

The Shapinsay Sound

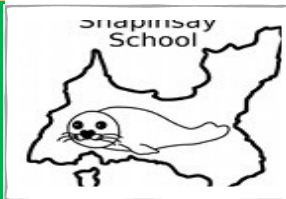


LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.
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Residential trips

P7 pupils had a great time in Lagganlia – trying out activities such as tree climbing, gorge walking (under a waterfall), cycling (30km!), skiing, canoeing and orienteering. It was a great opportunity not only for the children to try out the new activities, but also for them to get to know some P7s from other schools before they move to

KGS. P4 – 6 children spent 2 nights away in Hoy where they tried coasteering, gorge walking, canoeing and archery. Many thanks to Darren who came with us to Hoy, and to Parent Council, the Shapinsay Development Trust and the Community Council who have helped to fund the trips.

Day trips

P1 – 7 had the opportunity of visiting HMS Bulwark when it was in Kirkwall at the beginning of June. It was a great trip and the children really enjoyed it. We had a full tour of the ship and it was a great link with our WW1 learning in school. P3 children went to Papdale School to join in with a football festival and had a great time. Nursery children went to the airport as part of their transport topic. Thanks to all the parents who helped with these trips.



World War 1 learning

We have all been thinking about World War 1, to tie in with the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Jutland. We have done some philosophy, made poppies from clay and plastic bottles, done some drama work, read some poems from World War 1, tried out different codes, found out about animals in World War 1, made some small models, learned some songs and even made a tank! The children also thought about what lessons we can learn from World War One.

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The Shapinsay Sound

From the Chair

by Sheila Garson

July 2016

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I'm almost frightened to say it, but looks like summer has arrived! The longest day and the Picnic / island sports are past and the school has closed for the summer holidays. Things are late after a long, hard winter, but the land is recovering and it's great to see the green patchwork of fields, gardens full of colour and the roadside verges bright with wild flowers. It's also good to see the cattle out and that sheep clipping is underway. After a number of very poor summers, here's hoping for a good one this year

You may remember a public consultation session some time ago about the development of a North Island Landscape Partnership. This came on the back of the very successful Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership which saw the communities around the Flow benefitting for £2 million funding, which delivered 48 projects over a three year period. The North Island Landscape Partnership has a similar plan and the team are now working up their Stage 2 Heritage Lottery bid and will be visiting the island over the next month or so to develop some of the ideas from that earlier consultation. If this bid is successful we hope that Shapinsay will benefit from some of this funding. As you may know Debbie Sarjeant left the post of Admin and Finance Officer with the Trust at the end of June. Debbie has been involved with the Trust in a number of roles, over many years. No matter what the job, Debbie was always very willing, able and dependable and we will miss her greatly. On behalf of everyone at SDT and the wider community, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Debbie all the very best for the future.



Shining a light on Shapinsay's past

by Lynne Collinson

It's always intriguing to find out more about our local history and this month we bring you an item of interest from Ian James Mcleod Black who lives in Solihull and who has an interesting story to tell about his family links with Shapinsay – and Helliar Holm in particular. Ian writes:-



'My Grandfather Andrew Mcleod Black was an assistant lighthouse keeper, based for a period of time on Helliar Holm. His wife Sarah Jane Black, who was in the later stages of pregnancy, was residing on the island in the lighthouse family accommodation. In the final stages of labour a storm prevented her from leaving for Shapinsay and their second child, my father, Albert Helliier Black was born at the lighthouse on the 26th November 1912. I believe my father was amongst the verfew to have been born on a Lighthouse. His middle name was chosen after his place of birth, but on his birth certificate the 'a' was replaced with an 'e'!



My father had an older sister Helen Ross Black and until very recently it was not clear as to the exact year of her birth or the location. The wonders of the Internet!

She was born on the 2nd March 1910 at 'The Ayre' Kirkwall. Parents residence...

Hellyar Holm, Shapinsay. Both Helen and her parents appear in the 1911 census, at Hellyar Holm Lighthouse.

Of further interest is that my Grandfather and Grandmother were married on Helly er Holm on the 15th April 1911, the Minister being Archibald McCall, of the United Free Church of Scotland, Shapinsay and one of his witnesses was George Combe, who I believe was the Principal Keeper at the time. My Grandfather, served the Northern Lighthouse Board for a number of years, based at Helliar Holm, Dunnet Head, Bell Rock, Douglas Head, Isle of Man (Where my father became a King Scout), Start Point and the Pentland Skerries, where he lost his life in a drowning accident on the 27th January 1938, aged 52. His body was never recovered – only his cap was seen, floating on the water. He was the last of the 'Black family' line to have served for the Northern Lights, there being four others before him, including his father. Whilst the family were based in the Isle of Man, my father went on a different path and after a short period moved to Birmingham, followed by his Sister and ultimately spent the rest of their lives there.

