

Ness - Barvas

FREE Community Newsletter

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Some of the Ness Runners who participated in the relay

They're 'virtually' running together!

Ness Runners raise £1,035 for charity

The Ness Runners might not be able to meet up as a group for runs at the moment, but that hasn't stopped them from keeping active together. £1,035 has been raised by both the group and other individuals who took part in a 'virtual relay', in support of the caring charity Crossroads.

In early May, trainers were donned not only in the villages of the north end of Lewis, but also throughout the island, mainland Scotland, and even on the other side of the world. In an email to newsletter columnist Jasmine, Alison MacDonald, Habost (*Alison an Tigear*), explained how the relay worked, what their experiences of the virtual runs were, and how the running group were able to feel connected in spite of restrictions. To see the final results of last Saturday's live draw (16th May), turn to Alastair's column on page 9 for a round up. Alastair was himself a competitor in the event.

"In normal times," Alison said in her email, "our Ness Runners group meet up a few times a week, and many of us train for different races throughout the year. But with everything being cancelled and having to go out running solo, it's hard to find motivation. [For this reason], we decided to set up a virtual relay run/walk. We asked people to enter their

names either to run or walk, and Maggie Macleod, (*nighean Alasdair Thormoid Bhuidhe*) drew the teams live on Facebook for 2, 3 or 4 mile legs. We ended up with 4 teams of 3 walking, and 27 teams of 3 running."

What was the goal of the virtual relay? "Our aim was to give everyone a challenge to keep themselves motivated, as well as to raise money for Crossroads. We chose this charity as it's one that the North Lewis 5/10k supports."

And how did the relay work? "After being allocated their 2,3 or 4 mile walk or run, everyone had 2 weeks to complete their leg of the relay and submit their times to us. The results were then drawn live on Saturday evening (16th May). It was really good fun."

"Many of those taking part hadn't run since our Ness 5/10k in December, so it was a good incentive to get back into it. As it was a virtual relay, we had people taking part not just in Ness, but throughout the island, as well as in Glasgow, Inverness and New Zealand! It was a great way to feel connected whilst we can't run together."

Congratulations and thank you to all who placed, took part, and raised money for an important charity.

Niseach author shortlisted for literary award

For his first novel *As the Women Lay Dreaming*, South Dell born author Donald S. Murray has been shortlisted for an inspiring national accolade – the Paul Torday Memorial Award.



Paul Torday Memorial Award nominee, Donald S. Murray

The Paul Torday Memorial Award, now in its second year, was created by Mr Torday's family both in his memory, and to recognise writers releasing their debut novels from the ages of 60 and beyond. Author of *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen*, Paul Torday wrote his first novel at the age of 60, and it is owing to this that his family wished to inspire other authors to follow suit.

Commenting on his nomination, Donald said: "I am thrilled to have been selected for the shortlist for this award. It is one designed for men and women with grey, greying or - indeed - receding hairlines and it is a recognition of the fact that so many people have been forced to put their writing ambitions to the side for years while they pursue other careers and interests."

Amongst a shortlist of five other authors, Donald is in good company, including: BBC News presenter George Alagiah and BBC television series producer Gaby Koppel.

As the Women Lay Dreaming was published in November 2018 to mark the centenary of the Iolair disaster. The novel treats many different themes: complexities and manifestations of grief and trauma, difficulties associated with childhood immersion in a way of life previously unknown, and the long-lasting effects the disaster had on island families and subsequent generations.

(continued on p.3)



CROSS SKIGERSTA ROAD

Greetings to Roddy John Morrison of Cross Skigersta Road who has a special birthday on the 27th of May.

Love and best wishes from sister Joan, also Kenny, Moira, Scott and Robert.



ABOVE: Birthday greetings to Roddy John Morrison (Cross Skigersta)

TOP RIGHT: Baby Sofia Grace (see Cross)

CROSS SKIGERSTA ROAD

Happy 17th Birthday to Erin, and happy driving from Mum, Dad, Iona and Norman James.

CROSS

In the last issue we announced that Sofia Grace Macdonald was born on Saturday 25 April in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. In fact she arrived on Friday 24 April, the first child for Neil, formerly 19 Cross, and Laura from North Tolsta. Our congratulations to them and to the grandparents and the extended families.

Sofia Grace, who weighed in at 9lb 1oz, is the second grandchild for Finlay and Christine in Cross, and the first for Donald and Rhoda in North Tolsta. We are delighted to have a new photo of little Sofia Grace in this issue.



THANKS

I would like to say Thank You to all who have remembered me in prayer, sent cards, texts, phoned and many other provisions following my accident where I sustained a broken hip and ended up with a full hip replacement. I am truly overwhelmed by your kindness.

Every blessing to you all.

Martha x

Comhairle Social Media Activities Programme Reaches 100,000 Views

The Comhairle-sponsored online Social Media Programme has proven to be very popular with over 100,000 views logged on the platform. The local authority has expressed its gratitude for the support of the public, with the Programme, which was launched in early April, designed to help keep people entertained during lockdown. Since then thousands of people across the world have participated in the online activities.

The past week saw engagement reach an all-time high with Willie Campbell performing on Friday and Norrie Tago Maciver on Saturday; between them they amassed views of over 35,000.

Willie Campbell said: "The ceilidhs have become a social gathering online. People interact and chat with each other while the gig's happening and chat to the performers

too, they're most certainly pulling people together during a difficult time. It has been a pleasure to contribute."

One viewer who tuned in to watch Norrie 'Tago' Maciver said: "Thank you for this wonderful evening, enjoying your music from Australia. Looking forward to the next one!"

The Comhairle said it would like to thank all the talented individuals who have contributed towards the Activities Programme so far and appreciates their efforts to keep people entertained during these difficult times.

This week Iain 'Costello' Maciver will be performing at 9pm on Friday, and on Saturday night Rosie Sullivan will also feature at 9pm. Sophie Marsh has also provided another excellent yoga session and Thursday's quiz will take place at 7:30pm with a new Quiz Master.

Are you based in the Galson Estate Area?
Do you have old white electrical goods laying around that you are needing to dispose of?
Murdo is here to help!

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Sgeama Meantaraidh

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 mheantaraidh seo, neo ma tha ceistean sam bith agaibh, faodaidh sibh fios a chur gun a' phost-dealain seo: 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

Youth groups reap the benefits from CalMac fund

Awards from CalMac's Community Fund have enabled seventy-six youth groups across Scotland to improve opportunities for local young people, with five of these benefiting based on Lewis and Harris.

Comunn Eachdraidh Nis will receive £2,000 in support of its Youth Café for 12 – 18 year olds. This initiative will offer allocated study space and better facilities in which to socialise. The improved facilities will provide a designated quiet area for study time, aimed at encouraging students with their studies. Tutorial sessions will also be available on a voluntary basis from retired teachers who are members of the CEN board.

The Stornoway-based charity, **Western Isles Foyer**, will receive £1,760 in support of its Food for Thought project, which provides lunches from Monday to Friday on a drop-in basis for young people. The drop-in service has an average of 50 young people utilising its services on a weekly basis. Open 50 weeks per year, the Foyer has recorded 2,690 individual drop-ins over the previous 12 months. The new project will allow the Foyer team to purchase ingredients in support of service-users, including those living in its Supported Accommodation Service, and should also increase the confidence of service-users in the kitchen with the safe storage, preparation and cooking of food for themselves.

The Lewis & Harris Women's Football Association will receive £1,000 to assist in their participation in the Highlands & Islands League. The Scottish Football Association, working with The Scottish Women's Football League, have set up the new H&I Women's League in response to ever-increasing participation numbers in the Women's game. Lewis & Harris will compete against Kirkwall LFC (Ladies Football Club), Caithness LFC, Brora Rangers LFC, Inverness Clach, Inverness Caley, Nairn Ladies and Buckie Ladies. As well as Lewis and Harris players, there will also be a number of girls from Uist in the Squad.

