



NEWS, NEWS, NEWS

2018 has been a busy one for IEHT projects, with ongoing feasibility studies for the introduction of new affordable housing and expansion and development of An Laimhrig, a revitalised on-island woodfuel enterprise, establishing Eigg's very own tree nursery (more on that later) and an ongoing saga of trying to action a larger scale felling operation. Yes, it has certainly been a busy one and hot off the back of last year's 20th anniversary celebrations.

We had some stunning summer sunshine through May and June and as is becoming normal practice a very busy visitor season, which kept everyone on their toes.

Eigg Electric marked ten years powering the island in June, holding an event to celebrate all that has been achieved, as well as sharing some of Eigg's recent green initiatives. Andy Wightman, Green Party MSP joined us for the occasion.

As the year has gone on, we have welcomed new residents into the community and have said goodbyes to others, with Eigg Primary saying goodbye to Headteacher Andrew Murray this autumn. Andrew had a very positive impact during his time in post and will certainly be missed. We wish Andrew and his family all the very best in their new lives and hopefully they won't be strangers visiting! The process of finding Andrew's replacement is underway and we are hopeful someone will be in post soon! In the meantime Sue Hollands is doing a grand job as acting-head. We also said goodbye to Clare and Phil as they embarked on a new life in Spain back in February.

2018 has been a busy one for 'big' birthdays, with a total of twelve of us reaching 60, 40, 30 and 20! Naturally this meant celebrating with one almighty party as we hit the end of September, with a theme of Black Tie and Wellies! Eigg's Community Hall also got dressed up for the occasion with Tamsin and Tasha transforming the space into a glittery ballroom for the night.

In amongst it all, there has been weddings, including Eigg's own Jodie Robertson marrying Iain McDonald on Laig Beach, officiated by the enigmatic Marie Carr. A lovely day for all involved. New house builds as Tamsin and Stu's new home is brought to life by Damian and new bothies. We welcomed Ellis Cormack Wood, into the world in August, to proud parents Jill and Ben and there is another Baby Boden on the way!

Finally, in sad news, we said a final goodbye to John Booth this autumn, who passed away peacefully at his home aged 74. John, who came to Eigg 17 years ago, to renovate and restore Galmisdale House with his wife Christine, made a huge contribution to life on Eigg, serving as IEHT Director, IERA Chair and was integral in establishing the electrification of Eigg, giving the island 24 hour power, serving as Eigg Electrification Project Director and Director of Eigg Electric. He will certainly be missed.

Eigg's New Tree Nursery

We now have a tree nursery on Eigg! The idea came to fruition from working through our Long Term Forest Plan, which outlines the management of our policy woodlands and forestry plantation. Through this and our work over the last few years establishing a viable woodfuel business it is clear a lot of replanting will be required over the years to come. In recent years replanting that has been done has highlighted the shortage of tree nurseries. Our salty, exposed weather conditions don't help, with often low success rates from imported trees. In having our own nursery we plan to mitigate this problem, growing native trees and productive species from seed collected here on Eigg and sourcing conifer seed as locally as possible.

Thanks to our funders, Awards for All, The Pebble Trust, Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation and the Naturesave Trust, IEHT has been able to purchase a large polytunnel, equipment and tools. The polytunnel allows us to germinate the seeds earlier in the season than would allow if grown outside. This will give them a good head start indoors until hardening them off outdoors before heading to their final destination by the end of the year.

The tools and equipment purchased will allow us to build on our established volunteer programme to have work parties of volunteers to assist throughout the year in seed collection, planting the seed/transplanting/weeding, tending to trees, watering schedules, general maintenance, prep prior to planting out and tree planting depending on what time of year volunteers sign up for. The construction of the polytunnel was all done by volunteer effort and some pretty vague instructions! It was only after phoning the polytunnel helpline (!) that it became clear ours was of a commercial size and usually 'professionals' would come out and construct it. Overcoming challenges, the blood sweat and tears and after involving 23 off-island volunteers over the season and a couple of community days involving a further 25 folk, I am now very pleased to announce the construction is complete and it has already survived through winds gusting at 70mph! I really look forward to getting the community and volunteers involved in the full growing season of 2019 to learn and enjoy the simple pleasures of growing trees....

Tasha McVarish – IEHT Volunteer Coordinator
www.volunteeroneigg.co.uk



Eigg on Easyfundraising!

Earn donations for IEHT whilst doing your online shopping. It doesn't cost you a thing and has the potential to help IEHT. Please join in and support Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust
www.easyfundraising.org

Earth Connection Centre

Our visitors lucked out with the sunshine this summer! In May we had our annual yoga retreat and people enjoyed nature walks, swimming in the sea, singing and kayaking, as well as the yoga! We didn't run other courses due to other work commitments, but we still hosted many visitors. We had an American film crew stay for a week, as well as a team of renewable energy engineers from Estonia working on the Eigg Electric scheme. Once again we helped with the annual Feis festival for children, hosting classes here and at the hall. It was wonderful to hear all the music being played and great fun was had by all.

