

Cànan 'is Ceòl ann an Colbhasa/Language and Music on Colonsay



With the grant awarded to Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC) by Bòrd na Gaidhlig a weekend event was held celebrating Gaelic culture, music and language, specifically that of Colonsay & Ornsay. The event ran from Friday 9th - Sunday 11th October 2015 and kicked off the local food & drink festival, Connect with Colonsay.

The program consisted of 'taster' sessions in the morning - an hour-long seminar with speakers delivering a short talk on Gaelic culture and encouraging group discussion and engagement in an informal environment. Saturday's session was led by Seumas McNeill, local farmer and native Gaelic speaker who spoke of his childhood on Colonsay and the way in which his early memories are tied together with Gaelic. This session was attended by locals and visitors. Sunday's session consisted of a brief introduction to the dialect of Gaelic spoken on Colonsay with Alastair Scouller.

On Saturday & Sunday afternoons 'Introduction to Gaelic' classes were held offering a foundation in the language; greetings and introductions formed a large part of these sessions but time was allocated to support the individual participants, some of whom had more experience than others.

Saturday and Sunday evenings also featured popular Gaelic song classes with local singer Kate Bowman. Kate (supported by local musicians) taught the group a variety of songs including puirt a beul and rowing songs. The group then moved through to the bar and performed the songs they had learned in an informal music session with a backing band of locals.

Throughout the event The Colonsay Bar & Hotel graciously provided teas and coffees as well as ample space for all sessions and a relaxed atmosphere.



If anyone thinks they might enjoy an event like this in the future or have any feedback please contact Caitlin on her email caitlin.ccdc@gmail.com or drop in to the service point.

OBITUARIES

Jean MacAllister 1930-2015



It was with heartfelt regret that we said goodbye to Jean MacAllister last year. Jean was born in Hamilton on the 5th of December 1930 where she attended St John's Grammar School and Hamilton Academy. She then went on to study at Glasgow School of Art from which she graduated in 1952 and moved on to undertake her teacher training in Jordanhill. Jean first came to Colonsay as a student to take up a job in the Hotel during the holidays.

Jean and husband, Colonsay man, Johnny MacAllister, moved to Colonsay (to live in Glassard for a year before moving to Kiloran) in 1966 where she worked in the primary school.

Fond memories of Jean's humour, her beautiful, intricate art and her unbeatable tablet recipe will remain with us all. Jean passed away on the 17th November 2015. She is survived by her two daughters, Sheena and Kate, and her five grandchildren



Peggy Clark 1940 - 2016

We were all deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Peggy Clark. She passed away peacefully on the 28th of January.

A full piece on Peggy's life will be featured in next month's Corncrake.

Photo/video of the month

Now the weather is perking up and although the sheep may still be drenched and a bit sad-looking we at Corncrake HQ know there are still beautiful photographic moments to be snapped and funny animals to be videoed - Starting now please send your photos/videos to caitlinmusic@hotmail.co.uk and if your photo/video is chosen, you will have the highest honour of having it displayed in the next edition of the Corncrake!

Song of the month

Each month we will feature a song suggested by our readers. Please send your recommendations (or links to SoundCloud, Bandcamp, Youtube etc) to caitlinmusic@hotmail.co.uk or comment below

This months selection is a beautiful combination of intelligent musicality and angelic vocals in the form of Sarah Jarosz and Aoife O'Donovan. Jarosz plays an octave mandolin with a delicate touch, gently supported by Aoife's guitar.

Click [here](#) to listen to the song.



IT Training

COLONSAY AND ORANSAY HERITAGE TRUST are organising another weekend of IT training: Saturday March 12th and Sunday, in Kilchattan School. The format will be the same as last time, with a morning and afternoon class each day and drop in sessions for one to one help. These classes were very popular last time and we would like to encourage as many as possible to come along, whether or not you attended in the autumn. If you have a specific request for training please let us know. Details for each session will be advertised nearer the time. If you would like to attend or have any questions, please get in touch with either Carol (coht@btinternet.com) or Caitlin at the Service Point.

