First woman ordained to the priesthood on Skye

BY VAL COREY

Hallelujah! St Columba's, Portree, St Mary's Sleat and St Michael & All Angels’ Raasay have a new priest!

St Columba’s church was packed as over a hundred folk from many denominations (in itself a cause for great joy) came together to rejoice in Rosemary Bungard’s ordination last Saturday. Bishop Kevin, in his inimitable style, set the mood of celebration, causing gales of laughter with a few well-chosen words. Then we embarked on the serious business of the day commencing with the usual form of service up to the sermon.

Bishop Kevin's sermon was inspiring, following the theme that, as Rosemary had said when she started her unending journey, “I am a work in progress”. The Bishop replied that we are all works in progress, and that we have no timetable to reach perfection as “there are no clocks in Heaven”. Rosemary will be supported in her continuing journey by the church community, friends and family, and God!

After the sermon Rosemary’s daughter, Elita Poulter, played the Adagio from Bach’s violin sonata no.1 in G minor most exquisitely. It was very moving and was followed by the ordination proper. Rev'd Sr Clare Lockhart and Mr Robert MacDonald presented Rosemary for ordination, representing those who had taught her and the congregation who welcome her. The Bishop then outlined the role and ministry of the priesthood, followed by the lovely hymn Come Holy Ghost Our Hearts Inspire. Rosemary now made her declaration of intent to be a dedicated priest. It was then the turn of the people to assent to her ordination. The clergy laid their hands on Rosemary in blessing and prayer and the Bishop anointed her. She was vested with a chasuble and handed a Bible and the chalice and paten prepared for her first Eucharist.

The service continued with the celebration of the Eucharist during which Jonathan Bungard, Rosemary’s son, sang Cesar Franck's Panis Angelicus. Lovely.

As the final flourish Neil Colquhoun, the organist, played a stirring and gorgeously uplifting Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah in which we all attempted to join!

A magnificent buffet was provided to feast our bodies after the wonderful feast for the soul.
Last Chance to Join Na Tùsairean Club at Introductory Price of £599

Offer Ends 25th July 2016

As we celebrate breaking ground at the Isle of Raasay Distillery site, we come to the end of our introductory price offer for Na Tùsairean Club membership. We’re reservin the distillery’s first 100 casks just for members & offering exclusive annual accommodation for 10-year membership.

From Monday 25th July the Regular Membership Price of £999 will Apply

Visit our website for more information & to join: www.rbdistillers.com/whisky-club
Residents unite in call to NHS Highland: “The island wants a nurse”

BY DELLA CHESHIRE

In the first public meeting with Raasay residents since November 2015, NHS Highland (NHSH) confirmed on Monday that they will not re-advertise for community nurses on the island, despite having ringfenced the money and having no alternative provision either planned or in place.

A third of Raasay’s adult population attended the meeting at the community hall, making impassioned calls for reinstatement of 24/7 general nursing cover. Residents also highlighted the discrepancy between NHSH’s advertised nursing hours of 9-5 Monday-Friday, and the hours a nurse is actually present on the island.

Jill Westgarth, secretary of Raasay Community Council which organised the meeting, said: “All that we are asking for is a fairly basic nurse service like we always had.”

NHSH most recently advertised nursing posts for Raasay in December 2015, but failed to recruit anyone.

Attributing the failure to the on-call requirement of the posts, Kate Earnshaw, NHSH district manager for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross, stressed the need for a new sustainable model, and said: “Not every task that nurses do has to be done by a qualified professional.”

Residents raised concerns about recent cases of islanders requiring emergency care or evacuation, which Mrs Earnshaw said she knew about, although she was unaware of nurse absences during the working week.

She admitted that her decision to “red-flag” residents’ island status to NHS 24 in November 2015 had not worked due to an administrative error, which was only recently identified and rectified.

NHS 24 and 999 have been Raasay’s only out-of-hours health service since July 2015, when NHSH withdrew 24/7 nursing cover without warning.

Ross MacKenzie, NHSH area manager (west), apologised for the length of time residents had been left without a resolution, and said: “We desperately want to work with the community to see if there is another model that might work.”

Mr MacKenzie suggested a meeting with other parties including the Scottish Ambulance Service and CalMac, while Mrs Earnshaw committed to providing islanders with a weekly rota detailing what nursing cover might be expected.

Anne Gillies, chair of Raasay Community Council, summed up the feelings of many present by saying: “What we’ve got here at the moment is a shambles.”

Arts and Crafts Project

Emma, Katherine, Jill, Lillian, Elizabeth and Lloyd would like to say thank you to everyone - especially the Primary School pupils - for all their hard work and effort on the Arts and Crafts Project. Should anyone still have outstanding pieces of work, they should be brought to the Hall on Wednesday 13th July when the last workshop will take place between 2-4pm.

The end result of this work is imminent! The unveiling will be during the Craft Fair which is being held in the Hall on Wednesday 27th July.
Watch your speed on Raasay!

There are many residents who drive their cars or trucks around, particularly around the village and to and from the ferry, at speeds that would not allow them to stop if a child stepped or ran out or wobbled on a bike (which is highly likely with the state of the roads).

