

## Corncrake September 15 Edition

### Note from the Editor

Dear readers & friends,

First I'd like to apologise for the absence of an August issue and explain that the reason for this is a rather last minute change in Editorship. We bid farewell to Kevin Byrne who has worked in recent times as 'acting editor' to keep our friends, home and away, up-to-date with the goings-on here on Colonsay. We hope that this may be a step towards him and Christa having time for some well-deserved relaxation.

I have written for the Corncrake twice in my life; those with a particularly keen memory may recall my shared thoughts regarding the fish farm two years ago. It is, however, unlikely that many will remember the book review I wrote when I was 11. This newsletter has come a long way since then; the website has capabilities for hi-resolution video, images and audio, a wider reach than ever...it's a fantastic time to be involved.

I have written for the Corncrake twice in my life. But I've read it all my life. As such it gives me great pleasure to wave a vigorous "hello", take my seat in the prestigious Editorial swivelly-chair (all the most important chairs are swivelly chairs) and welcome you to my first issue of the Corncrake.

Caitlin McNeill

Editor

### Big Tea



On Sunday 19th July the Community Garden Group once more held their "Big Tea". All were invited to the garden which was kept very busy all afternoon as visitors and islanders alike enjoyed the rare summer sunshine. Pauline and Laura added to the fun, painting faces. There were just enough delicious donated cakes to accompany the tea and coffee, with lots of people coming back for seconds. Willie

held an alternative “Orange Shy” as the coconuts didn’t make it in time, and Esme correctly guessed the weight of the cake.

Plenty plants were donated by locals, in particular the late Angela in whose name two beautiful roses were planted.

## Dougal



Hannah and Donald MacAllister are pleased to announce that Colonsay's newest resident arrived safely on the 7th of June - Dougal John MacAllister - three weeks early weighing 5 pounds 11 ounces. Mum, Dad and baby are doing very well back home in Kilchattan.

## Marine Harvest



This month things have really kicked into gear out on the barge. Cages arrived and were installed with help from the Coastal Hunter and Emma C boats. The four local employees have been training both locally and further afield, with three recently gaining their Powerboat Level 2 certificate. The Harvest Carolina has delivered the feed and the fish are expected to arrive Sunday 6th Sep.

## Colonsay Rugby Festival



Friday evening on Machrins, tent up, pitch immaculate, open-air toilets with the best view in Scotland and new high tech electric shower (car battery, IBC and pallet enclosure)- in fact everything ready for the fourth Colonsay Rugby Festival. Boat comes in, teams ferried to the site, lovely evening and great party, fuelled by the Colonsay Brewery.

Saturday morning another lovely day, the five teams appear gradually out of their tents or b&bs for Gavin's bacon rolls. Oban arrive by rib with the post protectors-phew! John and Ken, our amazing refs, begin with a captains briefing at 11.45, 10 a side, 10 minutes each way. First game up is Correyvrecken, last year's runners up, versus Inverleith, strengthened by some Irish ringers. In fact Inverleith is a team transformed with more players than supporters, and average age halved. Correyvrecken win by 33, deadly on the break with a hat trick from seriously quick James Brown. They look good.

Merchiston and Strathendrick up next, Merchiston winning 31-5 but 17-year-old Fionn White playing for Strathendrick shines at number nine. Ochaloch Bears, looking seriously hungover, beat Inverleith but are then trounced by Correyvrecken with James Brown now up to 5 tries and Austin chasing him with 3. Oban's direct

running and aggression catches Merchiston cold but they are surprised by the ferocity of resistance from Strathendrick, before running out winners with a big second half. Ginger runs in 3 tries for Oban to take his total up to 4.

And then on to the semi-finals with some really top class rugby, Correyvrecken beat Merchiston 35-19 in a great open running game with fantastic handling from both sides. Austin adds 2 and James 1 to their personal tally.

