

Ness - Barvas

FREE Community Newsletter

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The line fishery of Port of Ness

Line fishing for mackerel has been a summer activity around our coasts for years. The excitement of landing the lively fish on the rock or pier has engaged boys' interest for generations.

The humble *rionnach* may not be the most popular fish course in the fine-dining establishments of the land but a couple of sides on the BBQ on a summer's evening, brushed with a little oil and maybe some spices ensures it is as good as anything the top chefs produce. The best mackerel for the grill are line-caught and now with the latest line-fishing technology installed in a Port of Ness boat it is easier to buy mackerel in prime condition locally.

After years on the family boats working out of Stornoway, Murdo Murray of Cross Skigersta has settled for a Ness-centred life. His 7-metre catamaran 'Queens of the Isles' SY 47, based in Port of Ness has just been fitted with mechanical line stripping gear which removes mackerel automatically as it is hauled in by the system. As the line comes aboard it goes through the equipment, unhooking the fish and dropping them directly into the fish box. The line returns to the sea and the process resumes until enough fish have been landed.

Murdo also has a line jigging set-up installed for white fish. The jig is controlled electronically and automatically sets the baited hooks one metre up from the sea-bed, minimising the loss of hooks and line. The system detects when a fish is hooked and hauls up the line.

With sonar fish-finder fitted, the skipper is able to identify the type of fish showing on the screen trace, helping him to achieve optimum fuel consumption and fishing time, and reducing the environmental impact of the operation. Murdo's knowledge and experience also enable him to set the lines in areas and at times when the target species are likely to be found.

The boat has a good quota allocation for mackerel, ensuring that local demand can be met. The 'Queens' also has

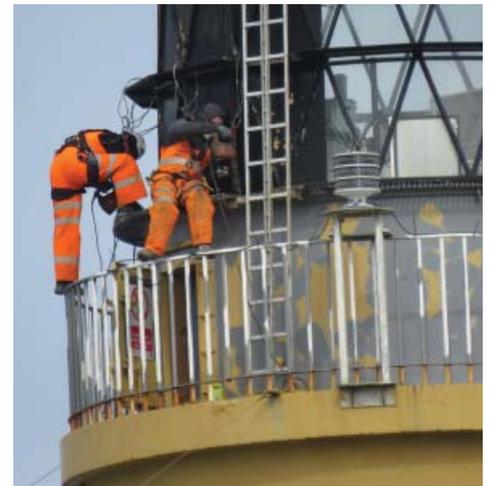
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SY47 *Queens of the Isles* alongside at Port Skipper, Murdo Murray, at Cross Skigersta on Tuesday, ready for another trip



Work at Lighthouse back on TRAC



As one of the most visited tourist attractions in the Outer Hebrides, the Butt of Lewis and its iconic Lighthouse is normally, pandemics permitting, a hive of activity.

Essential maintenance work started at the beginning of the year by TRAC International on behalf of the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) had to be suspended due to the Coronavirus crisis. With the easing of restrictions following government guidelines work resumed at the start of July. This work involves replacing the rotating optic with a static flashing LED in order to achieve more efficiency and lower maintenance costs plus refurbishing and redecorating the tower and mess facilities in the neighbouring building.

Graeme Macdonald, Project Lead with the Northern Lighthouse Board, said: "Our contractor, TRAC, resumed work on site on 2 July after putting in place measures to allow safe working under Covid-19 restrictions.

"Fortunately, a lot of the work has been external painting of buildings, so it hasn't been difficult to complete the work while socially distancing, and the good weather for most of July has allowed them to make good progress."

Aberdeen-based TRAC continue to make good progress with a spokesperson for the NLB telling the Newsletter: "Our contractors have made good progress with redecoration

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Port of Ness line fishery

a quota of 100kg plaice and 500kg skate per month and again is able to meet a growing local market.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created problems for the international trade in fresh fish with island fishermen especially facing challenges in marketing their catch. Many small boats are now focussing on their local area to sell their fish. The local marketing of Murdo's catch has been developed through social media, with collection from a central point. He also offers delivery in Ness, and, if the initial success of the venture is borne out, he plans to have a regular van service round the villages next season. With customers from as far away as Barvas, Murdo is grateful to all who have supported him in his new venture.

Murdo named his boat 'Queens of the Isles' to continue the name of the family's first trawler, 'Queen of the Isles' from the early 1960s and also in tribute to his and Yvonne's three daughters – Rachel (15), (Emily (12) and Sarah(3) – his queens of the isles!

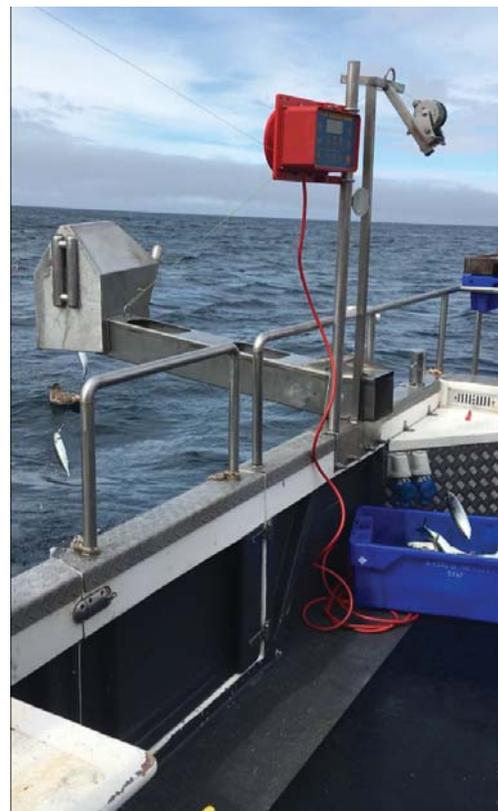
Murdo (48) has been fishing since he left school at 15. His late father, Donald, was for many years engaged in the Minch prawn fishery as owner and joint-owner of a number of vessels.

The Maclean and Murray fishing dynasties of Cross Skigersta provided their vessels for the guga-hunting trips to Sulasgeir for over forty years, including Murdo and his brother Calum's 'Heather Isle' in recent years.

The inshore fishery round Ness is seasonal and a couple of years ago Murdo decided to try his hand at Harris Tweed weaving. Following some teething problems with the Bonas-Griffith loom, he now enjoys pedalling away on the machinery to produce the famous cloth. And when he is not on the boat or the loom he offers the Lift & Skip service for recycling old washing machines and other appliances.

The old Gaelic adage claims you "can't plough the land and the sea" but it's the exception that proves the rule, and we offer our very best wishes to Murdo with all his activities, *a' treabhadh na tonnan no tioram ar tir.*

Steaming home with the catch



The automatic line stripper

Self Serve
LAUNDRY
MON TO SAT: 9AM - 7PM

at
Ness Charity Shop
by
Cross Stores



- MASKS must be worn in the Laundrette at all times
- Only TWO people allowed in Laundrette at a time
- Hands must be sanitised on ENTRY
- Spray and wipe machine handles and programme controls BEFORE use
- HANDS should touch only places needed to operate and load/unload the machines
- While clothes are being laundered please LEAVE the building.
- You must return BEFORE the cycle is finished to avoid handling other users' clothes
- Sanitise hands BEFORE leaving



**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.



MELBOST BORVE

A very Happy Birthday to Chirsty Ann MacKillop (nee MacKenzie), of "Brooklyn", Melbost Borve, who turned 80 on Thursday 13th August. With much love and best wishes from Shonnie, Marcina, Norman and the rest of her family and friends. Xxx

SWAINBOST

Happy 90th birthday on 12th August to Angus Neil Maclean, *Aonghas Neill Ghlen*, formerly of Swainbost now North Tolsta, lots of love from all the family in Tolsta, Shawbost and Ballantrushal. Photo taken in June 2020.

CROSS SKIGERSTA

Our very best wishes to Calum Watson who is making good progress following surgery in the Jubilee Hospital, Glasgow.



SRAC host first event in Scotland

SRAC hosted the first event in Scotland this year last Saturday with nine youngsters from Ness and four from Barvas taking part. Rachel Murray, Cross Skigersta became the first Western Isles athlete to achieve the qualifying standard for next year's International Island Games in Guernsey.

PHOTOS

Chirsty Ann MacKillop (top right).

Angus Neil Maclean (left)



WANTED

Sgoil Araich Lionail are looking for 2 garden benches for the outside play area. If anyone has anything that might be suitable, please call us on 822707. Many thanks.

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### THANKS

Grateful thanks to Donald and Ann Thomson, Bearsden and Skigersta, for their generous donation to *Fios*.

## CONDOLENCES

**MURDINA MACKENZIE**, Murdag Chaluum, passed away at home at 2 Lionel on Tuesday 4 August. Murdag, who was 85, married Angus, *Aonghas Bàn Dholaidh Fhionnlaigh*, in 1960 and on 15 June this year they marked their Diamond Wedding with the family.

Murdag and Angus had two daughters, Dolina and Annie (Maimie) and twin sons, Donald and Calum. We now extend our condolences to Angus and the family, including Dolina's daughters, Mairead and Dena Anne; Maimie's husband Donald and their family Aonghas and Kristin; Donald and his wife Feonna and their family, Cailean, Elizabeth, Ceit and Ruairidh; and Calum and his wife Sandra and their family, Scott and Cameron. We also remember Murdag's surviving sister, Anna and her loved ones and also the family of the late Cairstiona, another sister who had her home at 10 Lionel.

