After more than four months trying to get agreement for such a meeting, Raasay Community Council, represented by Anne Gillies, Elizabeth Simpson and Jill Westgarth, finally met with representatives of NHS Highland (NHSH) on Monday May 30th to review the deteriorating situation regarding nurse cover on Raasay.

In the meantime, having written to both the previous Chair and the new Chair of NHSH, as well as to the Minister for Health, and Nicola Sturgeon, we had made a formal complaint to the Chief Executive of NHSH about the contempt with which we feel our community has been treated, and about what we see as their failure to fulfil their duty of care, owed to the whole community. A formal complaint has to be investigated by NHSH and answers given to the questions we raised – we are awaiting these. We have also come across many documents, for example a new protocol for the delivery of nursing services, which are extremely worrying, and about which there has been absolutely no consultation.

At the meeting we discussed out-of-hours and emergency cover as well as the now patchy daytime provision. We also talked about the failure of NHSH to appoint a nurse back in January and some of the changes NHSH are wanting to introduce.

We had with us Kate Forbes, the new MSP, plus Hamish Fraser and John Gordon, two of the Highland Council Ward Councillors. Together we were able to get NHSH to agree that any changes to the service - which we are not at all happy about - will first be the subject of consultation and discussion with the whole Raasay community.

We will of course update you as and when there is anything new to report. We are hoping to be able to hold a meeting of the sub-committee of Raasay Community Council - which focuses solely on the nurse issue - next Tuesday, June 7th at 8pm in the Community Hall, which you are of course welcome to attend. Please watch the notice board for details.

Anne Gillies, Chair
Elizabeth Simpson, Treasurer
Jill Westgarth, Secretary

After the meeting, Anne Gillies, Chair of RCC, said: “Nursing cover on Raasay has been decimated in recent months and almost all confidence in the service is lost.

“NHS Highland must take responsibility for reinstating the system which worked so well on Raasay, until such time as an acceptable alternative is found.

“With blame for the loss of services being placed on difficulties in recruiting staff, I left the meeting and heard that fourteen people – many of them locals – were interviewed for a part-time nursing post on Skye.

“Only when these 14 people have viable, permanent jobs in Skye can NHS Highland say they have difficulty in recruiting nurses.”
JUNE 2016 RAASAY COMMUNITY NURSING COVER

Please be advised that due to staff shortages there will be NO COMMUNITY NURSE on duty overnight for June.

There WILL be a nurse on duty Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm

We are continuing to provide cover for Raasay from within the North Skye Community Nursing Team. Due to service demand on occasion the nurse may be required to arrive late or leave early.

At present there is no confirmed weekend cover for the other weekends but a request for cover has been placed with nurse bank, you will be informed if cover is found.

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999

For Minor Injuries or Illness dial 111

Thank you for your understanding at this challenging time.
A tartan for Raasay

BY LILLIAN MACLEOD

In last month’s Am Bratach you were told about one of the aspects of the Community Art Project – the designing of a tartan for the island.

The four designs were displayed in the shop and you were given the opportunity to vote for your choice. At the Art Project workshop on the afternoon of the 19th, some of the Primary children counted the votes and the results are as follows:

Raasay 1: 44 votes
Raasay 2: 8 votes
Raasay 3: 0 votes
Raasay 4: 7 votes

That makes version 1 the very clear winner. Thank you to all of you who took the time to consider your choice and place a vote; we’re very grateful.

The tartan you’ve chosen will now be woven into a piece to be draped on the Community Art Project wall hanging. There has already been some interest in garments being made in the new tartan so we may arrange for commercial weaving of a length of the tartan fabric.

Raasay groups fail to win votes at YIYC event

BY DELLA CHESHIRE

Not one of the four Raasay-based community groups which presented their case for funding at the Your Island, Your Cash all-day event on Saturday May 28 received a grant.

Rebecca Mackay, of Raasay Heritage Trust, proposed the purchase of a septic tank for Raasay Heritage Centre; Anne Gillies, chair of Raasay Community Council, applied for funding to publicise the attractions of North Skye and Raasay as places to work and live; Jill Westgarth, of Raasay House Community Company, asked for money to fund grass cutting between Suisnish and Oskaig; and Nairn Duncan, chair of Raasay Crofters’ Association, applied for funding to purchase a mobile BBQ and to trademark Isle of Raasay Venison.

Each person who attended, whether as part of a community group or as an individual, was entitled to a ballot; only eight of the 94 ballots cast were from Raasay. Fifteen of the 41 Skye-based groups received funding, with The Skye Youth Pipe Band being the most popular choice.

Pablo Mascarenhas, community and democratic engagement manager for Highland Council, said: “There are obviously groups [which received funding] that people from Raasay can access to a limited extent.

“That is democracy I suppose.

“We will look at the process and we would be happy to have representation from Raasay on that group.”

This pilot event, one of a series of seven organised by Highland Council, aimed to introduce the concept of participatory budgeting.

Councillors have already agreed to localise decision-making of community service budgets. If this event is judged to be successful, the tech services budget for Skye and Raasay – i.e. roads, recycling, rubbish and verge cutting - could be put to a public vote.
The domestic and medical use of plants on Raasay

This is the first of two narratives by JEN BURNET on the traditional use of plants on Raasay, looking at their domestic application especially in the dyeing of wool. The second narrative, to be published in the July newsletter, will look at their medicinal application.

In North Arnish as elsewhere on Raasay, much use was made of the native plants and herbs. John Nicholson recalled that as boys in Torran, they would boil birch leaves, sweeten and drink the ensuing liquid as they did not have luxuries like lemonade. He also remarked that Sheila MacLeod (whose father was Ronald Gillies of Fladda and whose son was ‘Calum the Road’) used to boil birch leaves to obtain a blue dye.