People regularly fly past the entrance to the play park and no matter how well you teach children about road safety, it’s easy for them to get distracted or misjudge how fast a car is going.

It’s getting to that time of year when there are far more children out and about on the roads, and it would be awful if something were to happen, and even worse if the driver was a local resident.

Isle of Raasay Distillery update

The site of Borodale House and our R&B Distillers Isle of Raasay Distillery has changed dramatically over the past few weeks with a surge of activity once we secured grant funding for the build.

The distillery is designed by Raasay resident Olli Blair of ABIR Architects with process design by Allen Associates and overseen by our lead contractors Colorado Group. The whole on-site team have begun work at pace to begin construction on the project, planned for completion in spring 2017.

The roof maintenance scaffolding set up to install bat protection has been removed and the site has now been cleared ready for demolition of the extension to Borodale House, which will be replaced with the distillery production unit. The Victorian house itself will be restored and renovated to serve as the distillery visitors’ centre and Na Túsairean Club membership rooms.

In its former life the extension served as guest bedrooms of Borodale House Hotel and the temporary Raasay House and so still was still stocked with linen supplies. During the site clearing this was donated to the local charity shop on the island.

Even before we were able to start the project-proper, pre-planning surveys required us to fell a number of trees on the site due either to decay or placement, with the requirement that we replant for each which we happily honour in the first planting season of the distillery opening.

Felled timber was gifted to the RDT Wood Fuel group and we plan to replant using native tree species of Raasay and those linked in some way to the production of whisky and spirits such as gin. These will include juniper, hazel, birch and beech.

We’re eagerly anticipating each milestone of the build and checking in with progress regularly here in Raasay’s Community Newsletter and via our online blog at www.rbdistillers.com/whisky-blog. If anyone has pictures of the site as it evolves we’d love to see them. Please feel free to send them to us via social media or by email to zoe.white@rbdistillers.com.

In the meantime we’ll wait a little longer with a dram of Raasay While We Wait single malt at the ready – available from Raasay Community Stores.

ARNISH EGGS

As of the end of June there will be no more Arnish Eggs available. Following two visits from “the mink!” I have decided not to replenish my flock this year.

I would like to thank everyone for their support.

Barbara
Back in the summer of ’69: The boat

In August 1969, CATHERINE WARD PENNY (NEE PIDGEON) and ROSEMARY WATKINS, then students at a sixth form college in Southampton, undertook a sociological and economic survey of Raasay with the aid of a Ford Foundation Travel Scholarship. They have kindly given us permission to reproduce extracts from their work in the newsletter.

The people of Raasay would be lost without their own form of contact with the outside world, the boat “Loch Arkaig”, a small converted inshore mine-sweeper. It is on this boat that anybody wanting to go to, or leave Raasay, would have to travel. But there is one snag with this form of travel; it is not the passengers or even the freight which cause the difficulty, but anyone who feels he would like to take his car with him. The “Loch Arkaig” is not really equipped to carry cars. It is true that it can carry two ordinary sized cars which, because of lack of space, have to be ‘bumped’, instead of driven, into their places on the boat, and a small car can be carried in the bow of the boat, after being swung onto it in the freight rope.

When the cars are on the boat it does not leave much room for the freight, but most of the freight is landed onto the boat when the cars have left it, at Kyle. Food etc is brought from the ports of Portree, Kyle and Mallaig to Raasay on the “Loch Arkaig”; it is because of the freight charges that the cost of living on Raasay is considerably higher than it is on the mainland. Because the consignments are usually small, the scale of charges for carrying freight only goes up to 3 cwts. The freight charges of goods transported from Kyle to Raasay are:-

8/-d for 1 cwts
13/9d for 2 cwts
19/9d for 3 cwts

To people living on an island like Raasay, where social life is not in abundance and many of their close relatives are working, or at school on the mainland, newspapers and post mean a great deal. It is the “Loch Arkaig” which delivers these things to the island.

The boat does its Portree-Raasay-Kyle-Mallaig journey on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays; any post to be sent anywhere south of Raasay has to leave at 8.30am on these days, after being collected by the postman at 8.15am. It is on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, at 4.15pm that the boat arrives with newspapers, bread, meat etc and it is this boat that takes the northbound post.

Là nan duaisean

BY REBECCA MACKAY

At the Prizegiving Day in Portree High School on Thursday 16th June 2016, the eldest daughter of Donnie and Kirsten MacLeod, Rosie, was awarded First Prize for Advanced Higher Music, a significant achievement. Rosie was, also, the Head Girl; for carrying out those duties between August 2015 and June 2016, she was presented with a medal, inscribed with her name and relevant dates. Well done!

Mòd Iomadail

A Gaelic learner seven year old Nellie Blair, a pupil at Bun Sgoil Ratharsair, did very well at the Local Mod on 12th June 2016, winning a Silver Medal for poetry with the poem An Cat Agamsa. It must be noted that she competed against some native speakers and so winning the silver medal is quite an accolade. Nach buidhe dhuait!