Murdag's funeral took place on Thursday 6 August with Rev. Ewen Matheson officiating at the service with the family at Habost Cemetery.

**NORMAN MACLEOD** passed away suddenly in his sleep aged 76 years on Saturday 8 August 2020 in Perth, Australia. He was the only son of *Seonaidh na Leadaidh*, 34 Eoropie, and *Seonag Mh'ch Dh'Il Tàillear*, 19 Skigersta, whose marital home was in Dumbarton. He loved Lewis all his life having spent his holidays every year in Skigersta as a young boy with his parents and sisters. Norman excelled in school and graduated from Strathclyde University, Glasgow in Mechanical Engineering in 1967. He worked mainly in copper mining in Zambia, Rhodesia, Korea and Australia where he settled in 1979.

He is survived by his wife Kim in Perth; son James and his wife Jo in Suffolk; daughter Catriona and her husband Mark in Perth, Australia; son Kenneth, his wife Mia and granddaughter Alexa in Indonesia; and sisters, Anne and her husband Donald Thomson (Bearsden), and Joan and her husband Ronnie Morrison (Skigersta). We extend our condolences to them all.

**WE WERE SORRY TO HEAR THAT BARBARA JEFFRIES** of 4 Eorodale passed away on Tuesday. We extend our condolences to her husband, Mark and the family including daughter, Jacqueline and her sons at 42 Cross Skigersta; and to Ivy Wren, Mark's sister and her family at 67 Cross Skigersta.

If you have any notices, greetings, birthdays or well-wishes you would like to include in the newsletter, please email:

[jasmine@uogltd.com](mailto:jasmine@uogltd.com)

## Tom's Titbits

The arrival of the canine companion I mentioned a couple of weeks ago is now fairly imminent. At six weeks of age he has been separated from his mum, who was having difficulty in coping with a litter of seven and at present he is residing in a five-star dog hotel fairly near here, being looked after by a kindly dog whisperer who is the next best thing to a mother a puppy could ever wish for. Another three of his siblings who are destined to be homed locally are with him. So, all is good and the initial training these guys need has already begun. We are allowed to visit on a daily basis, which I think is a bit soppy, but the good lady and the whisperer seem to think it's a good idea so that I can bond with Lochie, which is what I've called him as he hails from Lemreway. It's also a kind of tribute to my friends Donnie, Shonnie and Angus from the Gaelic Supergroup of the same name with whom I shared many an entertaining evening. We were given the extra bonus of having him home here for a couple of hours on Saturday night in order to familiarise him with what will be his new home. He certainly marked his territory by running about the back green and saying hello to some of the neighbours before leaving three copious pools of piddle on the utility room floor and falling asleep exhausted, with his wee head inside one of the trainers I'd been wearing all day. Any creature that can survive that must be hardy. My previous dog, which was considerably older when I got him, arrived here with no real fuss in the back of a van and that was about it for fourteen years, but things are different with this new guy. People have already begun giving me the "you'll need to get" list, and its long, very, very long. Extendable lead with an LED light, a cage, various jags, a chip, dog guard for the car, poo bags, dog coat, dog food, dog pad, collar, toys, food dish, water dish, a bed, a car seat belt, insurance and so it goes on. As far as I'm concerned, it's all a bit of a money-making racket and there could be tension ahead. I'm a poor pensioner - it is a dog and things are very basic here in High Borve. I just hope I've got the energy for all this as it's a bit like having a baby again at my age, and I'm not Mick Jagger. Watch this space.

The mention of the Lochies reminds me of a wee yarn which comes from the seventies when I took part in a concert tour with them which began in the Ness hall and went on to Stornoway, Lochaber, Glasgow and culminated at the Edinburgh Festival in one week on the road. My job was to compère the concerts, drive the van, set the equipment on stage, sell raffle tickets, take money at the door, and take part in Comedy sketches with Donnie. A sort of performing Roadie, if you like. One of our travelling co-performers was an accordionist guy from Skye called Blair Douglas who in those days had hair which reached down to his waist and, of course, went on to become a musical legend.

This whole tour was organised by a guy called Dai Vaughan who at that time lived in Ness. It went well and we added to our cast of performers on the night, from whichever locality we were performing in. The night we played in Edinburgh we were billeted in a huge rambling kind of guest house which had a lot of rooms covering three floors and we were sharing one big



by Tom Maciver

room with five single beds. I don't know if this was a cost-cutting exercise by Dai or not, but that was the way it was. We had a few beers after the performance in Edinburgh, which required me to arise in the middle of the night to use the NON en suite facilities. I disturbed a Lochie on the way to the door and he insisted that he was going to accompany me to the toilet, which was quite a way off. I told him I was over twenty-one and that I'd be fine on my own, but he insisted, so off we wandered down the hallways dressed only in our Y fronts and vests. We eventually found the loo and after siphoning off the pints we headed back to our room but, unfortunately, in the maze that was this huge house we couldn't remember which door was the entrance to our bedroom. I don't know if any of you have ever stood in the middle of a strange house at three in the morning in your underwear partly sozzled, not knowing where you're meant to be sleeping. But I can assure you it is a very sobering experience. The only solution according to my wise companion was that we would knock on a door and hope it was our room and he decided that I was to do the knocking because I was bigger than him. I knew that even if we had the correct room the other three occupants of our party would be in a chemically induced slumber and the chances of them waking up to a knock on the door were second to none, and shouting to them at this time of the night was not an option.

I knocked, it wasn't our room and a rather bemused disgruntled woman appeared from within, complete with hairnet and dressing gown and enquired as to what we wanted. It was like something out of a Carry On movie and what a carry on this was. I don't know what the blone thought at the sight of little and large standing outside her room in the wee small hours in their underwear and I didn't wait to find out. We took off down the corridor and thankfully the next door we tried was the correct one. The fear and excitement of it all made another immediate visit to the toilet necessary, but we marked our territory before heading out for the return visit.

I was told a similar story about a troop of Stornoway Territorial Army guys back in the day who were at annual camp somewhere in the Yorkshire Moors. They were on night manoeuvres and got hopelessly lost, but stumbled on a remote Inn in the middle of nowhere with a sign outside announcing it was called the George and Dragon. They reluctantly agreed that their only option was to try and wake someone up in order to try and pinpoint their location, so they rattled on the door. The upstairs dormer window flew open eventually and a rather grotesque and very angry hairnet and curlers woman yelled at them, "What do you want here at this time of night?" Trembling slightly with fear, one of the Stornoway coves asked, "Is George in?"

Ah well, *ma's breug thugam e's breug bhuam e.*

*Beannachd leibh*

Tom.

### PRESCRIPTION DELIVERIES

We are hoping to continue with the prescription deliveries for the time being. A couple of our regular volunteers are going on a well-deserved holiday over the next few weeks and we are looking for volunteers to fill in occasionally. The dates are as follows:

Thursday 20 Aug – Borve

Friday 21 Aug – Borve

Friday 21 Aug – Habost

Thu 27 Aug - Borve

Wed 9 Sept – Habost

If you are free to help out delivering prescriptions on any of the dates above, please email [christineamos@uogltd.com](mailto:christineamos@uogltd.com)



## Habost Amenity Site Opening Times



|                 | OPENS | CLOSES |
|-----------------|-------|--------|
| MONDAY          | 2pm   | 4pm    |
| THURSDAY        | 10am  | 12pm   |
| SATURDAY        | 10am  | 12pm   |
| From Sat 22 Aug | 2pm   | 4pm    |

## BEAGAN TAIC FUND



### THERE IS NO SHAME IN REACHING OUT TO YOUR COMMUNITY FOR A LITTLE HELP IN YOUR TIME OF NEED.

We understand that sometimes a little help is required to help you through a difficult financial period. Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is working in partnership with a local church to launch the "Beagan Taic" Fund. The fund will be available to any resident of the Galson Estate facing severe financial hardship.

There is no application form. If you are struggling financially please call 01851 850393 to discuss your situation in confidence. Just ask to speak to someone about the new support fund.

We understand that it is not easy to make this enquiry and we will do all we can to assist individuals and families in their time of need. Some personal details will be required along with information on current sources of income.

A decision will be made quickly and if assistance is appropriate it will be offered as shop vouchers, cash or a bank transfer. Advice on other possible sources of help will be offered to everyone who calls.

Tel: 01851 850393  
WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM



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## University of the Highlands and Islands publishes islands strategy

The University of the Highlands and Islands has reaffirmed its commitment to island communities with the publication of its first ever islands strategy. The document sets out the university's plans to enhance its activity across Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. Objectives include increasing island-based research activity, enhancing strategies for attracting and retaining talent, continuing to support the culture, languages and heritage of the islands and further engagement with industry to continue to build a skilled workforce in line with changing opportunities and needs.

The publication follows the recent announcement that the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland will receive £100 million investment from the Scottish and UK governments as part of the Islands Growth Deal. The university's strategy aims to support this deal, as well as the ambitions of the Scottish Government's National Islands Plan and Islands Act.