During the war years, the children were taught to knit and through the Government and Educational Authorities ‘Khaki’ wool would be sent to Raasay so that scarves and socks could be knitted for the soldiers. This proved to be an interesting and absorbing pastime during the long winter nights. The Khaki wool came already dyed but an important pastime of the islanders was the spinning, carding, weaving and dyeing of wool for other uses. Although a few dyes might have been fetched by boat from the shop at Portree, most would be created from the plants and lichens growing locally. A large black pot was put to boil and the plant to be used for the dyeing placed in the boiling water. Once dyed, the wool would be washed in fresh water.

Katy Gillies who was born and brought up on the island of Fladda and who lived in Portree, remembered that the most common plants used for dyeing wool were: Fiasag nan creag (sea ivory) to obtain an orange/brown, crotal for orange/tan and the bark of the alder for black or brown. A dye from the same plant or lichen would differ in colour due to the pot in which it was boiled, the water and the time of its picking. Katy also remembered how they would sometimes go themselves over to Arnish to visit Anna Ruarid Maclead (believed to be the last weaver at the north end) to have their cloth woven. Anna Ruarid would mostly weave blankets and bedspreads. The blankets were white and the bedspreads were made of small square patterns in dyed coloured wool. The weaving bothy was built in the glen near where the salmon fishermen’s portacabin was. Apparently the thatched roof was still on the bothy till the 1980s.

Some years back the author collected the plants to be used in the dyeing of wool by Patsy Forbes of Mill Place. Patsy, an expert in the processes of dyeing, carding and spinning, produced a series of dyed wools from the plants. These were put into a picture frame and hopefully, before too long, they will be displayed in the Heritage Museum when the building is completed.

The plants used in the display and the colours obtained from them are (from top left hand corner of photo and moving down each column):

- Sgitheach (Hawthorn) - Beige/Pink
- Gille-Guirmein (Scabious) - Yellow/Green
- Lus Chuchulainn (Meadowsweet) - Yellow/Lime
- Roid (Bog Myrtle) - Yellow
- Copag (Dock) - Olive Green
- Bog-Uisge/Sealasdair (Yellow Flag/Iris) - Beige
- Franineach (Bracken) - Olive Yellow
- / (Undyed Cheviot Wool) - White
- Crotal (Crottle, Stone Parmelia) - Orange Tan
- Suith na Mona (Peat Soot) - Dark Brown, Black
- Lus Nan Dearc (Blaeberry) - Brown Lilac
- Feanntag (Nettle) - Yellow/Lime
- / (Tree Lichen) - Orange Tan
- Droman (Elderberry) - Beige Maroon
- / (Bracket Fungi/Hapilopilus) - Lilac
- Fraoch (Heather) - Yellow

In cooking, particular plants were used to create unique dishes. The caragheen seaweed which is still collected today makes a tasty pudding by boiling its ‘jelly’ together with lemon and sugar. It is also a good substitute for gelatine used to thicken soups etc. Algae like dulse, with their high iodine content, were also frequently used. Fifty years ago dulse soup would grace most Hebridean tables but with today’s availability of so many ready-prepared soups, this is no longer the case and few islanders go out to collect it.
Correction: Last month’s article “A childhood on Fladda” should have stated that Katy MacLeod died in 2004, not 2003.

Entries open for Mountain Writing Competition

Entries are now open for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoS) annual Mountain Writing Competition, which seeks out the best writing – prose or poetry, fact or fiction – to emerge from the climbing and walking scene.

Entries should have some connection with mountains and mountaineering, rock or ice climbing, walking or ski-mountaineering, and winners will receive a cash prize and the chance to see their entries in print in the Scottish Mountaineer, the quarterly MCoS magazine. The first placed winners in prose and poetry categories will also receive a free weekend pass (worth about £100) to the 2016 Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival. Winning entries are also published on the MCoS website. Prose entries should be a maximum of 2,000 words long. Poetry entries can be of any length.

The competition is open to anyone resident in the UK, whether members of the MCoS or not. The deadline for this year’s competition is 31st August. Entries should be sent to the MWC Coordinator, Mike Merchant, preferably by email to article@mcofs.org.uk or by hard copy to MCoS, ‘MWC2014’, The Old Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP.
Donas ann an Diùranais / Duress in Durness

BY LE NIALL GÒRDAN

I have a bad memory
That I was comfortless and cold
And unknown bad things lay in store for me

In a hostelry up there
Filled with roaring swaggering
And uncalled for condemnation of our language

Vehement fools' talk they started
About Gaelic and her fate
Though not bairns or weens were they, alas

I took off with one great bound
Left the place without delay
To go and meet some others playing music

Having climbed up in the road
To a trouble-free wee tavern
What sweet music was afoot up there

And having asked, “Who is this
Who gives my life a lift
And guides my feet like dancing fingers?”

It was a chap MacAllister
Archie, player of tunes
A mighty fiddler who never weakens

The fiddler kindly said,
“Sit you down, my young man,
And we’ll play some tunes and music for the folk!”

Though my spell in Durness
 Started off quite bad
Something I never expected there –

I’ll remember well into the future
The happiness I felt
Warmth and joy was fated as was proper.