Other island groups benefiting from support from the CalMac fund include **Volunteering Hebrides** in



support of The Embark Project's "Going Places" young people's group, which will receive £2,000. The project, including The Embark Community Cycling Project, delivers a wide variety of events, activities and training opportunities for young people. The **Lewis and Harris Youth Groups Association** will also receive £2,000 that will offer 12 young people an opportunity to take part in the CalMac Adventure Challenge, featuring an after-school briefing and adventure over two days, including a night camping or staying in a hostel.

The CalMac Community Fund enables groups to "set up projects that would help break down barriers faced in island and coastal communities," a CalMac representative said. Any non-profit organisation registered in a mainland port or island that CalMac ferries serve can apply to the Fund, for awards between £500 and £2,000. Subsequently, a screening panel of young people judge the applications - individuals who are recruited from across CalMac's network in partnership with Young Scot and local youth services.

"The creativity and the imagination that has gone into the projects we've supported so far has really stood out for us," said CalMac's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Gordon McKillop. Adding, "Youth groups are really thinking hard about what they use the fund for that wouldn't otherwise happen. They have all really captured what the Community Fund is all about, creating opportunities for and benefiting the lives of children and young people. We are excited to see the projects legacies."

Niseach author shortlisted for literary award

(continued from p.3)

Speaking with newsletter columnist Jasmine M. Wilkie earlier this week, Donald added: "I am especially delighted that the book is set in South Dell with many of its landmarks - from Asmigaray to Sgeir Dhail - featured in its pages. It was a wonderful village to be brought up within. There are probably more story-tellers found within its boundaries than any other location in the planet. I owe them all a great debt. I also hope that most people recognise the need for the story of the lolaire and its aftermath in rural Lewis to be told in an imaginative and different way. People need stories to enable them to make sense of the world".



LOCAL MEDICAL PRACTICES

Delivery of Prescriptions for

Langabhat Medical Practice, Borge & Habost Surgery

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG) are assisting Langabhat Medical Practice, Borge and Habost Surgery by delivering prescriptions to the residents of the Galson Estate.

Kind volunteers will be collecting the prescriptions from the clinic at 2pm and delivering them throughout the estate.

The volunteers will place the prescriptions at your door, knock at your door and then move two metres back before the door is opened. The volunteers will be adhering to strict hygiene practices to protect the safety of those receiving the medication.

Habost Surgery: Due to current circumstances, it would be helpful if patients could order their prescriptions by telephone. From 1st April, if you order your prescription, we will be issuing a two months' supply. Prescriptions will be delivered on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Tom's Titbits

One commentator has suggested that the economy is in recession because the people are only buying what they need, and I reflected on this as I made my way to Stornoway on what was only my second trip there since the lockdown began. Up until now we have managed with the facilities available to us locally and it's quite interesting how we seem to survive without the items that we so often deem to be necessities.

Why do we need an endless supply of bottled water? All we have to do is turn on a tap and it's there, although most of the time all the taste of it does for me is remind me what it's like to be in a swimming pool. We have three cars in the family and at the moment they're all achieving nothing apart from about three weeks to the gallon whilst we still pay insurance and road tax. We could sell two of them and travel to work together taking turns with the driving whilst the other three pass the journey looking at their phones. Oh dear, I keep forgetting I'm retired now and don't have to go to work anymore and I feel this is going to be hard to get used to.

My journey to town was necessary though and the street traffic wasn't all that different to when things were normal, although it was strange seeing so many of the shops not open for business and for a change finding a parking space was easy. Kenny Froggan's have a social distancing policy, which meant that I had to wait for a while outside on the pavement. I'm not a patient person so I paced up and down and as I looked down the street at what used to be Mac's Imperial Bar it reminded me that we used to hang about impatiently outside its premises back in the days of the old licensing laws as we waited for them to open the doors at five o'clock. Faire, faire. The Crofters and Autoparts, like a lot of other businesses, have the now customary contactless policy, whereby you phone ahead with your order and then collect your bits and pieces at the door. Simple enough, but it seemed strange not being able to have access to the interior of a shop that I worked in for nineteen years.

After a phone call from home I had to pop into one of the supermarkets and although the floor was clearly marked with arrows and tape nobody really took any notice of them and it resembled some of the crazy driving I see on TV in some chaotic foreign countries. People weren't bothered and just cut in, reversed and overtook with their trolleys as they saw fit, including myself as I was quite keen to get out of town, and that's what I did as quickly as I possibly could. I suddenly feel very safe staying in the confines of High Borve. The moral of the story at the moment is that, between Barvas and Ness, I can procure most of my daily needs and I'll be



by Tom Maciver

quite happy to do so, even when the day comes that we return to whatever normal is.

On the vegetable front, things are looking up and even popping up out of the ground. I was more than a bit concerned for a while because nothing was growing but I think, once again, it's down to my own impatience. On a daily basis, during the recent unnaturally dry climate, I watered everything diligently in a bid to boost the growth but, as if by magic, it took an overnight shower of heavy rain to get things going. So, maybe the tap water cannot do what Mother Nature can. A lot of this could be down to my own lack of green finger experience, knowledge and technique. Remember, you are reading about a guy who spent his life selling clutches, starters and track rod ends and is now trying to adapt to a new lifestyle.

We had the last of the Guga on Saturday and as I gazed at it in the bucket of pickle in all its finery, this rusty, dirty, greasy, smelly, slimy delicacy, I wondered, given our current situation, whether I'll ever taste another one. Sulasgeir seems like the ideal place for isolation but the logistics of getting there, doing the job and getting back safely and in good health if Covid 19 is still around seem almost impossible. Time will tell but this particular bird tasted as good as ever.

On the retirement front again, I'm led to believe that the Cross Skigersta Midwife will be called no more as she has let go her *dreachd* in order to look after the Country Music Radio Presenter on a full-time basis. I'm not sure how this is going to work when the novelty of the peats, the gardening and the endless painting wears off and the winter sets in. I've been there, so I'm available to offer counselling anytime. The grapevine also informs me that my Newtonmore reader, (I think there's only the one) has become a great grandmother and I wish to congratulate her and her family as she's always been supportive of my ramblings in print and also bakes a great scone for scoffing when we pit-stop on mainland trips. Frustrated by not being able to visit Lewis, I'm told she passes the time by walking to and from her front gate 20 times each day and is contemplating purchasing a tablet. *Cum a dol e, a mioch*. We feel sympathy for our older citizens at this trying time as some of them are not able to have visitors or go visiting as was the natural thing for them to do. This is not the kind of life that they were accustomed to.

Mar sin leibh an drasda.

Tom



FOOD BANK
BARVAS AND BRUE COMMUNITY CENTRE
Commencing Tuesday 12th May 2020
The Food Bank will be Open
Tuesdays: 3:15—4pm
Fridays 3:15—4pm

You can contribute and leave food at the centre at the above times. Access can be gained via the side door to the left of the entrance and someone will be available to assist you.

The kinds of items that you can donate are:-

Cereal	Tinned Meat	Sugar
Tinned Soup	Tinned Fish	Pasta or Rice
Tinned beans	Tinned Fruit	Tea bags
Tinned Tomatoes	Tinned rice pudding or custard	Long Life Juice
Tinned vegetables (2 different types)	Biscuits	Long Life Milk
Jar of sauce	Chocolate	Spread (eg jam, honey, peanut butter)



Please ensure

the items are non-perishable, in date and well wrapped.

For those who require items from the food bank - The items will be delivered and dropped off at your home. Please contact any of the following to arrange this:-
Sarah—07927236450
Murdo—07770824552/840 284
Louis—07870362449

Please specify if you are gluten free, have allergies or intolerances so that the appropriate items will be given to you.

This will be a new food bank service provided for those that need it the most in the community and discretion is assured for anyone wishing to use this service.