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If you would like to receive Am Bratach electronically as a PDF each month, for free, please contact Lloyd Gudgeon (lloydraasay@gmail.com). We currently have around 250 subscribers.

However if you think there’s nothing like the feel of real paper with real ink, hot off the printer, then copies are now available to buy in the shop for 50p. How will you read yours?
Book review: The Raasay Mills: *Muilnean Ratharsair*, by Rebecca S Mackay

by PROFESSOR NEIL MACLEOD BEc, LLB Hons (ANU); LLM, PhD, currently lecturing at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia

The Isle of Raasay, in the Scottish Inner Hebrides, has a particular place in the history of Australia's Celtic connections. In the 1840s, the MacLeod 'chief' of Raasay sank beneath a sea of his own gambling debts, and the island was sold to George Rainy, just as the potato blight arrived. Much of the population had been cleared to make way for sheep in the preceding decades. Now they faced a mass clearance; and in the early years of the 1850s over half the remaining people were shipped away, some to Canada, the US and New Zealand, but most of them to Australia on the *Ontario*, the *Ticonderoga*, the *Borneuf*, the *Miltiades*, the *Georgina*, the *Edward Johnstone*, the *Hornet*, and the *Galgate*.

The Raasay Heritage Trust, in recent years, has opened an Emigrants’ Walk on the island; a path through scenic woodlands, punctuated by memorials marking the ships that sailed, with a tree native to the country of disembarkation planted nearby. It is a beautiful monument to the island’s loss.

The proceeds from the book under review will go to the Heritage Trust’s restoration work on the ‘Old Mill’ in the township of Inverarish, and an associated heritage centre. The book itself deals with three distinct mills on the Isle of Raasay:

(a) The ‘Old Mill’ located at Mill Place, likely constructed in 1761 to grind grain, converted into a sawmill c. 1851, and defunct by 1915. (It is shown as the ‘Old Meal Mill’ on the map at pp 76-77.)

(b) A sawmill at No.2 mine, constructed about 1915, closer to the source of timber. (Its location is marked as ‘No. 2 Mine’ on the map at pp 76-77.)

(c) A third mill constructed during 1938-40. Its machinery was dismantled in 1950, but it was refitted by the Forestry Commission. This mill was still in operation in the late 1960s and was sold c. 1973. (It is no longer in operation. It is shown marked as ‘Saw Mill’ on the map at pp 76-77.)

There is much more to this book than an account of its mills. The story of the mills is placed in the context of the economic and social history of Raasay from the middle of the eighteenth century to the closing years of the twentieth. It contains forty plates, consisting of maps, archaeological and architectural drawings, and photographs.

The book opens with a fascinating account of the island’s traditional agricultural economy and local agricultural practices. This account is firmly based in archaeological research and pays particular attention to the small settlements associated with run-rig farming, the role of the shieling (a small shelter associated with summer grazing), and on the harvesting and processing of grain.

The remaining chapters deal with each of the three mills, always with a detailed account of the social context in which developments unfolded. The original mill was built in 1761. (Mackay here corrects the previously accepted date of 1720.) It was one of the ‘grand developments’ each new chief visited upon his people; on this occasion forcing them to smash their hand querns and to pay him for the privilege of using his mill instead – in the process requiring them to travel considerable distances to grind small amounts of grain. Mackay gives a detailed account of the mounting debts of the chiefs, and of the concomitant poverty of their tenants. By the 1850s, so many tenants had been cleared to
make way for sheep, that the mill was no longer viable. And so it was converted into a sawmill; but that too fell into disuse in the early twentieth century.

In 1912 the island was bought by Baird & Co, who opened a mine there. The advent of the First World War saw a renewed demand for timber, and a sawmill was built near the mine. It was operated by German prisoners of war, twelve of whom died in a Spanish flu epidemic.

The mine closed soon after the First World War, and the island was bought by the government. The third sawmill was constructed in the lead up to the Second World War, when once again the demand for timber increased.

This is a scholarly book. It is meticulous and well researched; crammed with the kind of economic and historical detail normally found only in the best academic writing. However, it is not primarily intended as an academic text, and so it lacks some of the apparatus that an academic reader might wish for. There is no index, which is great pity given the enormous amount of incidental information that is contained in each chapter. There is no glossary of the various Gaelic terms that occur in the text, which would have been both interesting and useful. Not all of the works referred to are listed in the Bibliography, and for some that are, dates are not provided. References to printed works do not always give a precise page number. However, it must be borne in mind that much of the data presented here is the result of original research and based on interviews with the island’s inhabitants.

The only typo that might cause any confusion occurs on p 17, where ‘Feature 18’ should read ‘Feature 10’, a reference to the accompanying map of the archaeological survey of North Fearn.

This interesting book makes a valuable contribution to the social history of the Scottish Hebrides, and will provide a mine of information for those seeking to trace their family histories back to Raasay. (A large number of individuals are named, and again an index would have been useful in that regard.)

The book can be ordered from the Raasay Heritage Trust, 6 Osgaig Park, Isle of Raasay, by Kyle, Ross-shire, IV40 8PB, Scotland or email: osgaig@lineone.net Cost: £8.00 plus packing and postage.