Professor Crichton Lang, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Highlands and Islands, explains: "This is an exciting time for Scotland's islands, with the development of several national initiatives to strengthen island communities. However, issues such as climate change, population decline and COVID-19 also present many challenges.

"As the only university with a physical base within each of Scotland's main island groupings, the University of the Highlands and Islands has an important contribution to make to the sustainable development of our islands.

"Our new plan sets out how we will work with others and use our strengths in further education, higher education and research to have a beneficial impact across the islands and in the communities which are home to our staff and students."

Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Paul Wheelhouse, said: "The University of the Highlands and Islands has a key role to play in supporting our island communities to thrive and I welcome the publication of its first ever Islands Strategy. Its initial focus is on the three Islands Council areas and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the future sustainable growth of islands, particularly to provide opportunities for people to pursue skills and qualifications and to maintain and create quality jobs.

"It is more important than ever that we support communities across all of Scotland's inhabited islands. The Scottish Government established the first National Islands Plan last year and we are pleased to see many of the key themes in the University's Islands Strategy align with our own ambitions for the islands. We have also recently committed investment of up to £50 million as part of the Islands Growth Deal to help unlock investment and drive inclusive growth across Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides and deliver real benefits for individuals, businesses and communities.

"I look forward to working alongside the University of the Highlands and Islands to improve the quality of life for people currently living and who want to live on our islands."

Sue Macfarlane, Interim Principal of Lews Castle College UHI, commented: "This important strategy outlines a number of exciting opportunities for working collectively to strengthen our communities and business across all our Islands. Lews Castle College UHI looks forward to playing a key role in this collaboration, working even more closely with our partner colleges and our partners and stakeholders across the Western Isles and beyond."

The publication islands strategy will be discussed at the university's next islands forum meeting on Tuesday 29 September. The virtual meeting will include representatives from Shetland College UHI, NAFC Marine Centre UHI, Lews Castle College UHI, Orkney College UHI, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Shetland Islands Council, Orkney Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

To view the University of the Highlands and Islands' Islands Strategy, visit [www.uhi.ac.uk/publications](http://www.uhi.ac.uk/publications)

## seo a-Nis



### Shona Nic a' Mhaoilein

#### Deireadh agus Toiseach

Uill. Siud mise a-nis air fòrladh màthaireil agus feumaidh mi ràdh gun d' thàinig e orm gu h-obann on latha a dh'fhàg mi an oifis sa Mhàirt gun càil a dh'fhios a'm nach bithinn ann tuilleadh ri linn a' choronabhiorsais, agus na molaidhean gan cur an gnìomh an oidhche sin nach bu chòir do bhoireannaich throm a bhith a-muigh am measg chàich. Ciamar a chaidh còig mìosan seachad cho luath? Airson a' chiad dà mhìos no mar sin, cha mhòr gum faic mi duine beò 's mi ag obair bhon taigh a h-uile latha, taingeil nuair a thigeadh Pàdraig Post 's gum faighinn fiù facal air cuideigin ged nach biodh ann ach faighneachd mar a bha cùisean 's a' faighinn an aon fhreagairt gach latha! Bha an Sgitheanach an uairsin air falbh fad sia seachdainean agus ged nach do dh'fhairich mi aonranas coltach ris a-riamh, thàinig siud cuideachd gu crìoch agus bha e na fhaochadh gun robh làithean àlainn againn 's gun robh cothrom agam a bhith suidhe a-muigh greiseag ag obair sa ghrèin. Fhad 's a tha mi sgrìobhadh seo tha trì latha air fhàgail chun latha a chaidh a chur roimheam aig a' chiad scan – an latha mòr! Saoil am bi naidheachd againn mus leugh sibh uile seo Dihaoine?

#### Cruinneachadh

Mar a thuir mi aig deireadh mo cholbh an latha eile, bha cruinneachadh gu bhith againn mar theaghlach airson a' chiad uair ann an trì bliadhna deug le Mam, dad, a' chlann, na 'partners' agus na h-oghaichean air fad. Rinn sinn sin agus abair thusa gun robh oidhche air leth againn, leis a h-uile duine a' gabhail uallaich airson biadh a thoirt a-null gus am biodh sinn uile sàsaichte. Thàinig ar nàbaidh a-nall leis a' chamara agus abair gun do rinn i a' chùis air 20 againn (agus cù mo phiuthar!) a chumail fo smachd gus dealbhan fhaighinn ann am buidhnean - tha sinn air am faicinn on uairsin agus abair gu bheil sinn air ar dòigh leis. Onghail, cabadaich agus geamannan gu leòr, agus mu dheireadh bha agam ri mo mhionach mhòr a thoirt dhachaigh goirid an-dèidh meadhan-oidhch! B' e rudeigin sònraichte a bhiodh ann aig uair sam bith ach tha mi smaoinichadh gun robh e buileach sònraichte leis mar a bha sinn uile sgapte bho chèile anns na mìosan a dh'fhalbh.

#### Sgoiltean

Tha na sgoiltean agus na sgoiltean-àraich a' dol air ais an t-seachdain sa agus abair gu bheil truas agam ris na tidsearan agus ris a' chloinn, 's aca ri atharrachaidhean mòra a dhèanamh an dà chuid sa chlas fhèin agus aig na h-amannan cluich is bidhe. Tha caraid dhomh le nighean a tha a' dol dhan sgoil-àraich airson a' chiad turas agus chan fhaigh i a-steach còmhla rithe, a bhios uabhasach duilich dhan dithis aca. Tha nighean bheag mo bhràthar a' toiseachadh an Sgoil MhicNeacail air a' chiad bhliadhna agus tha eagal a beatha oirre leis nach eil i eòlach air duine – ghluais i an seo à Inbhir Nis sa Ghiblean agus cha d' fhuair i cothrom coinneachadh ris na co-aoisean aice sa chlas mus deach iad dhan sgoil mhòr còmhla. Tha mi an dòchas gum bi e nas fheàrr toiseach-toiseachaidh a dhèanamh Dicadain leis nach bi san sgoil ach a' chiad bhliadhna agus an t-siathamh bhliadhna 's gun cuir iad eòlas air a chèile mus lìon an sgoil le clann. Tha luchd-teagaisg air obair mòr a dhèanamh air a bhith ag ullachadh airson fàilte air ais a chur air a' chloinn agus tha iad dha-rìreabh rim moladh mar a ghabh iad ris a h-uile càil 's gun roghainn eile aca, agus glè thrìc gun fhiosrachadh chun a' mhionaid mu dheireadh. Tha mi a' guidhe gach soirbheas dhaibh uile 's iad a' tilleadh dhan sgoil còmhla.

Deireadh nan saor-làithean ma-tha, agus toiseach caibeidil ùr dhomh fhìn – abair gu bheil e neònach a bhith a' suidhe nam thàmh a' feitheamh fhad 's a tha an saoghal a' toiseachadh a' gluasad a-rithist dhan a h-uile duine eile. Sin agaibh e - tha mi an dùil gum bi naidheachd againn dhuibh mun àm a thig an ath iris den chuairt-litir a-mach. Mura h-eil, cuiribh geall gum bi mi dìreach a' dol às mo rian!

## Could the opening up of ferry services risk coronavirus outbreak?

As lockdown continues to be gradually relaxed, government statistics reveal that the Western Isles health board area has fared better than any other region in Scotland, with only seven people testing positive through the NHS system and one other case identified through private means, with contact tracing in this instance also carried out by NHS Western Isles.

As of Monday, the Western Isles health board had carried out, in total, 1,970 tests on individuals. At present, all staff working in adult care homes in the isles are offered weekly testing. In respect of testing staff working in Ospadal nan Eilean (Western Isles Hospital) in Stornoway, a NHS Western Isles spokesperson said: "NHS staff working in chemotherapy care areas are offered weekly testing in line with Scottish Government requirements – we do not have any long-stay older people's or mental health units, which are the other categories of routine weekly testing to protect the most vulnerable patients."

There continues to be some concern in parts of Scotland about localized spikes following a recent outbreak of coronavirus in Aberdeen, with a cluster of over 150 cases forcing the closure of a number of indoor and outdoor hospitality venues in that area for at least seven days. This was a consequence of the virus being detected initially among patrons of the city's Hawthorn Lounge pub, which was subsequently linked to further outbreaks in over 30 bars, restaurants, cafes and leisure facilities. In light of the opening up of links between the isles and mainland, particularly in respect of ferry services, there is, conceivably, a risk that incidences of COVID-19 infection in the isles may increase over the coming months.

Asked if additional contingencies were in place following the recent opening up of ferry services, NHS Western Isles told this newsletter on Monday: "Over the past five months, NHS Western Isles has worked extremely hard to prepare our staff and facilities for COVID-19, and we are well prepared to manage an outbreak; both in terms of managing patients and contact tracing and support.

"Opening up travel increases the likelihood of positive cases of COVID-19 in the Western Isles. However, Test and Protect arrangements are in place (alongside advice on respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, face coverings, avoiding crowded places and physical distancing) to ensure that the virus does not spread. This is why it is vital, to protect yourself, your loved ones and your communities, that both local people and visitors to the Western Isles ensure that they follow the regulations and advice in place."