This project is supported by Urras Oighreachd Bharabhais, Foundation Scotland and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar



WANTED

Petrol mowers, dead or alive!

Cash waiting!

Also servicing and repairs done.

Tel Jonny on 07900254494



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 midday on 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@uogtld.com Web: www.galsontrust.com

WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM

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Taic le Gàidhlig - Gaelic Support

With the schools closed, we realise that 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@uogtld.com.

Spòrsnis roof appeal

<https://localgiving.org/appeal/Sporsnis-roof/>

We invite readers to keep in mind the *spòrsnis roof appeal*. Any amount contributed will be very welcome and make a difference. All the funds raised from this appeal will be used for the purchase of materials to fix the roof.

Ceud taing



THANKS

We would like to thank the following for their generous donations and support of *Fios* during these challenging times:

Callum and Phylis Macleod, Braco, Dunblane and also Catherine Macleod, Byres Road, Glasgow (ex 1 Skigersta).

Moran Taing

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.

1



2



3



4



5

**PLACE
TELEPHONE
ORDER WITH
LEWIS CROFTERS,
PAY, ADVISE IT'S
A COMMUNAL
ORDER TO BE
COLLECTED BY
UOG AND
RECEIVE YOUR
ORDER NUMBER**

**CALL US
BETWEEN 10AM
AND 1PM ON
DELIVERY DAYS
ONLY.
CALL
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PROVIDE US WITH
YOUR ORDER
NUMBER AND
PREFERRED DROP
OFF POINT**

**YOU WILL BE
ADVISED OF A
TIME TO BE AT
YOUR DROP OFF
POINT AND
SHOULD BE
PREPARED TO
COLLECT YOUR
ITEMS.**

**OUR DRIVER
WILL COLLECT
YOUR ORDER
AND BE AT ONE
OF THE THREE
OUTDOOR DROP
OFF POINTS AT
THE SPECIFIED
DROP OFF TIME
SLOT.**

**YOU SHOULD
ADHERE TO SOCIAL
DISTANCING
GUIDELINES AT ALL
TIMES. OUR DRIVER
WON'T BE ABLE TO
LOAD ORDERS INTO
VEHICLES. GLOVES
WILL BE PROVIDED
TO ALLOW YOU TO
COLLECT YOUR OWN
ORDER.**

**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.

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn
A Company Registered in Scotland No: 273903
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seo a-Nis

Shona Nic a' Mhaoilein



Dè a' Ghàidhlig a th' air 'Groundhog Day'?

Tha e furasta aithneachadh gu bheil cus tìde agamsa na làithean-sa, agus gu bheil mi a' call mo chiall beag air bheag. Chunnt mi an-diugh agus on thòisich mi ag obair bhon taigh air 17 Màrt, tha mi a-nis air latha 65. Tha rudeigin neònach air tachairt oir aig an aon àm 's a tha mi ga fhaireachdainn fada, chanainn cuideachd gu bheil e air a dhol seachad ann am priobadh na sùla. Bheil ainm air a seo? Chan eil mòran diofar eadar na làithean agamsa an-dràsta, gu h-àraidh on dh'fhàg an Sgitheanach o chionn chòrr is mìos, agus tha mi a' faireachdainn glè choltach ri Bill Murray anns an fhìolm 'Groundhog Day'. Ag èirigh aig an aon àm, ag ithe an aon bhracaist, na h-aon chòmhradh le daoine, agus mura biodh airson na seiseanan Bookbug (agus Na Dùrachdan air Radio nan Gàidheal) cha bhithinn cinnteach idir dè an latha a bh' ann. Tha fadachd orm gus am faigh mi air a dhol taobh a-muigh crìochan a' bhaile, agus gheibh mi cothrom sin a dhèanamh Diluain sa tighinn nuair thèid mi dhan ospadal airson a' bhean-ghluine fhaicinn 's mi gu bhith 28 seachdain (mar-thà!!)

Cèilidh

An t-seachdain sa sgaoil sinn sanas airson mo dhreuchd a lìonadh fhad 's a bhios mi air fòrladh màthaireil. Tha mi air mo dhòigh gum faigh sinn air a' phròiseact Ghàidhlig a chumail a' dol fhathast agus tha sinn gu mòr an comain Bhòrd na Gàidhlig airson taic-airgid a thoirt dhuinn leis. A' bruidhinn air Gàidhlig, an robh duine agaibh air duilleag Facebook a' Mhòid Nàiseanta an t-seachdain sa chaidh nuair a bha cèilidh aca leis an fheadhainn a bhuannaich a' Bhonn Òr anns na 90an? Abair thusa gun robh mise nam ghlòraidh, agus mi fhathast gu math brònach nach bi Mòd ann am-bliadhna. Fhuair iad grèim air cuid dhiubh a sheinn bhon dachaighean fhèin air an oidhche agus airson an fheadhainn nach eil còmhla rinn tuilleadh, bha clàraidhean aca bho na co-fharpaisean a bhuannaich iad. Tha mi gu mòr an dòchas gum bi cèilidhean eile aca le buannaichean an t-seann nòis, agus na co-fharpaisean chòisir! Abair gum bhithinn air mo dhòigh an uairsin! Bha e na thlachd a bhith a' faicinn cò eile a bha san 'èisteachd', mar gum biodh, bho gach ceàrnaidh den t-saoghal. Abair sgioba aig a' Chomunn! Tha sinn air ar milleadh le cèilidhean air-loidhne an-dràsta agus Comhairle nan Eilean Siar cuideachd gar cumail a' dol gach deireadh-sheachdain.

Slàinte-inntinn

Leis gur e 'Mental Health Awareness Week' a th' ann a-rithist, tha e uabhasach cudromach, gu h-àraidh san t-suidheachadh sa bheil sinn an-dràsta, gu bheil sinn a' coimhead às ar deidh fhìn agus a' gabhail fois nuair a tha e a-dhith oirnn. Tha seo uabhasach trom air slàinte-inntinn gach neach leis nach eil sinn cho cleachdte sin ri bhith a' fuireach a-staigh cho fada, agus dha-rìreabh, cho fada air falbh bho chèile. Dèanaibh cinnteach cuideachd gum bi sibh a' cumail sùil air an fheadhainn a tha nan aonar, aig nach eil duine faisg ri làimh, agus air an fheadhainn a tha buailteach a bhith caran ìosal. Cuir litir thuca, tog am fòn, no fàg rudeigin air leac an dorais a dh'innseas dhaibh gu bheil sibh a' smaoinachadh orra ('s e sin, ma gheibh sibh air coiseachd chun taigh aca no ma tha sibh a' dol seachad orra co-dhiù!)

A-rithist feumaidh mi a ràdh gu bheil mi a' faireachdainn uabhasach fortanach gu bheil mi a' fuireach ann an coimhearsnachd bheag thaiceil (le bùth 'pop-up' ga ruith le taic bho Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh!) le daoine air leth mun cuairt orm. Abair gur e togail a th' ann a bhith a' faicinn na tha daoine a' dèanamh gus taic a chumail ri chèile.

Lionel Sports Day 1947

A photograph that featured in a past issue of the Stornoway Gazette was reproduced in the last issue of our newsletter inviting readers to name those in the picture.

The caption underneath the photo in the Gazette read: "SPORTS DAY FUN 1947: This photograph, which was kindly

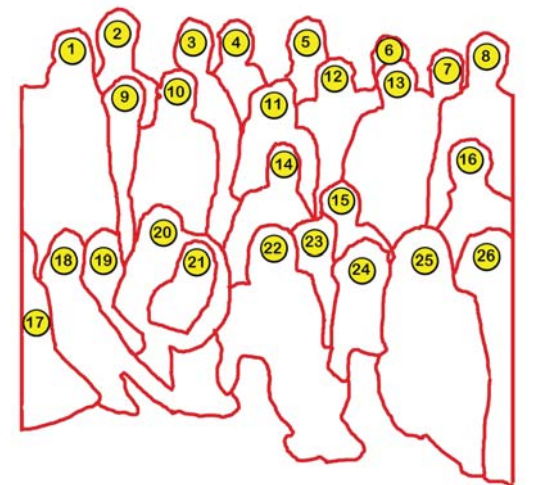
submitted to us by Mrs Catherine Macaulay, of 6 Kirkibost, shows Lionel School children enjoying their annual Sports Day in 1947."

