

Spring 2006

NEWSLETTER



Young find new lease of life at Hynish

In 2005 Alan Stevenson House, the Trust's centre in Hynish, Isle of Tiree, welcomed many groups, some interested in the arts, others engaged in sports, diving and windsurfing or school activities. Many of these included disadvantaged young people from all over the UK who took advantage of the exceptional facilities on offer. One of The Hebridean Trust's aims is to subsidise holidays for disadvantaged children and it is actively seeking support for this work. One of the visiting groups was the Beannacher Camphill Community that provides training for young adults with special educational needs.

In the words of Emma Louise Millar, a student from Beannacher, who wrote about her visit to the Isle of Tiree, "It is a lovely place; you will enjoy it. There was a nice place we stayed in called The Hynish Centre, they looked after us very well. The places you can go to are really nice. I think Tiree is a good place. There are a lot of walks you can do. We had an evening when we were singing. I enjoyed it very much. Please encourage others to choose it for your holiday."

Duncan Strouts, a carer, described some of the activities the group enjoyed, "We walked and pony trekked and we went on a speed boat and paddled and even swam. We climbed Ben Hynish and Kenavara, beach combed at Balephuill and Sandaig. We gazed out to sea from the broch at Vaul and rang the Ringing Stone. We lazed away a hot day at Happy Valley and looked to the horizon and Skerryvore. The sun shone and the rain fell and the wind blew, but not every day. We went home happy, and almost a year on we still talk of Tiree."

A Hynish family affair

Craig Watson was appointed as Assistant Warden in May 2005. The Trust realised that Monica Smith, the Warden, was in critical need of assistance and, although she called on casual help during the summer, she needed somebody not only to help out with all the duties of looking after visitors, but also to turn their hand to minor repairs. In employing Craig, the Trust created a new post, and Craig who is a qualified plumber, among his many skills, was the ideal choice. Craig has also had a wealth of experience caring for adults, particularly those with Down's syndrome, which he hopes will be helpful with potential visitors to Hynish with special needs.

Craig and his family have been associated with Tiree for many years. His grandmother lived in a house in Lower Square and Craig spent all his summer holidays on Tiree. He wanted to move back to the island as he recognized what a wonderful opportunity it would be to raise a family there. Craig and his wife Sharon have three children, Robert 12, Ashleigh 7 and Lynzie aged 4, and all attend the local school and benefit from small classes and the friendly way of life. Craig, who was a Boys Brigade Officer on the mainland, was soon contacted to run ...

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youth club on a Wednesday night, which now attracts over 20 teenagers.

Craig and his family now live in the first house his grandmother lived in when she rented on Tiree in 1952, a house that was restored by The Hebridean Trust. The Trust is able to offer low cost housing to Tiree families in listed category A buildings that Alan Stevenson built to house the workers who helped build the Skerryvore Lighthouse in 1838. Their historical significance makes them very special, but because of the low rents charged in line with Argyll & Bute Council, The Hebridean Trust has the added challenge of covering the maintenance costs. This is an ongoing responsibility, particularly in light of the exposed position and age of the properties. The Trust actively encourages people who have associations with the island but need economically viable housing.

If you would like to enquire about how you can support the Trust's increasing repairs and maintenance costs, please contact the Development Office on 01865 311468 or info@hebrideantrust.org

Gray turns to Gold

Alan Gray and his family live in Edinburgh and are regular visitors to Tiree. Alan returned to Tiree again in Summer 2005, straight from Connecticut, USA where he represented Scotland in the World Cerebral Palsy Games. His event is swimming and he was one of eight swimmers. He returned with three individual bronze medals and two relay gold medals (with one new world record!). Alan walks with two sticks and uses a wheelchair for long distances. He has gone through mainstream education and sat seven standard grades. His aim is to go to Stirling University to study media and sports science.

Alan's family love Tiree; they are Morton Boyd House's most regular visitors. They visit in the summer, at Easter, in October and even spend Christmas at Morton Boyd House (bringing with them their own Christmas tree and decorations!). "The house looked fabulous," says Alan.

The adaptations of Morton Boyd House add to the family's holiday benefits: the shower for the disabled, toilet access, accommodation on one level: all fantastic for Alan. The family loves the tranquil setting of Hynish, the seclusion of the bay, the renovated pier from which to fish. Alan's mum and dad are often seen recharging their batteries sitting on the bench looking out to sea.



