

Hebridean Homecoming Year



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

Highlands and Islands Community Newspaper of the Year 2022

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£2.20

Here Comes the Summer!



Mod Ionadail Leodhais



Three in a Row!



Artist in Residence

Plus: Back in Time • Old Photos • An Emigration Story • Football Focus and lots more!

Fàilte

Welcome to our July/August bumper summer edition. As usual with our double issues, we have four more pages of excellent content for you to enjoy and keep you going until September.

We've enjoyed a wonderful spell of hot, sunny weather, although it's at the point where a wee bit of rain is necessary for our rivers, lochs, reservoirs and grass. The sun is great, though. It really benefits everyone's health and makes living here a pleasure. However, anyone visiting in the last few weeks may have gained a bit of a false impression of the place! It's not often we get such a sustained hot spell, especially so early on in the season.

We had lots to fit in this issue, with the continued emigration series, photos from the local Mòd (the first time there has been a full programme since 2019), the usual football round-up, including photos from the club's Jock Stein win, and the regular village news. At this point I would like to put a plea out to residents of Tong, Coll and Vatisker – in recent months we've received little news from these areas and I'd like to encourage you to think of sending us your birthday celebrations, new baby announcements, wedding photos, anniversaries, graduations and achievements, and so on. You can send your news to us via your local correspondent (all contact details are printed on the right) or direct to the magazine's inbox (latneditor2@outlook.com). We also regularly check our Facebook messages and Instagram DMs. Please remember there is no charge to put in any village news.

We have a new Artist in Residence featured in this issue: Ishbel Murray from Tong. I met Ishbel recently when I took part in her series of free drawing classes at The Hut over the winter. Keep an eye out in An Lanntair for other work she's being doing in the local community, including a film; it will be of interest to a lot of people.



touch with us.

One final plea from me this month. The LATN AGM is due to be held on 8 August at 7pm in the Back Free Church creche. We have a great committee and we hope they continue for many more years. However, we would really like for new people to join us as well. I've said it before and I'll say it again, it's a nice committee to be on, with the burden of the work falling on the Editor and the village correspondents. We hold 10 meetings a year, each lasting about 1 hour. At the meetings we discuss ideas for articles and so forth. To ensure the resilience and ongoing success of the paper, we need new blood to join. If you are interested, get in touch with anyone listed on the right-hand side of this page. You don't need to be a writer! We hope you will consider joining us for our AGM and thereafter to keep this success story going.

Finally, the *Loch a Tuath News* would like to congratulate Mrs Annie MacSween (Ness) on her MBE. Deputy Lord Lieutenant Annie was instrumental, along with Lord Lieutenant Iain Macaulay, in our success in being awarded a QAVS in 2022. Her help and guidance with the process were much appreciated, and the Vice Chair of LATN and I will be enjoying an afternoon tea party with the King shortly as a result! A full report of our Holyrood experience will appear in the next issue.

Enjoy the summer; see you in September.

Jayne

Email: latneditor2@outlook.com
Find us on Facebook | Instagram | Twitter
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Cover image courtesy Sgoil a' Bhac

Submit an article or a photograph to the *Loch a Tuath News* by post (73 Newmarket, HS2 0DU) or by email (latneditor2@outlook.com). Contributions are preferred in digital format if possible. We are able to scan photos and documents. Please contact the editor to make an appointment. If you need to have an article typed, please contact the secretary.

Missed any issues? If you would like a copy of any *Loch a Tuath News* sent to you, then please get in touch with Colin Tucker, colintucker2000@yahoo.co.uk; tel.: 01851 820685.

We need you to keep us informed of any news you would like to share with the rest of the community. Please get in touch with your local correspondents, who give their free time each month to collate all the news items. They are the 'eyes and ears' of the district, but they need your help. See the contact details on this page. Thanks!

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The views expressed in the *Loch a Tuath News* by named individuals, unless otherwise stated, are not necessarily endorsed by the LATN Editorial committee.

As Na Bailtean

BACK

Wedding

A wedding with a connection to Back took place recently when Fiona Macleod (daughter of Kenneth and Erica Macleod and a granddaughter of the late Angus (Iga) and Bell Macleod, 44 Back) married Fraser Robinson from Kinbrace. They were married at the Royal British Legion in Thurso on 20 May.



Fiona and Fraser Robinson ▲



Ellie Margaret Maciver ▲

New Baby

Congratulations to Donnie and Lynne Maciver (1A Back) on the birth of their daughter Ellie Margaret on 1 June. Ellie is a baby sister for Louie and Archie and a new granddaughter for Norman and Nellie next door.

Bereavements

Alasdair Iain Mackenzie (*Tommy Hannah*) formerly of Reay Cottage, Back, passed away peacefully aged 84 in Stokesley, North Yorkshire, on Sunday 15 May. He is sorely missed by his beloved wife Vicky, his son Glen, his daughters Karen and Christine and their children, to whom he was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He was a much loved brother of William (*Uilleam*) and Dolina of Vatisker and Stornoway. The photo was taken in 2003 when he travelled home to the 50th year Castle Reunion with his daughter Christine. He attended as a student in the first year and then went on to start his apprenticeship in Birmingham as an electrical engineer with GEC.



▲ Alasdair Iain Mackenzie

Murdina MacMillan (nee Gunn) passed away peacefully on June 6th, 2023 at Blar Buidhe care home, aged 96 years. Murdag as she was most well known (*Murdag Ghurais*), spent many years living on Kennedy Terrace, but her formative years were spent at

number 1 New Street Back in the Poligan. Murdag was the second of five sisters, Mairead, Ciorstag, Ishbail and Seordag.

After a busy career working in hotels around Scotland, she returned to the island and worked at the Park Guest house with Catriona and Ian MacArthur. Following retirement, she helped at manses throughout the island for communion seasons, a role to which she was truly devoted.

10K Winner

Congratulations to Fiona Campbell's (15 Back) grandson Jonathan Fairgrieve on winning the recent Stornoway 10K race in a time of 35:23; he was also first over the line in the annual Leanne Fund 10K, held in Point, in a time of 35:15.



▲ Murdina MacMillan with two of her best friends Anna Shandaidh and Catriona Sheorais, who are both as lovely as ever.

LOCH A TUATH NEWS

AGM

**AND APPOINTMENT OF
COMMITTEE AND OFFICE
BEARERS**

▼

Back Free Church Creche
TUESDAY 8 AUGUST 2023
7 PM
ALL WELCOME

GRESS

Engagement

Congratulations to Craig Macleod (*mac Iain is Rosie*; 10 Gress) and Lauren (*Bounce*) Mackay, Stornoway, who got engaged after he proposed on Gress beach under the stars back in February. They celebrated recently with family and friends in the Golf Club and a great night was had by all.



Craig and Lauren ▲

Get Well Wishes

We are pleased to hear that Mairi (*Ghlen*) MacIannan, 23 Gress, is making steady progress after being in hospital recently. We hope it won't be long till we see you out and about on your daily walks.

We also remember others who have been unwell and have had treatment over recent months.



Baby Hayden ▲

New Baby

Congratulations to Jordan and Melissa Macdonald on the birth of their baby son Hayden on 3 April 2023 weighing 9 lb 13 oz. Hayden is the first grandchild of Martin and Morag Macdonald, St Aula' View, Gress, and the great-grandchild of Iain (*Swannie*) and Morag Macdonald, no. 40. The photo shows four generations: Hayden with Jordan, Swannie seated and Martin standing.

New Beginnings

Maisie Murray (*nighean Don agus Dana*; Seonamar, 6 Gress) and Stewart Gordon (*mac Al agus Annette*; 2a Gress) have completed their primary education in Sgoil a' Bhac and will be starting first year in The Nicolson Institute after the summer holidays. *Gur math a thèid dhuibh.*

New Driver

Sandy Macdonald (*mac DA agus Margaret*; no. 31) passed his driving test recently. Safe driving! Sandy has just left school and attended the school Leavers' Ceremony in The Nicolson Institute. After the summer Sandy is heading to Glasgow City College to undertake training in Deck Officer Cadetship.

Bereavements

The village was saddened to hear of the passing of Sister Clare (Carmel 7a Gress) on 2 May 2023. Sister Clare will be remembered as a very friendly and cheerful lady whose smile brightened the day for everyone she met. We send our sincere condolences to her dear friend Joan, sister Maggie, brothers-in-law John and Maurice, her nieces and nephews and their families (see Obituary, p. 9).

Chirsty Mairead Macleod (Tong) passed away on 27 May in Ospadal Nan Eilean, aged 89. Chirsty Mairead was born and brought up in 12 Gress along with her four brothers. She married Ivor Macleod, Vatisker, and set up home in Tong, but maintained a keen interest in all things to do with her native village throughout her life. We send our sincere sympathies to her family (see Obituary, p. 9).



Athletics

Catriona Bain (*nighean Jack agus Chriselle*; no. 42) took part in the Mull of Kintyre 10K held in Campbelton recently. Catriona completed the race in 41:29 and was



placed second out of 298 ladies! Counting the men, a total of 477 competitors took part and she was placed 14th overall. *'S math a rinn thu a Chatriona!* The photo shows Catriona receiving her medal on the podium.

◀ Catriona Bain

◀◀ Sandy Macdonald



▲ The Hut
◀ Chrissie and Malcolm Burr

VATISKER

Hut Gets a Paint Job

The Loch a Tuath Community Hut is the lucky recipient of a new paint job courtesy of FES. The team of Gordon Maciver (Operations Manager), Scott Mackay and Kenneth Macleod (both painters) undertook the work as part of FES's Community Benefit Programmes, which they carry out with HHP. They are pictured with Margaret-Ann Maciver, who oversees the running of the Hut.

Silver Wedding Anniversary

Many congratulations to Chrissie (nee Kennedy) and Malcolm Burr on their silver wedding anniversary. Chrissie (of 11 Vatisker; *Chrissie Iain Mast*) and Malcolm (originally from Orkney) were married in Edinburgh on Friday 19 June 1998. Their reception was held at Houston House Hotel, West Lothian.

Missing Creels

While some have since been returned to the owner, we are disappointed to report that twelve creels were removed from Brevig pier a few weeks ago, much to the distress of their owner. Nine were returned after a Facebook plea for them to be taken back, but three are still missing. If you have any information on their whereabouts, please get in touch with Fraser Millar.

UPPER COLL

Special Birthdays

Some of our senior citizens are celebrating special birthdays. We send warmest wishes to Seonaid Stewart (Ebenezer, 13a) on her 80th birthday. We also send good wishes to Kenneth Angus Macdonald (*Kingy*; no. 3), who has had his 70th birthday, and to Iain Macaulay (Solas, no. 65), who celebrated his 65th birthday. Congratulations to you all!