Thanks to the help of Norman Murray (Tarmod Tharmod Bhig, formerly of 74 Cross Skigersta Road), Noreen Murray, Murdina Murray (Murdag an Todilan) and Annie Macsween (Anna Mhurdaig) from Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, and those on Facebook who contributed, we have managed to identify most of those featured.

If any readers can identify the remaining Lionel School pupils, please get in touch with us via email at jasmine@uogld.com, or alternatively if you prefer, phone Hugh Macinnes on 07787317936.



1. Rev. Donald Macdonald – Eoropie;
2. Donald Graham (Mac Shuilvan) Swainbost;
3. Iain (Plo) Mackay – Cross Skig. Road;
4. Iain Callum Mackaskill – Shader, now lives in North Tolsta;
5. Callum Gunn (Callum Dhomhnuil a Ghiagan) – Cross Skig. Road/Skigersta;
6. Unknown;
7. Murdo Gillies – South Galson;
8. Norman (Doogily), Knockaird or Eoropie;
9. Mac an Taillear (possibly) – Skigersta;
10. Donald Murdo Smith (Tucsan/Mac an Tucsan) – Shader;
11. Donald John Campbell – (Mac a Phuilan) Swainbost;
12. Iain (Ghlen) Maclean – Swainbost, now living in Cross Skig. Road;
13. Unknown;
14. Donald Macdonald (Mac an Shedda/ an t-Seada) – Eorodale;
15. Unknown;
16. Unknown;
17. Unknown;
18. Unknown;
19. Unknown;
20. Murdo Macritchie (Mac a Bhoy) – Swainbost;
21. Christina (a Phuiean) Campbell – Swainbost;
22. Agnes Morrison (Agnes Dhomhnuil Maraid) – Post Office, Shader, in glasses;
23. Callum (Challum Parry) MacLeod – Melbost, Borve;
24. Alasdair (Emag) Macdonald – Swainbost;
25. Murdina Murray (Murdag an Todilan) – South Galson (now Newmarket, Laxdale);
26. Christy Ann Macdonald (Nighean Thormod Alex) Shader.



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Seiseanan Bookbug Air-loidhne Online Bookbug Sessions

Diluain, Diciadain & Dihaoine
Monday, Wednesday & Friday

10.30am Gàidhlig le Shona

11.15am English with Lindy

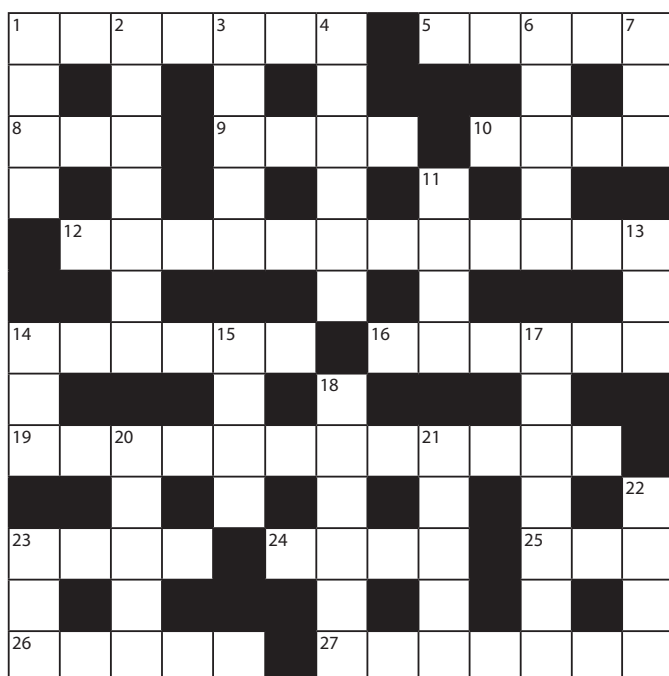
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Thig còmhla rinn airson seinn. sgeulachd agus spòrs!
Come along for singing, stories and fun!

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@uoglt.com mobile text: 07460 853 728

Ness-Barvas No.4 Crossword 22 May 2020



ACROSS

- 1 Tail cop popular (7, anag)
- 5 Tom's township (5)
- 8 Flip over short (3)
- 9 Solemn promise (4)
- 10 Stornoway boy in the bay (4)
- 12, 15D & 21D Furloughed weekly (4,8,4,5)
- 14 Tax on imports (6)
- 16 Lively electrician (6)
- 19 They spoil the fruit barrels (6, 6)
- 23 Industrious insects (4)
- 24 Musical instrument (4)
- 25 An age (3)
- 26 Shinty stick (5)
- 27 Goes to the seaside havens (7)
- 14 Jack the mariner (3)
- 15 see 12A (4)
- 17 Small buck (3, 4)
- 18 The Seville stylist? (6)
- 20 Carved pole (5)
- 21 see 12A (5)
- 22 The coves' country cousins (4)
- 23 Rainbow (3)

No. 3 Crossword 8 May 2020 solution



DOWN

- 1 Poet turns shark (4, anag.)
- 2 One ripe new settler (7, anag)
- 3 Island smallholding (5)
- 4 Baltic republic (6)
- 6 Spanish red wine (5)
- 7 First wife (3)
- 11 Paddy's posh emporium (4, anag)
- 13 Follows the night (3)

Ghlaodh iad ri Dia nan teinn; is shaor
e iad on trioblaid ghèir.
Ghrad-chuireadh leis an stoirm gu fèith,
's na tuinn nan tàmh gu lèir;

An sin tha iad ro ait, airson
gu bheil iad sàmhach beò:
'S gun tug e iad don chaladh sin,
's don phort bu mhiannach leo.

Salm 107: 28-30 [SD1992]

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 1: 12-14 [ESV]

PANIC BUYING?

Given that we're now several weeks into lockdown and that some of the top scientific minds on the planet are busily focused on developing a Covid-19 vaccine, I guess the other major unresolved issue at this time is: Will the boys be going to Sulasgeir this year?

There will be many a Niseach and Siarach looking deep into their guga buckets or barrels wondering if they'll have to ration the remaining few birds in order to make them stretch to the next harvest. For serious devotees, the thought of a 'fresh' batch of guga not being landed on our shores in August offers the prospect of a deep depression settling over our community later in the year.

On a quiet day, particularly now that most of us are confined to barracks, you might just hear a gentle tapping sound coming from local properties around the village, with folk 'sounding' their salting barrels to confirm that there are a few birds still swimming around in the brine.

For the artisan guga pickler, immersion in brine has been the *modus operandi* for generations of Nisich when it comes to preserving the guga's delicate flesh for consumption well past the Christmas and new year period.

Around the time in life when the young men of these parts were traditionally tutored on how to cut their first peat turf, or shown how to plant spuds for a bumper crop, you would also be schooled within the family on how you should pickle the bird. In the absence of a fancy hydrometer to gauge the salinity of the brine that you were to immerse the year's haul of gugas in, the ingenious Niseach would seek out the services of a spare *Solanum tuberosum* – or the humble potato, to you and me.

Not claiming to be a true pickling aficionado myself, I couldn't say whether a Kerr's Pink or a King Edward is best for gauging the salinity of the water. Essentially, when the potato is floating comfortably near the surface of the water, the salt/water density should comfortably preserve the guga for several months, or until the next harvest is due. However, unlike Domhnall Iain Trump, who is currently swearing by a daily dose of the antimalarial drug *hydroxychloroquine* to keep that nasty Covid bug at bay (despite medical advice to the contrary), I will not follow suit and endorse either variety of these spuds for guga marinating purposes – just in case someone ends up with a dodgy *spòg* and aims to blame me for his pickling shortcomings and resultant stomach issues.