Ian has never been to Shapinsay and would love to visit but is not able to do so at present due to health problems.

However he would love to hear from anyone who knows any more about his family connections with Helliar Holm.



Albert Helliier Black



Shapinsay School

Part 2

Hydrogen Challenge

We had a visit from Arcola Energy who worked with us to make lego cars powered by hydrogen. We tried to make the cars as efficient as possible so they went further – one went as far as 18m!

Many thanks to everyone who has supported the school this year. In next month's newsletter will be a review of the targets for this year as well as information on the targets for next year.



Sounding good on Shapinsay!

by Lynne Collinson

People on Shapinsay are being offered the chance to take part in two special events which could turn up the volume on our island!

Leading voice and acting coach Kristin Linklater of The Voice Centre at Quoyloo is offering to run a special one day workshop here in September - on the topic of 'Releasing Your Voice'. If you've ever wished you could speak more confidently in front of people - whether in a small group, at a wedding or even on the stage then this is for you! Find out all the tips and tricks to help you communicate more effectively, be 'listened to' and find your 'true voice'. There is a choice of dates. It could either be September 10th or the 17th – both are Saturdays. Contact 711755 for more details.



Meanwhile an enthusiastic group of handbell ringers from Caithness are offering Shapinsay folks a taster session Saturday 30th July which could launch us into having a handbell ringing group of our own on our island and maybe one for juniors, too.

We're assured that no previous experience is necessary, you don't even have to be able to read music and they say it's great fun for folks of all ages to do together as a community. There could also be opportunities to perform at events and in competitions in the future.

If you're interested in having a 'go' then please contact Emma Clements soon so that we can get an idea of how many would like to take part. Emma is an experienced handbell ringer who has taught groups in the past and she will be heading up this tuneful new venture!

These opportunities to be 'heard' in new ways come as Shapinsay's profile is being raised with our Involvement in the Big Hit European-wide hydrogen energy project which has created massive interest in our small but innovative island. Our 'voice' has a new and exciting 'ring' to it not just in Orkney but in the UK and even beyond.

If you're interested in having a 'go' then please contact Emma Clements (711740 or evclements@btinternet.com) soon so that we can get an idea of how many would like to take part. Emma is an experienced handbell ringer who has taught groups in the past and she will be heading up this tuneful new venture!

Shapinsay Picnic Day

On Saturday the 18th June the picnic got underway under typical picnic conditions, a grey sky and a cold wind, but thankfully the sun did try its best to make a couple of appearances and the rain kindly stayed away for the day. The hard work of the picnic committee from the night before and on the day saw a well laid out field, ready for all the events to take place. There was a good turn out of competitors and spectators, which made for a very enjoyable day.

The men's events I hear were very closely contested, with Darren Muir securing the men's shield for the umpteenth time, but not without a fight, Charles Groat took the runner-up trophy.

The women's shield was won by Ann Groat, who put in a super performance, with Alannah Leslie taking the runner-up trophy despite my best efforts.

In the under 16 boys again it was a very closely contested win with Thomas Leslie securing the shield and Alex Hall the runner-up Trophy.

The Under 16 girls saw Jasmine Hall secure the shield after some really good running wins, with Phoebe Dunnett taking home the runner-up trophy.



The Primary school bairns all put in a fantastic effort with both shields heading up to Gorn, as Einar Muir won the boy's shield and Leilah Muir the Girl's shield, with Paul Bady and Rowan Orr taking the runner-up trophies. We then all enjoyed a lovely tea of sandwiches and fancies, during which the children's prize giving was held, with the prizes presented by the school's former student teacher Lisa Ross. As well as all the competitors receiving their prize money and medals they were all also presented with a commemorative coin by Fiona on behalf of the Community Council to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. After tea came the tug of war. A fierce battle ensued between North and South (or maybe it was North East and South West?!) with South NARROWLY (can you tell I pulled for North?) winning the

pull. This was followed by a closely contested tug of war between the Primary school boys and girls, with the boys winning the pull. Then came the Under 16s with a boys v girls tug of war, now we struggled a bit to get even numbers for this one, and I haven't quite been able to verify that all tug of war participants were fitting the under 16 category, but without any photographic proof I will assume all were and that the boys win stands. We then had a very enjoyable dance in the evening, when the adult prize giving was held, and enjoyed another lovely spread of sandwiches and fancies for supper.