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**Made in Raasay**

A date for your diary: the next Craft Fair will be on **Wednesday 27th July**, from 11.00 to 3.00. It will take place in the Hall again and anyone who makes things here on Raasay is welcome to book a table, on a first-come, first-served basis. We will be running the Café again and any offers of help would be most welcome. We would also appreciate people volunteering to sit at the door taking the admission fee – even if you can do just an hour, that would be very helpful. As ever, offers of baking will be very gratefully received. If you want any further information, or would like to help out, please contact me directly: 660328, lilmac@macace.net (Lillian).

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**FIRE WOOD FOR SALE**

Cut, split logs ready for burning, delivered to your house. £50 for a load (£70 for hardwood). Contact Lloyd at RDT 660358. All profits go to charity.

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**Am Bratach: Raasay’s Community Newsletter** advertising rates, per issue:

- Full page: £15
- Half page: £10
- Quarter page: £6
- Eighth page/Small ad: £3

Rates currently under review – so place an ad soon!
Volunteering Opportunities on Raasay

Pensioners’ Minibus Drivers
- Need to be able to volunteer once a month.
- Get the 10.55am ferry and collect minibus the other side at Sconser. Take everyone into Portree centre for 1 hour. Then up to Jans Vans for up to 30 minutes. Then Co-op leaving no later than 2.30pm for the 3pm ferry. Bring minibus and passengers over and drop them off and help with their shopping to their homes. Take minibus up to Norman in the village by shop and hand him the keys. He then takes minibus back. Need to sort petty cash as passengers pay towards petrol which is left in bus and ferry costs for minibus and driver.
- Need driving licence which enables you to drive minibus.
- Any questions, contact Dave on 01478 660337.

Raasay Development Trust Wood Fuel Group
- If you enjoy getting outside and doing some physical exercise, why not volunteer to help cut and deliver the fuel logs?
- Usually a group of up to 8 or 9 volunteers meet at the Pit on a Saturday Morning and spend a couple of hours shifting logs, sawing, chopping, stacking or loading then and then delivering them to customers.
- No-one has to do more than they can manage and everyone enjoys the craic.
- To say thanks to the volunteers you get a free load of wood when you have spent 10 sessions volunteering.
- Contact Donnie O or Darryl for more details.

Raasay Community Association Board
- The board can have a maximum of 9 directors but currently has only 6.
- The hall is a very important facility for the community and school so please consider joining the board to ensure that it can continue to provide these facilities.
- The board meet on average for 2 hours once a month, there is not a huge amount of time or work involved.
- The next AGM is later this year so please consider standing.

Raasay Community Association Events Committee
- The events that RCA runs, along with the hire charges make up the main income stream for the hall, are vital to ensure the hall’s future sustainability but cannot happen, no matter how well attended, without volunteers.
- We are therefore looking for people to join the Events Committee and / or help at events.
- If you would like to help decide what events we put on and when please consider joining the committee - we meet 4 or 5 times a year.
- If you can only spare a few hours or more for a specific event please let us know as we are always looking for people to help set up the hall, take money at the door, run the bar, collect glasses, act as stewards, clear up afterwards etc.
- Next event dates at which help is required: Thursday 21st July at the BBQ / Duck Race, Friday 29th July & Friday 12th August during the day to set up and in the evening during the events.
- If you can help, or for more information please contact Margaret Ferguson, Ann Oliphant, Elizabeth Simpson, Henry Cheshire, John A Gillies, Iain Hill or the Admin Officer Katherine Gillies.

Raasay Heritage Trust work on Ceum nan Eilthirach – The Emigrants’ Walk
- In the area between Drochaid Sheumais Sheonaidh at Mill Place and Henderson's Bridge.
- Cut down invasive alder, rhododendron & pink fuchsia; clear paths of ingressive vegetation; strim verges & brush cut where necessary; clear all vegetation round the base of other trees; repair & paint picnic seats; brush edges of road & car park; burn cleared debris; treat knotweed & rhododendron.
- Contact Rebecca Mackay, secretary, Raasay Heritage Trust, if you are interested in helping, either by phone 660207 or by email osgaig@lineone.net
Notable Plants of the Raasay SSSI

In the fifth of a series of articles on Raasay’s flora, botanist STEPHEN BUNGARD takes a closer look at the Raasay SSSI

Raasay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covers 742 hectares on the eastern side of the island, running from Eyre to South Screapadal and is so designated for both geological and biological reasons. It was first designated under the 1949 Act that created SSSIs for the first time. There is much more detail at https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=1324

The presence of limestone means that it is home to many plants that are not found on the generally acidic soils so frequent elsewhere on the island. Every six years I am asked to assess the condition of the site in terms of its vascular plants by monitoring populations of six Nationally Scarce plant species (i.e. species occurring in between 16 and 100 10 km squares in Britain):

**Northern Rock-cress** (*Arabidopsis petraea*) was recorded in the 1930s as “On the cliffs east of Dun Caan” but not again until 2004 when I discovered two populations in a location that sort of fits that description.