Always trying my best to keep up with the latest trends, over this past year I have been testing out vacuum packing after investing in said gear, purchased especially for preserving the guga in its very finest condition. The vacuum sealing equipment didn't set me back any more than the cost of a decent kettle, and so I packed and sealed a bunch of guga quarters last August following the 2019 harvest. On receipt of last year's gugas, I had intended to immediately freeze them all in the vacuum-sealed bags for consumption later in the year. However, I kept a few *ceathramhan* aside in the fridge with a view to sharing them with a relative later that week. However, for one reason or another, the meal never happened and the batch stayed unfrozen in the fridge until last week (a full nine months!) when I eventually remembered they were still there. Not sure if they would be fit for human consumption, or whether a respectful burial was in order, I decided to cook them to see if they were still edible. Well, to be perfectly honest, they were more than edible, they were absolutely delicious. Therefore, I am living proof, quite literally, that the guga, once vacuum packed, will stand the test of time and safely defy its 'Sell By' date – if it had one. However, as with the pickling spuds, anyone trying this will do so at their own risk, although, so far, it has certainly kept me clear of Covid. Hopefully, Domhnall Iain won't read this or, with his deep pockets, he'll buy up the entire stock of gugas next year to take with his regular dose of *hydroxychloroquine* – providing he hasn't succumbed to the drug by then(!).

Preparation of the guga in our family prior to cooking also includes the ritual cleaning of the *ceathramhan* in hot water with a liberal sprinkling of washing soda to get rid of any grit or debris that had been picked up during its long and solemn journey from the rock.

The boiling time for the guga is not an exact science – more an art, I would say – with each family having their own particular cooking procedures, which are handed down through the generations. In my own case, for that optimal balance between taste and texture, I was taught to boil the bird vigorously for a solid hour. During this time, the

water in the saucepan could be changed or refreshed if the guga had lain in the pickling barrel for a year or more, with the contents of the saucepan now akin to old battery acid. Others, like my sister-in-law, like to boil the guga for two hours, or until the saucepan becomes soft. Either way, the results are always delicious.

Many refuse to eat the skin, which I believe is absolutely integral to the whole dining experience. After all, would you order a fish supper at the chippie and then discard the chips; or would you sit down to a delicious plate of spaghetti bolognese and dump the pasta in the bin? Of course not, so why turn your nose up at the guga skin? Okay, admittedly, maybe at times the Sulasgeir boys are guilty of rushing through the plucking stage, or possibly skimping a little on the blow-torch? Therefore, you will occasionally get a bird that's still a bit 'rough' and feathery in places, or that the skin is a little thick and chewy (*al dente*, as they say).

However, the guga meal is not complete without a plateful of good, dry potatoes, like Roosters, Kerr's Pink or, my own particular favourite when available, Golden Wonders; washed down with a glass of ice-cold milk.

Guga-eating etiquette has traditionally not included the use of tools. Therefore, I view with sadness when my fellow diners reach for the cutlery. Unfortunately, the use of cutlery to cut up and take those sublime morsels into your gob has become increasingly commonplace within the community. As far as I'm concerned, the bird always seems to taste better when you eat it with your hands, which allows you to get in to every crevice within the carcass to pull out and suck on every morsel the guga is kind enough to offer.

Another departure from tradition seems to be that households are increasingly cooking the guga in their barns or garages for fear of contaminating the domicile's curtains and furniture with the distinctive aroma of cooked sea fowl. If it's foreign muck or food that's detailed on Gordon Ramsay's menu, it can stink the place to high heaven without complaint from any of the diners. However, if it's from such humble origins as the guga, a certain decorum must, apparently, be maintained these days by the trendy Niseach, such as eating with cutlery and cooking the bird well away from the married quarters – "Cho fad's gus am bith sin modern," as they say.

WOOLLY MAMMOTH

Meanwhile, on the facial hair front, one wing of the family has not entirely bought in to the idea of me having a beard, rudely suggesting that my current look is reminiscent of a time when your average Niseach male went around clubbing woolly mammoths for fun. Admittedly, Stone Age man was not exactly the look I was after – more the dignified gentleman, I guess? It has even been suggested that my facial foliage is a potential breeding ground for the Coronavirus, and that some kind of intervention is needed for that reason alone.

It is, admittedly, fair to suggest that the beard is beginning to go 'rogue' on me, and that some form of control is required, and for that very reason I found some cordless hair and beard clippers on Amazon some weeks ago and placed an order. However, becoming increasingly alarmed each morning as I looked in the mirror, I checked my Amazon account to find that the goods were 'Not yet despatched'. I couldn't see on the Amazon website how I might find out why my clippers hadn't been sent. Normally, you can 'track' an order to see where it was in the delivery chain. However, in my case, the goods hadn't even reached that stage, and there was no "Where the heck's my clippers" button to press.

I then Googled how I might get support from Amazon under the particular circumstances I found myself in, and found a link that quickly led me into a Live Chat session with someone called Neline. Unfortunately, after 'chatting' about my order for a few moments, Neline then informed me that I was on the American Amazon website, not the British one. In other words, I was on Amazon.com instead of Amazon.co.uk. Essentially, if I had been an American customer, my enquiry would have been dealt with effortlessly and speedily. However, since I was a Brit, and there was no "Where the heck's my clippers" button on the Amazon website, there was no resolution to my problem, and the only option available to me was to cancel my order.

I have now ordered replacement clippers and, hopefully, they'll arrive before the Comunn Eachdraidh asks me to be the still-life model for their proposed summer exhibition, 'Neanderthal Niseach'.

NHS Western Isles launches new services to support patients in their own homes

NHS WESTERN ISLES is launching a new 'Hospital at Home' service, which aims to provide care in the community equivalent to the care provided within hospital. It is used where a patient would normally require admission to hospital but care at home is deemed more medically appropriate. The service can be used to support discharge from hospital, or to avoid hospital admission, whilst ensuring appropriate and safe patient care. It will initially be piloted in Lewis and Harris, with plans to expand to the Uists and Barra.

Through Hospital at Home, patients will be treated in their own place of residence (their own home, a relative's home or a care/nursing home) rather than receiving care in hospital. The service will be managed by a dedicated team made up of a wide range of NHS Western Isles clinical staff.

There are many advantages of such an approach which have been demonstrated in various national services of a similar nature. Allowing suitable patients to be cared for in their home environment, with enhanced clinical and nursing support, will avoid the loss of mobility that often occurs with a hospital admission and allow family and other loved ones to be present with the patient during their treatment. This being especially advantageous at a time when hospital visiting has had to be severely restricted due to the risks of COVID 19.

NHS Western Isles Medical Director, Dr Frank McAuley, said: "A high proportion of older people with frailty have been shown to experience a reduction in their functional ability between admission to hospital and discharge, so this is a very beneficial approach for them. It will both prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and also help facilitate appropriate and timely discharge from hospital and avoid people having to remain in hospital unnecessarily."

The decision on a patient's suitability for the Hospital at Home service will be made by a Medical Consultant when a patient attends either the Emergency Department, or a Medical or Respiratory Assessment Unit, or during a patient's stay in hospital. The range of conditions that could be managed through Hospital at Home is not prescriptive, and includes a wide range of conditions such as infections needing intravenous antibiotics, respiratory patients needing short term oxygen therapy and those requiring intravenous fluids for dehydration.

Patients will remain under the care of the hospital consultant and will be monitored on a 'virtual ward' within the hospital's electronic systems.

Debra Vickers NHS Western Isles Cardiology Nurse Consultant, along with Jane Gillion, Diabetes Lead Nurse, will be leading the Hospital at Home service. NHS Western Isles is also this week launching 'Hot Clinics', an initiative covering the whole of the Western Isles.