In the event of someone within the isles contracting COVID-19 and going on to have breathing difficulties that require intervention in the form of a mechanical ventilator, such patients will initially be treated in the Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. However, if additional capacity or expertise was required, this would be made available by other Scottish Health Boards on the mainland. Patients requiring complex multi-system intensive support would also be transferred to a mainland hospital.

Currently, there are 6 ventilators to manage COVID-19 patients in the Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. Patients placed on ventilators to support their breathing would each receive one-to-one nursing, with an anaesthetist overseeing all care for ventilated patients.

Anyone exhibiting coronavirus symptoms should immediately self-isolate and book a test. To access testing, contact the COVID-19 Response Team on:

TEL 01851 601 151 or EMAIL [wi-hb.covid19queries@nhs.net](mailto:wi-hb.covid19queries@nhs.net)



# CEN Centre and Museum re-opens to the public

## Public urged to follow guidelines to enable safe access to the CEN facilities



Comunn Eachdraidh Nis has re-opened and the new opening times will be Monday to Saturday, midday to 4pm.

Keeping our staff and visitors safe is our top priority so we have made some important changes you need to know about before visiting us again.

WE ARE:

- **Limiting the number of visitors allowed in the building at one time.**
- **Introducing a one-way system throughout the building. Staff will be on hand to help you follow this system.**
- **Encouraging you to pay using card.**
- **Cleaning all touch points throughout the building regularly.**

On entry, you will be met by a staff member and asked to give your name and contact details so as to adhere to the Scottish Government's Test and Trace guidelines. You will also be asked to sanitise your hands and wear a face covering while visiting us (except when you eat in the cafe obviously). Staff will advise you on how to move safely.

We have limited the seating in our cafe and the menu is written on blackboards on the wall. Please wait to be seated and a staff member will come to the table to take your order. A protective screen has been installed at the cafe till to protect staff and customers and we ask you to pay by card during your visit. Please exit out of the fire escape door in the cafe. The till, card machine, all tables and chairs will be sanitised regularly throughout the day.

Our museum is operating a one-way system. Please adhere to social distancing rules. We ask that you exit the museum and gallery from the rear doors of the gallery. Staff will help guide you.

A protective screen has been fitted at the shop counter to ensure the safety of our staff and customers. We are limiting customer numbers to two at a time. Please adhere to social distancing rules while in our shop. The counter, till and card machine will be sanitised after each customer.

Check out our social media channels for walk throughs of our new one-way system and for up-to-date information or phone on 810 377 if you have any questions. We greatly appreciate your co-operation during these challenging times. Tapadh leibh.

### COMUNN EACHDRAIDH NIS NEWS UPDATES

Taisbeanadh ùr aig Comunn Eachdraidh Nis / New exhibition 'Nobody's Home'

An Alternative View of the Outer Hebrides by John Maher is now on display in the gallery at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis.

"Abandoned croft houses lie scattered throughout the Western Isles. They are as synonymous with the islands as the vast sandy beaches, coastal machair and prehistoric standing stones. Many of the houses still contain the furniture and personal belongings of their former occupants, the reasons for the abandonment are varied and sometimes complex....There are no people in the photographs but their presence can be sensed."

John said "Around 2009, I got quite seriously into photography, mainly long exposure night photography. I found the island was the ideal location for that because of the lack of light pollution."



I found the old houses that were dotted around the landscape particularly interesting. I found the best results came within a couple of nights of a full moon.

It is fantastic to see the photographs out of their wooden crate again and on display in Ness."

~ ~ ~

Alan 'Baba' Macdonald has once again shown his master craftsmanship and has made these stunning new donation boxes for us. Our sincere thanks to him for his amazing work (Alan also made our lectern).

~ ~ ~

As an independent, non-core funded organisation that does not charge for the admission to its collection, Comunn Eachdraidh Nis relies heavily on the generosity of its visitors.

You can help share your present appreciation of a past lifestyle with future generations by donating whatever amount you can. All donations are gratefully received.

~ ~ ~

The staff and board at CEN would like to welcome our new cleaner Caron Hawkins.

Scottish Charity no: SC018004

## Seo a-nis Alex John

**IS MISE ALEX JOHN AGUS THÒISICH MI AIG URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN (UOG) MAR OIFIGEAR LEASACHAIDH GÀIDHLIG BHO CHIONN GHOIRID.**

Tha mi a' gabhail uallach obair Shona, a bhios air fòrladh màthaireil agus tha mi gu mòr a' coimhead air adhart ris a' bhliadhna a tha ri thighinn. Cheumnaich mi à Colaisde a' Chaisteil ann an Steòrnabhagh am bliadhna seo fhèin ann an Gàidhlig is Leasachadh. 'S e buannachd chultarail a tha ann sa Ghàidhlig ach cuideachd buannachd eacanomaigeach, aig a bheil comas-fàis. Tha Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn air mòran obrach a dhèanamh gus adhartachadh agus brosnachadh cleachdadh a' chànain sa choimhearsnachd agus tha mi airson obair còmhla ri sgioba an urrais gus barrachd adhartachadh a dhèanamh sa Ghàidhlig.

Bidh mi ag obair gu dlùth còmhla ri buidhnean eadar-dhealaichte gus seo a choileanadh agus gus an cuideachadh le bhith a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig gu làitheil san obair, agus tha fadachd orm a bhith ag obair air pròiseactan còmhla riutha. A thuilleadh air an sin, tha mi gu mòr a' coimhead air adhart ri bhith ag obair còmhla ri sgioba Urras Ghabhsainn anns an àm ri teachd.

Thar na mìosan ri thighinn, tha mi airson fàs cleachdte ri seiseanan 'Bookbug' agus leis an sin, bidh agam ris an trèanadh riatanach a dhèanamh gus na seiseanan a chuir air dòigh. Tha sgioba UOG gu mòr a' coimhead ri goireasan Gàidhlig san òigridh agus tha seiseanan 'Bookbug' na dhòigh math airson a' chànain a chuideachadh. Tron ghlasadh-sluaigh a tha air a bhith ann, tha na seiseanan air a bhith air an dèanamh tro sianal YouTube agus tha seo a-rithist air a bhith soirbheachail, ged a tha sinn a' coimhead air adhart ri tighinn còmhla ri chèile is gum bi pàirt shòisealta againn sna seiseanan air ais. Tha sinn an dòchas gum bi an comas againn sin a dhèanamh san aithghearrachd ach an-dràsta fhèin, bidh sinn a' conaltradh le goireasan air loidhne.

Tha an "Living Gaelic Initiative" ann gus cuideachadh a thoirt do ghniomhachasan agus buidhnean agus tha sinn gu mòr airson seo a leasachadh is sealltainn na buannachdan a tha ann an gnìomhachas dà-chànanaich. Tha seo a toirt cothrom do ghniomhachasan a bhith mar ghealach am measg nan reul mar gum biodh. Tha sinn uile mothachail gu bheil sinn ag obrachadh ann an saoghal shòisealta agus leis an sin, tha an cothrom ann rudeigin air leth a dhèanamh le aonachadh gnìomhachas agus Gàidhlig còmhla. Tha cothrom an seo daoine a thàladh don ghniomhachas agus faighinn làmh an uachdair air gnìomhachasan eile. Tha mi an dùil rannsachadh cùise a dhèanamh gus beachdan a shealltainn a thuilleadh air a bhith ag obair leis a' chòrr den sgioba aig UOG, a bheil cothrom do bhuidhnean agus do ghniomhachasan cuideachadh is stiùireadh faighinn ma tha iad airson Gàidhlig a thoirt a-steach don bhuidheann aca.

A bharrachd air na gnìomhan seo, bidh mi an sàs ann an Plòigh agus



Alex John Morrison

sinn a cuir air dòigh seiseanan airson An Dàmhair. Tha an sgioba air a bhith ag ionndrainn a' dèanamh na seiseanan samhraidh agus tha mi fhin a' coimhead air adhart ri prògram aig a bheil comas a bhith spòrsail airson na h-òigridh.

Ma tha sibh airson còmhradh mun obair a tha gu h-àrd no mu phròiseactan aig UOG, cuiribh fios thugam air post-dealan aig [office@uogtld.com](mailto:office@uogtld.com) no air fòn 01851 850 393.

**I'M ALEX JOHN AND I RECENTLY STARTED AT URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN (UOG) AS A GAELIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER.** I will be covering Shona's maternity leave and am very much looking forward to the year ahead. I graduated from Lews Castle College

in Stornoway this year in Gaelic & Development. Gaelic is a fantastic cultural asset, but also an under-exploited economic asset too. UOG have undertaken much work to promote and encourage the use of Gaelic in the community and I'm keen to work alongside the team to promote it further.

I will be working closely with various businesses and organisations in an effort to support them to use Gaelic in their everyday operation and I look forward to this aspect of the role. In addition to that, I am very much looking forward to working with the team at UOG in the future.

Over the coming months I hope to get up to speed with Bookbug and undertake the necessary training to enable me to deliver sessions. The UOG team are committed to Gaelic in early years and the Bookbug sessions provide a fantastic platform for sharing the language. During lockdown the sessions have been delivered via the YouTube channel and this too has been a great asset, although we look forward to getting back to meeting in person and enjoying the social aspect of the sessions too. We hope we can do this in the near future, but for now we are likely to be working on online content.

