

# isle of eigg heritage trust



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## CAIRDEAN EIGE NEWSLETTER, WINTER 2019

### NEWS



**I**T HAS been an extremely busy year on the island with the long-awaited harvesting of our forestry plantation the single biggest project we have had to see through.

Planted by Eigg's previous landowner in 1983, the trees were never actively managed and are now reaching a mature height, so as with any crop, they require harvest. With Eigg's island location, fragile infrastructure, schedule one protected wildlife, busy visitor seasons, wintry weather conditions and a modest volume of timber to contend with (in commercial terms), the project faced significant challenge from the outset.

Not to be deterred however, we decided – with the support of the Community Woodlands Association – that we would stick to delivering the project collaboratively with partners, rather than contracting the services of a management company.

It took time to find the right partners, and we have been lucky to have benefitted from the experience of Ian Shaw of Glencoe Timber and our neighbours across the water, Wood Knoydart, whose on-island team became an essential part of the project.

Not long out of successfully concluding a similarly sized project on the peninsula utilising their new timber trailer and crane, they had heard of the challenges we faced and proposed their first 'overseas' project. Drawing on the experience and support of Ian Dow, Grant Holroyd and Lorna Schofield, this showed what community-to-community working can look like. Ian became a common sight on Eigg's road, moving timber safely down to the pier!

Glennon Brothers were the final jigsaw piece. They were swift to offer up support, noting the innovative approach within the industry.

We also required permissions from Highland Council to use both the road and the pier to extract the timber and we needed a ship that could use the pier in just the same way as the Calmac ferry, this was tricky. Luckily however, an introduction to Troon Tug Co. was just the fit. The Red Princess – a 64m landing craft – rather dwarfed the pier on each of her visits! They, just like Ian showed a real willingness to help our community succeed.

The cutting and transport was complete as we started October, with the final cargo collected just a day before Halloween. In total around 2,200 tonnes were exported, with additional materials retained here on the island for our woodfuel enterprise.

As the project has wrapped up, I have been rather in awe of its success. The strength of the relationships built over its course and the level of planning that went into the project was evident from start to finish. For me, in the role of project manager, I have been so fortunate and lucky to be a part of this project; the experience, expertise and the will to succeed shown by everyone involved has been truly impressive. It also made for some good fun along the way!

The positive impacts will be widely felt. From providing the

community with between three to five years of firewood, building on local skills and knowledge, contributing to both Eigg's and another local community's economy and giving Eigg's community the opportunity to restructure and diversify its woodlands to name a few.

Now attention turns to planting, as what comes down must be replaced. The ambition is to replant with as many home grown trees as possible from Eigg's own Tree Nursery.

I have to mention of course, the swansong of the project; the clearing of Manse Wood. Ian Shaw was able finally to complete the work that first brought him to the island. Ian's careful approach has reintroduced access to this beautiful woodland and will hopefully aid some natural regrowth.

**I**N addition to the work in the forestry, the Trust has been pressing on with plans for the redevelopment of An Laimhrig, to create a better experience for visitors and locals alike.

Despite the loss of our original architect, we continue to move forward with new architects in place. WT Architecture have several successful projects in the Highlands on their cv and with this new team in place we are moving towards breaking ground on phase one in the coming year thanks to the help of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Community Enterprise.

**W**E also said farewell to a few islanders this year with James and Rachel heading for Scarborough, Craig and Katie moving inland to Glenloy and Nan Fee leaving to move to the east Lothian coast. They will all be missed.

**H**OWEVER, we did welcome some brand new islanders to the fold with the births of Ness Lynch, Ross Nelson and Jess Kirk. The primary school is going to be getting progressively busier in years to come! **Becca Long/Jonny Jobson**

### EIGG PRIMARY SCHOOL

**E**IGG Primary and Nursery have been very busy since we returned from our summer holidays. Miss Louise Taylor joined the school in April as the new Head Teacher and Martin Merrick joined as a full-time class teacher in August. We were also very sad to say goodbye to Sue Hollands, who retired in September after 16 years at the school and Nan Fee, who left before the summer holidays to teach in Edinburgh.

Everyone at Eigg Primary and Nursery contributed to making the community Christmas Craft Fair at the end of November a huge success. The primary and nursery children used vegetables from the school garden to make snacks to sell. The primary's snacks and a tapas and cocktail stall organised by one of the parents, raised about £600. This money is going to go towards a school visit to Applecross primary.

Not to be outdone, the nursery had their own tombola stall made up of prizes kindly donated by members of the community. The tombola raised £100 which will be spent on outdoor play resources.

We have already been lucky enough to invite a variety of visitors to the school such as the art teacher and her students from Mallaig High School and Fiona Sach who came to speak about her work with elephants at Chester Zoo. All of the children have also been on lots of trips to different parts of the island, including visits to the orchard to collect plums and apples.

In September, the primary children stayed in the Mallaig High School Residence for the week and filled their days with lots of

different activities including visiting the lifeboat, heritage centre and the Harry Potter Steam train. They also went to the leisure centre for swimming lessons, had yummy fish and chips for tea one night, joined the primary school for lunch, and had an art lesson at the High School.