Second semi-final is the historic struggle between Oban and Ochalochs, Ginger scores for Oban early on after a great break by Halo. A really hard fought game with no further scores as Ochalochs at last play with real determination but can't break down the Oban defence.

Before the final, there is a 20-a-side touch game on the pitch for spectators and enthusiasts.

The final is Oban versus Correyvrecken. Oban's mass defence and commitment are determined to snuff out the threat posed by the Correyvrecken runners. Rich at flyhalf for Correyvrecken trying to get Austin or James into space. After a break for an injury, Correyvrecken are caught napping by Halo who carves through a gap to score under the posts. 7-0 to Oban who then hold out grimly, even after the yellow carding of one player, holding on to the ball and defending well against repeated Correyvrecken attacks. Late in the second half Correyvrecken at last get James Brown into space, he scorches away to touch down under the post. Rich converts, 7 all at full time. Two minutes into sudden death extra time, Oban are penalised ten yards from their line. Correyvrecken spins it left, Eddie crosses unopposed and it's all over.

Outstanding final enjoyed by a good crowd in the sunshine, with much knowledgeable comment added from the Inverleith supporters club ("run straight you pillock" etc).

Fionn, the youngest player there, gets man of the tournament; James Brown gets the Golden Boot with 8 tries.

The theme for the ceilidh is "Under the Sea"- and after some well earned partying in their teams, the sea creatures emerge from their tents and start to drift over to the main tent and the music. A significantly bustier Pamela Anderson is there reprising Baywatch; John the ref is straight out of a slaughterhouse/horror movie as Shark Attack with his wife Sheila as a very elegant jelly fish; there is a huge lobster- too drunk to speak but he looks great; a startlingly green Irish jellyfish, a man with a bottle strapped to his head (message in a bottle); a very fetching penguin; Poseidon complete with a garden rake (pitchfork deemed too dangerous); finding Nemo; flotsam and jetsam draped in rubbish; the Middleton girls in nets; and finally as the sun set over the beach 20 near naked men (19 figure hugging speedos and one pair of baggy grey boxers) roped together walked into the tent- *a rope of mussels* (muscles- geddit). Dead silence, Jen the bandleader reduced to

incoherence, women young and old averting their gaze, small children sobbing, and then Pamela steps forward and seizing the lead mussel by the hand(?) trips into a Strip the Willow, and the party begins.

A fantastic night, with sea creatures and locals partying until 5. Jen and the band are perfect, Pede nonchalantly smacks down a revolting creature from the deep with his banjo without missing a beat. A swaying, swirling mob of about 100 dashing a White Sergeant on the pitch- and best of all a Virginia Reel stretching out into the distance.

And later the next morning- the sea creatures are gone, the tents are struck, site cleared (thank you to the Inverleith supporters club- you are stars)- the sheep and the rain are back.

Thanks,

The Middletons

#### **RNLI day**



On the 15th July there was a fundraising book sale in the village hall, raising money for the RNLI. Between the sales of books, teas & coffees, RNLI merchandise and a ceilidh (run by our voluntary fire fighters), over £800 was raised and donated to the valuable lifeboat

service.

#### **Car Boot Sale**

A successful car boot sale was held in July in the hall car park. At least 15 local sellers were in attendance with a table of donated items, with proceeds going towards the hall. The primary school had a table of crafts made by the children and with a least 100 people visiting the sale, enjoying donated home baking, £455 was raised.

## 90/60/30 Party

On the 1st August there was a great celebration of many decades spanned; Mo Middleton, Rupert Middleton and Lady Strathcona celebrated birthdays of 30, 60 and 90 respectively. Around 130 guests were invited to the hotel for food and drink and to toast the aforementioned. There were many proud speeches from family and friends and all in attendance enjoyed a wonderfully warm afternoon.

## Inveraray Inn



Crianlarich and now Inveraray: a warm welcome for Colonsay folk

Dear editor

Corncrake readers will likely be aware that the Byrne family own the Best Western hotel in Crianlarich and offer a year-round discounted islander rates (see below).