Alan and his mother at Morton Boyd House

There are still some weeks/weekends available for the 2006 season in both Morton Boyd House (sleeps up to 8) and Alan Stevenson House (sleeps up to 24) in Hynish, Isle of Tiree. To check the latest availability for accommodation visit the website at www.hynishcentre.co.uk



Craig and family enjoying a camping trip

The work to solve the problem of water ingress at one of the notable landmarks of the Hebrides, St Edward's chapel, Canna got a positive response from Historic Scotland when one of their key architects met a number of Hebridean Trust Trustees on site in June 2005. There is an agreement with the National Trust for Scotland to complete the programme of improvements and remedial works in partnership with The Hebridean Trust.



The toilet for the disabled and access improvements at Alan Stevenson House, Hynish, Isle of Tiree were completed in time for the start of the 2005 visitor season. The former stores building was converted by The Hebridean Trust 14 years ago to create accommodation for visiting groups of disadvantaged children and a facility for local community and social events. It is also used to provide catering and refreshments for visitors to Hynish. The improvements, undertaken by Touchwood Renovations of Tiree, are a welcome development for all users.

A lighting guide

A local guide welcomed visitors to the Story of Skerryvore Lighthouse exhibition during busy periods over the summer months of 2005. Staged by The Hebridean Trust in Hynish, Isle of Tiree, the initiative at the exhibition was one of a number put in place by the Trust to provide more of a learning and access focus and to encourage local people to get involved. This small exhibition, which contains a unique piece of industrial archaeology is at the centre of a living community and records the remarkable story of the design and construction of the Skerryvore Lighthouse by Alan Stevenson (uncle of Robert Louis Stevenson).

Admission to the exhibition is free but the Trust welcomes donations. The Trust uses the donations to contribute towards the running costs of the exhibition. The Trust also welcomes financial support towards its maintenance programme for the exhibition.

The Hebridean Trust has produced an exciting DVD of the Hynish Centre showing details of the facilities on offer. To request a copy please contact, The Development Office, The Hebridean Trust, North Parade Chambers, 75a Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PE info@hebrideantrust.org

Special news for the Treshnish Isles

The Treshnish Isles are a chain of uninhabited islands situated off the west coast of the Isle of Mull. They were purchased by The Hebridean Trust in 2000 with the help of grant money from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In addition to their Site of Special Scientific Interest status and classification as a Special Protection Area, the Treshnish Isles have been formally designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the internationally important colony of grey seals, *Halichoerus grypus* and the surrounding rocky reef habitat.

The islands are also a natural sanctuary of seabirds and are important for puffin, razorbill, guillemot and internationally important populations of storm petrel. The Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group (TIARG) regularly monitors the breeding seabird populations, through ringing and census work. All TIARG census and ringing data are fed into two national monitoring programmes.



The group's 27th expedition during June 2005 was centred upon Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil and took advantage of additional support to survey and ring on adjacent islands, resulting in the ringing of the first corncrake and adult great skua by the group.

Corncrake
(Robin M Ward)

As far as the Trust is aware, there are no mink and, significantly, there are no rats on the islands. This is quite surprising given the history of human occupation and the number of daily visitors, but the lack of rats and other land predators is a major reason for the existence of important colonies of burrowing petrels on the islands and the endearing puffins. The Trust has encouraged local groups, to lead a coordinated approach to mink control on nearby Mull to minimise the threat to the Treshnish Isles. The Trust welcomes day visits to the Treshnish Isles for which it does not charge but donations are gratefully received, which go towards conservation work on the islands and, in particular, the seabird surveys. Visitors are also reminded of the importance of taking care not to disturb wildlife when they visit and be alert to any uninvited guests!



© Stanton



2005 Auk ringing group

Young man's dream

Joe Withers Green the youngest Friend of The Hebridean Trust (see New Year 2005 Edition) had a fantastic opportunity to visit Tiree and the Treshnish Isles with his father in May 2005. Joe said, "It was brilliant! I never realised the amount of birds and wildlife that we would see." Joe's dad said that he had been stunned by the wealth of biodiversity on the islands. He said he had great admiration and support for the work of the Trust, particularly with visiting school groups and the Trust's challenge to meet housing needs evidenced in Hynish, Isle of Tiree.