Niall Gòrdan was born in Ross-shire in 1958 and became interested in Gaelic in the late 80s, discovering through this medium that he could compose poems and songs. Sorley MacLean was an inspiration, as well as many Skye poets including Màiri Mhòr nan Òran. He has a special place in his heart for Raasay and Dun Cana!
Facebook - www.facebook.com/niall.gordan.94

To receive PDFs of Am Bratach, for free, email Lloyd Gudgeon (lloydraasay@gmail.com)
10 YEARS OF WHISKIES YOUR DAD DOESN’T ALREADY HAVE

Isle of Raasay Distillery’s first 100 casks reserved for Na Tusairean Club members

BOTTLE THE PERFECT FATHERS’ DAY GIFT

www.rbdistillers.com/whisky-club
Jute shopping bags now in. £3.95

Carry a bit of Raasay wherever you go.

Fruit & veg deliveries are now six days a week.

Coming to Raasay for a visit? Let us do your shopping for you. Call, email or send us a Facebook message and we can prepare your order for collection when you arrive, or possibly arrange delivery to your holiday cottage.

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29/30 Inverarish Terrace, Isle of Raasay IV40 8NS
01478 660293 raassystores@aol.com
facebook.com/RaasayCommunityStores

Community of Raasay Retail Association
2762RS
The Viking influence on Raasay

BY MARGARET MOODIE

The Vikings [the term describes the sea-faring pirates and raiders from Scandanavia] had a large impact on the Hebrides. Their arrival began about the year 794. In their own countries the freehold system that was in existence meant that only the eldest son could inherit the family property. Therefore any other sons had to make their own way in life. Since plundering was seen as a worthy pursuit they would spend the summer months raiding and pillaging before returning home for the winter.

In the year 975 there was a political change in Scandanavia and the Norse began to arrive in the islands as immigrants rather than invaders gradually integrated with and married into the local communities, possibly eventually becoming Christians.

Raasay and Rona are first mentioned in 1263 as “Hrauncy” [Rocky Islands], preserved in the name Rona. This was at the time when Hákon of Norway sailed past on his way to Largs and defeat.

The MacLeods are a “Viking” clan – tradition states from Norway. Their origins have been referred to in poems – the Fairy Lullaby of the MacLeods of Dunvegan states “See of Leod the coats of mail and weapons Norway was the native land of your ancestry”.

The accredited progenitor of the MacLeods was Leod (or Ljótt). He was born at the beginning of the 13th century, and was the son of Olave the Black who succeeded to the Isle of Man and the Western Isles in 1223. Leod entered the bonds of fosterage with Paul Balkeson in 1231. When Balkenson died Leod inherited his lands.

He had at least two sons – Tormod or Norman who became Chief of Harris and Dunvegan, and Torquil from whom are descended the MacLeods of Lewis, Raasay and Assynt. In 1510 Calum Garbh the second son of Malcolm the 9th Chief of the MacLeods of Lewis became the 1st Chief of the MacLeods of Raasay.

There is very little evidence of Norse occupation on Raasay apart from the geographical names i.e. words ending in “ay” and “dale” and Satre on the Fearn’s Road is Norse for “summer pastures”. But there are two interesting features on the island:

a) Houses at the back of Brochel are on a different plan to all other houses and possibly are of a Viking design.

b) The stone setting in the Kennel Woods of what appears to be a grave is in the shape of a boat.
Gaelic in Australia: A letter from Yackandandah

JOHN MCINTYRE wrote to Margaret Moodie earlier this year, and has given permission for his letter to be reproduced here.

The resurgence of Gaelic in Scotland and places with residents of Scottish ancestry, is also doing well in Australia. The national group promoting this ancient language is Commun Gàidhlig Astráilia. CGA, as it’s known, holds an annual Gaelic Sgoil weekend in one of the State capital cities. This is normally attended by over twenty Gaelic language enthusiasts, some being native speakers, while others are at various stages of learning.

CGA also publishes an annual magazine titled ‘An Teachdaire Gaidhealach’, in English ‘The Highland Messenger’. This is a glossy publication with articles in both Gaelic and English. Most States also have their own Gaelic organisations or have interest groups, the members of which obtain tuition by various means. While some learners take advantage of tuition offered by Sabhal Mór Ostaig on Skye and enrol on these courses, others study privately by the internet or have frequent Skype discussions, using the material on the internet.

The tyranny of distance in Australia is a disadvantage to close group study in either urban or country centres. But despite this, most learners do make significant progress. It is very satisfying, when in Gaelic speaking parts of Scotland, to speak Gaelic to the locals, who are genuinely delighted as well as surprised to hear a stranger with an unusual accent, speaking their language.

My interest in the Western Isles and particularly Skye, stems from my paternal grandfather having been born in Portree in 1817. His grandfather, Padruig Mor Macintyre, was born at Glenorchy in Argyll (he was a nephew of Mairi, wife of Duncan Ban Macintyre, the Gaelic bard) and moved to Skye in the late 1700s to work as a forester for Lord MacDonald. In carrying out his duties as a forester, Padruig, or Big Peter, as he was known, raised the ire of many a crofter by preventing them from shooting deer on the Estate of Lord MacDonald. This was expressed in the verse below which was sung by a Nicholson who complained bitterly about his favourite gun going rusty through lack of use.