We are pleased to inform your readers that we have recently acquired The Inveraray Inn (formerly the Argyll Hotel) where the same offer applies effective immediately.

Readers can be assured of a warm welcome if they mention their Colonsay connection. We hope that your readers will find these facilities useful.

Kind regards, Geaspar

NOV – MAR: £25 / PERSON / NIGHT B&B  
APR – OCT: £40 / PERSON / NIGHT B&B

## Sports Day



Sports Day buzz got off to a great start with a '4th of July' fundraising ceilidh, celebrating all things American. Gavin and the Pantry team served classic Stateside fare which fuelled a long night of enthusiastic dancing. An unusual and well-attended start to the ceilidh season which raised almost £300 to go towards the community sports.

The day itself arrived on the 8th August, the wind just holding off and by 11am there were already more than enough children to kick off with old favourites such as the egg and spoon race and the sack races (it should be noted that the sacks used were kindly lent by the Primary School and as such were a tad small on the adults - the organisational team apologised but found it quite amusing to watch). These were followed by sprints and adult races, and then the 'heavies'; shot-put and Toss the Welly a.k.a Welly Wanging.

The afternoon finished with the tug-o-war, the hill race - from the airstrip to the Ardskenish green and back and featuring some stellar performances from the young locals - and once the rain closed in the kids (and some non-kids) took turns whacking the piñata in the immovable marquee.

## Colonsay Open Golf 2015



The Colonsay Open took place on Saturday 15 August in excellent sunny conditions.

After assembling in the Pantry for pre golf coffee, bacon rolls, allocation of handicaps and explanation of the days rules a motley group of golfers made their way to the first tee.

Groups of three teed off as the sun shone and after nine holes they were ecstatic to find refreshments in the form of burgers, a dram, soft drink and chocs ably served by Janet and Katrina.

As the sun set, the stragglers Tin Tin and co made their way back to the 18th needing several score cards in order to calculate their total shots!!



Score cards were collected in order to establish the eventual winners and the players adjourned to tart themselves up for the evening presentation and buffet in the Hotel.

After several recounts and scrutiny of the scorecards ( and disqualifications !!! ) the bandits sorry winners were finally announced ..

Winner of the scratch competition was Walter.

Winner of the h/cap competition was Derek

Several visitors also won , well done to them especially Tin Tin of the 256 bus.

Kids had a good competition and we look forward to them competing in the future.

Thanks to the Hotel for the buffet , greenkeeper Phil, Archie and volunteers for preparing the course and of course the players for making the day go well.

See you all next year.

Davie

The prizes were as follows:

Scratch trophy

1st Walter

2nd George

3rd Brian

Open trophy

1st Derek

2nd Brian

3rd Joe

Local shield

1st Joe

2nd Walter

3rd David Bell

Nearest the Pin

Trevor

Longest drive  
Donald Snr.

Ladies cup  
1st Annie  
2nd Caitlin  
3rd Sue

Visitors Cup  
Brian

Most Enthusiastic  
Douglas

Oldest competitor  
Trevor

Worst score of the day  
Neil

Shot of the day  
Phil (After the head of his driver went further than the ball on the first tee!)

Children  
1st Jamie  
2nd Quincy  
3rd Phoebe

The adult prizes were presented by Moira Bell and the children's were presented by head school teacher, Gill McKenzie.

Richard Buttrick also composed this poem about the day:

### **Colonsay Open 2015**

or

*"This beloved and infernal game"*

Upon the field of green and gold the twenty-five set out to play.  
Pride and honour the measures of the winning of the day.  
Each awaits the pleasure, pain and redemption their round holds  
And so with drive and pitch and putt the drama of the day unfolds

Across the sun warmed machair drift joy filled cries,

Or, perhaps more often, somewhat anguished sighs  
As putt is sunk, or shot flies wide, while the score records the cost  
For those who trusted in the gods of golf as yet another ball is lost.