Primary Care Clinicians (GPs) now have access to a virtual Hot Clinic which allows them to get Consultant level advice on patients to support their continued care within a community setting, where safe and appropriate. GPs can send an e-mail equivalent referral into Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. These referrals will be collated every morning (Monday to Friday) to allow the consultant of the day to review them, and provide any appropriate advice and support to the GP. A same day response will mean that appropriate investigations and treatment can be quickly commenced.

Dr Frank McAuley added: "The hope is that the Hot Clinics will help support primary care clinicians who are caring for vulnerable patients who may be heading towards a hospital admission and give advice to prevent this, if possible. It will also help identify patients who maybe need their hospital admission expedited."

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 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.

Sporting Viewpoint

by Alastair Dunlop



I note we are to hear about the beginning of the end of lockdown this week. We are told we will receive details on Thursday but as with all 'statements' much of it is leaked beforehand which always strikes me as strange. This week in Scotland it would seem that golfers and anglers are about to return to their sport. Selfishly I am waiting for the go-ahead for hill walking to resume. Obviously, football too but I know the team sports will take more time before restarting. We all have our opinions and I admit to moaning constantly about removing restrictions. I am no expert but I can read and listen and make up my own mind. I read many opinions on social media and what annoys me most is people dishing out personal abuse when they disagree with another opinion. By all means disagree but it is not necessary to make personal insults. It goes without saying we must continue to protect those who are most vulnerable but this should always be the case.

I am pleased that my running is improving and can at least take part in local events like the recent Ness Runners Relay. Maggie MacLeod (nighean Alasdair Thormoid Bhuidhe) is the lead person on Facebook. She may be leaving teaching soon for a new career on television as a presenter. As you will see from the results, I was correct in picking the winners, although I apologise for getting the Alison's mixed up again.

I also mentioned last time that Ness were top of the league. As you can see, they remain in first place just ahead of Back FC. Good to see Westside have moved into 5th place. There have been some superb 5K times recently. There are no strict rules about where you run so many runners, me included have been taking advantage of strong winds and downhill bits. Scottish Athletics have been organising national 'virtual races' but they have the rules that you must start and finish in the same place which is obviously easier.

The Scottish Premier league has finally been decided with as suspected Celtic declared champions and Hearts relegated. I say finally but with regard to Hearts you never know as league reconstruction discussion continues. Other big news this week was the announcement of Rangers' new kit sponsor. A company with no proven track record in this area. I hope it works out for them but is it going to be another risky decision which they will come to regret? Diehard football fans will have watched last week's live games from Germany which took place without any spectators. I only saw clips on the news as it had little interest for me. I understand it is useful as at least they receive substantial television money. It might happen in Scotland and England. Would I watch then? Probably.

Allow me to digress somewhat. I have just returned from walking the dog on Eorpie machair where I saw a polecat emerge from a burrow and attempt and fail to catch a small bird. There are no rabbits here since the other virus struck so how do these animals survive? Catching a bird must be the equivalent of winning the lottery. Oh, wait a minute, maybe it's easier in the dark.

I hope to travel to the mainland next week in a caring capacity (a suspect reason, I know, but true). Definitely no hill walking next week but hopefully soon.

Ness Runners Relay:

There were 27 running teams and 4 walking teams. Each person was completing 2,3 or 4 miles (9 miles in total).

WALKERS:

1st - Margaret A Morrison, Lewis O'Connor, Donna Maciver - 2 hours 20 minutes

RUNNERS:

1st - Norman Ferguson, Amy Rigg, Alison Macleod - 1 hour 2 minutes; 2nd - Morven Mackenzie, Christina Macrae, Emily Murray - 1 hour 6 minutes; 3rd - Kevin Macrae, Iain Smith, Alastair Dunlop - 1 hour 8 minutes

	Team	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 5	Total
1	Ness FC	00:17:06	00:18:29	00:19:09	00:19:58	00:19:59	01:34:41
2	Back FC	00:18:45	00:19:03	00:19:07	00:19:18	00:19:28	01:35:41
3	Point FC	00:17:46	00:18:27	00:20:12	00:20:55	00:21:24	01:38:44
4	Aths FC	00:19:08	00:20:03	00:20:19	00:20:54	00:21:08	01:41:32
5	Westside	00:19:50	00:20:27	00:21:06	00:21:50	00:22:12	01:45:25

Condolences

Many things have changed in our community since the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced in March.

We are presented every afternoon with the latest daily toll of deaths from the coronavirus, with the staggering tally of at least 35,000 precious lives now claimed by the pandemic in the UK. In our islands we are thankful that hitherto no deaths have been recorded as having been caused by the virus.

But we know that a number of our families are mourning loved ones who have passed away during these weeks of lockdown. In normal times our compassionate community and neighbourhoods would seek to share the grief in a tangible way by offering support, extending comfort with family worship, attending the funeral service and sharing the burden of duties at the interment. Friends would gather round the bereaved in their homes, in the church, at the graveside, and, after the interment, many families from Ness would share refreshments and remembrance at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis.

For the past ten weeks these expressions of practical support have not been possible. But we can assure the loved ones of those who have passed away of our sympathy.

We remember:

Allan Duncan Mackinnon, Brue, age 100, laid to rest yesterday, Thursday 21 May, at Barvas Cemetery; father of Kenneth, Allan, Màiri (Dawn), Edgemoor Square, and Roy.

Angus Macleod, 'Rabbie', Arnol, who died in Raigmore Hospital on Monday, and was laid to rest in Bragar Cemetery, yesterday, Thursday; husband of Dolina, formerly of 2 Lionel, and father of Mairead and Dena-Anne.

Angus Martin (Aonghas a' Sgiobair) formerly 15 Lower Shader and Airidh an Tuim, died on Monday 18 May in Dun Berisay and was laid to rest in Barvas Cemetery on Thursday 21 May; husband of the late Joyce and father of Alasdair, Jane and the late Angus.

Donald F Morrison, DF a' Ghladstoin, age 82, 135 Cross Skigersta, who died in the Western Isles Hospital on Wednesday 13 May; husband of the late Doleen, and father of Coinneach, Margaret and Christina.

Christina Smith, Cairstiona Chaluim Iceil, banntrach Tharmoid Sgiugs, age 86, who died at home, 10 Lionel, on Tuesday 12 May; mother of Iain, Margaret and Ina.

John Macleod, Iain Alaicean, age 71, formerly 11 North Dell, who died at Daviot on 2 May and was laid to rest at Habost Cemetery on Thursday 7 May; brother of Dolina, Alasdair, Catherine, Flora, Mary Ann and David.

Alice Ann Campbell, Alice Ann Sheonaigh Bhig, banntrach Uilleam Alasdair Eòrdaigh, age 87, 11 High Street, Skigersta who died at home on Thursday 30 April; mother of Angus, Alasdair, Màiri Agnes, Donald and Millie.

Johanna Macleod, Seonag Dhòdudh, banntrach Chaluim Mhurchaidh, age 86, 7 Eorpie, who died on 8 April; mother of Joan, Murdo (Dodo), and the late Doleen.

John Marshall, age 81, 113 Cross Skigersta, who died on 12 April and was laid to rest at Habost Cemetery on 15 April; husband of the late Catriona Anna, and father of Shona and Scott, and the late Iain.

Alasdair Macdonald, Alasdair Ìmag, Grimshader, formerly of 23 Swainbost, who died in Bethesda Hospice on Friday 10 April, laid to rest at Crossbost Cemetery on Monday 13 April; husband of the late Peggy, and father of Colin, Malcolm, Margaret and Annice.

Chrissie Flora Macleod of Leurbost and Bernera, laid to rest at Habost Cemetery on Wednesday 8 April; wife of Norman, Tarmod Pheataidh, formerly of 18 Cross, and mother of Norrie.

