

The Shapinsay Sound

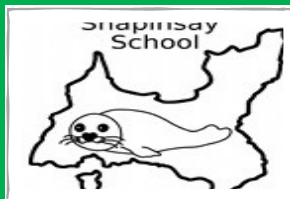


LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.
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This month we have a rather watery theme!

The Nursery children have a new water tray which was kindly given by the Parent Council. There has been lots of fun had exploring it, especially all the pipes. The Nursery have an under the sea theme for their learning this term and have been drawing and painting all sorts of sea creatures. **P1 – 3** have been learning about mermaids, and looking at manatees and why sailors confused them for mermaids. They are also learning about Pirates and have been creating their own treasure maps using co-ordinates and compass directions. The younger class have also been continuing to follow Tim Peake's work on the International Space Station.

P4 – 7 have been looking at using water responsibly. This term they are learning more about Orkney, including land use and government. We have all started rehearsing for our Pantomime (10th March) of Pirates Versus Mermaids, and it is looking great already. We hope that as many folk as possible will come along to see it, and meet our Pirates and Mermaids. Thanks to everyone who has donated costumes and fabric – we think we have enough now but please keep an eye on the Shapinsay facebook page as we will post there if we need anything else.

From 1st February Mr Tim Ross will be joining us for

his teaching experience. He will be mainly working with the older class.

We all had a visit from our local police officers and we had great fun finding out about their job, trying out some of their equipment and exploring the police car. Did you know you can fit 19 children in a police car at the same time? This is probably only worth trying when the car isn't moving however and we did have the police looking on at the time!



SHAPINSAY
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The Shapinsay Sound

February 2016

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From the Chair

by Sheila Garson



As we start the new year we are busy finalising our last grant claim to the Big Lottery's Growing Community Assets fund. A lot has happened since we made the initial bid to the Big Lottery for funding towards the turbine, way back in 2009. Although in the end this grant couldn't be used for the actual construction of the turbine because of State Aid rules, we were still able to use the funds to achieve the outcomes the community had identified as their priorities. Over the past few years this grant funding and the income generated by the turbine has enabled us to deliver those original outcomes.

The Trust has changed considerable since those early days. For example, when the community originally embarked on the turbine project it had no paid staff and

much of the early work was undertaken by the volunteer board. However, given the workload this was really not sustainable and we would never have succeeded in delivering that £2M project without employing staff. Working together with the staff and being closely involved in the project, the volunteer Board also gained a huge amount of knowledge and skills. This was all part of growing our community asset. The same is true now as we work to develop new projects and sustain existing ones, particularly in the current funding climate where funders are looking for innovative projects, which can sustain themselves. So as we come to the end of the Big Lottery Growing Community Assets funding and move into a new era the funding has done what it set out to do. The Trust has grown the assets it holds for the benefit of the community and we, as a community, have gained in knowledge and skills and most importantly grown in confidence in what we can achieve for our island. All this will help us as we work to develop new projects such as those looking at how to address the curtailment issues through hydrogen production



Shapinsay Development Trust

by Lynne Collinson

Looking on the bright side for Shapinsay.



Shapinsay Development Trust Director Simon Meason is determined to stay positive in this New Year and encourages everyone else on the Island to do the same. 38 year old Simon, who farms beef cattle on nearly 100 hectares at Frustigarth has been on the board of the Trust for the past 2 years and says a positive attitude is key to playing his part as a Director.

"Whenever things could be better it's good to look for solutions" he says, "rather than just having a moan. On the farm, finding solutions is something you have to do all the time - you just get on with it and turn everything round. All too often people can have a negative mind-set and that doesn't do anyone any good - even if it's been raining most of the day you can choose to focus on the half an hour of sunshine!"

Simon has lived on Shapinsay for most of his life and is married to wife Alison who he met whilst living for a short time on the mainland. They have two children and are now happily settled in the family home at Frustigarth where generations of Measons have lived since at least the 1600's.

As far as his Trust role goes Simon says "I want to help keep Shapinsay thriving and vibrant - ensuring a good future for the whole of the Island which will benefit everyone including me. I'd also like to see new blood attracted with young families coming in to play an active role in the community and keep all the services viable. The shop, the ferry and the school would all benefit from this."

"I'd also like to see more Directors join the board because it will broaden things out and bring more opinions into the mix - and it would also be good to have more people join the SDT as members, to show their support. We are very much moving forwards as a Trust - the newly converted Boathouse facility is a good example of this".

"There are so many good things in the pipeline including the green energy hydrogen project which could provide additional income for the Trust to spend on the Island. This could prove timely for us as a largely agricultural community. Farmers hit by changes in the basic payments scheme may be forced to cut back to farming at a basic level and that would mean less money coming into Shapinsay so any successful new projects could help offset this".