New Home

We send a warm Upper Coll welcome to the Maciver family who have recently moved into their new house at number 15c. We wish Jamie and Lauren and their sons, Alfie and Samuel, many happy times in their new home.

Vandalism

We are very sorry to report that a caravan belonging to one of our villagers has been vandalised while parked on their apportionment beyond the village. This is a shocking and disturbing thing to have happened and upsetting for everyone in Upper Coll. If you have any information about this we would urge you to contact the police.

Island Games

Well done to Stephen Mutch (no. 4), who has been selected to play in the football team representing the Western Isles on the island of Guernsey in the Channel Islands in July. We send good luck wishes to all our islanders who are taking part.

Mòd

We congratulate all the children who took part in the local mòd. The participation of so many children is wonderful to



Vandalism ▲ Alyth (right) and Bethany (left) Mackay ▲

see, and you are all to be commended. You can see pictures from the participants from Sgoil a' Bhac and Tong Primary on pages 12-13. Pictured here are Alyth and Bethany Mackay from Stornoway Primary who were awarded 1st and 3rd, respectively, in the P4-5 learners solo singing. Alyth and Bethany's grandparents are Margaret Anne and Iain Mackay (no. 6b) and their parents are Donnie and Donna Mackay.

School Leavers

It is that time of year again when we see the P7s from our local schools transition to the Nicolson Institute and when our senior pupils leave school to either embark on new educational courses or take up employment at home or away. We wish you all a restful and safe summer and best wishes for your new endeavours.

COLL

New Home

Best wishes to Mark and Jo Macdonald and their girls Bella and Alana on moving into their new house at Singlewell (9C Coll). It's wonderful to have two new young ones in the village. We wish you many happy and healthy years in your new home.

Dancing Trophy

In more happy news for the Macdonald family, Bella is part of a cheer and jazz team that was recently awarded second place in a competition in Inverness. Here she is pictured with her medal and the trophy.

Farewell

Rachel Erskine's neighbours in Outend Coll would like to wish her and her family all the best as they move to their new home in Beauly at the end of July. Hopefully, Rachel will be back regularly to visit her parents (Richard and Houston Collacott) and on work-related trips.

News Wanted

Please remember to send your village news to LATN. This can be done either via the village correspondent, Joan Macleod, or directly to the Editor's inbox (latneditor2@outlook.com). All contact information is on page 2. We have not been receiving very much Coll news recently and we would like to see more! There is no charge for putting any village news in, so send us your engagements, weddings, births, anniversaries, special birthdays, bereavement notices, and so on.



Bella Macdonald

TONG

New Baby

Congratulations to Ali and Mairi Campbell (Aird Tong) on the birth of their second child Owen Cailean Campbell on 14 February. Owen is a younger brother for Eryn, a fifth grandchild for Iain Alasdair and Etta (Aird Tong) and a fourth for Donnie and Chrisanne (Newvalley).

Bereavement

It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Christina M. Macleod (*Chirsty Mairead*) of 2 Morrison Terrace, Tong. We send our condolences to her son Aonghais Iain and her daughter Shona Mairi on the passing of their mother, to her brother Angus (Tain), and to her wider circle of friends and family. A full obituary can be found on p. 9.

Dux

Congratulations to Ellie Smith on being named Dux of Culloden Academy. Ellie is the youngest of the eight children of Jennifer and Domhnall Iain Smith and a granddaughter of the late Christina (*Teenie*) Smith, 7 Aird Tong.

Fabulous Fundraiser

Congratulations to Sophie Morrison, who recently completed the London marathon. She also held a bingo night at Back FRC. Both events were for the charity MIND and raised a hugely impressive sum of £2166. Sophie is a student at London Contemporary Dance School. She is the daughter of Marina and Jim Morrison, and a granddaughter of the late Jimmy and Mary Morrison (Laxdale) and Joan and the late Murdo Murray (Ford Terrace).

Cuppa and Ceilidh Group

The group went back on tour to visit some local community gardens to get a better understanding of what we can do in our local Polycrub. Huge thanks to Lewis & Harris Horticultural Producers and Ken Kennedy for giving us the guided tour and answering all questions. Following this, the group decided on a mini tour of the West Side visiting the Carloway Community Shop ending with tea/coffee and the Grinneabhat cafe. Once again, huge thanks to the staff there for their great service!

We will be meeting to discuss further plans including trips and activities. If this is something you would like to get involved in please do not hesitate to get in touch with Iain on: iain@tongandback.org



Cuppa and Ceilidh



Sophie Morrison



Owen Cailean Campbell



Ellie Smith

Also in the News

Open Studios is Back

Open Studios Hebrides has received grant funding for the third year running. The brainchild of Brevig-based artist Gill Thompson, OSH runs for two weeks in the summer, showcasing island art. Studios, galleries and spaces are opened to the public, helping to connect artists with the public and their local communities.

Gill told us, 'It all began here in 2021 with just 12 artists based between Tong and Tolsta. Last year it had evolved into an island-wide event. Artists open their studios or show their work in shared venues, giving visitors the opportunity to meet them and find out more about their work. There will be five 'Art Trails' based around Broad Bay, Lochs, Stornoway/Point, Uig and the West Side.'

Artists to visit in the Broad Bay area are Coll Pottery, Christine Morrison – Shadow Studio Vatisker, Gill Thompson – Harbour Print Breibhig, Terri Davies, Ralph Tonge, Lesley Mackenzie at Back Community Hut and Tom Hickman – Studio 17, Tolsta. Eilidh Jamieson will also be taking part from her new studio/gallery E Jay Design in Stornoway.

Keep an eye out on social media for further information.

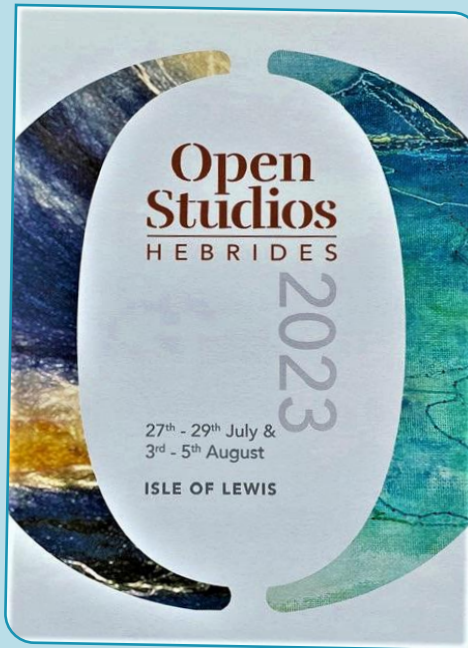
New Waste and Recycling Schedule in Effect

New service changes to all waste and recycling collections in Lewis and Harris took effect on 29 May. To find out when your bins will now be collected, visit the CnES website: www.cne-siar.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/lewis-and-harris

Mobility and Scrappage Fund

Up to £3000 is available to eligible applicants in the Outer Hebrides for the disposal of their older vehicles and to encourage the switch towards active or shared travel options. Applicants will receive a £2000 grant upon the disposal of their vehicle at a SEPA treatment facility and provision of a verifiable Certificate of Destruction. An additional Travel Better grant of up to £1,000 (based on two adults applying for £500 each) can be claimed towards the cost of shared or active travel options once the vehicle has been disposed of.

The disposal grant is only available for one vehicle per household. Through the Travel Better grant, the applicant can apply for up to £500 each for themselves



and another adult living in the same household. However, if the applicant wishes to buy a cargo bike, electric cargo bike or if an adapted cycle is best suited to their needs, they can apply for up to £1000 towards the cycle option only.

More information on the Mobility and Scrappage Fund, as well as the travel options that the Travel Better grant can be used for is listed on the Energy Savings Trust website. This fund is administered by Energy Saving Trust and funded by Transport Scotland.

£5300 raised for Bethesda

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar recently announced that the Dileab: Metagama performances, including that at Coll Centre, raised a total of £5300 for Bethesda Hospice. The Dileab project commemorating one hundred years of the sailing of the Metagama from Stornoway on the 21st of April 1923, was highly successful with eight performances taking place across Lewis in March and April 2023.

The Department of Education, Skills and Children's Services decided in early 2023 that all monies raised from a silver collection at the door of each event would be passed onto local charity, Bethesda Hospice.



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TYRES IN STOCK**

OBITUARIES

THE REVEREND CANON PATRICIA ANNE LOCKHART (SISTER CLARE) 24 MARCH 1944 – 2 MAY 2023

Sister Clare of Carmel (7a Gress) died on 2 May 2023. She was an Anglican nun and member of the Order of The Sisters of Charity, which she first joined aged 19 when called by vocation to religious life, which she pursued with conviction and determination all her life, making her Profession in 1967.

During the 1980s there was a period when the role of women in the church was explored. Again, she recognised her calling, leading her to further training and she was ordained as a priest, among the first cohorts of women priests in the Church of England.

She worked in Sunderland both as a hospital chaplain and with a charge for a local church, serving there for eleven years. She then moved to Gress to be with her friend Joan. They had known each other in Sunderland where Joan was the Chief Nursing Officer.

Sister Clare moved here in 1995 and quickly established the House of Prayer, transforming the barn into a chapel, a place of peace,

of quiet prayerfulness and love. Anybody coming within its four walls felt the special nature that pervades buildings used for prayer year in and year out.

Sister Clare was unstinting in her devotion to provide care and loving support to individuals. She made lasting friendships while exploring spirituality with people from a wide variety of Christian experiences. Her creativity was immense, drawing from a lifetime of reading, listening and caring. She drew us all closer to God in all that she did and during her last illness. She epitomised the serenity of her profound faith.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family, especially her remaining sister Maggie. We also remember her brothers-in-law John and Maurice, and her nieces and nephews and their families.

We are especially mindful for Joan, who has lost her companion of nearly 40 years and who shared the Office prayers with Sister Clare every day as a dedicated supporter of the Order.

The motto of the Sisters of Charity is 'God is Love' and nowhere was that more evident than in the community Sister Clare established in Carmel.



It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Christina M. Macleod (Chirsty Mairead) of 2 Morrison Terrace, Tong, aged 89 years.

Chirsty Mairead was born at 12 Gress to Angus (*Aonghais Chenuaidh*) and Mary Macleod. She was their only daughter and a loving sister to Kenneth, John George, Murdo and Angie, who lives in Tain.

Chirsty Mairead was brought up in Gress and always spoke fondly of her idyllic childhood there.

