

The Shapinsay Sound



LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.
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School Sale

The P7s had a magnificent sale of books, bric-a-brac, toys and clothes on Friday 15th April. There were also some really good raffle prizes and the Parent Council supplied teas, coffees and homebakes. The sale raised a fantastic £389.03, all of which will go towards the P7 trip to Lagganlia and the P4 – 6 trip to Hoy later this term. P7 would like to thank the Parent Council, the P4 – 6 children who helped them to set everything up and run stalls on the day, Radio Orkney for publicising the sale and to everyone who donated things for the sale and everyone who came along on the day and who donated if they couldn't come on the day.

Daily Mile

You may wonder why the children are running around the school... Don't be afraid – we have started the Daily Mile. Every day we will be walking, jogging or running round the school or the field (the older class and Mrs Bews have measured two courses, one for wet weather and one for dry). For more information please take a look at the school website.

Learning in Class

This term Nursery are learning about transport. They have been learning some new songs about transport and want to find out about things like rockets, aeroplanes, hot-air balloons, helicopters, boats and tractors. We had a visit from the Coastguard and the children enjoyed seeing the coastguard vehicle. P1 – 3 are learning about animals. They have set up some areas in the classroom – a vets, a bird-hide and a jungle and have thought of some different things we could do in each area. We hope to do some visits this term too. In French we are learning about animals and pets, and in music we are composing our own animal sounds.

P4 – 7 are learning about plants and have started designing their own 3D plants in art using tissue, PVA and wire. In French the older class are learning about countries and nationalities. They are composing their own music about locations using tuned and untuned instruments. All the children will be practising for the Picnic (18th June) with Mrs Bews



SHAPINSAY
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The Shapinsay Sound

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Responses to Curtailment - BIG HIT

Building Innovative Green Hydrogen systems in an Isolated Territory: a pilot for Europe (BIG HIT)

Shapinsay Development Trust (SDT) are delighted to be part of the BIG HIT consortium which we expect to offer greater opportunities for our Island as well as benefitting Orkney as a whole. The five-year long project will develop a replicable, fully integrated model of hydrogen production, storage, transportation and utilisation for heat, power and transport.

Shapinsay's community owned 900Kw turbine is frequently curtailed as a result of grid constraints. During early 2015 a sequence of community meetings was held in the island which resulted in hydrogen production being identified as one of the ways in which curtailment might be mitigated. These meetings also empowered SDT to establish a work programme to investigate and deliver 'Responses to Curtailment'. Over the past year Trust resources have been applied to this end.

Shapinsay's Responses to Curtailment programme aims to reclaim the lost capacity (and lost income) which has resulted from grid constraint and in so doing release resources which can be used to help deliver the island's ambition. Shapinsay involvement in the BIG HIT project is the programme's major outcome to date. Other 'responses' are still under development and will continue.

Shapinsay Development Trust believes that their involvement in the BIG HIT project offers a model not only for their future progress but for similar community based groups representative of small islands and rural communities. It looks forward to sharing its experience as the project progresses.

Service with a smile - from Evie and Eileen!

by Lynne Collinson



Speak to people who've made use of Shapinsay's electric car service and you'll hear many good reports. Affectionately known as 'Evie', the cheery red Nissan Leaf can be seen buzzing around the Island on most days busy picking people up and dropping them off with the SDT's trusty transport co-ordinator Eileen Phillips behind the wheel.

Eileen left Orkney at the age of 7 with her mum and Orcadian father but her roots here drew her back for holidays and finally to return and settle on Shapinsay 10 years ago when daughter Marie married an Orcadian and set up home on the island.

As well as being the main driver Eileen takes bookings for the car as well as for the minibus and out of hours boat and loves to help keep things running smoothly for everyone. The electric car, she says, "does help the community immensely – it's a lifeline for some folk, especially those with medical conditions needing transport to the surgery".

More economical to use than the minibus, Evie can travel up to 86 miles on just one battery charge so it makes sense to make the most of her for getting people around as well as for many other errands. That can mean anything from helping out in emergencies, taking people for routine visits to the surgery, getting something vital that's been forgotten to the ferry before it sails or fetching shopping and delivering the Orcadian to people not able to get out themselves.

Those who've found the electric car beneficial include Wendy and Lawrie Thompson of Broadgreen who say it's an "exceptional service" for which they have nothing but praise. "It was indispensable as far as we were concerned", says Lawrie, who couldn't drive for medical reasons for six months. "Eileen is extremely helpful and kind and especially good with older people" adds Wendy.