The rabbits must live in fear as balls, like Alice, disappear  
Down holes so blind and dark that the devil himself would find a place to park  
And I, at least, after pleading to the skies, would do a deal with Beelzebub himself  
To hit one stroke true enough to rest restore my falling pride.

And yet, the sun shines so sweet upon the backs of all us sinners  
As we delve into the dark arts of this beloved and infernal game  
That pleasure seeps through aching joints of winner and loser just the same.

Richard B  
Uragaig  
15<sup>th</sup> August 2015

## Gaelic Language & Music Weekend

**10TH - 11TH OCTOBER 2015**

**Cànan 'is Ceòl**  
**ann an Colbhasa**

music & language  
on Colonsay

*The beautiful Isle of Colonsay will host a weekend event of Gaelic language and music this October. With taster sessions focusing on Gaelic culture and the local dialect and beginner level conversational classes, this event will be fun for all levels of ability in the language.*

**For more information and to book a place:**

☎ 01951 200 244  
✉ [gaeliconcolonsay@gmail.com](mailto:gaeliconcolonsay@gmail.com)

**Colonsay Community Development Company**  
Colonsay Service Point  
Isle of Colonsay  
Argyll  
PA61 7YW

**BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG**

In October there will be an exciting opportunity to learn more about Gaelic, the Colonsay dialect of the language, Gaelic culture and song on Colonsay. Run by Colonsay Community Development Company and funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the weekend will feature local tutors and musicians and will offer varied 'taster' sessions and relaxed conversational classes at a beginner level. Those with a prior

knowledge of Gaelic may enjoy attending just the taster sessions and the music sessions in the hotel in the evenings.

For more information or to book a place (spaces are limited) call Caitlin on 01951 200 244 or contact CCDC on the addresses above.

### Scalasaig Sessions



There has been a number of concerts this summer held in the village hall in the run-up to the music festival featuring some familiar faces and some new. From a man in a milk van to Scots song accompanied by ukulele, we have been treated to a varied and high quality programme of music. Some highlights have included the revisiting of our well ken't friends Marc Duff & Iain Thompson, and a particularly well attended local's concert; featuring a surprise performance from Helen Piper as she provided superb backing vocals for her mum and raised the cuteness rating of the evening to roughly 110%.

As always it makes a huge difference to both locals and visitors to have these mid-week events running through the summer and all who attended are very grateful to Pedie & Carol for their efforts.

Carer Job

Argyll and Bute Council  
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid  
Willowview Community Care Team  
OBAN PA34 4SB

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**A VACANCY HAS ARISEN ON COLONSAY  
FOR A PERMANENT POST FOR A**

# **HOME CARER**

**Minimum of 6hrs per week.**

**Providing personal care to clients  
in their own homes.**

We are looking for enthusiastic people to join our team of carers to provide personal care to people in their own homes. You will be on a rota that may include weekend and evening work.

The basic rate of pay is £8.75 per hour, rising to £9.55, plus travel expenses, where appropriate. Training will be provided.

There will be an expectation to travel to clients using your own vehicle.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION & APPLICATION FORM  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Fiona Munn, Home Care Organiser,  
(Coll & Tiree)  
01631 572966**

All prospective applicants are encouraged to look at Vacant Posts advertised on  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk) and [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk)

## Calmac Update - Living Wage



## Caledonian MacBrayne is first UK ferry operator to gain Living Wage accreditation

- First ferry operator in the UK to be Living Wage accredited
- First major transport operator in Scotland to gain this recognition

- Joins a list of around 300 other companies and organisations in Scotland which have also been accredited, and 1600 throughout the UK
- Underlines the company's commitment to its staff, many of whom live and work in some of the UK's most economically fragile areas
- Minister for Youth and Women's Employment endorses CalMac's approach and welcomes the accreditation

Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) has become the first ferry operator in the UK and the first major transport company in Scotland to achieve Living Wage accreditation.