Apart from his public role on the Board, Simon also has another claim to fame, appearing on the cover of the second volume of 'Beachcombing in Orkney' which features him and his father Kenny carrying their prize find of a rope ladder between them.

It was retrieved many years previously when Simon was still in primary school but the pair were persuaded by author Keith Allardyce to re-enact the discovery - making a brilliant cover photo!



Poem

by HL Davis

The Valentine Blues Rag

(imagine a speakeasy in the twenties, and the lady singer performing through a megaphone)

Epiphany is over
The New Year has begun
Spring is round the corner, yet
I'm feeling awfully glum
It's really very silly
I'm sure you will agree,
But ladies let me tell of my
Woeful misery...

Hand on my heart and head to my toes
It's so ridiculous that God only knows
Why can't you see?
I've got the Valentine Blues.
Heart all a flutter and nowhere to go
Oh for a boyfriend, lover, partner or beau
I think you'll agree, it's quite plain to see,
I've got the Valentine Blues.

Oh Mr Postman bring me a sign,
A little posy from my Valentine
Perhaps a bouquet or a single red rose,
I don't suppose that you've a shortage of those.

Who could he be? That lover of mine?
So tall and handsome with a perfect behind,
I really don't care if he's a hundred and nine
I've got the Valentine Blues!

(trumpet instrumental)

Oh Operator! Please give me a line
You must connect me with my Valentine!
I'm three and forty, I haven't much time,
I'd even love him if he hadn't a dime.

Tall, fat or skinny, brunette or blond
I'd kiss a frog, I'd even live in a pond,
Oh mercy me!
I've got the Valentine Blu-u-ues
Oh mercy me!
I've got the Valentine Blues!



Shapinsay Development Trust

There were 2 Swap Grants issued to Community Projects last month.

The Rainbows and Brownies were awarded £200 towards the running costs for their organisation.

Also a grant of £200 was awarded to the School for the Lagganlia Trip in 2016 for the P7 pupils.

If you are interested in finding out if you may have a project that could be funded please pop into the Office or drop us an email.

Lisa-Marie Muir

by Lynne Collinson



It's February and many of us will already have failed miserably with our New Year resolutions no matter how good our intentions were but Shapinsay photographer Lisa-Marie Muir is determined to stick to her personal goal of taking a photo per day in 2016. Her inspiring scenic photos, taken on a professional level Canon Dslr are sold as cards or on Canvas in the Heritage Centre craft shop in Shapinsay and at occasional craft fairs on the mainland. She also has her pictures printed onto bags and notebooks as gifts. But her passion for photography started when she was a teenager.

Family and friends used to tell Lisa-Marie that she had an eye for a good photo even when she had her first basic camera, and more so when she got her first digital camera when her first daughter was born and that flair is never more evident than today, 12 years and numerous camera

upgrades later! "You do need an eye for composition", she says, "you can have the most fantastic camera in the world and not be able take a good picture".

Brought up on Westray she met Darren, her Shapinsay husband to be to when he was on a trip to Westray's regatta and she was just 16. She moved to Shapinsay 2 years later - they were wed when she was 20 - and they now have three lovely children.

"I find Orkney has so much to offer for any photographer" she says, "it's the skies and the sea that fascinate me - Orkney changes so much in a short space of time - I like to be able to freeze a moment - I especially like the summer light on the waves but we get some brilliant sunsets and sunrises in the winter, each season brings it's own unique aspects to try to capture on Camera".

And of course there's the elusive northern lights to capture using a long exposure to record images of the 'merry dancers' at their most colourful, "last February", she says "was the best I've seen them with the naked eye - greens and reds and really dancing - it was like a ballet!"

Lisa-Marie much prefers being behind the camera to being in front of it, "I don't like having my photo taken and while I don't mind taking photos of people, it's not something I do much of, except for family and friends", she says, preferring to snap local scenes to people. Her all-time favourite photo is one she took of some fishing creels at Frustigarth against the backdrop of a big sea rolling in.

Plans for the future include learning to build her own website to sell her work directly and finally getting some vintage rolls of film developed which she still has from when she started taking pictures as a teenager. It was too expensive to get them all developed at the time but she would be curious to see what those early snaps turned out like.

Meanwhile we look forward to seeing her latest pictures in the coming months as she travels around the Island with her trusty camera at the ready to capture some more special moments



Garden Notes from Old School

February can be a very frustrating month: there are bitterly cold days when we're reminded that it's still the middle of winter but also the occasional sunny day when we try to convince ourselves that 'spring is in the air' and want to rush out to the greenhouse to sow all sorts of seeds for the coming year. This might be alright if you have heat and plenty of space but for most of us and for most things it's still too early.

