday, Friday, Saturday for takeaways from 4-7pm.

Orders and card payments can be taken by phone. The hotel will then supply all customers with a pick-up time so as to control any waiting time on collection.

### The Breakwater TEL: 811 001

The Breakwater is open for takeaways: Wednesday 3-6pm

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 12pm (midday) - 9pm

Place your order and make payment over the phone. If customers wish to limit their social contact, restaurant staff will bring orders out to the car. Deliveries also available within Ness for those unable to visit The Breakwater.

### Wobbly Dog TEL: 810838

Cheese scones, cake, coffee and brownies will be available for take away from 12.00 - 2.00pm Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Come to the front door of the Wobbly Dog and your cakes will be brought out to you.

Message on FB or call us on 01851 810838 to order! Or we can deliver your order in the Ness area for just £1 extra.

## NESS FC SOCIAL CLUB

### MONTHLY DRAW

Our next draw will be on Tuesday 30th June at 7:30pm LIVE on our facebook page. If anyone would like to join our superdraw please feel free to contact the club for details.

£5 monthly entry

### MAY RESULTS

1st prize - £100 - Neil MacLean - Cross Skigersta Rd

2nd prize - £50 - Dorothy Morrison - Skigersta

3rd prize - £25 - Johan MacInnes - Cross Skigersta Rd

£5 bonus went to Peter Clarke - Oban

Congratulations to our winners.

### WEEKLY DRAW

We are still looking to set up a weekly draw.

£2 weekly entry

Again, contact the club for details and we'll get it going as soon as we have enough people!

### CASH PAYMENTS

If you would like to pay by cash for our draws, we can now take payments via Cross Stores. Please leave an envelope with your:

Name -

Contact number -

What the money is intended for, eg. £20 for four months.

Contact us on :

nesssocialclub@yahoo.com

Private message via our facebook page.

Contact us on :

nesssocialclub@yahoo.com

or private message via our facebook page.



## WANTED

Petrol mowers, dead or alive!

Cash waiting!

Also servicing and repairs done.

Tel Jonny on 07900254494



## TALKING NATURALLY by Samantha Hawkins

As I sat out in the garden on Monday morning making the most of what looked to be the last of the hot sunny days for a while at least, I reflected on the diverse variety of species I had seen between this newsletter and the last. Perhaps my favourite of the fortnight has been two male **Snow Buntings**, near the pool at Stoth on the 21st May. Yes, that is right – the end of May, when you and I both know that they should have been back on their breeding grounds long ago. The Snow Bunting is the most northerly breeding of any land bird on earth and is appropriately described as an 'Arctic specialist'. Males usually return to their breeding grounds in early April when temperatures can still be as low as -30 degrees to establish or reclaim old territories. Females arrive a few weeks later. Were these two just late to the party, or did they come from the mainland as a friend suggested could be a possibility? In the Cairngorms and West Highlands there are about 100 pairs of resident Snow Bunting. Day trip to Stoth maybe?



Above: Rose-coloured Starling, Fivepenny



Right: One of two male Snow Buntings at Stoth, 21 May 2020



Right: Red Admiral Butt of Lewis 1 June 2020

And so, a few days after this the temperatures began to rise, and as they did more bees and more butterflies and other insects emerged. There was also the occasional newly emerged Large Red Damselfly resting in the cool of leaves like dock. The **Red Admiral** butterflies have been plentiful this year. I normally only see one or two on the croft, but in the last week have counted up to twenty on the warmer days. They are plentiful too along the road verges, you cannot miss them. A migrant species, it is very distinctive with black/brown velvety wings crossed by vivid red stripes and a splatter of white spots towards the tips of the wings. It feeds on nectar-rich plants and has an ability to adapt to a broad range of habitats from mountains to the coast, town to country. The Red Admiral was previously known as the 'red admirable', quite appropriate for such a beautiful creature which sadly only has a life span of up to two weeks.