Joe and his dad visiting the Treshnish Isles

The Signal Tower at Hynish, Isle of Tiree has been the subject of an extensive restoration project, both internal and external. Before radio, The Signal Tower was the only way of communicating between Skerryvore Lighthouse and the Shore Station. This was often very difficult due to low visibility and frequent bad weather but, to ensure the safety of the Lighthouse crew, somebody had to keep watch. Now visitors can keep watch themselves from the newly restored surroundings of the observation deck.

Traditional enterprise

The main roof of the Sandaig Thatched Cottage Museum on the Isle of Tiree was re-thatched in time for the start of the 2005 visitor season. The shortage of thatch (see New Year 2005 edition) was overcome and a team of thatchers, using traditional techniques, came on board to undertake the work. The barn and byre were restored and re-thatched in the autumn, keeping them weather tight for winter. To maintain the roof properly, The Hebridean Trust has been advised that a new layer of thatch



needs to be added on an annual basis. Entrance to the museum is free so donations and many hours of work by volunteers on the island (for which the Trust is most grateful), are vital to keep it open. For more details of the traditional methods used at Sandaig Museum, see the places to visit page on the website www.hebrideantrust.org

Colin Souness cutting marram grass in preparation for thatching

How you can support our work

Making a donation:

I would like to make a donation to The Hebridean Trust of £_____

A regular gift, by Direct Debit, would be especially valuable in helping us to plan ahead with confidence. Please request details from info@hebrideantrust.org

Please complete your details and return your donation to the address below.

Gift Aid

You could substantially increase the value of your donation to us if you are a UK taxpayer. Every £1 you give could be worth £1.28 to us – at no additional cost to you. If you would like The Hebridean Trust to further benefit from your donations through Gift Aid now and in the future, please tick the appropriate box below:

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Friends of The Hebridean Trust are enthusiasts who wish to support our work, be kept up to date with the progress of the Trust's projects and receive details of new initiatives. Friends receive a subscription to our biannual newsletter, 5% discount on standard prices for accommodation at the Hynish Centre on Tiree and an enamelled lapel pin.

Membership subscriptions:

Individual annual membership	£15
Joint or family annual membership	£25
Junior annual membership (14 or under)	£5
Individual life membership	£100
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++Alternatively telephone the development Office on 01865 311468

Or email: info@hebrideantrust.org

Return to : The Development Office, The Hebridean Trust, North Parade
Chambers, 75a Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PE

Charles McLeish

The Hebridean Trust, friends and family were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Charlie McLeish on Christmas Day 2005. Charlie's mother had owned the adjoining property to Sandaig Museum and it was at the Museum that Charlie, along with his wife Ina, enjoyed volunteering so much. Several of the exhibits in the museum were given by Charlie, these include many of the photographs and items of clothing, which bring the period to life as well as relics from The Sturdy, one of the ships to sink off Tiree during the war. Sandaig Museum is open during the week from 2 pm to 4 pm from Easter to September. Many a time if he saw somebody looking around, no matter what time it was, Charlie would go over and let them in. A lot of the time Charlie went beyond the call of duty so as not to disappoint a visitor eager to learn the former way of life on Tiree. He will be sorely missed.



Volunteers' dinner that Charlie attended seated fifth down on right

Trust toasts supporters

The Hebridean Trust held a dinner on Thursday 29th September 2005 to thank all their volunteers and colleagues on the Isle of Tiree. New volunteer at Sandaig, Dorothy Burnie, was officially welcomed and it is hoped she will enjoy helping the Trust. Mike Stanfield (Chairman) took the opportunity to welcome Dorothy and to thank the Trust's loyal network of volunteers for their support and commitment. The dinner was held at the Glassary Restaurant, Sandaig next to the Trust's thatched Cottage Museum where all the volunteers make a valuable contribution in making the exhibition come alive for visitors.

The Trust was also sorry to learn that Effie McKinnon will be stepping down as a volunteer and thank her for her sterling efforts.

If you are able to offer your skills on a voluntary basis across any of the Trust's project areas please contact the Development Office on 01865 311468 or info@hebrideantrust.org



The cost of printing this newsletter was kindly donated.
The Hebridean Trust Trustees:
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