The problems arise later in the season when young plants are ready to go out but the weather is still too harsh so unless you have loads of

cold - frame space, I urge you to resist the temptation! If you are really desperate to get started, the exceptions to this advice are leeks, early peas and broad beans, but only at the very end of the month!

Apparently Billy Connolly once said 'There are two seasons in Scotland. June and winter!' Perhaps that's not exactly true in Shapinsay for although we are most definitely still in winter, there are encouraging signs of growth outside; the pointed green shoots of early daffodils, small fluffy balls of pussy willow on the dwarf willows and swelling buds on some shrubs such as flowering currants. Having said that, the main enjoyment we're getting from our gardens at this time of year is what Rosemary Verey called the bare 'bones' of the garden, that is the structure and shapes that are visible when the flesh of summer is absent, and of course that includes the evergreens. I have *Lonicera nitida* 'Baggeson's Gold', a shrubby honeysuckle, and a holly, *Ilex altaclerensis* 'Golden King' (which is in fact a female variety) which together light up a shady corner with their leaves edged in yellow. I also have another holly, *Ilex aquifolium* 'Silver Queen' (you've guessed it, this is a male cultivar) planted nearby in the hope that I will have berries when the plants become more mature. You could also try



Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Aureomarginatus' which looks quite like a holly and enjoys similar conditions. Another evergreen that is often overlooked but which is ideal for a shady spot is ivy. It too can provide a splash of colour just now and the very early flowers, although quite small and insignificant are a valuable food source for bees venturing out on a sunny day. The leaves of *Hedera helix* 'Atropurpurea' turn a lovely purple colour in cold weather while *H. helix* 'Glacier' has grey green leaves edged with white and *H. helix* 'Goldheart' has a splash of yellow on its leaves. Try to finish pruning blackcurrants and gooseberries by the end of this month. The best blackcurrants will crop on wood produced last summer so cut out only old wood as close to the ground as possible. Gooseberries will need the main shoots they produced last year reduced by about half, then all the side shoots cut back to two

buds. Next, give all fruit bushes a good mulch of homemade compost or any other well-rotted organic material.

February's notes wouldn't be complete without a reference to Valentine's Day. If you're in the habit of giving a gift at this time and your partner is a gardener, you need never be concerned about what to give, as this quote from the husband of a keen gardener illustrates; 'Although, to my untutored eye, the garden already looks full, there is, apparently, always room for new plants - particularly expensive ones.' (Roger Greenhalgh)

So why not enter into the romance of the occasion and give my Flower of the Month, a rose; not the usual sort of rose but the Lenten rose, *Heliborus orientalis*. It's now possible to find them in all shades of pink, white, pale green, even pale yellow and most of them have the most beautiful dark speckles inside the flowers. Plant them under the bare branches of

deciduous shrubs along with primroses and snowdrops and they will provide you with a very welcome display during each February and March for many years to come. You can't get much more romantic than that! 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

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I'm glad my home's in Shapinsay

As some of you may ken I am driving a new car now. Just before Christmas our old and up to then faithful car died, quite dramatically and was towed and pushed onto the boat, never to return. **RIP Zafira.**

While this was fairly disastrous at that time of year, it highlighted what a fantastic community we have here.

From the folk who towed and pushed my car, to those many folk who gave me and Anwen lifts every day for nearly three weeks, we did manage to get where we had to, when we had to.