S Gann Gu'n Dirich Mi Chaoidh
(Sadly I’ll Give Up Climbing)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'S gann gu'n dirich mi chaoidh</th>
<th>Sadly I’ll give up climbing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dh’ionnsuidh frithean a mhònaidh;</td>
<td>To the wilds of the moorland;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S gann gu'n dirich mi chaoidh</td>
<td>Sadly I’ll give up climbing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fhuair mi litir a Dùn Eideann</th>
<th>Come the letter from Dunedin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G’ radh nach feud mi dhol do 'n mahunadh.</td>
<td>Warning not to tramp the moorland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Padruig Mor aig Ceann Loch Aoinard | Peter Mor from Kinloch Aynort, |
|-----------------------------------| Told the tale that gained him nothing. |
| Rinn e’ fhoil 's cha d' rinn e buinnig. | Now my slender gun is rusting |
|                                  | Since I can no longer use it. |

| Tha mo ghunna caol air meirgeadh | It is hanging on the gun-rack, |
|---------------------------------| Though deserving of some action. |
| 'S cha dean mi car seilge tuilleadh. | |

| Tha e 'n crochadh air na tairngean | |
|-----------------------------------| |
| 'S cha do e thoill e aite fuairich. | |
Padruig and Annabella, his wife, had five children, one being Duncan who became a well-known climber of the Cuillins in Southern Skye. He was the first to climb a difficult peak called Peak of the Boys. He also ran the post office at Sligachan for some years. A descendant of Padruig’s, Malcolm MacIntyre, worked as a game-keeper on Raasay. His residence still exists in good condition and is a youth hostel on the northern road. (Ed. The hostel was sold to a family in 2015.)

As an ex-farmer, I retired to the village of Yackandandah which is located in north-east Victoria and is in what used to be gold-rush country in the 1850s. Southern Australian is one of the most dangerous fire-risk areas in the world, with large areas of open grassland as well as vast mountain ranges covered with eucalypt timber. This timber is very combustible due to its high eucalypt oil content. Lightning strikes from thunderstorms frequently ignite both grass and timber. These storms often occur on days of high temperatures and strong winds which make the wildfires very difficult to control. Score of homes are burned down by these fires every summer.

Many of Australia’s inland areas have been affected by severe drought for several years, rendering the lives of those who live in the regions extremely stressful. It is not uncommon for such droughts to end with heavy floods. Australia can certainly be a land of extreme contrasts, though between these, its climate is usually quite benign.

Kangaroos and wallabies frequent the hills and the bird life is prolific. Snakes and lizards are also prevalent but are rarely seen. Many signs of the old mining days still remain, in the forms of deep shafts, rusting machinery and rubble heaps of stone and soil dug out from mining sites. The hills are crossed by many sluice channels which carried water to assist in separating the gold from the Earth.

Yackandandah is a popular tourist town and apart from modern vehicles, has, in many ways, the appearance it had a hundred years ago.

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**4 Oscaig Park, Isle of Raasay**

Two bedroom croft house available for holidays. Sleeps up to 4 people. Garden & fantastic views across the Sound of Raasay. Prices from £300 to £500 per week, shorter stays available.

For more information or to book please contact: Katherine Gillies 01478 660233 or email: raasayrentals@gmail.com Website: https://raasay.wordpress.com/ Facebook: 4 Oscaig Park Raasay Accommodation

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NHS Highland is advertising for a

**Band 5 Community Staff Nurse**

based in Portree, covering Dunvegan and Isle of Raasay as required.

For more information call Jonathan Hanley, Integrated Team Leader on 01471 820174 or email nhshighland.recruitment@nhs.net.

Closing date June 10.

See https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/_Details.aspx?vacNo=433607
Butterfly-orchids

June is the peak flowering time for orchids in our area including the two British species of Butterfly-orchid, which are both found on Raasay.

These both have two leaves at the base surrounding the stem, creamy white flowers with a long lip (at the front) and a long spur (at the back). Greater Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) is typically around 25cm high and usually found in sward; Lesser Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera bifolia*) is typically around 17cm high and often in relatively bare ground.

They can be told apart by looking closely at the pollinia. These are the club-shaped masses of pollen grains that are transferred as a single unit during pollination – a feature of many orchids that can look startling when attached to the pollinating insect such as a moth.

Greater Butterfly-orchid on Raasay tends to be out on the hill in damp areas of moorland and has parallel pollinia. Recent Raasay records are rather few, probably mostly as a result of my centre of botanical activity having moved to Skye.

Most recent records for the Greater Butterfly-orchid are from an area stretching from Inverarish to Oskayg. In recent years, much of the largest population has been lost to agricultural improvement and the second largest population to tree planting. A few years ago it was possible to find about 100 of these plants on Raasay, now you would be lucky to find ten.

Terry Swainbank has studied these plants on Skye in considerable detail and amongst other interesting discoveries he found a hybrid between the two with slightly divergent pollinia at Ard Dorch.

These plants are pollinated by night-flying moths and elsewhere in Europe but, as far as I know, it remains uncertain what is doing the job in Scotland. Terry has trapped many moths near this species at flowering time but not found any with pollinia.

If you spot either of these orchids, or other of the less common orchid species, I would be very grateful for details.

Stephen (pronounced Steven not Stefan) is Vice-county Recorder for the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland for Skye, Raasay and the Small Isles. His website, including *Flora of Raasay*, can be found at tinyurl.com/Raasayflora OR bit.ly/Raasay, and his botanical blog can be found at skyeraasayplants.wordpress.com.
On Saturday the first of this year’s three Craft Fairs was held in the village hall. A steady stream of visitors wandered in and round the 9 tables, admiring the items displayed and buying many of them. We had two new exhibitors this time and their skills added to what is a remarkable range of crafts for a small island.

The café was very popular – no wonder with such a delectable array of home baking on offer – all kindly donated to the Fair. Grateful thanks go to Ann O and her helpers Sandra and Kate, who ran the café for us and to Caroline and Jen for their help. A special mention has to go to three exceptional wee helpers – Thomas, Nelly and Hamish who all did sterling work throughout the day! Of course there would be no Craft Fair without the hard work of the crafters and I’m very grateful to all of them for their support. The next Craft Fair will be in the last week of July and more information will be in next month’s *Am Bratach*. 
Raasay War Memorial – The journey continues

BY SALLY WALKINSHAW

Following on from last months’ article by Jen Burnet about Katy Macleod (née Gillies) and my articles regarding the Raasay War Memorial, I was contacted by Joan-A MacLennan.