After leaving school she worked at Murdo Maclean's department store,

CHRISTINA M. MACLEOD 23 JUNE 1933 – 27 MAY 2023

before leaving to work in the Great Western Hotel in Oban. This was forever a source of very happy memories and lifelong friendships.

In 1959 she married Evander Macleod (*Iomhair a' Choilean*) of 23 Vatisker. The couple moved to Tong on the birth of their first child Aonghas Iain, who was later followed by Shona Mairi. They were to spend the rest of their lives in Tong and formed strong bonds with special neighbours.

There was nothing Chirsty Mairead enjoyed more than a day in the peats and the laughs that went along with those happy days. Chrissie also took great pleasure in corresponding with lifelong friends and family. She also had great passion for nature and all its beauty.

Chrissie retained a clear memory and would often surprise visitors with details of their family history, as well as tales of a village life that has now gone.

She endured a long period of ill health with great fortitude. During this time she was supported by family as well as care and Medical staff.

Chrissie will be sorely missed by Aonghais Iain, Shona Mairi, Cameron, Mairi and her brother Angus (Tain).

► Chirsty Mairead at her happy place in Gress
At work in the Great Western, Oban ►





Abbie Joins P&D On Stage For Fundraiser

Abbie Macleod, a P7 pupil at Tong Primary, enjoyed sharing the limelight with local heroes Peat and Diesel on stage at the famous Barrowlands venue in Glasgow as part of their recent fundraising gig for the Western Isles Island Games Association. Abbie, who plays the guitar, joined the band on stage to accompany them and show off her talent. She told us afterward that she 'was absolutely buzzing!' Other support acts included Donnie Disco and Rumac Music among others. The gig raised over £20,000.

Project Neptune Community Meeting

As part of Transport Scotland's ongoing review into the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services the Ferries Community Board has recently been engaging with local communities in the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services network. Back Community Council wanted to ensure that people from the Back area were given a chance to voice their concerns with the way the ferry service is currently being run. A public meeting was held Monday 22 May with Angus Campbell, Chair of CALMAC Ferries Community Board. Those attending gave numerous examples of how the ferry service has been letting down islanders in recent years and put forward their own suggestions for how it could be improved. Suggestions included priority booking for islanders, more vessels to increase capacity, better planning of maintenance to minimise disruption, higher fares for campervans, local management of services and more input from islanders.

There was palpable sense of frustration with CalMac, CMAL and Transport Scotland throughout the meeting. Attendees felt that there was a lack of accountability and transparency from all three organisations and no real understanding of the negative impact this issue is having on islanders. One attendee commented that 'CalMac has lost its way', and the consensus was that islanders are now unable to rely on CalMac to provide what is supposed to be a lifeline service. It was only eight years ago that the *Daily Record* ran a 'Keep CalMac' campaign, it is highly unlikely a similar campaign would be run now if the service went out to tender.

A report of the findings from these public engagements will be presented to the Scottish Government by Angus Campbell in coming weeks. Whether the Scottish Government is prepared to listen to islanders remains to be seen. If there is one thing we can be sure of, ignoring the problem is not going to make it go away.

Reader Photo of the Month



Aaron Kearns (9) from Vatisker enjoying the sunshine on the beach

WHAT'S ON?

INTERNATIONAL ISLAND GAMES

4-8 JULY, GUERNSEY

STORNOWAY ART WALK

STARTS 17 JULY 2023

FREE ART FRIDAY

21 JULY 2023

OPEN STUDIOS HEBRIDES

27, 28, 29 JULY AND 3, 4, 5
AUGUST

LEWIS AND HARRIS HORTICULTURAL PRODUCERS' SHOW

SATURDAY 19 AUGUST, TOWN
HALL, STORNOWAY

OH!CON 2023

SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER, UHI
CAMPUS STORNOWAY

Back Football and Recreation Club



Rangers Soccer Academy

Rangers are taking over our facilities again this summer from Monday 17 to Friday 21 July! We are delighted to be able to facilitate this excellent experience for our local children and youth from across the island.

Pay & Play Badminton & Mini Golf

Throughout the summer on days and times when the hall is available, we will have some badminton courts set up, as well as our mini-golf course. Check out our website for availability.

Golf Driving Range

If you're looking for a fun activity to do with the kids, remember our golf driving range is open from 7am to 10pm Monday-Saturday. Tokens can be purchased from Gordon Diesels and Spar. A £3.50 token gets you 50 balls. We have junior clubs available upon request.

Fitness Classes

Sharon's fitness classes will be on pause for the summer holiday. Keep an eye on our social media for details on when the classes will start back.

Smash Back into Badminton

In May we launched a new badminton club on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9pm. The new group will taking a break over the summer and will restart after the summer holidays. The club will start back late August.

An Lanntair - Creative Play

An Lanntair's Creative Play with Danielle Macleod is also on break for the summer holidays. Creative Play will be back after the summer on Wednesdays from 10 to 11am.

Toddle-In

Toddle In is on summer break as well and will return on Thursday 24 August.

Youth Club (P1-P7)

Youth Club runs fortnightly during term-time for P1-P7 children. It will return on Friday 25 August.

Mini-Kickers (P1)

Mini-Kickers is our fun football session for children in P1. It is run on Mondays from 5 to 5:30pm. Children must be registered before they start attending. Registration will open when the schools

return and parents of children in P1 at both Back and Tong schools will be notified by the schools.



Mini-Kickers will return on Monday 28 August.

Development Club (P2-P7)

Our Primary Football Development Club is our football club for primary children. Children must be registered before they start attending. Registration will open when the schools return and parents of children in P2 at both Back and Tong schools will be notified by the schools. Development Club will return on Monday 28 August.

Development Club and Utilita - Football Festival

On 6 June we collaborated with our Development Club sponsor, Utilita Energy, to put on an in-house football festival for P3-P7 children. Utilita sponsored the Development Club subs from mid-March until the end of June so that children could attend the club for free. A team from Utilita then visited in June and it was a pleasure for our volunteers and Development Club parents to have the opportunity to meet them and find out more about the company. They also brought us a 'Football Rebooted' box (pictured) for people to donate football boots they no longer use or that don't fit them anymore, and people can also check to see if there are boots that would suit them or their children instead of buying new boots. The football festival was great fun, all the kids enjoyed it and we couldn't have asked for better weather! Our fab team of volunteer coaches, led by Murray Macleod, did a fantastic job organising and coordinating the football side of things for the children. A full photo

album from the day can be viewed on our Facebook page.

To find out more about what's on at Back FRC, head to our website at backfrc.org.uk.

Facebook – facebook.com/back-footballandrecreationclub

Instagram and Twitter - @backfrc





▲ Finlay Campbell EP6 second place U13 Fiddle



▲ Alana Macdonald GP1 2nd place P1-3 learner recitation



Eilidh Mackenzie 2nd place ▲ sgeulachd



Elise Macdonald GP6 3rd ▲ equal P6-7 solo singing



Katie Anderson GP6 first place ▲ P6-7 recitation



Lewis Mòd

Sgoil a Bhac choir second equal Unison Singing Choral Competition ▲



▲ Jessica Maclean GP2 3rd equal P1-3 learner recitation



▲ Liam Murray 3rd place P4-5 learner recitation

Sgeil a' Bhac



▲ Aibhlin McGregor GP5 won traditional solo singing and the Cupa Roinn nan Eilean Sir and the John Fyfe trophy for the highest marks in music and gaelic



▲ Tong Primary choir were first in the primary unison choirs for schools over 100 pupils/learners recitation

Lewis Mod *Tong School*



▲ Archie Martin won the P4-5 learners recitation



▲ Kirsty Murray 3rd in P1-3 fluent poem



▲ Maisy Kate-Martin was 3rd in P1-3 learners solo



▲ Layla MacSween was first in the P1-P3 learners poetry competition



▲ Ayla Macleod third place in the fiddle competition



▲ Orlaith MacQueen 2nd in P4-5 learners solo singing

An Emigration Story

George Beaton: 18 Upper Coll

In October 2014, a feature on Mrs Alexina Cumming, by D.A. Stewart (*Cab*) was printed in *Loch a Tuath News*. Alexina was the mother of Christine Graham (Bruinish, Upper Coll), Alex (18 Upper Coll) and Murdina Fairclough (Maclean Terrace, Stornoway).

Mrs Cumming, who was 94 at the time, told of growing up in Coll and Upper Coll and working in the Post Office in Back. After her marriage to William Cumming, 17 Upper Coll, she and William moved to Stornoway. Shortly after the birth of her third child Christine, William very sadly died, and Alexina raised her family on her own.

Alexina was one of six children. Two siblings died in infancy and her brother George died in Canada, leaving James, Katie Bell and herself as the sole survivors. In 2014, Alexina was the only one of her family left.

Alexina's final statement in the *LATN* article was, 'I thank the Lord for all he has done for me, but the one thing that haunts me is, not knowing where my brother George is buried, and I hope that one day someone will tell me that they have located his grave and hopefully I will see a photo of it.'

In 1928, George Beaton, 18 Upper Coll, with the help of his aunt Ciorstag in Coll, had left Lewis aged 18. The Canadian Pacific ship, SS *Minnedosa*, left Liverpool for Quebec and Montreal, via Belfast and Greenock, on 4 May 1928. On the next day, 46 passengers, one of whom was George Beaton, embarked at Greenock. Also on the passenger list were Margaret Macleod (16 Upper Coll), Evander Finlayson (24 Aird Tong), Donald Thomson (16 Aird Tong), Norman Macleod (34 Aird Tong) and Norman Maclean (19 Tong).

George, who had been a young postman in Back, settled in Toronto and obtained employment as a clerk. However, he became ill with meningitis and very sadly died in Toronto General Hospital on 18 April 1930, at the age of 20. He had been in hospital for two weeks, and throughout this time his auntie Ciorstag had organised a prepaid telegram to be sent from the hospital every day. It is said he was crying for his mother in Gaelic.

In 2009, some years before *Cab* wrote his article, Alexina's daughter Christine, and her son-in-law Calum Iain, met by chance a Canadian couple, Joan and Frank Marshall, when having a coffee in Glasgow. In conversation, the story of George came up, and the Marshalls very kindly offered to investigate where George was buried. This they duly did, on their return to Canada. They contacted the City Hall in Toronto, but it transpired that a Statement of Death Certificate, which would identify the place of death and burial location, was available only to the next living kin or executor. So, Alexina was still unaware of where George was buried.

Then, in 2014, Margaret Nicolson was doing home care in Stornoway, and one of her clients was Alexina; 'a lovely lady', said Margaret, recalling that time. In the interim, from the time of the original enquiry, online genealogy had progressed and through Ancestry.com Margaret was able to find out missing information, including George's passage details on the *Minnedosa* and his death certificate. She then duly contacted Prospect Cemetery in Toronto, where he had been buried, and found out where exactly he had been buried.