**Mountain Avens** (*Dryas octopetala*) forms mats over the rocks and as the scientific name suggests usually has flowers with eight petals. The feathery hairs of the seed head are initially twisted together then spread out to be dispersed by the wind.

**Dark-red Helleborine** (*Epipactis atrorubens*) is an orchid that flowers later than many on Raasay. The known Raasay population is about 150 – though inaccessible cliffs may conceal more.

**Thyme Broomrape** (*Orobanche alba*) is a dark red plant that parasitizes Wild Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) and is found scattered in small numbers especially in the southern part of the SSSI.

**Slender-leaved Pondweed** (*Potamogeton filiformis*) is plentiful in Loch a’ Chadachàrnaich and is present in small numbers in Loch na Meilich.

**Round-leaved Wintergreen** (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) has its only known location in Skye, Raasay and the Small Isles on a cliff near Druim an Aonaich where I first found it in 1991. It doesn’t flower every year and, growing on a potentially crumbling cliff edge, it is vulnerable to local extinction.

**Rock Whitebeam** (*Sorbus rupicola*) is a small tree of cliffs and rock outcrops. About twenty are known on Raasay, centred on Leac. Those on Rubha na’ Leac are easily accessible; those on Gualann na Leac are not.

This year is a monitoring year.

Stephen 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
News from Raasay Primary School

P7 Skye Schools Raasay House Residential: P7 pupils from Skye schools had a four night residential activity trip to Raasay House. This was in place of the Edinburgh/Glasgow trip which had been taking place over the last 20 years. The aim was to aid transition by building friendships through a shared experience. The pupils had the opportunity to experience such activities as kayaking, sailing, crating and archery as well as field games and challenges in the evening. The feedback from all schools taking part is that it was a huge success with pupils being thoroughly engaged throughout. The staff and organisation at Raasay House was praised by all, with the result that the P7 trip for next year is already being booked at Raasay House again. We are delighted that Skye schools have seen first-hand what Raasay has to offer and the merit of what the great outdoors experience can offer for our young people and all on our doorstep!

This month the pupils have been taking part in their annual swimming fortnight. All pupils improved their swimming skills and confidence and were awarded certificates accordingly. While out at Portree we also took the opportunity to visit the Viewfield Garden Centre and managed to fit in a ‘Fair Trade’ treasure hunt at the Co-op. Thank you to the Co-op staff who were very accommodating and presented the pupils with lovely ‘Fair Trade’ goodie bags.

On Monday 13th June the Raasay Primary School pupils and Nursery pupils visited the RNLI Station in Portree where they learned about the vital emergency service they provide. The school presented a cheque for £100 to the Lifeboat which was monies raised during our Coffee Day with an additional donation from our Rag Bag fund.

Charity work has featured very highly throughout this year, being a main focus for the pupils this term. On Friday 17th June, parents were invited to come along to support the children in Save the Children ‘Den Day’. This project encouraged children to build a den and to think about those children who do not even have basic shelter. The pupils were challenged to build their den completely from natural products. As you can see – they are very happy with the result and £30 was raised for Save the Children. Meanwhile on Tuesday 21st June, Knockbreck Nursery pupils visited Raasay Nursery and together they embarked on a ‘Barnardo’s Big Toddle’. They managed to raise an amazing total of £110.02! Thank you to everyone who donated and helped to support our fundraising efforts. This year the pupils in Raasay Primary School have raised £612.73 for the various charities they support including Poppy Scotland, Sport Relief and Children in Need.
Composting: Our composting scheme is now well underway with our first door-to-door collection which took place on Wednesday 29th June. The scheme will start in earnest after the holidays when collections will take place every Wednesday. We have also got Raasay House and the Community Hall on board which is helping to boost our total amount collected. Compost bins have been built and are quickly filling up. Thank you to Kate, Katherine and other parents and friends who have helped to get our scheme up and running.

Pupils in P2-6 visited Raasay Community Stores as part of their ‘Food’ topic. Pupils were given a list of foods from a variety of food groups which they had to purchase at the local shop. They had to look at the food labels to identify percentages of fats (including saturated fats), sugars, carbohydrates, proteins and salts within each product. Back at school they ‘interrogated’ the data and identified which items were the least and most healthy for us.

Prizegiving: The School annual Prizegiving will take place on Thursday 30th June at 1.30pm. All are welcome to share in celebrating the successes of our pupils. We would like to wish our P7 girls all the best as they move to pastures new at Portree High School. We are sure that they will continue to build on their successes to date and we look forward to following their progress and hearing their news. We welcome Hamish to Primary One this coming August and look forward to welcoming him to the main school.

Duck Race: Please note that the Duck Race in aid of School Funds will take place on Thursday 21st July – look out for posters and information locally. Ducks can be bought for £1 each in Raasay Community Stores.

“I would like to thank all the Raasay community whether they be groups, individuals or organisations for the support they give us. Also to our parents and staff a big thank you – you all go that extra mile and this enables us to undertake so many opportunities for our pupils throughout the year. Wishing you all a happy and well deserved holiday – let’s hope the sun shines!”