Calmac Summer Timetable 2016

This year's Summer ferry timetable will operate as follows:

COLONSAY

Check-in closes - vehicles and passengers
30 minutes prior to departure

OBAN - COLONSAY - PORT ASKAIG - KENNACRAIG Table 10

TEXT
CODE 10



DAY	Glasgow Queen St Low Level Depart	Oban Depart	Kennacraig Depart	Port Askaig Arrive	Port Askaig Depart	Colonsay Arrive	Colonsay Depart
MON	1219	1630	-	-	-	1845	1900
TUE	0523	0900	-	-	-	1125	1140
WED	-	-	0700	0905	1005	1115	1135
	1022	1530	-	-	-	1800	1815
THU	1219	1630	-	-	-	1845	1900
FRI	1219	1630	-	-	-	1845	1900
SAT	-	-	0945	1150	1215	1325	1340
	1219	1630	-	-	-	1900	1915
SUN	1212 A	1630	-	-	-	1845	1900



DAY	Port Askaig Arrive	Port Askaig Depart	Colonsay Arrive	Colonsay Depart	Kennacraig Arrive	Oban Arrive	Glasgow Queen St Low Level Arrive
MON	-	-	-	-	-	2115	-
TUE	-	-	-	-	-	1405	1810
WED	-	-	-	-	-	1405	1810
	1930 A	2015	-	-	2210	-	-
THU	-	-	-	-	-	2115	-
FRI	-	-	-	-	-	2115	-
SAT	-	-	-	-	-	1610	2140
	2025	2045	-	-	2250	-	-
SUN	-	-	-	-	-	2115	-

Travellers should note that an amended timetable will run on Thursday 14th and Monday 18th July - information will be published on www.calmac.co.uk

Colonsay Village Hall

The Hall committee held its A.G.M on 9th January. The committee is unchanged apart from the resignation of Esme Marshal. Esme has been a great supporter of the hall over the last 10 years or so and will be much missed. Global warming resulting in ever higher tides and ever windier gales with ever more bizarre names has made travel to and from meetings increasingly difficult. We will miss her humour and common sense at our monthly meetings.

Cooking up a Storm.

We were very lucky to attract four new members in 2015 and one of these, Sarah Hobhouse, was successful with a grant approach to Awards for All (Lottery funding) on our behalf. The award of £10 000 will be used to refurbish the kitchen to make it more suitable for catered events. There will be a six ring gas cooker, stainless steel preparation areas, commercial dishwasher as well as new crockery and utensils. New fridges and a warming cupboard should complete the transformation. We are hoping to have the kitchen ready to go for the end of March. Christa Byrne, another new recruit, has been using her insider knowledge of the trade to source the equipment and we have had very reasonable quotes.

The hall is now sixteen years old and there are a few maintenance issues outstanding. Some of the lights have given up the unequal struggle and there is an ongoing problem with water penetration through the roof; fortunately only during gales, unfortunately that has been most of the winter! It is hoped to make a concerted effort to solve all the outstanding issues over the next year. Details of availability, charges and general information about the hall can be found on our clockwork website at: <http://www.spanglefish.com/colonsayvillagehall/index.asp?pageid=352768>

Planning a Wedding?

We are delighted to listen to any enquiries and give our advice, and put you in touch with local caterers and musicians. Colonsay is a unique and very special Island and we would love to welcome you and share it with you for your wedding.

Donald MacNeill Chair.



The Colonsay Bar

The Colonsay bar is open at the weekends this month.

Saturday: 12-7pm
Sunday: 2-7pm

You might even see this man.
He might even buy you a drink!

(disclaimer: Walter buying you a drink not guaranteed)

THE GREAT COLONSAY

LAND DEBATE

Officials from the Mainland will soon travel to Colonsay, to make a presentation to a Public Meeting in the Hall, the topic being the issue of land and its ownership on the island. This has come about due to discussions and developments firstly at a local and secondly at a national level.

Locally, residents will be aware that their Colonsay Community Development Company have been working hard to address the shortage of affordable housing on the island. You can read the background to this in the article in this edition, entitled, "Hopes Raised For Port Mor Housing Project".



Nationally, the Scottish Parliament has, in recent years, passed the new Community Empowerment Act. Furthermore, they are currently preparing legislation for a Land Reform (Scotland) Act. The thrust of the legislation is to make it easier for communities to acquire otherwise unused land for community development purposes, e.g. the construction of social housing. It's clear that the new laws will impact directly on the Colonsay community in its search for land for housing, and more broadly.

