

The Shapinsay Sound



LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.
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It's been a busy end to the term – with lots of events to perform at!

The P7s switched on the Christmas tree lights, and all the children performed to the many people there. On 16th

December it was great to see so many folk there for our end of term carol service.

All the children from Nursery to P7 took part and did really well. The older children did their first performance on handbells, **P5 – 7** children played fiddle and Paul played Jingle Bells on the guitar.

In Art the **P4 – 7** children have been doing some great still life work, and the **P1 – 3** children have learned a variety of different collage techniques. The younger children also had a great time learning about life in the Arctic when Louise brought in her sled and they pretended to be huskies (with surprisingly convincing howls). Nursery children have been making all sorts of Christmas crafts and they look great.

Advance warning – our pantomime this year is Aladdin, and we will be performing it in March. Further details to come in future Shapinsay Sounds.



SHAPINSAY
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The Shapinsay Sound

From the Chair

by Sheila Garson

*Seasons Greetings
from the staff and board of SDT*

January 2017

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*We look forward to continuing to work with you during
2017 for the benefit of our island community.*

Transport Service Seasonal Holidays

There shall be no sailings on the OOH Ferry

Christmas Holidays

Sunday 25th December
Monday 26th December
Tuesday 27th December

New Year Holidays

Sunday 1st January
Monday 2nd January
Tuesday 3rd January

There shall be no Transport Car/Bus

Monday 26th December
Tuesday 27th December

Monday 2nd January
Tuesday 3rd January

Kinder Scotland Challenge!

People in Shapinsay are being invited to take part in a 21 day challenge to spread some extra kindness. That's quite a challenge for an already very kind community but we reckon we can do it!

It's all part of a project called Kinder Scotland involving the Carnegie UK Trust and U-lab, Scotland. The idea is do something kind every day for 3 weeks from January the 5th and to notice the difference it makes not just to other people but also in our own hearts and lives.

It's not just about the 'feel good' factor either. Zoe Ferguson who has been researching the topic as an associate of the Carnegie Trust says 'there is a growing body of evidence that consistently shows that positive relationships and kindness are at the very heart of our wellbeing'.

There are many creative and imaginative ways to be kind on top of the ones we're used to and it can be just as much about organisations or groups as individuals. It could also involve thinking and talking kindly and positively about other folks or even cutting ourselves some slack. Plenty of ideas can be found on Facebook pages like Kindness UK or the global kindness website <http://www.kindspring.org/ideas/>

People taking part might like to keep a diary to record their encouraging experiences of spreading a little extra kindness to warm up one of the colder months of the year.

Anyone in Shapinsay interested in supporting the Challenge should contact cao@shapinsay.org.uk for more details.

Garden Notes from Old School Part 2



I have planted more bulbs; groups of Tulip Doll's Minuet alongside Green Star which performed so well last year and alliums around an upright growing purple leaved elder Sambucus nigra Black Tower. Allium christophii has large heads of a paler lilac/mauve colour so should contrast well with the dark leaves of the elder. It is only about 18ins high so should stand up well and not get too blown about by the wind. When the flowers have finished, the seed heads can be cut and dried and make wonderful winter decorations.

Roses can be pruned now and dead leaves at the base cleared away and burned to reduce the risk of blackspot next year. Other deciduous shrubs can also be pruned to shape; remove any dead, broken or crossing branches which are easy to see now that the leaves have fallen.

A relative from further south asked how we are enjoying the Orkney winter, and the truth is at the time of writing, apart from a few light frosts winter hasn't really arrived yet. There's no doubt it will come but let's make the most of this weather while we can to get out in the garden, even for a few minutes – there's always something going on. To someone who commented to me recently "isn't this the wrong time of year to be gardening?" I replied "there is never a wrong time of year to be gardening!"

Happy New Year!

If you have any garden tips that you would like to share or any special plants that you would like to tell others about please let me know and I will include them next month.

Karen Evans, Old School, Shapinsay
karen@evanssmallholder.plus.com

Shapinsay Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Brownies and Rainbows.

For the last meeting before Christmas the children went carol singing around Millbank and Helliars View. We hope you all enjoyed the carols!



Garden Notes from Old School



So another year has passed and here we are, ready to start the whole thing all over again! I was asked recently to take a look at someone's garden and make some suggestions for new plants. This is always an exercise which prompts me to look again at my own garden to see if I can make some improvements. When we see our gardens day in, day out, it's easy to take for granted the way they look and sometimes we need to look at them with an outsider's eyes to see that some small changes could enhance the overall picture.

At this time of year evergreens are especially important for providing colour, structure and varied leaf colour, from the slender jagged leaves of *Olearia zennorensis* to the spiky needles of *Pinus mugo* Mughus and the large round leathery leaves of *Bergenia cordifolia* or Elephant's Ears.



Anything with yellow or gold on the leaves immediately brightens up an area; the holly Golden King is making slow but steady growth and the sedge *Carex oshimensis* Evergold always looks good in the border.