June Swannie of Flakimoss who has needed to make regular trips to the Health Centre also really appreciates the availability of the electric car and its driver. "I am thankful to Eileen for taking me between home and the surgery for many weeks now" she says, otherwise "I would have had a real struggle getting down every day – I didn't realise we had such a good service in Shapinsay."

There is capacity for more people to make use of the facility. "Everyone on the Island qualifies for the service", says Eileen, who loves her involvement. "I enjoy it – you're able to help people and it's doing something for the community. You also meet interesting folk who you'd never have met otherwise. No two days are the same – there's plenty of variety" – which can include some unusual requests. During the recent power cut Eileen received a call asking her to pick up a generator sent over to help with the crisis. Just a wee bit too big to fit in Evie but fair play she did collect and transport the cables that went with it!

For a suitable donation, Evie can also be booked by day-trippers to the Island to help them see the sights like our very own Iron Age broch where they can be dropped off and picked up again later. It's a definite incentive for visitors to come and hopefully spend money with local businesses or at the Heritage Centre craft shop whilst they're here. Use of the car to facilitate visits by tourists is to be promoted during the summer of 2016.

The electric car service is funded by the SDT with income from our wind turbine and donations. It runs from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm and can even be borrowed subject to a donation and Driving License check. Bookings need to be made at least a day in advance wherever possible. To make a reservation or for inquiries about bookings outside of the normal times Eileen can be contacted on 0790 157 5162 or e-mail shapinsaybookings@gmail.com

There may also be some new faces behind the steering wheel occasionally in future with a number of relief drivers now available to help Eileen out as demand grows

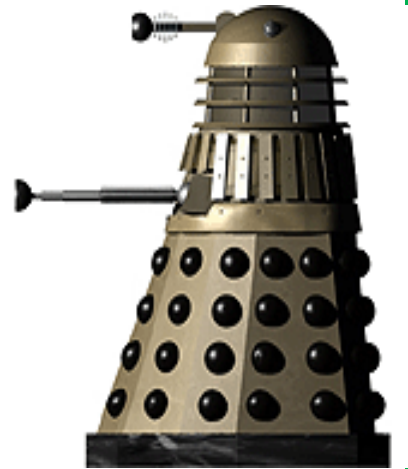
Poem

by HL Davis

If Shakespeare had watched Dr Who...

When I consider evenings jointly spent
Upon the sofa, gripped by eerie sounds,
As flickering shades of monstrous mal-intent
Invade the screen and all my wits confound,
With peeping glance above the cushion, locked
With equal fear unbridled, yet the thrill
Of Daleks reining havoc, somehow mocked
Into a lesser dread; I find you still
And reassuring with your calmly savoured
Observations shared of wobbly sets,
Dismantling barricades o'er which I laboured,
And laughing now, berate such SFX.
Now guided from the dark, you gently steer
Myself to shore, cast off from childhood fear.

Then am I reassured to find you still,



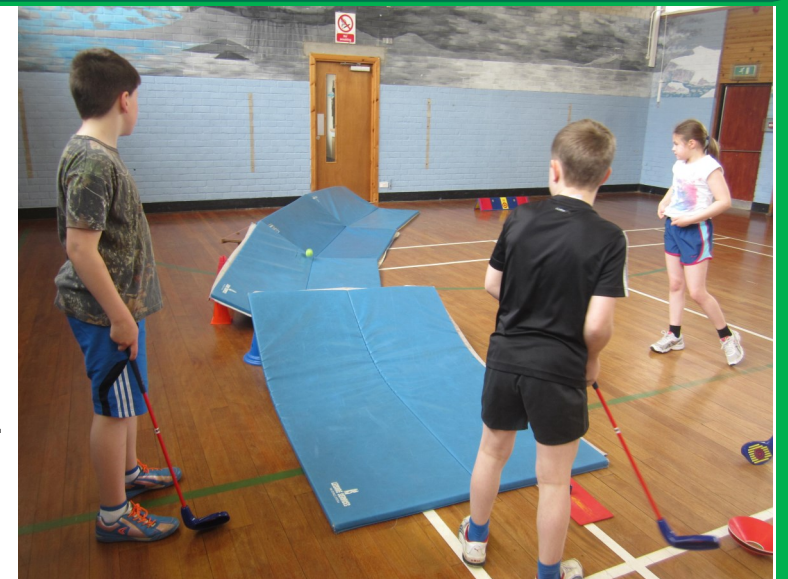
Shapinsay School

Part 2

Visitors

We have had some visitors recently. Kirsty came out to teach us club golf which was good fun some of us were relieved we didn't need to make holes in the hall floor!