Precious memories how they linger
How they ever flood my soul
In the stillness, of the midnight
Precious sacred scenes unfold

[from *Precious Memories* by Alan Jackson, also recorded by Jim Reeves and others]

The Story of a Ness Exile (Part 2)

The late Donald Macleod, Michigan, U.S.A. (*Dòmhnall Tullag*, formerly from Knockaird, Ness) left home for Canada aboard the *SS Metagama* in the spring of 1923. Here he remembers the Great Depression of the 1930s.

"The Depression in the 1930s interrupted my plans. The car industry closed and we had to find work elsewhere. At this time, many returned to the homeland. There was a Niseach superintendent (John Thomson from Habost) with a construction company in New York and I was advised to go there. I met him, and he put me to work at once.



There were casualties on the job and part of my work was to carry away the injured and dead. Seeing a man getting killed was something new for me and made me sick. Some advised me to take whisky, but that only made me feel worse. I don't think I would have made a good soldier. The following year, conditions improved and I returned to Detroit. I joined the auto industry with another company. It was time now to settle down. I was married in 1935 to Annie Murray and the first of our three children was born the following year.

"The Great Depression was not over and work was scarce, but that only brought us closer together. There was a large Lewis colony there and we had taken root. We were no longer from Ness or Point etc., but we were as one village, with one common bond. Fate brought us here, and we were different. When one found work he would at once recommend a fellow Lewisman for the first opening. This worked so well both on land and sea that there was very little unemployment among us. We blended in very well with the American worker and made very close friends. But socially, we kept our Lewis identity. Nearly all of us married Lewis girls. We now had our own home, Ceilidh was the evening pastime, with Gaelic songs being sung and stories told. The dessert was always a cup of tea and scones. If we had differences among ourselves, pity the outsider who would interfere.

"Many of the Lewismen held responsible jobs both on land and sea. Ness was well represented among the captains and officers who served on the Great Lakes and on salt water, and also among those who studied for the ministry and served as pastors both in Canada and the United States. At this time, ministers from Lewis were coming to Canada for short visits and some of them came to Detroit and held Gaelic services. Those services were well attended. The singing of the Gaelic Psalms and precenting the line was sweet music to us, and many eyes could be seen wet with tears. This was the beginning of the Presbyterian Free Church in Detroit, where we have worshipped since 1952. Our first pastor was the Rev. Murdo MacRitchie, who served the congregation for fourteen years and was then transferred to the Stornoway congregation."



Rev. Murdo MacRitchie, first minister of Detroit Free Church later minister of Stornoway Free Church



reflections

by Rev Murdo Campbell

Where is God in the Coronavirus?

It's now eight weeks since we began living in lockdown and following the Government rules of social distancing. It has been a strange two months with schools and shops closed, church services suspended, working from home or not at all. However, the past couple of months have given back to many of us what we were lacking or struggling to find – time. Prior to the Coronavirus crisis, our lives were so busy that we didn't have time to enjoy it as we should. But God, in His Providence, has slowed us right down, not only to make us realise that everything we once thought to be safe and secure is actually frail and fragile, but also to remind us about the shortness of time and how we need to make the best use of our time. In fact, I believe that these past two months have been gifted to us, in order to give us time to stop and seek the Lord, because He's speaking to us.

Some may ask, "Where is God in the Coronavirus?" But God is where He has always been - on His Throne. Throughout the Coronavirus, and long before, God has been ruling over and over ruling all that has been going on in our lives and the history of this world. Nothing has escaped His notice; nothing has taken Him by surprise; nothing has come as a shock to Him. Instead, God has constantly been speaking to us through His Providence, reminding us and reassuring us that He's still there. The people of Esther's generation may have asked a similar question: "Where is God in the Story of Esther?" As you know, God isn't mentioned once in the Book of Esther. There are many characters that appear on stage in the storyline, but God doesn't seem to be one of them. Of course, that doesn't mean that God has abandoned His people, or remains inactive and just stands by watching as the chaos unfolds. No, the beautiful detail in the Book of Esther is that, even though God isn't mentioned in the storyline, He's working backstage. Behind the scenes, God is actively seeking to ensure that the script, which He has written, is worked out for the good of His people and the glory of His name. The Book of Esther is all about how God, in His

Providence, protected His people by making Esther Queen in the Assyrian Kingdom 'for such a time as this' (Esther 4:14). The Assyrian Governor, Haman, had planned to annihilate all the Jews, but God's plans were much bigger. In fact, this is what the Lord had promised centuries earlier through His prophet Jeremiah: 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you, and not to harm you; plans to give you a hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11).

We often say that, "History is His Story." That's certainly the case in the story of Esther, but it's also the case in the story of our lives too; God is always working in the story of our lives, even when we can't see it. Therefore, the story of the Coronavirus is His Story, because God is not absent, neither has He abandoned us. In the years to come we'll look back over this dark and difficult period and see God's hand in it. That's the wonder of God's Providence; we may not understand what He's doing now, but we can be assured that we will know afterwards. Is that not what Jesus said to His disciples? 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand' (John 13:7). The story of our lives has been providentially planned and penned by our Heavenly Father, so that even on the darkest pages we can be assured that God is working in it all to bring us into a closer relationship with Him. That's the great hope and assurance of the Christian. Whether we encounter sin, sickness, stress, suffering or sorrow in this life, we have the promise that our God is still on His Throne and He's working all things together for good, to those who love Him, and those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Therefore, we should always read God's Providence in light of God's Word, because it's only the Bible that will help us make any sense of the tangled tapestry of our lives. That's what an anonymous poet once expressed:

*Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.*

Village WhatsApp Groups

A WhatsApp group has been set up for each village on the estate to allow residents to stay in touch, offer support, seek support and generally stay connected.

If you have not yet been contacted about joining a WhatsApp group, but would like to be added to the group for your village, please message 07469189449 and specify your name and village. The group is for many people, so please be mindful of not posting lots of details. Just ask for help and someone in the group will get in touch for the specifics of your request. It is not a service to replace emergency services or other support services. As a community we want you to know that someone will be around to help with some of the smaller things.



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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.

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

A 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

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

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 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

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

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



Hebridean Housing Partnership
0300 123 0773
customerservices@hebrideanhousing.co.uk
www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk



Tighean Innse Gall
01851 706 121
info@tighean.co.uk
www.tighean.co.uk



Jobcentre
01851 743 663 or 01851 743 664
stornoway-jobcentre@dwp.gov.uk
www.gov.uk



Western Isles Women's Aid
01851 704750
office@wiwasty.org
westernisleswomensaid.co.uk

CnES COVID-19 Information
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

CnES Financial Inclusion Service
Financial Inclusion: 01851 822 654
inclusion@cne-siar.gov.uk

CnES Benefits Office
01851 822 642
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



Lisa's column

by Lisa Maclean

URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

Over recent weeks we have all had to adapt and change. Our lives are probably quite different to how they were just a season ago. We have all had to look at new ways of doing things, and in some cases, some of the things we are doing are good changes!

UOG will, for now, continue with prescription deliveries and the collection service to Lewis Crofters. We will remain agile and open to considering what else might need to be explored to support the community through this time. We are now also beginning to look ahead a little and are evaluating and considering what will change in the longer term. We need to work with other agencies to establish what can be delivered at a very local level and could suit the needs of the community better. There seems little point in going back to "normal" if the old normal wasn't that great in the first place. We know as a community over the next period we will need to be innovative and entrepreneurial to ensure we minimise the impacts of the crisis, so now seems like a good time to start exploring what we can embrace in the longer term.

We launched the "Beagan Taic" fund over a week ago and are pleased to have this in place for anyone who needs it. We have worked with a local church to launch the fund and the details can be found in the advert adjacent. We want anyone who needs this support to reach out and know they can do so confidentially. The fund is open to anyone who lives on the Galson Estate.