Wilma Duncan Head Teacher, June 2016

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Summer is upon us, as is Wimbledon.

Scottish Strawberries now available.

Get stocked up for the finals of UEFA Euro 2016!

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.

Raasay Community Stores
29/30 Inverarish Terrace, Isle of Raasay IV40 8NS
01442 866003 raasaystores@aol.com
facebook.com/RaasayCommunityStores

Community of Raasay Retail Association 2762RS
The medicinal use of plants on Raasay

This is the second narrative by JEN BURNET on the traditional uses of plants on Raasay.

It has been suggested that with all the changes that took place in Gaelic society after Culloden, the tradition of healing might also have disappeared had it not been an economic necessity. Over the centuries, the healing traditions have been handed down from Gael to Gael so that nowadays, ‘herbal cures’ are increasingly being used for a wide variety of ailments.

In the past, particularly in the remoter areas of the Highland Islands where no doctor would be on call, the people depended on their knowledge of local herbs and plants to cure their ills. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge set up many schools in these more remote areas – one such school being at Acarsaid Tioram on Rona. Around the 1890s an Angus Murchison (known in Gaelic as Ura’Chadanach) came to teach the children of Rona. An educated man, he immediately recognised the difficulties of the islanders and their lack of medical care which in some cases led to death. Thus, he set about studying the properties of the local plants and herbs and their use in alleviating many of the islanders’ illnesses. Donald MacLeod of Eyre remembers hearing his grandmother and others who lived at North Arnish talking about Angus Murchison’s cures.

Sheila MacLeod (whose son was ‘Calum the Road’) also possessed a wealth of information about cures, many of which were derived from the native plants – for example Chrysanthemum leaves, which grew in the garden, were said to cure headaches and dockweed removed the sting from nettles. During the war years, Sphagnum moss, which grows in abundance in the damp woods at the north end of Raasay, would be collected and forwarded to the battlefields for assistance in stanching the blood of wounded soldiers.

Throughout the Highlands and Islands, a doctor of Raasay stock is remembered with great fondness – Alexander MacLeod, affectionately known as ‘an Dotair Ban’. An Dotair Ban was born in the first half of the nineteenth century in North Uist. He was the son of Murdoch MacLeod of the MacLeods of Rigg, who were a cadet branch of the Raasay MacLeods. Many of the stories of an Dotair Ban are still recounted for they are considered, as Norman MacLean in his book The Former Days recounts, “a most congenial topic for a tale”. Once such story tells of the doctor, who had ordered (amongst other things) there to be plenty of fresh air in a patient’s room, despairing when on his second visit he saw that once again the window had been tightly shut. He proceeded to smash the window with his walking stick, but not without first leaving one sovereign so that the window might be replaced. An Dotair Ban as factor to the MacDonald’s estate had thousands of pounds sterling going through his hands but being an exceptionally generous and kind hearted man he could, apparently, never keep a shilling for himself.

Amongst the natural cures used on Raasay was St John’s Wort, which is now successfully prescribed by doctors to combat cases of depression. The late Mary Beith, author of a most interesting book Healing Threads – Traditional medicines of the Highlands and Islands, visited Raasay in May 1999 to give a talk on the subject. She spoke of St John’s Wort which is known in Gaelic as Achlasan Chaluim Chille. It was used by the Saint, so the story goes, to help a herd boy whose mind had become upset whilst spending lonely, long nights with the cattle. The Saint placed St John’s Wort under the armpit of the boy and the balance of his mind was restored.

On Raasay, we are exceptionally fortunate to have the botanist Stephen Bungard living here. He, together with the artist Frances Priest, produced the leaflet Patterns of Flora which maps the different habitats of bog, coast, mountain, moor, limestone, woodland and freshwater loch where all plants and herbs can be found. Bogbean, for example, which was highly prized as a tonic for those convalescing from some illnesses can be found in freshwater lochans. As well as bogbean being very beneficial for the stomach, another healing plant for the digestive system is chickweed which is rich in iron and copper. Chickweed is also said to improve eyesight, but possibly the best known plant for eye ailments is eyebright.

The ‘old cures’ still perhaps known to folk on Raasay could now perhaps be recorded for the remedying of the ‘Old ills’....?
Many of you will be reading this newsletter on 1st July 2016, 100 years since the first day of the Battle of the Somme. A day resulting in 58,000 British casualties, one third of them killed.

When I was researching Donald Gillies for last months article, Joan-A MacLennan his great niece said to me “it is so important that his life is not just swept under the carpet”. I think this applies to every man and woman who fought and those who gave their lives in World War One and subsequent conflicts. There will be many commemorations on 1st July and I had hoped to attend events on the Somme but the tickets, although free, were allocated by ballot and I was not successful.

However I was able to attend several events commemorating the 90th anniversary in 2006. Those events and many since show that those men and women will not be forgotten.

I attended three main commemoration events that day but I think the first of the day is the one that gave the deepest memories.