Despite having attended the picnic for many years this is only my second year on the picnic committee and my first year competing in the picnic and having seen now first hand all that goes on I think it is worth mentioning the fantastic amount of work that goes into the successful running of the picnic. From the money collecting, to pitch marking, to sandwich making, to manning the different events, to working out all the winners, to laying out and clearing in equipment, to hall cleaning, without the willingness of the committee of volunteers we wouldn't have had the smooth, successful event that we had on Saturday. We are always on the look out for more willing volunteers, so if you think you could give a hand next year please speak to any of the committee members. Also we had a good turn out of competitors this year but it would be nice to see more competitors next year, so it is worth starting the training now, as speaking from experience competing with no training hurts a bit the next day!



Shapinsay Development Trust

Shapinsay Development Trust

Finance Officer – A new post from July 2016

We seek a new Finance Officer as we step into a new era. The post offers a guaranteed, flexible, 15 hours per week. Do you have the skills to take on the day-to-day control of our finances with the knowledge that there's scope to do more later if you have that ambition?

For full details and an application form please contact our Service Manager - Nic. Thake - at the SDT Office

SDTSM@shapinsay.org.uk - 01856 711733

The Boathouse, Shapinsay, Orkney, KW17 2DY

Shapinsay Guides



Over the past two terms the girls have been learning about First Aid.

June Bacon has taken them through a comprehensive course to gain their first aid badge. They have made a display in the corridor with helpful hints!

Well done girls and THANK YOU June.

Garden Notes from Old School

As gardeners, we're rarely satisfied with the weather. We always want the perfect growing conditions for our plants; too much sun and we're needing to water, too much rain and we're worried about waterlogging. The truth is that most plants cope pretty well as long as the extreme conditions don't go on too long but it's still worth trying to find the best spot to plant initially. In the wild, plants thrive in their natural habitats so it's worth looking at what those conditions are when planting in the garden. On Gardener's World, Carol Klein has been running a series of items called Right plant, right place where she visits different areas of countryside, e.g. hedgerows, moorland, rocky outcrops, woodlands, looking at which plants grow there naturally and then helping us to translate that to conditions in our own gardens. By all means add a handful of Fish, Blood, & Bone or Seaweed fertiliser at planting time but after that, the plants should be able to look after themselves. Like us, a plant will always do better if it is in a happy home!

Growing here in Shapinsay is always going to be a bit more of a challenge than in most areas of the UK but if there's a plant you really want to grow, never rule it out until you've tried it. Put it somewhere you think it will like and provide some shelter at least until it's established. Surrounding plants can help create a micro climate and planting things closer together than usual is useful in the early stages; you can always divide up and thin out later. Plants with more flexible stems such as Geums, Thalictrum, Libertia, Astrantias and Geraniums will tolerate wind better than others and ornamental grasses act as a good filter. Some years will be better than others. Last year, the globe flower, Trollius 'Cheddar' was amazing; it is a plant native to wetland meadows and it thrived in last year's wet conditions but this year, with the dry spell at the end of May and into June, the blooms have browned and faded very quickly.

Gardens are constantly changing landscapes, from one season to another and from one year to the next. This year, a creamy white lupin that has been in place for three years has suddenly grown to 5ft tall and put on an amazing show which has completely changed the look of the border. In another area, a long established flowering currant suddenly died leaving a big gap. Rather than cut out the dead wood completely, I pruned it to make a framework for Clematis 'Miss Christine' (anything described as 'vigorous' is always worth a try!). This clematis is part of the montana group so is hardy and doesn't need pruning unless you need to limit its growth. It has such a beautiful white scented flower with a pinky green flush to the outside of the buds. I have also planted Clematis montana 'Wilsonii' this year to grow over a low wall and again it's a strong grower with a lovely scent.

Our garden landscape has changed a bit more than usual this year as we've planted a couple of 6ft tall Whitebeams. They have been firmly staked and our fingers are very firmly crossed! It's amazing what an impact a tree has; where there was a straight line along the top of the wall with the hills and sky beyond, there's now a vertical feature which makes the whole view more interesting. The Whitebeams have beautiful silver undersides to the leaves especially when they first emerge in spring, then white flowers which are attractive to bees and butterflies, followed by bunches of red berries in autumn which the birds love – the perfect tree!