We also had a visit from Ian and Ron who came to tell us about the work of Coastguards. We learned that we should never touch anything suspicious at the beach (particularly relevant for Bag the Bruck) and that to contact the Coastguard you should dial 999 and ask for them.



World War 1 work

The whole school will be focusing on remembering World War 1 for the weeks beginning 23rd May and 30th May. We hope to start the work by doing some philosophy together with anyone else who would like to join us on Monday 23rd May in the morning. Please listen out to Radio Orkney nearer the time for details. We hope to go across to Kirkwall to see the poppies together and to find out more about World War 1.

Kirk News

There are a number of developments to report again which is probably a good sign! First of all, for the last few years I have been on Shapinsay every third Sunday throughout the year to take a service. Similarly every third Christmas is my Shapinsay Christmas. For the first time since Shapinsay linked with Kirkwall East I will be taking two services every Sunday for the 7 weeks of the summer school holidays. Between the 26th June and the 21st August both kirks will adjust their times of services to suit the boats and so Kirkwall East will meet at 10 am, I'll catch the 11.30 am boat to Shapinsay and we'll have a service here at 12 o'clock. We will not have shared lunches in the summer but will have a cuppa instead. We'll try that for the summer, reappraise in autumn and decide about future summers.

Shapinsay kirk has also recently become both eco-congregation and a Fair Trade church. We're applying for our first eco-congregation award and will be assessed shortly. Basically what that means is that we care about God's creation and want to do our bit to show it in practical living. We also buy fairly traded tea, coffee and biscuits for the church to support poor farmers around the world – as indeed we support our own by buying their beef, lamb and milk. If you'd like to know more about any of those developments, please speak to Caroline Bird or myself.

Rev Julia Meason, 874789, JMeason@churchofscotland.org.uk

Boathouse

The Boathouse will open during May - everyone will be invited to come and take a look. A separate announcement will be made in a week so. In the meantime here is a glimpse inside.



Garden Notes from Old School

Much as I dislike leaving my garden for any length of time, sometimes a short spell away allows me to look at it with fresh eyes. This is especially true at this time of year when things change so quickly. I went away in early spring and returned only ten days later to find the garden in its full spring glory. The garden looks neat and ordered for a short while, each plant seen as an individual in its own space; drumstick primulas, aubretia, auriculas, anemones and saxifrage are all flowering their socks off, making the most of the light available before surrounding foliage overtakes them.



We are having for the most part a lovely spring and this is reflected in the number



and size of flowers, notably daffodils, which are outstanding this year. The supersize golden trumpet varieties always look impressive in large groups and are so cheery but I also love the miniature varieties like Minnow which are effective because they are so understated.

May is traditionally 'Cherry Blossom Time' and if you are heading south there are some wonderful gardens to visit where you can see mature trees smothered in blossom which looks fabulous. We are never going to be able to achieve the same spectacle here but you could try Prunus Amanogawa which is a columnar tree or Prunus Kojo No Mai which has very delicate pale pink blossom and good autumn coloured leaves. According to the label this can grow 10 to 12 feet tall but mine will stay in a pot and I have no expectation that it will ever get anywhere near that big!

Planting has continued in the small spinney and I've decided that as it's a small area, I will limit the colour palette to shades of blue, white and green/yellow. Alchemilla, Tiarella, white foxgloves and Primrose Cottage Cream have all been added and should make good growth now for a strong display next spring. As a complete contrast to this woodland style planting, the scree garden will be home to those plants that like really good drainage. This is very much a work in progress but it's beginning to take shape and I am pleased to have been able to make a start by planting Sedum Xenox and a new plant I bought on my recent trip away, Sisyrinchium Biscutella. I'll keep you posted on how this project develops!

The greenhouse is packed to bursting point now but hardening off is in progress for module- grown cabbages, kale, sweet peas, beans and nasturtiums so it won't be too long before they can stay outside under a net cloche. Last year I took cuttings from tender Verbena Sissinghurst and silver trailing Helichrysum which are now growing well and also over-wintered Antirrhinum Black Prince which will provide cuttings for this year.