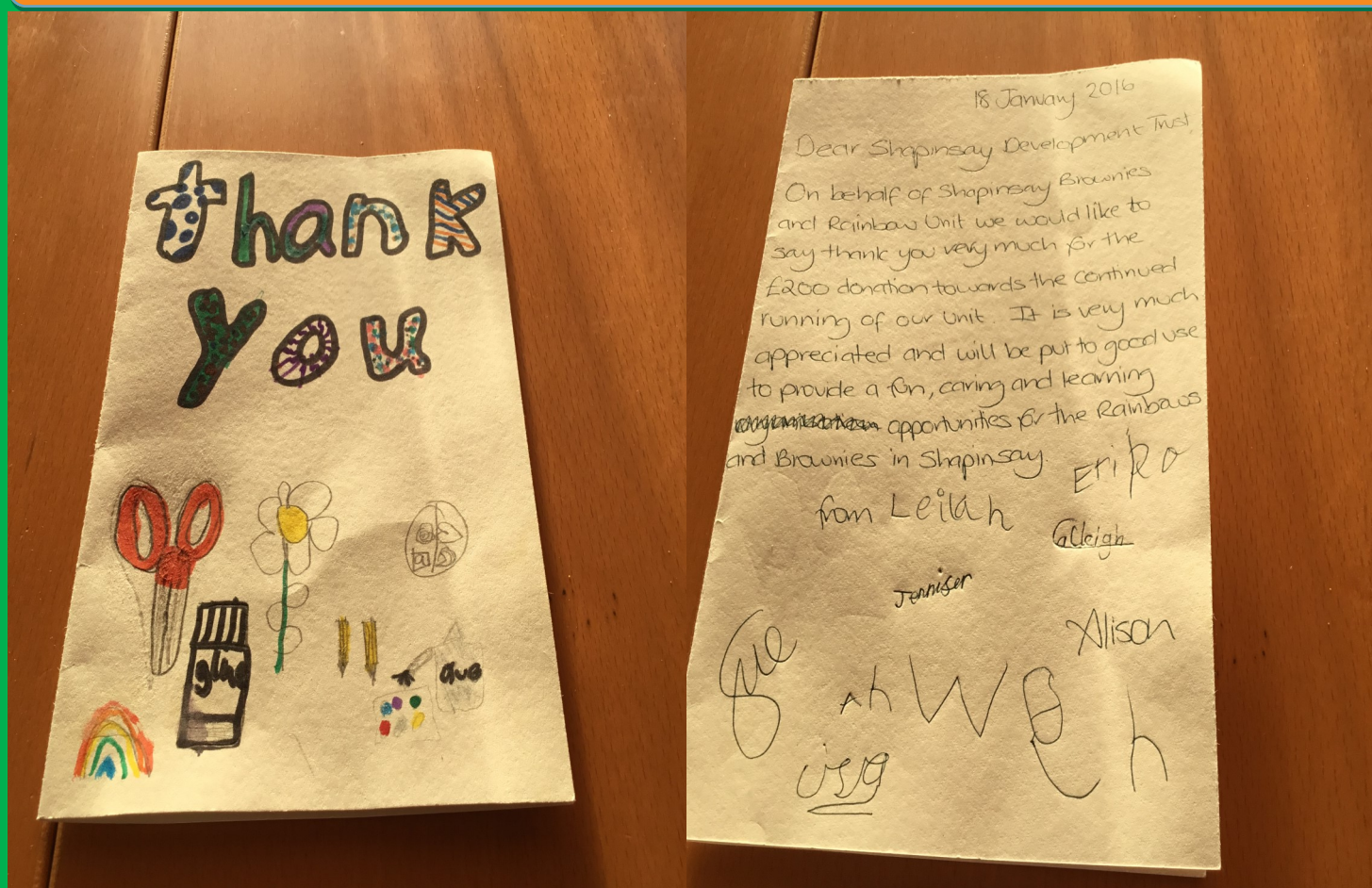
I understand that there are many places where getting a lift is no big deal, but I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of different people willing to help.

I hope that I thanked everyone who helped us at the time, but I felt that a more public word of thanks was needed.

I am sure the people involved would say that it was no big thing, but it meant the world to me and I will be eternally grateful to you all.

Caroline Bird

Shapinsay Rainbows and Brownies to Shapinsay Development Trust



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake

Little Auks

Early January saw Great Britain hit by some ferocious storms and torrential rains. Orkney had its share too. Storms make life difficult for our sea birds. One of the many birds that suffered and made national headlines was the little auk. Elodie found one dead at the school on Shapinsay and another was found around the shop. Many little auks were taken in by the SSPCA in Orkney, fed, rested and then released back into the sea. There were hundreds of birds seen in Scapa Flow, where some shelter and food could be found. My friend Gerry Cannon captured this image of a few little auks close in to Scapa pier on the 9th of January 2016.



The little auk is the smallest of the European auks, and in Orkney is known as the rotchie. Others in the family include tammie norie the puffin, tystie the black guillemot, aak the common guillemot, and coulter-neb the razorbill. The great auk which was last seen on Papay in 1813 is now extinct. Auks look similar to penguins but are not related, an example of convergent evolution.

Little auks are about 20 cm long and weigh about 150g. They have a stocky build, with a short neck and short bill. They are basically black and white, with more white on the head, neck and chest in winter than the all black of these areas in summer.

The little auk is a regular winter visitor to Orkney especially during stormy weather, but is our only regular auk species which does not breed here. It breeds in the high arctic, in places like Baffin Island in Canada, Greenland and Svalbard. It is one of the most numerous seabirds in the World, with an estimated 15 million pairs. They nest in huge colonies amongst large boulder scree well hidden from predators. They feed on small plankton called copepods and have pouches in their cheeks (rather like hamsters!) which can be stuffed with food to carry back from the sea to the nest to feed their young.

Little auks cannot walk on land very far and soon become exhausted. They cannot take off from land either, needing water to get airborne from. **So if you find one on land return it to a sheltered bay, or contact the SSPCA for advice if you think it is weak and needs professional help.**