Plant of the month is the Hosta or Plantain Lily. The flowers are usually white or pale mauve and are often scented. They are easy to grow and prefer a damp soil in light shade. Slugs can be kept at bay by surrounding them with seaweed or salty sand. There are so many different leaf colours, shapes and sizes but you could try H. 'Gold Standard' to brighten up a shady spot or use the huge leaves of H. sieboldiana var. Elegans as brilliant groundcover.

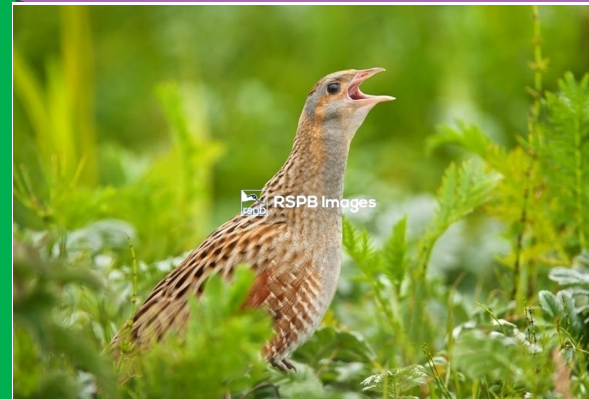
If you have any garden tips that you would like to share or any special plants that you would like to tell others about please let me know and I will include them next month.

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



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake



Corncrakes

Corncrakes begin to arrive in Orkney in late April and in to May from their wintering grounds south of the Sahara in Africa. They look for areas of taller vegetation such as nettle or iris beds in which to take cover. Often grass growth is slow when they arrive and the last two springs in Orkney have been especially cold and grass slow to get going. Once the grass gets longer corncrakes move in and lay their eggs where they like to keep hidden.

It is much easier to hear a corncrake than see one. They make a very loud rasping noise like "Crex crex" their Latin name or a "scritch scritch" sound rather like scratching a credit card over the teeth of a comb. The males call at any time but usually much more at night. They are trying both to impress a passing female and get her to come and settle down with him, and warning other males to keep out, this is my territory. Their song is monotonous and strident and can be a mixed blessing if you are trying to get to sleep! The corncrake is about the size of a sleek chicken or moorhen, with strikingly chestnut wings and a streaky buff body. Corncrakes used to be widespread and numerous in the whole of the UK. Unfortunately their range and numbers have decreased alarmingly and Scotland has been home to all the British corncrakes in the last 40 years. In 1993 a census revealed an all time low and there were estimated to be only 400 British corncrakes left and only 6 corncrake males in Orkney.

Close cooperation between farmers and people keen to conserve corncrakes has been crucial to boosting corncrake numbers in Orkney. Part of this has been through farmers delaying the cutting of meadows and silage fields until late summer to allow corncrakes to breed.

Another step forward has been through introducing corncrake friendly methods of mowing. A farmer can help more broods to survive by starting to cut a field in the centre, then working outwards. This is because chicks have a better chance of escaping the mowing machinery if it works outwards, rather than being trapped in the middle of the field.

In order for their population to remain stable, corncrakes need to produce one successful brood. If their numbers are to increase, they need to produce two successful broods. Young corncrakes are full-grown after six to seven weeks. First brood chicks are full grown in mid July and second brood chicks are full size in September.



Through the Orkney Corncrake Initiative, the RSPB can offer to pay farmers to delay their silage mowing until mid-August and ideally into September, buying time for the corncrakes to raise their chicks undisturbed when they are found to be nesting in fields.

There were 17 males recorded singing in Orkney in 2015, 9 on Mainland, 5 on Westray, one on Sanday and 2 on Shapinsay. The 2 on Shapinsay were near to Elwick Mill.

I surveyed Shapinsay in mid June this year for corncrakes, between the hours of midnight and 3am when males call from the centre of their territories. I drive around all the roads stopping every half mile or so and listening for 5 minutes then move on. I heard no corncrakes, but the sounds of snipe drumming, curlews bubbling and redshanks etc alarming makes up for it a bit.

So not a good start on Shapinsay this year and there have only been a handful heard elsewhere in Orkney. If you are lucky enough to hear one in Shapinsay, please email me on paul.hollinrake@rspb.org.uk or telephone the RSPBs Corncrake Officer Inga Seator on 01856 852021