Outside, the potatoes are all in, a new strawberry bed planted and supports in place for the peas. The veg garden can be ornamental as well as functional so I've decided to have some fun this year combining annual flowers amongst the veg and playing with different coloured leaves of lettuce, kale etc; purple cabbage with red nasturtiums, sweet peas with broad beans- the possibilities are endless!

Plant of the month is the primula. There are so many different varieties for so many different situations. The native primrose, Primula vulgaris can be seen on many of the roadside verges on mainland but it grows equally well in the garden; Primula Cottage Cream is similar but has slightly larger more creamy coloured flowers and there are also some old double flowered varieties such as P. Dawn Ansell and P. Ken Dearman. Primula denticulata, the drumstick primula is well-known and puts on a really good show in shades from purple and red through to white. The beautifully scented alpine Primula Linda Pope needs a moist but well-drained spot and then there are numerous coloured versions of the auricular primroses. Be warned, collecting them can become



addictive as some of the old photographs of primula theatres show!

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 by Nancy Ramsay (b1923)

Some of you may have wondered what the story is behind the large mural in the Clubrooms. This was commissioned for the community school building, which opened in 1970, and originally hung in the school foyer. Following changes to the school part of the building in the early 2000s it was moved to the dining room and more recently to the community end of the building. The work by local artist Nancy Ramsay illustrates the story of Shapinsay through the ages and is part of Orkney Islands Council's Art in Public Places Scheme.

Starting at the bottom left panel with what may be Iron Age children at Burroughston Broch or perhaps even Neolithic children at the stone age village believed to lie on the brae of Arrowon. Our Norse past is represented by a Viking galley with St Magnus Cathedral in the distance. We then move to 1746 when the mansion house of Sound was burnt down by the Royal Navy. This was an act of retribution against the then owner, James Fea, who supported the Jacobite uprising of 1745. Here too we see the duller, unenclosed landscape of old style farming. This is described in the Old Statistical Account for Shapinsay, written around 1794 by Rev George Barry as;

"...a dreary waste, interspersed with arable lands ill cultivated, a few miserable hovels thinly scattered over its surface, under the name of farm houses or cottages, which were not fit to shelter from the rigours of the climate a few ragged inhabitants, dirty through indolence, lean with hunger, and torpid by despair..."

The big full length panel moves us on to the mid 1800s where we see David Balfour's Scottish Baronial castle behind a typical Victorian farm cottage and drystone dyke. The landscape is also brighter here, illustrating the impact of the improved agricultural methods introduced by Balfour. This saw the old runrig system swept away and the whole island "squared" into neat 10 acre fields, drained and enclosed.

The final two panels on the right take us up to 1970 with children playing near the "new" school. Children feature throughout making the work very relevant to the original school setting. We also get a real feeling of moving through time from the changing styles of the children's clothes. All in all, it's a fascinating work, which really captures the essence of our island's cultural heritage.

Sheila Garson
Curator
Orkney Museum



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake

In December 2015 the curlew had the dubious honour of joining the UK red list of 67 birds of greatest conservation concern of the 244 species that nest in Britain.

This news will come as quite a surprise to most of us familiar with the curlew in Orkney. It appears to be everywhere, surely there is nothing wrong? Well Alan Leitch who works for the RSPB in Orkney is carrying out a study to try and find out.



You can help by keeping your dog under close control where curlews and other waders are nesting.

The Eurasian Curlew or Whaup as it is known in Orkney is in urgent need of our help. It is the most rapidly declining breeding bird species in the UK. Curlews have declined by a massive 43% in only the last 20 years to an estimated 68,000 breeding pairs, representing about 25% of the global population.



Alan has ringed about 200 curlew chicks in Orkney in the last three years. He is attempting to find out more about where our Orkney curlews go in winter, survival rates, predation and movements within Orkney. So if you see a flock of curlews, have a look closely at their legs. If you see one with rings on, please take a note of the colour combination and the letters on one of the rings if you can, and let us know. The aim is to try to find out how we can help them and put in measures to help before they decline in Orkney.



The project it is hoped will help to increase our knowledge of curlews in Orkney - more detailed research will be required - having a marked breeding population will be a good start. Other species of curlew in the World used to be very numerous until recently. However, both the Eskimo curlews of North America and the Slender-billed curlews of Europe are now extinct or almost certainly so. I hope the same fate does not happen to our curlews. Orkney and the moorlands of the rest of Britain would be a lot poorer without their mournful bubbling songs.

All photos by Alan Leitch