Edging the path is *Lamium Sterling Silver* which keeps its silver leaves all year round, in fact it is even more striking in winter. *Eryngium variifolium* also keeps its silver veined foliage and purple leaved *Heucheras* always provide a splash of colour, from the almost black H. Obsidian to the delicate H. Silver Scrolls. A lovely structural *Euphorbia* is *E. characias wulfenii*; it too is evergreen and has blue/ green leaves at the base and all the way up the flower spikes which terminate in lime green bracts with small red centres. They need the warmth and shelter of a wall but I think it's worth trying to find the right spot for them. Why they are flowering now is anyone's guess because they will certainly get knocked back later in winter, but they will flower again in spring.



Screen Machine



Big Screen Success on Shapinsay!

The Screen Machine mobile cinema's first visit to Shapinsay just before Christmas was a great success bringing with it a feast of films and something for everyone! There was a good turn-out for 'Finding Dory', 'Bridget Jones's Baby' and 'Girl on the Train' in particular.

Shapinsay Community Association and Shapinsay Development Trust co-hosted the two day event which included a private screening of Big Friendly Giant for the pupils of Shapinsay School. There had been fears the Screen Machine might not

get up and down the ferry ramp but all went well and a big thanks to our ferry guys for all their advice and help.

Senior Screen Machine driver and operator Iain MacColl says Shapinsay's Community Centre car park was a very convenient venue. Often when visiting islands, there can be a lot of miles to cover after leaving the ferry such as in the Summer Isles which involved 15 miles off the main road to the location for the screenings.

The 33 tonne vehicle, Scotland's only mobile cinema, clocks up 15 thousand miles a year in 9 week long runs. Iain has been behind the wheel for 19 years but never gets tired of bringing some of the best films to some of the remotest of places. "I get a real buzz from seeing the smiles and reaction on people's faces when they come out after being completely immersed in enjoying a film - or hearing the kids roaring with laughter and interacting with the characters and the plot."



For some wee ones it's their first time ever at a big screen movie and there have been some amusing moments like the youngster who kept asking for the channel to be changed because he didn't like the film!

Iain's role has a surprising aspect to it with two sides to the coin. Folks he says can see him as responsible for more than bringing the films to them. He is often hailed as a hero when people have enjoyed a screening "it's as if I wrote, directed and made the movie myself....but if folks haven't been so keen on a film I can get flack as if I could have given it a different ending"!



So what does it feel like heading off to the next venue after delivering such a treat to an overjoyed community? "It's no different to the circus pulling out of town - people accept it," says Iain, "although there was one island where they joked about taking my wheels off so they could hang onto the Screen Machine a bit longer".

Screen Machine Part 2



The Screen Machine experience of going to the movies couldn't be more different from when films were shown on Shapinsay in the old youth club hut and then the old Drill Hall - when rural cinema performances were in full swing.

Films shown in those days on the island included such classics as 'A Town Like Alice', 'White Christmas', 'Whisky Galore' and many of the Carry On series. But it was the movie 'Hell Below Zero' which summed up the slight downside of movie going in those days for Shapinsay's Kenny Meason who says it could be chilly in "the uninsulated under-heated Drill Hall with its hard seats" – though folks didn't seem to mind, even if it meant wrapping up

well and keeping their coats on in winter.

Reminiscing about those Drill Hall screenings Kenny says, "the juniors – us – sat on hard wooden forms at the front but we were nearest the screen and had full vision of the big screen. It was important to absorb the full impact of the Pathe News, not so much for the content, but for the size and breed of the cockerel which would ensure playground conjecture for days to come (it was after all the hey day of Orkney's egg production!)"

Jean Wallace was also another regular early cinema-goer on Shapinsay. She and her friends used to pedal along there on their bikes and looked forward to the entertainment despite the often cool conditions. Having attended one of the recent mobile cinema movies she says "it was luxury by comparison – with proper seats and it was warm".



It's hoped that the Screen Machine will visit Shapinsay again in future bringing with it a new selection of the latest films. It's about to have a major re-fit which will add at least 6 more years to its operational life.



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake

Pygmy Shrews - *Sorex minutus*.

The smallest mammal found in Orkney is the European pygmy shrew, and we can see them here on Shapinsay too. Probably the most common way of coming across them is when one is brought inside by a cat like this little chap shown in the hand. Luckily for this little fella he was not harmed physically, and was returned to a safe place to try his luck again.



Pygmy shrews are 40 to 60 mm long in the body, plus a tail which is 32 to 46mm long, and weigh around 5 grams. The tail of the pygmy shrew is proportionally longer and thicker than that of the tails on common shrews, which we do not find in Orkney. They have a long snout, small ears and eyes and have keen senses of smell, hearing and touch.

Pygmy shrews are active by day and night. They make and use tunnels in vegetation and will use burrows dug by other animals.



They eat insects, wood lice and spiders, but unlike their larger cousins, rarely eat earth worms. They are solitary except in the breeding season, and defend their territory aggressively towards their own kind. You may hear their high pitched squeaks when they fight.

They have a very high metabolic rate, and need to feed regularly, consuming up to 125% of their own weight per day. Pygmy shrews breed between April and October, producing two or three litters of 5-7 young. They overwinter as youngsters as they only live up to about 13 months maximum.

In Shapinsay their main predators will be merlins, hen harriers, kestrels, sparrowhawks and short eared owls.