By this time, Alexina was 94 years old and getting increasingly frail, and was so delighted to receive this information about George.

The story does not quite end there. Shortly after that, while Alexina was a patient in Ospadal nan Eilean, Anne White, one of her fellow patients in the ward, was being visited by her son Norman, who was home from Canada, visiting his mother. Once more, the story of George was told, and on his return to Canada, Norman and his wife Maureen duly visited the cemetery, found the grave, and laid flowers on it. Photographs were sent to Alexina. Her lifelong wish to find out about her dear brother's final place of rest was finally granted.

Alexina died on 4 April 2017, aged 97.



George Beaton ▲

You Know How to Whistle, Don't You?

By Donald I. Macdonald

'What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'

Setting aside for today the difficulties of star-crossed Italian teens, quite a lot of interesting information can lie hidden in names.

Look at an OS map of Back, for instance, and you can't help but notice how practically every hillock and rivulet has its own name. In past days, when people spent more time on the moor, these place names were as familiar as street names in Stornoway are now.

I was thinking about that the other day, while walking the dog out the Back peat road. Usually, it's now called 'the road to the mast'. When I was young, it was the 'road to the waterworks'. But the old name is *Na Cnocan Dubha*, The Black Hills.

Shortly after the gate at the community skip you come to a small watercourse that crosses under the road before flowing into the Gress River. Many of you will know it is called 'Feadan Liosgro', although recently someone (who walks there more often than most) told me she had never heard it called that, or, indeed, anything.

What is 'in' this name? It scarcely seems worth calling it anything. Look at the picture of it—to call it a stream, or even a brook, seems generous. It is rarely more than a foot wide and vanishes

feadan, -ain, -an, *s.m.* Flute, flute. 2 Chanter of the bagpipe. 3 Reed. 4 Spout. 5 The calibre of a gun. 6 Barrel. 7 Crevice through which the wind whistles. 8 Oaten-pipe. 9 Discharge of a still. 10*Canal. 11 Water-pipe. 12**Flageolet. 13(DMC) Opening in the wall of a barn to let in the wind for winnowing grain. 14(DMC) Opening in the wall of a byre. 15(DMC) Aqueduct under a road. F. na bàth-aich, the byre-runnel; f. taomaidh, a pump; ceol an fheadain tìath, the music of the soft reed.

—ach, -aiche, *a.* Of, like, or pertaining to, pipes, flutes, chanters, whistles, conduits, reeds, waterpipes or crevices.

▲ Dictionary definition

Feadan Liosgro in the snow ▶



underground at times. Yet it was clearly significant enough in the past to be called something.

Feadan, if you look it up in a Gaelic dictionary, has as its primary meaning a chanter, or a flute. What has that to do with flowing water? At the root of it is *fead* — which means 'whistle'. To whistle (as Lauren Bacall said once), you just 'put your lips together and blow', and that notion of a narrow channel and air—or, in this case, water—being forced through it is where all the meanings of *feadan* ultimately come from.

Next time you walk on the moor, look out for *feadans* on the map and you'll know, before you see them, what to expect: narrow (but sometimes treacherously deep) watercourses. Often linking lochans and rivers, for part of their course the only clue they're there at all might be just a line of rushes.

The second part of this name is even more interesting. *Liosgro* is almost certainly a word of Norse origin. Experts tell us that *-gro* ending (look out for it in other placenames) was originally the Old Norse word *gróf*, which means 'small stream' (or *feadan* if you prefer).

Lios is a bit trickier. *Murchadh Dòmhnallach*, in his excellent *Ainmean-àite Sgìre a' Bhac*, speculates it might come from *lióss*, meaning 'bright' or 'glittering'. 'Glittering brook' does have a nice ring to it.

Isn't it amazing that a muddy channel we might simply step over has a name taking us back over a thousand years?

It also tells us that the people who called it *Feadan Liosgro* didn't know what *gróf* meant, since they (in effect) called it Brook Liosbrook. What does that tell us about how Old Norse ceased to exist as a spoken language when Gaelic became the language of Lewis?

A more obvious example of this is the names of the lochs on the moor; the *-bhat* ending almost all have is Old Norse for 'loch'. They're double-named—Loch Something Loch, just like *Feadan Lios-feadan*. Presumably, lochs with Gaelic-only names, like *Loch an Eilein*, must have had now-lost Norse names, too.

Near to where *Feadan Liosgro* joins the Gress River is *Fuaran Liosgro*, a freshwater spring. Its water was prized in the days before piped water—I was told that one Back emigrant took away a bottle of it to use at his grand-daughter's baptism. You will struggle to find the *fuaran* today though, like the name of the *feadan* it's named after, it is largely forgotten.

It would be a shame if 'largely' turned into 'completely'. Names, and especially the place names so liberally dotted around Back, are not just arbitrary collections of sounds. They are like miniature time machines that can give us a glimpse into what our forebears thought and felt about where they lived, and they can enrich our own understanding of our natural landscape.

Even the simple rose can be traced back—linguistically—to the fabled gardens of ancient Persia. Maybe that doesn't make it smell any sweeter, but it certainly adds to its mythos.

BERTIE'S HEBRIDEAN ADVENTURE



The Russian Arctic Convoy Museum are taking their one-of-a-kind Austin 8 NAAFI Van to the Outer Hebrides.
Everyone is invited to come and see Bertie the NAAFI Van!

Bertie is RACM's largest exhibit and he always delights a crowd. He is a huge hit with both adults and children! During WW2 he was busy keeping personnel properly fuelled with tea and cake on British airfields. Now he helps us all learn what life was like on the Home Front with his interesting displays. Learn all about wartime rationing, air raid precautions and more. Vintage car enthusiasts will be delighted to know he still runs fine!

 RACPBertie  RACMuseum

Appearing:
Balalan Community Hub: 23rd August, 10-4pm
Comunn Eachdraidh Nis: 24th August, 10-4pm
Lews Castle: 25th & 26th August, 10-4pm

A particular invitation goes out to anyone who had a relative serve on the Arctic Convoys during WW2. RACM is busy trying to gather memories and artefacts from convoy veterans. If your relative served on Arctic Convoys please make yourself known to Bertie and his custodians!

<https://racmp.co.uk/> 01445 731137 info@theracmproject.org Registered SCIO: SC047909

Artist in Residence: Ishbel Murray

This month we meet Ishbel Murray, who has recently made the transition from teaching to re-immersing herself in her own artistic journey.

ED: Hi Ishbel, for those of our readers who may not know you, *cò às a tha thu?*

IM: I was brought up in Tong. My mother, *Ailios Iain Ghil*, and my father, *Seonaidh a' Bhrùnaich*, were, respectively, from Tolsta and Coll. They were among the original tenants of the new council housing estate in Tong. Ford Terrace was the street where my siblings and I grew up in a new community of neighbours who came from different parts of the area between Stornoway and Tolsta. Council housing was a new thing to the island, giving young couples who would otherwise have been dependent on their extended families for accommodation the chance to be independent. The estate brought together people who, although not bonded by family, formed close lifelong friendships.

ED: Did you know from a young age that art was going to be your path?

IM: As one of six children, I remember our house as being a lively, busy place where our parents managed to maintain a bit of order by encouraging us to spend time reading and drawing. We didn't have a lot of books, but there was always a pencil and some paper handy. Drawing allowed me to use my own imagination and I was happiest scribbling away with a pen or a pencil. Although I wasn't particularly gifted academically, art sessions at primary school was where I excelled and things came easily instead of being a struggle. Having managed to pass the dreaded 11 Plus exam, my education continued at the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway—only a couple of miles along the road but equivalent to landing on another planet for myself and my contemporaries. Everything was very new and very challenging, but luckily at least for me the art room was a place of sanctuary where I felt I belonged.

ED: What did you decide to do once you left school?

IM: Glasgow School of Art was seen as being the best place to study, and my application was accepted. Although it was a nerve-racking prospect to leave home, the city wasn't completely unfamiliar. My mother's sister and her family were in Partick, and my uncle managed the University Hall of Residence in Garnethill, five minutes from my new 'home', the Art School Girls' Hostel on Renfrew Street. However, my memory of



walking from Garnethill along Sauchiehall Street on the first morning of college will never leave me—the tall red sandstone buildings in the sunshine seemed enormous and in the mid-70s, this famous street still had an impressive air of luxury and grandeur.

ED: How did you enjoy studying in Glasgow in the 70s? It was quite a time to be a student...

IM: Four years at art school passed very quickly and, as most art students will agree, what you learn there is as much to do with what happens outside of your hours of study as what you achieve in the studio. Glasgow in the 70s was a very stimulating place. Public Image's punk anthem 'Anarchy in the UK' was released a couple of months after I started art school, and there was a raw energy around music and popular culture that couldn't be ignored. There were also exciting things happening in the Fine Art department too that challenged the old way of thinking about what it was to be an artist, and my own ambitions to become a highly skilled figurative artist were swept away and replaced by a more open—if uncertain—way of looking at things.

ED: What did you do after you graduated?

IM: It wasn't too long before the reality of earning a living meant that working as a waitress wasn't going to be a long-term solution, so I moved to Edinburgh to do a teacher training course in Art and Design. On graduating, this brought me right back to where I started—as a teacher of art at the Nicolson Institute. It felt a little strange to be back as a colleague of my teachers so soon after leaving school, but I was very lucky to have their kind support and advice. Teaching became my career for the rest of my working life from this point.

I left Lewis once more and moved to Aberdeen, taking up a post in the art department at Dyce Academy. There were many things to appreciate about the job: the camaraderie among staff and their good humour in dealing with what was often a difficult job, and also the pleasure in seeing talent and creativity in the work of some of the more dedicated pupils.

However, I had always had a desire to work abroad and while I was living in Aberdeen, I did a course in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Although I found some aspects of the course very difficult having little knowledge of grammatical terms or



what the International Phonetic Alphabetic system was, I did have an advantage over my fellow students as part of the Trinity College Course in TEFL was for students to learn a 'foreign' language. For that year it had been decided to adopt Gaelic for this part of the course—and although it had been a very long time since I had used my Gaelic, our teacher Roddy, taking us through the very basics of the language using TEFL principles in never using the 'native' English language of the students, was an inspiration to me. I was fascinated by how he was able to coach the other students to repeat phrases and demonstrate their meaning simply by his actions and of course I was learning a bit about my own 'native' language, too.

ED: Where did you find yourself after leaving Aberdeen?