Joan told me the first name on the War Memorial is her Great Uncle Donald Gillies and Katie is Donald’s youngest sister.

Joan has sent me a photo she has of Donald with his mother Isabella Gillies and has very kindly given her permission for it to be included in this article and also for me to research Donald’s service history in the First World War.

When I first started looking for Donald’s details, I found what seemed to be a number of strange facts and contradictions. On some records he was shown as ‘gunner’ and on others as ‘saddler’. When he died he is shown as being with the Royal Garrison Artillery, 1st Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery.

The following details are from Joan –

“Katy was Donald’s youngest sister and she told me she remembered tying his spats for him when he was home on leave. She would have been about 5 then.”

(in response to a question from me)

“I don’t know how or why my Great Uncle Donald ended up in the Hong Kong & Singapore Mountain Battery. He died from dysentery and was in hospital for a short time before he died. The padre who was with him when he died asked if he wanted a message to be sent to his widowed mother and his reply was ‘tell her to walk in the ways of the Lord’. He was reputed to be a very Godly young man.

“My maternal Grandmother Catherine Gillies (née Nicholson) remembers him leaving Raasay on his last leave and she said as he crossed the river from Shore St to Suisnish she knew he would not return. She said he was a very Godly young man who was well loved and respected by all who knew him.”

I have since been told that on his final leave Donald arrived at Clachan and walked from there to Fladda. By the time he arrived he only had a few hours with his family, only overnight, before walking back to catch the steamer and return to base.

This is the service history I have traced for Donald Gillies. A very high percentage of WWI service histories were lost during the Blitz in WWII but Donald Gillies’ has survived. Obviously I do not know the details of his day-to-day war service but I hope this will give some idea of his history. I have tried to include an explanation wherever applicable.

Donald Gillies attested (enlisted) on 8th December 1915 at Forres and went to the General Service Army Reserve on 9th December 1915. His trade is shown as shoemaker.

[In October 1915 men aged 18-40 could enlist voluntarily (or attest) with an obligation to come if called up (mobilised) later on. The War Office notified the public that voluntary enlistment would soon cease and that the last day of registration would be 15th December 1915. Men who attested were given a grey armband with a red crown as a sign they had volunteered and were officially transferred into Section B Army Reserve. They were then sent back to their homes and jobs until they were called up. Recruits in the reserve were not necessarily posted to their local regiments and rarely had a say in the regiments to which they were assigned.]

Donald was Mobilised on 29th February 1916 and posted to the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA).
He is shown as a gunner from 3rd April 1916 (assuming after basic training) and joined the Siege Battery 12 Company RGA on 1st June 1916.

[12 Company RGA manned a defensive position at Tynemouth, part of the North Eastern Coast Defences.]

On 20th December 1916 Donald was posted to 202nd Heavy Battery RGA and then to 175 Heavy Battery RGA which was at that time being used as a training battery at Winchester.

On 26th January 1917 Donald was appointed Saddler and went to No.1 Reserve Brigade (Siege) RGA also at Winchester. It is around this time that Donald bears the rank of Saddler rather than as previously that of Gunner.

The Saddler maintained and renewed tack and saddlery for the numerous horses in a gun battery. Heavy guns and siege batteries such as were used by RGA usually had at least 100 horses. The Saddlers worked closely with the drivers to maintain all the tack and saddlery in the wagon lines while the guns were in action.

When appointed as Saddler this would likely have carried a higher rate of pay, but he would also retain his normal rank i.e. Gunner (equivalent of private) and could still earn promotion to a higher rank. Therefore Donald Gillies could have been referred to in any of three ways, Saddler Donald Gillies, Gunner Donald Gillies or Gunner/Saddler Donald Gillies. This would account for the different rank descriptions during my research.

On 14th March 1917 Donald was posted to No.2 Depot RGA which was at Fort Brockhurst in Gosport. This was one of the four main depots of the RGA where mobilised men were sent to finalise their enlistment before being posted abroad. On 26th March 1917 he became part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) and embarked at Southampton bound for Egypt.

He disembarked at Alexandria on 29th April 1917 and was sent to General Base Camp at Mustapha.

[General base Camp was a holding camp situated within easy distance of the port of disembarkation. It received men on arrival and kept them in training while waiting posting to a unit.]

Donald Gillies was posted to 1st Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery RGA on 5th May 1917. This Battery provided artillery support for the Imperial Camel Corps and was equipped with six mountain guns, each of which was designed to be broken down into its separate parts and loaded on to six pack mules (or in this case, camels) for transportation.

Upon arrival at their position they deployed rapidly, reassembling their guns to provide timely, accurate fire support in places where conventional Field Artillery could not go.

The Imperial Camel Corps supported by the 1st Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain battery RGA were involved in heavy fighting with attempts to take Rafa from the Turks in January 1917 and then during the spring in the First Battle of Gaza (26-27 March 1917) and Second Battle of Gaza (17-19 April 1917). Both ended with Turkish victories.

There are no other major battles detailed until October and November 1917 which were after Donald Gillies’ death. It would seem that Donald was never involved in any major battles of WWI but saw active service at home and abroad, thereby earning his British War Medal (having entered a theatre of war or entered service overseas) and the Victory Medal.

On 21st August 1917 Donald was admitted to hospital in Alexandria due to illness and died of dysentery on 31st August 1917.

He is buried in Kantara War Memorial Cemetery which is situated on the eastern side of the Suez Canal, 160 kilometres north-east of Cairo and 50 kilometres south of Port Said.