The day started early, we left our hotel about 5am to drive to little town called Ovillers-la-Boiselle. Here is found the huge Lochnagar Crater. It is almost 300ft (91m) in diameter and 70ft (21m) deep and was formed when a mine was blown at 07:28 on 1st July 1916 signifying the start of the Battle of the Somme.

We were lucky to have a warm sunny day, very still with no breeze at all. At 07:28 a maroon was fired followed by the sound of a lone piper playing a lament. By pure chance I was stood exactly beside where the piper emerged on a track through the bushes beside the crater. There followed a special very moving service of Remembrance and during this service and the laying of wreaths children from the local school walked among us with baskets of poppy petals. We were all invited to take a small handful. Prior to the start of the day, the crater had already had poppy petals placed at the bottom.

As the commemorations drew to a close we were asked to drop our poppy petals into the crater as an act of remembrance. As we did so a sudden gust of wind blew across the crater carrying many of the petals across the surrounding fields where so many had fought and died. A small flock of birds flew over and just like the gust of wind were gone as quickly as they appeared. I don’t think I was the only person there wondering if the souls of those lost were acknowledging our presence. Many may think of it as just sentimental imaginings as I sometimes wonder myself. But I also remember the look on the faces of those around me, two burly leather clad bikers, the veteran proudly wearing his medals and the group of school children all with tears in their eyes as they watched the petals settle on the fields.

I will not forget and all those graves of the casualties will never be forgotten even if there are no longer relatives to visit them.

The service at Lochnagar takes place on 1st July every year.

I have been asked what it is about the battlefields that keeps me going back on visits and why I have such a keen interest in the men and what happened. The honest answer is I don’t really know, only that after visiting once there is something that calls you back time after time. There are some places, cemeteries, that although I have no personal link, seem to have a special feeling.

One of these is on the Somme, ‘The Devonshire Cemetery’.

At the end of the first day of The Battle of the Somme over 160 men of the 9th and 8th Devonshire Regiment were retrieved from where they had fallen in action in ‘No Mans’ Land’ and German positions earlier in the day. They were carried back to the British Front Line trench from the start of the day and were buried in a section of this trench. The graves were left in this...
position when the cemeteries were rebuilt after the war. 163 graves are now in the cemetery. Only two are not men of the Devonshire Regiment and the cemetery is named after the regiment.

On 4th July 1916 three days after the first day of the Battle of the Somme, a wooden cross was put up by the survivors of the 9th and 8th Battalions of the Devonshire Regiment. The following words were carved on the wooden cross: “The Devonshires held this trench, the Devonshires hold it still.”

In the 1980s officers of the Devonshire Regiment paid for a permanent monument to replace the cross which had gone missing, presumed stolen.

One of the men buried in the Devonshire Cemetery was Lieutenant William Noel Hodgson M.C. His poem ‘Before Action’ was published on 29th June 1916, two days before he was to die in action. His was one of the Devon bodies brought in that night.

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
Óran do Bheathag bheag à Ràtharsair

BY LE NÍALL GÒRDAN

Mo shunnd 's mo ghaol
dhan tè tha caomh
na còmhnaidh taobh ar n-eileanan
's gach gean on a' bhàrd bheag Sgìathanach...

'S i chuir an cèill
gu fiosrach fhèin
sàr-eachdraidh threun a h-eilein-se -
An t-Eilean beag rèidh sin Ràthairseach...

Gach duanag 's dàn
na leabhar gu lân
cha toirear sàr air sgriobhadh aic'
de shluagh mo luaidh mo Bheathag-ne...

Tè iomadh teang'
gun smàl gun mheang
's i cruinn is beag ach beanachaichte
de shluagh mo luaidh mo Bheathag-sa...

Bean gun uireasbhaidh
thèid mi 'n urras dhubh
beusach b' fhurast' i
ri cur an dàn
gur gràdh mo chridh' 's mo bheatha mo Bheathag-sa...

Mo shunnd 's mo ghaol
dhan tè ro-chaomh
bhios siud ri taobh ar n-eileanan
's gach gean on a' bhàrd bheag Sgìathanach.

My joy and love
to the gentle one
who lives beside our islands
and goodwill from the wee poet in Skye...

She has expressed
with knowledge fine
the great history of her own isle -
that smooth wee Isle of Raasay...

Lays and poems
fill her book
her writing knows no equal
our Rebecca is of the poets herself...

She's multilingual
without any flaws
rounded, small but blessed
my Rebecca is of the folk I love...

She has it all
I can assure you
easy her virtue
to put in poem
that my Rebecca is my heart and life's
love...

My joy and love
to the gentle one
who'll always live beside our islands
and goodwill from the wee poet in Skye.

Many will perhaps recognise the structure of this song, one of the famous Gaelic laments for Iain Garbh of Raasay as composed by Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh - "Mo bheud is mo chràdh": thus I thought it fitting to compose a complimentary song to a lady I have known for quite some time.

She is the inimitable Rebecca of Oskaig, who of course has been involved in a number of books - however, my reference here is to the first of many (and my own personal first!).