IM: I got a job in Italy as a teacher at an English Language School in the little town of Monza, just outside Milan, and spent an academic year there. I'd always wanted to live in Italy and had done a bit of preparation in studying the language and doing an OU course in Italian Art and Architecture beforehand. My experience of living and working there was something I'll always remember—meeting and making friends with other teachers and our students and taking the opportunity to explore and travel around as much of this northern part of Italy as possible. Milan is famous for being the site of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci and I was lucky enough to see this as well as the work of the wonderful painter Morandi in the gallery of his work in Bologna.

ED: What did you do when you returned from Europe?

IM: When I came back to what I regard as my second home, Glasgow, I ended up continuing to teach English but this time to speakers of many other languages, very often refugees from various parts of the world. My Head of Department, Gordon Wells, persuaded me to try teaching Gaelic to a small weekly class of beginners. I had dropped Gaelic at school as soon as possible as, despite our parents' valiant efforts, my siblings and I had succumbed to the use of English as the dominant language of the street among our young friends at Ford Terrace, where many families unlike ours had only one parent who was a Gaelic speaker. This meant that my ability to teach the language was severely compromised and it was only by keeping one step ahead that I managed to cope. However, the skills I had picked up in my TEFL training were invaluable and the enthusiasm of my students was infectious.

A few years after starting to teach Gaelic to college students in Glasgow I was offered the opportunity to teach Gaelic at a college in North Carolina for several months. While I was in the States, I spent time in Washington and New York where I saw paintings by some of my favourite artists—Edward Hopper, Robert Rauschenburg and, of course, Andy Warhol. A couple of years after this I was back in the States as a presenter in Los Angeles and Alaska with a BBC Alba crew making a film about Gaelic learners across the world; unfortunately, there wasn't much time on this whirlwind trip to visit the museums.

Over time, teaching Gaelic became a very rewarding full-time job. It has been a great privilege to see how the language has gained support over the years and to observe how young people I taught a long time ago have gone on to achieve fluency and be active in positions of influence in education and the arts, as well as bringing up their own children as Gaelic speakers.

ED: You spent a lot of time teaching; did you manage to keep up your own art career and interests during this time?

IM: My career as an artist somehow continued over the years alongside my work as a teacher. Now, having not retired, but having changed my position to being a fully self-employed artist, I am very happy to be back living in Tong and making the most of all my free time to dedicate to it. In the past my work as an artist has frequently combined with my involvement in promoting Gaelic—for many years in the role of Chair of the music and arts organisation 'Ceòl is Craic'—and also working in collaboration with the Gaelic Books Council.

In 2015 I developed a project called 'ASTAR Glen Tolsta', which included a publication featuring writing by author and broadcaster Catriona Murray to accompany the art exhibition of the same name held at An Lanntair in Stornoway. The following year I commissioned the publication *Le Mùirn* (With Affection), which featured an essay by Catriona Murray and included reproductions of artworks inspired by the songs of Murdo MacFarlane (*Bàrd Mhealboist*) in a project that brought poetry, music and the visual arts together at an exhibition at the Briggait Centre in Glasgow. I am still teaching although very much part-time and recently delivered a course for adults in drawing at the Loch a Tuath Community Hut, where it was a joy to work with local people who shared my passion.

ED: What do you find inspiring as an artist?

IM: My work has always started with observation of the world around me and working from life is where I begin with the image developing in a process that aims to reduce it to the basic abstract forms within—the two watercolours here were done when I came home after finishing art school and having no studio to work in and feeling at a bit of a loss I bought some watercolour paints and attempted to paint what I saw from the bottom of our croft or on the shore. Our weather on Lewis doesn't make it easy to do work like this, which is why I go to Greece every year to sketch and paint—it's a good excuse for my escape to the sunshine!

You can find out more about Ishbel and her work on her website: www.ishbelmurray.org



Football Focus

Three in a Row!

Back FC are the winners of the Jock Stein cup for the third season in a row after a great final against Ness at Goathill on 19 May. A packed crowd was treated to a four-goal 90-minute thriller in Stornoway in the first silverware to be played for in 2023. Joel Martin forced a Ness own goal in the seventh minute; the eager crowd then had to wait until the 68th minute for the sponsor's Man of the Match Chris 'Moley' Macleod to fire in a powerful header. With 10 minutes left to play, the stakes were increased when Ness clawed one back via an own goal scored by Campbell Macdonald. With the game on a knife edge, Joel Martin added to his season's goal tally with 88 on the clock, sealing the win for Back and ensuring a return trip to the Upper Coll trophy cabinet for the Jock Stein Cup.

Back FC Player of the Month

The April/May Back FC player of the month trophy was awarded to goalkeeper Michael 'Peel' Maciver. The award is sponsored by *Loch a Tuath News* and has been reintroduced after a gap enforced by the COVID pandemic. Michael has been in great form this season, after returning to his home side in 2023 after a brief sojourn to play for Ness FC. Up to the end of May, he had only conceded two goals across all competitions (one in the Highland Amateur round 1 match and one in the Jock Stein cup final, both against Ness), maintaining a perfect league record.

Back on Top

Back are currently sitting at the top of the LHFA league. In stunning form, they are, at the time of writing, still undefeated in the league and have dropped only two points following an earlier draw with United.

Highland Amateur Report by D.A. Stewart (Cab)

Back sailed through to round 3 of the Highland Amateur Cup after beating Black Rock Rovers 0-2 in Evanton on Saturday 3 June with goals courtesy of Chris Macleod and Campbell Macdonald.

After organising a local bus from Alda to take us to Evanton, driven by Norman Maciver, the team and supporters assembled at the ferry terminal at 6.30am. Dressed in their new strips, sponsored by Carpet World, Back showed the opposition they were there to win right from the start, pressing forward and creating plenty chances. Chris Macleod scored early in



Back FC player of the month



SENIOR RESULTS

- 15 May Back 3 - 0 Point (League)
- 19 May Back 3 - 1 Ness (Jock Stein Cup Final)
- 22 May Westside 0 - 1 Back (League)
- 31 May Black Rock Rovers 0 - 2 Back (Highland Amateur Cup Round 2)
- 5 June Back 3 - 1 Aths (League)
- 10 June Back 5 - 1 Benbecula (Co-op Cup Round 1)
- 12 June Back 3 - 0 Ness (League)
- 16 June Harris 2 - 4 Back (League)

Live match reporting on the Back FRC Twitter account!



the first half with a bullet of a header, and although Back dominated and controlled the game throughout they could not add to the score before half-time. It was the same story in the second half, with plenty of chances but no goals until captain Campbell Macdonald scored with a peach of a header. The opposition caused a few anxious moments for Back, but defenders Jamie Mackinnon and Campbell kept steady and, along with goalkeeper Michael Maciver, they thwarted all Black Rock's attempts to score. We should have scored more, but Black Rock's keeper was their star player on the day. The match finished 0-2 and afterward we were invited for a bit to eat and a blether with the Black Rock outfit. As a club, I commend our own players on their behaviour on this away trip, representing the club very well on their travels. The next round is at home against Avoch;

a tough tie, but we hope that the squad will rise to the occasion once again.

Thank you to Alex J. Macleod for his organisation and to Norman the bus driver for getting us there and back safely.

Unfortunately, the Highland Amateur dream came to an end with a third-round 0-2 home defeat to Avoch on Saturday 24 June. Keep up to date with all the live action on the Back FRC social media pages (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).



SENIOR FIXTURES

- 10 July Acres Boys Club Cup Semi-Final
- 14 July Acres Boys Club Cup Final
- 17 July Back v Carloway (Eilean Fhraoich Semi-Final, 2nd Leg)
- 24 July Back v United (league)
- 28 July Back v Lochs (league)
- 5 August North Uist v Back (Co-op Cup Quarter-Final)
- 11 August Eilean Fhraoich Cup Final
- 14 August Lochs v Back (Moldova Lewis Cup 2nd Round)
- 19 August Co-op Semi-Finals
- 25 August Back v Westside (league)
- 28 August Moldova Lewis Cup Semi-Finals
- 1 September Aths v Back (league)
- 2 September Co-op Cup Final

Live match reporting on the Back FRC Twitter account!



Back FC senior team in their new strips sponsored by Carpet World





Back FC U15s showcasing their new strips, sponsored by Broadbay Barbers

Carloway at Cnoc a' Choilich on Monday 19 June, which ended in a 1-1 draw. The second, decisive leg at Col Uarach is due to be played on Monday 17 July.

Don't forget you can watch match highlights on the Island Footie YouTube page, and follow the team on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Player of the Year

Congratulations to Eleanor Smith (Aird Tong) on being awarded the title of 'Players' Player of the Year' for her team Queen's Park FC. The team said on their Twitter page: 'Eleanor has an infectious personality and is a massive part of the squad. In 30 starts for

Co-op Cup

The Co-op Cup competition is now underway with Back having comfortably beaten Benbecula 5-1 at Upper Coll on Saturday 10 June. They drew North Uist United away in the quarter-finals, due to be played on Saturday 5 August.

Eilean an Fhraoich

Being the fortunate recipients of this year's bye, due to an odd number of teams being involved in the competition, Back's first appearance in the Eilean an Fhraoich was in the first leg of the semi-final against

the club this season, El has scored 6 times, and has 2 assists'.

Playoff Win

Shana Macphail (Tong Park) helped her team Stirling University WFC retain their place in SWPL 2 with a 1-0 playoff win against Rossvale. Stirling Uni finished seventh in SWPL 2, 12 points clear of bottom-placed East Fife, but 16 adrift of Queen's Park in what was an extremely competitive league. SWF Championship side Rossvale entered the playoff final after a last-day victory over Renfrew.

The match can be watched on BBC Alba via the iPlayer.



Jock Stein Cup Final



- ▲▲ Captain Campbell Macdonald lifts the cup for the third season in a row
- ▲ The Jock Stein Cup stays in Upper Coll for another year
- First trophy for David Maciver and his assistants this season ▶
- Man of the Match Chris Macleod ▶

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Comann Eachdraidh Sgìre a' Bhac

Back Historical Society Update

The comann made its own history last month by recruiting its first employee, Ellie Macdonald from Gress. Ellie is a statistics student in Glasgow and will be working with us over the summer on a variety of tasks, including building up a historical photo record of Gress. If you have old photos of Gress families that might help her, please get in touch.

She is also doing valuable work producing transcripts for some of the Gaelic videos on our Youtube site. This will enable us to add Gaelic and English subtitles to them, opening them up to a wider audience. The high standard to which she is doing this work is testament to her fantastic Gaelic and her meticulous dedication. We are extremely fortunate to have her. *'S math a tha thu a' dèanamh Ellie!*



Ellie Macdonald ▲

Ellie's placement was made possible by funding from *Sgeama Greis Gnìomhachais nan Oileanach/Bòrd na Gàidhlig* and from the Western Isles Development Trust.