In the early part of WWI, Kantara was an important point in the defence of Suez against Turkish attacks. The cemetery was begun in 1916 and now contains 1562 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.

If you have any further information regarding WWI and Raasay residents past and present, Sally would love to hear from you. Her email address is walkinshawsally@gmail.com.
News from Raasay Primary School

Cross Country: On Friday 6th May pupils in P6&7 took place in the annual Skye Schools Cross Country event at the Shinty Club in Portree. The pupils in P2-5 also went along to provide welcome support for our runners. As always, the event was a great success and all our extra training paid off as all the participating pupils put in a very good effort. Pupils have recently been training through an after school running club and by doing the ‘Mile a Day’ challenge during the school day.

Perth Trip: On Thursday 12th May pupils in P6&7 embarked on an educational trip to Perth. The day started with a trip down to Kyle to catch the 12.08 train to Inverness then changing there for the train to Perth.

Here is what the pupils had to say about their visit:

“I really enjoyed going to the cinema in Perth and watching ‘The Jungle Book’. One of the best parts of going to the cinema was that we could sit where we wanted because the cinema staff put on a showing of the film especially for us. We got lots of popcorn and juice and it was a really good night and I recommend going to Perth if you haven’t already.” Emily Gillies P7

“At Scone Palace we saw lots of old, posh things which were beautiful. We even saw a mammoth skull with the tusks still attached. At Scone Palace we also saw very beautiful peacocks. There was a replica of the Stone of Destiny; 42 Kings and Queens were crowned on the Stone of Destiny. We saw some French furniture which took the craftsman 10 years to make!” Ethan Carslaw P6

“I enjoyed the Black Watch Museum because they had interesting stories about the museum and the interesting historical things. My favourite thing there was the Queen’s diamond brooch and I also liked dressing up as a soldier. The gift shop was also very good because they had things like water bottles, rubbers and pens.” Lauren MacLennan P7

“On the 13th of May 2016 we went to Noah’s Ark and I really enjoyed it because we went go-karting and bowling which was really fun. When we went go-karting we had a race and Lauren came first, I came second, Emily came third, Ethan came fourth and Georgia came fifth. It was amazing and I would definitely go there again some day!” Leia Croy P7
Am Bratach
June 2016

“I highly recommend Frankie and Benny’s to everyone who passes by Perth! I really enjoyed my main dish of chicken wrap. Frankie and Benny’s do good, filling meals – and wait till you try the desserts! I had a Candy Box Tray and so did everyone else apart from the adults who had East Coast ice cream sundaes. The Candy Box Tray came with four bottles of various sweets and candies and also a jug of chocolate sauce which was delicious! With vanilla ice cream and a packet of Fizz Whizz to finish!”
Georgia Stone P7

As you can see from the above, the pupils had a wonderful time and were a credit to the school with their impeccable behaviour throughout. We have to thank our B&B host Samantha, who made us especially welcome with little gifts for the children and wonderful food and accommodation. This trip was only possible through the magnificent fundraising efforts by the community and school by way of the Coffee Day. We would like to thank our adult volunteers; Angela Carslaw, Fiona Stone and Rhona Gillies who gave of their own time to accompany the children on their trip.

Walk to School: Monday 16th May was the start of ‘Walk to School Week’. All pupils were encouraged to walk, where possible, or cycle to school. This ties in with our Health Promoting School status, as well as our recent learning about healthy bodies and healthy lifestyles. All the pupils (and parents!) made a special effort and the weather helped to make it more enjoyable with the sun coming out to welcome us to school!

Afternoon Tea: Pupils in Nursery to P4 enjoyed an outing to Raasay House for ‘Afternoon Tea’ on Tuesday 17th May. Pupils walked to Raasay House where they enjoyed some games before their ‘Strawberry Tea’. The dress code was ‘smart’ and everyone made a special effort – there was even a ‘hair and make-up’ session before the event! A huge thank you to Raasay House who put on a delicious spread with a beautifully laid out table setting. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed their ‘posh’ tea party and had a great time telling all about it the next day.

Smoothie Making: Pupils were learning about making healthy smoothies as part of their ‘Food Glorious Food’ topic. Pupils had to make up their own recipes which were then tried and tasted. Ingredients included: blueberries, strawberries, bananas, frozen yoghurt and coconut milk. The results were definitely very tasty and full of our ‘five-a-day’! The pupils completed this as part of a skills passport where pupils had to demonstrate that they could; use kitchen tools appropriately, use
food skills to prepare fruits and vegetables to create new products, demonstrate food hygiene practice in preparation and respect each other’s ideas. The children are still to complete their challenge evaluation but initial feedback has been that this was a successful project with some interesting and refreshing flavours.

Local Sports Day: On Thursday May 26th the school held their annual sports/fun day at the pitch. The children decided on the events, one of which was a Scarecrow Challenge – pictured are the finished scarecrows – Scotty and Goofy! They will now grace the school garden until the end of term. More photos to follow in the next edition.

All Weather Gardening Project: As I’m sure you will be aware Raasay Primary School’s project to replace the poly tunnel with a more Raasay-proof design and to set up a composting scheme made a successful grant application to the Climate Challenge Fund.

Unfortunately due to the wet weather in April which then ran into lambing we are a bit behind with the preparation work for the poly tunnel, however work to build the compost bins is due to take place this week and we will then be ready to start the composting scheme.

Initially we hope to involve around 15 households. The pupils will be invited to bring in their compostable waste along with the households in School Park.

Invitations are being delivered to these houses and those who let us know that they would like to take part will be provided with a compost caddy which will be collected and replaced from each house by the pupils in their "compost carriage" every Wednesday (to coincide with bin day).

