

The Shapinsay Sound



LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.
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At the time of writing we are just starting the Summer term, and the weather is beautiful. We've been enjoying the front area in particular and been outside as much as we can.

The whole school are learning about Japan (along with other schools in Orkney) at the moment. The older children learned a lot about Japan last year, and the younger children are enjoying finding out facts about Japan.

The **P4 - 7** class are learning about how natural forces affect buildings in both Orkney and Japan and will be testing their building skills using Ian's homemade earthquake and tsunami simulators. **P1 - 3** are learning about the weather and climate in Orkney and Japan, and comparing how the houses need to be different in order to withstand different situations. The Nursery children are testing materials in order to make wind and water proof houses for their toys. They will also be focusing on Number and Shape.

On Friday 20th April the **P1 - 7** children went to Kirkwall for a whole day of Rugby activities with Eday, Rousay and North Walls Schools. The children all really enjoyed it and we were really lucky with the weather. The children took part in a variety of games in the morning and then played some team games in the afternoon. The children got to know some children from the other schools as well. Mrs Bews was awarded with her "Volunteer of the Month" certificate by Active Schools as well - Well done Mrs Bews! The children will be starting to prepare for the Picnic too (**Saturday 23rd June**).

The children have been working on evaluating our school, led by the Pupil Council. It would be great to have some evaluation with members of the community too so please watch out for news of this in future Shapinsay Sounds.

We have been doing lots of fundraising for our trips to Lagganlia and Hoy. We hope to have a successful race night and sale (and thanks to everyone who helps us and supports us with these). We're really looking forward to the trips (and fingers crossed that we have a good summer!)



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DEVELOPMENT
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The Shapinsay Sound

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Shapinsay Renewables.

It's the time of year to dig out your shorts and put away the winter coats. Whirly has come to the end of another financial year and I have another year of data and figures to share with you.

The winter months have been quiet for wind turbines in Orkney, back in October Whirly was on course for the best year ever for generation. The main winter months normally provide us with a boost and are our most profitable months. This winter it just hasn't happened. Cast your minds back to Christmas, both Christmas Day and Boxing Day were beautiful days, hardly any wind at all. When you own a wind turbine which is being curtailed, these two days are really important. Everyone is normally at home using more power than normal.

The lack of any big storms throughout the winter has also played a part. When we have had consistent wind, we have had warmth. When we have had cold periods, there was no wind. Both scenarios are not going to maximise energy generation.

Whirly has generated 2530475 kw's over the year, last year's figure was 2453610 an increase of 76865 kw's.
Our curtailment has reduced from 28.94% in 2016-17 to 27.66% 2017-18.

If the winter had been more productive for us, the figure would be under 25%. Overall this means that we have been unable to generate or sell 27.66% of our power. It's a lot of money for Shapinsay to lose. The curtailment continues to reduce every year and when the Hydrogen project is up and running this should wipe curtailment out.

The long term solution to resolve curtailment is a new cable across to the Scottish mainland and an improved transmission network in Orkney. Grid improvements will allow us to export all our generated power and maximise our earnings. This work will hopefully start in the next few years. It will be very pleasing if I can report similar figures for this coming year's generation but it would be nice to have a good summer.

Shapinsay Way Ahead Programme (SWAP)

Shapinsay's Way Ahead Programme (the SWAP) is open to all residents

Start of a new (tax) year = Start of a new SWAP year!

Last year we used up all the allocated funds with a total of 11 successful applications, so this year we have increased the funds available.

If you have any ideas, plans, events, projects or dreams to help to maintain and improve our lives on the beautiful and peaceful island of Shapinsay please contact us to see if a SWAP grant is right for you.

01856 711733 or just drop into the boathouse between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday.

Application forms are available from the Boathouse
boathouse@shapinsay.org.uk

Or from the Trust web page on
www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/SHAPINSAY library.



Place Names

by Sheila Garson

Over the past few weeks I've been running a series of workshops on Shapinsay place names and its been great to see the interest and enthusiasm for this special part of our cultural heritage.

Many folk say the history of a country is stored in its language and place names are a special part of this. In Orkney we find the overwhelming influence of the Norwegian Vikings has given us our own unique dialect with the etymologies of many everyday words showing Old Norse origin.