We were delighted to get the news that our applications for Crown Estate Funding were successful. We have been granted £18,000 for a part-time Heritage Project Officer to help bring our plans for a new building forward, and £3000 for first year set up costs for our temporary new home. CEBac is very grateful to our local councillors Calum Maclean, Donald Crichton and John A. Maciver for their tremendous support with this funding, and in all that we do.

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Tong School

Roving Reporters

Thank you to Olivia, Layla, Amber, Eloise, Willow, David, Beth, Orlaith, Amelia, Lucie, Ayla and Kieran for sharing all the school news at the end of a very busy term.

Sgoil Àraich Stories

The preschool children have enjoyed visiting the P1 classrooms and learning with their friends. Mrs Cheesman and Mrs Macleod look forward to welcoming their eager and enthusiastic new pupils in August. The boys and girls also had great fun on a dinosaur hunt and found a huge dinosaur roaming around the school playground!



Follow my leader in Fairburn ▲



Zumbathon fun ▲

Intergenerational Friendship

We extend a sincere message of thanks to Mrs Annie Macleod for providing Gaelic tuition ahead of the local Mòd festival. Mrs Macleod's support was such an encouragement to the children. Mrs Macleod, along with some of the other ladies who attend the local Cuppa and Ceildih group, also formed a nice link with the pupils in P5/6 as they sewed bunting together. The colourful bunting is now ready to be used as a decoration for community events in the village. It was lovely to see the interaction between both groups as they worked together. The sessions were supported by Volunteer Centre Western Isles.

Clean Coast

The Pupil Council and Eco Committee have been working together to explore the Global Sustainability Goals of Life on Sea and Life on Land. The pupils wanted to make

a positive difference to their local area and contacted Clean Coast Outer Hebrides for assistance with organising a beach clean up to help wildlife. Tong shore was looking cleaner and brighter after their hard work. Thank you to Janet Marshall for co-ordinating the event and sharing her knowledge. The event inspired Joshua, P4, and he has continued to monitor the litter and clean the shore when out and about. Well done!

Astonishing African Assemblies

We have been treated to two assemblies where classes have shared their learning about Africa. GM1-3 shared interesting facts and even took us on a virtual safari where we met lots of wild animals. They also sang a catchy song to entertain everyone. P5/6 took to the stage to tell about African countries, some famous African people and interesting animals. A highlight of the assembly was the super dance performed by the energetic pupils! Well done to both classes for sharing their learning in such a fun and informative way.

Fantabulous, Fun Fairburn

P7 had a fantastic time on their much-anticipated trip to Fairburn Outdoor Activity Centre. After an early start and a smooth ferry trip to Ullapool, we were relieved to arrive at Fairburn. We were introduced to the staff and shown to our bedrooms. The rooms were very nice and very spacious, and the staff were friendly and welcoming. We participated in lots of fun outdoor activities, but the highlight was raft building as we all got soaked from falling into the beautiful, tadpole-filled pond. Later in the evening we went to see The Little Mermaid in the cinema. After the film we were treated to a nice McDonald's snack. The next day we all had a fun time at bowling and the arcade, and yet again we were treated to a delicious, delightful dinner at McDonald's. All the children had a blast and made memories they will never forget. Thank you to Miss Macleod, Mrs MacNeil and Mr MacMillan for accompanying the group and looking after everyone so well.

Ayla and Kieran



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Niceness

Two busses filled with delighted Tong School children travelled to Ness park and the beach for a day filled with fun, friendship, sand dune jumping and lots of laughter. Everyone had a great day on the annual school trip.

Flabbergasting Funday

The annual fantastic friendship fun day was held on 2 June. We give a big thank you to all the parents who organised the stalls, ran the delicious barbecue, made



GM1-3 action song at assembly ▲

◀ Mod Competitors

yummy waffles and monitored the bouncy castles. We also had great fun with soccerama, face painting and hair decorations. Thank you to all who worked so hard to give the children a lovely time.

Mòd Ionadail Leòdhais

Well done to all the pupils who worked diligently to prepare poetry recitations and learn songs before taking to the stage. It is a great way to boost confidence and develop different

skills. We were delighted when our school choir was awarded first place in the Primary Unison Choirs competition for schools with over 100 pupils. Thank you very much to Mr Iain Maciver, Gaelic singing instructor, for all his hard work and assistance.

Super Sports

A sports week was held at the school between 12 and 16 June. The events included our annual sports day, house competitions and a Zumbathon. Everyone particularly enjoyed the sports taster afternoon to try different activities including archery, athletics, shinty, tchoukball and muay Thai boxing. Thank you to all who gave of their time to coach the children.

◀ Ready for muay thai boxing!

◀◀ A great afternoon for all ages at the annual Fun Day

Nursery Dino Hunt ▼

▶ Thank you to Mrs Macleod



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Sgoil a' Bhac



Pupil-led Assembly



P7 Trip!

Sports Day

Despite the weather, we had a brilliant time at sports day. Thank you to all the parents who came to watch and well done to all the pupils for taking part!

May Achievers

We had lots of Achievers at school for the month of May. The children received their certificates at Assembly. Congratulations to our girls' and boys' relay team, both of whom got placed at the rural sports event.

Eco-Schools Scotland Award

We were recently recognised for our achievements in working towards a sustainable lifestyle, through the presentation of The Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag Award. We are delighted that all Pupils and Staff are making a conscious effort to be more sustainable.

P7 Trip

Our P7 pupils gathered at the ferry terminal with



Sports Day!

accompanying school staff to head to Alltnacriche Outdoor Centre for their residential trip. They had a great time getting involved in all sorts of outdoor activities, such as; an exploration hike around Alltnacriche and canoeing! This was accompanied by lots of fun games. We want to wish all our P7s the best of luck as they move up into the Nicolson Institute; you will all be missed by us here at Sgoil a' Bhac!

Pupil-Led Assembly

EP1-2 took a turn in presenting a pupil-led assembly. They did a marvellous job teaching us all about what they had been learning about the life of a strawberry. Their P7 buddies came to help them for part of the assembly too. They then told us they had made lovely little fruit kebabs for us all to eat at the end of Assembly. Great job EP1-2!



Achievers



Netball Festival

The P6/7 girls recently attended a netball festival and won it, unbeaten! Six teams took part, and it went down to the last game: Back v Stornoway Primary, with the winner to take all! Back was triumphant with a score of 5-2. A brilliant afternoon was had and all the teams played really well.



Netball Festival



wonderful opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and other young people who love youth work.' Maimie and Naomi shared a table with the First Lady Biden and the Prime Minister. Isn't that quite something for a Sunday afternoon?

▲ Naomi, Rishi Sunak, Maimie and Kaydence Drayak (Orkney)

The top table ▶

Prime Minister's Big Lunch

Maimie Zimmerman (57 Upper Coll) and her mum Naomi Macdonald were recently invited to the Prime Minister's Big Lunch at 10 Downing Street as part of their youth work with the Young Islanders Network. Maimie said, 'It was great to meet the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. We were sitting amongst incredible people from the length and breadth of the country'. She added, 'It was great fun and we are so thankful to UK Youth for having us there to celebrate. It was a



Back in Time

July/August 1952

TONG

Visitors From U.S. and Canada

Four visitors from across the Atlantic arrived in Tong on the same night recently. They were Mrs Marion Huff, of Detroit, and Mrs Margaret Engstrom, of New York, daughters of the late Mr and Mrs Norman Macleod, of 14 Tong, and brothers Murdo and Alexander Mackay, of Aird Tong. This was Murdo's first visit to Tong in 43 years. He came from Seattle and Alexander from Toronto.

The four met in the dining car of a London train when the Mackay brothers went up to the Macleod sisters and asked if they came from Tong. The wearying journey from London to Inverness passed pleasantly in reminiscences about their young days in the village.

Over 20 years have elapsed since Mrs Engstrom and Mrs Huff were home on a visit, and with the arrival of another sister, Mrs Peggy Finlayson of Lochcarron, six of the eight sisters are together for the first time in 41 years. The two remaining sisters, Mrs Crichton and Mrs Cheever, have made tier homes in the United States.

Tong, like all other villages in the island,

has changed much in 43 years and even in 23 years, but we hope that our four visitors will find the same hospitality and warmth of welcome as existed in those earlier days.

BACK

Drowning Tragedy in Gress River

Seldom if ever has the entire district been so shocked and grieved when it became known on the afternoon of 22 July that Bella and Jean Ferguson, the daughters of Mr and Mrs Donald Ferguson, School Road, Back, had been drowned in the Gress River. The news was all the more tragic when related to the history of the spot where the tragedy took place. Countless children from Back and Gress have played there over the generations, the large heap of stones shaped like a throne which stands in the middle attracting them to it, and never before has there been the least mishap. But this double drowning will make it a place to be shunned.

Bella was the eldest girl of the family and as such always took the younger ones under her loving care – how loving now more eloquent proof is needed than that she gave her life in an attempt to save her little sister. For here there was

no question – Jean needed her help, and she immediately went to the rescue. And so in the closing of her short life – she was 12 years old, she showed the same qualities as she had done from day to day - courage and love and solicitude.

Both she and Jean were well-loved by their schoolmates, and at the funeral, which surely was the most tragic and chastening sight ever to pass through the village, tributes from the staff and children of Back School were among the many placed on the white coffins. People came from far and near to attend, and it was one of the largest ever seen in the community.

Words are miserably inadequate in tragedy such as this, but Mr and Mrs Ferguson have the deep and heartfelt sympathy of not only relatives, neighbours and friends but all who heard, no matter where, of their irreparable loss. Consolation for them can only come from Him who said, "Suffer little children to come to me".

The Late Donald Macdonald, Cleveland, Ohio

We deeply regret to record the death of Donald Macdonald, of Cleveland, Ohio, born March 17, 1879 at 3 Vatisker,

Back. He was the youngest of a family of seven children of the late Mr and Mrs Norman Macdonald.

As a young lad, he left his native island, but regardless of where he was he never forgot the Isle of the heather, and after an absence of 51 years he paid the homeland a 3 month visit in 1949.

After settling in Cleveland around the turn of the century, he sailed the Great Lakes for a while, but in 1921 he went to work for the National Carbon Corporation. He wasn't long there till his skill and ability was recognised by his superiors, who elevated him to a supervisory capacity, a job he performed ably and satisfactorily, till he retired in December, 1946.