I have made various references - in Gaelic, these too are recognisable. I would also direct the readers' attention to a fine publication, On The Crofters' Trail by David Craig, in which Beathag recounts an anecdote alluding to some languages!

I hope it serves as a happy keepsake for a fine wee wifey.

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
Am Bratach

July 2016

RDT Project Updates

Forestry
It should now be possible for people to use all of the forest paths that have recently been closed for tree felling work. Some of the paths will be untidy and churned up in places, so go with care. Timber hauling work is continuing for a while, so if you come across any foresters and their machines, please stand back until waved through or give them a very wide berth (at least 30m) and obey any safety signs or instructions they issue. Once all the work has finished the paths will be brought back up to the original standard. Loose material on the hillside above the Oscaig road is to be stabilised by planting new trees and by using tall stumps and brash to build barriers that will catch moving stones.

In early June a helicopter survey was carried out covering Raasay. Nothing was spotted visually that might suggest new areas of disease infection in the remaining forest, but a detailed analysis of the photographs has yet to be completed. The results of that analysis will be known in a couple of months’ time.

Hydro Scheme
A consultant – XERO Energy - has been employed by the Scottish Government to carry out design work on the possible link between our hydro scheme and the new distillery and on the possible district heating scheme for the village. This work will be done by the end of July, and we will report the main findings in the next newsletter.

Community Engagement Project
The new community website is now open and available at http://www.raasay.com/. The site is brand new, and still waiting for many of the features, information, details and links that it will carry. Content is being prepared by all the community groups taking part. If there is anything you would like to see on the site – a link to another local site; some information - or if you are part of local community group that would like to have its own page on the new website, please let Lloyd know. The community artwork is nearing completion. We hope that it will be hung and there will be a grand unveiling at the next craft fair on 27th July. See separate notice for details.

Wood Fuel
If you enjoy getting outside and doing some physical exercise, why not volunteer to help cut and deliver the fuel logs? For more information see the Volunteering Opportunities section of the newsletter. Meanwhile, if you want fuel logs please contact Lloyd.

Am Bratach: Raasay’s Community Newsletter

advertising rates, per issue:
15% discount for 12 issues paid upfront, i.e. 12 issues for the price of 10!
Rates are currently under review, so why not pay upfront now?

Am Bratach: Raasay’s Community Newsletter

BY DELLA CHESHIRE

We hope you are enjoying reading the July edition of Am Bratach: Raasay’s Community Newsletter. Many thanks to all who have contributed.

If you are reading the printed edition, we hope that the mix of colour and black and white pages works – it will significantly reduce our printing costs. We are still looking at other ways to secure the long-term future of the newsletter, with the cover price and advertising rates currently under review (existing advertising agreements will not be affected). If you have any other suggestions, please let us know!

The deadline for the August newsletter is Wednesday July 27.

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.
Events at Raasay Community Hall
June saw the first BBQ of the year at the hall. The weather allowed us to get outside and the evening was well attended. Many thanks to all of those who helped on the day from manning the bar and selling the food to clearing away and packing up chairs and tables, and well done to the school pupils who made a ‘quacking’ start to duck sales in advance of July's Duck Race!

Upcoming Events
Thursday 21st July
RCA and Raasay Primary Parent Council are running a joint licensed BBQ and Duck Race with live music from Ceilear. The afternoon starts with a BBQ, bar and live music at the hall at 3pm, Ceilear will then pipe us down to the village in time for the Duck Race at 6pm. Ducks are available to purchase in advance from Raasay Community Stores at £1 each. Please come along and help raise funds for the hall and the school.

Friday 29th July
A licensed family dance with music from Malcolm Jones & friend. Bar and doors open from 7.30pm. Adults £8, under 18's £5, under 5's free, family £22.

Friday 12th August
A licensed family dance with music from Tar the Croft. Bar and doors open from 7.30pm. Adults £8, under 18's £5, under 5's free, family £22.

Other Events and Activities at the Hall
- CORRA AMM on Tuesday 5th July at 7.30pm.
- RHCC AGM on Tuesday 19th July at 8.00pm.
- Craft Fair on Wednesday 27th July from 11.00am to 3.00pm.
- Arts & Crafts Workshop on Wednesday 13th July 2.00pm-4.00pm; weekly group now stopped for the summer.
- Football – Tuesdays 7.00pm.
- Knitting Bee – stopped for the summer.
- Lunch Club – no lunch club in July.
- Yoga – Tuesday mornings 9.00am-10.15am and Thursday evenings 6.30pm-7.45pm (except July 21st). 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 – Please ensure that all items are securely bagged before placing in the bin.
- Pensioner’s Bus Service – Contact Theresa or David on 660337. Next trip Thursday July 21.
- 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: July 20.
- 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.

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 OAA.
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
# What’s On Raasay – July 2016

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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.)
- St Michael and All Angels’ Scottish Episcopal Church – Tuesday 5th July, 11am Raasay Community Hall; Sunday 17th July, 11am Ceòl-na-Mara. All welcome!
- Catholic Celebration of the Word and Communion at 37 Inverarish Terrace, Sundays 11.00am. Dave/Teresa Tel 660337.