The Norse Vikings began settling here in the 8th and 9th centuries and Orkney was held by the Norwegian and later Danish Crown until 1468. Although it is almost 600 years since we were part of the Norse world, place names remain one of the strongest linguistic links to our Viking past. Brian Smith, Shetland's Archivist, estimates that in the region of 99% of place names in Orkney and Shetland can be identified as Norse, with few earlier place names surviving. This means that in Orkney over 10,000 place names are derived from or corruptions of, the original Old Norse names.

The Norse naming system was straight forward, usually describing what was visible in the landscape or how a place was used. It's no surprise then that many surviving elements describing different kinds of buildings or settlement, types of land, topographic features and even the names of people. The sea was the road for the Viking settlers and we find many of their Norse name elements surviving in coastal features, skerries and holms. There are even names derived from their ship.

Often the written form of a place name does not correspond with local, Orcadian pronunciation. If you delve a bit deeper you will usually find this local pronunciation is much nearer the earlier form of the name, prior to spelling being standardized. This highlights why we should value the Orcadian pronunciation of island places as they often reveal the subtle nuances of meaning lost in the standard form.

Place names are a real window to the past and each one has a story to tell.



Shapinsay Heritage Centre open again!

Shapinsay Heritage Centre and Craft Shop opens for the 2018 season on **Sunday May the 6th**. This year's special exhibition will feature photos showing some of the significant changes within living memory which have shaped our island. This includes the coming of the Ro-Ro ferry with snaps of the naming ceremony.

Other progress such as mains electricity and mains water changed life on Shapinsay for the better. Exhibition organiser Edith Tait says the display will give the history of services which we take for granted today and will be of special interest to newcomers to Shapinsay who may not be aware that these are only more recent developments in our history.

"The advent of the Ro-Ro ferry nearly 30 years ago" says Edith "opened up the island and allowed people to commute to work for the first time. It also allowed trucks to be used to ship fertiliser and cattle and building materials – and the new service also allowed access for the Library van"

When it comes to power, farms and homes mostly used Startomatic engines before mains electric, which were only put on for specific tasks. But, says Edith "with mains in 1967 you could suddenly do anything you needed – have lights, dry your hair, put on the washer – all at the drop of a switch"

Mains water from boreholes was also a welcome boost from the late 1960's – previously drinking water came from individual wells. Now of course it comes from the mainland with an under-sea pipe.

The Heritage Centre with its 'events that shaped' Shapinsay display and the Craft Shop with a lovely selection of gifts made on the island will be open every day of the week. **Opening times are from 12 noon until 4.30pm during throughout the summer season.**

Anyone with goods for the gift shop should bring them in between 2.30 and 4pm on Friday May the 4th ready for set-up on Saturday.



Kirk News

Last month we had a very good online conference with a few of our counterparts in Path of Renewal – Shetland and Kintore among them. One of the things discussed was the fact that from the very beginning Path of Renewal has always been about experimenting and building the new ALONGSIDE the old but never about replacing what's already there. Sunday services have remained pretty much what they've always been but we have tried to build other things around that – coffee afternoons, Bag the Bruck or the community carol singing. We hope to build on that in the future and also encourage things like Philosophy for Community which has its own audience and a place in the life of the kirk and the island.

In this issue of Shapinsay Sound you can see an advert about the Church Family Picnic coming up in June. Even though it's next month we're asking that people let me know by the end of this month please if they'd like to attend as we need to order ice cream for all the children – hence our need to know the numbers. So please have a think about it and let me know by the 31st May if you can make it!

See you soon!

Julia

Contact me at: Rev Julia Meason, 874789,

JMeason@churchofscotland.org.uk

Church Family Picnic Saturday 9th June Scapa Beach 11.30 am to 2.30pm



Games, songs and ice cream provided.

Please bring a snack and a bucket and spade.

In the event of bad weather we'll meet at King Street Halls

We look forward to seeing you there!

PRESBYTERY OF ORKNEY

For further information contact Rev. Julia Meason on 874789

Garden Notes from Old School

I think it's safe to say that spring is now well into its stride. Growth is so fast now that every new day sees a change from the last.

Once I know that growth is well under way I can sort through plants over-wintered in pots outside and assess losses. One of the main causes of loss is leatherjackets which eat their way through the roots undetected until I tip the plant out of the pot to find out what killed it. The other factor is the wet; if pots are not able to drain freely they become waterlogged and young plants simply rot. Varieties of red hot poker can be particularly susceptible to winter wet in the UK. In their native South Africa they are often seen growing at the edge of streams and they do benefit from moisture during the growing and flowering period but when they become dormant, in our winter, they need good drainage. The key is to put a layer of grit into the bottom of the planting hole and surround the plant with a really gritty compost mix.