During the years of 1924 and 1925, many a Lewisman found his way to Cleveland in search of employment. In each case Mr Macdonald would plead his cause with those in the employment office at the National Carbon Co. He saw to it that we all had a job. Although there are only a few of us now residing here, yet, I am sure that all who knew him will join in mourning his loss wherever they may be.

With his devoted and good wife, their home was a "home from home" for countless Lewis boys, who were always sure of a warm welcome there.

From 1374 Cove Avenue, Lakewood, where they made their home for the last 15 years, they went to spend the winter in Florida last year. They returned to Cleveland last May with the intention of returning to Florida in the near future. But on July the 7th, Mr Macdonald was admitted to the Lutheran hospital for observation and on July the 9th he passed peacefully and unexpectedly from our midst.

The beautiful floral tributes and the great concourse of mourners at the funeral testified to the esteem in which he was held.

He was active in Scottish affairs and once held office in Clan Grant No. 17, Order of the Scottish Clans in Cleveland. Active also in the masonic order, he was a member of Bigelow Lodge No. 243. F. & A. M. and all the York rite bodies. A 32nd degree mason in Lake Erie Consistory Scottish rite bodies and a shiner. The masonic service was conducted by Oriental Commandery No. 18, of which he was a past commander, while the ministerial service

was performed by the Rev Pierson of the Solon community church.

The pall bearers, all native born Lewismen – were, Malcolm Maciver, Benside; Donald Morrison, Stornoway; Hector Macinnes, North Tolsta; Murdo Graham, Vatisker, Back; Alexander Macrae, Vatisker and Angus Campbell, Lionel, Ness. It is worthy of note that the last two named travelled from Detroit, along with Captain Donald Macrae, Vatisker, and Mrs Donald Macleod, 24 Back to attend the funeral. His remains were laid to rest in Lakewood Park cemetery.

To his wife, his devoted and constant companion, we extend our heartfelt sympathy in her sore bereavement. Our sympathy also goes to his only daughter Mary, Mrs A. J. Campbell and his son William H, also a sister, Mrs Isabella Macleod, Morrison Avenue, Stornoway.

H.M.I.

Grouses, Guitars and Transport

We think it's time the outside world knew something about the Back Front. There certainly is no lack of Scribes in the district, but of course we have no Pharisees.

Well, as this is the Grouse season we will begin with a right good grouse. A great dis-service is being done to the community by the drastic pruning of bus services to and from the town of Stornoway. In particular, the cessation the 1pm bus to town and the 2.30 and 3.20 buses from there have caused a great deal of hardship. At present a Back man who wants to do business in town, leaves here with the 11a.m. bus. If he misses the 1pm bus back home he has to walk the streets until he gets blisters on his feet, the while shopkeepers, reminding one of a semi-tropical town, go for their afternoon siesta. A guitar left carelessly in a doorway here and there to be strummed on by the passer-by would help to heighten this illusion.

Not many locals, but visitors from the mainland and from abroad are being caused inconvenience. Perhaps it would be a good idea to have a woman on the board of the Traffic Commission. She would see to it that housewives were not further harassed by lack of adequate transport. We are not all Tweed Barons and we can't all get up and down to and from Stornoway at the letting in of a clutch. It is strange that in any other seaport or seaside town there are always

bus shelters and weather-proof seats. Stornoway offers no such facilities, and even the opportunity of sitting inside the buses behind Billingsgate is denied us, now that the outlet there has been securely closed up.

We would welcome the return of these afternoon bus services, and are confident that they would be financially justified.

The Stockbroker and the Lyre

We were not suggesting last week that any weary Backach, plodding the streets of Stornoway during lunch-hour close-down might be able to play a guitar even if they should find one lying about, nor would we suggest that any Backach can play another musical instrument – the lyre.

Which reminds us all of the clever cartoon postcard, by Lymcus in which a man equipped with wings is deposited in Paradise and shown playing the lyre in that uncomplimentary sense.

Welcome and Adieu

There have been so many visitors in the district this summer that it is regretted we are unable to mention them all by name, but they know how warmly we welcome them, and how sadly we bid them adieu, and how much we look forward to seeing them soon again.

Let's hope others who haven't been in Eilean Mu Thuath for many years will follow their good example and come next summer. We use the word summer advisedly because surely it can't be any worse than the so-called summer we have just had!

The Late Mr John Maciver

It is with regret that the community learned of the passing of Mr John Maciver, 20 Vatisker, Back. A fine and much respected man, he was greatly esteemed by all who knew him and the large number of mourners at his funeral testified to the esteem in which he was held. Possessed of an integrity and devotion to duty characteristic of his generation, Mr Maciver, at 89, was one of the few of the grand old men of the village still left.

Our sympathy goes out to his son, Police Superintendent Alex Maciver, to Bella, whose devotion to her dear brother was an inspiration to us all.

D.M.L.

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The Times, Wednesday August 19,
1936

MENACE OF THE STAMP

ISLANDERS ON THE DOLE

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

The last fishing boat in the village of Vatisker, Island of Lewis, has been sold, and the "Mol Mor" (the big beach), where there used to be 20 boats drawn up together, is now deserted. Vatisker is a small village and a poor one; the disappearance of its fishing fleet is of little importance itself; but is significant of a new influence at work in the disintegration of the Highland economic structure.

An observer in the village explains: "The supreme factor is the Unemployment Insurance Act: there are no stamps to be got for haddock fishing." In the Island of Lewis to-day "stamps" have become as important as money, and the phrase "working for stamps" has passed into the current phraseology.

The life of a crofter fisherman is hard and precarious. Work is very uncertain, because, even when fish are available, bad weather often makes it impossible for the boats to put to sea, especially where there is no proper landing-stage or anchorage. And when there is no work there is no pay. Insurable work, even of the poorest and most irregular nature, offers a steady income, at least as good as a man can earn at the white fishing, without the hazards attached.

But there is little insurable work to be had in an island of crofter fishermen, and the scamper to qualify for benefit has had several unfortunate consequences, economic and moral. On the economic side there has been a depreciation in the value of labour, because crofters are willing to work for a pittance if they get "stamps." In several districts of the island men have agreed to construct new village roads on a basis of 50 per cent free labour. Their wages worked out at something like 5d. an hour, and the precious stamps. In one instance the wage fell as low as 2½ d. an hour, and the men struck work; but when they saw that their action was not likely to bring them any better wages they returned to the job. There is a continually recurring agitation, too, that maintenance work on the roads "should go round" instead of being given steadily to the same people. This agitation springs directly from the desire to earn stamps.

On the moral side it is not so easy to point to definite effects attributable to these causes, but it is clear that the independent and manly character of the people is being undermined by a system which makes unemployment more profitable than work – as it now generally is to a crofter fisherman. The crofters of the Isles have hitherto been their own masters, accustomed to rely upon their native enterprise and high skill in seamanship; now they are being induced to seek service with other people, however humble and unskilled the work may be. The quality of the race is not being improved when fishermen are seeking work as common labourers on the road.

Unemployment insurance has thus become the last in the series of causes which are driving people of the Highlands and Islands out of their old industries. The first cause in the failure of the fishing industry of Vatisker was undoubtedly the coming of the trawler. The inshore fishermen could not compete with the trawler in supplying the markets of the great cities. It is significant, therefore, that the fishermen of Vatisker, more than 30 years ago, turned over from fishing ling for export to fishing haddocks for their own consumption and for sale in the town of Stornoway. The next stage was the operations of illegal trawlers, who for more than a quarter of a century have made Broad Bay, on whose shores the village of Vatisker lies, one of their hunting grounds. The operations of a trawler in these shallow waters are always followed by a period when there are no fish. In these circumstances haddock fishing is a heart-breaking job, and although the Government has now given the inshore fishermen greater protection, the Illegal Trawling Act is being rendered ineffective by the lack of proper boatslips, the lack of co-operative marketing schemes to handle the produce of the small individual crews, and by the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Acts with their bias in favour of the employee as opposed to the independent worker.

The effect of the Unemployment Insurance Acts can be seen in other branches of the fishing industry. Many fishcurers are this

Highland News, Saturday, August 7, 1909

HIGHLAND WEDDING IN ONTARIO

A very pretty wedding took place the other day in Fort-William, Ontario, Canada, the contracting parties being Mr Angus Macleod, mason, late of Tong, Lewis, and Effie Mackenzie, late of Shader, Point, Lewis. The bridesmaid was Miss Bessie Mackay, and the flower girls Miss Bernice Stewart and Miss Jessie Wilson. The bride was given away by her brother, Mr Donald Mackenzie, and was attended by another brother, John. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Mr. Rowand. The supper was served by Mrs Stewart and Mrs Wilson. After the covers were served, a very happy evening was spent with Gaelic songs, Bagpipe music, and Highland dancing, the merriment being prolonged into the early hours of the morning.

year unable to get fishergirls from Lewis to go to the Lerwick summer fishing because girls working in Stornoway get unemployment assistance for three winter months, when girls working in Lerwick get nothing. Lerwick is purely a summer herring port; Stornoway has summer and winter fishings. The result is that under the present Anomalies Act a girl who has been employed at Stornoway in any of the past five years, even if it has been exclusively during the summer, is eligible for unemployment benefit during the normal duration of the Stornoway winter season – i.e., from January 1 to March 15. The Lerwick girl, on the other hand, when she goes out of benefit (usually in December) remains out until June 10.

Then there are the share fishermen. They do not qualify for unemployment benefit, and the tendency for fishermen to give up their employment in favour of labouring, which is operative in the white fishing, might have set in here too but for the decision of the boatowners to convert their crews into weekly wage earners by guaranteeing them 5s. a week. Last year the average gross earnings of herring fishermen in Scotland were £1 2s. a week, so the inducement is strong to crews to give up fishing whenever they have earned enough "stamps." Except to a single youth at the basic 17s. a week of benefit, idleness is actually more remunerative than work.

The most dangerous feature in the situation is that if remedial action – such as the introduction of a separate unemployment insurance scheme to meet the needs of such areas – is long delayed, the youth of the Highlands will have acquired an ingrained aversion from continuous work which it may be difficult to eradicate.

The Lewis and Harris Agricultural Shows are almost upon us: Point 9 July, Lochs 22 July, South Harris Show 25 July, Carloway 4 August and the LHHP 'Open to All' show on 19 August. The excitement and anticipation are rising palpably among potential exhibitors and visitors eager to see what is on display.

For those of you wishing to up your horticultural game, here are a few hints that might inspire and encourage you to display your prized produce. By this time, you will be inspecting lovely green pea pods, red and orange carrots, emerald cabbages, perfectly symmetrical onions and be imaging yourself walking off with an armful of rosettes and the 'best-in-show' trophy. All that remains now is to prepare your exhibits for the show!