The compost collected will be weighed prior to being added to the compost bin so that we can keep records of the amount of reduction in CO₂ emissions the scheme is responsible for. The compost will then be used to improve the soil in the poly tunnel and other areas of the school garden.

Once the poly tunnel has been built we will be able to grow our own food for much more of the year, and without having to take the poly tunnel down in the autumn to prevent it from being damaged.

We hope to invite the community to look around the new poly tunnel and compost system once established but in the meantime we will keep you updated with our progress and hope that you will support us in our efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions as we continue to learn about the benefits of growing our own food locally.

If you would like any more information please contact Katherine or Kate, Raasay Parent Council.
RDT Project Updates

Forestry
The harvesting activity has now finished, but the shipping of timber from the old slipway has begun. The transporter will continue to operate, taking logs from the remaining piles around the Loch and Temptation Hill down to Suisnish. That work will take several weeks. Meanwhile, we are asking for further information about when the repairs to the Cemetery road will begin.

Hydro Scheme
We have been awarded about £30,000 towards the costs of carrying out technical and legal studies on supplying electricity to individual commercial customers. This is because the National Grid will only take about 40% of all the power we produce and we need to be able to sell more than that to make the scheme financially viable. The study work will start in June, we hope, and finish quite quickly. If the results of the studies are hopeful, then we should start looking for finance to build the scheme later in the summer.

Community Artwork
Nearly all the design work has been done, the huge canvas has been constructed, and now the art work will start to be fixed in place on the canvas. If you want to get involved there’s still time. Please talk to Katherine, Lillian or any of the others already involved.

Pontoon
We hope to be applying for planning permission for the pontoon over the next few weeks. We have not raised the funds to cover the planning fees yet, so we must do that first.

Wood Fuel
RDT has started to run the wood fuel supply. We have delivered our first few orders, and more are coming in. Remember that we have to charge for the wood as it costs money to cut, split and deliver it. However, we hope that we have set the price for a load of wood (£50 for softwood, see separate advert) at the level where we cover all the costs but do not make a profit. Any surplus at the end of the year can be put to whatever good causes the community want to support. At that price the wood should be considerably cheaper than any of the commercial alternatives.
Meanwhile, we are always looking for new volunteers to help process and deliver the firewood. To say thanks to the volunteers you get a free load of wood when you have spent 10 sessions volunteering – each session lasts about 2 hours and is usually on a Saturday morning. Contact Lloyd or Donnie for more info.

NB There will be a short series of photography training sessions for people who would like to contribute pictures to the Newsletter and Website in the future. Keep a look out for details of the dates and times of the training.
We hope you are enjoying reading the June edition of *Am Bratach: Raasay's Community Newsletter*. Feedback in May had a distinctly international flavour, with readers from Ireland and America getting in touch. We’d love to hear how far around the world this issue reaches!

If you are reading a printed copy this month, we hope that the A3 paper helps to make the longer articles easier to follow.

As you may know, we currently receive Lottery funding from Awards for All Scotland, which will end in September. To sustain *Am Bratach* in the future, we are considering:

- applying for further Lottery funding
- increasing the cover price of the printed copy
- printing copies in black and white apart from the front and back pages
- increasing the advertising rates
- increasing the number of advertisers to include public bodies
- asking for donations from those who subscribe to the electronic copy

If you have any comments on these ideas, or would like to make alternative suggestions, please let one of the steering group know (Della Cheshire, Artemis Pana, Lloyd Gudgeon, Val Corey, Margaret Moodie and Rebecca Mackay).

Many thanks for all your contributions to this month’s newsletter. The deadline for the July newsletter is **Wednesday June 29**.

Please send any newsletter correspondence, including feedback, to Della Cheshire at Creachan Cottage, Isle of Raasay, IV40 8NT, tel 01478 660380 / 07952 806176, email dellatfcheshire@gmail.com or tweet @AmBratach.

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**FIRE WOOD FOR SALE**

Raasay Development Trust is selling low cost fire wood. We will deliver a load to your door for £50 (£70 for hard wood). Contact the RDT office (660 358) to place an order. Picture shows the size of load you get. All proceeds go to cover costs and to local good causes.
Raasay Community Association

Events at Raasay Community Hall
Bingo Night - Friday 20th May
Over 30 people came along to bingo night at the hall. With 7 games being played, there were plenty of winners of a full house or line. Who knew it could be so tense when you were down to your last number!!
Many thanks to all who came along to play, we hope you enjoyed the night.

Next Events
As usual, none of these events can happen without volunteers so if you are able to help at an event please do let us know. Thank you.

Friday 17th June
Licensed family BBQ at the Community Hall, food served from 6pm.

Thursday 21st July
Sees a combined event run by RCA and the school Parent Council raising money for the hall and the school.
A licensed lunch time BBQ with live music from Ceillear, the Ceilidh Trailers, will take place in the hall followed by a duck race in the village later in the afternoon.
More details to be given nearer the time.

Friday 29th July
Licensed family ceilidh with music from Malcolm Jones.

Friday 12th August
Licensed family ceilidh with music from Tar The Croft.

Friday 7th October - something new....
Watch this space as we will be bringing you Raasay's first Murder Mystery night, with the event hosted by professional actors from The Walking Theatre Company.
The evening's mystery will be based around a Highland Wedding and the drama will unfold between the courses of a meal in the hall.
It will be open to over 16's with tickets to be purchased in advance and with a minimum of 20 people attending.
We'll let you know more nearer the time!

Hairdresser
Due to holidays and the Referendum, Murdina's next visit will be on Thursday 30th June.