When the sun shines and the wind drops the garden comes alive with the sound of bees foraging among the spring flowers. Balfour willow catkins are huge and always a favourite with bees but the Pasqueflower, *Pulsatilla vulgaris* 'Rubra' is also a magnet. This is a garden variety of the now rare wildflower which grows in areas of chalk and limestone grassland in a few remaining sites in England. It has the added bonus of decorative, long silky seed-heads which stay on the plant until they are finally dispersed by the wind.



More colour is provided by the alpine saxifrages and primulas. A mainstay in many gardens at this time is the drumstick primula; in shades of purple, red and white, it is such a reliable plant for spring. The mauve blue Primula Linda Pope was bought at one of the Scottish Rock Garden shows years ago and it just keeps going! It has a sweet scent that can only be appreciated on a calm day so I often put a pot in the greenhouse to enjoy whatever the weather is doing outside.



Garden Notes Part 2

Also in the greenhouse, in order to appreciate its scent, is a blood-red wallflower which was originally a cutting from my son's garden in Cambridge. It does get 'leggy' after a while so I will be taking more cuttings now to create new bushy plants to flower next year. Buddleja and lupin cuttings taken last year are now growing well and need potting on to give good-sized plants ready for planting out as soon as they are fully hardened off. In the Keder tunnel new seedlings are sprouting every day and that means a lot of pricking out. Most veg intended for growing outside is grown in modules and planted out as strong growing young plants. It is a lot of work and they do need to be hardened off but I find that they establish well in this way and are less prone to slug damage. Inside the tunnel, I can sow directly into the ground and we are now enjoying salad leaves sown at the end of last year. Curly kale and the black kale, Cavolo Nero, have been providing us with plenty of greens over the last weeks but now they are beginning to go to seed so hopefully we can continue to pick enough leaves until this season's young cabbages are big enough to pick.



My latest toy is a soil thermometer. Following some drainage work we need to sow an area with grass seed and I was interested to know exactly how warm the ground had become. Advice was to wait until the soil temperature reached 6C and by the middle of April that magic number had been reached. So no excuses now, I just need a perfectly calm, sunny day to sow and a light rain overnight to water in the seed. No problem! 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

Scottish Ballet comes to Shapinsay

A BIG thankyou to the Scottish Ballet folks for coming to Shapinsay and putting on some FUN-tastic dance classes for the pupils at Shapinsay School whilst up in Orkney to perform at the Pickaquoy.

Adults also had a chance to take part in a separate dance session. They really enjoyed the experience with live piano from **Derek Barron** as **Lewis Normand** of Scottish ballet's education department put us through our paces.

Comments from the group included "Just brilliant" and "it has been a wonderful experience and a privilege to try this out". **Big thank you** also to Shapinsay School for hosting the event in the school hall!



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake

Do you fancy rotting seaweed for tea tonight?



If you ever walk along the strandline above the high tide mark and turn over a few stones, you are likely to find two of nature's great recyclers. The sandhopper and sea slater.

These are two very common crustaceans which come out at night and early evening to feed on rotting seaweed, sometimes travelling far down the beach as the tide falls. They form a vital part of breaking down the debris on the shore.

During the day, both sea slaters and sandhoppers hide under stones and seaweed and in crevices, whilst sandhoppers can also burrow up to 30 cm deep in sand.

The sea slater is an impressive beast looking very similar to woodlice that inhabit damp places amongst leaf litter for example or even in your home. Sea slaters are much bigger and can reach 3 cms in length. Sandhoppers look rather like miniature shrimps or prawns and grow to a maximum of only 1.5 cm. Males are slightly bigger than females.

Both species have a pair of dark eyes and a pair of antennae to feel their way around, seven protective segments and seven pairs of legs.

Sea slaters just crawl around. Sandhoppers can rapidly flick out their tail and jump up to one metre into the air to escape birds which might feed on them. Both these animals have gills. They do not live in water, but need occasional immersion to survive and must live in damp conditions.



Sandhoppers mate in the spring during their nightly migrations down the shore. Females carry about 15 eggs which she broods until they hatch.

At first the young are very sensitive to drying out, so they live in very wet washed up seaweed. They do not breed until the following year, and can expect to survive for less than 2 years in total.

Sea slaters do not breed until their third year, and once mated the female carries her eggs in a special pouch until they hatch. After breeding the adults die.