The "Living Gaelic initiative" is aimed at supporting businesses and organisations. We are keen to really develop this and demonstrate the many benefits of a bilingual business and how this can really allow your business to stand out. We are all aware we operate in a global society today and a Gaelic business offers a very unique selling proposition and can mean your business can edge ahead of the competition. I hope to be able to work on case studies to showcase ideas and possibilities as well as working with the rest of the UOG team to offer practical support and guidance to businesses and organisations who want to incorporate Gaelic into their offering.

Aside from these activities, I will be involved in Plòigh as we plan for the October sessions. The team have missed delivering the summer sessions and I'm keen to get involved in what looks set to be a full and fun activity programme for young people.

If you want to find out more about any of the work mentioned above or find out more about any UOG projects please do not hesitate to contact [office@uogtld.com](mailto:office@uogtld.com) or call 01851 850393.

## Westside community improves access to scenic routes



The **Shader Riverside Walkway** linking the main road to the shore, a return walk of about 1.75 miles has now been completed. With the construction of the footbridge over the river to replace the stepping stones at about the halfway mark, and the provision of drains and culverts to keep the path firm and dry throughout the year, this walkway is proving very popular with locals and visitors alike.

Last year the Woodland Trust donated 250 deciduous trees for planting along the banks of the river near the main road and they are coming on well. Over the past four years drains and culverts

have been constructed throughout the length of this stretch of river to create a continuous level stretch of firm grassy walkway. Local residents have contributed grass seed to reseed some parts of the path.

Airidhantuin Community Council (ACC) would like to thank all those who have contributed in any way to the creation of this walkway. Special thanks to UOG Investment Fund and CNES Challenge Fund for providing the funds for the construction of the footbridge; to Duncan Mackay and Sons Ltd, for the excellent work in installing the footbridge and landscaping the site; to Calum for the provision of benches beside the path; to Norman, Calum and Jonathan for mowing the grass regularly along the route; to Donald and Jonathan for constructing the stile; to all the volunteers and donors who have contributed material, time, money and energy to bring this project to completion; and last but not least to Margaret Ann for her 'work of art' which is enjoyed by many on the way.

As parking is difficult at the bridge on the main road, ample car parking is available at the shore end of the path, accessed from the Ballantrushal village road turning towards the mouth of the river along the Scottish Water road.

## Sporting Viewpoint

by **Alastair Dunlop**



I have been moaning to close associates for some time and now I am going into print. The following is a famous quote, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyses needed efforts to convert retreat into advance" - Franklin D Roosevelt, President of the USA, 1934 (I accept the word nameless may be incorrect).

On a more positive note, it was good to see Ullapool very busy this week with tourists and also on the ferry making it seem much more normal and less depressing. Also, schools return tomorrow and I would expect parents and grandparents to be celebrating tonight after many months of home-schooling and child-minding. Of course, there will be localised spikes in parts of the country, but I fail to understand why in parts of the UK where there have been little or no serious cases of the virus we continue to be subject to the same rules. Time to move on while still being mindful of the vulnerable. I am fortunate to be retired and on a pension. I feel very sorry for those who have lost their jobs and businesses in order to protect the NHS.

Scottish Football is back and, although it is very early days, perhaps with Celtic only drawing at Rugby Park we might have a competitive league this season. I am also mindful that when the champions wobble, they have a great habit of restoring their form very quickly. I note Mr Morelos scored two goals, but I still think it would be a positive move by Rangers to sell him quickly. I see Hibs have won again tonight, so good luck to them, I hope they can keep it going. I am not sure about the possibility of competitive local football in the near future, but I am strongly in favour - see above!

Ness FC organised twice-weekly training sessions for 5-14 year olds over the past four weeks. There was an average attendance of thirty-seven young players, male and female, and I watched most of the time. Head coach Micheil, aided by Hugh, Hector, Murray, Sam and Calum did an excellent job. Training will restart soon at a different time.

Micheil and fellow Ness player James Morrison (Jambo) are currently in north east France coaching 10-15 year olds. Micheil commented that there was a high standard of skills amongst their charges and, on the negative side, they could do with an interpreter and less heat. Jambo expects to return to his coaching duties at Dundee FC at some point.

I mentioned the white crosses marked on roads and grass in Ness in an earlier issue. I have learned they were being used for a drone exercise, so no great mystery there. The forecast for this weekend is good so I am off to the hills again. The highlight of my trip should be ascending the Forcan Ridge in Kintail. The guide book says it is as challenging as the Aonach Eagach ridge in Glencoe. I did this and do not remember any problem bits. However, the point is I was about twenty at that time.

## FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Ness Fire Service have a collection point for Western Isles Food Bank outside the station in Dell.

Any donations of food or (non-alcoholic) drinks will be made available to families in need.

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

Hugh MacInnes, Jasmine M. Wilkie, Donald A. Morrison, Samantha Hawkins, Lisa Maclean, Shona Macmillan, Tom MacIver, David Green, Alastair Dunlop, Rev. Greg Macdonald, Christine Amos, Alex John Morrison, Ali Walker, Donald 'Ba' Macdonald



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

*Lisa's column*

by *Lisa Maclean*

To say it has been a summer with a difference is a bit of an understatement, but as children have gone back to school for the first time in over five months it does mark yet another careful transition and provides a little more hope. We missed the delivery of our *Plòigh* summer sessions for children and young people, but we are hopeful we can offer autumn sessions for children as part of the *Plòigh* programme and have plans in place. We will cautiously consider how we can deliver these safely. We welcome Alex John to the team, who will be involved in assisting Christine and others to deliver these sessions. Alex John will take over from Shona as Gaelic Development Officer for a year. We wish Shona all the very best on maternity leave and hope she manages to get her feet up before baby puts in an appearance. We look forward to hearing the good news!

We are very pleased to have been selected to work with Community Land Scotland (CLS) and the Stove Network on a project that allows us to commission an artist for a residency of four months. We are currently at interview stage and hope the work will commence in September. The theme is "stories of radical ownership" and we hope an artist can tell the story of the community buy out of the Galson Estate in a unique way and leave us with something that will allow us to share that story with many. The project is collaborative and there will be an expectation that the story will be told in the context of community land ownership. It has been a pleasure to work with CLS and the Stove Network and we were delighted to receive a great response to the call out. We look forward to offering the commission and seeing this project develop.

UOG staff are being encouraged to take annual leave as most have worked throughout lockdown. Much work has been undertaken to support other organisations to allow them to continue to deliver or to adapt throughout Covid-19 and the immediate response work has kept everyone busy. We have had to defer the office rebuild due to the pandemic and as such will be moving out of the South Dell office in August and into another space in the community. We will adopt a blended working arrangement which will allow staff to work from home and the office comfortably, whilst ensuring social distancing can be adhered to. I can share more about this in the next issue of the newsletter. In the meantime, please contact us in all the usual ways.

Please remember our own staff continue to work 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@uogtld.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).



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## 90th birthday celebrations for rescued member of the MV Clan Macquarrie



We were delighted that Donald 'Ba' Macdonald shared the following message with the newsletter team, which was posted on the Clan Macquarrie Community Centre Facebook page.

Laura Garvie sent a message to the page to announce that her father, Bernard 'Bernie' Bowen, a rescued member of the crew of the MV Clan Macquarrie, had celebrated his 90th birthday on 30th June of this year. Rescued in 1953 when the 7,000-ton vessel was driven ashore in Borve by hurricane-force winds, Mr Bowen was one of the sixty-six crew members taken safely from the ship by breeches buoy apparatus, after a determined previous rescue attempt by the coastguard and many local volunteers.

On 30th January 1953, the MV Clan Macquarrie was on passage from Dundee to Glasgow in ballast, having completed a voyage from India with a cargo of jute. As they set out northabout to Glasgow, severe weather and sea conditions in the Minch prompted the Captain to alter course, proceeding to the Butt of Lewis and west of the island. The horrendous

weather conditions rose to hurricane wind speeds, and so too rose the seas, growing mountainous as the night drew on. With her now unable to make headway through these terrifying conditions, the vessel came to rest on the fairly-level shore at Borve, luckily bypassing the treacherous rocks and reefs which form part of much of the western seaboard south of the Butt. Having lost the lights, the sixty-six men gathered together in the pitch darkness to ensure all were accounted for.

Describing the incident in 2003 at a packed event in the Ness Hall, Douglas Buchan, another of the crewmembers of the MV Clan Macquarrie, described the incident as "quite alarming, not knowing what was going to happen." A valiant rescue attempt was made by the coastguard and local volunteers, but this had to be postponed until the weather moderated. The next day, the shipwrecked mariners were brought ashore by breeches buoy apparatus, and were warmly welcomed into local homes after their ordeal in one of the worst storms in living memory. "We were dragged through the sea from the ship to the shore," Mr Buchan described at the aforementioned event, "and I remember being taken to a nearby house. It was a blackhouse with a loom in one end and when I sat down in the room I realised how quiet it was after the violent storm outside. It was a very cosy place and obviously the ideal structure to shut out the elements. We had a very welcome meal of fish and potatoes and later that afternoon we were taken to Stornoway and spent the night in the Caledonian Hotel." The Board of Trade subsequently awarded its Wreck Shield to the coastguard team, in recognition of the brave efforts of those onshore.