We are very pleased to have secured funding through the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities fund to help us to continue with prescription deliveries and to help cover costs of some of the other work being undertaken. We have also secured funding through the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund to take forward a house-numbering project. Please keep an eye out for details of this initiative as we are keen to get numbers onto as many houses as possible and have funds in place to provide numbers for every house across the estate, including the homes on the Cross Skigersta Road. We are working on obtaining quotes and samples of house numbers and will issue details soon for our plans to roll the project out. We hope this initiative will be a help to emergency services, care providers and delivery drivers. We know how every minute can count in an emergency situation.

We are also working with the local gun club to try to get out-of-season authorisation in place to support management of the deer population on the estate. We are very aware that deer are coming onto agricultural ground and causing damage. We thank Callicvol Gun Club for their support and co-operation and Scottish Natural Heritage for their advice and guidance. We hope to have something in place soon. We thank the community for their patience on this matter as we try to safely work around Covid-19 restrictions and the fact we are out of season.

I once again thank the volunteers who are working on the newsletter, those who deliver prescriptions and to all volunteers for their willingness to support as and when needed.

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 for further information or to read our official response and an update on current activities in relation to Covid-19.

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



URRAS OIGHREACHD
GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

A company registered in Scotland: 273903
A registered Scottish Charity SC036903

HELP & SUPPORT**CORONAVIRUS UPDATE - BENEFIT REVIEWS AND REASSESSMENTS SUSPENDED**

Reviews and reassessments for disability benefits are being suspended for the next three months. [Updated 25 March 2020]

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

NO Coronavirus symptoms advice

NHS Scotland

0800 028 2816

ELDERLY

Age Scotland

0800 470 8090

FAMILIES

Parentline Scotland

0800 028 2233

FINANCIAL AND DEBT ADVICE

Money Advice Scotland

0141 572 0237

BUSINESS

Business Helpline

0300 303 0660

MND Scotland

0141 332 3903

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 Saturday 30th May 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

WEEKLY DRAW

We are intending to set up a weekly draw also.

£2 weekly entry (via direct debit) 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 or private message via our facebook page.

COVID-19: Guidance for Household Waste disposal

If you have symptoms that may be caused by COVID-19 or you live with someone that has symptoms, you can securely store personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths within disposable rubbish bags.

These should then be:

- *placed into another bag*
- *tied securely*
- *kept separate from other waste in your room*
- *put aside for at least 72 hours before being putting in your usual external household waste bin*

By following this advice, you will help to control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community and the most vulnerable.

Other household wastes (including recycled waste) can be disposed of as normal.

Media release by
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
3 April 2020



TALKING NATURALLY by Samantha Hawkins

The month of May is drawing to a close and the passage of migrant birds through our island has become just a trickle.

Three Black-tailed Godwits spent 48 hours or so resting and refuelling at the 'Stoth Service Station' before continuing their journey north (14 and 15 May). Tall and elegant waders, they looked resplendent in their deep russet-orange plumage. Even more striking perhaps are their long orange and black bills with which they were busily probing the mud beneath the shallow water of the pool. A nameless boffin who has time to do 'these sorts of things', observed that the Black-tailed Godwit can make up to 36 probes a minute with its bill in the hunt for food. Generally, these waders form life-long partnerships which can span 25 years, the success of which is probably due in no small part to the fact that they spend the winter months some 600 miles away from each other!

More waders now, this time much smaller ones – Dunlin. On a par size-wise with our all too familiar Starling, they have long, slightly downcurved bills and at this time of year, like the Black-tailed Godwit, are very distinctive in their breeding plumage, which includes a chestnut back and very unmissable black belly patch. The weather towards the latter end of last weekend was not promising, with a heavy almost impenetrable, misty haze – but it was perfect for these little birds. As I pulled into the layby just after Stoth, through the aforementioned misty haze, a vast squadron of these little birds quartered the area, over 200 and possibly many more out of view.

Fascinating to watch, they resemble clockwork mice which have been wound up to full capacity and let loose.



Dunlin

Twirling and swirling across the recently mist-moistened cliff tops, feeding conditions would have been good for them. Often associated with the mud flats of tidal estuaries where Dunlin gather to feed in vast numbers, they use their bills to probe or peck at the surface of the mud. On the cliff tops around Stoth, the Dunlin deploy what is termed the 'stitching' (sewing-machine-like) technique, 'the pecks at the surface are preceded by a dash forward which is typical of sight feeders'. Heads down, they were totally oblivious to other birds around them. But something spooked them, and when it did, the squadron took to the skies banking and turning in unison and eventually disappearing into the mist.

This was the largest number of Dunlin I had ever seen in one place and in the days before this I was averaging sightings of 9-12, much smaller groups. The sun had been out, and I had enjoyed observing the interaction between Dunlin and another of our local waders, Ringed Plover, as they rubbed shoulders. Slightly larger than a Dunlin and

more rotund, Ringed Plover blend perfectly into the pebbly clifftops we have here and more than likely they see you before you see them. Camouflage, as for so many birds and other creatures, is crucial to the Ringed Plover's success, and it needs to be as they make their nests and rear their young in this very open territory, which they will fiercely defend. Perceived intruders to the territory will be approached, with the Ringed Plover raising the feathers on its back, 'tail depressed and black chest patterns exaggerated'. If that doesn't do the trick then a fight may well follow – you don't mess with a Ringed Plover. The Dunlin, on this occasion, appeared oblivious, and just marginally changed course when challenged and carried on with their feeding mission.



Ringed Plover

Also, at Stoth this week was a Whimbrel, another wader, and a close relative of the slightly larger Curlew – the clue is in the beak. They are difficult to tell apart, believe me, I know! Slightly smaller than the Curlew, it also has a shorter bill and quite striking face pattern – the crown of its head is dark, a pale stripe down the middle and distinctive dark eye stripe. I had seen one a couple of weeks back, if you recall, but as we met unexpectedly in open territory, we didn't have long to make each other's acquaintance. This time, the Whimbrel had the architectural advantage of the lazy beds on its side and while its inclination was to run, it did so more slowly



Whimbrel

using the dips to its advantage, and allowing me a bit of time to take a photograph.

On the calmer days I usually end my daily run out with a visit to Skigersta Harbour where there is nearly always something different to see. Red-throated Divers, another favourite of mine, are often seen and more recently, a pair of Eider duck (13 May). I had never seen Eider before, and it was great to watch them drift in towards the rocky shore then out again riding the gentle swell of the waves. To my mind the Eider has two contradicting features – it is the UK's heaviest duck, but also it is the fastest flying. Like so many birds the male has the more stunning plumage. While the female is a seemingly unremarkable drab brown, the male is largely white, with a black belly, pale pinkish chest and a striking pale green patch at the back of the head. And, if like me, you have never seen one, I'm sure you would have heard them on wildlife documentaries, for their call can only be likened to that of the voice of the late comedian Frankie Howerd!



Canada Goose

And now, the novelty of my bird watching fortnight – a Canada Goose at Stoth (18 May 2020), a bird more commonly seen on the mainland. To coin a phrase, I spotted it a mile off, incongruous in its barren cliff top setting, and much taller and more strikingly marked than the three Greylag Geese it appeared to have formed a friendship with. Canada Geese are a 'love them or hate them' sort of a bird. Not native to the UK they were introduced from North America roughly 300 years ago and have done so well they are considered by some to be pests, gathering in large numbers and causing damage. Shortly after I saw it, all four took off and headed south, possibly to develop a united approach to the destruction of our grassland.

And finally, if you are looking for a bit of inspiration for ways of passing the month of June, why not sign up to '30 Days Wild' the now annual event organised by The Wildlife Trusts? It is now proven that nature is good for your health and wellbeing - it can also be a great classroom and playground for your kids. You can join here to access the resources available to guide you through the month:

<https://action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/57739/petition/1?locale=en-GB>