Decide as far in advance as possible those classes you will be showing in, and pay special attention to them in the last few days before the show. Thin carefully and only spray lightly just enough to maintain the plants' freshness. Leave the harvesting as late as possible to maximise the freshness of the produce, whether it be flowers or vegetables. It may mean getting up exceptionally early in the morning of the show. Pick off any offending caterpillars, slugs and snails if you are unfortunate enough to have been giving house room inadvertently to these pests in your temperature-controlled environments.

Judges will be looking for uniformity, cleanliness and good condition in most fruit and vegetables. They will also want to see that you have adhered to the specification in the show brochure. If the brochure says 'Six pods of peas', do not exhibit seven. If it says, 'display of garden flowers', ensure they come from your garden. If it's 'early potatoes', show earlies. It sounds obvious, but any judge will tell you stories of silly mistakes, disqualifying the exhibit.

Make sure all your exhibits are clean and undamaged. Harvest more than the specified number and select the best ones. Treat them with kid gloves to preserve their pristine qualities.

There is not enough room to explain how to present every different category, but the same principles apply to most exhibits. Let's take peas as an example. Cut off pods with a couple of centimetres of stalk. Do not mark or bruise. Peas should have a bloom on



One to aspire to! ▲

them like grapes, indicating their freshness. Keep the selection in a damped tray and take a couple of spares just in case of a wee accident en route. Arrange them as instructed by the organisers and if there no specific instruction lay them on a clean white paper plate or other appropriate container that shows off the exhibits to their best advantage. It is a beauty contest, after all.

Be especially careful transporting exhibits to the show. There is nothing more disappointing than leaving the croft with beautiful products and arriving at the show bench with broken flower stalks or a jumble of mixed produce.

One last thing...enjoy the whole experience. Be chuffed if you win prizes, be chuffed for those who do and, if you do not, promise yourself to do better at the next show, which reminds me the LHHP 'Open to All' show will be on 19 August in Sornoway Town Hall.

Ken Kennedy for LHHP

Crofting Corner

By Isobel Ann Macdonald

The ewe was very glad to discover that it was my blood all over the place and not hers. It was one of these annoying wee flesh wounds that likes to bleed a lot, but it's almost healed now so no harm done except to my pride!

The ewes are literally a third of the size now they have their fleeces off which goes to show that you can't condition score a sheep by looks alone. Looks can be very deceiving. Thankfully, they all seem to be in decent order even the ewe rearing triplets, so that is good news. Their lovely fleeces have gone locally to a lady who makes rugs.

The lambs are thriving, but the hot weather is causing a bit of scald (interdigital dermatitis) for some. This is when they get a sore bit in between the claws of their hoof and it can be quite painful and cause them to limp. Some antibiotic spray usually clears this up just fine, but it can be troublesome. If it continues to be an issue we will have to put them through the footbath at the fank.

We are hoping to vaccinate all the stock soon against clostridial diseases with a jag called Ovivac P and will be looking to wean the lambs in a few weeks so that the ewes can have a well-earned rest after doing a great job rearing them to this point.

Ninky (our youngest, Calum Iain) is talking about trying to halter train one of his lambs with a view to taking her to some shows so we will see how that goes.

The grass is growing nicely and the weather is good, so all is harmonious on the croft for now.



Interdigital dermatitis

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Alex John Macritchie and ▲ Donald Macritchie (16 Vatisker) and John Neil Macdonald (7 Vatisker)

Old Photos



▲ Oidhche Challuinn cast, late 1950s/early 1960s

Murdo Macdonald (*Murchadh Phreis, Gress*), far right in the back row. Murdo was a piper with the Glasgow Police Pipe Band, and was very involved in the Lewis and Harris drama scene.

Back row, L-R: Calum and Murdo Morrison (brothers from Harris), Murdo Macdonald; front row, L-R: Chrissie Macdonald, Alina Kerr, Dolina Montgomery, unknown.

◀ Sgoil a' Bhac Sgoil Araich 1998 - who can you name?

Coinneach aig Baile

A recent marking of the 80th birthday of my very good neighbour, who I had better not name for fear of severe retribution, made me reflect on the changes that have occurred on the *Sràid Iosal* since I was a boy.

If I said I used to help 'ràiteach' the *lion bheag* in this person's house after 'Bruce' came home from one of his frequent fishing trips on 'Eathar a' Pheel' the younger generation will have no idea what I am talking about.

When I say I remember cutting the Black Twist and mixing it with an ounce of Condor Sliced over a spread out page of the *Daily Express* how many will have any idea what I was doing?

When I say that I well remember helping Cairistiona with the 'dealgan', the hook suspended from the ceiling, as she twisted two strands of bobban wool to prepare it for the many socks she knitted how many will remember doing the same?

When I recall making woollen rugs with hessian tightly nailed to a wooden rack, and using a retracting 'magic needle' to push eight or nine strands of spare bobbin wool through the hessian to form a tightly looped comfortable surface for a self-designed rug, will anyone on the *Sràid Iosal* at present, apart from my good neighbour, recall the numerous rugs Yaach and his sons made using this method?

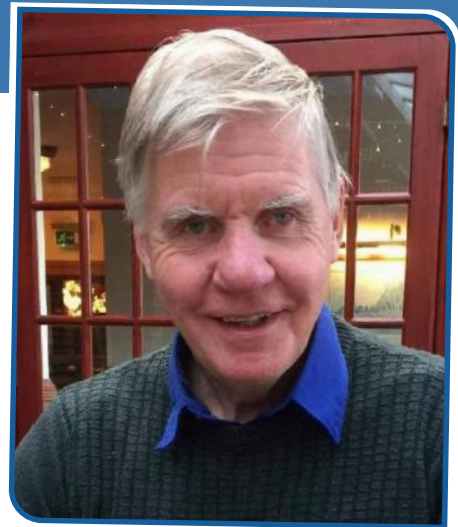
Times have changed. By now the peats would be at home. *Làraidh a'Pheel*, with Murchadh Dhòmhnail Sgurd, Calum Dan and even once Jock MacIannan, on holiday from college. We remember them and the sore fingers if we were persuaded to do the *stèidheadh* and a *fad dhubh* caught us unaware. I was never good at the *stèidheadh* on the lorry so, mercifully, wasn't asked too often. These were the days when we took the peats to the end of the 'poll' and stacked them until the big day of the lorry.

The best part was the peat-flavoured smoky tea, once the *meana chuileagan* were scooped out. We got ours after the adults were back filling the next load.

It was after this that tractors came and took the peats directly from the bank. Some of the drivers were very skilful at avoiding getting bogged down. *Noffan*, *Ailig Chalum Dholaidh*, although not one of the regular drivers, was particularly adept at handling the old grey Fergie on a difficult, hard-to-negotiate bank.

The memories are not only of the hard work to get the peats ready for coming home, but of neighbourly endeavour to help each other. We all went to each other's peats. We took home the peats, enjoyed the tea and cakes and put the world to rights.

'These were the days, my friend. We thought they would never end.' Said the words of the song. How true.



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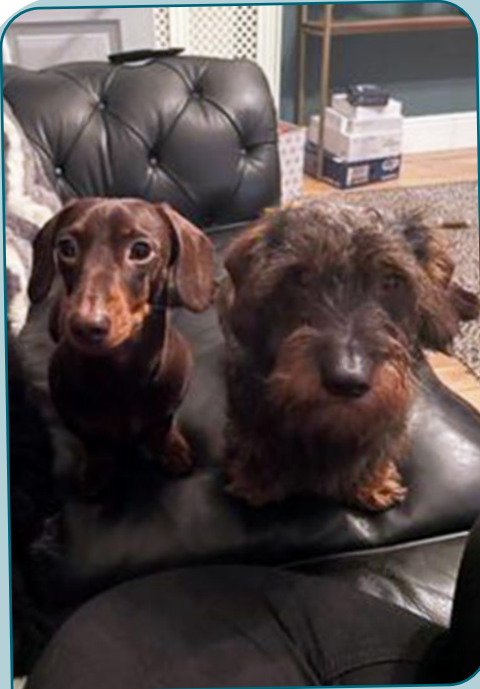
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CORRECTION

In last month's issue (vol. 27, no. 3), some errors were made in the article entitled 'A Continuation...' on page 13. Here is how the text should have appeared. We apologise for these oversights.

In a brief continuation of the Coinneach Aig Baile column in the May 2023 issue, here are some more photos relating to the story of Murdo MacLean (*Murchadh 'an Dhòmhnail or An Tàillear*), 22 Upper Coll. Murdo is photographed furthest left in this group of men. He sailed on nine trans-Atlantic voyages on the *Metagama* and five on the *Marloch*. He was married to Murdina MacLeod (*Murdag Thormoid Bhig*) of 66 Coll, who is pictured here enjoying her tea while working at the hay in Upper Coll, along with Alexina MacArthur (*Ailgina Ailig an t-Siarach*) and her mother Cairstiona (*Banntrach Ailig an t-Siarach*), of 8 Upper Coll. There is also a photo of the original croft house at 22 Upper Coll as it stands today. Finally, Murdo's Seaman's Log shows his date of enrolment as 21st March 1907, and that in 1924 he made voyages on both the *Metagama* and the *Marloch*. He died after an accident at sea in 1928. Thanks to his grandson John MacLean for sending in these pictures.



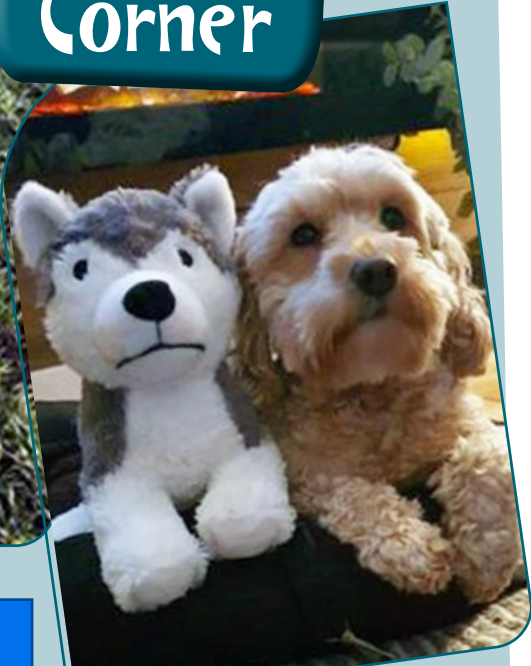
▲ Ivar and Floki



▲ Hulk and Goldie at 6 months

Pet Corner

Indy the mini cockapoo (on the right!)



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▲ Dazzy the pony

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