Speaking in 2003, Mr Buchan went on to say: "I had another look at that coast today and thank the Lord that we were on that small beach and not on the rocks."

In late April 2009, three crew members were invited to the open day of the Clan Macquarrie Community Centre – Douglas Buchan, Cliff Kerr and Bernard Bowen. A



Bernie Bowen in his sailing days

glorious, sunny day welcomed them, so unlike the conditions they had met that night in 1953. At the time, *fios* carried extensive coverage and spoke to Mr Bowen, who said: "I'm very glad I came – I wasn't sure if I would make it but I'm enjoying the day meeting the friendly people here and seeing Cliff (Kerr) and Douglas (Buchan) once again."

Laura's message and photographs posted to the Facebook page are reproduced below. We hope that Mr Bowen had a wonderful day.

"My Dad, Bernie Bowen, was rescued from the Clan Macquarrie back in 1953 by the people of Borve. Here are a couple of pics. The first shows him aboard ship a few years later. The second was on Tuesday when he celebrated his 90th birthday!! Thanks to you all X"

## Work at Lighthouse back on TRAC *(continued from p.1)*

of the buildings and they will be moving on to completing the electrical refit over the next couple of weeks with a view to commissioning the new optic towards the end of September."

He added: "The Butt of Lewis lighthouse has been guiding mariners safely through Scottish waters for over 150 years. This essential refurbishment and upgrade work mean this iconic lighthouse will be fit for purpose for many more years to come."

Not only is the Lighthouse getting a much-needed facelift, but also the area of land outside the compound which has traditionally been used as a parking area and turning spot for thousands of vehicles on an annual basis. In February 2020, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar were granted planning permission to provide 8 car parking spaces, 3 campervan spaces, a turning point for buses and long vehicles plus a picnic area. Work is well underway which has required at temporary closure of part of the road from Stoth to the Lighthouse and which remains closed at time of going to press.



The early stages of the works to provide parking spaces and picnic area

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### SIX LOCKDOWN LESSONS

It is fair to say that the experience of the last five months or so has been unique. No one saw this coming. No one knew what profound impact the spread of the virus would have on our lives, and of course, continues to have. The lasting effects are both hidden and evident. Evident effects are things like masks, hand-sanitiser, keeping your distance. Hidden effects are no less real. Things like loneliness, and being wary of things (and people) around us.

There is some distance to go before we can say that this experience is behind us. Nonetheless with schools this week, and with churches having limited re-opening, there is step change in how we face this crisis. I thought it would be suitable then to put down some personal reflections of my own experience over the lockdown period.

#### i. Empathy for those housebound

I had originally scribbled down 'sympathy' not 'empathy', but hopefully there was always some sympathy, but now we have been given an insight into what life is like when you cannot leave your own home. I hope I will prove to be a more caring pastor and person as a result.

#### ii. Appreciation for medical and local services

We had rainbows and clapping for carers to express appreciation for those whose jobs placed them in greater danger, for the good of others. Perhaps it helps us to recover a view of the medical professions as vocations not merely jobs. I would also like to extend my gratitude to our local shops, who have performed with great fortitude in these times.

#### iii. A sense of the fragility of our way of life

Our way of life, and I include both our island life and our western culture, has been strained by all of this. Things that we had come to rely on and assume, like a reliable food chain, became precious commodities. Our lack of island industry and our lack of self-

sufficiency was a glaring deficiency, making us deeply dependent on what comes to us via our freight ferries. Surely there is ample impetus now for us to tackle this weakness in our island economy?

#### iv. Thankfulness for available technology

A mere ten years ago, and our lives would have been far more impacted by this lockdown. Being able to video-call friends and family, being able to 'login' to church services, being able even to have fellowship by videoconference, to see each other, to help each other, to laugh with each other. I confess that nothing is more frustrating than technology that isn't doing what you expect or want. But at the same time, I bless the Lord that this lockdown happened at this stage of technological advances and not before. And to tie back in with the first point, I know that many, many congregations will be continuing their broadcasting of services for the sake of those who still cannot come to the buildings. YouTube is certainly no substitute for actually physically gathering. But those who cannot come to church have this means of joining in, and being part of their live congregational worship.

#### v. Debates over government locus

Long before lock-down there were signs that our governments (both Westminster and Holyrood) had little appreciation of the proper sphere of governance that Christ has given to his church alone. For myself, this concern has only increased in these months. Now I do not think that there was in any sense a persecution of the Christian church. But often the handling of restrictions with regard to Christian worship felt clumsy, almost an afterthought. There was no attempt to recognise that churches are governed by courts, synods and assemblies not inferior to their state counterparts, in their own sphere. This debate needs to be had urgently.

#### vi. Blessings during lockdown

Despite the strangeness of preaching in a virtually empty building, or from my manse study, it amazes me to be able to confess that there were real spiritual blessings for my soul in preaching. Yes, it was different. Yes, there were times I would have longed to be in church. But the Lord is not bound to a building made with hands. He can span the distances of our homes, as we worshipped him, one in spirit, united in praise of his Son and our Saviour. I'm sure this was replicated in the other local congregations too. What a wonderful God, who does not leave us, nor forsake us!

So, these are just some lessons learned over the past five months. I am sure we all have plenty of things to bless God for. We are unworthy sinners, but the Lord is still worthy of our worship.

# Restrictions eased on visitors to Care Homes

Following the issuing of the updated Care Home visiting guidance by the Scottish Government, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is pleased to report that each resident can now have an increased number of visitors.

From the 13th August 2020 visiting outdoors can be extended to up to 3 visitors from 2 households with all precautions remaining in place. The length of each visit will continue to be approximately 30 minutes and the frequency of visits will continue to be weekly.

A spokesperson said: "Residents' safety and wellbeing has been our main concern throughout the pandemic, and as we progress through the route map to recovery, it is important that we continue to manage safety alongside supporting wellbeing and enabling safe social contact. Vigilance around COVID-19 symptoms continues to be critical (and staying at home when these are present) alongside hand hygiene, increased cleaning, physical distancing and PPE which are all key features of good Infection Prevention Control."

Given the increase in visitors, a short questionnaire is being added to the visiting protocol.

The four questions visitors will have to answer are as follows:

*Have you felt unwell recently – especially with a cough, breathlessness, tiredness, a temperature or vomiting or diarrhoea?;*

*Have you been in contact with someone, in the past 14 days, who is suspected of having or is confirmed as having COVID-19?;*

*Have you been told by your GP or other NHS professional that*

*you should not be visiting a care home? and*

*Do you consent to your contact details being passed to Public Health as part of the 'Test and Protect' strategy, should there be a necessity following your visit to the care home, for example if the person you are visiting develops COVID-19 symptoms?*

The next aim, in addition to outdoor visits, is to progress to a single nominated visitor for indoor visits. Plans are to commence with these indoor visits by the 24th August, but this is dependent on the rate of transmission of COVID 19 at the time. Risk assessments will be completed by each Care Home and approved by the Director of Public Health prior to indoor visits.

The spokesperson added: "Further information will be provided on the specific indoor visiting protocol closer to the time. The prospect of indoor visiting is a welcome development as even although this is summertime, the weather has not made outdoor visiting comfortable or possible at times. We thank all concerned once again for their patience and understanding."

## WANTED - HEDGE TRIMMED

Looking for someone to trim a hedge in Ness

07555 998782

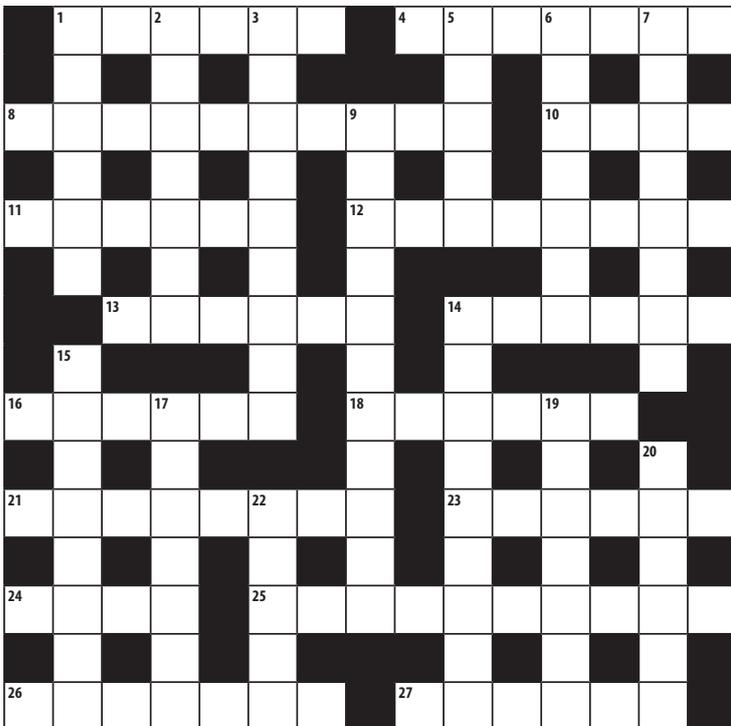
## WANTED - PROPERTY FOR RENT

Looking for a 3 - 4 bedroom house to rent in Ness.