The accreditation has been earned by David MacBrayne Limited - CalMac's parent company - underlining and enforcing the company's commitment to its 1450-strong staff, many of whom live and work in remote and/or economically fragile areas around the Scottish west coast. It also ensures Argyll Ferries' employees are covered by the pledge.

The award has been warmly welcomed and endorsed by Annabelle Ewing MSP, Minister for Youth and Women's Employment.

The accreditation is made by the Poverty Alliance on behalf of the Living Wage Foundation and involves rigorous interrogation of a company or organisation's pay structure both to its own employees and any contracted workers.

All employers will be expected to comply with National Living Wage (NLW) legislation by 2020, as announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the recent Westminster budget.

But CalMac, along with 300 other Scottish companies and 1,600 across the UK as a whole, is one of those going above and beyond any basic statutory commitment by signing up to the Living Wage Foundation's higher rates. The UK government's NLW is a rise in the national minimum wage and is not as high the Living Wage determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Working with the Poverty Alliance, the accreditation process involved Caledonian MacBrayne proving not only that it pays its own employees the Living Wage or above, but also making the commitment to ensure regular company contractors also comply. Thereafter the Living Wage and accreditation are reviewed annually.

Minister for Youth and Women's Employment, Annabelle Ewing MSP, said: "CalMac Ferries Limited plays a vital role in island life, operating a lifeline ferry service and providing employment for the communities of the Clyde and Hebrides.

"Staff are at the heart of this organisation, from the crews manning the vessels and ports to the kitchen staff making the famous CalMac breakfasts, so I'm pleased to see CalMac recognise this by becoming a Living Wage employer.

"The Scottish Government is committed to fairness and supporting those on the lowest incomes. We recognise the real difference the Living Wage can make to working people and are leading by example by becoming the first accredited government in the UK earlier this year.

"Research shows that the Living Wage can enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism and improve staff morale but we need even more organisations to recognise the benefits and sign up for accreditation and help those on the lowest pay.

“I congratulate CalMac on becoming the latest organisation to receive Living Wage accreditation and hope that even more follow its example.”

“It is absolutely right and proper that CalMac’s employees should earn a Living Wage,” said managing director Martin Dorchester. “It is something we were already doing with our staff and gaining accreditation simply formalises our commitment to this.

“A recent independent study by the Fraser of Allander Institute into CalMac’s social and economic impact across the network found that its staff earn 12 per cent more than the Scottish average. This reflects not only the importance we place on ensuring our staff - often in areas where job opportunities can be limited and also low paid - are financially recognised fairly for their work, but that they can live well within the prevailing financial climate.

“The same study also found that a CalMac employee typically has 13.6 years’ service with the company - an indicator of the fact that, for many years, the dignity afforded by a good wage has added up to commendable retention and loyalty for which we are both appreciative and proud.

“In an ideal world companies should not have to wear a badge to let others know it is doing the right thing by its staff, but if by wearing this badge CalMac can persuade others to follow suit and reward their staff properly, then this can only be a good thing.”

“Congratulations to Cal Mac on joining over 300 accredited Living Wage employers in Scotland,” said Peter Kelly, director of The Poverty Alliance. “As the first ferry company to become accredited, CalMac is leading the way.

“With over half of children in poverty in Scotland living in a household where someone works, paying the Living Wage is now more important than ever.

“We hope to see more employers following in CalMac’s steps in the coming weeks and months.”

The Living Wage, as set out by the Living Wage Foundation, should not be confused with the National Living Wage (NLW) detailed recently in the Westminster budget. The NLW is, effectively, a structured increase of the minimum wage, with the incremental rise beginning next year and continuing until 2020, when the NLW will be £9 for those 25 and over - it is less for younger people. The minimum wage becomes NLW next year at £7.20.