We had 2 long term volunteers with us, Alena from Finland, and from Switzerland, who helped us with all manner of jobs - painting, tidying, gardening and website work. This summer we have been gradually re-covering the roof to make it more watertight for another few years, and rebuilding our DIY solar water heaters. Building maintenance takes up a huge part of our time and it is never ending!

Norah Barnes

History Society - Craig's Ancient Eigg Military find!

Craig Lovat of Eigg Explorers was busy shovelling topsoil from Bayview for his garden when he came across a thin metal oval shape about 6 cm in length, 3 in width, looking very much like bronze. Cleaning the plaque, he could read the inscription Fort William Volunteers around the outside and could discern a fairly worn thistle and crown in the middle.

Realising it could be a military insignia, a bit of research confirmed his hunch: he had found the shoulder belt plate which was worn in the centre of the chest by British officers and soldiers alike. Officers had silver plates where regular recruits' were polished bronze.

As it turns out, the soil in which the plate was found was from the croft where Neil MacQuarrie used to live. Neil is a colourful character in Eigg history, known mostly for the illicit whisky he made together with his friend the Gobha Mòr from Lageorna, in a little cave fed by a burn hidden in the cliffs on the Cleadale shore. He also went by the name of a' Chòirneal Ban (the fair-haired colonel) because of his time in the local militia!

Thus, the plate Craig found showed Eigg had its own unit of civilians as part of the Fort William Volunteers, mustered for local defence from 1794 onwards in response to fears of a French invasion during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars between Britain and France...

They were part of Scotland's long tradition of auxiliary forces - Militias, Fencibles and Volunteers - raised for internal defence. There were also Moidart Volunteers, as evidenced from a similar badge recovered in Lochailort and now in the West Highland Museum in Fort William, which also houses a silver version of the Eigg Bronze plate!

Camille Dressler

Eigg Primary School

Eigg Primary has been very busy since we all came back from our summer holidays. We have two new primary pupils and three in the nursery, bringing our school roll

to eight in total. While we welcomed new faces, we had to say farewell to our Head Teacher Mr Murray. We're hoping to find a new Head Teacher who can start in the spring but meanwhile Sue Hollands is working as Acting Head to ensure everything continues to run smoothly in our school. We will have lots of things to show and tell them about our school and Eigg. As well as our classroom and school grounds, we also make the most of living on an island, visiting the beaches, our community orchard, and woodland. We have also been to the doctor's surgery, the mobile dentist van, Eigg shop, community hall and even to visit people in their homes to learn about their businesses, energy and culture.

At the moment we're getting ready for our school play. It's called *Night of a Thousand Lights* and sees our children travel the world to visit some of the festivals we've been studying as part of our Festivals of the World topic. We're also preparing for our Mince Pie March and Christmas Fair, both of which we hope will raise funds for us to go to the mainland for swimming lessons and to support our chosen charity, Inti Warra Yassi.

You can read all about what we do at school on our school website www.eiggprimary.com



Wildlife Watch

What an amazing summer we had with wonderful weather, fantastic volunteers and abundant wildlife to record! With only 5 months to carry out all the jobs required, it was a very busy, but rewarding season. Along with my trusty team of volunteers we learned about and recorded all the variety of wildlife on Eigg - e.g. over 122 bird species, 115 moths and 12 butterfly species. We also carried out surveys of bats, seashore life, orchids and other flowers, and the regular Whale-watch surveys with the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust.

I also organised a full programme of events and walks to engage with people of all ages. We did guided walks twice a week - as well as the regular Wednesday wildlife walk, we started a new shorter walk around the pier bay on a Monday afternoon which proved to be popular. Other events included Hen Harrier Awareness day, Marine Day, Intro to Seabirds, Dawn Chorus, Plants and their uses etc. and kids wildlife club activities galore.

Highlights include - observing rare birds such as the red throated diver, hen harrier and long eared owls, exploring new paths, working with volunteers on the exciting new nursery project, discovering a new world of moths, butterflies and dragonflies, and sharing all these wonders with people. I would like to give a special thanks to John Chester for sharing all his knowledge and skills with me - can't wait to do it all again next year!

Norah Barnes

Isle of Eigg Merchandise

With Christmas just around the corner, visit www.isleofeigg.net to order some Eigg related presents! Eigg Tea Towels, Wappenmaps, 20th Anniversary commemorative glasses, tote bags and much more.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support throughout 2018 and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and even happier 2019!