Zena Scott: 07788103103

If you solve the puzzle send a text or email to Jasmine with your solution or attach a photo of the completed grid. It will encourage our compilers to produce more puzzles and you may even get your name in the next issue of the freesheet!  
email: jasmine@uoglt.com mobile text: 07460 853 728

## Ness-Barvas No.10 Crossword 14 August 2020



### ACROSS

- 1 Evidences they can be corrected? (6)
- 4 Pieces let into garment (7)
- 8 Prove troll in Point (10, anag)
- 10 Video communication tool (4)
- 11 Accommodation to let in the sky? (6)
- 12 Moulds into style (8)
- 13 Private Eye's name for the Queen (6)
- 14 Current season? (6)
- 16 Goes furtively off down the hills (6)
- 18 Empties (6)
- 21 Clearances made way for such as this (4,4)
- 23 Neither woman nor man for Tormod (6)
- 24 O, big desert! (4, anag)
- 25 A craving for alcohol (10)
- 26 And I see the flavouring (7, anag)
- 27 Where films are made (6)
- 5 Trust in Gaelic (5)
- 6 Shape discrimination (7)
- 7 Severely defeats m(8)
- 9 Murdo's takeaway business (4,3,4)
- 14 A twin boss in Ness village (9, anag)
- 15 It saw me standing alone! (4,4)
- 17 Lies of fish and chips provider? (7)
- 19 Nanny school (7)
- 20 Cotton cloth (6)
- 22 Muddle, confuse (5)

### No. 9 Crossword 31 July 2020 solution



### DOWN

- 1 Gain (6)
- 2 The hunted red month? (7)
- 3 Sadly needed even more now (9)

Ach buanaich thusa anns na nithean a dh'fhòghlaim thu, agus air an do rinneadh thu dearbh-fhiosrach, air dhut fios a bhith agad cia uaithe a dh'fhòghlaim thu iad; 2 Timòteus 3: 14 [ABG1992]

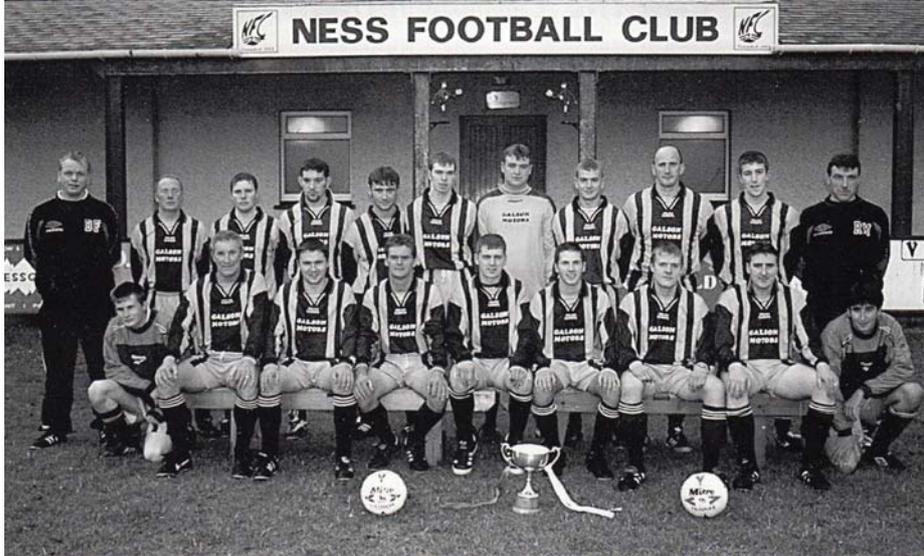
Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!  
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!  
Psalm 34: 8 [ESV]

## Fantasy Football and the musings of an unashamed sports superfan

Imagine there's no coronavirus — it's easy if you try.

What if COVID-19 hadn't ravaged the planet in 2020 and the sports world hadn't been temporarily called to a halt? Here's a look at how things might have played out.

Former *Fios* journalist Ali Walker is employed on the Brussels-based European affairs website and weekly newspaper, *Politico Europe*



Lewis & Harris League Winners 1999 - Ness FC

In English football, a wobbling Liverpool follow defeats to Watford and Atletico Madrid by going on a five-game losing run in the league. From being 20+ points clear, the lead slips inexorably away. Heads are lost and panic sets in on Merseyside. Jose Mourinho, now at Spurs, bangs the final nail into the coffin, and a 30-year wait for the league title goes on. Rival supporters nearly die with laughter.

It's not all good news for Man Utd fans, though. City take advantage of Liverpool's collapse to win the Premier League ... then add the European Cup to their now-bulging trophy cabinet. Unhappy in boring, sun-drenched Barcelona, Lionel Messi decides he wants a more glamorous lifestyle, and joins the new European champions in the drizzly northwest of England.

Long live Sheikh Mansour, goes up the cry. Long live financial doping.

North of the border, Celtic extend their 10-point lead and have the league wrapped up by Easter. Despite a 0-4 hammering

in the final Old Firm game of the season, Rangers fans insist Steven Gerrard is the man to lead them to "55." Superstar striker Alfredo Morelos is sold to West

Ham for £10M — a million for every extra kilogram he was carrying.

Hearts fail to drag themselves off the bottom of the league. They are relegated. Months of recriminations, in this case, do not follow.

Aberdeen reach the Scottish Cup final. Again. They play Celtic. Again. They lose in heart-rending fashion. Again.

But for Celtic, this domestic success again proves not to be a harbinger of European glory. A fourth-consecutive treble is followed by a humiliating exit in the Champions League qualifying round against FK Vaduz of Liechtenstein.

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Scotland qualify for Euro 2020. No, really, they do.

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On the tennis tour, Rafael Nadal — obviously — breezes to his 13th French Open title.

Roger Federer, aged 38, then becomes the oldest man to win Wimbledon since, err, Roger Federer in 2017.

*"On the rugby field, Finn Russell and Gregor Townsend fail to bury the hatchet. With their maverick playmaker exiled, Scotland limp to another 5th place finish in the Six Nations."*

After his Wimbledon triumph, Federer tells a BBC interviewer that, "honestly, the young players coming through now are so bad that I'd have to lose an arm and a leg to fall out of the Top 50."

After losing the final, Novak Djokovic retires and sets up a cult. He and his followers retreat to a remote Balkan mountain range, live off the fat of the land and eschew all accepted medical science. In 2060 a Netflix documentary — Tennis King — is made about the descent of a legend into insanity.

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In Tokyo, the Olympics take place in a blaze of bizarre Japanese culture.

Medals are won, records are smashed and drug tests are failed.

Britain again hoovers up piles of medals in all the sports that you have to be rich to participate in.

Jamaica and Kenya dominate the events that people are actually interested in.

Russia — allowed to compete after a court ruling, despite rampant cheating at recent Games — sweep the table in weightlifting and assorted other strength events.

After the US finishes second to

"...in the Lewis and Harris football league, Ness FC romp to their first title since 1999 and pick up a couple of local cups too."

China on the medal table, Donald Trump rages on Twitter. Joe Biden congratulates the Koreans on hosting a successful Olympics.

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The golf season starts with two fairytale triumphs. Rory McIlroy completes the career Grand Slam with a victory at the Masters. Then Phil Mickelson, at the grand old age of 50, finally wins the US Open and also seals his own Grand Slam.

The Open is held at Royal St George's on the Kent coastline. Brooks Koepka wins, but the tournament is frequently disrupted by the noisy sounds of a fleet of vessels in the English Channel, as lonely migrant dinghies are pursued by an armada of BBC and Sky News boats.

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On the rugby field, Finn Russell and Gregor Townsend fail to bury the hatchet. With their maverick playmaker exiled, Scotland limp to another 5th place finish in the Six Nations. There is devastation in the Borders and at Edinburgh's elite private schools. The rest of the country yawns.

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Locally, there is amazement at spornis as Alastair Dunlop misses a table tennis backhand for the first time ever. David Attenborough is summoned to film a documentary, but the TV crew record no further instances of this unique event.

And in the Lewis and Harris football league, Ness FC romp to their first title since 1999 and pick up a couple of local cups too. They pip Westside on penalties in the Jock Stein final with the out-of-retirement Domhnall 'Cheocaidh' Smith scoring the

winner.

Okay, that's enough: 2020 has been wild, but not that wild.

### THE L&H LEAGUE WINNING TEAM OF 1999 (Above)

**BACK:** B. Flower, N MacRury, MJ Maclean, I Mackenzie, N Mackay, A Morrison, MJ Graham, R Bell, CF Morrison, A Stewart, R Mackay. **FRONT:** G Macritchie, A Macdonald, S Macritchie, I Finlayson, G Macaskill, CI Macdonald, D Macleod, A Murray, DJ Smith



## NESS FC SOCIAL CLUB

### OPENING HOURS

Thursday 5pm – 8pm

Friday 5pm – 8pm

Saturday 4pm – 10pm (Minibus available)

Payment by card is preferable.

The bus will be available as usual on Saturday night.  
Face masks will be necessary on the bus.