Lunch Club
The next lunch club date, Wednesday 15th June, will be the summer outing. This year we will be visiting the Minginish Craft fair for a look around and a cup of tea / coffee and a cake, followed by lunch at Sligachan.
Lunch Club regulars will be contacted to confirm menus and transport arrangements in advance.
**Useful Contact Numbers**

**Business Gateway/Highland Opportunity/ Princes Scottish Youth Business Trust:**
Alistair Danter, Tigh na Sgire, Park Lane, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9EP.
Tel 01478 611501, Mob 07921 758451 Email alistair.danter@highland-opportunity.com

**MP:**
Ian Blackford MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.
Tel 0207 219 5292 Email ian.blackford.mp@parliament.uk

**MSP:**
Kate Forbes MSP, Thorfin House, Bridgend Business Park, Dingwall, IV15 9SL.
Tel 01349 864701, www.twitter.com/@kateforbesmsp

**Local Councillors:**
- Hamish Fraser, 8 Scullamus, Breakish, Isle of Skye, IV42 8QB. Tel 01471 822929
- John Gordon, 3 Mill Park, Staffin Road, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9EY. Tel 01478 611783
- Drew Millar, Ibrox, 6 Carndearg Place, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9PZ. Tel 01478 612895
- Ian Renwick, Lochside, Brookside, Clachamish, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9NY. Tel 01470 582386

**Ward Manager:**
Willie Mackinnon, Tigh na Sgire, Park Lane, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9GP. Tel 01478 613849

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**A meditative walk**

On the Isle of Raasay

Join us to enjoy a walk in the beauty, peace and silence of Raasay, visiting some of the island’s magical places.

**Friday 13th and Saturday 14th May, 2016**
**Friday 17th and Saturday 18th June, 2016**
**Friday 15th and Saturday 16th July, 2016**

Meet at the Ferry terminal on Raasay at 10am for this 3 hour walk.

All welcome - Booking essential - Free of charge

*Please bring your own refreshments*

Other dates available on request
Contact Jen Burnet M: 07833 140247 (evenings)
De tha Dol? Talla Ratharsair | What’s on at Raasay Community Hall

- Licensed Family BBQ on Friday 17 June 6.00pm onwards.
- EU Referendum on Thursday 23 June.
- Arts & Crafts – Mondays 2.00pm-4.00pm.
- Football – Tuesdays 7.00pm.
- Knitting Bee - Thursday evenings 7.30pm (except 23 June). All welcome.
- Lunch Club – Next lunch Summer Outing Wednesday June 15.
- Yoga – Tuesday mornings 9.00am-10.15am and Thursday evenings 6.30pm-7.45pm (except June 23). Best to practise before you have your evening meal, or at least one hour after. All welcome, bring a mat and a blanket and wear comfortable clothing. Five sessions paid upfront £15; one-off sessions £4 per session. Please contact Tekela on 660 253 or 07810 480972 if you are interested or to book. Other times can be arranged to suit a group of 3 minimum. As usual visitors and newcomers welcome.
- Contact details for the hall bookings: Katherine on 01478 660233/358 or Ann on 01478 660388.

Local Services

- RDT Surgery every Wednesday 10.00am-12.00pm or by appointment. Contact Lloyd on 01478 660358 or email lloydraasay@gmail.com
- NHS Nurse – 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday on 660204. Emergency calls to 999; minor injuries or illness to 111 (NHS 24).
- GP Surgery – Wednesday mornings by appointment through Portree Medical Practice on 01478 612013.
- Vet Surgery – Rhona Campbell, Veterinary Surgeon on 01478 611269.
- Recycle Rag Bag Raasay Primary School – CURRENTLY FULL.
- Pensioner’s Bus Service – Contact Theresa or David on 660337. Next trip TBC.
- Refuse collection – alternate Wednesdays. Green Bins: June 1, 15 & 29; Blue bins June 8 & 22.
- Mobile Library every third Wednesday – 9.55am Inverarish Terrace Phone Box, 10.30am Inverarish Terrace, 10.45am Raasay Primary School (teachers and pupils only), 11.35am Raasay House, 12.00 Raasay Ferry terminal - next due: June 8 & 29.
- Murdina Hairdresser – Alternate Thursdays on 07799315756. Next due June 30.
- The Alexander Technique – Call Winnie Ireland on 660227.
- Coal will be delivered fortnightly to Raasay. Coal lorry also delivering/selling garden coverage.
- Split fuel logs - £50 a trailer (£70 hardwood). RDT is now running the fuelwood supply, taking over from RHCC. Anyone wanting to order fire wood should call the office (660 358 - leave a message if Lloyd is not there) or send an email (lloydraasay@gmail.com).
- Isle of Skye Fish van deliveries weekly on Friday afternoons.
## What’s On Raasay – June 2016

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<td>3 Waverley Cruise Round Raasay</td>
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<td>6 Raasay Primary In Service Day</td>
<td>7 9am-10.15am Yoga 7pm Football 8pm RCC Nurse sub-committee meeting</td>
<td>8 BLUE BINS Mobile Library 3pm Crofters’ Association public meeting Raasay House</td>
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- If you are planning an event and would like to publicise it, please get in touch with Della as soon as possible on 01478 660380 / 07952 806176 or email dellatfcheshire@gmail.com for a mention in the next newsletter.

## Church Services

- Free Presbyterian Church – Sundays 12 noon & 6.00pm.
- Free Church of Scotland – Sundays 12 noon & 5.00pm. (Check Church noticeboard for any time alterations.)
- The Episcopal Church – 2nd Tuesday of the month at 11.00am in the Community Hall, followed by refreshments and fellowship.
- Catholic Celebration of the Word and Communion at 37 Inverarish Terrace, Sundays 11.00am. Dave/Teresa Tel 660337.