The Living Wage, which CalMac has signed up to, is significantly higher. Set by the Living Wage Foundation, not the government - currently its minimum level is pegged at £7.85 per hour for anyone over 18 - it is already 65 pence per hour more than the NLW will be when it’s introduced in 2016. It is reviewed on an annual basis and it is highly likely that, come 2020, the Living Wage Foundation level will be significantly higher than the statutory £9 mark.

### **Dr John Currie**

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Dr. John Currie, who lived on Colonsay and worked as GP for many years.

CURRIE Dr. John S (Stranraer / Colonsay / Strachur) Suddenly on Saturday 22nd August 2015, following a short illness, John beloved son of Lady Currie and the late Prof. Sir Alastair Currie. Much loved father of Catherine, Robert and Sarah. A proud grandfather and dear brother. Service at Warriston Crematorium, Edinburgh,



Lorimer Chapel on Friday 4th September 2015 at 15:00. Family flowers only please. All welcome.

### **Paddy Leahy 1934-2015**

Patricia (Paddy) Nicolson Leahy

12th September 1934 - 27th July 2015

Paddy was born in Danes Drive, Glasgow on the 12th September 1934, the third of four children to Herbert and Rachel Leahy.

In around 1941, during the Second World War Paddy was evacuated to Colonsay where some of the family stayed at No 5 Glassard and she started school on Colonsay - a long association and love for the island of her forebears.

On return to Glasgow her schooling continued at Glasgow High School for Girls then Glasgow Vet School, graduating in 1957, one of only 6 girls in her class. There then followed various jobs including a year in Australia before returning, first to Newcastle then moving home to the west of Scotland to work for the practice in Paisley where she would stay until her retirement in 1992.

Throughout all her travels she always returned to Colonsay and especially Milbuie which the family had initially been renting and then, when the chance came, she bought it for the family's use.

After retirement Paddy continued travelling and spending time with her animals and of course staying in Colonsay.

Latterly, ill health meant her visits became less frequent until she had to move to Clarence Court Care Home where she passed away peacefully in the early hours of 27th July 2015.

Paddy will be missed by those who knew and loved her and the family would like to thank all those who have extended their sympathies at this time.

*Alasdair Carswell*

Patricia (Paddy) Leahy  
1934 - 2015

Paddy's door at Milbuie was never closed, she was one of the world's sociable people. There are many memories of drinks, meals and parties with stories to be shared, laughs to be had and a welcoming that only Paddy could give.

Paddy was born in Glasgow, the third child of four children to Herbert and Rachael (nee. Nicolson). You will find Paddy's name on the old school register at Kilchattan - during the war Paddy, her older sister Kathleen, her younger brother John and her mother Rachael evacuated to Colonsay, staying at 5 Glassard. (Her father and older brother Alan, stayed in Glasgow)

After the war the family returned to Glasgow, where Paddy completed her education and trained as a vet. I remember Paddy telling me that after she had qualified she thought to herself; I've been in Glasgow or on Colonsay all my life, I need to see somewhere different. She bought herself a passage to Australia and worked as a vet over there for a year or so, before coming back to Glasgow via a veterinary job in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Within a few short years Paddy settled at a veterinarian practice in Paisley, her partnership there lasted until her retirement.

Paddy would come to Colonsay whenever she could and would always be happy to help with all creatures great and small (she was after all a wise and wonderful lady). Paddy was never without pets of her own, there would nearly always be dogs and a cat in the car with her when travelling to and from Colonsay. And for a long while she bred and showed Clydesdales, keeping the horses on a clients farm in Renfrewshire.

Paddy never married, she had strong family ties with her sister, brothers, nieces and nephews. Her friends were very important to her and the term 'ladies that lunch' reminds me very much of her.

Those that knew Paddy will have their own memories of her and those who met her because their animal needed treating will remember her as knowledgeable, no nonsense, but kind.

Aunty Paddy - I'll raise a glass of Chardonnay to you and know that my life is the better for having known and loved you.

*Lotta, Milbuie.*

#### **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](mailto: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.*