COMMUNITY* LAND SCOTLAND

For these reasons, CCDC have arranged a Public Meeting where the relevant experts can explain the consequences of the laws for our island. The meeting will also be an opportunity for you to have your say. Community Land Scotland will be represented by David Cameron and Lindsay Chalmers, whilst Ailsa Raeburn and Eric McNally will speak for HIE (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

**PUBLIC MEETING
on
Wednesday, 23rd March 2016 at 19.00 hrs in
The Village Hall.**

All island residents are warmly invited. Please come along to find out more and to tell CCDC your views on this crucial issue.

RSPB wildlife notes January 2016

It is no surprise that January has brought us on Oronsay a lot of lovely rain! The barnacle geese look wholly unphased as they plough on in their grazing of the arable fields whilst weather beaten reed buntings scour the ground for seeds like gold dust. Drier days between showers have been designated survey days for the wardens this month as we donned our binoculars (and waterproof coats just incase!) to record bird numbers on oronsay for the WeBS and NEWS surveys and both Oronsay and Colonsay for the National Goose count.

This month's counts for the Non-Estuarine Waterbird Survey (NEWS) were conducted across much of Oronsay's coastline from 13th to the 25th. This survey is incredibly important for recording waterbirds which are missed by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). It also focuses on recording how birds are using the strandline which is an important and reliable food source for many species. The survey also records other non waterbirds which are using the coastline to feed, this could help to highlight important conservation issues regarding how we manage these habitats. On Oronsay, the intertidal range was dominated by oystercatcher and curlew, with other waders such as ringed plover, turnstone and redshank using the seaweed covered rocks and beaches to probe for invertebrates. Herons were also in good number, making good use of sea, intertidal and inland sections seen mainly feeding on dense seaweed sections and along the edges of tidal pools. Sightings of cormorant, shag, red breasted merganser, great northern diver and eider were frequent on both open water and bays. Non waterbirds recorded actively using the coastline to feed included the chough, hen harrier, starling, hooded crow and a single wren!

For our WeBS survey this month we recorded 120 barnacle geese on the strand along with 3 greylag geese. A good count of 16 godwit feeding in the soft mud alongside 10 sanderling, 48 oystercatcher, 19 curlew, 1 redshank and a lone dunlin.



Sanderling feeding on the strandline

Numbers from the National goose count on the 21st and 22nd were good for both Oronsay and Colonsay this month. The landrover became the ultimate stealth bird hide as we went cross country in search of every goose in every dip of dune grassland. For Oronsay we counted 1541 barnacle geese, 21 greylag, 15 canada geese and 8 white fronted geese. For Colonsay we counted 650 barnacle geese, 84 greylag and 37 Greenland whitefronts. We had hoped for some rings in all that lot but couldn't find a single one!

The Oronsay otters have been the talk of the office this month after several really good sightings of the dog otter slinking around the beaches and dunes and a trail of fresh tracks around the holt and in and out of rabbit burrows in search of a decent meal.

The starlings have been making full use of the barn with all this rain. Working in the barn just before roosting time is a bit like listening in on a private rehearsal of an impression act, with all manner of bird calls being thrown out from babbling curlew, calling chough, mewing buzzard and piping ringed plover. European starlings are practised imitators of the songs and calls from many species. It has also been heavily documented that starlings often incorporate mechanical sounds like the ring of a telephone as well as human voices into their own song. You may have seen these clever so and so's on your bird table in the RSPB garden birdwatch this month.



Starlings preening in the yard

What to look out for in the next month

The wintering chough can be seen sifting through the seaweed looking for kelp fly larvae or heading back to Colonsay to roost just before sunset. Numbers of wintering geese are still high at this time of year so listen out for their noisy calls as they feed together on the grassland or see them flying in great lines across the sky.

Letters etc.

No letters received.

In Conclusion

The Corncrake is published to keep all our friends in touch with life on the island and invites contributions. Brief genealogical and related queries are also welcome from Colbhasachs overseas, as are obituaries and family traditions relating to Colonsay emigrants. The current edition was produced Caitlin McNeill and any comments will be welcomed if addressed to caitlinmusic@hotmail.co.uk. As usual, it is not intended to be completely anodyne, but any errors or omissions are regretted, and anything seriously annoying will if possible be suitably modified.