The **Whimbrel** that I mentioned in the last newsletter remains between Stoth and the lighthouse and I have been able to get a few more photographs which show the features that set it apart from a **Curlew**. If the two species would obligingly stand side by side it would be much easier, but in the absence of that remote possibility here are two photos:

The bird on the left is a Curlew and you can see that the bill is exceptionally long and with a distinct downward curve compared to the Whimbrel's shorter, straighter bill. The crown of the Whimbrel has 'two broad dark bands separated by a pale band' and its face has a more obvious buff stripe over the eye. If they were side by side you would also see that the Whimbrel is the smaller of the two birds, about a third smaller than the Curlew. Both Curlew and Whimbrel are

special birds, not just because of their unique look, but because like so many other species their population numbers have faced a massive decline over the last 25 years. For this reason, their UK Conservation status is 'red'.

When not 'Whimbrel-watching' over the last few days I have also enjoyed seeing all the other birds that occupy the clifftops just now 'going about their business'. Wheatear have paired up and somewhere out of sight nests have been made and young are being reared. I watched a male Wheatear on Tuesday as he flitted between rocks on what on the face of it looks like pretty barren ground. His beak told a different story though, as he returned repeatedly to his family with a variety of plump grubs and caterpillars. Also, on that same day, a flock of gulls had gathered, as they often do, by the pool above the bay at Stoth. There was one though which drew my attention out as he was a little more than the now required 2 metres from the rest of the group – a mixed bunch of Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls. He also stood out because of the colour of his plumage which from a distance appeared predominantly white. Yes, it was indeed, my *bête noire* of bird identification – white-winged gulls. It was going to be either a Glaucous Gull or an Iceland Gull. Inevitably, with the odds stacked at 50:50, I was going to choose the wrong one. I did. It was a Glaucous, not the Iceland I had decided upon. The largest of the 'white-winged' gulls it is said to have a grumpy, aggressive

appearance created by its 'flat forehead'.

Closer to home, and the dynamic on my bird feeders has changed over the last fortnight. The Starlings are conspicuous by their absence no doubt devoting their attention to rearing what will shortly become a tribe of noisy fledglings. The House Sparrows arrive en masse with demanding offspring; lots of wing flapping and open beaks in which the dutiful parent is obliged to place seed. Greenfinches seem to be maintain the numbers I have seen through the year, but having peaked at six; the Goldfinch now only come in twos. A first for my garden at the weekend was a very brief visit by a stunning male Chaffinch which threw itself against the side of the feed dispenser in an attempt to dislodge what was already covered with Sparrows. He quickly realised that there were easier places to get a bite to eat and hasn't been seen since.

I read in the 'Weekly birding round-up' (19-25th May, 2020) provided by Rare Bird Alert that 'numbers of Rose-coloured Starlings are starting to mount in Austria', and the team predicted possible sightings in the UK, 'late spring, early summer'. This bird is normally only found in its breeding grounds of Eastern Europe and Asia, although when conditions are right, thought possibly to be food supply related, it does head west. Sure enough, the following week's issue reported that sightings of these very distinctive birds had been reported as far afield as Scilly, East Sussex, Pembrokeshire, Lancashire and County Clare. There was also a sighting much nearer to home at Carnan, South Uist last Saturday (30 May 2020). Could it only be a matter of time before one was seen here? Well it was, and just four days later. Last night (Tuesday 2 June) I found I had been 'tagged' in a photo on Facebook and asked to identify an unusual bird in the garden of Murdo John Morrison (Murdo John Gheinidh), Fivepenny – yes, me of the Curlew/Whimbrel/Iceland/Glaucous identification dilemmas! Thankfully, I knew what it was straight away – a very handsome **Rose-coloured Starling**. In July 2015 one 'took up residence' for about a week in South Dell and was a frequent visitor to my late mother's bird feeder.

What will be next I wonder? Would it be too much to hope for a Hawfinch, a Woodchat Shrike, a Turtle Dove or my absolute must-see-again, a Hoopoe. All of the former have been spotted between Barra and the Uists over the last few days. Maybe with a bit of luck and a favourable wind...

If you have any interesting bird sightings to share please feel free to call or text: 07873 385982.

**Curlew**  
(left)  
Oct 2019  
Lionel  
Machair



and  
**Whimbrel**,  
Stoth 31  
May 2020