At the moment, the school is full of singing, acting and scenery painting, as the children prepare for their Christmas Play - which this year is based on the Clement Clarke Moore poem 'Twas the Night before Christmas'. Everyone is very excited! *You can read more about what has been happening at Eigg Primary and Nursery at on our blog, written by the children at [www.eiggprimary.com](http://www.eiggprimary.com)*

## WILDLIFE WATCH



**T**HE 2019 season was my second one as the SWT Wildlife Ranger and it was another very busy summer with many memorable moments, sharing our wildlife highs and lows with people.

A large part of my job is to carry out wildlife surveys, with the help of volunteers and locals, to keep up the data records that retired SWT Ranger John Chester has kept so meticulously over the last 25 years. For example, we recorded over 120 species of bird, 106 moth species and 15 types of butterfly. The highlight of the year has to be the successful breeding of a pair of white tailed eagles - the first time in over 150 years! Disappointingly, the Golden eagle had no chicks at all, however other birds of prey all managed to produce young.

Other memorable moments were the mega raft of 15,000 shearwaters, many sightings of dolphins and minke whales, wild flowers and orchids galore, monitoring the eider duck chicks, and discovering the astonishing variety of moths and other insects we have here.

One worrying trend though is the continuing decline in coastal and seabird populations and again shorebirds had a terrible breeding season, mainly due to rat predation. SWT and IEHT are looking at various options and we had a visit from GoodNature Trap company to do a feasibility study.

This year we held 32 weekly guided walks, eight events and five junior wildlife club sessions, and in total we engaged with over 500 people! Our events included - Hen Harrier Awareness day, Marine Day, Plant Uses, Birdsong, Seashore birds and the Big Butterfly Count which all proved popular.

We also carried out conservation work when we could, helping Tasha and the Trust volunteers to maintain paths, clear invasive plants, and help in the tree nursery. The volunteers all did a fantastic job and are an invaluable part of the Ranger season.

Personally I have thoroughly enjoyed working as the wildlife Ranger again this year as it has given me the chance to develop my wildlife ID skills and share my enthusiasm with lots of people! Many thanks to everyone who has shared their wildlife sightings, photos and helped the SWT volunteers and myself to carry out the many tasks needed.

**Norah Barnes**

*If you would like to get involved with any wildlife surveying, walks or practical work in 2020 please get in touch with Norah, email: [norah@earthconnections.co.uk](mailto:norah@earthconnections.co.uk)*

## ISLE OF EIGG HERITAGE TRUST



Friends of Eigg memberships make the perfect gift for Christmas. Sign up a friend or family and help deliver a wide range of projects on our island

**Single membership - £15**

**Family membership - £25**

For further info contact [jonny@isleofeigg.net](mailto:jonny@isleofeigg.net)

## HISTORY SOCIETY

**F**INALLY a way forward for Clanranald Pier! Built in 1790, Clanranald harbour is C-listed and comprises of two piers, one of which is still in use and is now badly in need of repair. To identify a way forward, Comunn Eachdraidh Eige, the Eigg History Society, contacted Historic Environment Scotland for specialist advice. As a result, Martin Haddlington, a historic building consultant and Bill Revie, a material and building consultant, came to the harbour in July. This could not have been a better day with the sun shining and the team was very impressed by the overall state of preservation of the main pier.

They noted the pier was built on much older foundations and had been capped with concrete in the early 20th century, which probably did more damage than good by preventing the stones from moving with the tides. It was agreed that the site might well have been in use in Viking times, adding an interesting interpretation element to the project.

Martin Haddlington is currently producing a preliminary survey to identify the financial scope of the work. Meanwhile, the Comunn Eachdraidh Chair, Hilda Ibrahim, has made contact with the Highland council's archaeology department with a view to appoint an archaeologist to do the necessary survey.

Completion of this phased approach within the next two years will enable a fully costed repair grant application to be made to Historic Environment Scotland.

*Any donation towards the archaeology survey costs are gratefully received by the Comunn Eachdraidh Eige. [www.spanglefish.com/eighistorysociety](http://www.spanglefish.com/eighistorysociety)*

**E**LSEWHERE, The story of Eigg's revival as an island and the way it has inspired other island communities to follow suit was presented by islander Camille Dressler in her capacity as chair of the Scottish Islands Federation, at the plenary session of the fourth European Rural Parliament in Candas in Spain on November 8. The story of Eigg's journey also featured in a chapter of a book launched at the ERP: "Europe on the Move" showing inspiring examples of rural development throughout Europe in the last 25 years, and published by Forum Synergies.

"I was very proud of presenting the story of what is happening on Eigg and other Scottish islands in terms of revival to such an international audience," said Camille. "This journey has been facilitated by ground breaking Scottish legislation and this was of interest to many participants as they are looking at new ways to give meaning to the word 'community'."

*For more info go to [www.islandsrevival.org](http://www.islandsrevival.org) (finding your way through Lost map) [www.europeanruralparliament.com/index.php/gatherings/erp-2019](http://www.europeanruralparliament.com/index.php/gatherings/erp-2019)*



## EIGG ON EASY FUNDRAISING

*Earn donations for the IEHT while doing your online shopping. It doesn't cost a thing and has been a great help to the Trust. Please join and support the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust. [www.easyfundraising.org](http://www.easyfundraising.org)*