### PLEASE NOTE THAT POOL AND DARTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

The weekly BINGO will not be starting yet, but we hope to get this up and running when we are able to do so.

We are following all government guidelines and will update any changes as we get them. We'd like to thank all our customers for their compliance with all the changes and restrictions we've had to put in place.

### SUPERDRAW AND OPEN THE BOX

The result of the July monthly draw was:

£100 - Murdo 'Baby' Morrison

£50 - Donnie Matheson

£25 - Becky Maclean

The next draw will be Saturday 29th August at 9pm.

### OPEN THE BOX

1st Aug - Norman John MacDonald, and he opened the box!

8th Aug – Craig Macleod key 2, key 5 opened the box

15th Aug – 8 keys, £200

## PARKING CHARGES REINSTATED

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is reinstating the parking charges in Stornoway Town Centre from Monday 20th July.

The Comhairle had suspended charging for parking in the Stornoway Town Centre in April due to the COVID-19 restrictions which were in place.

As restrictions are now being relaxed, and there is a noticeably increased demand for parking in the Town Centre, the reinstatement of parking charges will ensure that there is short term parking available for those who need it.

### CORRECTION

In edition 9 of the newsletter, dated 31st July 2020, we incorrectly reported that the new Chair of Comunn Eachdraidh Nis was Joan Macinnes. This was incorrect and should have stated that the new Chair of CEN is Joan Mackay. We apologise to all concerned for this error.

## LOCAL BUSINESS UPDATES

### Cross Inn TEL: 810152

Cross Inn Beer Garden is open:

Monday - Friday from 4pm.

Saturdays Beer Garden is open from 1pm.

Weather dependent.

Takeaways are available:

Thurs 4-7pm, Fri & Sat 4-8pm.

Drinks are available with food orders and will also be available for takeaways, 7-10pm.

Orders taken from noon. Can phone all orders on 810 152 and payment can be made on the phone. Further details available on Facebook.

### The Decca TEL: 810571

The Decca is now open again for B&B. We continue to offer our homemade bread and rolls for sale and can now also offer evening meals to our guests and non-residents. We have undertaken a risk assessment will be working in a way to comply with the COVID19 regulations for keeping ourselves and our guests safe.

### Porkies

Continuing to visit Barvas.

### Borve House Hotel TEL: 850 223

Borve House Hotel can be called between 12-8pm Monday – Saturday for takeaway.

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

As of this weekend (18th July), customers can sit-in but **booking is essential**.

### The Breakwater TEL: 811 001

As of 15th July there will be 2 indoor tables, and 4 outdoor tables for when the weather is kind. We have new procedures in place as per the latest guidelines to keep us all safe and would ask everyone to bear with us as we all get used these new ways of working.

We would encourage any households (or extended households) wishing to visit to give us a call in advance on **811001** to book a table to avoid disappointment and also to enable us to stagger arrivals.

We will be returning to our previous opening hours which are:

**Monday to Wednesday 12pm to 6pm**

**Thursday to Saturday 12pm to 9pm**

and takeaway will still be available as usual.

### Wobbly Dog TEL: 810838

Now open Monday - Saturday 10.00-17.00

Serving soup and bacon rolls in addition to our usual cake, scones and coffee.



TALKING NATURALLY by Samantha Hawkins



Loch Stiapabhat with Knockaird and Port in the background.

**THE HIDE AT LOCH STIAPABHAT**, or perhaps more its outlook, is one of the more interesting places I go to spend quality time in. Not just for a spot of birdwatching, but for the wealth of other animal, insect and plant life that it attracts. Oh yes, and for peace and quiet! I was one of a core of about 12 people from the local community and beyond, including representatives from SNH and the RSPB and renowned, modest and very likeable bird watcher, the late Peter Cunningham (Stornoway), who between us managed to get the original hide opened. A far more basic affair, and much further away from the main body of water, it did serve a purpose and no doubt paved the way for the establishment of the hide we have now.



A small selection of the birds you may see from the bird hide

I am pleased that the hide is again open, subject of course to current Covid-19 safety guidelines, which are clearly set out on posters at the gate to Lionel Machair. I have not visited since March, pre-Lockdown, but that will change very shortly. As I have mentioned before, I am a member of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), which I fully recommend to anyone with an interest in birds and the natural world in general. A charity, the BTO is perhaps not as widely known as the RSPB, but go and have a look at their website and read about the incredible work that they do. To a great extent, their research relies on the input of volunteers like you and me to produce scientific data to 'enhance the understanding of birds and their behaviour'.

Being furloughed has given me an opportunity to become more familiar with their work, take part in online courses and 'sign up' for several projects. There are plenty of projects to take part in and for all ages and abilities. **Garden Birdwatch** is definitely one in which anyone can participate in, and from the comfort of their own home, and you don't even need to feed the birds in your garden for it to be successful. It's about enjoying the birds and other wildlife that use your garden, watching

and recording what you see and inputting the data online once a week, or just whenever you can. Currently it is free to join this project, and this free membership will last for one year from the date of enrolment, so why not give it a go?

The most recent of the BTO's projects I have just committed to is the **Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)**. This is how the BTO explain the project: "WeBS surveyors monitor the UK's internationally important non-breeding waterbirds. Following a tradition begun in 1947, wetland sites are counted once per month, providing data for population and trends in abundance and distribution."

Loch Stiapabhat was declared a **Local Nature Reserve (LNR)** back in 2005, a first for the Outer Hebrides, and is also a **Site of Special Scientific Interest**. And no wonder it has attracted these 'accolades' as it has much to commend it, including being the largest eutrophic loch on Lewis (it covers an area of 2.5Ha). Added to which it is the last, or first, body of freshwater that migrating birds see in spring and autumn as they make their way to or from the Arctic. It is a place where they can rest, feed and rehydrate in relative safety and hence the loch can attract a range of interesting species. Loch Stiapabhat, despite being classed as an area of 'high priority' by the BTO, has not been regularly surveyed for WeBS purposes since November 2007. Hopefully, my voluntary efforts here, which will begin in a week, will add some much-needed information and help me to gain more confidence and knowledge. Sadly, nearly 60 of the 71 sites on Harris and Lewis that require survey input (one day per month) are currently without volunteers to do this 'work'. There is a list of vacant sites on the BTO website, should you be interested...

It was just by chance last weekend that my attention was grabbed by a bubbling cloud of screeching, belligerent gulls seemingly balanced on top of which was the reason for this noise – a Hen Harrier which I think was female. Oblivious to the angry mob, it continued to quarter Lionel Machair for prey, then on over to the old football pitch at Fivepenny and eventually disappearing and out of sight towards Habost, leaving them in its wake. The following day, and more than likely the same bird, hunting over the Eoropie crofts that line the road to the Lighthouse. A medium-sized raptor they are fabulous birds to watch in flight, hunting low over the ground for prey. Sometimes less than 5M above the ground they cannot only see but hear their quarry, which is primarily small birds and rodents.

About 50cm long with a wingspan of

between 100-120cm the female weighs in slightly heavier than the male at 400-600g. While males can be described as a plain grey silver colour with paler underparts, the females are brown with streaked, paler grey-brown underparts and on the undersides of their wings, an almost chequerboard-like pattern. Both sexes share a white rump and a distinctive long tail. The barring on the tail is where it derives the nickname 'ringtail'. Apparently, it derives the name 'Hen Harrier' from its once fondness for preying on domestic fowl.

Unfortunately for the Hen Harrier, it is also now known as, "Britain's most intensively persecuted bird of prey" with just an estimated 545 breeding pairs recorded in the UK in 2016. In the last 15 years alone, it has suffered a 24% decline in its numbers. Persecution of Hen Harriers is not just a modern-day problem, it has been going on for over 200 years. And why? Well, because of its propensity for preying on Red Grouse on commercial Grouse moors. Gamekeepers tally books dated 1837 and 1840 from the Glengarry Estate in Inverness-shire recorded '63 Hen Harriers' being killed in addition to 63 Goshawks, 98 Peregrines, 27 White-tailed Sea Eagles, 15 Golden Eagles, 18 Ospreys, 6 Gyr Falcons, 11 Hobbies, 275 Kites, 285 Buzzards, 462 Kestrels, 78 Merlins and 35

Horned Owls, as well as 198 Wildcats, 246 Pine Martens and hundreds of assorted other mustelids and corvids." Shooting Estates, it would seem, have always been 'big business'. I find it hard to comprehend that these are just the figures from one UK Shooting Estate.

It is a persecution that is 'ongoing, current and relentless', not to say illegal, despite the Hen Harrier having been a protected species in the

UK for over 75 years. Tagged birds 'mysteriously' go missing, and according to the RSPB, "Scientific research published in 2019 showed that 72% of the satellite-tagged hen harriers in their study were killed or very likely to have been killed on British grouse moors, and that Hen Harriers were 10 times more likely to die or disappear over areas of grouse moor relative to other land uses." Strange that!

Yesterday, was the 12th August, often referred to in some circles as 'The Glorious Twelfth' that marks the start of the Red Grouse shooting season. Maybe in time to come the phrase 'Inglorious Twelfth' will become a more widely acceptable description.



Black-tailed Godwits as seen from the hide last September



Hen Harrier over Eoropie